## State of Confession Newsletter Articles



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# "Things have Changed" Newsletter Article for August 2004

As you are well aware from our congregation's prayers, newsletter articles, pamphlets, and special Sunday afternoon teaching sessions, there are those within our beloved Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod who have been doing things that are not according to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. It was hoped that the July 11-15, 2004 LC-MS convention would make a clear confession of the truth and return us to our grandfather's church.

It is with great sorrow that I must inform you that the convention did not clear up the doctrinal disagreements among us. Instead, the convention affirmed the false teaching by its resolutions, reports, elections and constitution/bylaw changes. Prior to this convention it could legitimately be claimed that the false teaching of some was not the official position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Let me make it abundantly clear: Our Synod's historic teaching and practice has changed.

1. Whenever I was first ordained into the office of the Holy Ministry, it was well known that there were renegade congregations within the Synod that were practicing open communion by offering the Body and Blood of our Lord to those who were not members and thus had not been taught nor did they publicly confess our common faith. I could comfort myself in the fact that our official position in Synod had not changed and charitably assume

that the District President was working to bring that congregation and pastor back to the truth. The **CTCR** document, Theology and Practice of The Lord's *Supper*(1983) stated, "The practice of refusing

"We have here had the joy of seeing a genuine Lutheran Synod, and this was also what we expected to find in you. But after we have seen you with our own eyes, we must confess that God has done more among you than we expected. Your Synod is not satisfied with merely the Lutheran name and with enlarging itself outwardly; but as a genuine Lutheran church body you place pure doctrine above everything and you make it your task to bring it forth from the Word's rich mine. With joy we have been witnesses to the earnestness with which all of you, pastors as well as hearers bow to the words of God and do not ask about what the world and the spirit of the times demand, but only say, "Speak, O Lord! Thy servant heareth." Thus have we seen that your burning zeal for doctrine likewise bears fruit in a burning love, and that you wish to offer your whole life to God."

C.F.W. Walther

1864 Convention of the Norwegian Synod

Communion to certain Christians and the general population at Lutheran altars is called close communion. This practice serves the Gospel, and even those refused, by its reverence for our Lord's last will and testament."

Now, however, I am told by our Synodical President that the practice of open or "Close Communion seeks to prevent a profession of confessional unity in faith where there is, in fact, disunity and disagreement. It would be neither faithful to the Scriptural requirements for admission to Holy Communion(1 Cor 11:27ff.; cf. 10:16-17) nor helpful to fallen humanity if the Christian church welcomes to its altars those who deny or question clear Scriptural teachings"

CTCR document, Theology and Practice of The Lord's Supper(1983).

closed communion is not a matter of doctrine at all, just "practical application." In part one of his report found in the 2004 Convention Workbook, he says, "This disagreement in practice has resulted in dissension and disharmony between pastors and congregations of the LCMS, even though they are otherwise agreed on the doctrine of the Lord's Supper" (p.4). There goes closed communion!

2. Only a few years ago, in 1998 the Synod's Committee on Worship produced a report *Reflections on Contemporary/Alternative Worship* that detailed the errors of contemporary worship, as well as providing resources to help with the use and teaching of the liturgy. It warned against too hastily departing from "the historic pattern of worship that has been handed down for nearly 2,000 years.... Worship is closely related to other concerns, such as the unity of the church, formation in the faith, and faithfulness to the Word of God. A change in worship may indeed signal a change in doctrine.... Not every form of expression is compatible with the Gospel.... Style, after all, is not neutral, but is intrinsically bound up with the substance that it proclaims."

Now, however, I am told by our Synodical President(Report 1, CW) that contemporary worship is a fact of life, which, he admits, does not quite agree with our LCMS Constitution's requirement for the "Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school" (LCMS Constitution, Art. VI). Instead of

"The conditions of membership in the Synod require the 'Exclusive use of doctrinally pure agenda, hymnbooks, and catechisms in church and school' (LCMS Constitution, Art. VI). This presents a dilemma, since our Synod has not specifically stipulated what these 'doctrinally pure' contemporary worship resources for use by our congregation and professional workers must be."

Part 1 of President Kieschnick's Report to 2004 Convention

returning to our roots, the 2004 Synodical Convention approved Resolution 2-04 which directs the Commission on Worship to "initiate a process toward the development of diverse worship resources for use in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod." Furthermore, this same resolution admits that we move forward with contemporary worship despite an inadequate common understanding of worship among us. "That the Synod in convention affirm respect for diversity in worship practices as we build understanding of our theology of worship and foster further discussion of worship practices that are consistent with that theology." There goes pure worship!

3. In September/October 1998, the Synodical President together with his presidium, disciplined a District President for participation in a unionistic and syncretistic service in accordance with our **Synodical Constitution** which requires for membership: "Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as: a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church; b. taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession; c. participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities."

Following the Synodical

However, the guidelines requested of the CTCR in the aftermath of that event(Yankee Stadium) can and indeed ought to be expected to be so clear and unambiguous as to rule out any repetition of such participation in similar occasions of syncretism in the future. Instead, it was stated in support of the document that both sides in the argument about the Yankee Stadium affair were entitled to appeal to the Civic Events document."

Minority Report to the CTCR Document on Civic Events

"Further, as indicated in Part I of my Report to the Synod, I agree with and uphold the position of the LCMS that pastors of our Synod should have the freedom, tempered with the accompanying responsibility, of 'offering prayers, speaking, and reading Scripture at events sponsored by governments...' if the organization in charge does not restrict a Christian witness, and if this can be done without any compromise of our Scriptural, Confessional and constitutional commitments." Part 3 of President Kieschnick's Report to 2004 Convention

Convention of 2001, Synodical President Gerald Kieschnick approved and deemed appropriate the participation of that same District President in a unionistic and syncretistic service at Yankee Stadium, maintaining that his decision was correct and furthermore that his decision is the "position of the LCMS." The 2004 Synodical Convention passed Resolution 3-06A, "To Commend the CTCR Document *Guidelines for Participation in Civic* 

Events" (GPCE) which effectively denies the existence of syncretism by claiming that Christian and non-Christian clergy could "take turns" offering prayers without it being joint worship. There goes complete agreement in doctrine and practice!

4. Prior to 1989, men were Seminary trained and then ordained and called into the office of the Holy Ministry in accordance with Article XIV of the Augsburg Confession, "They teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be regularly called."

At the Synodical Convention in Wichita(1989), the unbiblical category of "lay ministers" was created in response to a supposed emergency situation regarding a lack of ordained clergy to serve parishes. In 2001, instead of putting an end to the practice as was recommended by Resolution 3-08 (and endorsed by our again seminaries), a substitute resolution 3-08B endorsed and continued this practice. In 2004, Resolution 5-09 directs "the Synod in convention recognize, affirm, and encourage the work of the Districts in developing ministry-equipping programs for laity such as the Lay Leader Institute, Missionary Training Center, Training Leaders for Ministry, and The Alaska Project." There goes the Pastoral Office.

5. Prior to our 2004 Synodical Convention, women were not allowed to hold the pastoral office or perform its duties and responsibilities. Furthermore, out of concern for St. Paul's words concerning the order of creation(that a woman is not "to have authority over a man," 1 Timothy 2:12), the manmade auxiliary offices of elder and congregational chairman were not open to women either. However, by the passage of Resolution 3-08A, 1 Timothy 2:12 was said to apply only to the pastoral office. With this new teaching, a woman may now serve in any humanly established office in the church, including elder, congregational chairman, communion assistant, etc.

Whenever this resolution is put together with the lay ministry conundrum spoken above, the question becomes whether the office of lay minister, providing the service of Word and Sacrament, could not be filled by a woman. The discussion of this resolution from the floor of the Convention was interesting. CTCR chairman, Samuel Nafzger, made it clear that Resolution 3-08A was only stating that women were not given permission to publicly lead worship, publicly preach, publicly administer the Sacraments, or publicly exercise the Office of the Keys. Then Nafzger further explained that he was using the technical definition of the word, "public," which is "on behalf of and in responsibility to the congregation." In other words, a woman could in fact do those things (as a lay minister, etc.), but not as one called to the pastoral office. For example, in many congregations women are

already preaching when they give a children's sermon. There goes the order of creation!

6. Prior to our 2004 Synodical Convention last month, any member of Synod could file charges of false teaching against any other member of Synod. Each member was held to the Word of God.

Now, according to 8-01A, "The action to commence expulsion of a congregation or individual from membership in the Synod is the sole responsibility of the District President who has ecclesiastical supervision for such member." Furthermore, the rulings of the Committee on Constitutional Matters [which state that the prior approval of an ecclesiastical supervisor precludes the possibility of discipline for wrong doing] were approved by the Synodical Convention, overturning their annulment by the Synodical Board of Directors. In addition, resolution 8-01A, would put a gag order concerning any discussions of public sin and thus would contradict God's Word and the clear explanation of the condemnation of public sin as found in the eighth commandment of the Large Catechism. There goes the refutation of error!

The constitution of Trinity Lutheran Congregation, UAC states, "This congregation shall be affiliated with the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod so long as the confessions and constitution of said Synod are in accordance with the confession and constitution of this congregation as set forth in Article III." Article III declares that the Holy Scriptures are "sole rule of faith and life," and it accepts "the Symbolic Books of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580...as a correct and sound exposition of the Christian doctrine taken from and in full accord with the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, no doctrine which conflicts with or sets aside the foregoing norm of doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation."

Out of love for the true doctrine of God's Holy Word, which presents the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ alone, these false teachings of our Synod must be declared to be "null and void" in our congregation. Out of love for our neighbor and his salvation we must make a "state of confession" of the truth and expose the falsehood. For the sake of our outreach and mission to the lost, we must speak the truth which saves.

In order to retain our membership in the Missouri Synod with a clear conscience, we must plainly state that we do not agree with nor do we tolerate these teachings. Those who desire to have true fellowship(join our congregation or receive communion) with us will of necessity need to agree with us concerning these new false teachings which have only recently been approved. Let me make it abundantly clear, this is NOT a decision to leave

the LCMS! This is a godly decision to stay and fight for the truth, but without partaking of the error. During this "state of confession," the goal of our remaining in Missouri is to use the next years in order to try and call back our Synod to her former doctrine and practice.

For many of you, this proposed action of our congregation to enter a "state of confession" is quite familiar, having been talked about in Bible studies, in bulletin inserts, etc. For others, you may be quite surprised and even shocked that it is being proposed at all. Be comforted that we will proceed slowly and cautiously. Our next regularly scheduled Voters' Assembly is Sunday, November 21. We will use the next few months in order to explain and carefully teach all who are willing to learn about our present Synodical crisis. We will allow some time for discussion and questions at our upcoming Congregational Council meetings on September 19 and October 17. We will have special Bible Studies to explain our Scriptural teachings. We will invite our District President to speak to us concerning these actions. We will continue to provide documentation from all sides so that our congregation can make an informed decision.

--MDH

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Some literature available on the web.

World Magazine article, "Missouri motioning: Conservative Lutherans lose elections and power in the LCMS" by Edward E. Plowman

http://www.worldmag.com/

Pastor James D. Heiser of Salem Lutheran Church has a comprehensive 23-page report on the 2004 Convention of the LCMS, "Here we have no Continuing City"

http://www.salemlutheranchurch.net

A small booklet explaining a State of Confession and citing the Scriptures and our Lutheran Confessions is entitled, "For such a time as this: *in statu confessionis*"

http://www.scholia.net

A comprehensive summary of the LCMS crisis

http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/

For an update on the Chicago conference "Confession and Christ's Mission attended by approximately 500 people(350 pastors and 150 laymen). Especially look at the "summary."

http://www.consensuslutheran.org/

### "A State of Confession: Protest Against Error" Newsletter Article for September 2004

In a Concordia Tract it says, "The word synod comes from two Greek words: syn, meaning "a meeting or assembly," and hodos, meaning a "way or journey." We describe ourselves as congregations "walking together," because our congregations all confess and practice the same teachings of God's Word."

At this summer's LCMS Convention, the historic confession and practices of the Missouri Synod were changed in several significant areas: acceptance of syncretism, approval of contemporary worship, acceptance of open communion, use of lay ministers, removing the vocation of woman, and the exaltation of ecclesiastical supervision over the Word of God. As our present Synodical President has said, "This is not your grandfather's church."

Every true Christians has no choice, but to respond. The pure teaching of God's Word and the correct practice of that teaching, compels us to proclaim truth and reject falsehood.

- --God's Word makes it clear that we are not to participate(share) with those who do not continue to hold to the Apostolic teaching. 2 John 10-11, "If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. Also Romans 16:17, "I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them."
- --Our Lutheran Confessions (Book of Concord) speak to the requirement of full agreement in doctrine and practice. Although human traditions need not be the same, Augsburg Confession, article VII, makes it clear that "it is enough for the true unity of the church to agree concerning the teaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments."
- --Our own congregational constitution, article III declares that the Holy Scriptures are the "sole rule of faith and life," and it accepts "the Symbolic Books of the Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord of the year 1580.as a correct and sound exposition of the Christian doctrine taken from and in full accord with the Holy Scriptures. Accordingly, no doctrine which conflicts with or sets aside the foregoing norm of doctrine shall be taught or tolerated in this congregation."

However, out of love for our neighbor, we do not want to proceed too quickly, lest the Lord not be able to use us as a witness to other congregations, pastors and members. Due to pastors keeping quiet about the Synod's problems and Synodical publications only giving one side of the story, there are many who do not know that false teaching has now been approved. Many have not been taught for years and thus are not able to distinguish the intentionally vague and changing terminology that seeks to hide the new falsehood under the guise of truth. There are many who need to come to repentance through the true preaching of the law.

Can we both reject the falsehood so we don't partake in it, and yet not completely separate from our brothers in Christ for the sake of speaking the truth in love? Yes, for a time, you and your congregation can enter into a "state of confession." A state of confession is a protest by which a person, congregation, etc. publicly opposes an intrusion of error into one's own church body.

The purpose of a state of confession is to keep the confessor from partaking in the error, by his association with the erring body. However, it allows the confessor to remain in the particular association and call his erring fellows back to the truth. A state of confession is carried out by refusing altar and pulpit fellowship with those who are erring or those who practice fellowship with those who are erring. The intended effect is to call the erring brothers back to the truth.

A state of confession continues until either the erring body returns to the truth or the protest proves futile and separation becomes obligatory.

"The idea of haste, in planting as many missions as possible, in hope of saving as many as possible, is certainly popular in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It is also ill-advised, and needs some serious correction, I believe, for the simple reason that haste makes waste. "One Mission Ablaze: Igniting Congregations" (nicknamed Ablaze!) is the program being promoted by the administration of the Missouri Synod for mission work at home and abroad, and it is certainly flawed in this particular. The stated worldwide goal of Ablaze! Is to reach one hundred million people with the Gospel by 2017, the Reformation's five hundredth anniversary. Goals like that are sure to bring inordinate haste, and disdain for careful training in things Lutheran and confessional. "Burn Down the Mission" an article by Burnell Eckardt in the magazine *Gottesdienst*, page 8-11.

#### "The Practice of a 'State of Confession'" Newsletter Article for October 2004

In the August 2004 Trinity Trumpet, I gave a report of the 2004 LCMS Convention in which I listed six doctrines in which our Synodical Convention officially approved false teaching.

- 1. Open communion will no longer be disciplined as false teaching.
- 2. The practice of using diverse Pentecostal-style contemporary worship practices will be promoted.
- 3. The "renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description" is, in fact ignored as a requirement for Synodical membership.
- 4. Those who publicly teach in the Church or administer the sacraments are no longer required to be ordained clergymen.
- 5. The teaching concerning the order of creation is now ignored so that women may hold the office of elder, congregational chairman, communion assistant, etc.
- 6. The authority to file charges against a false teacher has been taken away from pastors and congregations and given solely to the District Presidents. Furthermore, if that District President acting as ecclesiastical supervisor gives prior permission, then the subordinate cannot be charged with wrong doing.

In the September 2004 Trinity Trumpet, I began to address something called a "State of Confession." "State of Confession" describes **a protest by which a person, congregation, etc. publicly opposes an intrusion of error into ones own church body.** The purpose of a State of Confession is to keep the confessor from partaking in the new error, by his association with the erring body. It allows the confessor to remain in the particular association and call his erring fellows back to the truth.

## This month I need to explain the **practical application of a State of Confession.**

- (1) Unlike some other denominations which teach that members can believe whatever they want, Lutherans believe that Christian fellowship is established only when there is complete agreement in Scriptural doctrine and practice. If the Word of God speaks to an issue, then that teaching is not up for grabs. We do not have the option of ignoring our differences so as not to rock the boat. No error is to be lived with. The truth of God's Word is more important than any human relationship or institution.
- (2) Whenever a person joins a congregation, that person is making <u>a public confession that they believe what is officially taught in that pulpit.</u> That is, public membership declares that my personal confession(the words which

come out of my mouth) is in agreement with the public confession of the congregation(what is preached and practiced by their called minister). We call this in theological shorthand, "altar and pulpit fellowship."

Similarly, whenever a congregation joins a Synod, that congregation is making a public confession that they believe, teach and confess what that Synod officially teaches(in her public documents and practices). Furthermore, this common confession should mean that each and every congregation is in "altar and pulpit fellowship." That is, members can receive communion at others altars and pastors can preach in the other's pulpits, because they all believe, teach and confess the same things.

(3) Another thing to consider is that <u>not every act of cooperation with other people is a declaration of church fellowship</u>. I may sit in the pew of a Baptist church to observe a wedding, but that doesn't mean that I believe, teach and confess everything taught there. Though I eat a chicken dinner at a Roman Catholic church, no one would accuse me of being in church fellowship because I ate dinner in their basement.

Understanding those three points, a State of Confession is carried out by refusing altar and pulpit fellowship with those who are erring or those who practice fellowship with those who are erring. Should our congregation vote to enter a State of Confession at our November Voters' Assembly, we will clearly declare, in detail, which false teachings have been approved by our Synod and to which we protest. From that point on:

- 1. We would not permit those who teach, practice and support those protested false teachings to commune at our altar, nor will we commune with them. (altar fellowship)
- 2. We would not allow those who teach, practice and support protested false teaching to preach in our pulpit. (**pulpit fellowship**)
- 3. We would not support with our talents or money the church and mission work of those who teach, practice and support those protested false teachings. (mission support)

Those who teach, practice and support false teachings include not only those who actively announce their acceptance of falsehood, but also those who by refusing to take a stand(Rev 3:16) show that they either agree with the falsehood or do not consider false teaching to be important.

4. However, we would continue to call our erring brothers back to the truth. With the exception of altar and pulpit fellowship and its support, we would continue to attend meetings, conventions, and conferences of our circuit, District and Synod. We would take advantage of every opportunity to speak the truth in love.

In fact, it is for the sake of this loving witness, that a congregation would

enter a state of confession and not simply leave the synod. I say, once again, "Entering a **State of Confession is NOT** a decision to leave the LCMS. It is a godly decision to stay and fight for the truth, but without partaking of error." If we have any love for our brothers, we will bear with them and even suffer for a time, if they might be won for the truth. We must not desert those who have not been kept informed of Synod's change in direction and those who have been deceived by those in positions of authority and official Synodical publications.

Next month's article will explain that a state of confession is not permanent, but comes to an end when our erring Synod returns to the truth or our protest proves

"Therefore, in a State of Confession, one draws back from a complete and final break in fellowship with the heterodox, and from one's communion which has gone heterodox, so that God may use you as a witness to them, so that through you the Word of truth which alone can restore him may be heard by him one last time, and so that the heterodox is not too quickly cut off from that proclamation of the Word of Truth which alone can rescue him from heterodoxy. The very same "speaking the truth IN love" that compels one to break fellowship ultimately with the heterodox also compels one not to break that fellowship too quickly (and, I might add, too eagerly). When in a state of confession, one bears the solemn responsibility of becoming the voice of God, and the confession of His truth in a place where that voice has become scarce, and this for the sake of the heterodox and for the sake of His faith."

"Status Confessionis" by the Rev. Paul Williams at www.forministry.com/CAONLCHCAOSL1/ InStatuConfessionis.dsp

futile and separation becomes obligatory. In addition, I will explain how many good discussions and opportunities to speak about these things have already resulted from simply the contemplation of a State of Confession. And finally, I will answer the question, "Why a State of Confession now?

## "Why a State of Confession Now?" Newsletter Article for November 2004

Why a State of Confession now? For many years, confessional Lutheran voices have been speaking up against (1) the increasing intrusion of false teaching and practices, (2) our Synod's neglect in teaching the Word of God and (3) the lack of discipline among our pastors. For the last three years, we have been quite openly complaining about the new false teachings and practices that were being promoted. We have been warning our people concerning these false innovations, though the present administration continues to assure us that our doctrine has not changed. Not only were our voices not heeded, but our pleas to return to God's Word were met by resolution to encourage more of the same offensive actions.

A State of Confession will encourage the discussion about our Synod's false teaching to take place. I could relate to you either my experience with pastors throughout our District, or my family and friends at reunions and gatherings.

When I first began to speak about the Scriptural problems within our Synod, there was a little give-and-take, some discussion, and often disagreement. As the discussion continued over the years, I was able to move the discussion beyond mere likes-and-dislikes, and opinions based on what-my-church-does. The discussion began to progress to the heart of the matter, as there were appeals to the Holy Scriptures, the Small Catechism, or even the Lutheran Confessions. Points began to be made about the relation of the falsehood to justification, the means of grace, the sacraments, the efficacy of the Word of God, etc. However, it wasn't long after these points were brought up that the whole discussion ground to a halt. There has even been refusal to speak of the topics at all.

Here are the **comments and questions which ended the discussion** from being addressed by the Word of God and the Confessions:

- --"That's just your opinion."
- --"I'm no theologian, but I don't think that the pastors in St. Louis could be wrong."
- --"It can't be wrong. It's published by CPH."
- --"You shouldn't say that about Yankee Stadium. That's unloving."
- --"I don't know what Scripture says, but..."
- --"Why do you always quote the Small Catechism/Augsburg Confession/etc.?"
- --"I like the liturgy, but I won't condemn someone who...."
- --"You must not care about bringing people to Jesus!"
- --"You are an ultra right wing radical."

- --"I know the Book of Concord speaks of <u>(fill in the blank)</u>, but we don't do that today."
- --"Who are you to say, 'That is wrong?"

Appeals to the Holy Scriptures were either belittled as "merely opinion" or were declared to be inconclusive due to the unconvinced nature of the person himself. Appeals to our Lutheran Confessions were marginalized as unimportant or were declared to be irrelevant because they weren't Holy Scripture. Many times there was a complete ignorance of the documents that makes one a Lutheran. Appeals to church history and Reformation practices are considered out-of-date practices which don't work today.

Whether at family gatherings or pastoral conferences, **I have found a** "don't-ask, don't-tell" policy. Each person listens to find out if the other person is a liturgy-person or does contemporary worship, etc. and then if they are your kind of Lutheran, you can talk with them. If not, keep quiet. Our pastors keep the Synodical dirty laundry from their members, and our Synod drifts further and further away from the truth.

With little, or no visitation and discipline of our pastors, even small errors have now progressed over a number of years and become firmly established. In direct conflict with Synod's position, many congregations are practicing open communion. Pastors regularly participate in unionistic and maybe even syncretistic services. Some LC-MS congregational members have never used a doctrinally pure hymnal, but only Pentecostal-type contemporary services. Nevertheless, our leaders continue to say that we are all united as brothers in Christ.

The reason none of the disagreements are brought up is that we might get into an argument and find that we do not have a common ground for our own particular practice of Lutheranism. Now is the time to say, "Enough!" Let's talk about the elephant in the kitchen. Everyone keeps acting like it is not there.

If we go into a State of Confession—that is, we remain in the Missouri Synod, but do not commune those who support these false teachings—it may just be the thing that starts the conversation again. Just by our congregation and others raising the possibility of a State of Confession, I have had phone calls and conversations from pastors and laymen who want to know what is going on. I have had more substantial conversations in the last few months than I have had in the last two years. Many of Trinity's members have been talking about the LCMS' problems with the members of other congregations.

As long as we complain and refuse to take action, our neighbors in the LCMS will go on thinking that these errors are not that serious. We need to put our actions where our confession is. If we do nothing, because we don't

want to upset others, then we show that we love our social relationships more than we love God's Holy Word. We cannot keep quiet and live in peace with falsehood. We must speak the truth trusting that God will give true unity by means of His Word.

People have told me, "Do you mean that these errors are that serious?" Now is the time to say, "Yes."

A congregational vote on a "State of Confession" will occur after the adult Bible Studies addressing the present false teaching within our Synod is completed—possibly on November 21 at the Voters' Assembly.

"With regard to the orthodox character of a church body note well:

- (1) A church body is orthodox only if the true doctrine, as we have it in the Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran Symbols, is actually taught in its pulpits and its publications and not merely "officially" professed as its faith. Not the "official" doctrine, but the actual teaching determines the character of a church body, because Christ enjoins that all things whatsoever He has commanded His disciples should actually be taught and not merely acknowledged in an "official document" as the correct doctrine. It is patent that faith in Christ will be created and preserved through the pure Gospel only when that Gospel is really proclaimed.
- (2) A church body does not forfeit its orthodox character by reason of the casual intrusion of false doctrine. The thing which the Apostle Paul told the elders of Ephesus; "Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30), came true not only in the Apostolic Church, but also in the Church of the Reformation and will occur in the Church to the Last Day. A church body loses its orthodoxy only when it no longer applies Rom. 16:17, hence does not combat and eventually remove the false doctrine, but tolerates it without reproof and thus actually grants it equal right with the truth.

"Christian Dogmatics" by Francis Pieper, Volume 3, pages 422-423