of the individual's salvation and the United Church's emphasis on God's foreknowledge of man's response to the gospel are called the "two forms" of the doctrine of election. Each is recognized as a legitimate way of expressing the doctrine so long as the corresponding dangers of Calvinism and synergism are avoided.[34] Neither side was forced to accept for itself the preferred form of the other. What the "settlement" really says is that the two different approaches to this doctrine, so long as they remain within certain bounds, do not need to divide Lutheran Christians. The settlement was a compromise which the former committee of theologians would never have proposed, and challenges to its legitimacy from a Norwegian Synod minority plus the whole Synodical Conference have never ceased.[35] The membership of the United Church which, like the Joint Ohio and Iowa synods, had been contending mainly for its right as Lutherans to teach the "second form," was the more easily satisfied by the compromise. In the Norwegian Synod, however, many found it difficult to grant the legitimacy of a teaching which they had been accustomed to regard as heretical. Approval of the "settlement" by a special Norwegian Synod convention of 1913 came only after explicit assurance that the two forms do not mask two different doctrines. The strength of the negative vote in the convention (396 aye, 106 nay) plus the great number of congregations which did not vote in the congregational referendum[36] raised the specter of possible schism should the merger actually take place.

Bridging of the troublesome doctrinal barrier guaranteed the merger which occurred in the year of the Reformation's 400th anniversary. In a huge, enthusiastic convention in St. Paul, which combined Norwegian religious and cultural elements in a way not always easily distinguishable, over 92 percent of Norwegian Lutherans, comprising over 30 percent of all Norwegians in America, combined to form the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.[37] Its official documents predictably gave it a traditionally Lutheran stance on Scripture, on Lutheran doctine, and on relationships with other churches.[38] Alarmed at the restriction on fraternal relationships with other Christians, the Hauge Synod, whose congregations were used to participating in general evangelistic and reform ventures, demanded and received assurance that the constitution did not mean to prohibit such activities. The strong Haugean lay tradition is also reflected in recognition of the layman's right and duty of witnessing to his faith privately and in congregational gatherings.[39] A strongly confessional emphasis and a cautious spirit toward other Lutherans were guaranteed by the merger convention's choice for president, Hans G. Stub of the Norwegian Synod.

Unsuccessful efforts were made to draw all Norwegian Lutherans into the merger. The tiny Eielsen Synod declined. The Lutheran Brethren were willing to cooperate in evangelistic work but, because of their antipathy to the "lax standards" of Christian life of other Lutherans, had no interest in merger. The Lutheran Free Church, still agitated about the frictions of the

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34. For all the Norwegian Union Documents, including the "settlement," see ibid., vol. 2, app. C, pp. 344–58.

35. Missouri and Wisconsin synod journals attacked the "settlement" both before and after the merger. The Synodical Conference devoted its 1912 program to its discussion. Franz Pieper's *Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913) was a response to the Norwegian settlement which elicited further proposals from Ohio, Iowa, and General Council theologians and led indirectly to official negotiations between Missouri and its opponents after 1917.

36. Three hundred fifty-nine congregations were for the "settlement," 27 against, and 231 did not report a decision. In accordance with a constitutional provision, those not reporting were counted as "for." See Nelson, *Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans,* 2:192.

37. At the time of merger there were 1,031 pastors, 3,009 congregations, 474,715 members.

38. Scripture: "The revealed Word of God and therefore the only source and rule of faith, doctrine and life" (Constitution I, 2). Confessional writings: "The unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism" (Constitution I, 3). Other churches: "The three bodies promise one another in all seriousness to observe the rule not to carry on churchly cooperation with the Reformed and others who do not share the faith and confession of these bodies" (Articles of Union, 3). The Articles of Union refer to the Scriptures as "the inerrant Word of God" (Articles of Union, 1).

39. Articles of Union, 2.

implications that closer relationships would depend on the Synod's favorable response.[45] In deference to the General Council and as evidence of a desire for greater unity, but with protestations of the adequacy of its traditional formulations, the General Synod in its conventions of 1909, 1911, and 1913 complied with all of the council's requests. It affirmed the Bible to *be* the Word of God and incorporated the pledge to the unaltered Augsburg Confession and acknowledgment of the other confessional writings into its constitution. That action not only paved the way for eventual merger but also placed all Lutherans in America, for the first time, on virtually the same confessional basis.[46]

Other differences between these two bodies remained to the moment of merger but seemed to cause no great difficulties. The General Council's official position barred non-Lutherans from communing or preaching in Lutheran services except in the most unusual circumstances; it officially disapproved of membership by pastors and laymen in secret societies with religious ceremonies; it discouraged participation in general Protestant cooperative ventures. The General Synod allowed freedom to the individual conscience on intercommunion and membership in secret societies, and was more ready to consult and cooperate with non-Lutherans.[47] But the General Council, assured of the General Synod's growing appreciation for the standards of historic Lutheranism, did not insist that the synod's position had to be identical with the council's on these questions. On most counts, the position of the United Synod, South was close to that of the General Council.

Although the General Council's official statements on doctrine and practice had always seemed closer to the conservative Midwestern German synods than to the General Synod, its ties to the General Synod were strengthened by the unsympathetic criticism of those Midwestern synods who demanded more rigorous discipline of fellowship infractions than the General Council could impose. By 1910 most of Eastern Lutheranism assumed that merger would be achieved some day. Fraternal delegates occasionally expressed hope for eventual merger, but no one seemed to be in a hurry about it. In 1914 when the suggestion to start planning for merger was made to a three-synod committee responsible for joint celebration of the Reformation quadricentennial, the committee took no action because it felt it had no such power. Presidents of the three synods gave the subject of merger occasional attention during the next several years, but the proposal which triggered serious merger planning came from the committee's lay members at its last meeting, April 18, 1917. This time the presidents supported the suggestion and began at once to draw up a merger plan. Within two months a constitution had been drafted. By November all three synodical conventions had approved. Of the forty-three district synods within the general bodies, all but one quickly approved the actions of the general conventions. The exception was the General Council's Augustana Synod. A national body rather than a geographical unit, and strongly Swedish in character, it had often felt less than at home within the General

45. Schmauk's analysis of the problem is colorfully described in a letter to Leander S. Keyser of the General Synod, quoted by George S. Sandt, *Theodore Emanuel Schmauk* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1921), pp. 176–78; cf. pp. 133–36.

46. For the confessional development of the southern synods, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America,* rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), pp. 237ff.

47. "The General Synod cultivates fraternal relations with other branches of orthodox Protestantism. . . . It enacts no restrictive law against fellowship at pulpit and altar, but allows to both ministers and members the freedom of conscience and love in this matter" (Valentine, "The General Synod," p. 59–60).

Council. Just before the merger Augustana withdrew, to the great disappointment of council president Theodore E. Schmauk who had influenced Augustana in several previous crises not to leave. He had always opposed the idea of "east coast Lutheranism uniting by itself and leaving the west out in the cold."[48] The determination to merge within the year of the Reformation quadricentennial explains at least in part the speed with which the merger was achieved, less than twenty months having elapsed between agreement of the presidents to proceed and the actual unification on November 14, 1918. The fact that it could be accomplished in so short a time is proof of how ready these synods were for amalgamation.

Doctrinally, the new United Lutheran Church in America stood precisely where its constituent synods had—the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God were accepted as the infallible rule of faith and practice; the three ecumenical creeds were affirmed; the unaltered Augsburg Confession was recognized as the basic doctrinal statement of Lutheranism, along with the other Lutheran confessions as elaborations of Lutheran doctrine. No reference was made in the constitution to the potentially troublesome matter of secret societies or relationships with non-Lutherans. An invitation in the constitution's preamble for all Lutheran synods in America to unite with the new church on this basis was regarded by its framers as a great contribution to further unity but by the more conservative synods as an arrogant affront.

For the future of the church, the choice of its first president was second in importance only to its doctrinal stand. Because of Schmauk's vigorous leadership of the General Council, his central role in the organizational planning of the new church, his reputation as conservative theologian, author, administrator, public figure, and the respect which he enjoyed in other synods, many assumed he was the logical choice. The General Synod had no candidate of equal reputation or versatility, partly because of its tradition of electing a new man to its presidency every two years. The merger convention's choice, however, was Frederick H. Knubel (1870–1945) of the General Synod, whose leadership in Lutheran wartime cooperation had given him considerable intersynodical visibility. Younger than Schmauk, he was not as attached to classical Lutheran theology nor as fearful of contact and cooperation with non-Lutheran churches. His election guaranteed that the new church would be less tied to a defensive Lutheran position in determining its course in doctrinal, ecclesiastical, and social questions.

In polity, both General Synod and General Council leaders had for years battled the individualistic and independent spirit of a self-sufficient congregationalism. Schmauk, especially, had insisted, against the general sentiment of Lutherans in America, that "the larger governmental unity of a general organization, which represents the local congregations . . . [as] a visible body of saints united in the same confession and for the fulfillment of a common mission" is also truly "church" with legitimate power and authority.[49] The ULCA's polity, from the outset, did not

48. Sandt, *Schmauk,* pp. 164–74.

49. Ibid., p. 143, paraphrase of a letter from Schmauk to Gottlob F. Krotel.

share the assumption of most other Lutherans that only the congregation was truly "church," or that each congregation must retain full independence over against supracongregational structures, or that the general body was merely "advisory" to the congregations. This merger gave to the general body and its boards and commissions powers greater than those of its own predecessor bodies or the other Lutheran synods.[50]

Midwestern Germans—Some Slow Progress

The Lutherans who tended to make doctrinal unanimity the one and only basis of intersynodical friendship entered the twentieth century in what seemed to be a hopeless impasse, in spite of their nearly identical positions on the confessions and the practical issues of church life. Their common German background did not exert the kind of cohesive influence which kept the Swedish Lutherans from serious schisms and which helped overcome the fragmentation of the Norwegians. Predestination, grace, and man's role in conversion were still the controversial issues. The decade of journalistic warfare in the 1890s, untempered by any personal contacts, had made each side (Synodical Conference on the one hand, the Iowa Synod and the Joint Synod of Ohio, on the other) more confident of its position and more suspicious of the other than ever.

Even more than the others, the Missouri Synod had boundless confidence that it represented the only real Lutheranism in America. Other Lutherans were charged either with unwillingness to separate themselves completely from erroneous teaching and church life, or with actual heresy in doctrine, or even with being no longer Christian. Other Lutherans were indicted as the troublemakers who tolerated the errors of non-Lutherans.[51] Behind the differences on individual points of doctrine (or theology) Missouri's theologians usually thought they detected an unwillingness to accept the doctrine of "grace *alone*" and an unwillingness to submit human opinions to the scriptural revelation. On that basis, they charged that other Lutherans did not even know what Christianity is, that "the Gospel was to them a deeply hidden mystery, yes, an offense and an aggravation," and that the real issue was simply "how man is saved. If we agree on that, that man is not saved by his own works but by faith in Christ, then the battle will have been won."[52] But in the meantime isolation from the others and vigorous witness against them was the only correct stance.[53] In defending their synod against attack, Missouri's theologians repeatedly affirmed that their synod was "in possession of the truth—the entire, unvarnished truth,"[54] and that "as certainly as Holy Scripture is God's Word—which it is—so certain is it that our doctrinal position is correct. . . . Whoever contests our doctrinal position contends against the divine truth."[55] "Never," wrote a Wisconsin Synod editor about the Missouri Synod, "has the pure doctrine of God's Word been in uninterrupted control of one and the same church body for so long a time."[56] Preservation, repetition, indoctrination of this truth, and its defense against all change was regarded as the church's primary task.

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50. Cf. Wentz, *Basic History,* pp. 274–75; and Juergen L. Neve, *History of the Lutheran Church in America,* 3d ed., rev. (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), pp. 348–51.

51. The classic statement of this position is Franz Pieper's "Ueber den Unterschied von rechtgläubigen und irrgläubigen Kirchen," Missouri Synod, Southern District, *Verhandlungen . . . 1889,* pp. 9–51.

52. *Lehre und Wehre* 47 (1901): 233–34; and Pieper's presidential address of 1902, Missouri Synod, *Synodal-bericht . . . 1902,* pp. 18–19.

53. See Georg Stoeckhardt, quoted by F. Richter, "Was ist zur Einigung nötig?" *Sprechsaal* 1 (1904): 7.

54. From Stoeckhardt's sermon at C. F. W. Walther's funeral, quoted by Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary . . . 1839–1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 89.

55. Franz Pieper, Missouri Synod, *Synodal-bericht . . . 1905,* p. 17.

56. C. M. Zorn, "Unser Jubeljahr 1922 und Hohelied 5:2–6, 12," *Theological Monthly* 19 (August-September 1922): 263.

Friedrich Bente's editorial on the fiftieth anniversary of *Lehre und Wehre* illustrates this total confidence that Missourians had nothing to learn from Lutherans of other synods, which made the others less than anxious to discuss and debate the unresolved questions of the predestination controversy. Every issue of *Lehre und Wehre,* he wrote, represents every other. If you know one, you know them all. *Lehre und Wehre* has rejected the idea of doctrinal progress and has simply taken its stand on the theology of the sixteenth century. By God's grace it has been kept untarnished by false teaching. It knows that it has presented the divine truth in purity. In every case it has proceeded from the essence of the Christian faith. It is not immune to error. If it does not continue to hold to God's grace it might fall, as have some other Lutheran journals (for example, the *Lutheran Standard*). But in regard to what it has taught, it has no cause to repent. It does not ask God's forgiveness for what it has taught. "That would be to accuse God Himself, indeed, to mock God, who has commanded that these very doctrines be taught." And whoever hopes that *Lehre und Wehre* will do such penance at some future time, will be sorely disappointed.[57] Almost every issue of *Lehre und Wehre* and *Der Lutheraner* pointed out weaknesses and deviations from the truth on the part of other Lutherans. Theological books published by the other synods were given especially close scrutiny. Any suggestion that true Lutheranism does not have a perfect theology or that no one part of the church knows and understands all truth was taken as a sign of the relativizing influence of modern theology on Lutheranism.[58] Of course, each side charged that the other's unfair tactics and uncharitable interpretations were blatant violations of the eighth commandment.

Less inclined to be that harsh on each other, pastors took the initiative in reestablishing personal contacts between the theologians. Between 1903 and 1906 five large intersynodical conferences were held, primarily for the Midwestern German synods. At Watertown and Milwaukee in 1903, Detroit in 1904, Fort Wayne in 1905 and 1906, theologians of Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio, and Iowa debated papers on various aspects of election, conversion, and scriptural interpretation. The polemics were not as harsh as on the printed page. Only "principles," not individuals, were occasionally consigned to hell, and a somewhat more objective attitude toward opponents' views seemed to emerge. No agreement, however, was reached on the doctrinal issues. Among the issues, as in the 1880s, were: (1) Why is one man converted while another is not? (2) Does a man's response to God's grace have anything to do with his conversion? (3) A question not previously debated, namely, how one interprets and uses Scripture passages which seem to conflict with one another, for example, that God wills the salvation of all but that he has elected some to salvation. Missouri and Wisconsin said that both must be affirmed without attempting any harmonization. Joint Ohio and Iowa said that the passages whose meaning is difficult must not be allowed in any way to becloud the clear central teachings of Scripture.[59] Both sides, as

57. *Lehre und Wehre* 50 (January 1904): 1-20. Views such as Bente's were the reason some who lived through this period in the Missouri Synod felt that "intellectually, theologically, and in its ministerial education immigrant Lutheranism in America had reached intellectual stagnation in 1915." See Otto H. Pannkoke, *A Great Church,* pp. 14-15; chap. 1, "The Lutheran Church in America in 1915," is a critical description of immigrant Lutheran orthodoxy by a man who grew up in it.

58. *Theological Quarterly* 11 (April 1908): 126-28; ibid. 15 (July 1911): 189; *Lehre und Wehre* 46 (March 1900): 85-87; ibid. 46 (May 1900): 153; ibid. 46 (July-August 1900): 242; ibid. 62 (November 1916): 508-16.

59. Ohio's and Iowa's view was called "analogy of faith," Missouri's was called "analogy of Scripture." Accounts of the conferences were published in all church papers of the participating synods, and also in the General Synod's *Lutheran Observer* and the General Council's *Lutheran Church Review.* The best evaluation of the conferences is Neve's *History,* pp. 210-21. Theodore E. Schmauk's "The Lawful Method of Drawing the Church's Doctrine from Scripture," *Lutheran Church Review* 27 (October 1908): 539-45, contested the approach of Missouri.

eration a committee composed of Knubel, Stub, and Theodore E. Schmauk was asked to bring definite proposals to a second meeting. As far as the Chicago Theses were concerned the Midwestern synods hoped they might become official statements of all the consulting bodies. However, because they knew that the United Lutheran Church was opposed in principle to making full cooperation dependent upon new statements of doctrinal agreement, they did not press for official adoption in their own churches. They received official status only when the Minneapolis Theses (1925), of which they became a part, were adopted by most of the Midwestern synods later in the decade.

At the 1920 conference, Knubel and Charles M. Jacobs presented a revised version of Knubel's 1919 paper on "The Essentials of a Catholic Spirit." It enunciated a doctrine of the church which affirmed classical Lutheran doctrine, opposed organic union with other Protestants, and insisted on Lutheranism's right and duty to witness to its understanding of the gospel in all contacts with other Protestants. In addition, it enunciated eight essential doctrinal points as a "basis for practical cooperation among the Protestant Churches." Whereas the attitude of many Lutherans toward other churches had been total separation, this statement affirmed as the proper Lutheran position

To approach others without hostility, jealousy, suspicion, or pride, in the sincere and humble desire to give and receive Christian service. To grant cordial recognition to all agreements which are discovered between its own interpretation of the Gospel and that which others hold. To cooperate with other Christians in works of serving love insofar as this can be done without surrender of its interpretation of the gospel, without denial of conviction, and without suppression of its testimony as to what it holds to be the truth.[59]

In regard to intra-Lutheran affairs the statement said that because there is no reason to doubt the sincerity of any synod's subscription to the confessional standards, all Lutherans are in unity of faith and "together do form one Church." A final section warned against anti-Christian ideas and organizations, without mentioning lodges by name, and encouraged Lutherans to be alert to all teachings and organizations that contradict the truth of Scripture.

Stub undoubtedly spoke for the majority at the conference in opposing the report of Knubel and Jacobs. Behind the details of his objections was the conviction that "if there is to be what we call cooperation in Church matters [with the non-Lutheran Protestant churches], then there must be unity of faith, not only in a general way but more especially in regard to doctrines that are characteristic of our Lutheran Church . . . [especially] the Lord's Supper." Moreover, said Stub, his own Chicago Theses were to be preferred not least because they had won the approval of the Missouri Synod. The Knubel-Jacobs paper, on the other hand, was dangerously inadequate because it did not mention the Bible as "the inerrant Word of God."[60] The very idea of cooperation with non-Lutheran American Protestants

59. Minutes of the Joint Conference on Doctrine and Practice, January 27–28, 1920, in ibid. "1920," pp. 2–17. The papers were published in *Lutheran Church Review* 38 (April 1919): 198–212. "The Essentials of a Catholic Spirit" is also in Wolf, *Documents,* pp. 301–12.

60. Letter of Stub to Lauritz Larsen, December 27, 1919, in Archives of Cooperative Lutheranism. In Article III of the Articles of Union of the Norwegian Lutheran Church the merging synods promised "to observe the rule not to carry on churchly cooperation with the Reformed and others who do not share the faith and confession of these bodies" (Gustav M. Bruce, ed., *The Union Documents of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America* [Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1948] p. 58). The verbatim of Stub's objections is in the minutes of the Joint Conference on Doctrine and Practice, January 27–28, 1920, pp. 18–27.

was inconceivable to the Midwesterners. When coupled in one document with a less blunt rejection of secret societies than they wanted and with the claim that they ought to have no misgivings about the United Lutheran Church, the combination was sure to be rejected. In spite of Knubel's and Jacobs's repeated pleas that their statement would be a great service to Lutheranism and would enhance its influence in the Christian world, the conference adjourned without any action. The door was left open to further meetings of the conference, but the churches which had rejected the Knubel-Jacobs proposal were not sufficiently interested. The Knubel-Jacobs paper had confirmed their previous fears that the United Lutheran Church was un-Lutheran in its attitude toward other Christians, toward distinctive Lutheran doctrine, and toward secret religious societies.

In regard to problems of the past as outlined in Stub's Chicago Theses, agreement had not been difficult. On the newer issue of Lutheranism's stance toward the growing wave of ecumenical cooperation, agreement was impossible. Cooperation in home missions, which had triggered the discussions, became a forgotten casualty. And the possibility that the National Lutheran Council might play a positive role in achieving full fellowship among its participating churches was gone. In rejecting the Knubel-Jacobs proposal, Lutheranism within the council came to a parting of the ways. "Instead of a single-voiced and full-orbed Lutheran testimony within the NLC, there emerged two distinct parties each waving its own flag."[61] Yet cooperation in common tasks at home and abroad continued in spite of the failure to achieve fuller mutual recognition. Throughout the twenties and thirties the National Lutheran Council thus served as a symbol of enough unity to warrant limited cooperation, but the very limits of the cooperation testified to the unfulfilled desire for greater unity.

Two events of the twenties need to be seen as aftermaths of the joint conferences. Within a few years, the Norwegians and the Ohioans began to promote a new alignment of synods based on the full mutual recognition which the conferences did not achieve. This new cooperative body, the American Lutheran Conference of 1930, eventually included all National Lutheran Council bodies except the United Lutheran Church. The United Lutheran Church, meanwhile, adopted a revised version of "The Essentials of a Catholic Spirit" as its "Washington Declaration of Principles," thereby officially endorsing the very approach to other Lutherans and other Christians which the Midwestern synods had found objectionable. All subsequent intra-Lutheran tensions and efforts toward further unity can be understood only against the background of these events of 1919 and 1920.

The Role of the National Lutheran Council in the Twenties

Fortunately for suffering Lutherans in Europe, the crises over the National Lutheran Council's role in Europe, the debate about doctrine and practice at home, and the declining will of Lutherans to raise funds were not severe enough to terminate

61. Nelson, *Lutheran Church Among Norwegian-Americans*, 2:299.