

HIS† CHURCH, OUR SYNOD

by Raymond G. Munroe, Elder

May, 2004

(A three part series on the article "Why Missouri Stood Alone", by Th. Engelder.)

Why Missouri Stood Alone

By: Prof. Th. Engelder, Springfield , Ill.

1847 Ebenezer 1922:

Reviews of the Word of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of a Century:

pages 110-123

Edited by W. H. T. Dau, CPH, St. Louis , 1922, 536 pages

Much has been presented in this newsletter about what has been going on in our synod and among Lutherans in general--to the point of being mind-boggling--and may seem to just reflect the spirit of the times, or age as in the German, *der Zeitgeist*, and therefore a recent development. To the contrary, this is by no means new. It goes back to not only Martin Luther's time but to the time of the apostles. The apostle Paul's writings certainly reflect this, as do Martin Luther's. Both contended against those who preached *another Gospel* (II Corinthians 11:4), and Luther against the Reformed such as Zwingli and Calvin.

So how have such things come about among Lutherans even today in the Missouri Synod? ***Why Missouri Stood Alone*** describes what happened, how and why; and that this is not a recent development at all! This is a serious matter to say the least.

A multitude of what Missourians had stood against has been creeping in to the practices of our synod. The explanation is simple enough, at least during the two centuries since the King of Prussia force the union of Lutheran and Reformed churches. The German Lutherans who emigrated to this country brought a lot of baggage with them, both after the Prussian Union and before it over the previous century, and this is amply described by Professor Engelder. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod celebrated its 75th anniversary in 1922 and, in commemoration, 1847 Ebenezer 1922 was published by Concordia Publishing House, and the title above is found on pages 110-123. Emphasis has been added by *italics* or ***italics*** to portions of his article. My added comments are indicated by [***RGM:*** in brackets]:

This article appeared in the January 26, 2004 issue of Christian News in full and the entire article is published on the Reclaiming Walther website at:

www.reclaimingwalther.org/articles/700/723.htm

hosted by Rev. Jack Caccione. My added comments are indicated by [***RGM:*** in brackets]:

Why Missouri Stood Alone

From the very beginning the Missourians were devoted to the cause of a united Lutheran Church in America. They have given to it the best that was in them, and have suffered shame and reproach for it. But did they not in 1847 organize a separate synod? Why did they not unite with the older synods?

The Missouri Synod has been severely blamed for standing alone. In 1848 the "Missionary" spoke of "their exclusiveness and their unpardonable one-sidedness, which in many

instances is the cause why they and their church are evil spoken of and their usefulness is materially hindered." The "Lutheran Observer" of 1864 called it "bigotry" and said: "They err in declining to enter into an intimate ecclesiastical communion with the American Lutheran Church and its General Synod." Again: "Some say that unity must precede union. But the **Bible demands that we unite.**[RGM: But, no scripture is cited] Hence those who magnify those differences and endeavor to keep us separate are the **greatest sinners in the Church.**" And as late as 1918 the "Lutheran"[RGM: This and others cited, except for *der Lutheraner* were not LC-MS publications, by the way!] declared: "A doctrine of rigid aloofness and separatism was developed as a wall of defense. When **orthodoxy becomes so strict and strait-laced and legalistic**...the cause of unity is harmed, and union and cooperation are impossible."

The fact is that the Missourians labored, not to keep the Lutherans separate, but to unite them, and they went about it in the Lutheran way. That is the only way, according to the Augsburg Confession: "**This is sufficient for the true unity of the Christian Church, that the Gospel is preached therein according to its pure intent and meaning, and that the Sacraments are administered in conformity with the Word of God.**" The fathers were ready to join, and some of them had joined, the older synods on this basis. "Walther had hoped that these synods, by placing themselves fairly and squarely on the Lutheran Confessions, would render it possible for him and his companions to unite with them. He would have been content to see the leaven of truth work in the older synods, and gradually bring about a better state of affairs from the viewpoint of confessional Lutheranism." And when they, for conscience' sake, organized a separate synod, "the main object the synod sought to obtain by its common efforts were just this: to **bring back the straying Lutherans to their Church and her pure doctrine, and to unite them under the banner of her old, but not antiquated symbols.**" (*der Lutheraner*, Sept. 8, 1847.) Synod stood for the "preservation and cultivation of the unity of the pure confessions." (Constitution, chap. I.) "Conditions of membership: Acceptance of all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church ." (Chap. II.) The General Synod, comprising at that time about half of all the Lutherans in America, had but to accept the Lutheran Confessions, and the Missourians, destined to become the largest Lutheran body, would have formed either an alliance or a union with it. *The General Synod refused, and Missouri stood alone.*

The *General Synod refused to accept the Lutheran Confessions because the dominating element abhorred them. It was in fact not a Lutheran body.* In the letter addressed to the Evangelical Church of Germany[RGM: This was the *Union Church of Germany*] in 1845, signed by Dr. S. S. Schmucker, their leading theologian and teacher, Dr. B. Kurtz, editor of the "Observer," and others, they say: "In most of our church principles we stand on common ground with the Union Church of Germany." And: "**The peculiar view of Luther on the bodily presence of the Lord in the Lord's Supper has long ago been abandoned by the great majority of our ministers.**" These men *loved the Reformed doctrine and practices, were fanatical champions of the revival, sought to put into the Lutheran Church "the warmth of Methodism and the vigor of Presbyterianism," and advocated a union with all possible and impossible sects, meantime practicing pulpit-and altar-fellowship with whatever Reformed sect was willing.* [RGM: Today the *ELCA* has done this, and more, encompassing Episcopalians as well as the signing "**The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**" with the R.C. Church]

They called this abomination "American Lutheranism." W. M. Reynolds, one-time of the General Synod, called it "a kind of mongrel Methodistic Presbyterianism." With Dr. S. Sprecher, their third leader, they **denounced the Lutheran doctrine on Baptism**[RGM: Mark 16:16_?], **the Lord's Supper**[RGM: Matthew 26:26,28_?] **Absolution**[RGM: John 20:23 ?], and the Personal Union, and the *Lutheran practices "as antisciptural*[RGM: again, no scripture is cited] *and injurious to the spiritual kingdom of Christ," and spoke of "baptismal regeneration nonsense and similar semipapal imbecilities." Their hatred of the Confessions was so intense*

that, when casting about for strong terms of reproach, they coined that of "symbolic Lutherans" as most adequately expressing their repugnance; that Sprecher warned against the sinister designs of those who would "make all their synods stand on the **Unaltered Augsburg Confession**"[RGM: as opposed to Melancthon's Altered version]; and that Schumcker looked upon the practice of binding the conscience of the minister and members to the Confessions as "highly criminal."(For the whole sad story see Bente, "American Lutheranism, Vol. II.")

They *abhorred the Confessions, and so they abhorred Missouri*. They branded its love of Lutheranism as "rigid symbolism" "German Lutheranism," "deformities of a Pharisaic exclusiveness." They denounced the Missourians as "Jesuits in disguise," stigmatized the synod as "a new sect," of *Roman-Catholic proclivities*; for *did they not teach the real presence*[RGM: Matthew 26:26,28_?], and wear gowns, and burn candles on bright midday ? And Sprecher insisted that the General Synod refused admission to such as adhered to the Lutheran Symbols. ***Are you asking why Missouri stood alone?***

Lutheranism and General Synodism would not fuse. Wyneken, the first of the fathers to come over, had been led by the providence of God into the Synod of the West, belonging to the General Synod, and he labored long and patiently to win it back to Lutheranism. "When I later became acquainted with the state of affairs, I felt that I must not at once withdraw, especially since no attempt had yet been made in the synod itself to win over the erring brethren, to a number of whom I had become warmly attached, by means of an open testimony." In 1845 he brought the matter before the general body, was turned down again and again, and when he finally moved that synod either renounce the name Lutheran or reject as utterly un-Lutheran the position of Schmucker, Kurtz, and the others, synod, as the "Lutherische Hirtenstimme"[RGM: Shepherd's Voice] gleefully reported, "listened good-naturedly to this funny motion and tabled it." Wyneken stood alone.

Missouri and the General Synod would not fuse. If they had tried it, what kind of "intimate ecclesiastical communion" would have resulted? Here is the General Synod declaring: "Our principles not merely allow, but actually demand, fraternal relations with all Evangelical Christians." The Missourians protest, in the words of *Luther*: "*A man who knows that his doctrine, faith, and confession is true, correct, and certain cannot stand together with those who teach false doctrine or who side with such.*" In 1845 the General Synod "*cordially approves of the practice of inviting communicants in regular standing in either church (Lutheran or Reformed) to partake of the Sacrament in the other.*" Again the Missourians quote *Luther*: "*I am shocked to hear that in one church at one altar, both parties should take and receive the Sacrament, one party believing that they are receiving mere bread and wine, the other, that it is the true body and blood of Christ.*" Well, then, who is this man Luther? *Walther* arises: "*We place Luther far beneath the prophets and apostles, but at the same time far above all the other orthodox teachers of the Word known to us.*" Kurtz jumps to his feet: "We are three hundred years older than Luther and his noble coadjutors, and eighteen hundred years older than the primitives. They were the children, we are the fathers." Here is the [der] **Lutheraner** glorying in the distinctive Lutheran doctrines, and the *Observer* at once and always calling it to order for "gathering these old rags, tying them on to a stick, and calling upon all Lutherans to agree with it on pain of excommunication." The whole time of Synod would have been taken up with the tabling of the "funny" motions of the Missourians. And that is what actually took place. The leaders made it their *chief business to combat confessionalism*.

Why did not Missouri unite with the mother synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania? Because Pennsylvania preferred the ways of the General Synod. Already in 1844 Sihler had foretold that Pennsylvania, "indifferently observing the anticonfessional, church-destroying activities of the so-called General Synod, yea, fraternizing with their leaders, would become their prey." It was fulfilled in 1853.

The Ohio Synod did not belong, by far, in a class with the General Synod. Yet its Lutheranism was not sound Lutheranism. Dr. Loy himself, in the story of his life, characterizes it as being at that time "*a unionistic corporation.*" And what is more, and what finally counted, it refused to forsake the un-Lutheran position it held in this respect. The friendly and earnest remonstrances of Sihler, Ernst, Selle, and other pronounced Lutherans, whom the providence of God had led into the Ohio Synod, were disregarded, and these men were compelled to withdraw. Their letter of withdrawal, of 1845, says: "Some of the undersigned had requested the synod to remove the unionistic formula of distribution now in use among us at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which formula begins: 'Christ says,' etc." The petition was refused. They further petitioned "that the synod raise a protest against the false teachings of the so-called Lutheran General Synod regarding the Sacrament. A technicality prevented action on this petition and others. And when finally the resolution was offered: "That the synod henceforth accept all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and solemnly enjoin upon its candidates for ordination to consider themselves bound by the same, action upon this matter was again postponed for three years. It was plain to us from these transactions that the synod, in the majority of its members, possessed no sincere willingness stanchly to represent our Church in its battle with the unionism of our times."

"The synod," the letter states, "at this moment can hardly be regarded as acting in sheer ignorance." There was a great deal of ignorance. Loy points out "their limited opportunities." *Walther speaks of less than ten copies of the Book of Concord to be found in the older synods.* Loy mentions also the "force of established customs." Sihler's party would have patiently borne with that. But there was no sincere willingness, on the part of the majority, to break the fetters of established customs. One of the leaders declared, in the matter of *servng mixed congregations*: "*You are trying to force principles upon us imported from the 'old country'; we have no use for them here.*" And the *Lutheran Standard* spoke of the secession as a fortunate occurrence. *It wished to be left alone.*

The "History of the Ohio Synod" and also Prof. Lehmann, both admitting the justice of those demands, still blame the protestants for taking the step they took. G. J. Fritschel does not. He says in his "History": "It was not the intention to bring on a rupture. The object was to exert all possible influence on the synod towards placing it on a sound Lutheran basis." "Since the synod refused to take the true Lutheran position, these men, who were determined to uphold the Lutheran Confessions, could do nothing less than withdraw and prepare to *form a new synod.*" Nor will Dr. Loy blame them. Referring to the synodical sermon he heard at the first meeting of synod he attended in 1849, in which a leading member of synod, *himself a Mason*, sang the *praises of lodgism*, and against which *he privately protested*, he said later: "If the case occurred now, I would not have become a member of the Ohio Synod without a renunciation of the deistic foundation of that sermon and of the man who preached it, unless he repented of the sin and made all possible reparation of the evil resulting." Exactly that was the position of the protestants. With Luther they were shocked to see Lutherans commune at the same altar with men who had the Reformed contempt of the Sacrament; but it was only when Synod refused to apply the first principles of confessionalism and condemn these and similar un-Lutheran practices that they were forced to withdraw for conscience' sake. Said Sihler in 1851: "God is my witness that my testimony against the Ohio Synod sprang from honest zeal for the honor of God and the welfare of the Church. If synod had received our first request with only some measure of good will, the whole situation to-day might be different." They left with a sore heart, and with profound grief, the *Lutheraner* reported the matter.

I think the comments inserted at numerous may be helpful to our readers, particularly where out-and-out heresies are proclaimed. Is it not incredible that such people persist in claiming to be Lutherans while at the same time reject and denounce all that upon which true Lutheranism--

in fact true Christianity--is based. In Germany, only the independent churches use the name Lutheran. *More on this topic in another column. (Part II is planned for the next issue of WORD & WITNESS)*

Sola Scriptura

Sola Gracia

Sola Fide

Solus Christus†

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My March article left off with the expectation that "Part II is planned for the next issue of *WORD & WITNESS*." Well, personal as well as family and household matters got it the way. So here, a month behind schedule, is

Part II

A similar separation took place in Michigan , in 1846. The Michigan Synod was organized, in 1849, on the basis of the Confessions; but there, too, indifferentism and unionism prevailed. They received, for instance, a minister into synod who refused to subscribe to the Confessions without reservations. In the face of the protest of such staunch Lutherans as Craemer and Lochner, they were bound to continue in their un-Lutheran ways, and four pastors were compelled to withdraw. The spirit in which they took this step is shown in the closing words of the declaration of withdrawal: "We part from the synod with sincere grief because of the un-Lutheran position which the synod maintains in spite of the clear testimony which we have offered. We pray the Lord of the Church that He many soon lead the Synod of Michigan to see and be convinced that its position is dangerous, especially amid the conditions prevailing among the churches of our country; and that it is necessary for our dear Church of the pure confession and for the prosperous operation of Lutheran synods to be firm and decided in 'doctrine' and 'practice.'" [*RGM*: For two decades or so our *Michigan District* has exhibited a similar indifferentism, not unlike that described above!]

Finally there was Buffalo . There was a synod which abhorred unionism as strongly as Missouri did. J. A. A. Grabau had twice suffered imprisonment for holding out against the Prussian Union. Why did not Missouri and Buffalo form a union? How little Grabau cared to have fraternal relations with Missouri he showed in his synodical report of 1848, declaring "that the ministers Walther, Loeber, and their accomplices are living in false doctrine as regards the sacred office of the ministry, the Church. . . . We declare furthermore that they are willful and proud sinners, who in spite of all Christian exhortation have increased in sin and become strong in crime. Therefore we have to regard them as willfully false teachers and manifest, zealous sinners, until they turn, repent, and sincerely seek reconciliation with us." This was the sin of Missouri - it had refused to allow Grabau to introduce Romanizing principles into the Lutheran Church . Besides teaching that outside of the Lutheran Church there is no salvation, he denied the right of a congregation to call, of its own authority, the minister, to prove his doctrine, and to

excommunicate the impenitent, and he even asserted that Christians are bound to obey their ministers in all things not contrary to the Word of God. That, of course, meant the establishment of a Lutheran papacy. And if there is anything that does not agree, it is Lutheranism and a papacy. Loeber and Walther could not tolerate the monstrous thing. They taught with the Confessions that the congregation is the highest, final tribunal in the Church, and that, to Grabau, was a monstrous thing.

When Grabau enunciated his doctrines in the "Pastoral Letter" of 1840, this came as a shock to the Saxons, who "had been hoping, with not a little joy, that with just these brethren they might enjoy the most intimate communion, closely united in the bonds of confessional Lutheranism." For years they labored, patiently and earnestly, to bring about an agreement on Scriptural, confessional lines. They refrained for a long time from a public controversy; they carried on the discussion in a conciliatory manner; again and again they attempted to meet Grabau in conference. In the end Grabau excommunicated the whole Missouri Synod.

[**RGM**: More on the *Prussian Union, Grabau and the Buffalo Synod* in a future article.]

And so Missouri perforce stood alone. The isolation for which she has been maligned these many years was not of her choosing. Nor did she like it. She was eager to establish a friendly "entente" among all Lutherans, if possible, and alliance; indeed, the closest ecclesiastical communion. They aimed at "the final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America."

People must get the idea out of their heads that the Missourians of old were violent men, or men who, blown up with Pharisaical pride, gloried in their isolation. Why, the name of Wyneken was a synonym of modesty and charity! Let Loy tell you how, after a clash in which Sihler had been at fault, he, "the elderly man," sought out Loy, "the mere stripling," and begged his pardon. Let Walther tell you how, when, like Joseph, he had been compelled to speak roughly with his brothers in his polemics, he would, like Joseph, go into his chamber to weep, and only after washing his face come among the people again. (Letter to Delitzsch.) Again: "Our controversy with Buffalo is a cross which would again and again almost crush us to the ground." (Letter to Brunn.) With the fathers of the Smalcald Articles they knew that "it is a serious matter to be separate from so many nations and peoples and to be called schismatics. But here is God's command, which forbids us to hold communion with those who teach false doctrine." They were, on the whole, rather likable men. Says Loy: "For myself, I never had much difficulty in getting along with the members of the Missouri Synod."

There was nothing "exclusive" about Missouri. Men did not at all have to join their particular organization in order to be treated as true Lutherans--if they were true Lutherans. When they became acquainted with the Tennessee Synod, which, from Paul Henkel down, had been testifying against the apostasy of the General Synod, they "rejoiced in having found in them flesh of their flesh and bone of their bone." (Bente, I, 217.) Sihler: "It would be a great joy if we could enter into definite church-fellowship with them." The delegates of Missouri to Tennessee, 1853: "Our Synod extends the hand of fraternity to you, not fearing to be refused, and ardently desires, however separated from you by a different language and local interests, to cooperate with you, hand in hand, in rebuilding the walls of our dilapidated Zion."

Wherever there was a stirring of Lutheran life, Missouri was quick to see it and eager to stimulate and strengthen it. When Ohio was working and fighting its way upwards (as Loy puts it), it was Sihler and Walther who urged them on, counseled and admonished as they felt brothers should do, and rejoiced over the good progress made. The protest of their Eastern District against the Union Letter of the General Synod was hailed by Walther as a hopeful sign: "Surely God will in His grace bring all those who in this land want to hold fast the precious doctrine of the

Lutheran Church into still closer communion." When Ohio in 1848, by formal resolution, adopted the Symbols of the Lutheran Church as its confession and was assaulted for that by the "Observer," Sihler became the proud champion of their cause. And when in various quarters vehement protests were raised against the Definite Platform (that Zwinglianized Augsburg Confession which the Schmuckerites in 1855 attempted to foist on the Church), Walther warmly commended the "Standard" for "its Lutheran fervor and manly firmness," and proudly chronicled the fact "that what is known as the Lutheran Church of North America possesses in her various divisions a host of witnesses whom God has given insight, faith, and courage enough to set themselves against the revolutionary and destructive designs of the many renegades in her midst." And so throughout.

The Free Conferences held from 1856 to 1859 by men from Ohio , New York , Pennsylvania , and Missouri had for their object the unifying of the Lutheran Church . The prime mover was Walther. He had proposed them "with a view towards the final realization of one united Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America." (Lehre und Wehre, II, 4.) And when the Synodical Conference was formed in 1872, a union between the Ohio , Missouri , Wisconsin , Norwegian, Illinois , and Minnesota Synods, glorious as this consummation was, it was not considered the final consummation, but only the groundwork for it.

Nothing was permitted to stand in the way of union, nothing short of a willful and persistent denial of the Lutheran faith. Not the hard words hurled at them, not even aberrations in doctrine, if but the open mind and an honest desire for the truth remained. If you want to meet broadminded men, make the acquaintance of the fathers. President Wyneken referred to the Buffalo Synod in 1853 as "our brethren"; and you know what Grabau had been calling Missouri . And when Ohio in 1856 urged Missouri and Buffalo to endeavor to establish fraternal relations, Walther, "receiving the admonition with sincere gratitude" and pointing out "that true union can spring only from the unity of faith," concludes with the peace offer: "If, however, in case an agreement in doctrine cannot be reached at present, the Buffalo Synod will refrain from anathematizing our doctrine and, as to what has been done on our side in consequence thereof, will let bygones be bygones, and thus accepted our offer of reconciliation, we would consider it our sacred duty to maintain, even though our doctrinal difference be not yet removed, fraternal relations with Buffalo." (Lehre und Wehre, II, 380.)

Missouri aimed to bring together the Lutherans of America, and for that very reason she stood alone. Her isolation was, after all, of her own choosing. The ultimate object of the separation was union. "True unity is oneness in faith," says Krauth. And in order to win men back to the one faith, there had to be a body which clearly taught this one faith, which in doctrine and practice stood squarely on the Confessions and, by refusing to stand with errorists, refused to countenance the error. Nor could Missouri have preserved the faith if she had united with such as persisted in error, or suffered them to unite with her. Faith cannot dwell with error. The body that experiments in that direction will lose its pure faith - and its power for good. Nor can such an organization be held together. No synod can endure half confessional and half indifferent. "If a Lutheran synod does not want to plant the seeds of dissolution in her very midst, its members must be bound, by provision of its basic law, to refrain from even these subtle forms of syncretism. Let us faithfully confess the truth, and not attempt to help along the kingdom of God by deviating from the instructions God gave us." (Walther to Ernst.) The oneness of the faith unites, and Synod knew of no other way of attaining her object, that of uniting the straying Lutherans, than that of unfurling the banner of the old Confessions, and of laying down these conditions of membership: "Renunciation of all syncretistic church-fellowship, such as serving union-churches as such, taking part in the worship and sacramental acts of heterodox and mixed congregations." (Chapter II.)

They were far-sighted men. They knew their policy could not fail. They were willing to

wait. They were willing to set up in humble quarters as an insignificant 'Synoedchen. [RGM: Little or Baby Synod] They were willing to bear shame and reproach for many a long year. For they were confident their way would succeed.

It had to succeed. It had God's promise back of it. "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord." Jer. 15, 19.20. Accordingly, when these separations were going on, Rev. W. Loehe had reason to prophesy: "By going out from those with whom they could not come to an agreement on the basis of God's Word, their number has not decreased, but their strength is increased. No longer hampered by the halting and lukewarm, our friends can now move forward in a compact mass. They will not remain alone."

Why did not Missouri unite with the mother synod, the Ministerium of Pennsylvania? Because Pennsylvania preferred the ways of the General Synod. Already in 1844 Sihler had foretold that Pennsylvania, "indifferently observing the anticonfessional, church-destroying activities of the so-called General Synod, yea, fraternizing with their leaders, would become their prey." It was fulfilled in 1853. The Ohio Synod did not belong, by far, in a class with the General Synod. Yet its Lutheranism was not sound Lutheranism. Dr. Loy himself, in the story of his life, characterizes it as being at that time "a unionistic corporation." And what is more, and what finally counted, it refused to forsake the un-Lutheran position it held in this respect. The friendly and earnest remonstrances of Sihler, Ernst, Selle, and other pronounced Lutherans, whom the providence of God had led into the Ohio Synod, were disregarded, and these men were compelled to withdraw. Their letter of withdrawal, of 1845, says: "Some of the undersigned had requested the synod to remove the unionistic formula of distribution now in use among us at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, which formula begins: 'Christ says,' etc." The petition was refused. They further petitioned "that the synod raise a protest against the false teachings of the so-called Lutheran General Synod regarding the Sacrament. A technicality prevented action on this petition and others. And when finally the resolution was offered: "That the synod henceforth accept all the confessional writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and solemnly enjoin upon its candidates for ordination to consider themselves bound by the same," "action upon this matter was again postponed for three years. It was plain to us from these transactions that the synod, in the majority of its members, possessed no sincere willingness staunchly to represent our Church in its battle with the unionism of our times."

How much of this shall be credited to Missouri? We shall not quarrel about that. The fathers did not. *Der Lutheraner* of September 5, 1846, was glad to acknowledge that the first to protest against the great apostasy was the *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* of Pittsburgh, and the good work of the "Standard," of Tennessee, of men like Charles Porterfield Krauth (of the Council), who, says Walther, "was wholeheartedly devoted to the pure doctrine of our Church, as he had learned to understand it, a noble man and without guile," received their unstinted praise.

The first sentence in the opening paragraph of *Why Missouri Stood Alone* above reads: "A similar separation took place in Michigan, in 1846. The Michigan Synod was organized, in 1849, on the basis of the Confessions; but there, too, indifferentism and unionism prevailed."

Here we are, one hundred and fifty-eight years later, faced with the very same situation--this time, though, it is Synod-wide! Can *unionism* exist, let alone prevail, without a proclivity towards *indifferentism*? It is at least unlikely. The not uncommonly used theological terms *adiaphoron* (singular), *adiaphora* (plural) meaning a thing or things unimportant, or indifferent; not commanded or forbidden by God. ~~But~~

Adiaphora: [From Dictionary of Theology]

Teachings and practices that are neither commanded nor forbidden in scripture. An example might be whether or not to use a sound-board in a church, to meet in a tent or a building, to have two or more services or simply one on the day of worship.

Adiaphorist: One of the German Protestants who, with Melanchthon, held some opinions and ceremonies to be indifferent or nonessential, which Luther condemned as sinful or heretical.

These included, e.g. the *Real Presence* and, among other things, even the bodily resurrection of Christ! Sadly there were during those times about which Professor Engelder writes, and recent times, there have been those who have taught that these things cited here are, as issues, unimportant--indifferent or nonessential. It could be said that such *Reformed* heresies are the primary causes of the ongoing battle for the *Gospel*.

Watch for the conclusion in Part III.

Sola Scriptura

Sola Fide

Solus Christus†

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Part III

We need not quarrel. There is honor enough to go round. And there are men a-plenty to give testimony that the usefulness of Missouri was not materially hindered. G. J. Fritschel: "Later events proved that the influence of Wyneken extended further than he himself had anticipated." The same: "These conferences (1856-1859) had a great influence on the Eastern synods, and especially on Ohio ." Loy speaks of the "stimulating power" he and his fellow-students found in the "Lutheraner," of "the need of such a tonic to stir us up amid the indifferentism which was destroying all earnest faith and life." Of the later years: "I was glad that we had Walther among us, and was thankful that God had given us so powerful an advocate of a cause so dear to my heart." And he speaks "of the new Lutheran life which had come into our synod." There you have a real "revival and great bloom," and the whole Joint Synod of Ohio was glad to point out Dr. Walther as the chief instrument of it all. The General Council "Pilger": "if the Missouri Synod had not so tenaciously clung to the confession of the pure doctrine, if the Lord had not taken pity on the Lutheran Church of America by placing it in her midst, we would be today an insignificant body, Lutheran perhaps in name, but otherwise the stamping-ground for foxes and

other wild things." F. Uhlhorn, in his *History*: "The fact is that the greatest gain the Lutheran Church of America made came by reason of the firm and immovable stand men took, against unionism and liberalism, for the old Lutheran faith. The next result, indeed, was division after division, but in the end their determined confessionalism yielded blessed gain. Synod after synod placed itself, with varying degrees, indeed, of insight and consistency - on the platform of the symbols." Neve, in his "History:" "The close unity [of Missouri], coupled with its size, exercised a powerful influence on those without, strengthening, especially in the Eastern synods, the already awakened confessional consciousness. " Krauth: "I have been saddened beyond expression by the bitterness displayed towards the Missourians. They have been our benefactors. Their work has been of inestimable value." - That will do.

The Missouri Synod is going to keep up the good work in the good old way. And great things will be accomplished if all work together along the lines and in the spirit of Dr. Pieper's great treatise: "Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche." [**RGM**: "To the agreement of the American Lutheran Church"]

Sadly, the events of the past two and a half years have show that Professor Th. Engelder's vision has not been realized. Rather, instead of observing these passages from Matthew, Chapter 7:

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: 14 Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. 15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

But at that time the issues and disagreements were largely external rather than internal and toward this end the 1929 convention of the Missouri Synod recommended the creation of a committee instructed "to formulate theses, which, beginning with the status controversiae, are to present the doctrines of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in the shortest and simplest manner." The committee appointed by President F. Pfotenhauer (F. Pieper, Th. Engelder and others) issued the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* in 1931. This document treated Holy Scripture, God, Creation, Man and Sin, Redemption, Faith in Christ, Conversion, Justification, Good Works, Means of Grace, Church, Public Ministry, Church and State, Election of Grace, Sunday, Millennium, Antichrist. Open Questions, Symbols of the Lutheran Church. This Brief Statement was adopted by the 1932 Missouri Synod Convention. Efforts toward unity with the American Lutheran Church continued. The 1938 Missouri Synod Convention accepted the *Brief Statement*, the *Declaration*.

This Statement, consisting of *just nine* pages--in my word processor--is indeed brief by comparison with the BOOK OF CONCORD and is much easier to read but, surprisingly it is not easy to find. We find several parts which are germane to the issues that have plagued the Synod since 2001, to say the least.

For example: *OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES*,

2. We furthermore teach regarding the Holy Scriptures that they are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2:20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged. This was denied at the deliberations of the Synod Dispute Resolution Panel in the Benke suspension case. In fact, Dr. Samuel Nafzger, Executive Director of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, instructed the panel that it was to deliberate solely on the basis of 2001 Convention RESOLUTION 3-07A (Cases of Discretion) and not on the Word of God--notwithstanding Paragraph 2 of the Brief Statement above.

The charges against Dist. Pres. Benke were *Unionism* and *Syncretism*--at the Yankee Stadium *Prayer for America* and for this we find in the Brief Statement: **OF THE CHURCH**,

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

Throughout the period from when charges were made against Pres. Benke and continuing today his supporters, including Synod President Kieschnick, made accusations attributed various motives on the parts of his accusers and Synod 2nd Vice-president Dr. Wallace Schulz and voiced criticism about Matthew 18 not being followed. Martin Luther treats these questions in his Large Catechism commentary on the Eighth Commandment:

279] Further, Christ teaches: *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.* So he whom it concerns is always to be treated with personally, and not to be spoken of without his knowledge. **280]** But if that do not avail, then bring it publicly before the community, whether before the civil or the ecclesiastical tribunal. For then you do not stand alone, but you have those witnesses with you by whom you can convict the guilty one, relying on whom the judge can pronounce sentence and punish. This is the right and regular course for checking and reforming a wicked person. **284]** All this has been said regarding secret sins. But where the sin is quite public so that the judge and everybody know it, you can without any sin avoid him and let him go, because he has brought himself into disgrace, and you may also publicly testify concerning him. For when a matter is public in the light of day, there can be no slandering or false judging or testifying; . . . For where the sin is public, the reproof also must be public, that every one may learn to guard against it.

Information from the *Christian Cyclopedia* about two men who were appointed by Synod President Pfothenauer to the committee which prepared what was to become the *Brief Statement* of 1932:

Prof. Th. Engelder (1865-1949), the author of *Why Missouri Stood Alone* may be of some interest. He was born in Olean, NY; educated at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, IN and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO; served as a pastor at two congregations between 1886 and 1914; was LC-MS Michigan District president 1912-14; professor at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, IL 1914-26 and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. He was a staunch defender of verbal inspiration; molded thinking of Mo. Syn. and was chief translator of F.A.O. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* in the edition that appeared in 1950-57 under the title *Christian Dogmatics*.

Franz August Otto Pieper (1852-1931) was born in Carwitz, Pomerania, Germany; was educated at Northwestern University and Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO; was pastor of two Wisconsin Synod congregations 1875-78; was professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1878-1931, and Seminary President 187-1931. He served as President of the Missouri Synod from 1899 to 1911.

F. A. O. Pieper's most outstanding theological contributions were in the field of dogmatics; he presented doctrines in such a way as to appeal not only to the mind but also to the heart; the doctrines of grace and inspiration received special attention. His exceptional abilities

were brought into play also as preacher and as synod president.

Both these men were appointed by Synod President Pfothenauer to the committee which prepared what was to become the *Brief Statement* of 1932

To attribute motives is to break the Eighth Commandment. That said, some questions may be in order now. Do some place the opinions of men above the *Scriptures*, that is, The *Word of God*? Are some seeking that *glory* which belongs only to *God*? Many, in the name of *Church Growth*, are obsessed with the notion of *inclusiveness* and therefore are opposed to what they consider to be *exclusiveness* such as Close(d) Communion.

Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them. And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brazen wall; and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the Lord. (Jer. 15, 19.20.)

Sola Scriptura

Sola Gratia

Sola Fide

Solus Christus†

Soli deo Gloria