

## **A Formula for Fellowship: Concord and the Unit Concept**

"Fellowship" – It's something believers know to be a good and positive thing. Individual congregations have "fellowship" hours with coffee and donuts between Sunday services. Boards of fellowship sponsor potluck dinners, picnics, and outings. Church bodies publicize their declarations and expressions of fellowship with other denominations and traditions.

Believers who know Scripture well realize that fellowship is about more than common human experiences and interests. Fellowship between believers is a spiritual connection through a shared faith in Christ. This bond, this tie that binds, is something to be celebrated and advanced, never ignored or disparaged. The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Church knows and understands this. We appreciate what it means to be a part of Christ's body, Christ's bride, the Church. But why does it seem that our dedication to such a positive principle and practice evokes such negative responses from people outside our circles (and even sometimes from those within the WELS)?

The response is particularly negative from those who consider themselves our fellow Lutherans. Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) pastors feel free to joke about how WELS members will not join them in prayer<sup>1</sup> and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) members and leaders take offense when we refuse to recognize them as brothers in the faith<sup>2</sup>. "We all share a common Lutheran heritage," they seem to feel, "isn't that enough for us to join together in work and worship, or at least in prayers for future unity?"

Scripture answers "No." As much as we desire to join together with other Lutherans, or with other Christians, God's Word has led the WELS to understand that fellowship without doctrinal agreement is a false fellowship and a denial of God's truth. Our expressions of true fellowship, however, witness to other churches and Christians. We show them that the differences that divide us are potentially, if not actually, damaging to faith. The doctrine of fellowship does not reject Christian love or create an exclusive elite within Lutheranism.

Unfortunately, the WELS and its brethren in the Conference of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (CELC) still find themselves standing apart from the vast majority of Lutheran churches. While it is sad that we are separated from most other Christian denominations, that at least is to be expected. Our estrangement from other Lutherans, however, is a tragedy. It is ironic that one of the doctrines which estranges us from other Lutherans<sup>3</sup> itself commands that estrangement: the doctrine of fellowship. The LCMS and other Lutherans could be

working to unite all those with whom we share the Lutheran tradition, heritage, and identity. Instead, when they fail to understand or practice what Scripture says about Christian fellowship, they also fail to understand that they are separating themselves from true Lutheranism.

Differences in exegesis and interpretation will always exist between church bodies. Even in the days of the Synodical Conference disagreement over certain passages could exist without destroying our doctrinal unity or threatening our fellowship as Lutherans. However, if someone calls himself, herself, or his/her church body "Lutheran", by definition there must be agreement with the doctrines confessed in the Book of Concord. If that someone knowingly preaches or practices a doctrine of fellowship not in accord with the Confessions, that person or denomination has severed the connection to true, historic Lutheranism by self-exclusion. No "fault" would then lie with those Lutherans who have maintained their confessional position and retained their practice of fellowship.

We in the WELS and CELC are those Lutherans who have not strayed from the position of the Confessions. The LCMS with its misunderstanding of fellowship has distanced itself from the Concord it once shared with us. The churches of the ELCA and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) appear to be long past reconciling their doctrine and practice with the confessions that should define their Lutheran "heritage" and identity.<sup>4</sup> There are individuals in the WELS -- both pastors and laypeople -- who feel that the "unit" concept of church fellowship is exclusive, unloving, wrong and unbiblical. While all these people and churches will believe what they wish, their position on fellowship strongly disagrees with the Formula of Concord -- and shows that they therefore can no longer be considered confessional Lutherans.

"So what?" some might respond, "So what if you in the WELS think that we disagree with a 400 year-old historical document? What matters is that we do what Christ would have us do!" To a certain extent, the theologians of the WELS would agree: what is most important in the matter of fellowship, as in any doctrinal issue, is what God's Word says. The WELS is to be commended for its "Theses on Church Fellowship", one of its doctrinal statements, since they are so clearly based on Scripture and Scripture alone. Indeed, there is not a single reference to the Lutheran Confessions in this most Lutheran formulation.<sup>5</sup>

The concern before us, however, is not so much to prove the scriptural origin of "our" doctrine of fellowship and the "unit concept"<sup>6</sup>, but rather to establish that the WELS is Lutheran on this issue, and that those who reject

our position are, in fact, rejecting their own Lutheran identity. A brief study of just one of the Confessions, the Formula of Concord, easily illustrates this sad truth.

More than any of the other confessions in the Book of Concord, the Formula of Concord was designed to define what it means to be a Lutheran. The context in which the Augsburg Confession was presented showed that it was meant to be more inclusive than exclusive. The men at Augsburg desired to show the Emperor that they were not intending to separate from the historic Christian and catholic Church. These followers of Martin Luther stated as many points of agreement with the Roman Church as possible before delineating beliefs and practices that kept them separate. Luther's Catechisms were (and remain) useful summaries and teaching tools, but they were never meant to define the faith of the Reformation. In their author Martin Luther's words, the Smalcald Articles "were to have been presented on our part to the Council, if any had been assembled at Mantua or elsewhere, indicating what we could accept or yield, and what we could not."<sup>7</sup> But these articles were necessarily and intentionally less than comprehensive, as Luther limited himself to the "chief matters".<sup>8</sup>

Only the Formula of Concord was intended from its inception to show by doctrinal exposition who could and could not call himself a true Lutheran (and more specifically, who could truly claim subscription to and the protection of the Augsburg Confession). At its heart, then, though not spelled out as such, the Formula concerned itself with the doctrine of fellowship. In exposing and rejecting the errors of those who claimed to be Luther's heirs but were not, the Formula systematically laid out what one had to believe, teach, and confess in order to be called a brother in faith.

This historical context is important for understanding how the Formula of Concord supports a "unit" understanding of fellowship. On the surface, the confession appears to have little to say on the subject: only a few lines here or there seem to address the issue directly. But any serious consideration of what Andreae and Chemnitz, et al, and their noble sponsors intended, as well as an examination of the processes of formulation and subscription will speak clearly. While these men desired to extend the right hand of fellowship to as many people as possible, they would never compromise doctrine for the sake of unity.<sup>9</sup>

It is also helpful to keep in mind the political context in which the Formula of Concord was written. Questions of fellowship today -- whether among individual believers or between church bodies -- tend to

involve voluntary associations, and church membership as the result of a choice made among numerous options. Today's denominations are often independent bodies, free to determine their own doctrine and practice. This was not the situation in the sixteenth century -- indeed, it is a rather recent, "New World" circumstance, which bears little resemblance to the world that Chemnitz and the others inhabited.

At the time the Formula of Concord was drafted, and largely as a result of the Peace of Augsburg, the church an individual belonged to was not a matter of choice but of geography. The doctrinal position of any congregation was determined not by its pastor, not by its members, but by its prince (or duke or elector or count, etc.).<sup>10</sup> Thus a traveller would not have been able to determine the doctrine to be expected from any given "Protestant" pulpit just by reading a sign out front, or even by knowing where its pastor got his training. Congregations, in turn, examined any pastor who came to them in order to assess his doctrinal stances and integrity -- there would have been no transferable "credentials" such as a denominational hierarchy or seminary today can give.

Another aspect of the state church problem would have been the absence of any effective way to enforce church discipline. The openly immoral or apostate could be excommunicated. But the inconspicuous sinners (the hypocrite, the drunk, the wife beater, and the closet apostate) all were relatively safe from church action, since they obtained and retained their church membership by virtue of their residence in the parish. Having made no pledge or promise on joining the church, they could not be charged with breaking one. The implication of these state church problems was that fellowship could not be expressed or denied as we know it.

Still the unit concept of fellowship (though not the terminology)<sup>11</sup> was understood by the Reformers and the Confessors. And they transmitted this to their heirs.<sup>12</sup> One example is that of Calov and Huelsemann at the colloquy the king of Poland called at Thorn in 1645. Given the opportunity and encouragement to begin and close their meetings in the peaceful, unifying act of joint prayer (without a doubt the biggest sticking point with those who reject the unit concept), the Lutherans refused to join together with the Reformed and Roman Catholic representatives.

It would appear that these fathers knew of no joint prayer that could be practiced simply on the basis of the evaluation of the situation, purpose, character, and probable effect of the prayer. *The Lutheraner* commented favorably as follows: "From this we can see 1. That we are following the same practice as the faithful Lutherans in the year 1645; 2. That this demand for public prayer with errorists and heretics is a characteristic of the Reformed, but is foreign to the true Lutheran church."<sup>13</sup>

The translated quotation above from the Missouri Synod's *Lutheraner* shows that joint prayer with errorists was rejected and the unit concept practiced in the old Synodical Conference. The essay "Fellowship Then and Now" (quoted above) from the WELS Commission on Doctrinal Matters gives example after example showing that the Wisconsin Synod's current stance on fellowship is exactly the same as the Synodical Conference's (and therefore Missouri's) original stance.<sup>14</sup> The historical continuity of this doctrine and practice is even reflected in Bente's Historical Introduction to the Symbolical Books (Book of Concord), which was authorized and published by the Missouri Synod in honor of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation. Quoting Walther, quoting Luther, Bente records:

"Whoever really regards his doctrine, faith and confession as true, right, and certain cannot remain in the same stall with such as teach, or adhere to, false doctrine; nor can he keep on giving friendly words to Satan and his minions. A teacher who remains silent when errors are taught, and nevertheless pretends to be a true teacher, is worse than an open fanatic and by his hypocrisy does greater damage than a heretic. Nor can he be trusted." (Walther, 39f.)<sup>15</sup>

Unfortunately, despite such strong and direct evidence that the Lutheranism of history and of the Confessions rules out fellowship with those who "teach or adhere to false doctrine", the LCMS in this century has abandoned principles of our common Lutheran forebears. The LCMS, along with individuals within our own circles, has decided that joint prayer with other church bodies and their members, along with certain other forms of fellowship, is acceptable, biblical, and Lutheran.

Although the LCMS's Commission on Theology and Church Matters could directly state in 1974,

For the Symbols all the articles of faith are so integrally related to the Gospel-in-the-narrow-sense (FC SD V, 27) that error in any article threatens a correct understanding of the Gospel (cf. Ap II, 44; IV, 3, 81, 110; XII, 77; XV, 4; XXI, 14; XXVII, 23, 34). It is in the interest of preserving the pure teaching of the Gospel that Lutherans seek by the light and power of the Gospel to reach full agreement in all articles of faith.<sup>16</sup>

they also asserted in 1981, apparently in deliberate rejection of the unit concept of church fellowship:

There is the problem of terminology and levels of agreement. Through the use of the word "fellowship" almost exclusively to refer to a formal altar and pulpit fellowship relationship established between two church bodies on the basis of agreement in the confession of the faith, some have been given the impression that no fellowship relationship other than spiritual unity in the body of Christ can or should exist among members of Christian churches not in altar and pulpit fellowship. The fact that the LCMS is closer doctrinally to a church body which at least formally accepts the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions than to those denominations which do not is often obscured by the "all or nothing" approach that frequently accompanies ecclesiastical declarations of altar and pulpit fellowship.<sup>17</sup>

This doctrinal dichotomy -- perhaps best described as a "blind spot"<sup>18</sup> -- is shown in the LCMS's handling of the

Scouting issue, its participation in the military chaplaincy program, joint prayer in inter-synodical conferences, and its participation in numerous cooperative programs with the ELCA. This is just to name a few areas (not to mention its woeful failure to exercise discipline when pastors, congregations, professors, schools, and individual members violate the principles of fellowship on which we are in agreement). Both anecdotal and published evidence shows the effects of this indistinct and compromised position on fellowship practices. Evidence includes the participation of many rank-and-file members of the Missouri Synod in unionistic activities (e.g., participation in inter-denominational organizations like InterVarsity Christian Fellowship while in college) and a loose denominationalism (e.g., retaining membership and "identity" as a Missouri Synod Lutheran while regularly worshipping in churches of other denominations). When the door to fellowship was cracked open for joint prayer and "cooperation in externals", a host of other errors crept in and multiplied.

Meanwhile, within WELS circles many individuals have appeared who wish to apply something like the "levels of fellowship" principles of the LCMS. They would do this on a more personal level. These people accuse the WELS of arrogance, lack of love, foolishness, error, and many other things, and have tried to "correct" the synodical understanding of fellowship.<sup>19</sup> This is how a former WELS pastor justified giving a woman and her son "a spiritual experience" at the communion rail. He stated, "I have come to the point in my life where I believe that denying someone the Lord's Supper solely because he is the wrong synod is acting contrary to the Gospel of Jesus."<sup>20</sup> Another former WELS pastor used the same false distinction that the LCMS uses: "It is my belief that, in general, we may pray and worship (altar and pulpit fellowship aside) with anyone who confesses saving faith in Jesus Christ." He went on to say: "I believe that our separatism from Christians of other church bodies is disobedient to the commands of Christ and harmful to the spiritual health of our membership."<sup>21</sup> An unnamed former WELS member testifies that "all that is required for fellowship, on earth and in heaven according to the Bible, is faith in Jesus Christ." He uses personal testimony to justify his new understanding of fellowship. He even accuses the WELS of "inventing" the concept of the invisible church "in order to acknowledge there are Christians outside the WELS".<sup>22</sup>

Reading these statements from "fellow Lutherans", one cannot help but be reminded of men like Martin Bucer, Agricola and Philip Melancthon. These men were champions of the Reformation who wanted to be able to join forces with other "Protestants" for strength, unity, and fellowship, but who failed to understand the

importance of doctrinal integrity. A survey of Christian history, particularly Lutheran history through the centuries, shows the same thing time and time again. What these men claim to be doing -- joining with "weaker" brethren in order to lead them to a better understanding of the truth -- inevitably leads to doctrinal compromise or indifference -- precisely what they promise will not happen. The Christian love which they claim motivates their abandonment of proper fellowship practices frequently turns out to be rooted in their own emotions and experience -- a desire to avoid the pain of separation and the accusations of arrogance.

The end result is an abandonment of confessional Lutheranism -- and thereby a surrender of scriptural truth. What we in the WELS will pray for and desire is that all who call themselves Lutherans, within and without our circles, would return to a study of the truths of God's Word, and of the Confessions which lay out those truths. In the Formula of Concord our erring brothers and sisters can find a proper understanding of the doctrine of fellowship.

From the very beginning, the Formula makes clear that complete agreement in doctrine is the basis for Lutheran identity and fellowship. The Epitome states in paragraphs 4 and 6 of the "Summary Content, Rule, And Standard" (emphasis added):

3. As to the schisms in matters of faith, however, which have occurred in our time, we regard as the unanimous consensus and declaration of our Christian faith and confession, especially against the Papacy and its false worship, idolatry, superstition, and against other sects, as the symbol of our time, the First, Unaltered Augsburg Confession, delivered to the Emperor Charles V at Augsburg in the year 1530, in the great Diet, together with its Apology, and the Articles composed at Smalcald in the year 1537, and subscribed at that time by the chief theologians.

To this direction, as above announced, all doctrines are to be conformed, and what is contrary thereto is to be rejected and condemned, as opposed to the unanimous declaration of our faith.

The "Comprehensive Summary, Foundation, Rule, And Standard" of the Thorough Declaration similarly declares in paragraphs 1, 2 and 14:

Since for thorough, permanent unity in the Church it is, above all things, necessary that we have a comprehensive, unanimously approved summary and form wherein is brought together from God's Word the common doctrine, reduced to a brief compass, which the churches that are of the true Christian religion confess, just as the ancient Church always had for this use its fixed symbols; 2] moreover, since this should not be based on private writings, but on such books as have been composed, approved, and received in the name of the churches which pledge themselves to one doctrine and religion, we have declared to one another with heart and mouth that we will not make or receive a separate or new confession of our faith, but confess the public common writings which always and everywhere were held and used as such symbols or common confessions in all the churches of the Augsburg Confession before the dissensions arose among those who accept the Augsburg Confession,

and as long as in all articles there was on all sides a unanimous adherence to the pure doctrine of the divine Word, as the sainted Dr. Luther explained it.

Moreover, since for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd.

Thus from the outset two primary principles are established: first, that the unity of the Church is based on unanimity in doctrine, and second, that it is also necessary to reject and reprove all error in doctrine. These two principles are also the foundation of the doctrine of fellowship.

The very structure and purpose of the Formula, both the Epitome and the Thorough Declaration, illustrates the importance of these two ideas. Each article presents a doctrine that is in contention, for the purpose of bringing all Lutherans together in confessing the truth of the matter. First the true teaching is succinctly stated for all to accept. Then all opposing errors are refuted and repudiated. Every "we believe, teach and confess" is a statement which emphasizes that the Formula is a unified body of beliefs for a unified body of believers, a positive statement which logically and necessarily includes the confessor and excludes those who do not agree. Nowhere in the Formula will one find "we all believe, most of us teach, and some of us confess" or any such permutation. Unity in all belief and practice is the only standard. Similarly, no distinction is made in the Formula between errorists on one issue and those on another. They are all condemned and rejected, without any suggestion that one error might be a barrier to fellowship, but some other error might not.

Indeed, it borders on the ludicrous to think that one could subscribe to the Formula and still maintain that complete agreement in doctrine and summary rejection of false doctrine and practice are unnecessary for Lutherans. The condemnatory statements of the Formula make no sense in an environment of "selective fellowship" or distinguishing between altar and pulpit and prayer fellowship. In fact, to take such an approach one would have to say that the formulators must have been sinning against the Eighth Commandment, or that they were two-faced hypocrites, saying one thing and praying another.

Many more statements in the Formula clearly state that the issues of doctrine and fellowship must be treated as a unit (not "levels"). Article II rejects just about any possible false view of free will -- as well as those who hold to such beliefs. Article VII in particular demonstrates an understanding of fellowship by rejecting and refuting the Crypto-Calvinists who followed a Calvinistic or Zwinglian understanding of the Lord's Supper.

We intend to explain the articles which have been drawn into controversy among the theologians of the

Augsburg Confession (from which the Sacramentarians soon in the beginning, when the Confession was first composed and presented to the Emperor at Augsburg in 1530, entirely withdrew and separated, and presented their own Confession), still, since some theologians, and others who boast [their adherence to] the Augsburg Confession, have, alas! during the last years, given their assent in this article to the Sacramentarians no longer secretly, but partly publicly and against their own conscience have endeavored to wrest forcibly and to pervert the Augsburg Confession as being in this article in entire harmony with the doctrine of the Sacramentarians, we neither can nor should omit our testimony by our confession of the divine truth also in this document, and must repeat the true sense and proper understanding of the words of Christ and of the Augsburg Confession with reference to this article, and [for we recognize it to be our duty], so far as in us lies, by God's help, preserve it [this pure doctrine] also for posterity, and faithfully warn our hearers, together with other godly Christians, against this pernicious error, which is entirely contrary to the divine Word and the Augsburg Confession, and has been frequently condemned.<sup>23</sup>

Perhaps the most direct declarations on fellowship are to be found in Article X, "Of Church Rites", which dealt with matters of adiaphora. Particularly clear is this statement from paragraph 31 of the Thorough Declaration (emphasis added): "Thus the churches will not condemn one another because of dissimilarity of ceremonies when, in Christian liberty, one has less or more of them, provided they are otherwise agreed with one another in the doctrine and all its articles, also in the right use of the holy Sacraments, according to the well-known saying: 'Disagreement in fasting does not destroy agreement in the faith.' "

In Article X the most important reason for proper doctrine and practice in all things, not just fellowship, is set forth. When anything in the church begins to affect faith or burden consciences, it threatens the very heart of salvation:

For here it is no longer a question concerning external matters of indifference, which in their nature and essence are and remain of themselves free, and accordingly can admit of no command or prohibition that they be employed or omitted; but it is a question, in the first place, concerning the eminent article of our Christian faith, as the apostle testifies, that the truth of the Gospel might continue, which is obscured and perverted by such compulsion or command, because such adiaphora are then either publicly required for the sanction of false doctrine, superstition, and idolatry, and for the suppression of pure doctrine and Christian liberty, or at least are abused for this purpose by the adversaries, and are thus viewed.<sup>24</sup> (emphasis added)

If any doubt were left as to the Formula's teachings on fellowship, Article XII "tied up the loose ends" by rejecting and condemning any other error that might have surfaced since the Reformation began. It was made very clear that the Lutheran church had no room for, and would not tolerate anyone who held to the heretical teachings enumerated in Article XII.

Thus we see that the Formula of Concord teaches and requires that Lutherans adhere to a "unit concept" of

fellowship -- no matter what name is given to the doctrine or its principles -- and can indeed be considered a "Formula for Fellowship". This is not a mere academic truth, divorced from the realities of Christian living or from the love of Christ. The truth stated so clearly in Article X applies equally to all the controversies addressed in the Formula, and thus to any disputed doctrine: any error or offense in doctrine eventually obscures the Gospel and impacts justification by grace alone, through faith alone -- in Christ alone. There are no "minor issues" where doctrine is concerned.

It is misunderstanding of this important truth, or a lack of appreciation for it, that allows Lutherans -- and indeed, Christians of all other denominations -- to wrongly believe that it is possible, permissible, and perhaps even proper to distinguish "levels" of fellowship. The Lutheran Confessions tell of no such distinction, because Scripture speaks of no such distinction. Our Lutheran love for and dedication to the doctrine of justification compels that we understand fellowship as a "unit", and the Formula of Concord requires it. This we believe, teach and confess -- we reject and condemn all other opinions.

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<http://members.aol.com/gracewww>

<http://www.execpc.com/~thahm/index>

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<sup>1</sup>This happened to me in 1989 in St. Louis.

<sup>2</sup> This is detailed in a number of recent question and/or comments posted to the *Questions & Answers* section of the WELS web site.

<sup>3</sup> Even the LCMS recognizes this. At their web site (<http://www.lcms.org/cic/wels.html>) is the following Q&A:

"What are the main differences between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS)?"

A. From the LCMS perspective, the three main theological differences between the LCMS and the WELS are the following:

1) The biblical understanding of fellowship.

The WELS holds to what is called the "unit concept" of fellowship, which places virtually all joint expressions of the Christian faith on the same level. In an official statement made in 1960 the WELS states, "Church fellowship should therefore be treated as a unit concept, covering every joint expression, manifestation, and demonstration of a common faith" (Doctrinal Statements of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1970, pp. 51-52). The LCMS, however, has historically not understood or practiced church fellowship in this way. Our Synod, for example, has made a distinction between altar and pulpit fellowship (for which full doctrinal agreement is required) and other manifestations of Christian fellowship, such as prayer fellowship (which do not necessarily require full doctrinal agreement). Disagreements on this issue led the Wisconsin to break fellowship with the LCMS in 1961.

2) The doctrine of the ministry.

3) The role of women in the church.

<sup>4</sup> The recent "Full Communion" agreements of the ELCA with the Reformed, Episcopal, and Moravian churches, and the LWF's agreement with the Roman Catholic Church on Justification certainly lead one to lose hope that those "Lutheran-in-name-only" churches will ever return to true confessional Lutheranism.

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<sup>5</sup> "Theses on Church Fellowship", pp. 27-37, in *Doctrinal Statements of the WELS*, prepared by the Commission on Inter-Church Relations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1997 (Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee).

<sup>6</sup> This purpose has already been achieved admirably and numerous times. See especially: John Brug, *Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth* (Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, 1996) and Curtis Jahn, ed., *Essays on Church Fellowship* (Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, 1996) .

<sup>7</sup> *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 453.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.* -- *Preface to the Smalcald Articles*. p. 459.

<sup>9</sup> See F. Bente, *Historical Introduction to the Symbolical Books*, pp. 235 - 256, in *Concordia Triglotta* for a thorough review.

<sup>10</sup> See Manfred Roensch, "The Formula of Concord in the History of German Lutheranism", in *No Other Gospel* (Northwestern Publishing House: Milwaukee, 1980), especially p. 63ff.

<sup>11</sup> I have yet to find a source to tell me when and where the term "unit concept" originated.

<sup>12</sup> The example of Luther at the Marburg meeting with Zwingli and Bucer is discussed on pp. 374-376 of "Fellowship Then and Now", contained in *Essays on Church Fellowship*.

<sup>13</sup> "Fellowship Then and Now", *Essays*, p. 376. Quotation cited there from *Lutheraner*, 1908, p. 111.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 353-374.

<sup>15</sup> Bente, p. 94.

<sup>16</sup> "A Lutheran Stance Toward Ecumenism", November 1974, found at <http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/text/ecumenism.txt>.

<sup>17</sup> "The Nature and Implications of the Concept of Fellowship", LCMS CTCR, found at: <http://www.lcms.org/ctcr/docs/fellow-2.html>.

<sup>18</sup> Term used by Carl J. Lawrenz, "Essay on Church Fellowship", in *Essays on Church Fellowship*, p. 408.

<sup>19</sup> Two web sites contain numerous examples. The first is maintained by a WELS member in the Milwaukee area who stops short of saying the WELS is wrong: "The WELS and the Doctrine of Church Fellowship" at <http://www.execpc.com/~thahm/index>. The other is part of the web site of Grace Church in Waukegan, pastored by Robert Rhyne: <http://members.aol.com/gracewww>.

<sup>20</sup> Darald Gruen, Letter of July 19, 1996, found at: <http://members.aol.com/gracewww/gruen.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Rhyne, Letter of Resignation from Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church., found at: <http://members.aol.com/gracewww/resign.htm>.

<sup>22</sup> "Testimony of a Former WELS Member", found at: <http://www.execpc.com/~hahmt/other4.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> Article VII, paragraph 1, *Thorough Declaration*.

<sup>24</sup> Paragraph 14, Article X, *Thorough Declaration*.