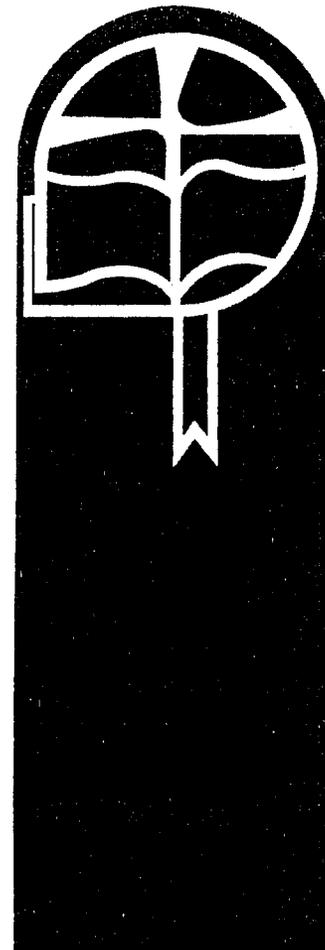


GUIDING PRINCIPLES

FOR THE USE OF



A Statement Of Scriptural And Confessional Principles

WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO THE
EXPRESSION
OF
DISSENT

A Report of the
Commission on Theology and Church Relations
The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod
November 1973

Preface

In its 1973 synodical convention The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod adopted *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* as a formal “statement of belief” (Resolution 3-01, *Proceedings*, pp. 127—128).

While many have greeted this action with enthusiasm, others have disagreed with it. Considerable discussion has taken place in the Synod on the meaning of the convention’s action, as well as on the means that are available to the members of the Synod for the expression of dissent.

The “Guiding Principles” that follow were prepared to help the members of the Synod understand how the Synod itself has spoken to such questions. The initial draft was prepared at the request of President Preus and discussed with the Council of Presidents in July and September before its submission to the CTCR in September 1973 for further consideration. After discussion and revision in two meetings of the commission, it was formally adopted for distribution throughout the Synod.

In order to further the development of theological consensus in the Synod, President Preus has asked the CTCR to provide leadership in carrying out its constitutional responsibilities to deal with statements of dissent or objections to the Synod’s doctrinal statements. In response to that request, the commission adopted the following “Policy for Processing Communications and Statements of Dissent”:

The CTCR expresses its intention to listen carefully to all who have objections to or misgivings about synodically adopted “statements of belief” and/or doctrinal resolutions, or who offer suggestions for their improvement. The commission also seeks to promote conversation with groups or individuals, where this is desirable and feasible, in an attempt to resolve doctrinal differences and misunderstandings in accordance with the Scriptures and the Confessions. The commission implores the aid and blessing of the Holy Spirit that these endeavors may instruct and edify Christ’s holy people.

- A. The role of the commission in carrying out this responsibility shall be:
 1. To receive and consider all communications and statements of dissent with regard to synodically adopted “statements of belief” and doctrinal resolutions;
 2. To classify all these communications and determine the nature of any dissent;
 3. To weigh all criticisms or suggestions regarding synodically adopted “statements of belief” and/or doctrinal resolutions;

4. To determine if the dissent in any way involves disagreement with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

B. After the commission has given full consideration to these communications, it shall proceed as follows:

1. If the commission is persuaded that the criticism or dissent is in error, it shall communicate this to the individual, and, where necessary, to the respective officials for whatever further action may be necessary;

2. If criticism or dissent is found to be valid, the CTCR will attempt

a. to clarify the issue for the Synod;

b. to recommend to the Synod changes or appropriate action.

3. The commission will make an appropriate report to the church.

This policy statement expresses the commission's hope that its "Guiding Principles," as well as its subsequent consideration of objections to such synodical doctrinal statements as *A Statement*, will assist the Synod in the "conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith" (Constitution, Article III).

DR. RALPH A. BOHLMANN, *Executive Secretary*
COMMISSION ON THEOLOGY AND CHURCH RELATIONS
The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod
November 1973

convention calling for revision or rescission. While the conscience of the dissenter shall be respected, the consciences of others, as well as the collective will of the Synod, shall also be respected.

b. 1973 Resolution 2-12 (*Proceedings*, pp. 111—115): "To Understand Article II of the Synod's Constitution as Requiring the Formulation and Adoption of Synodical Doctrinal Statements."

c. 1971 Resolution 5-24 (*Proceedings*, pp. 163—165): "To Define Status of Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements."

d. 1971 Resolution 2-21 (*Proceedings*, pp. 117—120): "To Uphold Synodical Doctrinal Resolutions."

e. 1969 Resolution 2-27 (*Proceedings*, p. 91): "To Honor and Uphold Doctrinal Statements."

f. 1969 Resolution 2-06 (*Proceedings*, pp. 85—86): "To Preserve Doctrinal Unity Through Proper Supervision."

g. 1967 Resolution 2-04 (*Proceedings*, pp. 88—89): "To Adopt 'A Declaration on the Status and Use of Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements.'"

h. CTCR Statement: "Status and Use of Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements" (1967 *Workbook*, pp. 51—52).

i. 1965 Resolution 2-08 (*Proceedings*, p. 96): "To Uphold and Honor the Doctrinal Content of Synodically Adopted Statements."

j. 1962 Resolution 3-17 (*Proceedings*, pp. 105—106): "Resolution 9 and Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements."

k. 1962 Resolution 6-01 (*Proceedings*, pp. 122—123): "Constitutionality of Resolution 9 of Committee 3 of the 1959 Synodical Convention."

l. 1959 Resolution 9, Committee 3 (*Proceedings*, pp. 191—192): "Subscribing to the 'Brief Statement,' the General Confessions, and Particular Symbols of the Lutheran Church, etc."

m. 1959 Resolution 11, Committee 3 (*Proceedings*, pp. 192—193): "Resolutions on Doctrinal Matters."

3. The status of such a "statement of belief" is specified as follows in 1971 Resolution 5-24 (*Proceedings*, p. 165):

That in the case of the aforementioned more formal and comprehensive statements of belief that the Synod declare —

(1) its position that these statements, together with all other formulations of doctrine, derive their authority from the Word of God which they set forth from the Holy Scriptures;

(2) its insistence that the ministry of the church regard these formulations with special seriousness and that those who disagree with these formulations in part or in whole be held to present their objections to them formally to those officials whom the Synod has given the immediate supervision of their doctrine;

(3) its conviction that as a result of joint study of the Word of God the Holy Spirit will lead the Synod into all truth, that possible errors in the aforementioned statements will be discovered and corrected, that instances of failure to submit to the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures will be evangelically dealt with on an individual pastoral basis, and that the Synod can speak with a voice that is Scriptural, Gospel oriented, truly Lutheran, and that we will continue to "walk together" as a true Synod.

rected, that instances of failure to submit to the clear teaching of the Holy Scriptures will be evangelically dealt with on an individual pastoral basis, and that the Synod can speak with a voice that is Scriptural, Gospel oriented, truly Lutheran, and that we will continue to "walk together" as a true Synod.

Accordingly, the following resolution is herewith submitted.

WHEREAS, *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, issued by the President of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in consultation with the vice-presidents of the Synod, 3 March 1972, addresses itself to the doctrinal issues troubling the church today; and

WHEREAS, *A Statement* presents what the Synod throughout its history has confessed and taught on these issues, as witnessed to by synodical statements, catechetical expositions, and convention resolutions; and

WHEREAS, *A Statement* is, therefore, neither a new standard of orthodoxy nor a document "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" (FC, SD, Comp. Summary, paragraph 2); and

WHEREAS, The Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations has evaluated *A Statement* as follows:

We find the doctrinal content of *A Statement* to be in accord with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions and to contain nothing contrary to them. We also find the doctrinal content of *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* to be in accord with the doctrinal position of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod as it has been taught historically and expressed in the official doctrinal statements of the Synod [Adopted 3 November 1972];

and

WHEREAS, *A Statement*, in its entirety, has been presented to the congregations and clergy of the Synod, and during the past 16 months has been studied and discussed throughout the church, and has been approved by various synodical boards (Board of Control, Springfield; Board for Higher Education) and congregations; and

WHEREAS, The Lutheran church in the past, when confronted with doctrinal controversy and crisis, has accepted expressions of belief which are in agreement with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, e. g., the *Thirteen Theses of Doctor Walther*, 1881; therefore be it

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod declare *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*, in all its parts, to be Scriptural and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions, and therefore a formulation which derives its authority from the Word of God and which expresses the Synod's position on current doctrinal issues; and be it further

Resolved, That The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod declare *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* to be a "more formal and comprehensive statement of belief" in the sense of Resolution 5-24 of the 1971 Milwaukee convention, and that the Synod further declare that *A Statement* shall hold the status defined in said resolution (Preamble, above).

2. The most important recent synodical statements are the following:

a. *Bylaw 109e* (adopted in 1973 Resolution 3-02, *Proceedings*, p. 128) which states:

While retaining the right of brotherly dissent, members of the Synod are expected as part of the life together within the synodical fellowship to honor and to uphold the resolutions of the Synod. If such resolutions are of a doctrinal nature, dissent is to be expressed first within the fellowship of peers, then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR THE USE OF A STATEMENT OF SCRIPTURAL AND CONFSSIONAL PRINCIPLES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE EXPRESSION OF DISSENT

Introduction

The 1973 convention of the LCMS declared *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* "to be Scriptural and in accord with the Lutheran Confessions, and therefore a formulation which derives its authority from the Word of God and which expresses the Synod's position on current doctrinal issues" (1973 Resolution 3-01, *Proceedings*, p. 128).¹

The convention indicated the status it wishes *A Statement* to have by declaring it to be a "more formal and comprehensive statement of belief in the sense of Resolution 5-24 of the 1971 Milwaukee convention," and stating that *A Statement* "shall hold the status defined in said resolution" (1973 Resolution 3-01, *Proceedings*, p. 128).

It is important for our life together in the Synod that we do not give our synodically adopted doctrinal statements "more or less status than they deserve" (1969 Resolution 2-27, *Proceedings*, p. 91). Our Synod has spoken on this question a number of times in its recent history.² The guiding principles that follow summarize and apply what the Synod has said about the status and use of its doctrinal statements in general and of a synodical "statement of belief" (such as *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles*) in particular. It is hoped that these principles will help the Synod find a greater measure of unity in its confession of faith and witness to the world.

Guiding Principles

1. Because of the action of the 1973 synodical convention, *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* is now to be regarded as an official synodical document which is to be used throughout the Synod rather than as the statement of an individual intended for a somewhat limited use. As a synodical document, *A Statement* "expresses the Synod's position on current doctrinal issues" (1973 Resolution 3-01, *Proceedings*, p. 128). More precisely, *A Statement* has the status of being a synodical "statement of belief" in the sense of 1971 Resolution 5-24.³
2. The doctrinal authority of *A Statement* is not derived from the majority vote of the 1973 synodical convention, but "from the Word of God" which it sets forth "from Holy Scripture" (1971 Resolution 5-24; cf. 1973 Resolution 3-01, First Resolved, *Proceedings*, p. 128). Such synodical statements of belief, "insofar as they are in accord

with the Scriptures and the pattern of doctrine set forth in the Lutheran symbols, are, pursuant to Article II of the Synod's Constitution, binding upon all its members (cf. also Article VII)" (1973 Resolution 2-12, *Proceedings*, p. 115).

In adopting *A Statement*, the Synod does not "presume to establish doctrine, but intends only to confess doctrines taught by the Scriptures." Doctrine "taught by the Scriptures and confessed by the Synod" does not become binding upon its members "only if and when it is unanimously approved. Rather, the Synod holds that a doctrine must be unanimously accepted because it is clearly taught in Scripture" (1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 118).

The Synod "holds that its confessional base is as broad as *Holy Scripture*, and that provided a doctrinal resolution is in fact in harmony with the Word of God, which is 'the only rule and norm of doctrine,' the content of such a resolution is *intrinsic* to the Synod's confessional basis" (1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 118).

3. The Synod has clearly stated that its doctrinal formulations are "subordinate to the Lutheran Confessions" (1971 Resolution 5-24, *Proceedings*, p. 165; cf. also 1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 119: "not to be regarded as equal to the Lutheran Symbols"; 1969 Resolution 2-27, *Proceedings*, p. 91: "standing under the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions; and 1969 Resolution 2-06, *Proceedings*, p. 86, "under the norms of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions").

The adoption of such doctrinal statements does not expand the Synod's confessional basis. Rather, the Synod understands "Article II of its Constitution as permitting, and at times even requiring the formulation and adoption of doctrinal statements as definitive of the Synod's position relative to controverted issues" (1973 Resolution 2-12, *Proceedings*, pp. 113—114). The Synod recognizes that "the only basis for the acceptance of such statements is that they are in accord with Scripture and the pattern of doctrine set forth in the Symbols" (1973 Resolution 2-12, *Proceedings*, p. 115). By the same token, for the substantiation of any claim that the doctrinal content of such statements is incorrect, it must be demonstrated that it is not in accord with Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

4. The Synod has repeatedly urged its members "to honor and uphold the synodically adopted statements as valid interpretations of Christian doctrine" (1969 Resolution 2-27, *Proceedings*, p. 91; cited in Council of Presidents Statement and incorporated in 1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 119; cf. 1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96, and 1962 Resolution 3-17, *Proceedings*, p. 106). The Synod has further stated that to "honor and uphold" its doctrinal statements "means not merely to examine and study them, but to support, act, and teach in accordance with them until they have been shown to be contrary to God's Word" (1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 119).
5. Since *A Statement* is a formal synodical "statement of belief," it is

blessing of God's Holy Spirit, serve the "conservation and promotion of the unity of the true faith" (Constitution, Article III) and aid the Synod in the faithful proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to all the world.

FOOTNOTES

1. The full text of Resolution 3-01 is as follows (from *Proceedings*, pp. 127—128):

Preamble

The Formula of Concord, in the Lutheran Confessions, mentions Doctor Luther as asserting that "the Word of God is and should remain the sole rule and norm of doctrine, and that no human being's writings dare be placed on a par with it, but that everything be subjected to it." The next paragraph begins: "This, of course, does not mean that other good, useful, and pure books such as interpretations of the Holy Scriptures, refutations of errors, and expositions of doctrinal articles, should be rejected. If they are in accord with the aforementioned pattern of doctrine they are to be accepted and used as helpful expositions and explanations." (FC, SD, Summary, paragraphs 9—10)

Doctor Walther's "Thirteen Theses," which emerged during the Predestination Controversy in America, surely fits into this category. The first of these theses appeared in *Der Lutheraner*, 15 January 1880, and the last in the 1 May 1880 issue. The entire 13 were approved one year later by a vast majority at the synodical convention in Fort Wayne, 11—12 May 1881. (Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1881, pp. 35—36, 41)

Our Synod has continued to be greatly concerned with doctrine, as past convention resolutions indicate (1950—1971). Also, in order to clarify the status of doctrinal statements, the Synod approved Resolution 5-24, "Status of Synodically Adopted Doctrinal Statements," at the Milwaukee convention, July 1971, which reads:

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the desirability of the formulation of doctrinal statements which clearly set forth the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and apply them to issues of our day; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod clearly state that such doctrinal formulations are subordinate to the Lutheran Confessions; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod distinguish between resolutions concerning doctrine formulated and adopted at a convention and more formal statements of belief which are produced by officially authorized groups, and which are then presented to the congregations and clergy of the Synod for study and discussion, and which are subsequently adopted by a synodical convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod reaffirm the resolutions of recent conventions that the Synod "honor and uphold the synodically adopted statements as valid interpretations of Christian doctrine" (1969 *Proceedings*, p. 91); and be it finally

Resolved, That in the case of the aforementioned more formal and comprehensive statements of belief that the Synod declare —

- (1) its position that these statements, together with all other formulations of doctrine, derive their authority from the Word of God which they set forth from the Holy Scriptures;
- (2) its insistence that the ministry of the church regard these formulations with special seriousness and that those who disagree with these formulations in part or in whole be held to present their objections to them formally to those officials whom the Synod has given the immediate supervision of their doctrine;
- (3) its conviction that as a result of joint study of the Word of God the Holy Spirit will lead the Synod into all truth, that possible errors in the aforementioned statements will be discovered and cor-

is in error and the Synod acts on that account to modify the document or to change its status.

12. It must be recognized that the process of expressing and dealing with dissent may reveal that the dissenter actually disagrees with the confessional position of the Synod, and not merely with a formulation in a synodical statement of belief. It is imperative that all members of the Synod whose disagreement is in fact with the confessional position of the Synod be dealt with fraternally, evangelically, pastorally, and in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod for the exercise of doctrinal discipline.
13. While it must be recognized that a separation may regretfully be called for when neither the dissenter nor the Synod is persuaded to alter their position, all members of the Synod should earnestly and frequently invoke the blessing of the Holy Spirit "that as a result of joint study of the Word of God, the Holy Spirit will lead the Synod into all truth" and "that the Synod can speak with a voice that is Scriptural, Gospel oriented, truly Lutheran, and that we will continue to 'walk together' as a true Synod" (1971 Resolution 5-24, *Proceedings*, p. 165).

Summary

The action of the 1973 synodical convention in declaring *A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles* to be a synodical "statement of belief" means that this document is now an official statement of the Synod's doctrinal position on those matters with which it deals. As such, the Synod expects all its members to "honor and uphold" it, that is, to support, act, and teach in accordance with it.

The Synod's action in adopting *A Statement* is an application of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to current questions, rather than a broadening of the Synod's confessional basis as such. Accordingly, the adoption of *A Statement* as a synodical statement of belief does not mean that the members of the Synod have been asked to formally express their assent to *A Statement* by subscribing to it. But the Synod, as a voluntary association of Christians who have agreed to walk together, rightfully expects any of its members who disagree with such formal statements of belief to express their dissent or objections through synodically established procedures. If such dissent is for doctrinal reasons, the Synod further expects the dissenter to demonstrate on the basis of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions the need for the revision or rescission of any formulation alleged to be doctrinally incorrect.

The process of dealing with such dissent may well lead to a modification or clarification of the statement of belief, but it may also result in the application of the evangelical and fraternal disciplinary procedures specified in our synodical Constitution and Bylaws. *A Statement* is not to be used mechanically or legalistically to discipline members of the Synod, but it is to be honored, upheld, and used fraternally and evangelically throughout the Synod in an effort to assist the Synod in remaining faithful to its confessional position. Used in this way, *A Statement* may, with the

assumed that all members of the Synod do in fact honor and uphold it except in those cases where they have expressed disagreement with the doctrinal content of *A Statement* in accordance with the Synod's established procedures for expressing and dealing with such dissent. Accordingly,

- a. There should be no effort to have *A Statement* formally and individually subscribed by the members of the Synod. Although assent to the Synod's doctrinal statements is assumed in all cases where no dissent has been expressed, the members of the Synod are expected to subscribe formally only to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.
 - b. At their ordination, installation, or induction into office, pastors, teachers, professors, and other church workers of the Synod shall continue to be pledged only to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.
 - c. Those who supervise the doctrine of the members of the Synod (e. g., the synodical president and vice-presidents, District presidents, various boards, institutional presidents) should remind the members of the church's ministry whom they supervise of their obligation to honor and uphold the Synod's doctrinal statements, or, if they cannot in good conscience do so, to register their disagreement with such statements by means of synodically established procedures.
 - d. Congregations or agencies of the Synod who are calling pastors, teachers, or professors to serve them are entitled to know and free to inquire whether persons under consideration for a call or appointment do in fact honor and uphold *A Statement*, or if not, what is the nature and extent of their disagreement. In the latter case, such congregations or agencies will want to consider carefully whether such dissent has been expressed according to established synodical procedures, and whether such disagreement or dissent deals with purely formal considerations (such as procedure, terminology, phraseology, and sequence of topics) or with substantive doctrinal issues.
6. Registering dissent with the doctrinal content of a synodical statement of belief such as *A Statement* should be regarded as an effort to lead the Synod to correct or modify its position as expressed in the doctrinal statement under question. The Synod's procedures for dealing with such dissent rest on the assumption that all members of the Synod should honor and uphold the Synod's doctrinal position, since "the very concept of a Synod ('walking together') precludes individualism which allows every man to interpret Synod's confessional position according to his own subjective preference" (1973 Resolution 2-12, *Proceedings*, p. 114; cf. also 1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 118). Accordingly, divergent doctrinal positions cannot coexist within the Synod indefinitely and without serious effort to achieve confessional unanimity. Therefore the process for dealing with dissent

according to the Synod's established procedures should result in a modification or correction of either the dissenter's position or the Synod's expression of its doctrinal position, rather than continued dissent. Those who disagree with the doctrinal content of a synodical statement of belief such as *A Statement* owe it to the Synod to demonstrate from the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions that the doctrinal statement either does not correctly apply the Scriptures and Confessions to the questions with which it deals or that the statement fails to leave questions open which are not settled by the Scriptures themselves.

7. When dissent or disagreement is expressed with a synodical statement of belief such as *A Statement*, either by those delegates who voted against the adoption of the statement or by other members of the Synod at a later time, care should be taken to distinguish between formal and substantive disagreement. Concerns dealing with such matters as procedure, the choice of phraseology or terminology, the sequence of topics, or the omission of certain valid emphases are merely matters of *form* and do not ordinarily in themselves constitute valid grounds for failing to honor and uphold the doctrinal content of synodically adopted statements of belief. However, it is a matter of *substantive* disagreement when it is held that a synodical doctrinal statement does not in fact correctly apply the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions to the matters with which it deals.

8. The Synod's established procedures for registering dissent with its doctrinal statements include the following:

a. "That we call upon those who teach publicly in the church (pastors, teachers, and professors) to test their findings and opinions with their peer groups before presenting them to the church at large and to refrain in brotherly love from disseminating doctrinal opinions in such manner and in such situations as will cause confusion and offense in the church" (1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96).

It is expected that pastors and teachers will discuss their objections and concerns in their conferences, that professors will discuss such matters with their teaching and administrative colleagues, and that staff members will discuss their objections with their boards and other staff persons.

b. With reference to statements of belief, the Synod has requested "that those who disagree with these formulations in part or in whole be held to present their objections to them formally to those officials whom the Synod has given the immediate supervision of their doctrine" (1971 Resolution 5-24, *Proceedings*, p. 165). This means that pastors and teachers are to present their objections to their District president; professors at synodical institutions, to the president and board of control of their institution, as well as to the District president of the geographical District in which the institution is located (cf. Bylaw 1.09 d, adopted in 1973 Resolu-

tion 3-02, *Proceedings*, p. 128); and staff members to their boards or commissions and any appropriate supervisory staff members.

c. The Synod has further provided that dissent is to be brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (cf. Bylaw 1.09e; 1962 Resolution 3-17, *Proceedings*, p. 106; 1965 Resolution 2-08, *Proceedings*, p. 96; Council of Presidents Statement incorporated in 1971 Resolution 2-21, *Proceedings*, p. 119). The Commission on Theology and Church Relations should make every effort to express its opinion on the matter in question in ample time to permit further appeal on the part of the dissenter.

The commission's biennial report to the Synod should also indicate the opinions it has rendered on all such expressions of dissent, and should include any recommendation deemed advisable to clarify or correct possible inadequacies in the document under question.

d. Members of the Synod may submit overtures to the synodical convention in an effort to have the Synod change its position or recognize the viability of the dissenting opinion. Bylaw 1.09e asks that dissent "be expressed first within the fellowship of peers, then brought to the attention of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations before finding expression as an overture to the convention calling for revision or rescision" (adopted in 1973 Resolution 3-02, *Proceedings*, p. 128).

9. From the fact that the Synod has established the aforementioned procedures for expressing and dealing with dissent, it is clear that the Synod does not intend to impede the fraternal discussion of doctrinal issues, and that the Synod recognizes that such discussion may even lead to the revision or correction of its official doctrinal statements. But it is equally clear that the Synod, in the interest of doing things decently and in order, has established the aforementioned procedures for expressing and dealing with dissent so that the church is not disturbed by its members engaging in loveless public criticism or disparagement of its official position.

10. In evaluating and dealing with dissent or disagreement which has been expressed in accordance with the aforementioned procedures, all supervisory officials and boards, as well as the Commission on Theology and Church Relations and any peer groups that may be involved, should always endeavor to distinguish carefully between formal and substantive dissent, and to deal with the latter in terms of the Synod's confessional base, namely, Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions (cf. Constitution, Article II).

11. *A Statement*, as a formal synodical statement of belief which applies Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions to current issues, remains, in all its parts, the official position of the Synod until such time as the Synod itself has been persuaded from the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions that the doctrinal content of *A Statement*