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Why Another School?  
The Doctrinal History and Reasons for the Formation of Immanuel Lutheran High School,  
College, and Seminary

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## **Table of Contents/Outline**

Abstract – pg.2

Introduction –pg.3

Historiography: Scholars’ Views on Unity in American Lutheranism – pg.5

Synodical Conference Begins Pursuit of Doctrinal Union – pg.7

Unity Threatened: Disagreements Arise Between Synods – pg.11

The Missouri (LCMS) and the Wisconsin (WELS) Debate on:

Church and Ministry – pg.11

Chaplaincy and Scouting – pg.14

Church Fellowship Explained – pg.14

Church Fellowship Between the LCMS and WELS – pg.19

Doctrinal Integrity Pursued: Formation of Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary (ILC) – pg.24

Independent Churches Form the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) – pg.25

Difference Between the CLC and WELS Explained – pg.26

Conclusion – pg.29

Appendix A: A Summary of the Doctrine of Church Fellowship – pg.32

Appendix B: A Timeline of Events – pg.33

Bibliography – pg.34

## **Abstract**

My paper analyzes the split between two major synods within Lutheranism and how this led to the formation of the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) and Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary (ILC), located in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The two synods that split were the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS) and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The WELS is a more conservative synod and they cut ties with the LCMS because of its change from conservative to liberal viewpoints on certain doctrines. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), also referred to as the Norwegian Synod, is another synod that is involved in this period of history but since the ELS is in confessional agreement with the WELS it is grouped with the WELS. The CLC, also a conservative synod, formed as a result of separation from the LCMS, WELS, and ELS over disagreements in doctrine and, as a result of this separation, ILC was formed as a school of the CLC. Therefore it is essential to look both at the broad perspective of liberalism vs. conservatism as it applies to the LCMS and the WELS and also the strife within the conservative synods that led to the formation of the CLC. This history, both broad and specific, describes the doctrinal reasons for the formation of ILC and why this institution is so important to its members.

## **Introduction**

The topic of religion is one that is often surrounded by controversy and discussion. After all, there are so many different types of religions out there. Which one is true or is it even just one? Scholars have debated these very questions over thousands of years among the major religions of the world. This paper focuses on Christianity and specifically Lutheran Christianity in America. Lutheranism is one of the largest denominations of Christianity in America and dates to 15<sup>th</sup> century Germany. However, as stated, there are many differences in religion and Lutheranism is no exception. These differences and debates have been influential in the formation of the different synods in Lutheranism and the colleges and seminaries of the various synods.

Groups of like-minded churches often form larger groups or federations called synods, a word which comes from Greek and literally means “same road.” If a particular church is in a synod, then members of that church are also in fellowship with other churches of that synod. Some synods differ on the extent of doctrinal agreement necessary for fellowship.

Within the realm of American Lutheranism there are several different synods. Most of these synods believe the core teachings of the Lutheran faith such as: belief in Jesus Christ and His sacrifice for sins, the Law and the Gospel, the Lord’s Supper, and Baptism. But these synods differ on other doctrines and are therefore not in full agreement with one another. There is a split among Lutherans between liberals and conservatives. Several of the larger synods are becoming more and more liberal with the changing time which in turn has led to some disagreements with the conservative synods.

One such conservative synod in American Lutheranism is the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC). This is a relatively small synod in the larger context of Lutheranism. The

CLC exists today because the founding members broke ties with the larger synods in Lutheranism over disagreements in doctrine. Therefore, the history of the CLC can be traced back to many larger synods such as: The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) also referred to as the Wisconsin Synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) also referred to as the Norwegian Synod. The LCMS, WELS, and ELS were all once members of the Synodical Conference. The Synodical Conference was one of the first conservative Lutheran conferences in America.

The formation of the CLC led to the need for a school to educate the next generation in the synod. For this reason, Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary (ILC), which was formed in 1959 before the CLC, became the primary school of the CLC and continues to exist today. The cause of this separation and formation lies in the doctrines of the Lutheran faith, and synods still debate these doctrines today. Because many of these debates still continue to plague Lutheran synods today, it is important for those growing up in the synods to have a strong knowledge of the history behind the inception of their institutions. It is equally important for those outside of the synods and Lutheranism to know why debates on doctrines that seem so miniscule can actually mean a lot to the members of these synods. The history of ILC and its role in the conservative synods of American Lutheranism show that it was founded for the same reason as the Synodical Conference, although it was almost 100 years later. This main reason is the doctrinal integrity of the Bible.

## Historiography

Many scholars have written about Christianity and more specifically Lutheranism in America. However, when speaking about conservative Lutheranism, many of the smaller synods contained in this paper such as the CLC and schools such as ILC are overlooked. Because the CLC and ILC are so small compared to the rest of American Lutheranism, the majority of scholars only write briefly, if at all, concerning their histories.

However, there is much literature about the larger synods from which the CLC and ILC eventually came. One main scholar on the topic of religion and more specifically American Lutheranism and its doctrinal divisions is Martin Marty.

Marty states one point on unity in American Lutheranism,

Late in the nineteenth century, thanks to the restless student movement, returning missionaries, and thoughtful laity, leaders in these churches got the message that the central Christian theme of oneness in Christ had been hopelessly compromised. Southern Baptist, northern Methodist, Norwegian Lutheran, and Scottish Presbyterian outposts and extensions had to contend with each other to establish clinics, schools, and churches on a typical Micronesian islet. In order to legitimate their competition for converts they had to stress their differences, not their likenesses.<sup>1</sup>

From this statement it is clear that Marty characterizes Christianity as a religion in which there are many different churches who disagree on the application of certain doctrines. Although these churches are all grouped under the name “Christianity” many of them are not in fellowship together. Marty looks at this as almost a paradox because the main goal of many of these churches is doctrinal unity.

In another work Marty again writes concerning the lack of unity in American Lutheranism,

Mention of tensions or splits between North and South, Social Gospel and Salvationist movements, liberals and evangelicals, or between Catholic and Protestants, “Know-Nothing” anti-Catholics, and creators of anti-immigration sentiment and action points to the fact that the

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<sup>1</sup> Martin Marty, *The Public Church* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1981), 71.

Christianity that prevailed in the United States and Canada a century after American independence and a half-century after Canadian confederation (1867) was anything but united.<sup>2</sup>

Another scholar of unity in American Lutheranism agrees with Marty's point that unity was a difficult prize to accomplish. G. Everett Arden states that the slow and painful emergence of unity in American Lutheranism is the most interesting part of its history. Arden also states that although Lutherans have labored for this unity for many ages, it is still unfulfilled for the most part.<sup>3</sup> Marty and Arden are two scholars who find the history of Lutheranism in America interesting because of unity. They do not disagree on the importance of unity for Lutherans but they seem to be amazed by the difficulty in achieving unity.

One of the first main conservative Lutheran organizations contained in this paper is the Synodical Conference. As shown through the paper, the history of the CLC and ILC can be traced back to the Synodical Conference and the synods that comprised it. Richard C. Wolf is one scholar who characterizes the purpose of the Synodical Conference in this way,

The primary intent of the Synodical Conference was not to create another organization similar in structure to the General Synod, the United Synod in the South, or the General Council, but to express and promote unity among Lutherans in America at a level of doctrinal and confessional conservatism which was both to distinguish it from the other general bodies and, ultimately, to create internal difficulties which would fracture the very unity being sought.<sup>4</sup>

Along with Wolf, Armin Schuetze is another scholar who deals primarily with conservative Lutheranism in America. His work, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor*, is the most detailed work on the history of the Synodical Conference. Since the CLC and more specifically the focus of my paper, ILC, have roots that trace back to the Synodical Conference, I will use Schuetze's work for much of my background material.

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<sup>2</sup> Martin Marty, *The Christian World* (New York: Modern Library, 2007), 177.

<sup>3</sup> G. Everett Arden, "En Route to Unity," in *The Maturing of American Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 224.

<sup>4</sup> Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 82.

I have only given a brief look at the historiography of this topic but the majority of scholars share the view that doctrinal unity among Christianity and Lutheranism in America is a difficult feat to accomplish. This is true for both large and small Christian organizations. However many churches and synods still desire this unity and this paper explains many of the reasons why they work for it. One such synod is the CLC and its school ILC. Through the study of the history and reasons for the formation of ILC, doctrinal unity is seen as a high priority for the members and people involved.

### **Synod Formation**

In order for one to fully understand the history of ILC and how it was formed, one must first understand synod formation in American Lutheranism. The first main union of Lutheran synods in America was the Evangelical Lutheran General Synod of the United States of North America, which was founded in 1820.<sup>5</sup> This large synod was the main authority in Lutheranism until 1863 when five participating synods left for political reasons, highlighted by the Civil War, and formed the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America.<sup>6</sup> However, in 1867, a third synod formed under the name, the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>7</sup>

These three synods were the basis for most unions in American Lutheranism until 1872, when the Synodical Conference formed. This Conference was a group of six separate synods and is the group from which the CLC eventually came.<sup>8</sup> The Synodical Conference came into existence because of issues on doctrinal agreement and fellowship, many of the same issues that

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<sup>5</sup> Armin Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000), 9.

<sup>6</sup> Schuetze, 9.

<sup>7</sup> Schuetze, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Schuetze, 9.

led to the eventual breakup of the conference. The members of the Synodical Conference sought doctrinal integrity and union based on the Bible. However pursuit of this endeavor created several debates on various doctrines in question. This idea of doctrinal integrity and union is seen throughout the years of the Synodical Conference and eventually in the formation of ILC.

The six main synods that joined to form the Synodical Conference were the: Joint Synod of Ohio, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Norwegian Synods.<sup>9</sup> From the beginning, doctrinal integrity was an important component of the Synodical Conference. But the founding members did not want to forget the primary purpose of their work, namely the saving of souls through the Biblical preaching of Jesus. The message of the first convention of the Synodical Conference in 1872 reinforced this theme. The opening sermon of the convention was a message to eliminate selfishness within the Conference and maintain pure doctrine to help stimulate mission efforts. However, as is the case with many large synods, keeping doctrinal unity is a continual struggle and this soon became evident in the Synodical Conference. From the period between 1880 and 1920, there were many organizational changes within the conference. There were as many as seven synods in the Synodical Conference in 1908 and as few as three in 1917.<sup>10</sup> Eventually the conference contained four synods, and this did not change until it was disbanded in 1967.

When looking at the history of the Synodical Conference, the desire for doctrinal preservation and unity can be seen in its origins. However, the sad truth is that many of the debates on doctrine become the ultimate cause of the Conference's downfall. But this same desire for unity in doctrine survives through the years and can be seen in the formation of ILC. But before focusing on ILC, it is important to look at the specific doctrines that were the basis

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<sup>9</sup> Schuetze, 20.

<sup>10</sup> Schuetze, 127-128.

for debate. Many of these changes and disagreements arose between conservative and liberal synods. As more liberal policies began to be adopted, conservative synods began to disagree and leave fellowship. This is the case in the relations between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod.

### **Liberal vs. Conservative**

The concept of liberalism in Lutheran churches is discussed in great detail between synods, and is one that seems to occur in all religions, not just Lutherans and not just Christianity. Historically speaking, synods within American Lutheranism used to be very conservative. But as a new age of liberalism enters the forum of religion, more and more Lutheran synods are becoming less conservative. This changing from conservative toward a more liberal viewpoint has led to new disagreements between synods. The Wisconsin Synod and CLC are two synods that have remained very conservative and therefore their disagreements are confined mainly to the issue of church fellowship. The Missouri Synod is an example of a formerly conservative synod that has become more liberal throughout the last forty years.

The disagreements between liberal synods and conservative synods include a myriad of doctrines. One such doctrine is the Creation account in Genesis. Conservative Lutherans believe that God created the universe in six natural and consecutive days. He did this by Himself through the power of His Word and this creation included everything on the earth. This is the type of Creation in which Lutherans have historically believed and that they have taught. However, many liberal churches still believe that God created the world, but they often look at it as Theistic Evolution or as only a “partial” creation. Theistic Evolution is the belief that God used evolution to create the world. It is a combination of the Creation account in Genesis and

the theory of Evolution.

Another debate between liberals and conservatives is in the area of marriage.

Conservative Lutherans believe that God created marriage when He created Adam and Eve, and thereby He instituted marriage as a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman that was not to be violated.<sup>11</sup> The ideas of liberalism are contrary to this conservative sentiment. Further, many liberal churches now promote same-sex marriages and no longer believe that marriage applies only to one man and one woman. Restrictions on divorce have also been loosened or changed in liberal churches which is also different from the conservative belief.

Liberals and conservatives also are at odds on the doctrine of Objective Justification.

The doctrine of Objective or Universal Justification is the teaching that God has declared everyone in the whole world not guilty of their sins. This verdict is a result of Jesus Christ's death and resurrection for the atonement of the sins of all the world. The debate on this doctrine centers on when this declaration of God was declared and for whom it was declared. Liberal churches teach that the declaration of not guilty covers most sinners but not the whole world.<sup>12</sup>

These are only a few examples of some of the differences that can arise between liberal and conservative Lutherans. As indicated earlier, the Synodical Conference was founded as a group of conservative synods. As liberal teachings began to enter, the Conference began to split apart over differing teachings. And even though many changes were about to occur, the principles of doctrinal integrity and union still survived and passed on to a new conservative synod, the CLC, and the school of the CLC, ILC. This introduction of liberal teaching into the Synodical Conference can be seen in the debates between the Missouri Synod and Wisconsin

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Sydow, *Martin Luther's Small Catechism* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), 56.

<sup>12</sup> Rick N. Curia, "The Significant History of the Doctrine of Objective or Universal Justification Among the Churches of the former Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America" (Paper given at the California Pastoral Conference of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1983), 4-8.

Synod concerning: the doctrine of church and ministry, military chaplaincy, scouting, and prayer fellowship.

### **Church and Ministry**

The period of the 1930s and 1940s marked not only a dark time for the United States as a nation but also for the relationship between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods. Although they were unified in the Synodical Conference, certain members of the Wisconsin Synod began to question some of the teachings of the Missouri. One of these teachings centered on the doctrine of church and ministry. This doctrine deals with the definition of the church and those who make up and serve that church. The debate arises because of the definition of the church and its role.

The Missouri position considered only the local congregation as “the church” and only it had the right to execute the keys of the church. This means that a Christian school and even the larger body of the synod are not part of the divine ministry and consequently, pastors are the only called servants of the Word, not teachers or professors.<sup>13</sup> The Wisconsin view was that both the congregation and the synod were included in the term “the church” and therefore they both held the power to execute the keys of the church.<sup>14</sup> Both Synods held that there were two different types of churches. One church was the local congregation and the actual people who made up that congregation. However, this visible church could contain hypocrites and unbelievers, since God is the only one who can read the heart. The other Church, which is often capitalized, is the group of actual believers who share the common faith. This Church is an invisible church since

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<sup>13</sup> “The Call” refers to the call of God for an individual to serve as a pastor or teacher.

<sup>14</sup> Schuetze, 235. The doctrine of the Office of the Keys states that Christ gave the power to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and retain the sins of impenitent sinners to His Church on earth. This Church is not a physical building or one congregation alone but the actual souls of those who believe in Christ as the Savior.

only God knows those who truly believe. This Church also cannot be contaminated by hypocrites and unbelievers. Beyond this area of agreement, the Wisconsin Synod also stated that schools are included in the term “ministry” and therefore, just like the pastors, the teachers at those schools are also divinely called to serve, a point not held by the Missouri Synod.

August Pieper, a former leader in the Wisconsin Synod, stated his view this way,

If we agreed with this (Missouri’s view on the church) we would have to cross out Matthew 18:20 and demolish the freedom of the congregation of the saints. The church, that is, the congregation of the sanctified, has all the freedom and godly right to come together in any means or number as long as the law of love is not hurt. The Church is nothing other than the congregation of saints. God gives us all the right to recognition and the right to speak.<sup>15</sup>

Representatives from the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods met in 1932 to resolve this difference. They formulated a document called the Thiensville Theses but the debate was far from over. J.P. Koehler, a pastor in the Wisconsin Synod, was not pleased with the outcome of the Thiensville Theses and called the document a “compromise.”<sup>16</sup> There were other members of the Wisconsin Synod who were just as displeased as Koehler and Pieper was one of them. Pieper reinforced his sentiment regarding the discussion and essentially called the agreement of the Thiensville Theses void. This reaction greatly disturbed the Missouri Synod and it quickly became apparent that further meetings with the Wisconsin Synod would be needed if a resolution was going to happen.

The next attempt to resolve the conflict of church and ministry came in 1946.<sup>17</sup> The Synodical Conference felt that a committee needed to be formulated to delve into a number of issues between synods. Therefore the Synodical Conference Interim Committee was created

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<sup>15</sup> Mark E. Braun, *A Tale of Two Synods: Events That Led to the Split between Wisconsin and Missouri* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003), 71. When Pieper uses the term: Saints, he is referring to someone who is set apart from sin because they believe. This is different from the Roman Catholic view of saints, which states that a saint is a higher level of Christian who can intercede with God the Father on behalf of those still on the earth.

<sup>16</sup> Braun, 70.

<sup>17</sup> Schuetze, 237.

with the goal of resolving the church and ministry debate as well as the new issue about military chaplaincy.<sup>18</sup> Over the next six years, the committee met several times and eventually passed a resolution to adopt the Thiensville Theses. This resolution also included a note that stated:

It should be clearly understood, however, as before said that there is no complete agreement within the Synodical Conference when these basic concepts of the doctrine of the Church and Ministry are translated into practical life of the Church and its Ministry (witness the Chaplaincy question for example). The original report of the Interim Committee clearly refers to the realm of disagreement among us.<sup>19</sup>

By stating this, the committee was admitting that there was agreement on the principles of the doctrine but not on the application of it. The main question that still needed to be answered was whether differences on the application of a particular doctrine constituted disagreement on that doctrine.

The final attempt to resolve the church and ministry debate came in 1956.<sup>20</sup> The Synodical Conference set-up a committee of members from each of the synods which deliberated on several topics including church and ministry. In the end, the committee came to an “impasse” and the question remained unanswered.<sup>21</sup> One may wonder why this situation remained unresolved in the Synodical Conference for so many years. There are several interpretations as to why. One is that each synod within the Synodical Conference taught what they believed to be right and many did not consider the issue to be relevant enough to destroy the entire Synodical Conference. The debates were also still being studied by seminaries within each synod so people believed that a resolution would come eventually. Finally, the majority of members felt that the difference was not in the doctrine itself, but in the application. Whatever the reason for its continuance in the Synodical Conference, this difference on church and ministry would prove to

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<sup>18</sup> Schuetze, 237.

<sup>19</sup> Synodical Conference, *Convention Proceedings*, 1952, 142-144.

<sup>20</sup> Schuetze, 238.

<sup>21</sup> Schuetze, 238.

be a significant stumbling block in the future, and ultimately a part of the cause for separation and dismemberment of the Synodical Conference.

### **Chaplaincy and Scouting**

The period of World War II in the United States brought about new controversies in the Synodical Conference. Two main areas of discussion were military chaplaincy and scouting. With respect to chaplaincy, the United States government felt that it was necessary to provide troops with spiritual care and morale. However, the men and women of the armed forces come from a wide variety of religious backgrounds and beliefs. To cover all areas, the government designed a base of three main types of religion: Protestant, Jewish, and Roman Catholic, and divided all soldiers into one of the three categories.<sup>22</sup> But this raised questions in the Synodical Conference, especially concerning the doctrine of church fellowship.

Church fellowship is defined as the special unity that a group of believers share through their faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>23</sup> Lutherans believe that the Holy Spirit creates faith when the Word of God is heard. This fellowship is very important to conservative synods. There are other churches that have a more liberal viewpoint and are not as strict in their views on church fellowship and base fellowship on agreement in some “important” doctrines. From the conservative viewpoint, members achieve fellowship when an individual or group declares that they are in agreement with all teachings or doctrines of a particular church. John F. Brug, a professor in the Wisconsin Synod, agrees with this definition in his work:

...when we speak about church fellowship in this book, we are referring to all activities in which Christians join together as members of visible churches. Church fellowship is every expression of faith in which Christians join together because they are united by their acceptance and confession of all of the teachings of Scripture. We are practicing church fellowship

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<sup>22</sup> Schuetze, 258.

<sup>23</sup> Sydow, 116.

whenever we declare that we are united in doctrine with other Christians and whenever we join them in activities that express such a shared faith in God's Word.<sup>24</sup>

Being in fellowship with a church has many benefits. One such benefit is the ability to partake of the Lord's Supper or Communion. In some churches, this is a privilege that is granted only to members in the same fellowship, a practice among conservative Lutherans known as closed communion. There are also churches that allow this privilege to all people regardless of fellowship; this is called open communion and is found in liberal churches. Another privilege of being in fellowship is the unity of the congregation. When individuals declare that they agree with the particular teachings of a church, they agree to become members in that church and to share in the spiritual support of one another.

Since the Wisconsin Synod believes in the conservative view of church fellowship, the government's concept of military chaplaincy violates that doctrine. According to church fellowship, members of another religion or of another synod cannot partake in the benefits of fellowship with those who are members of the Wisconsin Synod. For example, what would a conservative Wisconsin Synod chaplain do when asked to give communion to someone outside of his fellowship? However, the Missouri Synod changed from its conservative stance of being in opposition to the chaplaincy question to the liberal view of approval of chaplaincy.

By 1941, the Missouri Synod convention reported that there were fifty eight Missouri Synod chaplains in the military.<sup>25</sup> The Synodical Conference met in 1946 and appointed the same committee who researched the doctrine of church and ministry to look into the area of military chaplaincy. Much like that of church and ministry, the committee came to no decision regarding chaplaincy in 1952 except that the seminaries of the various synods should research it

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<sup>24</sup> John F. Brug. *Church Fellowship: Working Together for the Truth* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997), 20.

<sup>25</sup> Schuetze, 259.

in a joint manner.<sup>26</sup> However, at the 1954 convention of the Synodical Conference, the Wisconsin Synod clearly made its point regarding chaplaincy,

The evidence thus far considered indicates that the military chaplaincy in its present form is still unionistic in essence and practical tendency. Despite the fact that during the last ten years the Government has come to recognize officially the Church as the body that authorizes and places chaplains at the service of the Government; and although it had likewise endeavored to guarantee the right of conscience to the Church and chaplain: it still retains its directive authority over the religious work in the chaplaincy, tending to crowd the military chaplain into unionist activity.<sup>27</sup>

It is truly intriguing that this issue of chaplaincy was never resolved. Edmund Reim, a former pastor and professor in the Wisconsin Synod, believed that it was because of the strong loyalty that Missouri churches had to their synod. He also stated that the chaplaincy issue contained a lot of emotional factors and family members felt deep concern for their loved one's spiritual care while at war. Reim also felt that the Wisconsin position on chaplaincy was misunderstood and unpopular.<sup>28</sup> Regardless of the reasons why, it is still an issue that affects each synod today.

The other area of debate between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods that goes hand in hand with chaplaincy is scouting. The Boy Scouts are a group designed for boys and organized within a given geographical area. They are not a church, as such, but they provide a forum for boys to participate in religious activities outside of church. The Boy Scouts do not discriminate on the basis of race; all young boys are welcome. But the Boy Scouts do require a confession of faith in some kind of "god" and seek to further a scout's religious tenets. Even though these activities are outside of the church and not within a fellowship, the Boy Scouts give benefits of church fellowship to those not united under a common fellowship.

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<sup>26</sup> Schuetze, 262.

<sup>27</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, *Continuing in His Word*, Tract 11, 7. The term "Unionistic" is used to refer to a violation of church fellowship.

<sup>28</sup> Braun, 101.

One example of this is joint prayer, which conservative Lutheran churches acknowledge as a benefit of church fellowship. At many scouting events, people who are not in full doctrinal agreement with one another participate in prayer which some view to be an exclusive right of fellowship. It is important to state that this does not apply to individual prayer. Individual prayer is not a benefit of fellowship. Joint prayer is only when a group of people are gathered together and are praying together. The unity behind joint prayer within a group is seen as a benefit of fellowship in conservative churches and therefore is not practiced with those outside of fellowship.

The Wisconsin Synod believes in avoiding membership in the Boy Scouts because they practice contrary to the doctrine of church fellowship when it comes to joint prayer. They also believe that agreement on all doctrines is necessary for church fellowship and the Scout clubs violate the doctrine of church fellowship when they promote a union based on less than full agreement in Bible teaching. However, liberal synods do not share this conservative view on church fellowship.

Scout clubs also promote salvation by works, which means that a person can attain salvation by living a good life and relying on their good works. This is in direct opposition to the historic Lutheran teaching of salvation by the grace of God through faith in Jesus. Conservative Lutherans teach that salvation is a gift from God which He gave when He sent Jesus as a sacrifice for sins. This gift of His grace can only be attained through faith in Christ and not by good works or the merits of man.

Historically, the Missouri Synod was against membership in Boy or Girl Scout troops.<sup>29</sup> But as the synod moved into the 1940s, its views on the topic began to change. The Missouri Synod no longer felt that it was a violation of church fellowship to be a member of a scout troop.

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<sup>29</sup> Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *Convention Resolution*, 1938.

Their new stance was that the topic of scouting should be left up to the individual congregation.<sup>30</sup>

This new approach to scouting shocked and outraged the fellow synods within the Synodical Conference. Both the Wisconsin and Norwegian synods took a position against scouting and therefore against the Missouri Synod's teachings.

One member of the Norwegian Synod stated:

The change in position regarding the Scouting movement was seen as a weakening of the Missouri Synod stand against unionism, which would ultimately cause it to lose its true conservative character.<sup>31</sup>

The Wisconsin Synod made its views apparent in 1954 by stating,

Our stand against Scouting has in recent years become more unpopular than ever. Formerly, when nearly all church bodies were embracing Scouting, we at least had the comfort of knowing that we were not standing entirely alone when we testified against the movement. We could rely on the encouraging testimony of our sister synods in the Synodical Conference.

That situation, however, has been changed. In 1944 the Missouri Synod abandoned its former position on Scouting and left the matter of Scouting to the judgment of the local congregation. As a result, many congregations in our sister synod now cooperate with Scouting and sponsor their own troops. Our stand against Scouting now places us in disagreement even with those in church fellowship with us. Attempts to resolve this disagreement have thus far proved unsuccessful. This difference in Scouting is one of the matters that is straining our relations with the Missouri Synod and which, therefore, must clearly be understood by all of us.<sup>32</sup>

The scouting controversy remained unresolved, much like the topic of chaplaincy. Each Synod made many efforts at agreement but never found a common ground. However, these issues did not go away but rather fueled a larger topic that had been brewing between the synods of the Synodical Conference, namely church fellowship. As the Synodical Conference moved into the 1950s and 60s, these issues of military chaplaincy and scouting would prove to be major factors, resulting in the break-up of the Synodical Conference in 1967.

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<sup>30</sup> Braun, 106.

<sup>31</sup> Braun, 110.

<sup>32</sup> *Continuing in His Word*, Tract 7, 2.

## Church Fellowship

The debates on church fellowship, church and ministry, military chaplaincy, and scouting between the Wisconsin and Missouri synods were all leading up to the main doctrine in question, church fellowship. The Wisconsin Synod felt that the Missouri Synod was beginning to adopt more liberal policies with regard to church fellowship.

In 1932 the Missouri Synod adopted the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*.<sup>33</sup> This was the document that declared the Missouri Synod's view on church fellowship, a view accepted by all the synods within the Synodical Conference. The *Brief Statement* set forth the conservative viewpoint that God ordained His word alone, without the admixture of human doctrine, to be taught and believed in the Christian Church.<sup>34</sup> According to the *Brief Statement* Christians are to distinguish between orthodox and heterodox churches and avoid fellowship with heterodox churches. This applies to all doctrinal differences regardless of the type or number of doctrines involved.

In 1935 the Missouri Synod began negotiations with the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) and the American Lutheran Church (ALC).<sup>35</sup> Both the ULCA and the ALC were liberal synods who did not share the conservative belief of the Synodical Conference regarding church fellowship and therefore were not members. However, they sought to resolve these differences and began working with the Missouri Synod.

The Missouri Synod wanted to join with the ALC as long as they accepted the *Brief Statement*. ALC representatives met and accepted the *Brief Statement* but also included the *Declaration of the Commission* along with it. The *Declaration* was a document that the ALC

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<sup>33</sup> Schuetze, 272.

<sup>34</sup> Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1932; reprint, Eau Claire: Messiah Lutheran Church, 1997), 10 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

<sup>35</sup> Schuetze, 273.

wrote which reinterpreted the principles of the *Brief Statement*. It stated that it agreed with the Missouri Synod concerning major doctrines but did not in some “smaller” ones. The ALC also went on to say that it did not believe it necessary to be in full agreement with all doctrines for the purposes of fellowship. The Missouri Synod met with the Wisconsin and Norwegian synods concerning this stance by the ALC. Both the Wisconsin and Norwegian strongly encouraged the Missouri Synod not to join the ALC until it changed this stance. The Missouri Synod heeded their exhortation at this point but continued negotiations with the ALC.<sup>36</sup>

As negotiations continued with the ALC and Missouri, the two synods created a new document of unity in 1944.<sup>37</sup> This document, *Doctrinal Affirmation*, was initially intended to be a melding of the *Brief Statement* and the *Declaration*. Early on, *Doctrinal Affirmation* was met with much hostility by members of the ALC because they felt it contained more views of the *Brief Statement* rather than the *Declaration*. However, the ALC eventually accepted *Doctrinal Affirmation* as a document of unity between itself and the Missouri Synod. This was alarming to the Wisconsin and Norwegian synods because it still contained liberal elements of the *Declaration*. This move by the Missouri Synod and ALC proved to be extremely influential in the break-up of the Synodical Conference. As the Conference moved into the 1950s, it became clear that a break-up of the Synodical Conference was about to happen. This break-up of the Synodical Conference was initiated by the conservative synods that were concerned by an introduction of liberal teachings in the Missouri Synod. Although many doctrines were at the heart of the debate, the conservative roots of the Synodical Conference remained alive and proved to be strong enough to keep the core teachings of the conservative synods intact. The Norwegian Synod was the first to make a move as it suspended fellowship with the LCMS in

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<sup>36</sup> Schuetze, 277.

<sup>37</sup> Schuetze, 279.

1955.<sup>38</sup>

The Wisconsin Synod was not as quick to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In 1955 the Wisconsin Synod also marked the Missouri Synod as causing divisions and offenses but it did not take the next step of avoiding fellowship.<sup>39</sup> Its reluctance to act proved to be the main reason for the eventual formation of the CLC and ILC and the main disagreement with the Wisconsin Synod. This debate was heating up as many Wisconsin Synod pastors protested continued fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In 1956, the Wisconsin Synod appointed a committee to address the number of protests coming in against the Missouri Synod.<sup>40</sup> This committee came back with a proposal to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod because of doctrinal disagreements in the area of church fellowship. This resolution did not pass with a vote of 61-77 and negotiations continued to address the problem.<sup>41</sup>

One member of the Wisconsin Synod who expressed his disagreement with continued fellowship with the Missouri Synod was Edmund Reim. Reim was a leader in the Wisconsin Synod and the president of its seminary. Reim stated that he had made his protest clear and that since no action had been taken regarding a final break in fellowship with the Missouri Synod, he was forced to discontinue fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>42</sup> This is important because Reim was one of the founders of the CLC and was one of the first professors at ILC. This decision by Reim was very influential and vital to the formation of the CLC and ILC and certainly set an example that others followed.

Another pastor in the Wisconsin Synod who expressed disappointment with the synod's actions was Paul F. Nolting. Nolting believed that ongoing fellowship with the Missouri Synod

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<sup>38</sup> Schuetze, 319.

<sup>39</sup> Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Convention Proceedings*, 1955, 13.

<sup>40</sup> Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, *Convention Proceedings*, 1957, 130.

<sup>41</sup> Schuetze, 340.

<sup>42</sup> Schuetze, 340.

was contrary to the doctrine of church fellowship and he felt that the rest of the synod knew it as well. Therefore, he did not know why the Wisconsin Synod continued to remain in fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In 1957, he presented a study on the doctrine of church fellowship using Romans 16:17 as a basis.<sup>43</sup> Nolting felt that the Wisconsin Synod had seen errors within the Missouri Synod since 1939 and had been patiently trying to get them to see their errors.<sup>44</sup> However, he states that according to Romans 16:17, the words *mark* and *avoid* mean to suspend fellowship immediately when it's determined that an individual or group is causing divisions and offenses contrary to Bible teachings.<sup>45</sup>

Reim and Nolting were not alone in their assessment of the Wisconsin Synod. By October 1957, twenty five protests were raised against the Wisconsin's decision to remain in fellowship with the Missouri Synod.<sup>46</sup> These protests revolved around the Wisconsin Synod's teaching of church fellowship, especially with respect to Romans 16:17. Leaders in the Wisconsin Synod felt that before it could break fellowship with the Missouri Synod, it must admonish the Missouri to see its errors. The Wisconsin Synod also felt that before it took action, the Missouri Synod must prove itself to be persistent in its errors. In other words, the Wisconsin Synod felt that it needed to show Missouri the problem in its teachings in hopes of getting the Missouri Synod to change. The Wisconsin Synod did not feel that the Missouri Synod had made a final decision regarding its fellowship and therefore did not want to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod because it was not persisting in error. However, according to Reim, Nolting, and the others who formed the CLC, the Missouri Synod had shown itself to be a false teaching

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<sup>43</sup> Braun, 242. Romans 16:17 - Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. See appendix A.

<sup>44</sup> Paul F. Nolting, "*Mark...Avoid*" (*Lest the Hearts of the Simple Be Deceived*) *Romans 16:17-18: Origin of the CLC* (West Columbia: Coordinating Council of the CLC, 1970; reprint, Eau Claire: CLC Book House, 1983), 4-5 (page citation is from the reprint edition).

<sup>45</sup> Braun, 243.

<sup>46</sup> Braun, 241.

church body and once marked as such, the next step was to avoid in obedience to Romans 16:17. They believed the concept of persistent errorists allowed for a step not found in Romans 16:17. The Wisconsin Synod eventually broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961, but it still differed with the CLC regarding the steps for termination of church fellowship.<sup>47</sup> In 1963, the Wisconsin Synod left the Synodical Conference which eventually disbanded completely in 1967.<sup>48</sup>

### **Immanuel Lutheran Church**

As a result of the Wisconsin Synod's continued fellowship with the Missouri Synod, many churches and members from the Wisconsin Synod broke off and formed independent churches. One such congregation was Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, Minnesota. Immanuel was one of the larger congregations in the Wisconsin Synod and had been operating since 1866.<sup>49</sup> The congregation of Immanuel no longer considered itself to be in fellowship with the Missouri Synod because of its relationship with the ALC. But as a member of the Wisconsin Synod, it was still in fellowship with the Missouri Synod because no formal declaration of separation had been made. This was cause for alarm for the Immanuel congregation. The Synodical Conference met in 1954 to discuss these matters of fellowship but recessed the discussion until 1956. These types of setbacks were very disturbing to members of Immanuel as well as other congregations in the Wisconsin Synod. To them, a clear division existed according to the doctrine of church fellowship in Romans 16:17. It was evident to the members of Immanuel that steps toward separation would have to be taken soon.

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<sup>47</sup> Brug, 87.

<sup>48</sup> Schuetze, 410.

<sup>49</sup> Joseph Lau, "The History of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, 1867-1961" (Master's Thesis, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. 1991), 16.

On October 17, 1955 Immanuel Lutheran Church adopted the following resolution:

Be it resolved, that for the time being, while we prayerfully await faithful, obedient action in accord with the word of Romans 16:17 at the recessed session of Our Synod's Convention in 1956, we declared ourselves IN STATUS CONFESSIOINIS. This term IN STATUS CONFESSIOINIS as herein used means that we abstain from active fellowship with, and support of, the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States.<sup>50</sup>

This was an uncertain time for Immanuel but the congregation adhered to the conservative foundations of the Synodical Conference, namely that the doctrine of the Bible comes before the formation of synods. This is a truth that many members felt had been forgotten by the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod.

However, as Immanuel's resolution states, this break was only until the Wisconsin Synod made a decision at the 1956 convention. Although it was not in fellowship, the Immanuel congregation sent a few observers to the convention in 1956 to listen to the decision. When the congregation heard that the Wisconsin Synod had again decided to delay a decision regarding fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the following resolution was adopted:

Whereas, membership, fellowship and association in and with Our Synod had been highly treasured by our congregation, however, as always, obedience to God's Word and preservation of it in our midst means much more, MUCH MORE, therefore, be it resolved, that we the Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mankato, Minnesota, do hereby, NOW, regretfully, declare our withdrawal from membership in the Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States.<sup>51</sup>

### **Immanuel Lutheran High School, College, and Seminary**

Since Immanuel Lutheran Church was no longer a member of the Wisconsin Synod, or the Synodical Conference, it needed a school in which to educate the next generation. Many members had sent their children to Bethany Lutheran College, located in Mankato, and also very close to Immanuel Church. Bethany was a school of the Norwegian Synod, which was still in

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<sup>50</sup> Lau, 138.

<sup>51</sup> Lau, 139.

fellowship with Immanuel at the time. However, a problem soon arose as students found themselves in disagreement with many faculty members regarding church fellowship. After the 1958-59 school year, almost half of the seminary students left Bethany.<sup>52</sup>

Several congregations that had left the Wisconsin Synod and the Synodical Conference had formed a group of churches called the Interim Conference. This Conference met to discuss the options of opening a new school because of the newly formed problems at Bethany. The Conference elected a committee to discuss the options. This committee came to the decision that Immanuel Lutheran Church should start the process of organizing and operating a school. The committee also suggested that Immanuel Church name the school after the congregation and so it was called Immanuel Lutheran School.<sup>53</sup>

The school would function in a small school house, donated by members and moved onto Immanuel's property. On September 8, 1959 Immanuel Lutheran High School conducted its first classes.<sup>54</sup> The faculty included Edmund Reim, who became the new seminary dean, as well as other members of the Wisconsin Synod who had left. On September 16, 1959 the college and the seminary began classes.<sup>55</sup> Although the beginnings of Immanuel Lutheran School were very humble, the members took refuge in the importance of their cause. The creation of a school where young people who shared a common faith could learn and worship in fellowship was the highest priority. This was the same reason for the formation of the Synodical Conference nearly ninety years before. The turmoil that had disbanded the Synodical Conference was still fresh in the minds of the members of Immanuel Lutheran Church and was extremely influential in the creation of their new school. Immanuel Lutheran School provided a conservative spiritual

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<sup>52</sup> Lau, 149.

<sup>53</sup> Lau, 150.

<sup>54</sup> Lau, 154.

<sup>55</sup> Lau, 155.

foundation for the young members of Immanuel Lutheran Church and ILC continues to serve that purpose today for members of the CLC.

### **The Church of the Lutheran Confession**

Although they had successfully started Immanuel Lutheran School, the members of Immanuel Lutheran Church were still without a church synod. Being part of a synod has many strengths which include fellowship as well as a network of sister congregations throughout the nation. It was clear that there were many congregations that had broken away from the Wisconsin Synod, as well as from the Norwegian and Missouri synods, many of them for the same reasons. In 1957 the first conference of independent churches met. It was at this conference that they drafted the document *Concerning Church Fellowship*.<sup>56</sup> *Concerning Church Fellowship* is a document that details these congregations' beliefs about the doctrine of church fellowship and how they differ from the beliefs of the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Norwegian synods.

Around this time, the independent churches also created another document entitled *Church and Ministry* to state the beliefs of these congregations concerning this doctrine. Free conferences between these congregations continued for a few years. In 1959, a committee was appointed to write a constitution in preparation of a new synod. This work on the constitution continued until 1961 when several congregations created the Church of the Lutheran Confession in a convention at Sleepy Eye, Minnesota.<sup>57</sup> The founding members formed this Synod out of the many congregations and members that left the Missouri, Norwegian, and Wisconsin synods over the disagreements in doctrine.

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<sup>56</sup> Church of the Lutheran Confession, *This is Your Church*, (Eau Claire: CLC Book House, 2001), 7.

<sup>57</sup> *This is Your Church*, 9.

There are still debates between the Wisconsin Synod and the CLC as to whether disagreements actually do exist. The main reason that the CLC broke off from the Wisconsin Synod and formed is the difference in the doctrine of church fellowship. Both synods agree that common belief in all doctrines is necessary for fellowship. The point where disagreement arises is how the marking of false teaching relates to the termination of fellowship. John F. Brug, a professor at the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, writes concerning the split:

Over the years, the sticking point has been whether there is a difference between the WELS and the CLC in the doctrine of fellowship, or whether there is only disagreement about the way the WELS had applied the doctrine to the termination of fellowship with the Missouri Synod. In other words, did the WELS fail to break fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1955 and 1957 because it has a faulty doctrine of fellowship, which allowed continued fellowship with persistent errorists, or was the delay due to a differing of opinion about whether the Missouri Synod had heard and rejected our admonition, thereby justifying the conclusion that it was persisting in its error in spite of admonition.<sup>58</sup>

David Lau, a long-time pastor and professor in the CLC, states his view regarding the WELS and CLC:

When the CLC was organized, there were two main doctrines that we had to know we were agreed upon, one was church fellowship and the other was the church and ministry.<sup>59</sup>

According to Lau, the CLC is not in agreement with the Missouri Synod regarding both church fellowship and church and ministry. With respect to fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod, the main disagreement is over church fellowship. Lau also remarks that the CLC was not sure what the Wisconsin Synod meant when it used the term “persistent errorist.” The Wisconsin Synod felt the need to prove that the Missouri Synod was a persistent errorist in the area of church fellowship and church and ministry before it could break fellowship with the Missouri Synod. This is not the way that the CLC understands the doctrine of church fellowship. The CLC looks at Romans 16:17 as giving God’s direction for the termination of church

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<sup>58</sup> Brug, 91.

<sup>59</sup> David Lau, interview by author, notes in possession of author, 17 August 2008.

fellowship. The CLC believes that the message of that passage does not allow for the process of determining a persistent errorist between the mark and the call to avoid. According to Lau and the other members of the CLC, the Missouri Synod had been persisting in error since 1938 and therefore was not in agreement with the Wisconsin Synod.

Although the Wisconsin Synod eventually broke fellowship with the Missouri Synod, the difference in its doctrine on church fellowship and that of the CLC still lingers today. The split between the Wisconsin Synod and the CLC was important to ILC because it affected its home congregation of Immanuel Lutheran Church. Immanuel Lutheran Church is located in Mankato, Minnesota. When the CLC was formed, the members of the church decided to join the newly formed synod. It was also apparent at this time that the CLC needed a high school, college, and seminary in which it could educate its children.

By 1962, the CLC had grown steadily and contained 7,000 members who lived in eleven different states.<sup>60</sup> This growth was also evident in ILC. By 1962, ILC had a high school enrollment of sixty three, as well as twenty two students in college, and six in the seminary. Of these students, fifty seven were from out-of-town and needed room and board.<sup>61</sup> This service of room and board was provided by many of the members at Immanuel Lutheran Church. However, as enrollment steadily continued to grow, the need for additional housing became apparent and something needed to be done.

Two main factors framed the discussion about ILC. One factor was the increased number of students and the need to house them. The other factor was the desire to locate the school in an area central to the majority of congregations in the CLC. Mankato was already a central location but if the school was moved to a new location, it must also be central to rest of the CLC

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<sup>60</sup> Eunice Roehl, *Throughout All Generations: Immanuel Lutheran College-1959-2008* (Slayton: Page One Printers, 2008), 12.

<sup>61</sup> Roehl, 13.

congregations. The Board of Trustees of the CLC considered several sites, including Eau Claire, Wis., Mankato, Minn., Red Wing, Minn., and Watertown, S.Dak. A Planning Committee deliberated concerning the options available and came to the conclusion to purchase land in Eau Claire as the home for ILC.<sup>62</sup>

The initial plan to move ILC to Eau Claire called for the purchase of 20 acres near Messiah Lutheran Church, a member congregation of the CLC.<sup>63</sup> However, a new discovery in the Eau Claire area shocked the Planning Committee as well as the rest of the synod. The Minnesota Foundation, a company that operated homes for the elderly, had recently put the Erskine Ingram estate, located on the south side of Eau Claire, up for sale. The Ingram estate was built in the 1920s and was located on 75 acres of land.<sup>64</sup> The estate came with several buildings that were already furnished and ready to use, a perfect solution for the problem of housing out-of-town students that ILC faced. On January 9-10, 1963, the members of the CLC called a special convention to decide whether or not to purchase the Ingram estate for the future home of ILC.<sup>65</sup> The convention decided in favor of purchasing the estate and plans immediately began for the transplantation of ILC from Mankato to Eau Claire.

### **Conclusion**

Throughout the history of both the Synodical Conference and ILC, the importance of doctrinal integrity can be seen. When looking back at the beginnings of the Synodical Conference, its very existence began as a stand against many of the Lutheran bodies that were changing doctrine. The very purpose of the Synodical Conference was to be a home for

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<sup>62</sup> Roehl, 17.

<sup>63</sup> Roehl, 25.

<sup>64</sup> Roehl, 25.

<sup>65</sup> Roehl, 26.

Lutheran synods that wanted to hold onto conservative beliefs. However, as the history indicates, divisions in the Synodical Conference still arose over the years as doctrines such as church fellowship and church and ministry continue to be debated.

One historian has noted this desire for unity in American Lutheranism and the accompanying problems:

The years between 1920 and 1965 saw a gradual but consistent rise in the awareness of the Lutherans in America of the degree of essential unity which already existed among them. The attempts to express this enlarged sense of unity steadily widened in their enlistment of varying Lutheran church bodies and groupings. In addition, earnest endeavors to increase still further the areas of agreement and unity in terms of doctrine, practice, and co-operation became characteristic of the period. Never before had Lutherans in America been so generally concerned about the obstacles in the path of over-all unity and ways to eliminate those obstacles.<sup>66</sup>

As conservative synods broke away from one another as well as from liberal synods, the principle of doctrinal integrity remained at the forefront of many synods. This desire to hold fast to the teachings of the Bible also resulted in the formation of new synods such as the CLC, and its academic institution, ILC. The very word “Immanuel” comes from the Hebrew language and means “God with us.” This is a very fitting name for the school of ILC since it was founded and continues to operate with the sole desire to have God as the focal point of life, whether it be work, school, or relaxation. This same desire can also be seen in those who founded the Synodical Conference as well as the many who throughout the years held onto the doctrines confessed by the Synodical Conference, even as splits occurred.

One may ask why this history is important to those outside of the Lutheranism and more specifically the CLC or ILC. Regardless of belief, religion is a major part of society, in America as well as many other countries around the world. It shapes the values and morals of many people and is the cause for many of decisions we make every day. It is important for those

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<sup>66</sup> Wolf, 321.

outside of Lutheranism to understand the values of Lutherans even if they do not share the same values. This paper shows those outside of Lutheranism why these doctrinal issues are so important to those of the Lutheran religion and therefore gives a better understanding into the faith and values that Lutherans have. Lack of knowledge of the values and beliefs of others can be a cause of offense without even knowing it. Hopefully, with a better understanding of issues in Lutheranism, one can avoid the same mistake the government made by grouping all Lutherans under the term “Protestant.” Along with understanding of values and beliefs comes respect for one another regardless of which way they believe.

For those who are members of the CLC and ILC, as well as other Lutheran synods throughout the world, the task of remembering the reasons behind the events in this history is important. For it is because of the fundamental Lutheran concept of belief in the entire Bible as the Word of God and its teaching without error that these events occurred. Debate on religion and doctrine will continue for many years to come, even until the end of the world, which makes it all the more important to know this history and understand the reasons behind it.

## **Appendix A: A Summary of the Doctrine of Church Fellowship**<sup>67</sup>

**Definition:** Common worship and church work among those who agree on what the Bible teaches.

### **Where it's found in the Bible:**

**I Corinthians 1:10** - Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment.

**2 Corinthians 13:11**- Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

**Amos 3:3**- Can two walk together unless they are agreed?

**I John 1:3**- That which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

**Romans 16:17**- Now I urge you brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned and avoid them.

### **Application of the doctrine:**

Conservative synods such as the CLC and the WELS teach that full doctrinal agreement must occur if fellowship is to exist. Fellowship includes the benefits of: Closed Communion, prayer, worship, Christian education, mission work, and spiritual comfort. The CLC and the WELS teach that synods must be in full doctrinal agreement for these benefits to exist within fellowship. Liberal synods such as the LCMS teach that only agreement on the main doctrines of the Bible is needed for fellowship. In short, the difference involves the levels of fellowship needed by each synod for church fellowship to exist.

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<sup>67</sup> Sydow, 116-118.

## **Appendix B: Timeline of Events**<sup>68</sup>

**1872-** Synodical Conference Forms

**1932-** LCMS adopts the *Brief Statement*

**1938-** LCMS accepts the ALC *Declaration* along with *Brief Statement* for future fellowship principles

**1938-** LCMS enters military chaplaincy program

**1939-** WELS declines participation in military chaplaincy program

**1939-** WELS declares LCMS/ALC union unsatisfactory

**1946-** Synodical Conference sets up Interim Committee to investigate military chaplaincies and church and ministry doctrine

**1955-** ELS suspends fellowship with LCMS

**1955-** WELS marks LCMS but does not avoid

**1956-** Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato, MN breaks fellowship with the WELS

**1957-** WELS rejects resolution to break fellowship with LCMS but will continue protesting fellowship

**1959-** Immanuel Lutheran College conducts first classes

**1961-** CLC is created at a convention in Sleepy Eye, MN.

**1961-** WELS suspends fellowship with LCMS

**1963-** WELS and ELS withdraw from the Synodical Conference

**1963-** Special convention by the CLC approves plans to move ILC to Eau Claire, WI and purchase the Ingram estate as the new campus.

**1967-** Synodical Conference is disbanded completely

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<sup>68</sup> Schuetze, 405-410.

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