

# The Minneapolis Theses, 1925

## ***I. The Scriptures***

The synods signatory to these Articles of Agreement accept without exception all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testaments as a whole, and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

## ***II. The Lutheran Symbols***

1. These synods also, without reservation, accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not insofar as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Lutheran Church, as this has found expression in response to the exigencies arising from time to time.

(The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, in agreement with the position of the Lutheran Church of Norway and Denmark, has officially accepted only the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism. This position does not imply that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in any way whatsoever rejects the remaining symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, as the constant references to them in her theological literature amply testify, but since the other symbolical books are not known to her constituency generally, it has not been deemed necessary to require formal subscription to the entire Book of Concord.)

2. Adherence to our confessions pertains only to their doctrinal content, (i.e., the doctrines declared to be the divine truth and the rejection of opposite doctrines), but to these without exception or limitation in all articles and parts, no matter whether a doctrine is specifically cited as a confession or incidentally introduced for the purpose of elucidating or proving some other doctrine. All that pertains to the form of presentation (historical comments, questions purely exegetical, etc.) is not binding.

## ***III. Church Fellowship***

1. These synods agree that true Christians are found in every denomination which has so much of divine truth revealed in Holy Scripture that children of God can be born in it; that according to the Word of God and our confessions, church fellowship, that is, mutual recognition, altar and pulpit fellowship, and eventually cooperation in the strictly essential work of the church, presupposes unanimity in the pure doctrine of the Gospel and in the confession of the same in work and deed.

Where the establishment and maintenance of church fellowship ignores present doctrinal differences or declares them a matter of indifference, there is unionism, pretense of union which does not exist.

2. They agree that the rule "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only" is not only in full accord with, but necessarily implied in, the teachings of the divine Word and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. This rule,

implying the rejection of all unionism and syncretism, must be observed as setting forth a principle elementary to sound and conservative Lutheranism.

#### **IV. Points of Doctrine**

In 1920 all synods with the exception of the Buffalo (to which they had not been submitted) adopted theses [see Chicago Thesis 1919] on:

1. The Work of Christ
2. The Gospel
3. Absolution
4. Holy Baptism
5. Justification
6. Faith
7. Conversion
8. Election

After discussion of these theses the representatives present came to the conclusion that we are in full agreement in all essentials pertaining to these doctrines.

#### **V. The Lodge Question**

1. These synods agree that all such organizations or societies, secret or open, as are either avowedly religious or practice the forms of religion without confessing as a matter of principle the Triune God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God, come into the flesh, and our Savior from sin, or teach instead of the Gospel, salvation by human works or morality, are anti-Christian and destructive of the best interests of the church and the individual soul, and that, therefore, the Church of Christ and its congregations can have no fellowship with them.
2. They agree that a Lutheran synod should not tolerate pastors who have affiliated themselves with any anti-Christian society. And they admonish their pastors and congregations to testify against the sin of lodgery and to put forth earnest efforts publicly and privately to enlighten and persuade persons who are members of anti-Christian societies, to sever their connection with such organizations.

#### **VI. Recognition**

The representatives of the synods here present agree that the synods accepting these articles are one in doctrine and practice, recognize each other as truly Lutheran and may enter into pulpit and altar fellowship.

The presidents of the synods here represented are asked to present this Agreement to their respective synods for adoption.

Typewritten and printed copies of the Minneapolis Theses are in Hein File: Minneapolis Colloquy; American Lutheran Church archives.