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THE LODGE QUESTION AS VIEWED
BY THE CHURCHES AFFILIATED WITH
THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES OF CHRIST
IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Bachelor of Divinity

by

Walter W. Warmann

June 1953

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgement	11
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE POSITION OF THE CONSTITUENT MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES	6
1. African Methodist Episcopal Church	6
2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion	7
3. American Baptist Convention	8
4. Augustana Evangelical Lutheran	9
5. Church of the Brethren	10
6. Colored Methodist Episcopal Church	11
7. Congregational Christian Churches of the U.S.A.	12
8. Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America	13
9. The Evangelical and Reformed Church	13
10. Evangelical United Brethren Church	14
11. Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren of North America	15
12. Five Years Meeting of the Friends In America	16
13. The Greek Orthodox Church	17
14. International Convention of Disciples of Christ	18
15. The Methodist Church	19
16. The Moravian Church	20
17. National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.	21
18. National Baptist Convention of America	22
19. Presbyterian Church in the United States	23
20. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.	24
21. Protestant Episcopal Church	25
22. Reformed Church in America	26
23. Religious Society of Friends of Phil- adelphia and Vicinity	28
24. Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America	29
25. The Russian Orthodox Church of North America	30
26. Seventh Day Baptist General Convention	31
27. Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church	32

	Page
28. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church in the United States of America	33
29. United Lutheran Church in America	34
30. United Presbyterian Church of North America	36
III. CONCLUSION	38
APPENDIX	40
BIBLIOGRAPHY	44

Manasse, who is a member in the Anglican Church in England, was much perturbed by abuses in the Anglican Church, especially by the ingress of Freemasonry into his church. His article in *Theology* was an attempt to bring some of these abuses to light.

When Mr. Manasse published his article he did not realize that he would arouse controversy of far-reaching consequences. Many members of the Church of England were shocked at the infiltration of Freemasonry into their ranks. The clergy itself became divided on the issue. The British press also took up the debate. The issue caused its pages to be filled to express their views. People from all over the world wrote, some in support and some in opposition of Mr. Manasse's article in *Theology*, others in violent opposition to it. This caused Manasse to deal with the question of Freemasonry more fully in a book entitled, *Darkness Visible*.

London: Duckworth & Co. (London) 1911.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the January 1951 issue of Theology, a journal which promotes Christian knowledge, Walton Hannah published an article entitled, "Should a Christian be a Freemason?"¹ Mr. Hannah, who is a canon in the Anglican Church in England, was much perturbed by abuses in the Anglican Church, especially by the ingress of Freemasonry into his church. His article in Theology was an attempt to bring some of these abuses to light.

When Mr. Hannah published his article he did not realize that he would arouse controversy of far-reaching consequences. Many members of the Church of England were awakened to the infiltration of Freemasons into their ranks. The clergy itself became divided on the issue. The British press also took up the debate. The press opened its pages to readers to express their views. People from all over the world wrote, some in support and praise of Mr. Hannah's article in Theology, others in violent opposition to it. This caused Canon Hannah to deal with the question of Freemasonry more fully in a book entitled, Darkness Visible.²

¹Walton Hannah, Darkness Visible (London: Augustine Press, 1952), p. 5.

²Ibid.

As the controversy grew it was forced into the Convocation at Canterbury. Here it was side-stepped. It was debated before the Church Assembly in June 1951, but the debate confined itself to irrelevant matters. The reason for this was that the issue was too delicate. Too many prominent church dignitaries were involved. Too many Masonic clergymen were determined to stop such an investigation. At the present time the whole issue has developed into a stalemate.

As to the future relationship of the Church of England to Freemasonry the writer agrees with Mr. Hannah's observation in Darkness Visible:

The fact that no adequate or convincing reply has yet been made to the theological objections to the Craft either in the columns of the Church press (including Theology), in my personal correspondence, or in the Church Assembly debate in June 1951 (which body was not in any case competent to deal with theological issue), has strengthened my conviction that sooner or later the Church of England, if she is to preserve the integrity of her Christian witness, will have to face the issue and modify, or least define, her attitude to Freemasonry.³

Since this controversy has caused such a stir in England, particularly in the Anglican Church, it probably will have its repercussions on churches here in the United States. The writer believes that since the churches belonging to The National Council of Churches of Christ in America comprise the majority of Protestant churches in the United States and since the National Council of Churches numbers more people

³Ibid., pp. 5 f.

than any single religious body in America,⁴ these churches especially will probably have to deal with the lodge problem. Therefore, I believed it worthwhile to investigate the situation.

When some years ago many Protestant churches organized the National Council of Churches, the lodge question was not an issue for membership in this Council. To many of these churches the lodge presents no problem. They are non-committal in their attitude. Dr. Samuel McGrea Cavert, General Secretary of the National Council of Churches, describing the National Council of Churches, writes:

The genius of the Council is to foster a united Christian fellowship which will express itself in every phase of the life and work of the Churches. The Council has no authority over the denominations and is in no sense a superorganization but through its representative character and its democratic processes it draws the churches together in a family group in which they reinforce each other and coordinate their efforts. It conserves freedom and diversity, with no thought of dictation or enforced uniformity, while at the same time securing needed unity of action.⁵

He furthermore writes:

All churches which share the basic faith in Jesus Christ as Divine Lord and Saviour are eligible to membership. Into details of doctrine the Council does not enter but stands upon the common ground of historic Christian faith and conviction held by the Churches

⁴Samuel Cavert, "Introducing the National Council of Churches", 1951 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, edited by George Ketcham (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1951), p. 2.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

that comprise it.⁶

Therefore these churches are not asked to express their position on the lodge when they apply for membership in the National Council of Churches. In a letter to the author, Dr. Cavert writes, "the question of attitude toward lodges is not one which is involved in membership in the National Council."⁷

These churches are therefore not now concerned about the lodge question. But they will be when they are awakened to the inroads secret fraternal societies have made into their ranks just as the church of England was awakened by Mr. Hannah. The purpose of this study, then, is to show the position of the churches belonging to the National Council of Churches on the lodge question. To each statement of position I am adding a brief history and statistical report of the respective church since this information may in part reflect the position on the lodge question which the several churches take.

In my effort to deal with the question raised by this thesis I discovered no documentary material was available. Therefore, with the exception of the three Lutheran Churches belonging to the National Council of Churches whose position

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁷Letter to the author dated March 2, 1953.

on the lodge is documented,⁸ the author wrote to the secretary or some prominent official of each group belonging to the National Council of Churches asking for the position of their church with reference to secret fraternal organizations.

Originally I mailed only twenty-seven letters. In some instances I found it necessary to mail a follow-up letter; sometimes I was referred to another church dignitary. A total of ninety-three letters were sent out to representatives of these church groups asking for their position on the lodge question.

The response to the inquiries was surprisingly good. Most of the individuals addressed seemed happy to state their position and those who were slow in answering seemed to have valid excuses. Of the original twenty-seven letters sent out, replies were received from twenty-six of the men addressed. The position regarding the lodge of this last church body was obtained by writing to one of the clergy of this group.

⁸Paul M Bretseher, "To Join or Not To Join", The Lutheran Witness, LXX (July 10, 1951).

CHAPTER II

THE POSITION OF THE CONSTITUENT MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

1. African Methodist Episcopal Church:

This is "the largest of the Negro Methodist sects"¹ and "the second largest Methodist group in the United States."²

In 1816 this body withdrew from the Methodist Episcopal Church, white, and organized a church for the colored, the white cooperating. There were and there are today no doctrinal differences, the spirit being an endeavor to solve the question of race prejudice.³

"Both doctrine and polity follow that of other Methodist bodies."⁴

The latest statistics show that this group has 5,878 churches with a membership of 1,166,301.⁵

¹Elmer T. Clark, The Small Sects in America (Revised edition; New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1949), p. 66.

²Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations in the United States (New York and Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951), p. 134.

³J. L. Neve, Churches and Sects of Christendom (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1940), p. 428.

⁴Mead, loc. cit.

⁵All statistics given throughout this study have been taken from the 1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, edited by Benson Y. Landis (New York: National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America, 1952), pp. 235 ff.

As to their position on the lodge question, Bishop S. L. Greene, president of the Council of Bishops of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote in a letter to the author:

The African Methodist Episcopal Church endorses no fraternal or political organization, as such, but unqualifiedly encourages our members who desire to do so to become members of them.⁶

2. African Methodist Episcopal Zion:

This Church is "the second largest of Negro Methodist sects,"⁷ "an independent body having withdrawn from John Street Methodist Church of New York City in 1796,"⁸ "feeling themselves oppressed by caste prejudice and suffering the deprivation of Church privileges permitted to others."⁹ "Their first Church they named Zion and this congregation was the nucleus of the African Methodist Episcopal Church."¹⁰ "In doctrine and polity they are in accord with the Methodist Episcopal Church."¹¹ Latest statistics show there are 728,150 members belonging to 3,090 churches.

⁶Letter to the author dated November 29, 1952.

⁷Clark, op. cit., p. 67.

⁸1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 66.

⁹E. H. Klotsche, Christian Symbolics (Revised edition; Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1929), p. 309.

¹⁰Klotsche, loc. cit.

¹¹United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census. Religious Bodies: 1936 (Washington: United States Printing Office, 1941), II, 1196.

Regarding their lodge position W. J. Walls, Presiding Bishop of the District, in a letter to the author, wrote:

There is no restriction in our church on secret societies and no sentiment against them. The ministers themselves belong to them. They preach their sermons and furnish their churches for anniversaries and they hold office in them. Many of them consider themselves fortunate to be members of a secret society.¹²

3. American Baptist Convention:

"Formerly known as the Northern Baptist Convention"¹³
 "this group was formed in 1950 to have one national organization which would carry on a unified plan of missionary work."¹⁴ By and large the Northern members represented in this group are more liberal in thought and theology than those in the Southern Baptist Convention. Gestures at re-union have been made but are still unsuccessful.

The local church is still the basic and highly independent unit of American Baptist government and administration. In matters of faith every Baptist church of the convention speaks for itself, but there are certain Baptist doctrines held in common.¹⁵

In the American Baptist Convention there are 6,706 churches and 1,554,304 members.

Regarding their lodge position, Reuben E. Nelson, General Secretary, writes:

¹²Letter to the author dated November 26, 1952.

¹³1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 16.

¹⁴Mead, op. cit., p. 28.

¹⁵Ibid.

Our American Baptist Convention has never taken any action concerning secret orders. By the nature of our organization we are simply the cooperative agency for Baptist congregations who are altogether independent in their church polity on these matters. The attitude concerning secret orders therefore varies from church to church. A number of our pastors take the attitude that twentieth century life is so crowded with organization and activity there is no time for secret orders.¹⁶

4. Augustana Evangelical Lutheran:

"This body was organized originally by the Swedes who settled along the Delaware River."¹⁷ "But another and a much stronger immigrant stream began to flow into this country from Sweden in the forties of the last century."¹⁸

Men of the Augustana Synod, together with American, German, Norwegian, and Danish Lutherans, organized the Synod of Northern Illinois in the fall of 1851. In this body all of these worked together until 1860, when the Swedes and Norwegians withdrew and organized the Scandanavian Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America. In 1870 there occurred the friendly withdrawal of the Norwegian section for the purpose of organizing the Norwegian Lutheran Conference. In 1894 the word "Scandanavian" was dropped from the name, which thenceforth became the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod of North America, or, in brief, the Augustana Synod.¹⁹

In 1930 this group joined in the organization of the American Lutheran Conference, a federation of five Lutheran bodies.

¹⁶Letter to the author dated November 26, 1952.

¹⁷Mead, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁸Religious Bodies: 1936, II, 881.

¹⁹M. Phelan, New Handbook of All Denominations (Seventh revision; Nashville, Tenn.: Cokesbury Press, 1933), pp. 163 f.

"The synod is the center of authority."²⁰ There are 465,062 members belonging to their 1,121 churches.

The Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church declares in its Constitution (adopted 1928, Chapter IV article II, Section 2):

The greatest care shall be exercised in order that no person lacking the proper qualification be ordained to the ministry or retained in that office. It is especially stipulated that no person who belongs to or joins any secret organization or society of unbelievers shall be received or retained in the ministerial office.²¹

5. Church of the Brethren:

The Conservative Dunkers or as they call themselves, the Church of the Brethren, constitute the main branch of the Dunkers. They uphold the principle of non-conformity to the world but do not enforce it as rigorously as was done in earlier times.²²

They came to America in 1719 enticed by the free lands offered by William Penn. In their earliest days at Germantown they printed the first German Bible in America and began to circulate the first American religious magazine. "The polity of the church corresponds more nearly to the Presbyterian than to any other specific ecclesiastical form."²³ As to doctrine, they are "in general terms . . . classified

²⁰Religious Bodies: 1936, II, 882.

²¹Paul M. Bretscher, "To Join or Not To Join", The Lutheran Witness, LXX (July 24, 1951), 242.

²²Klotsche, op. cit., p. 338.

²³Religious Bodies: 1936, op. cit., I, 276.

as orthodox Trinitarians."²⁴ "They have no other creed than the New Testament and hold to the principles of non-violence, temperance, and the expression of religion through the good life."²⁵ This group has 186,358 members and 1,030 churches.

Grace Hollinger, Administrative Assistant to Norman J. Baugher, General Secretary of the Church of the Brethren, writes, regarding their position on lodges:

The official position of the Church of the Brethren is in opposition to secret fraternal organizations. Minutes of its annual Conference from 1604 to 1903 relates to various aspects of this matter. No official action has been taken since 1903 until last year when a committee was appointed to "relate the Church of the Brethren interpretation of the New Testament teaching as it relates to secret orders or oath-bound societies."²⁶

6. Colored Methodist Episcopal Church:

In doctrine and polity this Church is in complete harmony with the Methodist Episcopal Church South. "This organization was formed in Jackson, Tenn. in 1870"²⁷ "at the request of its Negro members"²⁸ because of the slave issue. Today there are 2,469 Colored Methodist Episcopal Churches and 392,167 members in the United States.

On the lodge question Mrs. A. P. Allen, Assistant to

²⁴Neve, op. cit., p. 527.

²⁵1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 24.

²⁶Letter to the author dated November 27, 1952.

²⁷Neve, op. cit., p. 429.

²⁸Clark, loc. cit.

President W. A. Bell, Secretary of the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church, wrote me: "The Colored Methodist Episcopal Church has no regulation forbidding its members to join secret fraternal organizations."²⁹

7. Congregational Christian Churches of the U.S.A.:

The Congregationalists likewise have enjoyed unification with two bodies: That with the Evangelical Protestant Churches, of German antecedents, in 1924, and in 1931 with the Christian Church.³⁰

This union "has been thoroughly democratic leaving both free to continue their own forms of worship and each with its own polity and doctrine."³¹ "A merger with the Evangelical and Reformed has been under consideration since 1944."³² "The position of the 'Christians' was extremely broad. The practice of the Congregationalists had become quite similar."³³ "Congregational polity, unlike presbyterian or episcopal polity permits of easy change."³⁴ They have 5,620 churches and 1,241,477 members.

Douglas Horton, Minister of the General Council, writes

²⁹Letter to the author dated December 4, 1952.

³⁰William Sweet, The Story of Religion In America (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1939), p. 396.

³¹Ibid., op. cit., p. 68.

³²Ibid., p. 67.

³³Neve, op. cit., p. 501.

³⁴J. Paul Williams, What Americans Believe and How They Worship (New York: Harpers and Brothers, 1952), p. 222.

of their position on the lodge, "Our church has never taken any position with regard to secret fraternal organizations."³⁵

8. Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church in America:

This body was organized in 1872 by missionaries from Denmark under the name, Kirkeling Missionsforening. In 1894 3000 members withdrew to unite with what is now the United Evangelical Lutheran Church but 5000 remained to form the present body.³⁶

"In doctrine the church makes no attempt at forming new standards, but is in entire conformity with the Lutheran Church of Denmark."³⁷ Only recently they have changed their name to the American Evangelical Lutheran Church. This group has eighty-two churches and 19,899 members.

Regarding their position on the lodge Paul M. Bretscher, in his article, "To Join or Not to Join," writes:

From a letter received from the Rev. Holger G. Nielsen, secretary of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, I draw the inference that also this Lutheran group is in theory opposed to secret oath-bound organizations but, for historical reasons, is experiencing difficulty putting its theory into practice.³⁸

9. The Evangelical and Reformed Church:

The Evangelical and Reformed Church is the product of a union established at Cleveland, Ohio, on June 26, 1934, between two bodies of Swiss and German background with basic agreements in doctrine, polity and culture—the

³⁵Letter to the author dated January 21, 1953.

³⁶1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 59.

³⁷Religious Bodies: 1936, II, 993.

³⁸Bretscher, loc. cit.

Evangelical Synod of North America and the Reformed Church in the United States.³⁹

"The union was unique in that it left all details to be adjusted after the union."⁴⁰ "Both churches were German Calvinistic" ". . . church polity is modified Presbyterian."⁴¹

In 1949 the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed church were standing at the altar ready for union when the process was halted by court action brought by a minority within the Congregation group.⁴²

Regarding their lodge position W. B. Kerschner, Secretary, writes:

I do not know what the attitude of the Evangelical Synod of North America was before its merger with the Reformed Church in the United States. As a life-long member of the latter group I know that no action was ever taken by them in opposition to secret fraternal organizations. Also since the merger in 1934 there has been no legislation pro or con upon that subject. I am sure that this is a true summary of the situation past and present.⁴³

10. Evangelical United Brethren Church:

The youngest of the major Protestant churches in America, the Evangelical United Brethren Church was born in a merger at Johnstown Pennsylvania, in 1946, uniting bodies previously known as the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the Evangelical Church. Both Churches originated in Pennsylvania and were quite alike in

³⁹Mead, op. cit., p. 81.

⁴⁰1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 41.

⁴¹Mead, op. cit., p. 83.

⁴²Williams, op. cit., p. 128.

⁴³Letter to the author dated December 3, 1952.

doctrine and polity.⁴⁴

"There were no essential changes in the basic doctrines or polities of either of the two merged churches."⁴⁵ "In doctrine this church is Arminian and in government Methodist."⁴⁶ They have 720,544 members and 4,457 churches.

Their position on the lodge according to I. D. Warner, Resident Bishop, is as follows:

Regarding the matter of secret fraternal organizations, The Evangelical United Brethren Church, in its discipline, makes no statement or pronouncement. An issue was made of this matter in 1889, when a small minority registered strong opposition to any member being received who was a member of such organizations. In the General Conference of that year, they withdrew and formed what is called "The United Brethren (Old Constitution)." The church has remained small through the years, and a number of the younger ministers have quite recently come into our church, who do not feel it is necessary or wise to make this demand of their members.⁴⁷

11. Evangelical Unity of the Czech-Moravian Brethren of North America:

This group originated among the Czech and Moravian immigrants arriving in Texas about 1850. In 1864 they organized as the Bohemian and Moravian Brethren and in 1903 as the Evangelical Union of Bohemian Brethren. There are few departures from the doctrine and polity of the Moravian Church in America. These churches are confined to Texas.⁴⁸

⁴⁴Head, op. cit., p. 84.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 85.

⁴⁶1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 42.

⁴⁷Letter to the author dated February 20, 1953.

⁴⁸Head, op. cit., p. 140.

They have thirty-two churches and 4,090 members.

Rev. F. J. Kostohryz, their president, who wrote me regarding their position on lodges, observes, "Members as well as ministers are not to belong to any secret organization."⁴⁹

12. Five Years Meeting of the Friends In America:

"With about seventy thousand members this is the largest single Quaker body in the United States."⁵⁰ "Feeling the need of greater unity and closer cooperation in the performance of common Christian tasks"⁵¹ "the Five Years Meeting of Friends was formed in 1902 by eleven yearly Meetings entering into a loose confederation."⁵² "Each of these Yearly Meetings remains independent but meets in the gathering held every five years for advisory purposes."⁵³ There are 68,612 members and four hundred and ninety churches in this union.

Their position on the lodge issue, according to Errol T. Elliot, Executive Secretary, is as follows:

The Quakers have had, quite generally, a testimony against secret societies. This has given way in recent decades however until there are very many Friends who

⁴⁹Undated letter to the author.

⁵⁰Head, op. cit., p. 95.

⁵¹Phelan, op. cit., p. 120.

⁵²1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 46.

⁵³Head, op. cit., p. 96.

are members of lodges of various kinds.⁵⁴

13. The Greek Orthodox Church:

During the period from 1890 to the First World War the number of Greek immigrants to the United States increased greatly. They came mostly from Greece and the Greek islands in the Aegean Sea. At first there was no central organization of the churches, only the ecclesiastical supervision of the Holy Synod in Athens.⁵⁵

"An act known as the Founding Tome of 1922 established the Greek (Orthodox) Archdiocese of North and South America."⁵⁶

A new constitution and by-laws have been adopted for the Greek Orthodox churches in the United States. Doctrine, polity and worship are of the usual Eastern Orthodox patterns.⁵⁷

They have 320 churches and a million members.

Archbishop Michael, writing on their position with respect to the lodge states:

The Greek Orthodox Church is in agreement and cooperates with every organization or group of persons who work in conformity with the laws of this great country in which we live and are not antagonistic to the Faith and the Tradition of the Eastern Orthodox Church in general.⁵⁸

According to one of their periodicals they say,

. . . Masonry trespasses the bounds of the Church by interfering with ethical and religious truths. The

⁵⁴Letter to the author dated November 25, 1952.

⁵⁵Religious Bodies: 1936, I, 572.

⁵⁶Mead, op. cit., pp. 76 f.

⁵⁷Mead, loc. cit.

⁵⁸Letter to the author dated February 23, 1953.

very fact that Masonry deals with religion and worship makes it mandatory for the Orthodox to avoid Masonry and all lodges and organizations of a similar character. Religion and ethics is the business of the Church. To insist that one can be an Orthodox in good standing and a Mason at the same time is simply to betray a gross ignorance of the mission and nature of Christ's Church. It is to overlook the truth that the Orthodox church alone dictates religious and ethical truths.⁵⁹

14. International Convention of Disciples of Christ:

"This convention meets annually with advisory powers only over the churches of the Disciples of Christ, and is composed of individual members of those churches."⁶⁰ "The convention as such has no authority over the action of the churches."⁶¹

In theology they occupy the common evangelical position. There is nothing distinctive about them save their "anti" attitude in the matter of organs and missionary societies. In polity they are the strictest of all congregationalists.⁶²

This group has 7,835 churches and 1,792,985 members.

Gaines M. Cook, Executive Secretary of the International Convention of Disciples of Christ, writes regarding their position on the lodge as follows:

⁵⁹Eusebius Alexander P'Stephanou, "The Orthodox Church Militant," An Account of the Doctrinal and Historical Relations of Orthodoxy with the Separated Communions (New York: Cosmos Greek-American Printing Co., n.d.), 28.

⁶⁰Mead, op. cit., p. 71.

⁶¹M. Phelan, op. cit., p. 102.

⁶²Clark, op. cit., p. 215.

So far as I know, there has never been any pronouncement from our Convention either pro or con. We are, of course, in the tradition of the free churches whose general position is that matters of political and social affiliation are considered to be the prerogative of the individual. In other words, we make no attempt to regulate individual lives with respect to any affiliation. Unofficially, I think that the consensus of opinion of the Disciples of Christ would be favorable to any relationship established by the individual which would aid him in establishing wholesome contacts with other people. To illustrate this further, we believe that the codes of morals and ethics held by the Masons, Odd Fellows, Knights of Pythias, et al, are constructive. On the other hand, I have heard many sermons and preached some myself, on the fact that a fraternity or lodge can never take the place of a church and we well recognize the danger inherent in such a mistaken conclusion which undoubtedly has been reached by many men who have affiliated with these organizations. The point of view, you see, is that we have consistently emphasized the primacy of the church and have warned against fraternal organizations becoming rivals for the time, loyalty, and services of our members. At the same time we have recognized that it is possible for those who keep all things in proportion and balance to be both good churchmen and good Masons, etc.⁶³

15. The Methodist Church:

This group includes the three branches united at Kansas City in the general conference of 1939: the Methodist Episcopal Church, the northern body, the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; and the Methodist Protestant Church.⁶⁴

"This was the largest unification movement ever to take place in the United States."⁶⁵ "The polity of the Metho-

⁶³Letter to the author dated November 26, 1952.

⁶⁴Head, op. cit., p. 132.

⁶⁵Sweet, loc. cit.

dist Church follows the general polity of all Methodism.⁶⁶ They are "in common with other Arminian bodies,"⁶⁷ but "they attach little importance to doctrine. The emphasis is laid on the activity of the church, its discipline and organization. A marked legalism characterizes the church discipline."⁶⁸ It has 9,065,727 members belonging to 39,961 churches.

G. Bishop Bromley Oxnam writing for the Methodist Church regarding the lodge position of this group wrote:

The Methodist Church has never taken a position upon the question of affiliation with fraternal organizations; whether secret or not secret. Many of our bishops are prominent in Masonry and find no problem in that relationship.⁶⁹

16. The Moravian Church:

"The first group of Moravians arrived in Georgia in 1735 under the leadership of Spangenberg."⁷⁰ "Later they moved to Pennsylvania,"⁷¹ which is now a stronghold for them. "The Moravian Church has no doctrine peculiar to

⁶⁶Mead, op. cit., p. 133.

⁶⁷Klotsche, op. cit., p. 303.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 305.

⁶⁹Letter to the author dated November 28, 1952.

⁷⁰Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), pp. 428 f.

⁷¹Mead, op. cit., p. 130.

itself."⁷² "They are broadly evangelical, insisting upon a principle of 'in essentials unity, in non essentials liberty, and in all things charity'."⁷³ "A strong unionistic tendency characterizes the Moravian Church."⁷⁴ "The Moravian Church is broadly evangelistic, liturgical with an episcopacy as a spiritual office and in form of government 'conferential'."⁷⁵

The Rev. Kenneth G. Hamilton, Executive Officer, in a letter to the author regarding their position on the lodge question writes:

Let me quote the only official statement on the subject of secret societies contained in the Book of Order of the Moravian Church. This book contains the official compilations of legislation adopted by the synod of our church. Part 4 chapter 2, section 19 reads: "Every congregation shall be at liberty to frame its own rules with respect to secret societies in such a way as local conditions necessitate."⁷⁶

17. National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc.:

The National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. is the result of a merger of several Baptist conventions in 1895. This group is the older and parent convention of Negro Baptists. They are to be distinguished from the National Baptist Convention of America, usually referred to as the "unincorp-

⁷²Religious Bodies: 1936, II, 1203.

⁷³Mead, op. cit., p. 139.

⁷⁴Klotsche, op. cit., p. 314.

⁷⁵1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 73.

⁷⁶Letter to the author dated December 17, 1952.

orated body."

In doctrine and polity the Negro Baptists are in close accord with the Northern and Southern Conventions. They represent the more strictly Calvinistic type in doctrine and in polity.⁷⁷

The National Baptist Convention U.S.A. Inc. has 4,467,779 members and 25,350 churches.

Their position on the lodge is according to U. J.

Robinson, Secretary of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. Inc.:

The baptist church [sic] has no regulation prohibiting its members from joining secret orders. However, there are quite a few baptist preachers who are critical of their members being affiliated with these secret orders.⁷⁸

18. National Baptist Convention of America:

"The National Baptist Convention of America was organized in St. Louis in 1886"⁷⁹ "and was a post-civil war effort on the part of ex-slaves who found in Baptist democracy and simplicity the answer to their religious needs."⁸⁰ The older and parent body of this group is the National Baptist Convention of the United States of America Incorporated.

Both were formerly in the National Baptist Convention incorporated but they divided in a dispute in 1916 over the control of publications of the conventions, in which

⁷⁷Religious Bodies: 1936, I, 153.

⁷⁸Letter to the author dated November 26, 1952.

⁷⁹Klotsche, op. cit., p. 278.

⁸⁰Williams, op. cit., p. 248.

the election and tenure of national officers was concerned.⁸¹

At the present time this religious body has 10,851 churches and 2,645,789 members.

Their position regarding the lodge is stated by the Rev. John W. Williams, pastor of St. Stephen Baptist Church in Kansas City, Missouri, in the following paragraph:

The National Baptist Convention of America does not openly state its position as it relates to fraternal organizations or lodges. I rather think that it is left to the individual to choose according to his desires. As far as our local church is concerned it is that way. We have a number of our officers and members in several secret organizations and I should think that it is left entirely to the individual member.⁸²

19. Presbyterian Church in the United States:

This body is that branch of the Presbyterian Church "which established a separate existence at the time of the Civil War. It is often called the 'Southern' Presbyterian Church."⁸³ "Several unsuccessful attempts have been made to bring about a union of the Northern and Southern churches."⁸⁴

The polity of this Church follows the Presbyterian system, although "the Southern church is definitely conservative in theology and outlook; the northern church shows more

⁸¹Mead, op. cit., p. 32.

⁸²Letter to the author dated February 27, 1953.

⁸³1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 79.

⁸⁴Klotsche, op. cit., pp. 248.f.

liberal trends, unwelcome to many within the southern."⁸⁵

The latest report reveals that this Church has 3,665 churches and 702,266 members.

E. C. Scott, Stated Clerk and Treasurer of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, wrote the following regarding this Church's position on the lodge:

Our General Assembly has never taken a stand against membership in secret fraternal orders. The only reference I can find on this subject is the record of an action by our General Assembly 48 years ago (at its 1904 meeting) as follows: The Assembly records its hearty commendation of the brave stand taken by the majority in the Synod of Brazil in refusing to make membership in the Order of Free Masons a bar to communion in the Church.⁸⁶

20. Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.:

This is the branch of the Presbyterian Church which is often called Northern Presbyterian. "Today it is the largest single body of Presbyterians in the United States."⁸⁷ "At the outbreak of the Civil War, in 1861, the Southern Presbyterian Churches separated from the churches of the North."⁸⁸

The characteristic feature of this church is its government by "presbyters" or "elders". The church is constituted like a republic, the supreme governing body being the General Assembly.⁸⁹

⁸⁵Mead, op. cit., p. 153.

⁸⁶Letter to the author dated November 29, 1952.

⁸⁷Mead, op. cit., p. 149.

⁸⁸E. H. Klotsche, op. cit., p. 246.

⁸⁹1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, loc. cit.

"The seventeenth century Westminster Confession of Faith is still the nominal standard of Presbyterian doctrine, in both the North and the South."⁹⁰ "As a whole these standards are distinctly Calvinistic."⁹¹ The church today has 8,317 churches and 2,364,112 members.

As to its position on the lodge Henry Barraclough, Manager of the Department of Administration, wrote to the author in a letter dated December 4, 1952:

A careful survey of the Presbyterian Digest, 1938, does not indicate that our Church has ever made any official pronouncement on the matter of secret fraternal organizations.

21. Protestant Episcopal Church:

This group constitutes "the self-governing American branch of the Anglican Communion; for a century and a half in this country it bore the name of the Church of England."⁹² "It began as a colonial branch of the Church of England dating from 1607 when the British planted the colony of Virginia."⁹³

The Church of England ceased to exist in America when England recognized the independence of the American colonies. Its successor was the Protestant Episcopal Church, organized in 1789. This body perpetuated of the mother church, but its organization was carefully

⁹⁰J. Paul Williams, op. cit., p. 199.

⁹¹Religious Bodies: 1936, II, 1402.

⁹²Mead, op. cit., p. 157.

⁹³Neve, op. cit., p. 358.

adjusted to American needs.⁹⁴

"Like the Established Church of England this group is deeply interested in a Christian Union."⁹⁵ At the present time it numbers 7,116 churches and 2,417,464 members in the United States.

C. Rankin Barnes, Secretary of the Protestant Episcopal Church, wrote in a letter to the author regarding the lodges:

1) there is no mention of the matter in the Canon Law of the Episcopal Church, and 2) so far as I know its General Convention has never passed any resolution on the subject. As a matter of fact many leading Episcopalians, both clerical and lay, have been particularly active in the Masonic Order.⁹⁶

22. Reformed Church in America:

This church was established in 1614 when the Dutch founded a trading post on Manhattan Island. Many believe it is the oldest Protestant church on the American continent.

"In 1819 the church was incorporated as the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church in 1867 it became the Reformed Church in America."⁹⁷ "The Church is a distinctively Calvinistic body"⁹⁸ "and the government of the church stands midway between episcopal and Presbyterian forms; it might be called modified

⁹⁴Lars P. Qualben, op. cit., p. 503.

⁹⁵Neve, op. cit., p. 360.

⁹⁶Letter to the author dated December 1, 1952.

⁹⁷Mead, op. cit., p. 162.

⁹⁸Religious Bodies: 1936, op. cit., II, 1506.

Presbyterian."⁹⁹ They have 767 churches and 187,256 members according to latest reports.

Regarding their lodge position Dr. James E. Hoffman, Stated Clerk, writes:

The question of Free Masonry was before the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America on numerous occasions during the latter part of the previous Century, the action of the Synod can best be summed up in the report of the Synod of 1880:

1. Resolved: That this General Synod, after deliberate consideration of the memorials of the Classes of Holland, Wisconsin, Grand River, and Illinois, do hereby recognize and appreciate with those bodies and the Churches which they represent, the practical difficulties and perplexities which are set forth in their respective papers.

2. Resolved: That while, on the ex parte evidence of the memorials now before it, this Synod cannot properly give its official testimony for or against Free Masonry and other oath-bound secret societies; and while it holds as sacred the indefeasible rights of all of its ministers and members to their individual conscientious convictions and liberty of speech and action, subject only to their prior loyalty to Christ and to His Church yet it hereby declares that no communicant member, and no minister of the Reformed Church in America ought to unite with or to remain in any society or institution, whether secret or open, whose principles and practices are anti-Christian, or contrary to the faith and practice of the Church to which he belongs.

3. Resolved: That this Synod solemnly believes and declares that any system of religion or morals whose tendency is to hide our Saviour, or to supplant the religion of which He is the founder, should received [sic] no countenance from His professed followers; and, furthermore, that no humane, benevolent or philanthropic, or reforming agency in this world whose principle is to "do good unto all men, but especially to them that are of the household of faith", and, therefore, that all who belong to this Church are in duty bound to give it the pre-eminence over all orders or peace or prosperity, and especially its great charities and philanthropies.

⁹⁹Mead, op. cit., p. 163.

4. Resolved: That this Synod also advises Consistories and Classes of the Church to be very kind and forbearing and strictly constitutional in their dealings with individuals on this subject, and that they be and are here affectionately cautioned against setting up any new or unauthorized tests of Communion in the Christian Church.

Subsequent to the 1880 Synod that matter was again discussed but each time the Synod referred back to the action of 1880.¹⁰⁰

23. Religious Society of Friends of Philadelphia and Vicinity:

"The first session was held in 1681."¹⁰¹ This group was never a member of The Five Years Meeting of Friends In America. They have forty-six churches and 5,743 members.

To indicate their position on the lodge Mr. Howard G. Taylor, Jr., Secretary, quotes from their book of Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends of Philadelphia and Vicinity.

The official statement of this Yearly Meeting is clear on the subject. It is as follows:

"The Society of Friends has always borne a corporate testimony against secret organizations. While individual Friends have felt free to join organizations in which the element of secrecy is practically of no significance, we believe that there is need for a continued appeal to our members to abstain from membership in most secret societies. Although the primary aim of many such societies is the welfare of their members they often exert a discrimination, influence and power inimical to the best spiritual, social, business and political life.

¹⁰⁰Letter to the author dated December 3, 1952.

¹⁰¹Faith and Practice of the Religious Society of Friends of Philadelphia and Vicinity (Philadelphia: Friends Book Store, 1952), pp. 1 ff.

"We admonish our younger members against joining college secret societies and other organizations that set up undemocratic social discriminations and barriers in college life. The exclusiveness of secret societies often causes real suffering and gives to the fellowship which they promote a flavor of selfishness foreign to the spirit of Christian brotherhood.

"Secret societies are capable of producing much evil, and are incapable of producing any good which might not be effected by open means. The pledge to secrecy is in itself a surrender to independence which tends to moral decadence and spiritual loss. It is our testimony that the individual should be free to follow the truth in thought and action without any restriction through a pledge to secrecy."¹⁰²

24. Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America:

Since April of 1929 the Orthodox Parish Churches of the United States and Canada have been united in the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate (Diocese) of America. . . . In matters of faith and doctrine this church recognizes the spiritual and canonical authority of the Holy Synod (House of Bishops) of the Romanian Orthodox Church of Romania, of which body the titular bishop of the American diocese is a de jure member. In administrative matters the episcopate is an autonomous organization having the "Church Congress" a yearly convention as its supreme administrative body and a Council of the Episcopate as the executive body of the congress. The episcopate adheres to the same doctrine as all other Eastern Orthodox churches and respects the canon laws governing them all.¹⁰³

This group has forty-seven churches and fifty thousand members in the United States.

The position of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America on the lodge question as given by John N. Toconita, Secretary to the Bishop, is as follows:

¹⁰²Letter to the author dated November 28, 1952.

¹⁰³Mead, op. cit., pp. 77 f.

Regarding the church members who have joined different secret organizations, the hierarchy of the Romanian Orthodox Church has not, up to this time, taken any stand for or against membership in secret fraternities. It is a fact that many of those who belong to secret organizations have remained good and loyal Christians.¹⁰⁴

25. The Russian Orthodox Church of North America:

This church came to America "by way of Alaska, where it was a missionary offshoot of the church in Russia, when Alaska was Russian territory."¹⁰⁵

For many years this Russian Church has acted as foster Mother to the Orthodox Churches which came into existence through immigration from other countries (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Rumania, and Syria). It took care of many of the Uniat Churches and kept them from uniting with Rome.¹⁰⁶

"The general doctrine of the Russian Orthodox Church is in accord with that of the Eastern Orthodox Churches."¹⁰⁷ This group has 399 churches and four hundred thousand members.

Regarding their lodge position The Rev. Alexander Schmemmann wrote:

As a principle the Orthodox Church considers that the membership in a Masonic lodge is incompatible with the church membership though there is no universal or canonical decision, but only local and disciplinary prescriptions by bishops and synods. The reason for that opposition to Masonry is a) that the Christian

¹⁰⁴Letter to the author dated January 20, 1953.

¹⁰⁵Mead, op. cit., p. 165.

¹⁰⁶Neve, op. cit., p. 61.

¹⁰⁷Religious Bodies: 1936, I, 590.

ideal as presented by the Church, is considered to be absolute and therefore requiring no other "idealistic" or mystical society to achieve it. b) that in many countries Masonry is opposed itself to the Church and is fully rationalistic in its beliefs and c) that a Christian at baptism pledges total loyalty to Christ and to His Church and therefore could have no other pledges and oaths accepted.¹⁰⁸

In 1932 Metropolitan Antony of the Russian Orthodox Church made the following statement:

" . . . It is forbidden to all Orthodox Christians to become Freemasons. All members of the clergy are duty bound to question those who come to Confession whether they are members of Masonic Orders, and in case it will appear that they are Masons and believe and share Masonic teachings, they should be informed that membership in the Masonic organization is incompatible with Orthodox Christianity and that such should immediately resign from Masonry, otherwise they will be deemed unworthy to receive the Holy Communion and their further impenitency will bring to them excommunication from the Orthodox Church."¹⁰⁹

26. Seventh Day Baptist General Convention:

"This group dates from the English Reformation having adherents among the followers of Cromwell."¹¹⁰ They "are in general agreement with Calvinistic Baptists save in their Sabbatarian views."¹¹¹ "They claim to have supplied the seventh day teaching to ten other Protestant denominations

¹⁰⁸Letter to the author dated April 13, 1953.

¹⁰⁹Eusebius Alexander P'Stephanou, op. cit., p. 30.

¹¹⁰Yeve, op. cit., p. 526.

¹¹¹Clark, op. cit., p. 206.

including the Seventh Day Adventists."¹¹² "Doctrinally they hold to the Arminian side . . . on church polity they stress independence."¹¹³ They have sixty churches and 6,187 members according to the latest report.

Their practice regarding the lodge, according to Courtland V. Davis, Corresponding Secretary, is:

Seventh Day Baptists have made no official pronouncement concerning membership in secret fraternal organizations. There is a feeling on the part of some that such organizations take time and energy that could well be devoted to the work of the church. However many Seventh Day Baptists are more or less active members of such organizations.¹¹⁴

27. Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church:

The churches of this body represent the immigration into the United States of communities from Syria, Palestine Egypt and Iraq, connected with the Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch. . . . During the month of September, 1934 the Patriarchate of Antioch appointed the Very Reverend Archimandrite Antony Bashir as patriarchal vicar for all Syrian Orthodox people in North America with full authority to unite all the parishes in America in one organization.¹¹⁵

"The usual Eastern Orthodox patterns of belief and ritual are used."¹¹⁶ There are seventy-seven churches and seventy-five thousand members belonging to this group.

Archbishop Bashir writes regarding their attitude to

¹¹²Mead, op. cit., p. 38.

¹¹³Neve, loc. cit.

¹¹⁴Letter to the author dated December 28, 1952.

¹¹⁵Religious Bodies: 1936, I, 601.

¹¹⁶Mead, op. cit., p. 80.

the lodge:

Our church does not interfere with the liberty of the individual whatsoever in regard to the organizations he likes to belong to, or the books he desires to read, or the pictures he chooses to see. He is free to do anything he likes to satisfy his own mind. However, when he commits any sin against the laws of the church he will be corrected.¹¹⁷

28. The Ukrainian Orthodox Church

In the United States of America:

While the church recognizes the spiritual authority of Constantinople, it is completely independent in all matters of administration. Subscribing to Eastern Orthodox doctrine, it has instituted certain variations in worship and polity to meet the needs of its people living in the United States. . . . They formed their own church independent of Moscow in 1928 and held their first convention in 1931.¹¹⁸

Today they have forty-seven churches and 40,250 members.

The Chancellor of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America, The Rev. Walter M. Propheta writes regarding their lodge position:

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of America takes the negative point of view on the subject of Secret fraternal organizations. It is our conviction that in any civilized country there is not need for secret fraternal clubs or organizations. They tend to breed discrimination, intolerance and class hatred.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷Letter to the author dated December 1, 1952.

¹¹⁸Mead, loc. cit.

¹¹⁹Letter to the author dated January 16, 1953.

29. United Lutheran Church in America:

This body dates back to the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, organized in 1748,¹²⁰

and is the result of the union effected in 1918 of three general bodies, each of which had its historical beginnings far back in colonial times. These bodies were: the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, and the United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South.¹²¹

Though strongly devoted to the historic creeds and confessions of Lutheranism, the United Lutheran Church in America might be distinguished from other groups such as the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod in the application of more liberal and progressive interpretations and policies. Polity is less firm than might be expected in so large a body; forms of government and worship are considered of secondary importance and each church and synod is independent in these matters. This group lists 3,860 churches and 1,925,506 members and is the largest Lutheran Church in North America.¹²²

The official position toward fraternal orders (lodges) by the U.L.C. in America may be found in the Constitu-

¹²⁰1952 Edition Yearbook of American Churches, p. 61.

¹²¹Phelan, op. cit., p. 153.

¹²²Mead, op. cit., p. 121.

tion and By-laws of the U.L.C. in America (Revised to 1948), p. 6, Section 6 of Article VIII.

Section 6. As to the maintenance of Principle and Practice. The United Lutheran Church in America shall protect and enforce its Doctrinal Basis, secure pure preaching of the Word of God and the right administration of the sacraments in all its Synods and congregations. It shall also have the right, where it deems that loyalty to the Word of God requires it, to advise and admonish concerning association and affiliation with non-ecclesiastical and other organizations whose principles or practices appear to be inconsistent with full loyalty to the Christian Church, but the Synods alone shall have the power of discipline.

The position of the U.L.C.A. is more fully expressed in Declarations By the United Lutheran Church in America ("Washington Declaration" adopted at the biennial Convention of the U.L.C.A. in 1920 in Washington D.C.)

The pertinent paragraphs read:

E. Concerning movements and organizations Injurious to the Christian Faith.

In view of the prevalence throughout our land of doctrines which are subversive of the Christian faith: and in view of the indifference manifested by many Christian people to the doctrines and principles of the teachers, sects, and organizations which seek their adherence and support and in view of the fact that through the acceptance of religious and other teachings which contradict the Gospel of Christ, the faith of Christians is endangered; we declare

I. That we solemnly warn all our pastors and the members of our congregations against all teachers, sects and organizations of any kind, whose doctrines and principles contradict the truths set forth in Section D, III, of this Declaration or which limit their adherents or members in a free confession of their Christian faith (Cf. A, V, 3, above)

II. That we warn them especially against all teachers, sects, and societies whose doctrines and principles deny the reality of sin, the personality of God, the full and complete God head of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his redemption of the world by His sufferings and death, and

the truth and authority of the Holy Scriptures; as well as against all teachers, sects and societies which teach that man can be saved from sin or can become righteous before God, by their own works or by any other means than the grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ. We believe such doctrines are not only not Christian but are anti-Christian and destructive of true Christian faith and life.

III. That inasmuch as these and other false and dangerous doctrines are widely spread, not only by the activity of individual teachers, but also by the dissemination of literature and through the agency of societies and other organizations, calling themselves by various names which often times conceal the real nature of the doctrines and principles for which they stand; we therefore lay it upon the consciences of the pastors and of the members of all our congregations to scrutinize with the utmost care the doctrines and principles of all teachers, sects, organizations and societies of every sort which seek their adherence and support, and to refuse such adherence and support in all cases of conflict or possible contradiction between these principles and doctrines and these set forth in Holy Scripture and in the Confessions of the church. In the application of this principle the Church should always appeal to a conscience which it is her sacred duty to enlighten, patiently and persistently, from the Word of God. (Cf. also Constitution of The United Lutheran Church in America, Art. VIII, Sec. 6.) p. 18&19.¹²³

30. United Presbyterian Church of North America:

The United Presbyterian Church of North America was formed by the union of the Associate Presbyterian and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian churches, consummated at Pittsburg, Pa., May 26, 1858.¹²⁴

"The doctrines, traditions and institutions of the two bodies were preserved; government follows the Presbyterian

¹²³Bretschler, op. cit., p. 226.

¹²⁴Phelan, op. cit., p. 228.

pattern."¹²⁵ "The Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms are the doctrinal standards."¹²⁶ This group lists 219,027 members and 830 churches.

Dr. O. H. Milligan, Principal Clerk, writes regarding their position on the lodge:

When the Associate Presbyterian Church and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church united in 1858 forming the United Presbyterian Church of North America a Testimony was adopted in which Article XV is as follows:

"We declare, That all associations whether formed for political or benevolent purposes which impose upon their members an oath of secrecy, or an obligation to obey a code of unknown laws, are inconsistent with the genius and spirit of Christianity, and church members ought not to have fellowship with such associations."

In 1910 the position of the church was changed by the adoption of a new Book of Government in which the Membership Covenant #118 reads as follows:

"(4) Do you promise, in order to such a life of holy obedience, that you will be diligent in your attendance upon all the appointed means of grace, in the performance of all duty as it may be made known to you; that you will give the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ supreme loyalty, separating yourself from all associations you may find to be a hinderance to godliness and the performance of Christian duties?"¹²⁷

¹²⁵Mead, op. cit., pp. 156 f.

¹²⁶Phelan, loc. cit.

¹²⁷Letter to the author dated December 2, 1952.

CHAPTER III

CONCLUSION

As a result of our study of the history and statistics of each of the thirty constituent churches belonging to the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America we made the following observations:

1. "Churches with strong nationalistic ties are more inclined to be antagonistic to the lodge and are included in the group which officially oppose lodges. They also have stronger doctrinal foundations and have not recently entered into mergers with other churches.
2. Negro denominations seem more favorable to the lodge. They are in most instances included in those groups which are indifferent to, or even encourage, the lodge.
3. Churches which are indifferent to or favorable to the lodge have a very flexible doctrinal system. To them, differences in doctrine are not important. Their constant cry is for union and it is a common thing for them to merge with other church bodies. Their easy, unionistic, doctrinal position influences their lodge position and makes them indifferent toward the lodge."
4. The National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America itself is non-committal toward the lodge. Some of the constituent members are not opposed to

the lodge, but others are. Therefore, there is no agreement on this issue in the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

In years to come the lodge question may become the basic cause for trouble and conflict between churches in the National Council and may even seriously interfere with their present cooperation. This will happen, especially, if these churches are wholly awakened to the evils and inroads of Freemasonry into our American churches.

APPENDIX

THE POSITION OF PROTESTANT CHURCHES IN THE UNITED STATES WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The writer himself is a member of [the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. This group recognized the evil of the lodge — *from its very beginning* more than a hundred years ago and has consistently warned against affiliation with secret fraternal societies. It has declared its position in a set of propositions which are readily available. These propositions read:

a. Synod is firmly opposed to lodges or societies of an unchristian or anti-Christian character.

b. It is the solemn, sacred, and God-given duty of every pastor properly to instruct his people on the sinfulness of such lodges as deny the Holy Trinity, the Deity of Christ, the Vicarious Atonement, and other Scriptural doctrines, and to induce his congregation(s) to take action against all members who after thorough instruction refuse to leave such a lodge.

c. It is the duty of every fellow Christian, fellow pastor, and especially of the officials of Synod, to admonish all pastors who neglect their duty in this respect; and if Christian admonition has been administered in the spirit of Matthew 18 without the proper results, the officials of Synod shall bring such cases to the attention of the respective District for further action.

d. Synod instructs its officers to exercise vigilant care and urges all pastors and congregations to admonish such congregations and pastors as permit the "lodge evil" to exist in their churches without countertestimony and decisive action. If after due investigation it becomes evident that such congregations and pastors refuse to

change their attitude and practice, they shall be suspended and eventually expelled from Synod.

e. Synod earnestly requests the various Districts to carry out these provisions and faithfully to assist their congregations in eradicating the "lodge evil".

f. It is, and shall be, the practice in Synod not to administer Holy Communion to members of such lodges.

g. A conscientious pastor may in cases which present unusual features, rendering their classification difficult, administer Holy Communion to a person who is still outwardly connected with such a lodge. But in such a case the pastor shall earnestly beware of procrastinating and giving offense, and to this end he shall freely and conscientiously consult with his church council and congregation, his brethren in the ministry, and with the officials of Synod, as the case may be.¹

But the Missouri Synod is not the only church in the United States which opposes the lodge. There are other Protestant churches, not members of the National Council of Churches, that have raised their voices in opposition to lodgery.

One of these is the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. A certain W. J. Coleman is chairman of their Witness Committee. He writes the position of his church on the lodge:

The Covenanter Church moved by what it considers the inherent evil of organized secrecy joins with several other Churches in a testimony against all Secret Societies. The Covenanter statement of this testimony is as follows:

¹Handbook of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, (Revised edition; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), Section 14.03.

"Christians should walk in the light. Their doctrines, their purposes and manner of life, their rules of action and conduct, should not be concealed. The formation of secret associations for the prosecution of ends, however good professedly, is inconsistent with the requirements of Christian principle." Chapter XXII, Section 5.²

A similar view is expressed by The Baptist Examiner, a periodical published weekly by the Southern Baptist Convention, there we read:

We hope that the Christian people in our Nation in general and West Virginia in particular are waking up to the importance of the fight Ansted Baptist Church is having to make for its existence and for the principle of religious freedom, as well as the right to manage its own affairs. We hope, too, that people are waking up to the great, evil power of Freemasonry. It is appalling to think that this un-American institution has the power to actually crush out from existence as an organized body a real Baptist church. Such a thing this monstrous evil is seeking to do in its evil work against the Ansted church.³

The American Lutheran Church, too, is one that opposes the lodge and has the following paragraph in its Constitution (Article II, Section 4, p. 422, of Official Reports to the Eleventh Convention of the American Lutheran Church held in Columbus, Ohio, October 5-12, 1950):

The Church is earnestly opposed to all organizations or societies, secret or open, which, without confessing faith in the Triune God and in Jesus Christ as the eternal Son of the eternal God, incarnate in order to be our only Savior from sin, are avowedly religious or practice forms of religion, teaching salvation by works.

²Form letter sent out approximately 1948 by W. J. Coleman, chairman of the Witness Committee for the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America.

³"Something to Do Something About", The Baptist Examiner, XVI (January 27, 1951).

It declares such organizations and societies to be anti-Christian, and rejects any fellowship with them.⁴

These are the positions on the lodge question of some Protestant Churches which do not belong to the National Council of Churches. Their statements indicate that they, too, are conscious of the evils of the lodge and oppose it. Therefore the Missouri Synod does not stand alone in its objections to lodgery.

⁴Paul M. Bretcher, "To Join or Not To Join", The Lutheran Witness, LXX (July 24, 1951), 242.

1. African Methodist Episcopal Church: Bishop W. J. Wells, Presiding Bishop of District, 4736 South Parkway, Chicago 15, Illinois.

2. American Baptist Convention: Dr. Nathan G. Nelson, General Secretary, 111 Madison Ave., New York 16, N.Y.

3. Church of the Brethren: Arace Hollinger, Administrative Assistant to Norman J. Schuler, General Secretary, 23 South 33., Elgin, Illinois.

4. Colored Methodist Episcopal Church: Dr. A. P. Allen, Assistant to Secretary, Prof. W. A. Bell, Miles Memorial College, Birmingham 4, Alabama.

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A. Correspondence

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2. Denominations

- a. African Methodist Episcopal: Bishop S. L. Greene, President, Council of Bishops, 1212 Fountain Drive, S. W., Atlanta, Ga.
- b. African Methodist Episcopal Zion: Bishop W. J. Walls, Presiding Bishop of District, 4736 South Parkway, Chicago 15, Illinois.
- c. American Baptist Convention: Dr. Reuben E. Nelson, General Secretary, 152 Madison Ave., New York 16, N.Y.
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- j. Evangelical and Reformed Church: Rev. W. Sherman Kerschner, Secretary, 1505 Race St., Philadelphia 2, Penna.
- k. Evangelical United Brethren Church: Bishop I. D. Warner, Resident Bishop, 1455 Horticultural Drive, Route No. 2, Puente, California.
- l. Five Years Meeting of The Friends in America: Mr. Errol T. Elliot, Executive Secretary, 101 South 8th St., Richmond, Indiana.
- m. Religious Society of Friends of Philadelphia and Vicinity: Mr. Howard G. Taylor, Jr., Secretary, 304 Arch St., Philadelphia 6, Penna.
- n. The Methodist Church: Bishop G. Bromley Oxnam, Bishop of the Methodist Church, The Washington Area, 150 Fifth Ave., New York 11, N.Y.
- o. The Moravian Church (Unitas Fratrum): Rt. Rev. Kenneth G. Hamilton, Executive Officer, 69 W. Church St., Bethlehem, Penna.
- p. National Baptist Convention, U.S.A., Inc.: Rev. U. J. Robinson, Secretary, 405 St. Michael St., Mobile 10, Alabama.
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- x. Russian Orthodox Church of North America: Rev. Alexander Schmemann, President, St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and Academy, 537 West 121st Street, New York 27, N.Y.
- y. Seventh Day Baptists: Mr. Courtland V. Davis, Corresponding Secretary, 510 Watchuny Ave., Plainfield, New Jersey.
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- bb. United Presbyterian Church of North America: Rev. O. H. Milligan Principal Clerk, 108 South Brodhead Road, Aliquippa, Penna.

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