

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1955

The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church and Fellowship with Other Lutherans in America

Andrew Brondos

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_brondosa@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brondos, Andrew, "The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church and Fellowship with Other Lutherans in America" (1955). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 457.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/457>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE SLOVAK EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
AND FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER LUTHERANS IN AMERICA

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

by

Andrew Brondos

June 1955

Approved by:

George Dolak
Adviser

W. J. ...
Reader

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. FELLOWSHIP DEFINED	3
III. EARLY POSITION ON FELLOWSHIP	7
IV. CONGRESS OF SLOVAK LUTHERANS	14
V. LATER ATTEMPTS TO UNITE ALL SLOVAK LUTHERANS	26
The Conference of Slovak Lutheran Pastors.	26
Merger Attempt of the Slovak Synod, Zion	
Synod and Conference of Slovak Lutheran	
Pastors, 1931-1935	29
VI. RELATION TO THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH . . .	45
VII. RELATION TO THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE	53
VIII. SUMMARY	57
APPENDIX	59
BIBLIOGRAPHY	61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Much has been said and done about uniting the Church. Because of Satan's continuous action in introducing and re-introducing schisms and heresies, the true congregation of believers must remain alert in keeping the true doctrine of Holy Scriptures in its preaching, educating, and practice.

When the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church¹ was founded in 1902, there already existed many splits and differences among the Lutherans on the American scene. These disagreements were, in many cases, on very important doctrines. Most prominent among these were the doctrines of the election of God by grace, conversion solely by grace, and chiliasm. Among the differences in practice which were and still are prevalent are questions on altar and pulpit fellowship and secret societies.² This situation of the American Lutherans made it necessary for the Slovak Lutherans to take a definite stand and to show in which camp they would dwell, as well as with whom fellowship would be practiced.

The SELC has related itself positively and negatively

¹Hereafter, this will be referred to as the SELC.

²Svedok (Streator, Illinois: Svedok Publishing House, 1918), XII, No. 2, 22.

to other Lutheran churches in the United States. With some church bodies it has declared agreement and has affiliated with this group--the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. With others, though there have been repeated attempts and invitations for union, the SELC has declined to affiliate. These positions, affiliations or non-affiliations are the points considered in this thesis. That is the scope of this thesis in content. In time the scope of this thesis includes the period from the organizing of the SELC in September of 1902 to the end of the year 1954.

This examination is made on the basis of the SELC synodical conventions as covered in the Proceedings of these meetings; in the official periodicals of the Synod, the Svedok (Witness) and the Lutheran Beacon; in the History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902-1927, written by Prof. George Dolak; and in material included in several synodical pamphlets.

CHAPTER II

FELLOWSHIP DEFINED

Before an examination of church fellowship can be made, the term "fellowship" must be defined and discussed in the light of Holy Scriptures. Fellowship manifests agreement between two individuals or two or more groups of individuals. This agreement may be concerned with one particular subject or any number of subjects. When two or more church bodies are in fellowship, there exists between those church bodies agreement, harmony and unity on the interpretation of Holy Scriptures and on the Christian life.

The New Testament in the original uses the word which is sometimes interpreted "fellowship." It is translated this way twelve times in the Authorized Version and fifteen times in the Revised Version. The basic meaning of the word is "common." Its literal meaning is a common sharing or participation. Consequently, the term "church fellowship" means a common sharing of two or more church bodies in what they interpret from Scripture, what they preach and teach from Scripture and what they practice from Scripture. In this light, then, the meaning of such terms as doctrinal fellowship, prayer fellowship, altar fellowship, pulpit fellowship and other similar terms becomes clear.

The Scripture passages using the term "fellowship" or implying it are as follows:

And they continued in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship and in breaking of bread and in prayers. (Acts 2:42)

The fellowship among these early Christians depended upon their continuing "steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine." That was the basis of their unity. In this union the people in fellowship partook of holy communion and prayed together.

God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. (1 Corinthians 1:9)

This passage shows God as the Originator of the fellowship that the Christians have with Christ, the Son of God. In this fellowship with Christ there is fellowship with all Christians.

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. (1 Corinthians 10:16.17)

Communion here is spoken of as a common sharing "of the body and blood of Christ" or a common sharing in the result of Christ's laying down His life. This fellowship makes one common spiritual body of all those who shared in the death of Christ and in the celebration of Holy Communion.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

This passage shows what all true believers have in common; the Holy Ghost is with them.

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3)

This passage speaks of the fellowship in which all true believers are one in fellowship with God. There is a bond uniting all Christians to each other which in turn is a bond between these people and God.

The following passages refer to the fact that there is to be no fellowship with certain people.

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. (Romans 16:17)

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. (2 Thessalonians 3:6)

Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. (2 Timothy 3:5)

Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. (2 John 9.10)

Conclusions: Fellowship belongs to those who "continue in the apostles' doctrine." Each person who is included in this fellowship was called into it by God. This fellowship includes a common denominator between God and man through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. On a vertical plane this fellowship involves God and man. On a horizontal plane this fellowship involves every Christian with every other Christian.

When a person belongs to a certain church body, we conclude that that person is in agreement with the teachings of that church group and, consequently, is in fellowship with all the members of that church body. When two church bodies or synods disagree in the interpretation and teachings of the Holy Bible and in their applications, there can be no fellowship between these two church bodies. Agreement and common belief, then, are prerequisites for fellowship whether it be on a personal basis or on a group basis.

Holy Scriptures present the fact that when there is no true agreement in the apostles' doctrine, there is to be no fellowship. Such people who do not remain true to the teachings of Holy Scripture are to be avoided.

This is carried out by the individual Christian as well as by a group of Christians such as a denomination or synod. The group of Christians discussed in this thesis is the S.E.L.C. It will be noted in this paper how this church body has united in fellowship with those holding to the true Word of God and how it has refused to unite with church bodies which did not hold to the true Word of God.

CHAPTER III

EARLY POSITION ON FELLOWSHIP

The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church was founded at Connellsville, Pennsylvania on September 2-4, 1902. Before this time, the Slovak Lutherans who immigrated to this country were served by various pastors, some of whom were non-Lutherans.¹ Such a situation existed because the mother church in Slovakia had taken no steps to provide spiritual care for the emigrant Slovak Lutherans. Furthermore, there was a lack of leaders who could arrange for shepherds to take care of the Slovak Lutherans.² Such a Synod as the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church was to unite all the Slovak Lutherans, keep them in the fold and provide them with spiritual leaders.

During the preparatory meetings held before the organization of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, discussions were held concerning affiliation with other church bodies. At the meeting held in Braddock, Pennsylvania on January 16, 1900 several pastors (L. Boor, Karol Hauser and M. Tomáška) moved that the Slovak Lutheran congregations

¹George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927" (Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), p. 25.

²Ibid., pp. 19 ff.

become missions of the Missouri Synod. It was the opinion of these men that a Slovak Lutheran Church would not be able to establish and maintain itself because of its smallness. This was not the opinion of the majority of the pastors, however, and they continued to urge an independent Slovak Lutheran church body. It was at this point that the Slovak Lutheran pastors who were affiliated with the Missouri Synod absented themselves from the preparatory meetings.³

One of the reasons for the difference of opinion on the affiliation or non-affiliation of the Slovak Synod with other church bodies was the background of the Slovak Lutheran pastors. The first Slovak Lutheran pastors who came to the United States from Slovakia either remained independent or joined one of the Lutheran church bodies already organized in America. We cite the following examples. Pastor Horak studied under the Pennsylvania Synod of the General Council. Pastor Drahotín Kvačala became a member of the Pennsylvania Synod. C. L. Orbach was graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and was ordained in the Missouri Synod. On the other hand, two Slovak Lutheran pastors who remained independent were Daniel Z. Lauček and Ľudovít Novomeský.⁴

The insistence on an independent church body was

³Ibid., p. 52.

⁴Ibid., p. 96.

maintained because of the following reasons:

- 1) The fact that even though a Slovak Lutheran Church would be small numerically, its secular duties would be in proportion to its size, whereas the spiritual duties of a church body are identical, regardless of its size. Confidence was also expressed in the sure help of God in the performance of these duties;
- 2) God's command to teach all nations implies that God desires to have instruments in every nation for the propagation of the Gospel. The Church is such an instrument.⁵

After the pro-Missouri men had left the meeting, a resolution was passed to found the Brotherhood of American Slovak Churches of the Evangelical Augsburg Confession in the United States of America.⁶ The term "brotherhood" was used interchangeably with the term "synod."

The pro-Missouri men also attempted to found a synod. These men met for this purpose in Cleveland, Ohio on April 16, 1901. Present at this meeting were L. Boor of Chicago, Illinois; J. Jurčo of Streator, Illinois; Karol Hauser of Freeland, Pennsylvania; and D. Bella of Cleveland, Ohio. This group of men declared that they were one in doctrine and practice.⁷

The name decided upon for the new pro-Missouri synod was General Slovak Evangelical Synod of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in the United States of North America. This new synod would be affiliated with the Missouri Synod

⁵Ibid., pp. 52-53.

⁶Ibid., p. 53.

⁷Ibid., p. 54.

only by faith. Otherwise, there would be complete independence for this synod.⁸ A further attempt to found this synod was to be made in a meeting that was supposed to be held in October of 1901. These attempts of the pro-Missouri men, however, were unsuccessful. One reason given was that none of the members of the Brotherhood would join this group, and they were too small to proceed alone in the founding of a new church body. Thus a synod which would have immediately affiliated with the Synodical Conference was not founded.

The significance of this attempt of the pro-Missouri men and the simultaneous rejection of it by the founders of the Brotherhood evidences the fact that most of the Slovak Lutherans wanted complete synodical independence. They would not join any other already-existing church body because they felt an independent Slovak Lutheran Church would serve the people quite satisfactorily.⁹

The Opposition Synod--1912

The SELC was founded on a common platform to which all the sustaining members of the Synod subscribed. A constitution was drawn up and this also was ratified. There were some, however, who in the early years of the SELC's founding did not practice according to the Constitution and common platform of Synod. Reports were received from congregations

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid., p. 52.

to the effect that certain pastors were not conforming to the teachings of the SELC. The president wrote to these pastors, admonishing them according to the Holy Scriptures. When this did not help, disciplinary action was taken against these non-conformists and their cases were brought before Synod. In most instances, these attempts failed and instead of conforming, these dissenters severed their connections with the SELC.¹⁰ Two of the most noteworthy men who severed their connections were the first president of the SELC, Rev. Daniel Lauček, and the first secretary, Rev. Drahotín Kvačala.¹¹ Kvačala was among those who formed their own synod in 1912. This synod was called the Slovak Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the United States. This body, however, did not exist long.

In the year 1919, when renewed efforts were made to unite all Slovak Lutherans, the Slovak element of the United Lutheran Church¹² again came into the scene. Two exploratory meetings were held by the Slovak pastors from the ULC in Johnstown, Pennsylvania on April 23, 1919 and in Braddock, Pennsylvania on June 10-12, less than a month

¹⁰Zápisnica z 27-ho shromaždenia Slovenskej Eyanjelickej Luteranskej Synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických (Pittsburgh: Slavia Printing Co., 1937), p. 129. Hereafter, this will be referred to as Zápisnica SELC.

¹¹Dolak, op. cit., p. 122.

¹²Hereafter, this will be referred to as ULC.

before the meeting of the Congress of Slovak Lutherans.¹³

It was at the Johnstown meeting that three non-Slovak pastors of the ULC appeared on the scene. These men advised the Slovaks of their church body to refrain from uniting with the Slovaks of the SELC at the forthcoming Congress of Slovak Lutherans.¹⁴ It was at the Braddock meeting that these ULC Slovak pastors founded the Slovak Zion Synod. This particular Synod at its founding consisted of thirty-two congregations and nineteen pastors.¹⁵

The Slovak Zion Synod did not remain an independent body for very long. About a year after the founding of the Synod it affiliated with the ULC. Although the Slovak Zion Synod had agreed completely to the Platform of the SELC presented and discussed at the Congress, nevertheless, they joined the ULC. These were their reasons:

. . . first, because as a smaller body Zion Synod could not work effectively without the moral and financial support of a larger body; secondly, because Zion Synod had the same doctrinal platform as the United Lutheran Church; and, thirdly, because the General Council had been magnanimous in its treatment of Slovak Lutherans, who had thus far repaid the General Council rather poorly.¹⁶

Shortly after the meeting of the Congress, a great

¹³Dolak, op. cit., p. 130.

¹⁴Regarding the discussions and decisions made at the Congress, an entire section following this will be presented.

¹⁵"United Lutheran Church in America," The Concordia Cyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 784.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 143.

many charges were hurled back and forth between the Slovak Zion Synod and the SELC. These polemics were often very bitter and strong and in the end seemed only to cause a greater breach between the two synods.

Efforts to unite all the Slovak Lutherans were made at the Congress of Slovak Lutherans held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1913. This was the first time since the coming of a mass of all Slovak Lutherans. Many of those who gathered were of the opinion that only formalities separated the Slovak Lutherans in the United States.¹ The SELC officials, however, stated that before such a union could be effected, a true "unity of the spirit" was necessary.² Furthermore, the Slovak Synod declared that such a union was possible if there would be a sincere effort on the part of all concerned to achieve it. It was the belief of the SELC that the formal union divided the Slovak Lutherans who had been separated in some individual, but were in fact united in spirit.

A general preparatory meeting was held on March 6, 1915 in Pittsburgh. The meeting was attended by twenty pastors and twenty-three laymen. The main topic of discussion was whether the proposed alliance was to be a formalistic or a religious union. As a result of the discussion, it was

¹ "Slovak Lutheran Synod in America, Pa.," *Slovak Lutheran Synod, Illinois: Slovak Publishing House, 1917*, p. 370.
² J. Kobernik, "The General Council of the SELC," *Slovak Lutheran Synod, Illinois: Slovak Publishing House, 1916*, p. 111.

CHAPTER IV

CONGRESS OF SLOVAK LUTHERANS, 1919

Renewed efforts to unite all the Slovak Lutherans were to be made at the Congress of Slovak Lutherans held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1919. Much had been said concerning a union of all Slovak Lutherans. Many of those who proposed such a union believed that only formalities separated the Slovak Lutherans in the United States.¹ The SELC officially stated that before such a union could be effected, a true "unity of the spirit" was necessary.² Furthermore, the Slovak Synod declared that such a union was possible if there would be a sincere effort on the part of all concerned to achieve it. It was the belief of the SELC that the issues which divided the Slovak Lutherans were not mere formalities as some had declared, but were in fact major issues.

A general preparatory meeting was held on April 8, 1919 in Pittsburgh. The meeting was attended by twenty pastors and twenty-three laymen. The main topic of discussion was whether the proposed alliance was to be a nationalistic or a religious union. As a result of the discussions, it was

¹"Všeevanjelickú schodzu do Uniontown, Pa.," Svedok (Streator, Illinois: Svedok Publishing House, 1917), XI, 372.

²J. Kucharik, "Čo General Council Skutočne Učí," Svedok (Streator, Illinois: Svedok Publishing House, 1914), VIII, 203.

decided that the union should be an alliance of all Slovak Lutherans nationally, religiously, and also socially.

Eight points were drawn up. The most important of these are given in Dr. Dolak's History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church, page 127.

The meeting favors the formation of an Alliance of Slovak Lutherans; the purposes of the Alliance are to be: to achieve harmonious co-operation of Slovak Lutherans in social, national and religious affairs; to achieve co-operation among Slovak Lutherans in charitable work; a mutual respecting of each other's interests by the Church and fraternal organizations; joint preparations for religious union of Slovak Lutherans in America. Congregations, organizations, choirs and individuals could become members of the Alliance.

At the general preparatory meeting a committee on religious affairs also met. This meeting left the members of the committee hopeful and they believed that their efforts would be successful in uniting the Slovak Lutherans on religious matters. The Rev. L. J. Karlovsky reported on this meeting later at the Congress, saying, "There it seemed that the committee would achieve its purpose." However, at a second meeting held in Tarentum, Pennsylvania on May 13, 1919, the committee met with difficulties which were not overcome.³

The purpose of this committee was to discuss the teaching and practice of the Lutheran Church. Two groups of men had been appointed to this committee. One group represented

³George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927" (Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), p. 127.

the SEIC, and the other group represented the Slovak element of the ULC. The SEIC platform was used as the basis of the discussion because the members of the ULC had no completed statement. The United men, after hearing the statement of the Slovak Synod, declined to accept it. They held that their incomplete statement should be read and considered. After hearing the ULC statement, the SEIC men declined to accept it because they failed to understand it. The United men, on the other hand, understood the Slovak Synod platform and could find no fault with it, but, nevertheless, declined to subscribe to it.⁴

The ULC men, furthermore, showed that they had no intention of uniting with the SEIC in a separate Slovak church body. An invitation was extended to the SEIC to join the ULC. The reason for the invitation, said the United men, was that they felt the Slovaks were not strong enough to maintain a separate synod and would have better support and protection by uniting with such a church body as the ULC. This seemed to be the plan of the United men, and for this purpose they worked. The Slovak Synod declined the invitation to join the ULC in this way:

By the grace of God our Synod has the pure teaching and correct practice. Moreover, our Synod is a Slovak body. Why should we join a body which does not have the pure teaching and correct practice and which, in addition to this, is foreign to us in spirit and in language?⁵

⁴Ibid., p. 128.

⁵Ibid., p. 129.

Two other significant meetings were held before the Congress met. The Slovak men of the ULC met as a group and the pastors of the SELC met as a group. The purpose of these separate meetings was to consider and determine what stand would be taken by the respective church bodies.

The meeting of the Congress of Slovak Lutherans officially opened on July 4, 1919 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The meeting was not begun with prayer, since there was disagreement in doctrine and practice. At this meeting it was reported that forty-four congregations and seventeen organizations were represented. Fifteen pastors and thirty-seven lay delegates represented the congregations and twenty-three lay delegates represented the societies.⁶

A resolution was passed by the Congress that only the subject of church union would be discussed. Thereupon the Committee on Church Union was called upon to present its report. Pastors John Pelikan of the Slovak Synod and M. F. Benko of the ULC submitted reports. Pastor Pelikan was called upon to explain the failure to achieve agreement at the Tarentum, Pennsylvania meeting. He reported that there was disagreement on the following points:

1. The United Lutheran Church accepts the Augsburg Confession as the pure exposition of God's Word but places other Symbolical Writings upon a lower level, stating that they are in agreement with the true and pure faith.

⁶Zápisnica SELC, 1937, p. 130.

2. The United Lutheran Church does not teach definitely that every word of the Scriptures is inspired by God.
3. The United Lutheran Church teaches predestination intuitu fidei.
4. In the doctrine of the Church the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church deems it necessary not only to acknowledge and confess the correct teaching, but also to apply it in life, refusing to tolerate those who do not agree with all of the doctrines of our Church and refuse to be instructed.
5. The United Lutheran Church is very lax in treating the problem of secret societies.
6. The Slovak Synod insists upon real church discipline. This the United Lutheran Church does not have.
7. The Slovak pastors of the United Lutheran Church insist that it is impossible for them to sever their relations with the United Lutheran Church.⁷

In rebuttal of Pastor Pelikan's statements for the Slovak Synod, Pastor Benko of the United Lutheran Church stated:

1. The United Lutheran Church teaches plenary and verbal inspiration.
2. The lack of church discipline in congregations of the United Lutheran Church (i. e. Slovak) is due to the fact that it has not been possible to introduce it everywhere.
3. The United Lutheran Church also condemns societies whose principles are in opposition to religion.
4. The position of the United Lutheran Church with regard to fellowship is that no one is to be admitted to altar and pulpit fellowship who is not one with us in faith.⁸

The doctrinal session of this one-day meeting was held in the afternoon for approximately two hours. The basis for the discussion during this session was the Platform drawn

⁷Dolak, op. cit., p. 133.

⁸Ibid., p. 134.

up by the Slovak Synod. This platform was read, discussed and accepted in its entirety. There were no claims of false doctrine. The doctrinal points of the Platform are herewith presented in translated form provided in Dr. Dolak's dissertation.

1. The Holy Scriptures

In spite of all errors and false teachings we firmly believe and hold to the teaching of the inspiration of Scripture, that is, we believe and firmly confess that not only some matters or much in the Scriptures is inspired, but that Scripture as it is, in its entirety and in its parts, in expressions and words is inspired by God. It is our firm conviction that Scripture does not contain any errors, that it is in all of its words the infallible truth. It is and will remain the norm of faith and Christian teaching.

2. The Holy Trinity

We teach and believe, as do our pure Confessions, taken from the Word of God, that the true God is one but in three persons which are equally eternal and equally great. We accept the three ecumenical confessions of the Christian Church as they are and read and acknowledge all of the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the pure exposition of the divine truth.

3. The Way of Salvation

We are saved freely, purely by the grace of God through faith in Jesus Christ our Savior. At the same time we most emphatically condemn all such teachings which proclaim any kind of human co-operation. Our salvation is altogether in the hands of God and we receive it freely by His grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

4. Sin

We believe and teach

a) that the cause of sin is not God but the devil and the perverted will of man which permits itself to be blinded by the devil.

b) that original sin is the deepest corruption of the

entire human nature, as a result of which man lost his concreated righteousness and perfection and became inclined to all evil.

c) As a result of original sin not only the first parents died spiritually but also all of their descendants are born into this world spiritually dead because they inherit the sin of the first parents by physical birth.

d) that this inherited sin is damnable, that is, that it brings down God's wrath and eternal damnation and that no secular education or enlightenment or progress, of which our age is so proud, can change this condition of corruption and damnation.

5. Free Will

Before his conversion man has no free will in spiritual things, not even a passive inclination to God's grace.

6. Conversion

a) The conversion of man does not depend on man in any way, that is, upon his co-operation or good conduct, but it is in its entirety (in solidum) the exclusive work of the Holy Spirit, who works, brings to pass and perfects it in us by His omnipotence with the gifts of grace through the means of grace.

b) We furthermore believe with our whole heart also that conversion is not some kind of a correction and improvement of the old man, not some kind of an awakening (excitatio) of dormant powers in man but a divinely wrought rebirth, resurrection, of one spiritually dead, the creation of a new spiritual life.

7. Justification

Man can be saved solely by the grace of God for Christ's sake, by faith, without any of our merit or worthiness. Faith is no meritorious work but it also is the pure gift of God.

8. Election

We teach and confess in accordance with Article XI of the Formula of Concord. On the basis of it we teach the universal grace of God, according to which God desires that all men come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved. God does not desire that any be lost but that all be converted and saved. Therefore, we reject the Calvinistic predestination to damnation.

We, furthermore, teach that God actually hardens but the cause of the hardening is not His eternal decree, as if God had predestined such people to damnation and therefore hardened them, but that this hardening is merely the righteous punishment of God which all merit who stubbornly resist the grace of God. The grace of God, therefore, is serious in its purpose.

Furthermore, we teach that there is a predestination or election to eternal life because the Holy Scriptures teach thus. As deep as is the silence of Scripture on a predestination to damnation so clear is its testimony concerning an election to salvation.

We conclude with the Formula of Concord: "However, as regards these things in this disputation which would soar too high and beyond these limits, we should with Paul place a finger upon our lips and remember to say, Romans 9:20: 'O man, who art thou that repliest against God?'" (Triglott, p. 1083, Par. 63).

9. The Church

a) In the proper sense the Church is the communion of believers, saints, that is, the total of all of those who, elected by the Holy Spirit from the number of accursed and lost men, through the Holy Gospel, truly believe in Christ and by this faith are sanctified and incorporated into the Church.

b) To whom has God entrusted the power of the Church? To the Church, to all believers, who exercise it through regularly called servants of Christ, that is, through ministers. As Dr. Luther remarks so aptly: "The keys do not belong to the pope (as he falsely claims) but to the churches, that is, to Christ's people, namely to the holy Christian people, wherever it may be found in the world or wherever there are Christians.

c) To how great a part of Christianity does the whole spiritual power belong? Not only to a church of one entire State or to an association of churches, to a synod, but the church in every community is the church to which Christ has given and entrusted the keys of the heavenly kingdom and thus all spiritual power.

d) We teach that the Church in the proper sense of the term, as the gathering and total of believers, is and shall remain invisible in this life because faith is invisible to us and only God, the Searcher of the

hearts, knows them who truly believe. We believe that the Church, even though invisible, is a firmly built edifice, which not only people but all the devils assail in vain. Only when the Lord comes to His judgment will the veil be removed which concealed the holy city from our physical eyes and then we shall actually see the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, our spiritual mother, the true Church of God and of Christ in its complete and perfect beauty and glory.

e) In spite of the fact that the Church is invisible, we can and must speak of visible church organizations. Christians are to be found in such visible church organizations everywhere. It is the sacred and inevitable duty of every Christian to affiliate with such a visible church organization. With which visible church organization shall a Christian affiliate? Which is the true visible Church? The true visible Church is the one in which the Word of God is taught purely and sincerely in all articles of faith and the sacraments are administered strictly according to the institution of Christ, and in which this is faithfully adhered and testified to in life.

f) Be it resolved that our congregations should not affiliate with nor belong to such larger church bodies, synods, whose teaching is not pure and founded on God's Word and whose practice does not conform to it, and which tolerate in their midst pulpit fellowship with the heterodox and errorists, and who (furthermore) tolerate in their churches individual members of secret societies.

10. Giliasm

Such a teaching is not founded on the Holy Scriptures and we, therefore, reject it.

11. The Antichrist

On the Antichrist we teach in accordance with the Smalcald Articles, Article IV, Par. 10.

12. Relation to Fraternal Organizations

We condemn all societies which have as their purpose fostering a false religion and a false worship as well as carrying on a false religious missionary activity. We condemn all secret societies which require of their members an oath in advance. As far as benevolent

societies (such as SEJ, ESJ, ŽEJ, SES, NSS)⁴¹ are concerned, we permit them to stand. We have no objections to them as long as they do not assume some secret or afore-mentioned character.

⁴¹SEJ: Slovenská Evanjelická Jednota (Slovak Evangelical Union), Pittsburgh, Pa.; ESJ: Evanjelická Slovenská Jednota (Evangelical Slovak Union), founded in Cleveland in opposition to the Slovak Ev. Union; ŽEJ: Ženská Evanjelická Jednota (Women's Evangelical Union); SES: Slovenský Evanjelický Spolok (Slovak Evangelical Society), founded in Chicago and later merged with the Gymnastic Union, Sokol; NSS: Národný Slovenský Spolok (National Slovak Society), Pittsburgh, Pa.⁹

With the unqualified acceptance of this Platform, all seemed to be going well in this effort to unite all Slovak Lutherans in America. A resolution was made to call the Alliance into effect. The resolution was adopted. Thereafter an election was held. Those elected were the following: Rev. L. J. Karlovský, president; Mr. John Bibza, vice-president; Rev. J. S. Bradač, secretary; Mr. John Pankuch, treasurer.¹⁰

According to Dr. Dolak, there is little evidence of any life on the part of the Alliance in spite of the fact that it was formally declared to be in existence and is thus considered a failure as an attempt to unite all Slovak Lutherans in America.¹¹

The official publication of the Slovak Synod, the

⁹Ibid., pp. 134-138.

¹⁰Zápisnica SELC, 1937, p. 130.

¹¹Dolak, op. cit., p. 138.

Svedok (Witness), brought out several reasons why the Alliance had failed. They were: 1) it was erroneous to assume that an Alliance of Slovak Lutherans could be formed regardless of religious differences; 2) the secular organizations must not be allowed to be equaled with Christian churches at a meeting on church union; 3) the far too rapid discussion on religion did not suffice.¹²

The Svedok also contained statements which manifested open opposition to the Alliance because many sought in the Alliance an exclusively new religious church body. Such a new body would necessitate the dissolution of all existing Slovak church bodies in the United States. The Svedok evidenced its opposition, averring, "It was opposed to the creation of some kind of new structure upon the ruins of the Slovak Lutheran Church."¹³

When the Slovak Synod met at its convention in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in September of 1919, a resolution was passed which superseded all previous discussion of union according to the plan of the proposed Alliance. The four points of this resolution are:

1. Since our Synod is rightly united and allied by one spirit in doctrine, faith, creed and life upon the foundation of the pure Word of God and our Symbolical Books, therefore a new union is not necessary.
2. That it is willing and prepared to unite with individuals as well as with every pure church body,

¹²Ibid., p. 139.

¹³Ibid., p. 139.

which stands on the foundation of the Word of God and the confessional books of our Evangelical Lutheran Church.

3. That it does not desire to unite with any affiliation, or church body, which does not stand on the pure Word of God and the confessional books of our Evangelical Lutheran Church.

4. Likewise, because the United Lutheran Church in America is a church body which does not stand on the pure foundation of the Word of God and confessional books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we cannot unite with her until she changes her constitution.¹⁴

Finally, the Slovak Synod stated that the entire so-called Alliance, as it was presented at the Congress, was not feasible.¹⁵

¹⁴Zápisnica SELC, 1919, p. 49.

¹⁵Ibid.

CHAPTER V

LATER ATTEMPTS TO UNITE ALL SLOVAK LUTHERANS

The Conference of Slovak Lutheran Pastors

Although there had been many unsuccessful attempts to unite all Slovak Lutherans, nevertheless, renewed efforts were made to achieve this goal. Slovak periodicals such as Slovenský Hlásnik and the Kalendár Sion repeatedly published appeals for Slovak Lutherans to unite.¹

A noteworthy attempt was made by a group of Slovak Lutheran pastors without any synodical affiliation. The leader of this group was Pastor Samuel Holčík, who had been a member of the Zion Synod but had been expelled in 1925.² It was hoped by these men that they could succeed in uniting both the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Slovak Zion Synod into a new Alliance.

This group of pastors met in Binghamton, New York on May 30, 1924, to discuss the reasons for the existing disunity among the Slovak Lutherans. During their discussions two reasons were submitted for the disunity. These were, the presence of atheistic literature and the fact that those

¹George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927" (Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), p. 145.

²Ibid., p. 146.

who wore badges of fraternal organizations were refused admittance to the Slovak Lutheran church buildings. The editor of the Svedok, however, disagreed with these opinions and stated that the disunity was to be found because of "the attacks on the Church by members of fraternal organization, in the activity of unconscientious pastors and to a certain extent in the Zion Synod."³

A second meeting of these non-affiliates was held in Pittsburgh on October 17, 1924 for the purpose of continued effort in forming an independent Alliance of all Slovak Lutherans. Regarding this meeting, the president of the Slovak Synod, Rev. John S. Bradač, stated:

It is regrettable that so many refuse to affiliate with our Synod. Prove to us wherein we are wrong. We are a Slovak body and we are independent. Why not come into our Synod? Show us why a new union is necessary.⁴

At a third meeting in Cleveland, Ohio on September 26, 1926, this group of pastors formed the Alliance. The SELC was not represented because no formal invitation was extended. The Slovak Zion Synod stated that union should be effected only within the body of the ULC.

Another group took the name of Conference of Slovak Lutheran Pastors at its meeting in Youngstown, Ohio in October, 1926.⁵ Some of these pastors of the Conference

³Ibid., p. 147.

⁴Ibid., p. 148.

⁵Ibid., p. 149.

considered the platform of the Slovak Synod to be personally acceptable to them but felt that it was not adequate for the Slovak people. Therefore they insisted on the founding of an independent alliance instead of uniting with the Slovak Synod. Furthermore, it was stated by the Conference that it would not be a synod, nor did the pastors of the Conference desire to found a synod; but that they would organize as a synod if the existing Slovak Lutheran synods would not unite into one synod. Meanwhile this group would continue to study the idea of a union for all Slovak Lutherans in the United States.⁶

Regarding this Conference, the Svedok presented what was believed to be the purpose of the Conference, stating, "They desire to unite us in such a manner as the Lutherans of Slovakia are united in the unionistic Lutheran Church of Slovakia."⁷

Furthermore, Rev. J. S. Bradač called the attempts of the Conference to unite Slovak Lutherans "a sinful and harmful misleading and confusing of issues."⁸ He also asked the question why a new union was necessary since the Congress of Slovak Lutherans in Pittsburgh in 1919 had agreed to the Platform of the SELC.⁹

⁶Ibid., p. 149.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid., p. 150.

⁹Ibid.

Merger Attempt of the Slovak Synod, Zion Synod
and Conference of Slovak Pastors, 1931-1935

Renewed efforts to unite all Slovak Lutherans in America were made during the years 1931-1935 in a series of six meetings. In the year 1930 the Slovak Synod, the Zion Synod and the Conference of Slovak Pastors each appointed a committee to represent them intersynodically to reconsider the possibilities of uniting Slovak Lutherans. The presidents of the respective bodies decided upon an agenda for discussion and called the first meeting. The following list gives the pertinent facts concerning the place and date of the six intersynodical meetings.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, March 23-24, 1931.

Youngstown, Ohio, November 2-3, 1931.

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, June 8-9, 1932.

Chicago, Illinois, November 8-9, 1933.

Chicago, Illinois, September 25-26, 1934.

Cleveland, Ohio, April 30 - May 1, 1935.¹⁰

The goal set for these meetings was a broad one. The end, it was hoped, would not only bring together all the Slovaks represented by the three participating bodies but also of all Slovak Lutherans in the United States.¹¹ Of the

¹⁰Zápisnice Schôdz Intersynodálneho Výboru (Archives of the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church), p. 1. Hereafter, this will be referred to as Zápisnice SIV.

¹¹Zápisnica SELC, 1937, p. 131.

three bodies represented there were five men from the Slovak Synod, six men from the Zion Synod and six men from the Conference of Slovak Lutheran Pastors.¹²

The discussions on doctrines which would form the basis for union centered upon ten points. The doctrines placed on the agenda were:

1. Holy Scriptures
2. The Symbolical Books
3. Election
4. Church
5. Synodical Organization
6. Office of the Keys
7. Relation to Synodical Bodies
8. Synodical Membership
9. Stand on General Council in Slovakia
10. Church Practice

During the course of the meetings all of these questions were discussed by the intersynodical committees. There was agreement reached by all the members of the church bodies present and it was agreed to establish a common platform which would show the doctrinal stand of the entire conference. This platform is as follows:

The Doctrine of Holy Scriptures

We believe, teach, and confess that the canonical books of both the Old and New Testaments are, in their entirety, in their parts and words, the true and pure Word of God, inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Concerning the Symbolical Books

We regard and hold all of our Symbolical Books as the pure and unadulterated exposition of the Word of God and do not make any distinction among them, but hold them all to be the true presentation of the truth of

¹²Zápisnice SIV, p. 3.

God. We accept them unconditionally (not quatenus but quia, not as norma normata, but as norma normans).

The Doctrine of Election

On the basis of the Word of God we teach, believe, and confess a gracious divine election to eternal life, which took place before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1:3-7; 2 Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; Rom. 8:28-30; 2 Tim. 1:9; Mat. 24:22-24; FC (Leska Edition) pp. 683-4, par. 5, 5, 23.

The condition and cause of our election is alone the grace of God in Christ and the merits of Christ. Therefore we condemn all such false and erroneous teachings which emphasize deeds, better conduct or behavior, our own decision, a forsaking of or retreat from malicious opposition, or anything else by us or in us, consequently also the election with a view to faith, as though God had elected us because He foresaw faith in us, Acts 13:48; FC, p. 684, par. 8.

There is no election to damnation, for divine love is universal, 1 Tim. 2:4. We condemn every kind of Calvinism. God does not desire the death of the ungodly. If many nevertheless perish, it is their own fault.

On the basis of the Word of God we are to distinguish between the universal will of God and gracious election. The universal will of God extends to all; the gracious election embraces a definite number of those whom God has from eternity elected to eternal life, 1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Thess. 2:13; Rom. 9:12; 11:7.

Those whom God has elected for eternity the Holy Spirit in time calls by the Gospel, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps in Jesus Christ by the one, true, living faith.

This true, important, and comforting doctrine concerning God's election leads to the very Word of God, arouses us to a godly life, and assures us of eternal life.

Conversion

Concerning conversion we believe, teach, and confess that it is the condition in which, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, a person recognizes his sinfulness and damnableness on the basis of the divine law and believes

that his sins are forgiven him for the sake of Christ's vicarious satisfaction and that eternal salvation is imputed to him. Acts 11:21; Luke 24:46, 47; Acts 26: 18; Hosea 13:9.

Conversion is the work of the grace of God alone according to the working of His mighty power, Eph. 1:19 ff., and neither in its entirety nor in its smallest part is it a work of man, Phil. 1:29, Eph. 2:8; Jer. 31:18.

And therefore we condemn every kind of synergism, that is, the teaching that conversion does not take place solely by the grace and power of God, but that it in part depends upon the cooperation of man, his correct decision, and conduct in comparison with other people retreating from their intentional opposition and resistance to the Holy Spirit, Ezek. 36:26; Phil. 2:13.

Likewise we condemn every kind of Calvinism, namely, the teaching that God does not desire to convert and save all who hear the Word of God, but that He desires to convert and save only a certain portion of mankind. At the same time we condemn also Semi-Pelagianism, Acts 7:15; Mat. 23:37; Acts 13:46.

The Scriptures reveal to us only these two truths:

- A. That conversion is the work solely of God's grace, and
- B. That non-conversion is the fault of man himself, Hosea 13:9; and therefore we desire neither to say nor to think more than lies in this revelation, for the Word of God says to us: "O man, who art thou that re-
pliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20.)

Church Practice

The following theses governing church life were accepted:

1. The concept of church practice. Church discipline means proving by deed and truth and practicing in life that which we believe, teach and confess on the basis of the Word of God.
2. The relation of practice to teaching. The mutual relation between teaching and practice is like that between a tree and its fruit. Wherever pure doctrine and true faith are found there should be and only there can be a correct life and God-pleasing deeds.

3. Church discipline. Each congregation is to be concerned not only that the pure doctrine should be proclaimed in its midst and that the sacraments be administered according to Christ's institution, but also that the congregational life, the life of its ministers, and of all of its individual members to be in accord with the pure teaching of the Word of God, and for this purpose church discipline, commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, is to be practiced.

4. The form of church discipline.

A. Church discipline is to be enforced without respect of persons in the case of all who deviate from (the true) order.

B. As much as possible strictly in accordance with Mat. 18:15-18, and other Scripture passages.

5. The purpose of church discipline. The purpose of church discipline is not to destroy but to gain and save the soul.

6. The practice of church discipline is a difficult and responsible duty and requires great care both on the part of the ministers as well as every member of the church. Only a Christian, full of faith and the Holy Ghost, fired with love to Christ, is able to practice church discipline correctly, never to lose sight of its purpose and not to regard repentant brethren and sisters with a Pharisaical, evil eye, as did the older brother of the prodigal son, but to rejoice over their penitence.

Declaration on Parochial Rights

1. We desire to respect mutually the authority of our congregations and not to interfere in the affairs of another congregation or in the affairs of the members of another congregation.

2. We shall refuse to serve in any way at all people who do not belong to our congregation and who have a quarrel with their (own) congregation or with its spiritual leader.

3. We shall accept as members of our congregations only those who produce a letter of dismissal or transfer.

4. In an emergency we shall serve those who are not members of our congregation only with the knowledge and permission of their regular pastor or vacancy pastor.

Pulpit and Altar Fellowship

Our position is that Evangelical Lutheran pulpits and altars are for Evangelical Lutheran ministers of the Augsburg Confession only. No one else, that is, no minister of another confession, has even any access to them.

Announcement for Communion

By announcement for Communion we mean that God-pleasing Christian order according to which the minister of the Gospel is concerned that individual communicants come into contact with their spiritual father and announce to him their intention of communing. However, the appropriate manner of introducing this order in congregations where it does not yet exist is left to the congregations and their pastors to decide and finally to accept. We admit that this order is very beneficial to, and necessary for, a congregation.

Christian Burial

Who is entitled to a Christian burial? A member of a congregation, who died in the Lord, is entitled to a decent Christian burial. A non-member is not entitled to a church funeral.

Christian Weddings

1. Christians are to be married in their own congregations and by their own pastors.
2. In case of a divorce the innocent party is entitled to a Christian wedding, while it is to be denied to the guilty party, when its guilt is adequately and clearly proved.

Theses on Societies

1. In principle we have no objection to societies whose purpose is to give financial aid to their members in illness and to grant death benefits.
2. But we emphatically deny any society the right and power to arrogate to itself matters which the Lord Jesus commands only His Church to do, as, for instance: missions, religious training of ministers and teachers; and, in general, to interfere in the rights, work, and administration of the Church.

At the same time it is necessary that neither the

Church nor her servants interfere in any way at all in affairs of a society which is purely fraternal in nature.

3. Especially do we reject and condemn all societies which bind their members with a secret oath, and which foster a false religion by being in principle against Christ, the only Redeemer and Savior of the world, as for instance, Free Masons and all societies organized after the manner of the Free Masons.

Relations with the Slovak Evangelical Union

At the very first meeting of the commissions of the three bodies, Messrs. Stephen Štefánik, John Bibza, Peter Jurás, Emil Stankoviansky and Dr. J. W. Ildza, the supreme officers of the Slovak Ev. Union, appeared to extend their greetings. They also expressed the desire that the joint commissions draw up resolutions advising how the peaceful relations all desired might be reached. A committee of three, consisting of the Revs. M. F. Benko, Imrich Vangor, and John Marciš, gave its report to the Youngstown meeting Nov. 2-3, 1931. The following points of the committee's recommendations were accepted by the joint commissions:

1. The Slovak Ev. Union is neither authorized nor called by God to expound the Word of God, to teach, proclaim, and spread Christianity through its official organ, for God gave the power of the keys of the kingdom of heaven solely to the Church. The SEU arrogates to itself a right which belongs to the Church.
2. By publishing matters, reports, misunderstandings, and differences of local congregations the SEU disseminates hatred, quarrels, disturbances among members. We demand that the organ of the SEU should not publish, or pronounce judgment on, church matters, for these belong to the province of the Church.
3. We demand that the SEU should not belittle nor slander the office of the ministry through its organ, the Slovak Herald, and not work thereto that a minister be deposed from office. God calls a minister to a congregation and from a congregation by means of the congregations and not by means of a society.
4. No articles should appear in the official organ and no speeches should be made at meetings to the effect that had it not been for the SEU there would be no

Church; for that is an attempt to obligate both the ministers and the congregations to the SEU and the local chapter. The Church is founded by God. He creates faith in the human heart by His Word and sacraments.

5. Let the organ of the SEU publish only reports, differences, articles, editorials touching upon the life and progress of individual chapters, the entire Union and the welfare and progress of our nation.

6. If a minister should commit some misdeed, the editor must first of all have proof of the fact and only then should he publish it as a report. It is a matter for the Church to pass judgment upon him, and not for the society.

7. We do not recommend to the Union that it seek to compel ministers to become members of the Union by attacking them; thereby many are merely repelled, as are also their members.

8. We declare that we have nothing against the SEU as a pure insurance company and that when the SEU puts into practice the guidelines and principles here enunciated the desired friendly relation will be achieved.

(Paragraphs originally numbered 6, 8, and 10 in the Committee's recommendations, and dealing with matters belonging strictly to the sphere of the Union itself, were omitted by the joint commissions.)¹³

When it appeared that a union could be effected including all three of the church groups represented, each group submitted its own plan for the union. The following are the recommendations of the three committees:

The Recommendations of the Slovak Synod Committee

1. It has thus far been demonstrated at the meetings of the Intersynodical Committee that, in the articles of faith and Christian Lutheran practice concerning which we thought there was a difference among us and concerning which we have had discussions at the meetings

¹³Zápisnice SIV, pp. 4 ff. Summarized and translated by Dr. Dolak.

of the Intersynodical Committee, there is really unity and understanding among us; for all of the members of the Intersynodical Committee have expressed their agreement with those articles which we have considered carefully and in the fear of God.

2. On the basis of this fact that in teaching and practice we have achieved unity, we, as members of the Intersynodical Committee for our Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod in the U. S. A., make the following recommendation to this meeting: Let there be founded a completely independent Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, independent of any synod, founded on the pure Word of God and the Symbolical Books of our Ev. Lutheran Church. That means:

a) that the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod in the U. S. A. would become a member of this new independent Ev. Lutheran church body in America, that it would cease to exist and would sever its ties with the Synodical Conference;

b) that the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Zion Synod would become a member of this new independent Ev. Lutheran church body in America, that it would cease to exist and would sever its connections with the United Lutheran Church in America;

c) that the ministers and congregations which are not members of any Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America would become members of the new, independent Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, that they would sever their connections with other Ev. Lutheran church bodies here in America and in Slovakia.

3. We further recommend that these recommendations be presented for acceptance to the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod in the U. S. A., to the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Zion Synod, and to the ministers and congregations which are not members of these two synods.

4. The result of the deliberations on these recommendations and the vote on them is to be announced by the respective synods and the pastors and congregations which do not hold membership in a Slovak Synod to the president of the Intersynodical Committee, who shall then call the final meeting.

The Recommendations of the Zion Synod Committee

The Committee of Zion Synod, for the sake of an objective

and thorough consideration of the form of union recommends that the Intersynodical Meeting consider the following methods (of union):

1. Let it consider the manner (of forming) one independent body.
2. Let it consider the manner of forming one synod holding membership in one of the existing general Ev. Lutheran church bodies in America.
3. Let it consider the manner of forming a Conference of Slovak Ev. Lutheran ministers of the Augsburg Confession on a federative basis, with retention of present synodical membership, on the condition of spiritual (altar) fellowship.

The Recommendations of the Conference of Slovak Pastors

Concerning the form of Union the Conference submits the following Declaration:

From the very beginning it was and is in favor of one independent Slovak church body in America. That means:

1. Tentatively we should not affiliate with any one. . . .
2. Later we should affiliate with that body with which the great majority of congregations and ministers shall desire to affiliate--after thorough, patient, and mutual instruction.

At the present time we cannot affiliate:

a) either with the Synodical Conference for several reasons; especially, lest we "forsake" the rest of Lutheranism in the world, as well as the mother Church. Both the Zion Synod and the Conference, and others, then, must be considered.

b) nor yet with the United Lutheran Church. . . . The Slovak Synod must be considered. If we were to affiliate with someone immediately, we would, at the most, recommend joining the National Lutheran Council; among other things the Council would "interfere" least in our internal affairs; it also has the least in the way of a "common programme," and thus we could do most for ourselves and ours.

Our independent church body is 1) necessary for us,

and 2) possible for us, and 3) has a more promising future (especially the immediate future) than our "factions."¹⁴

At the September 26, 1934 meeting of the Intersynodical Committees a motion was passed that a committee should draw up a detailed plan of union and present it at the next meeting. This plan would be considered by the intersynodical committees and would then be submitted to the respective church bodies for acceptance.¹⁵ On this committee were the presidents of the three bodies and one additional member from the Slovak Synod and the Zion Synod. This detailed plan was presented at the meeting on May 1, 1935 and was accepted. The following is the plan:

Name

The name of the new body is to be: Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Basis of Doctrine and Practice

As the basis of doctrine and practice we accept everything upon which we have thus far jointly agreed at our regular intersynodical meetings, as it is recorded in the minutes of the said committee.

Missionary Activity

The goal or purpose--in addition to teaching, preaching, and guarding the purity of doctrine--of our above-mentioned and proposed Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in America shall be to develop a lively missionary activity both at home and abroad according to the command of our

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 35-35. Summarized and translated by Dr. Dolak.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 35.

Lord Jesus Christ in Mat. 28:19,20 and Mark 16:15,16.

a) Home Missions: By Home Missions we mean missions in the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, etc. It is necessary to seek out scattered Slovak Lutherans in these countries, to gather them into congregations and to support them financially according to our ability, until they become independent. It is possible for us to carry on such mission work.

b) Foreign Missions: By Foreign Missions we understand mission work among the heathen. This we also desire to do according to our ability and, as soon as it shall be possible, independently.

Educational Work

By educational activity we mean the training of students, that is, students of theology, teachers, missionaries, deacons, and deaconesses. To achieve this the committee sees several possibilities, but the most practical seems to be for such students to complete their studies at our own institution. Furthermore, we recommend that our congregations found Christian day schools wherever it is possible.

Charities

The work of charities embraces various charitable institutions as, for instance, orphanages, poor-houses, old folks' homes, sanatoria, etc. We desire to have such institutions, for we want to provide for orphans, widows, old folks, etc. There are possibilities of obtaining financial help also from the government.

Administration

1. The administration remains synodical in principle.
2. The head of the administration may be called president or bishop, according to the desires of the individual congregations. The president of a conference may be called president of the conference or senior, according to the wishes of the congregations. The authority of the head of the organization shall be determined in the future, but let the autonomy of the congregations and the freedom of the pastors be retained in their entirety.

The Budget

Since it is not yet possible to determine the number of confirmed members who shall comprise the Slovak Ev.

Lutheran Church in America, the congregations should be informed that they shall have to make contributions and that by accepting the union they obligate themselves to support the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in America. Congregations may have special collections for general purposes. Let the members of congregations also regard it as their duty always to contribute, in addition to their congregational dues, to the purposes of the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in America.

Pensions

The question of pensions is left for a satisfactory solution in the future.

Relation to Other Bodies

The relation of our Slovak Ev. Lutheran Church in America shall be the same towards all Ev. Lutheran bodies whose teachings and practice are the same as that of our Church.

Plan of Union

On the basis of the fact that we have achieved unity in doctrine and practice, we, as members of the Inter-synodical Committee make the following recommendations: Let there be founded a completely independent Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, independent of all Synods, founded on the Word of God and the Symbolical Books of our Ev. Lutheran Church. That means:

a) That the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Synod in the U. S. A. shall become a member of this new independent Ev. Lutheran church body in America; that it shall cease to exist and that it shall sever its connections with the Synodical Conference.

b) That the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Zion Synod shall become a member of this new independent Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, that it shall cease to exist and that it shall sever its connections with the United Lutheran Church in America.

c) That the pastors and congregations which do not hold membership in any Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, shall become members of this new independent Slovak Ev. Lutheran church body in America, that they shall sever their connections with other Ev. Lutheran church bodies here in America and in Slovakia.

We furthermore recommend that these proposals (recommendations) be presented for acceptance to the Slovak

Ev. Lutheran Synod in the U. S. A., to the Slovak Ev. Lutheran Zion Synod, and to the pastors and congregations not holding membership in these two synods.

Let the respective synods, ministers, and congregations which do not hold membership in the Slovak synods, announce the outcome of their discussions and voting on these recommendations to the president of the Inter-synodical Committee, who shall then call the final meeting.¹⁶

The Zion Synod held its regular synodical conference shortly after the conclusion of the intersynodical meetings. It was at this meeting of the Zion Synod that it was declared that the Zion Synod could not see the possibility of effecting an independent body for the following reasons:

1. Because the Zion Synod considers it to be a great difficulty, rather impossibility for an independent church body in America to solve successfully the problems of existence.
2. Because the people would not be able to sustain the financial load of such an independent church body.
3. Because the pastors of the Zion Synod are included in the United Lutheran pension plan and would deprive themselves of the benefits of this plan should they leave the United Lutheran Church.
4. Because there is no specific and decisively stated relationship to other evangelical Lutheran bodies.¹⁷

Later the president of the Zion Synod, Rev. P. A. Putra, wrote in the August, 1936 issue of Zion, the synodical publication, that a union of Slovak Lutherans was not necessary.

1. The founding of a single Slovak Evangelical Synod

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 40-41. Summarized and translated by Dr. Dolak.

¹⁷Zápisnica SBLC, 1937, p. 153.

in America is not as important as the fact that we are bound in one faith and in one practice.

2. We are convinced that a church of the Evangelical Augsburg Confession in America would have suffered great loss, if the proposed union would have been effected.
3. In this independence we would have deprived ourselves of all aid, which till now we have received from the more prosperous non-Slovak brothers in the faith. It is an entirely natural thing that the United Lutheran Church would discontinue giving aid to congregations, students, would cease to supplement the salary of those pastors who without that help would have to abandon their congregations.
4. The greater part of our identity will be lost in the course of twenty years.
5. The Zion Synod and her congregations see a greater spiritual power in the union with larger synods. For the Zion Synod and her congregations it is better if they remain in the United Lutheran Church of America.¹⁸

Thus, like all previous attempts to unite all Slovak Lutherans, this merger attempt failed. The rejection of the union by the Zion Synod was the main factor in the failure. Should the Zion Synod have accepted the proposed merger, there may have been one Slovak Lutheran Church today.

After the rejection of the merger attempt by the Zion Synod, the Slovak Synod made the following statement:

We again state and announce even today, that we desire even now to work together with every sincere Slovak Evangelical Lutheran for the purpose of furthering and strengthening our Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church not only here in America but also in Slovakia. We are not closing the door even now to further discussion and efforts for a proper and God-pleasing union. We know and confess that our work in the Lord till now has

¹⁸Ibid.

not been in vain, nor will it be in the future. May the Lord always effect through us that which pleases Him alone. We would be devoted to Him and to His holy will. We do not seek our own glory but the glory of God. For us Christ is and always must be all in all.

Perhaps it will be that under the guidance of God and in His own time there will be accomplished that about which Pastor J. Vojtko wrote while he was still among us, that "gradually all good Slovak Evangelical Lutherans will come to that conviction, that the only historically and doctrinally correct body existing and functioning is our beloved Synod and not another. Our Synod alone (mine--in contrast to other Slovak church bodies) is correct in this, that she might gather into her bosom all Slovak Evangelical Lutherans in the United States.

We conclude with the words of Holy Writ, I Kings 8:57.58: "The Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us; that he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments." Amen.¹⁹

As this statement shows, there is still hope for the establishment of a united Slovak Lutheran church body. In the year 1947 a resolution was passed that the Slovak Synod elect a committee that would reopen union discussion with the Zion Synod. To date there is no evidence of any action taken by such a committee.²⁰

¹⁹Ibid., 1937, p. 135.

²⁰Ibid., 1947, p. 218.

CHAPTER VI

RELATION TO THE UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH

Soon after the SELC was organized in 1902 there were some pastors who left the Synod. For much of the time since then there have been at least two bodies of Slovak Lutherans in the United States. Today there are two groups. One is the SELC, which is affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Conference of North America; the other is the Slovak Zion Synod, which is affiliated with the ULC. The ULC is further a combined body of three formerly separate bodies. These were the General Council, the General Synod and the United Synod of the South, which united into one body in 1918.¹ Before that time the SELC took a position against the practices of the General Council and the General Synod. After this union took place, the discussions of church union carried on with the ULC were more specifically with the Zion Slovak Synod, which affiliated with the ULC in 1920.

The General Council was one of the first Lutheran church bodies to manifest interest in Slovak Lutherans.² The early

¹J. Kucharik, Prečo sa naša Slovenská Evanjelická Nezmeného Augsburgskeho Vyznania Synoda v Amerike nemože pripojiť ku United Lutheran Church in America pot'azne k jej slovenskej čiastke (n.p., 1919), p. 6.

²George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927" (Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), p. 25.

influence of the General Council was felt especially in the very active missionary endeavors of the Council. Serving as missionaries were to be found about a dozen Slovak Lutheran pastors.³ The General Council also had a very active Slav Mission Board.⁴ The superintendent of this board was Dr. Adam Hamer, against whom much criticism was directed in connection with the work of the missionaries among Slovak Synod congregations.⁵

This can be seen in the fact that the energetic missionary work of the General Council among Slovak Lutherans did not everywhere achieve expected results. In fact, the Slovak Synod congregations themselves objected strenuously to the work of the General Council's mission board. Attempts to have Slovak Lutheran students prepare for the ministry at the General Council's Allentown Seminary were also objected to by many.⁶ The claims of the Slovak congregations included criticisms of the General Council's missionaries, who were attempting to influence the people to sever their connections with the Slovak Synod, and members of the General Council.

³Ibid., p. 208.

⁴Ibid., p. 99.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Juraj Vojtko, "Allentown alebo Springfield," Evanjelicko-Luteránsky Kalendár (Pittsburgh, Pa: Slavia Printing Co., 1928), XVI, 104.

Much more criticism was made of the General Council. The pastors of the General Council were said to be extremely lax in their practice.⁷ It was also stated that some of the first pastors who were enlisted to work among the Slovak Lutherans were "wholly incapable and unfit for the work of the holy ministry."⁸ Many of these pastors, the Slovak Synod affirmed, had not qualified to prepare at other theological schools, but nevertheless were accepted by the General Council and placed into the work of the ministry after only a brief period of two months' instruction at a General Council school.⁹ It was the opinion of the Slovak Synod that the General Council would accept any pastor as long as he was a Lutheran.

Although the General Council was one of the first Lutheran Church bodies to take an interest in the Slovak Lutherans, it was claimed by the Slovak Synod that the General Council manifested interest in its body only after it had been organized. The work of the General Council among the Slovak Lutherans was begun without any invitation of the Slovak Synod to do so.¹⁰

The general practice of the General Council was also condemned in many respects. The Svedok listed several criticisms:

⁷Dolak, op. cit., p. 209.

⁸Ibid., p. 211.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

The Slovak Synod asserted that the General Council taught that man has a free will in spiritual matters and cooperates in his justification; that only believers receive the body and blood of the Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar; that Christ will return to this earth one thousand years before Judgment Day; that the Pope in Rome is not the real and final Antichrist; that a synod should rule over local congregations; that sectarians may preach in Lutheran pulpits; that sectarians may be admitted to Holy Communion with Lutherans; that a member of one church may hold membership in a secret society; and that a pastor may at least pray at the funeral of an unbeliever.¹¹

Perhaps the sharpest criticism was spoken against the unionistic tendencies and practices of the General Council. Soon after the General Council was organized, a norm called the "Galesburg Rule" was accepted which stated, "Lutheran pulpits are only for Lutheran preachers, Lutheran altars are only for Lutheran celebrants."¹² But between this guide and the practice of the General Council there had been a great gap.

In spite of the many basic differences of doctrine, there was much discussion about a union or affiliation with the General Council. From the Council's side it was positive; from the Slovak Synod's side it was negative. The General Council approached individual Slovak pastors to serve as missionaries, and a number did serve in that capacity.¹³ The invitation to merge activities was presented to the Slovak Synod also as a body. The General Council promised

¹¹Ibid., p. 212.

¹²Kucharik, op. cit., p. 21.

¹³Dolak, op. cit., p. 211.

financial aid in the event that the merger would be effected. This offer and invitation the Slovak Synod did not accept. Furthermore, the SELC stated that it would sever connections with any pastor who would be in the service of the General Council or be subsidized by it.¹⁴ Another statement showing strong sentiments against the General Council was made by the Svedok in 1918, stating that the General Council was one of the most dangerous church bodies to the Slovak Synod.¹⁵

Besides the General Council, the General Synod was also criticized by the SELC for its doctrinal practices and general aims. The SELC claimed that the General Synod was continually working toward the goal that would have foreign languages succumb to the English language.¹⁶ The Slovak Lutherans did not want to lose their identity and therefore did not agree with this type of thinking.

Such accusations and criticisms, however, were not directed against the entire General Synod.¹⁷ Within the General Synod, it was stated in the Svedok, there were some men who did preach correctly.¹⁸ The Slovak Synod also said that the General Synod had two elements within its church body; one was lenient and the other was strict. The lenient element had always been more Reformed than Lutheran and wanted

¹⁴Ibid., p. 75.

¹⁵Svedok, (Streator, Ill.: Svedok Publishing House, 1918), XII, no. 2, p. 22.

¹⁶Ibid., XII, no. 5, p. 75.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

no part of the Formula of Concord. The strict element wanted to be truly Lutheran, regarded the Formula of Concord highly, but nevertheless would not accept it as a true confession.¹⁹

Concerning the United Synod of the South before its affiliation in the ULC, the Slovak Synod did not take a stand. The reason for this is probably the fact that the SELC had very few churches in the South and was not faced with the problem of dealing with this church group.

When efforts were made to have the Slovak Synod merge with the Slovak Zion Synod and affiliate with the ULC at the 1919 Congress of Slovak Lutherans, the Slovak Synod took a direct stand against the ULC. The Slovak Synod produced a booklet which presented the reasons why the Slovak Synod could not affiliate with the ULC. The SELC made the statement that the ULC claimed the correct foundation of the Holy Scriptures and the Symbolical Books but did not practice according to this foundation.²⁰ Furthermore, the SELC stated that the matters which separated them from the ULC were not small, insignificant matters as some believed, but truly important doctrinal matters.²¹ Differences of doctrine were shown in the teaching on inspiration, on

¹⁹Ibid., II, no. 11, p. 174.

²⁰Kucharik, op. cit., p. 6.

²¹Ibid., p. 8.

conversion, on creation (they taught that God used a form of evolution to bring the world into its present form) and on sanctifying the holy day. The unionistic practices of the pastors of the UIC were criticized most emphatically. Many instances of such unionistic practice were shown in the work of all three bodies that made up the UIC.²² This statement made of the General Synod is typical of the criticism hurled at the entire UIC.

To this very day the General Synod has maintained a strong leaven of Calvinism, in which she distinguishes no difference between the teachings of the Lutherans and the followers of Zwingli and Calvin. Officially she has exchanged delegates with Presbyterians, allowed herself to be represented in the Federal Council of Churches, cultivated altar and pulpit fellowship with the Reformed Church in general. Already in 1917 she sent delegates to the Presbyterian General Assembly and to the Federal Council of Churches, where all reformed church bodies are members. The Lutheran Observer, the official periodical of the General Synod in introductory articles praised the work which the Federation of Churches is performing among all faiths, praised the "World's Sunday-school Union," World's Union of Young People's Societies, Anti-Saloon League, Women's Christian Temperance Union, Laymen's Missionary Movement, etc. At the meeting, maintained during the assembly of the General Synod in 1911 in Washington, D. C. a Baptist minister and a Presbyterian minister spoke; the meeting was presided over by the president of the Seminary of the General Synod in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Dr. J. B. Remensnyder, president of the General Synod, ". . . answered in a commensurate manner." (Lutheran Observer, June 16, 1911.) Dr. J. B. Remensnyder, D. D., is affiliated with the sect, Lord's Day Alliance.

Joint missions, so-called "revivals" and joint worship with sectarians are a daily occurrence. In Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, a congregation of the General Synod maintained a joint "revival" with Presbyterian, with

²²Ibid., pp. 8 ff.

Methodists and the United Brethren. (Church Work and Observer, October 9, 1916.) In Grand Forks, North Dakota two years ago a pastor of the General Synod preached in a Methodist, in a Congregational and in a Presbyterian church and the pastors of these churches he allowed in the pulpit of his own church. In St. Joseph, Missouri Rev. George S. Murphy, a pastor of the General Synod (we might say in passing a Free Mason), was present at the Thanksgiving Day worship services with Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Reformed congregations. In Gordon, Pennsylvania a pastor of the General Synod, together with a Methodist minister, conducted a joint service exclusively for men. During the assembly in which the formal opening of the United Lutheran Church was made on October 27, 1918, Professor Singmaster from Gettysburg preached in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York.²⁵

Since the time of the Congress in 1919, the SEIC has refused to affiliate with the ULG as the Zion Synod did, and has remained firm in its determination not to practice any kind of fellowship with this church body.

²⁵Ibid., p. 20.

CHAPTER VII

RELATION TO THE SYNODICAL CONFERENCE

When the SELC was founded, it was organized to be an independent Slovak Lutheran church body. Attempts on the part of some to have the Slovak Synod become immediately affiliated with the Synodical Conference failed.¹ This, however, did not mean that there were differences between the Synodical Conference and the Slovak Synod regarding doctrine and practice. Evidence for this can be seen in the fact that very soon after the SELC was organized in 1902, a resolution, indirectly referring to the Synodical Conference, was passed stating that the Slovak Synod was of one mind in doctrine and practice with the orthodox Missouri Synod, a member Synod of the Synodical Conference.² This was followed in 1908 with the affiliation of the SELC with the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.³

Since the infant years of the SELC there is much evidence of close relations with the Missouri Synod. This was manifested first of all by the enrollment of Slovak Synod

¹George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927" (Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1953), p. 52.

²Zápisnica SELC, 1937, p. 128.

³Lutheran Beacon (Minneapolis, Minn.: Pioneer Globe Printers, 1952), IX, No. 8, 130.

students preparing for the ministry at Missouri Synod schools. By 1907 there were eight Slovak students at the Springfield Seminary and two students at the St. Paul school.⁴ In the January, 1908 Svedok it was reported that the Missouri Synod had agreed to pay half of a Slovak professor's salary at the Springfield Seminary, provided that the man would also assume other duties besides teaching the Slovak language.⁵ This professorship was instituted in the year 1909 when Rev. Stephen Tuhy began teaching at the Springfield Seminary.⁶ Since that time all Slovak Lutheran students preparing for the ministry and for teaching at Lutheran parochial schools have attended Missouri Synod's preparatory schools and seminaries. Also several men have served as professors at Missouri Synod schools.

In 1916 Rev. Joseph Kucharik was delegated to represent the SELC officially at the forthcoming Missouri Synod conferences.⁷ Since that time the Slovak Synod has often been represented at the conventions of the Missouri Synod. The SELC has also been represented on the Board of Trustees, on Intersynodical Committees, on Interim Committees and on other

⁴George Dolak, "Slovenská profesúra na Concordia seminári v Springfield, Illinois," Evanjelicko-Luteránsky Kalendár (Pittsburgh, Pa.: Slavia Printing Co., 1952), p. 65.

⁵Svedok (Allegheny, Pa.: n.p., 1908), II, No. 4, p. 61.

⁶Dolak, Kalendár, op. cit., p. 67.

⁷Zápisnica SELC, 1920, p. 26.

special committees of the Synodical Conference. When the present Lutheran Hymnal was compiled and edited, again the SELC was represented on the Intersynodical Committee on Hymnology and Liturgics for the Synodical Conference of North America.⁸

There has also been consistent agreement on doctrinal matters. A committee which was commissioned to review the Constitution and By-laws of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America recommended that these be ratified, and this was done in the 1941 convention of the SELC.⁹ Regarding the Common Confession which stated anew the doctrinal position of the Synodical Conference, the SELC declared:

Be it resolved that the SELC express its agreement with the doctrines set forth in the Common Confession and grant its consent to the course of action as outlined in the resolutions of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.¹⁰

Regarding the relation with the Missouri Synod, it should be said that it has been close down through the years. Discussions have been held concerning the possibility of the Slovak Synod's becoming even closer affiliated with the Missouri Synod. In 1953 the Slovak Synod passed a resolution

⁸Zápisnica SELC, 1941, p. 112.

⁹Ibid., p. 120.

¹⁰Lutheran Beacon (Minneapolis, Minn.: Pioneer Globe Printers, 1953), IV, No. 3, 56.

to study the advisability of the SELC's becoming a district of the Missouri Synod.¹¹ Should this be effected, it would be the culmination of the friendly relations which have existed between the two bodies from the beginning.

¹¹Official Proceedings of the 35th Convention of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U. S. A. (n.p., 1953), p. 69.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY

The SELC was organized in order that Slovak Lutheran immigrants might have proper spiritual care. When this Synod was founded, its pillars were set on the Holy Scriptures and on the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church. This Synod has remained firm in this true Christian foundation.

The SELC encountered many problems in trying to effect a completely unified Church for all Slovak Lutherans in the United States. But always where there were endeavors to unite the Slovak Lutherans the SELC has insisted that fellowship and union must be preceded by complete agreement in all articles of doctrine on the basis of Holy Scriptures.¹

The SELC has affiliated with one body, has refused to affiliate with other bodies and has agreed to affiliate in another case but the affiliation was not effected. The affiliation with the Synodical Conference was made and has been maintained because there has been complete agreement in all articles of doctrine. The rejection of affiliation with the General Council and the United Lutheran Church was supported very adequately by clear statements showing disagree-

¹Naše Stanovisko v Učeni a v Praxi (n.p., n.d.), p. 44.

ments in doctrine and practices. A union with the Slovak Lutheran Zion Synod was considered by the SELC as something not only desirable but also possible doctrinally. Agreement was reached on all doctrinal matters and the SELC stood ready to enter into the union, but because of the Zion Synod's rejection of the proposed union, the union was never realized.

The SELC stands ready to discuss church affiliation with any church body. But now as always the SELC will agree to church union or affiliation only when there is full agreement on the doctrines of Holy Scriptures as well as on the interpretation and practices of these doctrines.² Only then can there be a true Biblical fellowship.

²Ibid.

APPENDIX

Much of the material presented in this thesis was obtained from Slovak sources. Since the English reader would have difficulty locating these sources as they stand, this appendix will present a sample of the kind of Slovak source used and will give the English translation of titles.

The Evanjelicko-Luteranský Kalendár in translation is the Evangelical Lutheran Calendar and is an official publication of the SELC published annually.

The title of the pamphlet Naše Stanovisko v Učení a v Praxi is translated Our Stand in Teaching and Practice. No publication information is available. This pamphlet can be found in the archives of the SELC located at the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

The title of the pamphlet Prečo sa Naša Slovenská Evanjelická Nezmeneného Augsburgského Vyznania Synod v Amerike Nemôže Pripojiť ku United Lutheran Church in America Počítaže k Jej Slovenskej Čiastke is translated Why Our Slovak Evangelical Synod of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in America Cannot Affiliate with the United Lutheran Church in America with Reference to Her Slovak Element. This pamphlet was written by Joseph Kucharik in 1919 and can be found in the archives of the SELC.

In English the Svedok is called the Witness. This is an official publication of the SELC and a monthly periodical.

Zápisnica z 27. Shromaždenia Slovenskej Evanjelickej
luteránskej Synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických in trans-
lation is Proceedings of the 27th Convention of the Slovak
Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States.

Zápisnice Schôdz Intersynodálneho Výboru in transla-
tion is Proceedings of the Meetings of the Intersynodical
Committee. These meetings are listed and discussed on
pages 29-44 of this thesis.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Dolak, George. "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, 1902-1927." Unpublished Doctor of Theology Thesis. St. Louis, 1953.
- . "Slovenská profesúra na Concordia seminari v Springfield, Illinois," Evanjelicko-luteránsky Kalendár. Pittsburgh: Slavia Printing Co., 1952.
- Kucharik, Joseph. "Čo General Council Skutočne Učí," Svedok. VIII. Streator, Illinois: Svedok Publishing House, 1914.
- . Prečo sa naša Slovenská ev. n. a. v. synoda v Amerike nemože pripojiť ku United Lutheran Church in America potažne k jej slovenskej ciasťke. Garfield, N. J.: n.p., 1919.
- Lutheran Beacon. IV, 3. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House.
- . IX, 8. Minneapolis: Pioneer Globe Printers.
- Lutheran Cyclopedia. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954.
- Naše stanovisko v učení a v praxi. Vydala Slov. Ev. Nez. Aug. Vyznania Synoda vo Spoj. Štatoch. Third edition. Pittsburgh: P. Jamriška and Co.
- Official Proceedings of the 35th Convention of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U. S. A. 1953.
- Svedok. II, 4, 5, 11; VIII; XI; XII, 2, 5, 15. Streator, Illinois: Svedok Publishing House.
- Vojtko, John. "Allentown alebo Springfield," Evanjelicko-luteránsky Kalendár. XVI, 104. Pittsburgh: Slavia Printing Co., 1928.
- Zápisnica synodálnych zasadání Slovenskej ev. nez. a. v. lut. synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických. 1919.
- Zápisnica synodálnych zasadání Slovenskej ev. nez. a. v. lut. synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických. 1920.
- Zápisnica z 27. shromaždenia Slov. ev. lut. synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických. 1937.
- Zápisnica z 28. shromaždenia Slov. ev. lut. synody v Spojených Štatoch Amerických. 1941.

Zápisnica z 30. shromaždenia Slov. ev. lut. syncdy v Spojených
Statoch Amerických. 1947.

Zápisnice Schôdz Intersynodalného Výboru. Pittsburgh:
Slavia Printing Co., 1935.