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Editorial

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CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

**Living Toward One Another
with the Word of God**

HARRY G. COINER

Homiletics

Brief Studies

Theological Observer

Book Review

Vol. XXXVI

October 1965

No. 9

“For too many church people growing older is a waste!”

For Charles A. Behnke ministry to the aging and shut-in is a hopeful creative enterprise symbolized in the above statement. That thought appears in the stirring introductory devotion of his new book, Today and Tomorrow. These 47 devotions apply the Gospel in a creative way to Christians advancing in age. The author expresses a keen understanding of feelings and problems confronting the retiring, the retired, the bedridden, those living with children, the institu-

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Editorial ✧

"UNPRINTED RESOLUTIONS"

We are not thinking of the unprinted memorials but have in mind those resolutions which, even though never expressed in specific convention actions, were nevertheless implicit in the resolutions adopted by the delegates at the 1965 convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Resolve No. 1. To be a missionary church. Resoundingly passed. The convention resolved not only to be sent into all the world but also to be spent for the world. Some may perhaps think that this resolution applied only to the \$40,000,000 offering. This is far from the whole story. It was a resolution which calls upon each individual Christian to be sent and spent. It is a challenge to the Synod's members to wake up. The implementation of this resolution will take countless man-hours of prayer, planning, and propagandizing.

Resolve No. 2. To be equally concerned with the unity as well as the purity of the church. Resoundingly passed. The rhythm of the ancient church was affirmed: one *and* holy; catholic *and* apostolic. But it must be remembered that the delegates passed no resolutions establishing new bonds of altar or pulpit fellowship with anyone.

Resolve No. 3. To be a church rather than a sect. Passed, with some confusion. Basically the delegates said that they wanted The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to be Lutheran, but was there some toying with the sectarian option?

Resolve No. 4. To be a democratic body when assembled in convention. Passed, with too much confusion. Here is an area of weakness which needs immediate and radical attention. The delegates need more instruction in the nature of a representative political body. Attempts to kill resolutions before discussion were usually forestalled by the chair, but they should never have been made from the floor. More alarming was the tendency to adopt a resolution and then immediately introduce another resolution which had the net effect of amending or even destroying the first resolution.

Resolve No. 5. To be loyal to Scriptures. Passed, with considerable unclarity. There was no mistaking the determination of the delegates to remain absolutely under the written Word of God. At times, however, non-Lutheran ways and means of affirming this loyalty were presented to the assembly or by the assembly. Wise leaders were saying in committee meetings and on the floor: "Let us not impoverish Scriptures, either by adding criteria of reliability which it must meet before we will trust it, or by subtracting anything from it." A broad hermeneutical study, to be carried on over several years, may finally enable a subsequent convention to pass a thoroughly Lutheran resolution on this point. It would be tragic if the Synod were to draw its theological battle-lines for the next ten years on questions on which Scripture does not speak clearly.

This is a battleline which the purveyors of emotional arguments will naturally seek out. It is not a battleline which should occupy the best energies of Lutheran church people.

***Resolve No. 6.* To become more concerned about the social problems of mankind. Passed, but with only limited understanding and appreciation of what is involved in this resolution.**

***Resolve No. 7.* To emerge from isolation. "Isolation" is not our word for our past history. It is, however, the word which newspaper reporters almost without exception used in their descriptions. There must be some truth to it, or else we have kept our real personality successfully hidden.**

***Resolve No. 8.* To do our own thinking. Resoundingly passed. The efforts of the suspicion salesmen, the fear-mongers, were decisively rejected. The influence of the far right was nonexistent, and other pressure groups, present or future, should have developed a healthy respect for the common sense of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod in convention assembled.**

H. T. M.