



Make Known God's Manifold Wisdom

The Fifteenth Anniversary
of the Confessional
Evangelical Lutheran
Conference

Kiev, Ukraine
June 3-5, 2008



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Lutheran Conference

Faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions.....	3
A Desire for a New Alliance	5
Roadblocks on the Path to Formation.....	7
A New Alliance	9
The Constituting Convention of the CELC.....	13
Conventions of the CELC	18
<i>Quebradillas, Puerto Rico – April 23-25, 1996</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Winter Haven, Florida – April 20-22, 1999.....</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Gothenburg, Sweden – April 23-25, 2002</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Narita, Japan – May 31-June 2, 2005.....</i>	<i>24</i>
Regional Meetings	27
The Theological Commission.....	27
The CELC Today	30
The Lutheran World Situation	33
A Look to the Future.....	33



We are gathered here today in Kiev, Ukraine, on a very happy and joyous occasion. This is the fifteenth anniversary of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC), founded in 1993 in Oberwesel, Germany. "Make Known God's Manifold Wisdom" will serve as the theme for this anniversary celebration. The CELC was established as the spiritual heir of the Synodical Conference. The purpose of the CELC has been to preserve the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions in our midst and to proclaim the message of salvation in Christ throughout the world. The CELC has done this through mutual encouragement and strengthening of the member churches. We are filled with gratitude and thankfulness to the Lord that He has preserved His Word in its truth and purity in our midst and we pray that He continue to be with us through Word and Sacrament in the future.

Faithful to the Scriptures and the Confessions

To fully appreciate our celebration, we must understand our roots. The CELC has its origin in the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference. The leading light in confessional Lutheranism in America at the time and the creative genius behind the Synodical Conference was Dr. C.F.W. Walther (1811–1887). In many ways he was the American Luther. In July of 1872 the constituting convention of the Synodical Conference was held at St. John's (Bading's church) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Its purpose was to unite confessional Lutherans in North America. The following church bodies were represented: the Ohio Synod, the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, the Norwegian Synod, the Illinois Synod, and the Minnesota Synod. The Synodical Conference soon began work among the freed slaves in the South, and in the twentieth century it would carry out extensive mission work in



Nigeria. The Synodical Conference possessed the Gospel, pure and unadulterated, and it made every effort to share that saving message of Christ crucified.

One of the saddest chapters in the history of Lutheranism in America was the demise of the Synodical Conference. The Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (LCMS) had been the bastion of orthodoxy throughout the world. Yet in the 1930s this mighty defense began to crumble. In 1935 the Missouri Synod accepted separate invitations from the American Lutheran Church (ALC)¹ and from the United Lutheran Church (ULC) to negotiate for the purpose of establishing pulpit and altar fellowship. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS) and Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) rejected those invitations because they believed that the ALC and ULC merely wanted union without real doctrinal agreement, which conjecture soon became evident. In the negotiations between the ALC and LCMS, the ALC drew up a document called the *Declaration*, which was ambiguous on many important doctrines (Scripture, salvation, church and ministry, Sunday, and the last things). Missouri's adoption of the *Declaration* in 1938 in conjunction with its own *Brief Statement* began its slow but steady decline. Discussion between the two churches continued. In 1950 the LCMS and the ALC produced a new union document called the *Common Confession*. Still, it too was an ambiguous and compromising statement.

The rift between Missouri on the one hand and the ELS and the WELS on the other continued to widen. Missouri began to make a distinction between prayer fellowship and joint-prayer so that its members could pray at meetings with church bodies with whom they were not in fellowship.² In 1945, forty-four of Missouri's pastors drew up a statement known as the *Statement of the Forty-Four* in which they openly rejected the old Missouri stand on church unity and related doctrines. There were even questions concerning inerrancy at the St. Louis seminary.³ As the hope of settling these differences gradually faded, the ELS with deep regret declared at its convention in 1955 that its fellowship relations with the LCMS were suspended. Still, this suspension was not without the loss of some

members to both the Missouri Synod and to the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC), formed in 1960. The WELS broke fellowship with Missouri in 1961. In 1963 both the ELS and WELS withdrew from the Synodical Conference. This ended both synods' association with the LCMS and the Synodical Conference, which had been such a blessing through the years. In 1967 the two remaining synods in the Synodical Conference, the LCMS and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (SELC-Slovak), dissolved the organization. The SELC then merged with the LCMS.

A Desire for a New Alliance

Even before the demise of the Synodical Conference, it was proposed that its membership should be expanded beyond North America so that all the churches of our fellowship throughout the world could participate in its meetings.⁴ However the doctrinal disagreement among the member church bodies made that impossible.

When the ELS and the WELS withdrew from the Synodical Conference, the need for an international organization or federation upholding the confessional position of the former Synodical Conference soon became evident. The same need was experienced by lonely confessional Lutherans scattered throughout the world. There was a desire for an organization in which the hand of fellowship could be extended around the globe. A prominent and forceful voice for such an organization was the Rev. Edgar Hoenecke. In 1967, as executive secretary of the Board for World Missions of the WELS, he called for a new alignment. In his report to the synod he wrote:

It is unthinkable that our Wisconsin Synod should fail to fulfill its God-given destiny and to discharge its debt of gratitude to God for the preservation of sound teaching by helping to gather into a world-wide Lutheran fellowship all those who still hold fast their Reformation heritage without concession or compromise.⁵

In 1967 representatives of the ELS and the WELS organized the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum to give them an opportunity for mutual assistance and strengthening in their common faith. It was to review the work of each synod and give special attention to any concerns that might surface in the relationship between the two bodies while encouraging one another in the Lord's work. The Forum originally met annually but now meets biennially to discuss mutual concerns.⁶ Yet there was a desire to have an organization more international in scope, an international synodical conference. Already in 1968 the forum encouraged the formation of a world-wide organization of church bodies in confessional agreement. They exhorted their respective synods:

1) to manifest in a tangible and practical way the unity of faith and confession which exists between these bodies, 2) to strengthen each other in an endeavor to remain faithful to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and 3) to extend a strengthening hand to others who share these Scriptural convictions.⁷

In subsequent meetings, the Forum continued to encourage the ELS and the WELS presidents and their doctrinal commissions "to arrange for exploratory meetings of other confessionally minded Lutheran churches to discuss a doctrinal basis for the possible establishment of a federation similar to the former Synodical Conference."⁸ Executive Secretary Hoenecke of the



The 1968 meeting of the Forum

WELS Board for World Missions also continued to press for a world-wide synodical conference. In his report to the 1977 WELS Synod Convention, the Rev. Hoenecke wrote:

There is need for further contact between our spiritual children and their mother church. ... Some organized form of expression of the fellowship of the mission churches with the mother church in the United States would be the answer. This is so much more important in view of the absence of any orthodox associations available to our mission churches in their areas.

Let us not think that the mission church will not be led to find fellowship with other Christian churches near at hand, if we must one day leave their countries and have not made provision for active contact with them in some definite framework of fellowship. We ought to plan ahead and provide this before it is too late!⁹

Roadblocks on the Path to Formation

In spite of the urgent pleas for the formation of a world-wide organization, nearly twenty years passed before the proposal was actively pursued. The main difficulty blocking the formation of such an organization was the many triangular fellowship relationships that existed throughout the world as a result of the break in fellowship with the LCMS. When the ELS and the WELS broke fellowship with Missouri, they did not end their fellowship with the many overseas brethren. For a time these church bodies remained in fellowship with both the ELS and the WELS and the Missouri Synod. Concerning this issue, the 1980 ELS Synod Convention resolved "that an international conference of those church bodies in fellowship with each other be called when feasible, to discuss their relationship (including the issue of 'triangular relationships'), and to draw up a clear confession of faith on the doctrines which are at issue in our day."¹⁰ Finally in the late 1980s most of these triangular relationships were resolved.

An interesting situation remained in Germany. In 1984 the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany (*Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche*, ELFK) ended its fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church, because it tolerated higher criticism in biblical interpretation and had unionist tendencies. The Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany (*Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche*, SELK) defended the tendencies found in the Evangelical Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church and therefore, the ELFK suspended relationships with it in 1989.

The ELFK was still in fellowship with the LCMS and a number of its European partner churches. It urged these churches to take a stand against the doctrinal position of the SELK, but its request was unheeded. After three years of patient pleading the ELFK demonstrated its seriousness in maintaining a sound scriptural position by adopting resolutions suspending fellowship with its five erring sister churches: The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS), the Evangelical Lutheran Church of England (ELCE), the Evangelical Lutheran Church—Synod of France and Belgium (ELC—SFB), the Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland (CLCF), and the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Denmark (ELFCD). This action in 1992 at its Hartenstein convention brought to an end the difficulty of a triangular fellowship that involved both the ELS and WELS even after the ELFK suspended fellowship with the SELK. Now the ELFK was ready to participate in the establishment of a new international organization.¹¹

Another group of lonely Lutherans was the Lutheran Confessional Church (Scandinavia [LBK]). This church body was organized in 1974 by pastors and lay people who for confessional reasons had left the state church of Sweden. Dr. Siegbert Becker of the WELS CICR had frequently visited this group and was a source of encouragement among those struggling Lutherans in Sweden. The new church body immediately declared itself in fellowship with the WELS. The ELS declared fellowship with this church body in 1981.¹² This group also was looking for a more international expression of fellowship.

A series of doctrinal discussions occurred with the Church of the Lutheran Confession (CLC) and the ELS and WELS between 1987 and 1990. There was some hope that an agreement could be reached and that the CLC could be a part of the formation of a new international organization. The discussion centered in the role of admonition in termination of fellowship with erring church bodies. These discussions resulted in sufficient preliminary consensus to lead the participating groups to resolve to assign a joint subcommittee of nine people (three from each synod) the task of producing a common document in the matter. This subcommittee subsequently met at Eau Claire, Wisconsin on April 5–6, 1990, and prepared a document for study by the various doctrinal commissions. These discussions, however, did not come to fruition.¹³

A New Alliance

The Doctrine Committee of the ELS reported to the 1986 Synod Convention:

ELS Pres. George Orvick and Chairman Wilhelm Petersen of the Doctrine Committee attended a meeting of the Committee on Interchurch Relations of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod in January. They reported from this meeting a proposal by the CICR to its own synod of the organization of an international synodical conference of confessional and conservative Lutheran church bodies. ... Because your Doctrine Committee is of the opinion that the implementation of such a plan may help to clarify our fellowship relations with various overseas church bodies... and that such a proposal would be an encouragement to confessional Lutherans throughout the world, it recommends a synodical endorsement of such a proposal.¹⁴

The 1986 convention of the ELS officially resolved that the synod support the creation of a new confessional Lutheran conference.¹⁵ The WELS also endorsed such an organization.

Many people advocated such an international organization over the years and did much to bring it to fruition. However three names stand out as individuals who worked to promote such an organization and make it a reality: Pres. Gerhard Wilde of the ELFK, Pres. George Orvick of the ELS, and Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch of the WELS. Pres. Wilde emphasized again and again the need for such a fellowship for lonely Lutherans throughout the world. He had experienced that loneliness in his own country during Soviet times and later when his church body struggled to maintain its confessional stand. Pres. Orvick expended considerable effort throughout his presidency to make contact with confessional Lutherans in the United States and around the globe who were in need of a new confessional home. Prof. Gawrisch worked tirelessly for this organization. He put in more time and effort than anyone else to organize, promote, and establish such an international synodical conference.

A committee began planning for the new conference and its work. This committee included Professors Wilbert Gawrisch, Lyle Lange, and Armin Panning from the WELS, and Dr. Wilhelm Petersen, Prof. Juul Madson, and the Rev. Gaylin Schmeling from the ELS. Prof. Gawrisch was chosen as chairman and Prof. Madson served as secretary of this planning committee. The committee's initial meeting was held on October 18, 1988, in connection with the meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum in Mankato. The planning committee went about its work deliberately and carefully. A number of questions had to be considered and resolved. What would be the name, purpose, and structure of the organization? There were questions about meeting times and representation. Would the new organization have both a doctrinal and mission emphasis? Would it produce doctrinal statements?¹⁶

The planning committee divided itself into two geographically aligned subcommittees: the Minnesota group and the Wisconsin group. The Minnesota Subcommittee was responsible for structure, representation, times of meetings, and name of the organization. The Wisconsin Subcommittee was responsible for purpose of the organization, confessional basis, constitution, publicity, program for meetings, production of doctrinal statements, and doctrinal and mission emphasis. The meetings of the planning committee were held either in Mankato or Milwaukee, and at times in La Crosse.

The planning committee produced a provisional constitution with eleven articles, which addressed most of the issues placed before the committee. A number of names were suggested for the organization. Among them were the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference and the International Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum. The planning committee agreed on the name: Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference.

The conference was to have both a doctrinal and mission emphasis. It was to maintain and promote a Lutheran confessional stance throughout the world. It also was to encourage a mission-minded attitude among its constituency. There was discussion of a special CELC mission field as had been the case in the Synodical Conference mission work. It was decided that at the present, the CELC should not consider its own field. Rather it should encourage activities in existing fields.

The planning for the organization of the CELC did not go unnoticed throughout the world. A news item in *SELK Informationen* (November 1990) reports:

The synodical convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), which met in June 1990 in Mankato, Minnesota, accepted the provisional constitution of a Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference (CELC). This provisional constitution was prepared by commissions

of the ELS and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS). The CELC intends to testify to and strengthen the unity in faith and confession of its member churches and give the world a united testimony to the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. In doing this, it sees itself as the successor of the former Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, which broke up in the early '60s because of inter-church and theological controversies.

If the CELC organizes and begins its work, there will be a third international organization in world Lutheranism. Potentially, it could include a dozen churches with about 500,000 members. In addition, there is in confessional Lutheranism the International Lutheran Conference (ILC) with 27 churches and about 3.2 million members. There are 105 churches with about 54 million members in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), of which 39 million belong to the national and state churches in Europe.¹⁷



The 1993 Constituting Convention of the CELC – Oberwesel, Germany

The CELC intended to be the successor of the Synodical Conference even when others were making that same claim. Their claim, however, was not valid. They were not upholding the confessional heritage of the Synodical Conference.

The Constituting Convention of the CELC

The constituting convention of the CELC took place April 27-29, 1993, at Oberwesel, Germany, a beautiful site overlooking the Rhine River. As the conference began, the sun shone brightly through the lovely trees surrounding the buildings of the Deutsches Jugend Herbergs Werk. Spring and vitality were in the air. The youth hostel was located on the high bluffs overlooking the Rhine River. The Rhine flowed gently and gracefully, carrying sightseeing boats up and down the river. Medieval castles were to be found at every bend of the river. The hills surrounding the conference center were covered in vineyards bursting into bloom.¹⁸

As lovely and magnificent as the sight outside the meeting center, what took place within was even more beautiful. Delegates from eleven church bodies gathered there on the Rhine to take part in the constituting convention. They came together to share and celebrate a common faith and mission. The conference was the spiritual heir of the Synodical Conference. It was certainly a joyous and strengthening experience. Those



Church Leaders at Oberwesel

who attended the meeting expressed the same sentiments as Dr. Walther at the constituting convention of the Synodical Conference, "O blessed and blissful day!" (*O gesegneter, seliger Tag!*). Here delegates from throughout the world confessed their adherence to the pure marks of the church, the Word and the Sacraments. The common unity of faith based on the inerrant Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions filled everyone present with joy and thanksgiving. The purpose of the CELC was to strengthen each of the member churches through mutual encouragement and consultation.

There were thirteen charter members of the CELC: Christ the King Lutheran Church (Nigeria), the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mexico), the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church (Finland), the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church (Puerto Rico), the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (Germany), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (USA), the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia, the Lutheran Church of Cameroon, the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi, the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia, the Lutheran Confessional Church (Sweden and Norway), the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church—Japan, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (USA).¹⁹ Nineteen voting delegates, 11 advisory delegates, and 13 official guests were in attendance. Many of the participants' wives were also present at the convention.

The theme of the convention was "God's Word is Our Great Heritage." In the opening service Pres. Carl Mischke of the WELS based his sermon on a portion of the Savior's high-priestly prayer, John 17:14, with the theme "I Have Given Them Your Word." He pointed out that God's Word is a message that reveals our sin and our Savior, and offers us all that we need for time and eternity.

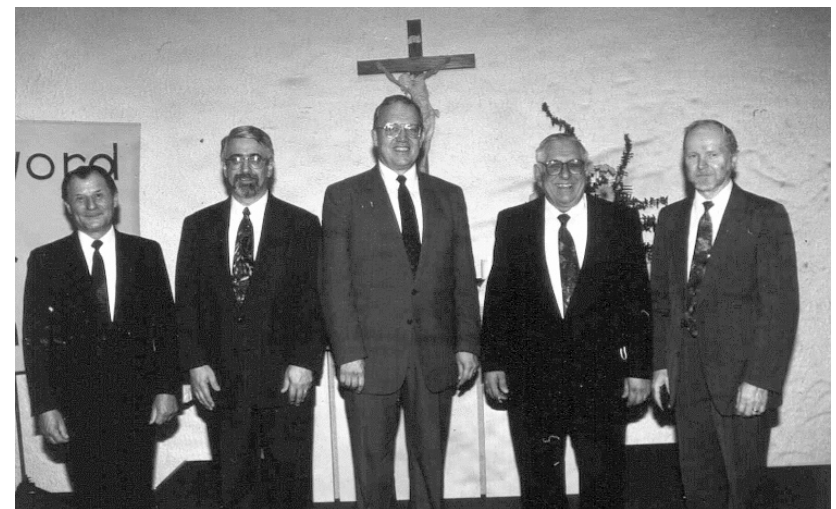
The essays of the convention carried out the convention theme, "God's Word is Our Great Heritage," explicating two main points: it is ours to share and it is our to preserve. The first essayist was the Rev. Duane Tomhave, the administrator of the WELS Board for World Missions. In his essay, "We Have

a Common Mission: To Make Disciples of Jesus Christ," he emphasized the wonderful privilege we have in bringing the message of salvation to all people.

The second essay, delivered by Prof. Salimo Hachibamba, the president of the seminary of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa, was entitled, "We Have a Common Message: We Are Forgiven Through Jesus Christ." After clearly defining such concepts as sin, redemption, justification, conversion, and faith, Prof. Hachibamba concluded his essay with an important section stressing the truth that these are biblical concepts which transcend all cultural considerations.

The Rev. Gaylin Schmeling of the ELS presented the third essay entitled: "We Have a Common Means: The Gospel in Word and Sacrament." The essayist pointed out that the life-giving Word and the blessed Sacraments are the means through which all the treasures of the cross are brought to the individual, and that through these means faith in the Savior is worked and preserved in the heart which receives these treasures and makes them one's own.

The fourth essay was given by the Rev. Egil Edvardsen of the LBK. In his essay, "We Have a Common Foundation: God's



The Officers of the CELC in 1993

Pure Word,” the Rev. Edvardsen discussed the inerrancy, clarity, purpose, and use of the Holy Scriptures. It was shown that the inerrancy of Scripture was indeed the doctrine of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions.

Pres. Gerhard Wilde of the ELFK delivered the next essay, “We Have a Common Confession: Unity in the Spirit.” Pres. Wilde spoke of the importance of preserving our common confession and unity in faith and in the Spirit. The ELFK has valiantly fought to preserve that common confession in its midst for the past forty years, in spite of communist rule and financial hardships. It was indeed wonderful to hear this essay by the leader of a church body that has made such a heroic stand in the face of crosses and struggle.

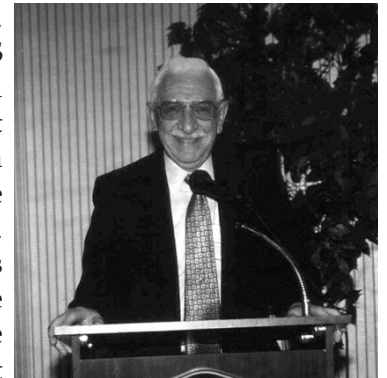
The sixth essay, “We Have a Common Concern: Properly Dividing the Word of Truth,” was presented by Dr. Wilhelm Petersen, president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota. The essay defined the two chief doctrines of the Bible, the Law and the Gospel, and warned against the great danger of confusing Law and Gospel. Dr. Petersen dedicated his essay to the memory of Dr. C.F.W. Walther, who was the first president of the Synodical Conference and who taught so well the art of properly dividing Law and Gospel.

The final essay was given by the Rev. Richard Lauersdorf, the first vice president of the WELS. His essay had the title, “Lessons for the Future from the Past: Highlights from the History of the Synodical Conference.” The Rev. Lauersdorf reviewed the history of the Synodical Conference and emphasized the lessons of that history for the CELC.

Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin, served as convention chairman. The delegates discussed the proposed CELC constitution and it was decided to work under that constitution until the next convention. The CELC was to meet every three years. During the interim, regional meetings were to be held so that more people would be able to attend and derive blessings from the

CELC. The officers of the CELC elected by the convention were Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch, president; Prof. Lyle Lange of Dr. Martin Luther College in New Ulm, Minnesota, vice president; and Pres. Armin Panning of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, secretary.

Throughout the convention Mr. Eugene Schulz of the WELS was busy photographing and filming many of the events that took place. Later he produced a 45-minute video depicting the high points of the conference. In addition Mr. Schulz was appointed as the treasurer of the CELC, providing valuable service for the organization. He has spent countless hours keeping the finances of the CELC in order.



*Mr. Eugene Schulz,
treasurer of the CELC*

The purpose of the conference, according to the proposed constitution, was to give expression to our unity of faith, to encourage and strengthen each other, to encourage the sharing of the Gospel with others, to give a clear, firm and united testimony to the world, and to prepare and publish scriptural confessional statements on issues that confront the church today.

Throughout the convention, the members of the conference aided and supported each other in their important mission.

The members of the conference encouraged each other to press on with the work of spreading the Gospel, noting that when God’s Word is faithfully proclaimed, God will produce a harvest. President George Orvick told the conference that when the ELS was formed in 1918, people referred to it as a “plucked chicken.” Yet, by God’s grace the ELS has grown new feathers and prospered over the years.

President Carl Mischke noted that when the WELS terminated fellowship with the LCMS in 1961, many foretold the demise of the WELS. By God's grace the WELS is now active in mission work in many areas of the world.²⁰

It was a most uplifting and strengthening experience to gather with like-minded, doctrinally sound Lutherans from all over the world. The CELC is intended to be especially beneficial for the smaller church bodies scattered on the various continents of the world. It assures us that we are not alone in our confession of our Christian faith. We have brothers and sisters on every continent from Australia to Africa, from Europe to the Americas.

The closing service of the convention took place at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Steeden, Hessen, Germany. Pres. George Orvick of the ELS preached the sermon based on Romans 3:24. Pres. Orvick stressed that the new conference must ever proclaim the doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Justification must remain the flag flying high above the mast of the church's ship and it must give place to no other teaching, for this is the article of faith upon which the church stands or falls.²¹

Conventions of the CELC

Quebradillas, Puerto Rico – April 23-25, 1996

An international meeting of Lutherans in total doctrinal agreement is an event which is quite unique. In most international church organizations there is at most partial agreement, and often they simply agree to disagree. This was not the case at the second triennial convention of the CELC, which was held April 23-25, 1996 in Quebradillas, Puerto Rico. Quebradillas, located in the northwestern part of Puerto Rico, was a lovely setting for the convention with its tropical climate, warm winds, and ocean beaches.

Ninety-three people from fifteen countries participated in the convention. The Lord's blessing was clearly in evidence. In his opening address, CELC Pres. Wilbert Gawrisch noted that the sun never sets on the CELC. He invited the conference participants to, "See what God has done." It was truly the work of God that people from so many different languages, cultures, countries, and backgrounds held a common faith and a common purpose.²²

The theme of the convention was "Justification by Grace through Faith: Our Heritage from the Lutheran Reformation." In the Reformation the central article of justification by faith alone was restored to its truth and purity. We are declared righteous by nothing we do or accomplish, but alone on the basis of Christ's redemptive work which is counted as ours through faith in the Savior. He accomplished salvation for all on the cross and announced it to all by His resurrection, declaring the whole world righteous. This treasure is brought to us personally through the means of grace and is received by faith alone in the Savior which is worked through those very means of grace.

The seven essays of the convention carried out the theme as follows: first, "Justification is by Grace" by the Rev. Mark



The Lord's Supper Service at Quebradillas

Tuffin of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia; second, "Justification is Complete" by the Rev. Oto Rodriguez, a pastor of the Confessional Lutheran Church (Mexico), who later accepted a call as missionary for the ELS mission in Chile; third, "Justification is for All" by the Rev. Takeshi Nidaira of the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church—Japan (LECC); fourth, "Justification is Received through Faith" by the Rev. Daison Mabedi of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi; fifth, "Justification through Faith Produces Sanctification" by Prof. Adolph Harstad of the ELS; sixth, "Justification through Faith Gives Innumerable Blessings" by Prof. Martin Hoffmann of the ELFK; and seventh, "Justification by Grace through Faith is the Doctrine by which the Church either Stands or Falls" by Prof. Arnold Koelpin of the WELS.²³

Two new church bodies were received into the membership of the CELC: The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Peru and the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Russia. This brought the number of member churches to fifteen.

At the convention the provisional constitution of the CELC was adopted. In addition a resolution was passed to appoint a theological commission to summarize the essays of the first two conventions and bring their work back to the next meeting of the CELC. Their work was then to be reviewed by the member churches before the documents were officially adopted by the CELC.

This convention of the CELC was hosted by the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church (Puerto Rico). Mission work began in Puerto Rico in the 1960s. The national church was organized in 1990. The church has four established congregations located in San Juan, Humacao, Barrancas, and Guayama. The warm Caribbean breezes and Caribbean hospitality reminded everyone of the warm breezes of the Gospel that daily melt our sin-infested hearts, drawing us to the Savior.

Winter Haven, Florida—April 20–22, 1999

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity" (Psalm 133:1). This was the sentiment of those gathered for the third triennial convention of the CELC, which took place on April 20–22, 1999, in Winter Haven, Florida. It could plainly be seen that the Lord had preserved seven thousand faithful, though it may have seemed as though they were standing alone in their respective countries. As these Lutherans came together, they found comfort and strength in their unity and fellowship in the Lord.

The theme of the convention was "Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord: The Holy Spirit, His Person and His Work." The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Holy Trinity who proceeds from the Father and the Son. He is the Lord and giver of life, who makes present for us the blessings of the cross and works faith in our hearts to receive those blessings. Through the means of grace, He works faith, gives new life, and preserves us in the true faith unto our end.

The seven essays of the convention carried out the theme as follows: first, "The Holy Spirit is God" by the Rev. Walter Westphal of the WELS; second, "The Holy Spirit is the Giver of Faith" by Dr. Gottfried Herrmann of the ELFK; third, "The Holy Spirit Uses Word and Sacrament to Carry Out His Work" by the Rev. Frackson Chinyama of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Malawi; fourth, "The Holy Spirit Comforts the Church" by the Rev. Stefan Hedkvist of the LBK; fifth, "The Holy Spirit Sanctifies and Preserves the Church on Earth" by the Rev. Samuel M. Kawiliza of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa—Zambia; sixth, "the Holy Spirit Gives Spiritual Gifts to the Church" by the Rev. David Haeuser of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Peru; and seventh, "Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord: Preserve Our Unity of Faith" by the Rev. William Meier of the WELS.²⁴

One of the items of business at this convention was to accept the Bulgarian Lutheran Church into membership. It became the sixteenth member of the CELC.

Outgoing CELC president Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch and his wife, Marilyn, enjoyed a surprise 50th wedding anniversary celebration after one of the evening sessions of the convention. Prof. Gawrisch was thanked for his service to the CELC. While many individuals participated in the organization of the CELC, Prof. Gawrisch was instrumental in its establishment. Humanly speaking, there probably would have been no CELC without his faithful service. He gave of his time and efforts untiringly for the establishment of the organization.

Gothenburg, Sweden – April 23–25, 2002

This was the first convention of the CELC of the new millennium. The church had just celebrated the two thousandth anniversary of the dear Savior's birth for our salvation. He is the Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He partook in our suffering, death, and hell so that we might partake in His glory, life, and heaven, a wonderful exchange. It was indeed a time to celebrate 2000 years of grace. Therefore it was only proper that the theme of this convention should center in Christology, or the Person of Christ.

Assembled on the campus of a small college in Kungälv, Sweden, near Gothenburg, the CELC held its fourth triennial convention on April 23–25, 2002. There were 140 participants



The 2002 Convention of the CELC – Kungälv, Sweden

from five continents: Europe, Asia, Africa, and North and South America. Of the sixteen member churches, thirteen were represented.

The theme of the convention was “Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever.” Christ is both God and man in one person. The second person of the Holy Trinity assumed into Himself a perfect human nature, which never subsisted alone, so that the natures are so intimately united as to form one undivided and indivisible person in Christ. He lived a holy life in our place, which the Father counts as the holy life of all people, and then He gave Himself as the one sufficient sacrifice for all human sin. As our prophet He revealed Himself as our redeemer, as our high priest He carried out the work of redemption, and as our king He rules His threefold kingdom for the good of His church.

The five essays of the convention carried out the theme as follows: first, “The Person of Christ” by the Rev. Takeshi Nidaira of the LECC; second, “The Two States of Christ” by the Rev. Jonas Schröter of the ELFK; third, “The Work of Jesus Christ as Prophet” by the Rev. Mutebele Chijoka of Lutheran Church of Central Africa – Zambia; fourth, “The Work of Christ as Priest” by the Rev. Segundo Gutierrez of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Peru; and fifth, “The Work of Christ as King” by the Rev. Stefan Sjöqvist of the LBK.²⁵

In addition to the reading and discussion of the essays, there were business sessions dealing with a number of topics. A highlight of this meeting was the acceptance into membership of three churches: the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia, the Ukrainian Lutheran Church, and the Czech Evangelical Lutheran Church. This brought the total membership of the CELC to nineteen.

This convention of the CELC was hosted by the LBK. It was organized in 1974 by pastors and lay people who for confessional reasons had left the state church of Sweden. Today it has congregations in both Sweden and Norway. The pastors of the LBK are trained at Biblicum, in Ljungby. This church

continues to confess orthodox Lutheranism in nominally Lutheran lands.

Narita, Japan—May 31–June 2, 2005

The land of Japan is known as the land of the rising sun and yet visitors soon realize that it is a land covered by pagan darkness. Shrines and temples are found everywhere. Japan is strongly influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shintoism. Yet in this land, the light of the Gospel has arisen. A faithful confessional Lutheran church proclaims the forgiveness of Christ providing true light in the land of the rising sun. This church body is the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church—Japan (LECC).

The LECC hosted the fifth triennial convention of the CELC held in Narita, Japan, on May 31–June 2, 2005. What a wonderful time this was. Confessional Lutherans gathered here from the four corners of the earth. There were people from many nations present with many different passports. They spoke a plethora of languages and had a variety of customs. Still they had one thing in common—the most important thing: they were one in the Lord, one in faith, one in doctrine, and one in the blessed hope of everlasting life in heaven.

The theme of the convention was “Eagerly Await the Savior,” based on Philippians 3:20-21, pointing to the truth that our citizenship is in heaven. This topic centered in the doctrine



The 2005 Convention of the CELC – Narita, Japan

of the last things, or eschatology, dealing with such things as death, resurrection, judgment, and eternal life. The Christian should always be prepared for the last hour. This is only possible by despairing of anything in ourselves to obtain salvation and by trusting alone in Christ’s redemptive work. We will indeed be prepared for our last hour and our Lord’s second coming by keeping our faith in the Savior alive through a regular use of the means of grace. Maranatha, Lord come quickly.

The five essays of the convention carried out the theme as follows: first, “Eagerly Await the Savior as You Prepare for Death” written by the Rev. Mikhail Starikov and presented by Andrey Kozionov of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Russia); second, “Eagerly Await the Savior as You Anticipate Resurrection and Glorification” by the Rev. Frackson Chinyama of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa (LCCA)—Malawi; third, “Eagerly Await the Savior as You Look Forward to Christ’s Return” by the Rev. Gundars Bakulis of the Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia; fourth, “Eagerly Await the Savior even though You Must Face Divine Judgment” by the Rev. Mitsuo Haga of the LECC; and fifth, “Eagerly Await the Savior Waiting for Heaven with Joy” written by the Rev. Ezequiel Sánchez and presented by Rev. Mario Domínguez of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mexico).²⁶

A highlight of the 2005 convention was the acceptance of Gereja Lutheran—Indonesia as the twentieth member of the CELC. This church body is making a valiant stand for the Christian faith in a land that is dominated by Islam. The members of this church are facing persecution but they continue to proclaim forgiveness and hope in the Savior.

The agenda of the convention contained two other items in a very preliminary form. One was a proposed dispute resolution procedure, should that become necessary in the CELC. A number of suggestions were offered and incorporated into the proposal. The proposal was accepted provisionally, and at the same time, it was sent back to the Planning Committee for revision and presentation to the next triennial convention.²⁷

The second item was whether there was interest in having an international advanced degree program in the CELC. The idea of global theological education was discussed at the convention. It was decided that a feasibility committee be appointed and that this committee report to the Planning Committee.²⁸

Prof. Panning completed his term as the second president of the CELC and he was sincerely thanked for all that he had done for the conference during his time in office. In his President's Report, he stated:

It has unquestionably been a high point of my career to have been part of the CELC from its very beginning in 1993 and to have been permitted to work with hundreds of fellow believers on six continents. I can honestly say with the Apostle Paul, "I thank my God every time I remember you." It has been sheer joy to get to know you and to work with you. And although our paths may not cross again here on this earth, yet in Christ we can be absolutely confident of spending eternity together. May that sure future give all of us strength and zeal as together we eagerly await our Savior's return.²⁹

Prof. Panning and his wife, Virginia, have faithfully served the Lord and His church throughout their lives.

Mission work through the WELS began in Japan in the 1950s. The church body was officially incorporated as the Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church of Japan in 1962. The first national pastor was the Rev. Yoshida, ordained in 1969. At present the LECC has five national pastors, eight established congregations, a seminary



Prof. Bivens and Prof. Panning

for the training of pastors and has a major radio ministry, "Walking Together With Jesus." Started in 1963, this program has broadcast to a potential listening audience of more than five million people. In 2007, the LECC celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the mission work which is the origin of the church body. Those serving in Japan today are Pastors Akagami, Haga, Nidaira, Yoshida and Oshino, who is serving under a semi-retirement call; and Missionaries Kermit Habben, Joshua Stahmann, and Bradley Wordell. Although this church body faces obstacles in proclaiming the message of Christ crucified in a land with a predominantly Buddhist and Shinto culture, more and more people are hearing God's Word and being drawn to the LECC.

Regional Meetings

The constitution of the CELC calls for triennial conventions. Regional meetings between the plenary conventions are to be held in five world regions: North America, South America, Asia, Europe, and Africa. On the North American continent the Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum has taken the place of these regional meetings. In these regional meetings, member churches may meet to discuss essays and consider matters of common interest and concern.

The European division of the CELC has been particularly faithful in regular regional meetings. It has had ten regional meetings in the past fifteen years, which have provided an excellent opportunity to express and benefit from this fellowship with likeminded brothers. The essays from these meetings are preserved in the archives of the Lutheran Theological Seminary (*Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar Leipzig*) in Leipzig, Germany.

The Theological Commission

The Theological Commission of the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference, established in 1996, held its first meeting in Steeden, Germany, on March 5-6, 1997. The members of the commission were the Rev. Egil Edvardsen (LBK), Dr. Gottfried

Herrmann (ELFK), Prof. Salimo Hachibamba (LCCA-Zambia), Prof. Lyle Lange (WELS), Dr. Wilhelm Petersen (ELS), and Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch, CELC president, *ex officio*.

One of the purposes of the CELC is to publish documents which set forth the theological position of the member church bodies. To that end, the Theological Commission was established to produce statements which summarize the essays given at each convention in booklet form. In this way, the essays presented at the triennial conventions would be available to a wider audience than merely the participants of the convention. The first document prepared was an exposition of Holy Scripture. It became Article I of *The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century*. The Theological Commission has also given advice in doctrinal matters when it was requested.

The next meeting of the Theological Commission of the CELC was held at Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota, March 3-5, 1998. At this meeting a statement on justification was prepared. The members of the commission visited the new headquarters of the ELS and the campus of Bethany Lutheran College. Martin Luther College, the training institution of WELS in New Ulm, Minnesota, was also a part of their itinerary.

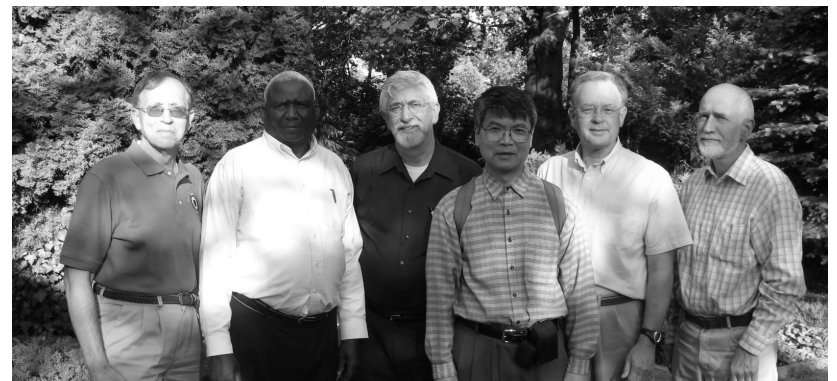
The 2001 meeting of the commission took place in Stavanger, Norway. Here the commission reviewed the statement on justification and began preparing a document on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. During their stay in Scandinavia, the members of the commission became better acquainted with the members of the LBK.



The Theological Commission in 1998

In 2004 the Theological Commission met in Lusaka, Zambia. The commission reviewed the statement entitled "Holy Spirit: His Person and His Work" for publication and began preparing a statement entitled "The Person and Work of Christ." While in Zambia, members of the commission lectured at the seminary of the Lutheran Church of Central Africa in Lusaka. The members of the commission had the privilege to visit congregations in Lusaka and a number of rural congregations in the bush country around Lusaka. There was ample opportunity to see the work being carried out by our sister church in Central Africa. It became very evident that the Lord had richly blessed the work of the Gospel here.

In 2007 the Theological Commission met at the Lutheran Theological Seminary (*Lutherisches Theologisches Seminar Leipzig*) in Leipzig, Germany. The commission reviewed the statement entitled "The Person and Work of Christ" for publication and presentation at the 2008 CELC convention at Kiev, Ukraine. In addition the commission began preparing a statement on eschatology. During the time in Leipzig, the members of the commission gave presentations at the seminary of the ELFK. Following the meeting of the commission there was a meeting of the Global Theological Education Committee. Discussions at this meeting centered on sharing theological education on a worldwide level. It was agreed to ask the CELC at its triennial meeting in 2008 to establish a commission to advance and enhance efforts to provide theological education on a



The Theological Commission in 2007

seminary level and to provide global theological education on the post-graduate level for present and potential seminary professors.³⁰

The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century now has three published articles. Article I is a study of the doctrine of Holy Scripture, Article II of the doctrine of Justification and Article III, “The Holy Spirit: His Person and Work.” The statement entitled “The Person and Work of Christ” and the statement on eschatology will become Articles IV and V respectively in *The Eternal Word*.

The members of the Theological Commission of the CELC at present are Prof. Lyle Lange (WELS), Prof. Gaylin Schmeling (ELS), Dr. Gottfried Herrmann (ELFK), Prof. Salimo Hachibamba (LCCA-Zambia), the Rev. Takeshi Nadaira (LECC), and the Rev. Steve Petersen, CELC president, *ex officio*.

The CELC Today

The CELC is now fifteen years old and has grown to a membership of twenty church bodies. The names of the church bodies, the year of their entrance into the CELC and their approximate sizes are listed below:

1. Bulgarian Lutheran Church (1999)	210
2. Christ the King Lutheran Church (Nigeria, 1993)	5,400
3. Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Mexico, 1993)	440
4. Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church (Russia, 1996)	100
5. Confessional Lutheran Church in Latvia (2002)	690
6. Czech Evangelical Lutheran Church (2002)	160
7. Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church (Finland, 1993)	35
8. Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Church (Puerto Rico, 1993)	230
9. Evangelical Lutheran Free Church (Germany, 1993)	1,600
10. Evangelical Lutheran Synod (USA, 1993)	21,000

11. Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (1993)	100
12. Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Peru (1996)	1,400
13. Gereja Lutheran - Indonesia (2005)	700
14. Lutheran Church of Cameroon (1993)	1,500
15. Lutheran Church of Central Africa-Malawi (1993)	30,000
16. Lutheran Church of Central Africa-Zambia (1993)	11,600
17. Lutheran Confessional Church (Sweden and Norway, 1993)	280
18. Lutheran Evangelical Christian Church-Japan (1993)	450
19. Ukrainian Lutheran Church (2002)	3,000
20. Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (1993)	415,000

The CELC has met triennially in the following locations:

1. 1993 - Oberwesel, Germany - Theme: God’s Word is Our Great Heritage
2. 1996 - Quebradillas, Puerto Rico - Theme: Justification by Grace through Faith: Our Heritage from the Lutheran Reformation
3. 1999 - Winter Haven, Florida, USA - Theme: Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord: The Holy Spirit, His Person and His Work
4. 2002 - Gothenburg, Sweden - Theme: Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday, Today and Forever
5. 2005 - Tokyo, Japan - Theme: Eagerly Await the Savior
6. 2008 - Kiev, Ukraine - Theme: Make Known God’s Manifold Wisdom

The first president of the CELC was Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch (WELS). The second president of the CELC was Prof. Armin Panning (WELS). Both these men did a great service in the Lord’s kingdom. The present officers of the CELC are: president, the Rev. Steven Petersen (ELS); vice-president, the Rev. Daniel Koelpin (WELS); secretary, Prof. Forest Bivens (WELS); treasurer, Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS); planning committee, Pres. John Moldstad (ELS) and the Rev. Wayne Mueller (WELS).³¹

The CELC maintains a website <www.celc.info> for the purpose of promoting confessional Lutheranism on a worldwide scale. The website offers a brief history of each member church and its contact information. In addition the various publications of the CELC are offered in PDF form, including *The Eternal Word: A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century*. The website of the ELFK has *A Lutheran Confession for the Twenty-First Century* in the German language <elfk.de>.

Today, the CELC is the third largest worldwide Lutheran fellowship, following the larger Lutheran World Federation and the International Lutheran Council. From its organization in 1993 at Oberwesel, Germany, it has grown from 13 to 20 church bodies with approximately 450,000 members. The conference accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments (the verbally inspired and inerrant Word of God) as sole authority for doctrine, faith, and life. The conference also accepts the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, not *in so far as* but *because* they are a correct exposition of the pure doctrine of the Word of God. The CELC continues to strengthen each of its member churches through mutual support and fellowship as it prepares for its fifteenth anniversary in 2008. We praise and thank our triune God for having permitted us to establish this confessional organization on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word.



The Officers of the CELC today

The Lutheran World Situation

As one surveys Lutheranism in the world, three major options for wider fellowship become visible. The first option is the Lutheran World Federation, which is by far the largest organization of Lutherans in the world. However, this organization has lost its Lutheran heritage. It no longer makes its stand on the inerrant Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Theologians are tolerated within the organization that do not confess the central truths of the faith.

The second option is the International Lutheran Council. This organization is made up of those church bodies that are in fellowship with the LCMS. Their doctrinal stance is closer to that of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Yet a wide spectrum of doctrinal deviation is permitted within these church bodies. Here one finds religious pluralism.

The third option in our world today is the Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference. It is the smallest of the three groups, but it continues to uphold our great Lutheran heritage. It boldly confesses the doctrine of the inerrant Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Its purpose has been and continues to be to preserve and promote this confessional stand throughout the world. This is its doctrinal emphasis. At the same time, it is firmly committed to proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the only Savior from sin to all people.

A Look to the Future

We are now celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the CELC, fifteen years of God's grace, centered in the Savior. He is the Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). He took upon Himself our flesh made from dust so that through union with His divinity He might conquer sin, death, and all our foes in the flesh and raise us to His divine glory, eternal life in heaven. We have seen His love, grace, and compassion throughout the past fifteen years and He will continue to care for the CELC and each of its member churches all the way through this earthly journey.

As we face the future the prospects of the church are, humanly speaking, not that promising. Our situation is much like that of the Irish missionaries in the sixth century. Their missionary houses were Christian outposts in a continent that had lapsed into paganism. In much the same way the churches of the CELC are outposts in a world gone pagan. Still those ancient missionaries did not say “Woe is me!” and hide in their monasteries. They did two things: they *preserved* and they *spread*. They preserved the Christian literature of the ancient world and they spread the Gospel. Likewise we will strive to preserve the Word of God in its truth and purity and we will spread the Gospel to the ends of the earth. We will make our stand with Augustine, Luther, Walther, and the other heroes of faith. The strength to go forward and do all things through Him—that strength He gives us in the life-giving Word and the holy Sacraments. As we move forward may our prayer be that of the great twentieth-century hymn writer Martin Franzmann:

O Spirit, who didst once restore
 Thy Church that it may be again
 The bringer of good news to men,
 Breathe on thy cloven Church once more,
 That in these gray and latter days
 There may be men whose life is praise,
 Each life a high doxology
 Unto the Blessed Trinity. Amen.³²



CELC Blessings for Member Churches

1. **Confessional unity**
The chief purpose of the CELC is to “give outward expression to the unity of spirit and oneness in faith and confession that binds the members of the conference together.”
2. **Fraternal encouragement**
As we come from various parts of the world and face many challenges, we are lifted up by the Gospel and by the unity that we share in the faith so that we continue to advance the cause of Christ’s kingdom.
3. **Outreach focus highlighted**
We urge the members of our conference to be zealous in sharing the pure light of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ with those still living in spiritual darkness.
4. **Doctrinal review**
A major focus of each triennial convention is to study together scriptural doctrine and practice and to provide a forum for removing whatever might threaten to disturb unity in the faith.
5. **Education opportunities**
The conference is exploring ways in which we may promote advanced theological training through the use of our respective seminaries.
6. **Identification of new mission fields**
By communication between the member churches we learn of mission efforts occurring in new locations around the globe.
7. **Promotional/advertising**
Connection with our worldwide fellowship gives recognition for our member churches as they seek to identify themselves in their geographic regions.

8. National identity encouraged

Since many of the members in the CELC developed from former mission fields, there is always the desire to have more national churches become organized and join the conference when application for membership seems appropriate.

9. Website offerings/productions

The conference prepares and disseminates clear Scripture-based confessional statements on issues that confront the church from time to time <<http://www.celc.info>>.

10. Brotherly approach to challenges

A procedure is in place to assist member churches in bringing about a peaceful, God-pleasing resolution should a theological dispute threaten harmony within the CELC.

11. Interactive referral

We encourage the forwarding of inquiries often received from individuals seeking contact information for confessionally sound Lutheran churches in a global geographic vicinity.

Produced by Pres. John A. Moldstad (ELS)

Addendum II

Opening and Closing Services

The preachers for the opening and closing service for each convention, with their text and theme, are found below:

Constituting Convention: Oberwesel, Germany – 1993

Opening service:

Pres. Carl Mischke (WELS)

text: John 17:14

theme: “God’s Word is Our Great Heritage”

Closing service:

Pres. George Orvick (ELS)

text: Romans 3:24

theme: “Why Our New Conference Must Ever

Proclaim the Doctrine of Justification by Grace Alone

through Faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ”

Quebradillas, Puerto Rico – 1996

Opening service:

Pres. Gerhard Wilde (ELFK)

text: Romans 3:28

theme: “We Are Justified by Faith Alone”

Closing service:

Pres. Karl Gurgel (WELS)

text: Nehemiah 8:9-12

theme: “The Joy of the Lord is Your Strength”

Winter Haven, Florida – 1999

Opening service:

Prof. David Valleskey (WELS)

text: John 20:19-23

theme: “Come, Holy Spirit, God and Lord”

Closing service:

Rev. Steven Petersen (ELS)

text: 1 Corinthians 12:3

theme: “The Confession That Saves Our Souls and is the Foundation of Our Fellowship”

Kungälv, Sweden—2002

Opening service:

Rev. Stefan Hedkvist (LBK)

text: Deuteronomy 18:15-19

theme: "Where May We Find This Prophet?"

Closing service:

Rev. Salimo Hachibamba (LCCA-Zambia)

text: Hebrews 13:5-8

theme: "Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday and Today and Forever"

Narita, Japan—2005

Opening service:

Prof. Gaylin Schmeling (ELS)

text: Philippians 3:20-21

theme: "Our Citizenship is in Heaven"

Closing service:

Prof. Paul Wendland (WELS)

text: Philippians 1:21-25

theme: "For Me to Live is Christ"

Addendum III

Officers of the CELC

1993-1996

Officers

Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch (WELS), president

Prof. Lyle Lange (WELS), vice president

Prof. Armin Panning (WELS), secretary

Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS), treasurer

Planning Committee

Pres. Gerhard Wilde (ELFK)

Rev. Duane Tomhave (WELS)

1996-1999

Officers

Prof. Wilbert Gawrisch (WELS), president

Prof. Lyle Lange (WELS), vice president

Prof. John Moldstad, Jr. (ELS), secretary

Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS), treasurer

Planning Committee

Rev. Duane Tomhave (WELS)

Pres. George Orvick (ELS)

1999-2002

Officers

Prof. Armin Panning (WELS), president

Prof. Adolph Harstad (ELS), vice president

Prof. John Moldstad, Jr. (ELS), secretary

Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS), treasurer

Planning Committee

Rev. Walter Westphal (WELS)

Rev. Daniel Koelpin (WELS)

2002–2005

Officers

Prof. Armin Panning (WELS), president
Prof. Adolph Harstad (ELS), vice president
Prof. Forrest Bivens (WELS), secretary
Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS), treasurer

Planning Committee

Pres. John Moldstad, Jr. (ELS)
Rev. Daniel Koelpin (WELS)

2005–2008

Officers

Rev. Steven Petersen (ELS), president
Rev. Daniel Koelpin (WELS), vice president
Prof. Forrest Bivens (WELS), secretary
Mr. Eugene Schulz (WELS), treasurer

Planning Committee

Pres. John Moldstad, Jr. (ELS)
Rev. Wayne Mueller (WELS)

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- ¹ This is the American Lutheran Church of 1930 made up of the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods.
- ² This occurred at the 1944 LCMS convention at Saginaw, Michigan, which also opened the doors to scouting.
- ³ George Orvick, *Our Great Heritage: A Popular History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (n.p., n.d.), 42–44; T.A. Aaberg, *A City Set on a Hill* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1968), 135–242.
- ⁴ *Proceedings of the Forty-seventh General Convention of the Lutheran Synodical Conference* (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 20, 68.
- ⁵ *Proceedings of the Thirty-Ninth Biennial Convention of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1967), 222–223.
- ⁶ It was resolved to begin meeting biannually at its 1980 meeting. See *Report of the 64th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1981), 33.
- ⁷ Gerald Hoenecke, "Evangelical Lutheran Confessional Forum," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 66, No. 1 (January 1969), 60; see also *Report of the 52nd Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1969), 15.
- ⁸ Armin Schuetze, "The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference: How It Came to Be," *WELS Historical Institute Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2 (October 1994), 21.
- ⁹ *WELS Book of Reports and Memorials* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1977), 82.
- ¹⁰ *Report of the 63rd Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1980), 74.
- ¹¹ Gaylin R. Schmeling, "A Brief History of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Germany Including Its Recent Ministry Discussion," *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (December 2002), 314.
- ¹² 1981 *ELS Report*, 80.

- ¹³ *Report of the 73rd Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1990), 70. See also *WELS Book of Reports and Memorials* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 1993), 232–243. The subcommittee of nine included: CLC: Daniel J. Fleischer, Clifford M. Kuehne, Robert A. Reim; ELS: Juul B. Madson, George M. Orvick, Gaylin R. Schmeling; WELS: Wilbert R. Gawrisch, Carl H. Mischke, and Armin J. Panning.
- ¹⁴ *Report of the 69th Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod* (Mankato, Minnesota: Evangelical Lutheran Synod, 1986), 57.
- ¹⁵ 1986 ELS Report, 62.
- ¹⁶ Schuetze, “How It Came to Be,” 32.
- ¹⁷ Wilbert R. Gawrisch, “A Third International Lutheran Organization Is Being Planned,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 88, No. 2 (Spring 1991), 148; see also “Vorläufige Verfassung der Konfessionellen Evangelisch-lutherischen Konferenz beschlossen,” *SELK Informationen*, Nr. 139 (November 1990), 5.
- ¹⁸ Lyle W. Lange, “The Constituting Convention of the CELC—A Mountaintop Experience,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 90, No. 3 (Summer 1993), 218.
- ¹⁹ Gaylin R. Schmeling, “The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference: The Spiritual Heir of the Synodical Conference,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 76, No. 10 (October 1993), 6.
- ²⁰ Lange, “Constituting Convention,” 221.
- ²¹ Schmeling, “Spiritual Heir,” 7. The preachers for the opening and closing services of each convention, with their text and theme, are found in Addendum II.
- ²² Lyle W. Lange, “The Second Triennial Convention of the CELC,” *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, Vol. 93, No. 4 (Fall 1996), 289.
- ²³ Gaylin R. Schmeling, “The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference: An International Lutheran Meeting that Was Different,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 79, No. 8 (August 1996), 10.
- ²⁴ Matthew Thompson, “Winter Haven, Florida to Host CELC Conference in April,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 82, No. 3 (March 1999), 9.
- ²⁵ “Five CELC Convention Essays: The Person and Work of Christ,” *Lutheran Sentinel*, Vol. 85, No. 7 (July 2002), 9.
- ²⁶ Gaylin R. Schmeling, “Confessional Lutherans Meet in the Land of the Rising Sun,” *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, Vol. 45, Nos. 2 & 3 (June & September 2005), 275–276.
- ²⁷ *Proceedings of The Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference: Fifth Triennial Convention* (Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Northwestern Publishing House, 2005), 25.
- ²⁸ *Proceedings, Fifth Triennial Convention*, 22–23.
- ²⁹ *Proceedings, Fifth Triennial Convention*, 30.
- ³⁰ In addition to the meetings noted in this section, the commission usually meets the day before each triennial convention.
- ³¹ For a complete listing of the officers of the CELC, see Addendum III.
- ³² *Worship Supplement* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1969), hymn 758.

