From the American Lutheran Church to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Rhetoric of Merger

David L. Warne

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FROM THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA: RHETORIC OF MERGER

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Master of Arts Major in Speech South Dakota State University 1988
FROM THE AMERICAN LUTHERAN CHURCH TO THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA: RHETORIC OF MERGER

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Arts, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AALC  American Association of Lutheran Churches
AELC  Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches
AFLC  Association of Free Lutheran Congregations
ALC   American Lutheran Church
CLC   Committee for Lutheran Cooperation
CNLC  The Commission for a New Lutheran Church
ELCA  Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
FELLP Fellowship of Lutheran Laity and Pastors
LCA   Lutheran Church in America
LCMS  Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod
LIFT  Lutherans Informed for Truth
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Origin and Justification of the Study

In 1888 a large American Lutheran Church National Convention met to begin work on a proposal for the merger of the American Lutheran Church identified as ALC in this study with two other Lutheran church bodies to form a new church body. The proposal of the ALC had included four mergers and a similar proposal was received in 1988 after years of discussion and planning. By August, 1989, the planning for the new organization was completed and the merger proposal was referred from the annual ALC National Convention to the congregational membership of the ALC. Adoption of the proposal required approval by at least two-thirds of all ALC congregations. In each separate congregation, the approval was to be by a simple majority of those who voted. Three congregational votes were held from September 16, 1989, to March 19, 1990. The Bloom Falls, Bruce, Leader reported that 61 percent of the members represented the proposal and the Constitution was carried (Saturday, 1989, 8:15).
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Origin and Justification of the Study

In 1982 a larger majority of American Lutheran Church national convention delegates voted to begin work on a proposal for the merger of The American Lutheran Church (identified as ALC in the remainder of this paper) with two other Lutheran church bodies to form a new church body. The tradition of the ALC had included such mergers and a similar reorganization occurred in 1960 after years of discussion and planning. By August, 1986, the planning for the new organization was completed and the merger proposal was referred from the annual ALC National Convention to the congregational membership of the ALC. Adoption of the proposal required approval by at least two-thirds of all ALC congregations. In each separate congregation, the approval was to be by a simple majority of those individuals voting. These congregational votes were held from September 14, 1986 to March 15, 1987. The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported that 81 percent of the congregations approved the proposal and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was formed (Gutierrez 1987, 1[C]).
As with the 1960 reorganization, this proposal had factions that supported and opposed the merger. A study of the rhetoric of these groups provides an opportunity to examine the application of rhetoric in its classical definition—that is rhetoric as a means of persuasion.

A second reason such a study was conducted is that a significant number of people in our geographic area were affected by this rhetoric. In South Dakota the ALC had 82,468 voting members. In Minnesota there were 366,399; in North Dakota 127,551; and in Iowa 151,810 (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984, 12).

The possibility exists that this study was the only local work compiled on this particular merger action. The contribution of this study to the clergy and lay leaders of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), could be valuable.

From the viewpoint of the speech scholar, this study could provide some insight as to the use of rhetoric in practical application.

Finally, as a member of the ALC before, and the ELCA now, the use of rhetoric by the church interested me both personally and academically. This was an opportune time in the church's history to study the rhetoric of these groups.
Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the rhetoric of The American Lutheran Church, and the various interest groups within this organization, as it applied to the merger with the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to form a new organization, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

To achieve this purpose this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What groups, including the ALC leadership and special interest groups from the ALC membership, emerged and were involved in the rhetoric of this merger?

2. Who were the main spokespersons for these groups?

3. What issues of the merger proposal created controversy and the need for rhetoric?

4. What arguments and forms of support were offered in the discussion of these issues?

The limits implied in these questions narrowed the study to a subdivision of the classic convention of invention. The study was also limited only to the rhetoric of the ALC and did not include the other national organizations involved in the merger proposal.
Procedures and Methodology of Study

The following procedures were utilized to answer the questions raised in the "Statement of Purpose." As the merger idea was first presented in 1982, the survey of literature for this study was limited to materials printed and presented after 1982.

1. The following literature was surveyed to determine if any previous studies had been conducted regarding the rhetoric of the latest ALC merger:


A survey of the titles listed indicated that no duplicate studies or articles had been published.

Not included in this literature was a dissertation by Katherine M. Olson. Ms. Olson's dissertation, *Towards Uniting a Fellowship Divided: A Dramatistic Analysis of the Constitution Writing Process of the Evangelical Church in America*, was published in 1987 at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, and was not yet included in the indexes available. A
telephone conversation with the author indicated that no duplication of study existed.

2. To establish the history of merger in the ALC, a survey of library materials was conducted. The H. M. Briggs Library on the South Dakota State University campus, the Mikkelsen Library on the Augustana College campus, and the personal library of Pastor Lloyd Menke, a member of the ELCA clergy, were utilized. The history of previous mergers centered on the groups that have previously come together to form the ALC. This provided some historical background on cultural and ethnic heritage of the ALC membership.

3. The history of events in the current merger plan was highlighted through a survey of periodicals since 1982. As Minneapolis was the location of the home office for the ALC, the Minneapolis Star and Tribune was a primary source for this portion of the study. Other periodicals included The Lutheran Standard, The Lutheran Digest, and Christian News. Other sources were utilized as they were discovered.

4. While putting together a chronology of the merger plan and proposal, the groups involved and the spokespersons for these groups were identified. The same periodicals used for step three of this methodology were utilized for this step.
5. The main issues of the merger proposal were identified.

6. Since the focus of this study was to be on one aspect of the invention of the rhetoric of this merger, a working definition of argument and forms of support (evidence) was developed. These definitions were by necessity brief and were based on current interpretation of classical rhetorical theory. This information provided the analytical model outlined in Chapter Three.

7. To discover the arguments and evidence used by these groups, the major spokespersons for each group identified were contacted. A request for any available transcripts or tapes of presentations delivered, either in favor or in opposition to the merger, was made. Of those tapes and transcripts obtained, three were chosen for analysis. The analysis of these presentations is provided in Chapter Three.

8. The study was summarized and answers to the questions developed in the "Statement of Purpose" provided. Any conclusions that could be drawn were also offered.
CHAPTER 2

HISTORY OF MERGERS THROUGH 1988

The constituting convention for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) took place in Columbus, Ohio in the spring of 1987. According to Lowell Almen in the May 8, 1987 Lutheran Standard:

The road to Columbus has been a long one, rocky at times, often twisting, and sometimes bewildering. Because of immigration patterns, language barriers, perceived doctrinal differences, and varying degrees of Americanization, there once were 150 different Lutheran bodies in the United States. Assimilation into an English-speaking culture and unity efforts that reach back even into colonial times have reduced the number of separate Lutheran church bodies to about a dozen, some of them very small (Almen 1987, 11).

One of the larger of this dozen, with 2.3 million members, was the American Lutheran Church (Almen 1987, 11).

Merger History Through 1963

In his book, All These Lutherans: Two Paths toward a New Lutheran Church, Todd W. Nichol identifies four churches that came together between 1960 and 1963 to form the American Lutheran Church. These four bodies were the "old" ALC of 1930, the United Evangelical
Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Free Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Two of these bodies, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Free Church, were formed during the 1890s and had changed little in terms of mergers and reorganizations since that time. The former was a Danish Lutheran Church while the latter was Norwegian. The other two bodies, the ALC of 1930 and the Evangelical Lutheran Church had both gone through a major merger before the 1960 reorganization (Nichol 1986, 90).

The ALC of 1930 was a blend of four German-American groups—the Ohio Synod, formed in 1818; the Iowa Synod, formed 1854; the Buffalo Synod, 1845; and the Texas Synod, 1851. Each brought with it characteristics that would make the church blending a difficult task. The Ohio Synod claimed a long experience of life in America, a history of contacts with Lutherans to the east, and a strong grip on the Lutheran Confessions. On the other hand the Iowa Synod carried a "flexible" conservatism and a tradition of theological creativity (Nichol 1987, 13). The Buffalo and Texas Synods were not very large and early in their histories had been carefully guided by the ideas of their founders. When these two men died, Casper Braun of the Texas Synod and Johannes Andreas August Grabau of the Buffalo group,
neither church attracted many members and usually followed the lead of the Iowa Synod in matters of doctrine and policy (Nichol 1986, 67, 72).

The Ohio and Iowa Synod representatives conducted most of the merger negotiations for all four groups and by the end of the 1890s these groups were moving toward each other. During the next decade they endured a conflict with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and in 1920-25 it appeared that the merger was definite. In 1926, however, a controversy over the inspiration of scripture erupted. Iowa objected to the use of the word "inerrant" in the constitution of the new church, but Ohio insisted on it. It took four years for the controversy to be resolved and a compromise reached. The word "inerrant" did not appear in the constitution's doctrinal article, but it did appear in an explanatory note appended to the constitution. The ALC of 1930 was born (Nichol 1987, 13). "This church," says Nichol, "carried into the future a tradition of being definite about doctrine and a strong commitment to Lutheran unity" (Nichol 1987, 13).

The fourth church of the group was older than the ALC of 1930, but had similar problems reaching a merger agreement. In 1897 four large Norwegian-American churches--the United Norwegian Lutheran Church, the
Norwegian Synod, Hauge's Synod, and the Lutheran Free Church--were thriving. The common faith and ethnic background made the churches very similar and by 1900 it seemed that these organizations would unite.

However, one issue, election to salvation, seemed to provide the stumbling block. Part of the group professed salvation by grace alone. That is, God provides salvation out of love as a gift we do not deserve. The others in the group wanted to know what role faith played in salvation if it were simply a gift from God. Finally, all agreed on "justification [salvation] by grace through faith" and decided that there were two legitimate ways to talk about that one doctrine of faith. In 1912 the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America was born. Later the name of this church became the Evangelical Lutheran Church. The Lutheran Free Church decided not to join this new union and remained a separate church until 1960 (Nicol 1987, 13). Again according to Nicol, "The new NLCA brought together a passion for pure doctrine, the zeal for a Christian experience and holy living, and the insistence that any Lutheran church needs both clear heads and believing hearts" (Nicol 1987, 13).

In 1948 the four groups mentioned earlier--the ALC of 1930, the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA), the
Lutheran Free Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church--initiated steps toward a merger. By 1952 the churches had prepared a statement of faith, The United Testimony on Faith and Life, and a few years later the constitution was ready. The only issue to be resolved was over the location of the church headquarters. One group favored Chicago and another Minneapolis. There was also controversy over membership in the World Council of Churches, and a "tussle" over representation at the church convention (Nichol 1987, 13).

With Minneapolis the choice for church headquarters and the other problems resolved, the "old" ALC, the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church merged into the American Lutheran Church in 1960. Three years later the Lutheran Free Church gave a vote of confidence and also joined the larger organization (Nichol 1987, 13).

Todd Nichol explains in his book what the heritage of the American Lutheran Church may be. He also gives insight into the attitudes that heritage might foster:

The traditions contributing to the ALC first came to the United States with immigrants from Denmark, the German lands, and Norway. Most of these immigrants had come in the great rivers of people that poured in between 1850 and 1925. By the middle of the twentieth century the descendants of the immigrants were comfortably at home in the United
States. An ethnic veneer was sometime apparent, but it was thin. Few spoke the old languages, and many a Lutheran from the Midwest who traveled to Europe was surprised to learn how much distance there was between the European and American versions of Lutheranism (Nichol 1986, 94).

Nichol goes on to suggest that leaders of the ALC were steeped in the conservative theology of the 13th century confessionalism. To an old idea of the emphasizing of the inspiration and authority of the scriptures they added the term "inerrant" to describe the "Word of God" (Nichol 1986, 95). This leads to several of the ways that the ALC "makes a church."

According to its constitution, the ALC ". . . accepts all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God . . . " The three ecumenical creeds, along with the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism are called "brief and true statements of the doctrines of the Word of God" (Nichol 1986, 96). All congregations and members of the church are said, and are constitutionally bound, to subscribe to these confessions.

The ALC defined itself as a union of congregations. The congregations came first and were the central power-holding entity. Congregations owned property, called their own pastors, and jealously guarded
their rights to remain autonomous. Pastors did not even vote in district conventions unless given the power to do so by the congregation.

In the past few years some of the autonomy has been given up to the districts in that district help was sought in some cases. When this was true, however, the district representatives had no vote, only a voice, in the congregational decision making process. District presidents, recently called bishops, served more as administrators, but there was a move to give the bishops a more "pastoral" role in the affairs of the congregations (Nichol 1987, 97).

Finally, like a majority of protestant denominations, the ALC modeled its national structure on the plan of a corporation. It was built of boards, executives, and staffs that were accountable to the congregations through general conventions (Nichol 1987, 97). However, even with this local control established, Nichol makes this observation about the attitude the ALC membership developed toward decision-making:

Although they have built a bureaucracy several layers thick for their church, the people of the ALC are often hesitant to rely on structure to order its work. It is sometimes said that the ALC works more as if it were a big family than a large denomination. This is more nostalgic than accurate, but there is a grain of truth to it. The familial feel of the smaller churches is gone, but a hesitance about structure and bureaucracy remains.
other hand, there still exists in the ALC a tradition
of confidence in authoritative (and even
authoritarian) personal leaders. Congregations,
districts, boards, and the national church have now
and then chafed, but usually respond, to the
direction of able leaders (Nichol 1987, 97).

With this brief look at how the ALC reached the
1980s, and with some idea of the attitudes that journey
produced in its members, a chronology of the newest
merger action can be undertaken. This is by no means
meant to be a stereotypical picture of any member of the
ALC congregations, but it is sufficient to give a flavor
of the ALC's heritage.

From ALC to ELCA

The Lutheran Standard reports that at 2:00
Pacific Daylight Time on September 8, 1982 ALC convention
delegates in San Diego, California, heard the results of
the merger vote via telephone hook-up. The Lutheran
Church in America voted 669 yes and 11 no in favor of the
merger resolution. The Association of Evangelical
Lutheran Churches voted 136 yes and 0 no, and the
American Lutheran Church voted 897 yes and 87 no. The
resolution for merger was passed with over 90 percent
voting in favor of merger (Almen and McLellan 1982, 10).
Jean Caffey Lyles, in the September 29, 1982, Christian
Century analyzes that vote and reports that the union
vote actually consists of balloting on four questions:
(1) commitment to join in forming the new Lutheran body, 
(2) formation of a 70-member Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) to work out the details, (3) the setting of 1987 as the year for the constituting convention and January 1, 1988 as the target date for the church to start functioning, and (4) a pledge to continue contacts with the current Canadian merger talks in which the CLA's Canadian Synods are involved (Lyles 1982, 949).

Dr. David W. Preus, the presiding bishop of the ALC, spoke of the merger with emotion, "The compelling thing for the people of the ALC is the desire to express a very visible unity. We don't only want to be united in what we confess to teach, we want to show it too" (Almen and McLellan 1982, 12). Other church leaders were equally as positive. William Kohn, president of the AELC, stated, "It will bring together more power, more ability, and more resources than any merger that has been part of our past. Now we can dream bigger. We can talk, and think, bigger" (Miller 1982, 6[A]). The Rev. James Crumley, Jr., presiding bishop of the LCA, concurred. He gave three benefits to the merger proposal. Local congregations would cooperate on programming. Barriers caused by "name" differences would be erased, and new congregations would be placed where they are needed (Miller 1982, 6[A]). Other church leaders who appeared
enthusiastic about the plan included Rev. Paul Johnson, Rev. Joseph Everson, and Rev. Lloyd Svendsbye (Miller 1982, 6[A]).

Even with the large affirmative vote, and even with the congratulations of church leaders, not all ALC pastors and delegates were convinced that the merger was the best alternative at this time. A proposed amendment to put the matter "to serious study" was defeated. Rev. Rolf Heng, Beltami, Minnesota, claimed "the current momentum for union is like a runaway train." Although "just a country preacher" in a town of 138 people, Heng "does not see God using momentum in the expression of his will. Instead God uses waiting" (Almen and McLellan 1982, 12). The most organized opposition came from a group of twenty-one pastors. The group, called the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation, opposed immediate merger. Dr. Duane Lindberg, pastor of Ascension Lutheran Church in Waterloo, Iowa and coordinator for the group, laid out their opposition the day prior to the vote.

The ALC would be buying a "pig in a poke" by voting to commit to a new Lutheran Church before we had dealt with the substantive issues. Still unresolved are the doctrinal question of biblical infallibility, the authority of Lutheran pastors, and the ownership of church property. In the four mergers that produced the ALC, such issues were resolved in advance (Miller 1982, 6[A]).
District ALC Bishop L. David Brown, also of Iowa, commented on the Commission for Lutheran Cooperation position. He said he hoped the committee would look ahead "with the sense that we're not doing this just to get it done, but to manifest the (Holy) Spirit's work being done in the church today" (Sioux Falls Argus Leader 1982, 3[A]). With this controversy already in the news, the approved merger was born and underway.

While 1982 was the birthdate of the merger proposal, the conception was much earlier. Lowell Almen, in a timeline of the merger history of the ALC, gives 1972 as the probable date the idea began to take seed. That year saw the formation of the Consultation on Lutheran Unity. The churches involved were the ALC, LCA, and the LCMS. In 1975 the Consultation was dissolved. In that same year the AELC, a splinter group of the LCMS was formed. Later in 1978 the AELC was invited to join the ALC and LCA in a second cooperation committee to be renamed the Committee on Lutheran Unity. Two years later the ALC, LCA and AELC conventions approved a proposal to ask the district and synod delegates of each church whether to move gradually or quickly to a merger between the three churches. LCA and AELC delegates favored a rapid move, while the ALC delegates were split. Finally in 1982 the national conventions for each church approved
the merger proposal and the CNLC was formed (Almen 1987, 12).

The first meeting of the CNLC convened only three weeks after the conventions, September 27-29, 1982, at Madison, Wisconsin. Most of the time was spent in searching for ways to operate the committee so everyone of the seventy member panel could be involved in decision-making. A process that utilized small groups and Robert's Rules of Order was adopted. After spending time getting acquainted the group made several decisions (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 1).

First the group established a Planning Committee. The function of this group was to plan and propose agenda items for future meetings, to receive and forward written reports from the task forces, to propose descriptions for the task forces, to present nominations for persons to serve on each task force, and to propose a CNLC budget. A committee was formed to establish "effective means of communication" with units of the churches and the people of the churches. In the final plenary session the CNLC established two task forces: the Task Force on Theology and the Task Force on Society. The commission directed these last two groups to work together whenever possible, keeping each other informed and sharing information and studies through
joint meetings (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 1). The first task given was to develop statements on theology and the "world in which we live" that would help mold the future work of task forces, committees, and the commission. The CNLC also received nine papers that had been requested by the Committee on Lutheran Unity before it had completed its assignment (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 2).

Reaction to the CNLC's first meeting was almost immediate. Lowell G. Almen, editor of The Lutheran Standard editorialized on "The Back Page" of the October 19, 1982 issue that "One of the thorny issues that soon must be addressed is the new church's statement on scripture" (Almen 1982:31). Almen questioned what language would be utilized to express the authority of God's word. He cited the ALC constitution with the terms "infallible" and "inerrant" and the LCA's constitution which "avoids 'inerrant' and 'infallible' while still affirming with vigor the authority of the word" (Almen 1982, 31). Almen quoted David Preus as saying in San Diego that "he does not believe the word 'inerrant' will be used again." Almen in his editorial agreed (Almen 1982, 31). Several letters in the December 10, 1982 and January 7, 1983 Lutheran Standard expressed different
views. Three of the letters came from Minnesota and all favored the terminology used in the ALC constitution.

With the debate over terminology already starting, the CNLC held its second meeting in Chicago. The commission met from February 7-11, 1983. Reports from the Task Forces on Society and Theology were received and two more task forces, a Task Force on Purpose and a Task Force on New Church Designs, were formed. The Task Force on Purpose was assigned the task of developing a proposed statement of purpose for the new church with a focus on mission. The Task Force on New Church Designs was assigned the responsibility to determine the implications of the church's mission, identify ecclesiological and organizational issues which must be considered in the design of the new church, develop an order by which to consider these issues, propose task force, study group, and committee responsibilities necessary to achieve these goals, and report on all these aspects at the August, 1983 meeting of the CNLC (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 2).

The Task Force on Society reported that a list of topics had been developed for consideration. Writers had been enlisted to research these topics and report back to the force. The subject matter of these papers indicated
the scope of the task force investigations. The topics included requests for population statistics to analyze the racial, ethnic and age distribution of members in the new church; economic projections to establish the financial support available; religious trends in the church population; education trends; health care trends; and a special report on the changing roles of white women, white men, women of color, men of color, and the concerns of youth and the aged. Each of these reports was to pay special attention to the significance of the changes and concerns for the church and society (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 3).

The Task Force on Theology had been asked to prepare statements of three areas: the new church's confession of faith, the nature of and membership in the church, and the mission and ministry of the church.

In the statement on the Confession of Faith the task force drew up three parallel statements about the Word of God as message, as Christ, and as Holy Scripture. Concerning the Scriptures the task force wrote.

The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the divinely inspired and written Word of God. The Holy Scriptures are the source and norm for the faith and life of the church. They bear witness to God. Through the Scriptures and the proclamation of their message the Holy Spirit speaks judgment and grace to all (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1982a, 4).
A second recommendation made the three creeds of the church the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. The Task Force also commented that the Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism should be singled out for "unquestionable priority and congregational use," and it recognized that the church would continue to confess its faith in "all that is said and done." The task force concluded this portion of its report by writing that "a new confessional statement is not called for at this time" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 4).

Reporting on the membership of the new church and that impact on mission, the task force reported, "Whatever definition of membership may be required for legal and representative purposes, theologically the membership of the new Lutheran church consists of the baptized members of its congregations" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1982a, 5).

When exploring the implication of the church's membership for its mission the task force turned to the Nicene Creed: "We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church." The report points out that this is what the church is challenged to be. The mission, then, is to be one, holy, apostolic, and catholic church. The
report continues with recommendations on how this mission could be accomplished:

To be one, the church's mission is to be a sign of oneness that is God's will for the world. To be holy the mission is to witness to the presence and the coming of the Kingdom of God, and to oppose whatever is contrary to God's will for goodness and justice and peace, and to serve all who are in need. To be catholic the church's mission is to be an inclusive fellowship and to bring the Gospel to people of every race, culture, and class. And to be apostolic the church's mission is to carry on Christ's mission to the whole world, the whole person, and the whole society, and to maintain the purity and integrity of the Gospel and pass it on to future generations (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 6).

In its report on the Ministry of the Church the Task Force on Theology made a distinction between the ministry of all believers, that is all members of the church, and the Office of Ministry. The Office of the Ministry will be composed of those people who are called and ordained by the church into this "office." The task force made the following recommendation: the ordained ministry bestows a special function but not a special status in the church. The responsibilities of that function include the preservation of the apostolic teaching of the church, the public proclamation of the Gospel, the administration of the sacraments of the church, the upbuilding of the community of believers through pastoral care, and to speak publicly to those outside the church in the name of the Lord and the
church. The report stressed that these positions were part of what was to be considered "working papers" and were not the final recommendation of either the Task Force on Theology or the CNLC (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 7).

These recommendations were sent to the churches for consideration and input with the final wording to be decided at a later meeting (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 8).

Also announced was a tentative timeline for the completion of these statements in time for the national convention of each participating church to vote on their acceptability. It also called for concurrent conventions again in August of 1986 for approval of the final plans, and hoped for a May, 1987 constituting convention (Christian Century 1983, 210).

Again concerns raised at the convention in San Diego surfaced. It was reported in The Christian Century that while the CNLC was meeting, a second conference was being held at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. This conference was attended by "some 700 people, most of them pastors." Two areas where the conference participants expressed concern were in "understanding the role of the bishops and in the use of quotas to ensure representation of women and minorities
in the new church" (Christian Century 1983 210). This second practice was scheduled to come into being in the late 1980s. Carl Braaten, professor at the Lutheran School of Theology-Chicago, was quoted as saying, "The issues facing the new church are complex. The commission may be moving far too fast in dealing with the kinds of problems we've been dealing with at this conference" (Christian Century 1983, 210). There was hope expressed that by February, 1984, there would be agreement on the statement of faith, statement of purpose, and a proposal for the new church design.

Commenting on the controversy and the CNLC action David W. Preus said, "There are some inevitable spots where the commission will face strong differences on issues. It will be amazing if we get through [the scripture section] without heavy artillery opening up" (The Lutheran Standard 1983, 18).

The third meeting of the CNLC was held in Columbus, Ohio, September 24-28, 1983. Over three-fourths of the meeting time was devoted to the final reports of the four organized task forces. These reports addressed the key issues of theology, society, purpose, and the process of developing recommendations for the structure of the new Lutheran Church (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 27).
The first report came from the Task Force on Society. The final report was 302 pages in length and contained four sections. The introduction of the report identified four options for a relationship between the new church and society (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).

Option one recommended a "wholehearted adaptation of church to society." This option accepted society as is and the structure and theology of the church were to be used to legitimate or justify the society within which the church exists (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).

The second option called for the church to function as a distinct entity, apart from society. The church proclaims the Gospel to individuals. "Individual Christians are involved in society, but the church corporately is not" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 28).

The third option for the church in society called for critical integration. This approach suggested that both the individual Christians and the church corporately be "critical of all that conflicts with the realization of God's will for humanity, both in church and in society, and to operate on that realization" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).
And finally the fourth option called for total separation. "The church is functionally and structurally distinct and separate from society. In this view God works through the church, while the world is either autonomous or under demonic control" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).

The task force concluded this section by stating, "The choice of option will be critical for determining the structure, policy, and program of the new Lutheran Church. The commission as a whole did not take a position on any of the options (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).

The CNLC then moved to the final report of the Task Force on Theology. On receiving this report the commission passed a four-part resolution that (1) acknowledged that the assignments given to two task forces were limited in scope, (2) thanked the task forces for working in the framework of the CNLC's timetable, (3) recognized that further work may be needed on specific issues in these reports and the CNLC proceeds, and (4) adopted the final reports as working documents rather than final statements on any of the issues raised (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 28).

The CNLC also adopted its own statement regarding the need for a new confession and affirmed a summary
emphasis regarding the Word of God and Scripture. That statement read:

A new confession of faith or a new statement of doctrine is not necessary as the basis of union for the New Lutheran Church. The church is, however, called constantly to the action of confessing and must confess its faith anew as new issues and challenges arise. It must do so aware of context, cultural diversity, changes in language and in theological methods, as a necessary part of living confession.

In both the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, the term "Word of God" is used in several senses: (a) The Word of God, through whom God created everything, became incarnate in Jesus Christ, through whom God fashions new creation, (b) The Word of God is the message from God and about God, both Law and Gospel, revealing judgment and mercy through word and deed beginning with creation, continuing in the history of Israel, and centering in all its fullness in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and (c) As record and witness of God's revelation, centering in Jesus Christ and proclaiming both Law and Gospel, the sacred Scriptures are the Rod of God, authoritative as source of the church's proclamation and norm for the church's life and faith.

These Scriptures are divinely inspired, for God's Spirit spoke through their authors. The same Spirit speaks to us through the Scriptures. Given by God, they are sufficient and reliable for bringing us the truth of our salvation. They thereby present the standard for Christian faith and life (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 29).

The commission then voted to "transmit the report of the Task Force on Theology to the congregations as a preliminary report" and moved to consider the report from the Task Force on Purpose. The commission voted to "receive the Statement of Purpose submitted by the task force with the understanding that it be shortened and condensed." A committee was given the task of preparing
the Statement of Purpose in language suitable for a constitution (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 33). The longer version of that statement was not included in this CNLC report.

The report from the Task Force on Church Design was accepted and eleven separate task forces were organized to make recommendations for the following assignments: Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships; The Church's Global Mission; The Development of the Church in the US; Specific Ministry (Lay and Ordained); Services and Resources for Congregations; The Church and Education; The Church's Social Ministry through Homes, Institutions and Agencies; The Church in Society; Communication/Interpretation; Resources; and Pensions, Health, and Insurance Benefits (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 33).

The commission issued an invitation for responses on the following issues:

1. the decision that there is no need for a new confession of faith at this time;
2. the distinction between "general ministry" and "specific ministry;"
3. the function and responsibility of the bishop;
4. the relation between local and universal dimensions of the church;
5. the membership of the church as baptized persons; and
6. the CNLC statement regarding the Word of God and Scripture (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983b, 34).
The new call for responses to issues raised during the merger prompted two more organizations, in addition to the previously mentioned Committee for Lutheran Cooperation, to release statements. The Fellowship of Evangelical Lutheran Laity and Pastors (FELLP) wanted the terms "inerrant" and "infallible" used in describing the Bible. The organization also wanted the new church to oppose "any new translation of the Bible which adds or deletes from the original Hebrew and Greek texts in order to change God-language" (The Christian Century 1984, 192). FELLP was organized by several Bloomington, Minnesota pastors in March of 1983. The goal of the group was "to encourage denomination programs and positions that reflect a more conservative, strong Biblical Standard (Adams 1983, 20). The ALC pastors credited with forming the organization, Vernon Hintermeyer of Grace Lutheran, and Donald Richman and Jack Aamot of Emmeus Lutheran were part of a group that also included several LCA pastors. There was both an ALC and a LCA branch of the organization.

"FELLP has the possibility of stimulating our people to give the word of God serious consideration," said Reverend Hintermeyer. "It is a rallying point for the members of our congregations to let their elected leaders know their feelings" (Adams 1983, 20).
While two incidents not related to the planned Lutheran merger were the catalysts that formed the group (Adams 1983, 20), FELLP, in early 1984, sent a statement of "affirmation of faith" to some thirty-eight thousand Lutherans. In the view of the fellowship, as stated in that letter, "fundamental issues of theology and practice" should be resolved before documents for the proposed church being formed by the ALC, the LCA, and the AELC are completed (The Christian Century 1984, 193).

FELLP was the first group mentioned in the Christian Century report. Another group, Friends for Biblical Lutheranism also raised questions and concerns about how the Bible was to be used in the new denomination (Christian Century 1984, 193). The Lutheran Standard reported that the local liaison for the Friends for Biblical Lutheranism was Dr. Benjamin Johnson, a LCA pastor from St. Cloud, Minnesota (The Lutheran Standard, 1984b, 15). Also listed in this report was a third group opposing merger called Lutheran Alert National with a home base of Tacoma, Washington. No names were linked with the Lutheran Alert organization.

According to L. David Brown, the bishop of the Iowa District, ALC, "FELLP and the other groups have been falsely claiming that the congregations in the new Lutheran church would not be able to own property. They
also contend that the words 'inerrant' and 'infallible' must be used to describe the scriptures and that the ALC is breaking its own constitution by merging at this time" (The Lutheran Standard 1984b, 15). Brown goes on to say that these groups have been very active in Iowa and have made some false claims about the new church. He also mentions the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation as being very active but had not created any problems. Brown implied that the first three groups could be more like the latter (The Lutheran Standard 1984b, 15).

At about the same time that FELLP was meeting in Minneapolis, the Commission for a New Lutheran Church was holding its fourth meeting in that same city. Kay Miller reported that the CNLC opened meetings on February 18, 1984 (Minneapolis Star and Tribune 1984b, 1[B]). During this five-day meeting the commission expected to develop statements of faith and purpose, discuss the issue of ownership of church property, and make a final decision on the use of the terms "inerrant" and "infallible." The completed statements of faith and purpose would then be forwarded to the ALC, LCA, and AELC national conventions for approval as indicated in an earlier timeline (Miller 1984a, 1[B]).

The first action of the commission on any of the controversial issues came with an "overwhelming" vote to
recommend that the merged church adopt a strong quota system designed to put "more women, minorities, and lay people in its legislative assemblies, boards, and committees" (Miller 1984b, 1[B]). According to the CNLC's report, the qualifications and ratio for elected representation would be as follows:

a. to be elected one must be a member of a congregation of this church and must have been confirmed or be at least eighteen-years of age;

b. the legislative assemblies must be two-thirds lay persons or must be three-fourths lay persons (this is an option offered by the commissions);

c. 50 percent of the lay delegates must be women and 50 percent men; and

d. a minimum of 20 percent of all delegates must be persons of color or persons whose primary language is other than English (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984a, 7).

The quota system would not be mandatory for the new church but would be a goal. It also would not apply to governing bodies of congregations (Miller 1984b, 4[B]). The statement of faith that had been proposed was approved without changes and the statement of purpose was revised and adopted (Miller 1984b, 4[B]). The adopted statement of purpose included eleven "purposes" and twenty-five "objectives" to achieve those purposes (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984a, 2-3).

On the final day of this meeting the CNLC approved two plans for structuring the merging churches. The first option would organize the eleven thousand congregations into sixty regions and would encourage a
strong national church. The second option would divide the congregations into 105 smaller synods, which would be grouped with nine regional centers and a weaker national church. This plan would put the decision-making power of the church closer to the congregations. Both options were to be submitted to the national conventions for input (Miller 1984c, 4[B]).

The remaining action of the commission came in recommendations that the title "bishop" continue to be used for the elected church leaders, that the ownership of church property remain with the congregations, that the basic Lutheran creeds and confessions not be changed, and finally that two categories of ministry be recognized— one of lay ministers and one of ordained pastors (Miller 1984c, 4[B]).

With several proposals ready to go to conventions for approval, Carl F. Reuss polled the membership of the ALC and found several issues gaining mixed reaction. The results of his informal study were reported in the April 20, 1984, Lutheran Standard. While no statistical validity was given to the results of Reuss's work, it did generate a feeling for the opinions of the Lutheran laity. Almost no one felt the need for a new confession of faith for the merged church, but about 50 percent of the people Reuss polled did want to include the words
"inerrant" and "infallible" when describing the scriptures. About one-third of the ALC members had problems with the role the bishop would take in the new church. Many feared that too much power would be delegated to this position (The Lutheran Standard 1984, 19).

On the question of membership, a concern was expressed that simply allowing baptized members full voting rights would not be appropriate. Most wanted voting members to at least be confirmed and a small group would have liked the voting members to show proof of discipleship (Reuss 1984, 19).

Two concerns listed by ALC members that were not among the major issues discussed were that evangelism and witness fervor would scar the church and that bigness and bureaucracy would burden the responsiveness of the church to its members. Several hopes for the church were expressed. One was that it would be living evidence of Lutheran unity. Another was that theology would continue to hold its "rightful" place of importance, and a third was that commitment to mission would continue to be strong in the new church (Reuss 1984, 19).

During June, 1984, the proposals of the CNLC were beginning to work their way through the decision-making structure of the ALC. At their meeting in St. Paul on
June 18, 1984, the national ALC church council was asked to petition the Commission for a New Lutheran Church to remove the racial quota system recommended by that body. The request for removal included a statement that the new church body should instead "suggest" that minorities be well represented on church bodies. The decision made by the national council would be subject to the approval of the ALC national convention to be held in Moorhead, Minnesota, in October of 1984 (*Minneapolis Star and Tribune* 1984, 16[A]).

In explaining the quota idea, Dr. David Preus said that the CNLC had softened the percentage of non-whites to fifteen but had essentially left the proposal as it had been originally adopted. Said Preus, "We are trying to become less a church of the frost belt--and less a church of lutefisk dinners" (*Wolfe* 1984b, 1[B]). The result of the change would be a church membership with a "broader social view," Preus continued, and who "minister to those in their own neighborhoods the same way we traditionally have ministered to those in other countries" (*Wolfe* 1984b, 1[B]).

The *Minneapolis Star and Tribune* also reported on October 13, 1984, that in addition to the quota proposal, the ALC national convention would also look at the "inerrancy issue" (*Wolfe* 1984a, 4[C]). Wolfe goes on to
explain that the convention delegates would not be asked to take any action on the merger proposal, but could be asked for input and/or approval of the documents the CNLC had prepared to date.

With a 557-360 vote the ALC national convention affirmed that CNLC leaders should take steps to guarantee a balance of men and women and "significant numbers" of minority people on the new church's boards and assemblies. This vote rejected the proposal by the ALC national council that planners avoid the quotas and make suggestions in their place. LCA national convention delegates favored an immediate 10-percent ratio for non-whites with an increase to 20 percent in the next ten years. The AELC favored the 20 percent ratio effective immediately (Wolfe 1984c, 1[A]). These recommendations, along with the defeated proposal of the ALC national council were returned to the CNLC for consideration.

Almost immediately after the ALC national convention adjourned, the Fellowship of Lutheran Laity and Pastors held its first national convention in Minneapolis. The convention had a reported 1,079 delegates. The focus of the convention was on issues "of the utmost importance to a growing number of us who believe it is absolutely vital that they be resolved before a new Lutheran church becomes a reality (The
Lutheran Standard 1984a, 21). Several speakers were cheered during their presentations but the greatest response came from Ray Powell who outlined the twelve issues FELLP was concerned about. Three of Powell's requests to the new church were:

1. Declare and affirm that all of the Holy Scripture is the absolute authority of the infallible and inerrant Word of God.
2. Declare disciplinary measures for those theologians and clergy who reject such doctrines as the virgin birth, the deity, and the resurrection of Christ.
3. Declare that abortion and homosexuality are gross sins and an abomination to the Lord (The Lutheran Standard 1984a, 21).

Immediately following the ALC national convention was the next meeting of the CNLC. The October 29-November 2, 1984 session was held in Los Angeles. The report from this session was the first draft of "a narrative description for a new Lutheran church" (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 39). Much of the language and form of this narrative would later be used for the constitution of the new church. The Preliminary Statement of Faith held no new surprises. It included a statement on scriptures that was identical to the statement adopted earlier by the CNLC (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 40). The Statement of Purpose included the original eleven "purposes" but the objectives suggested to reach those had been increased to twenty-six. A change had been made in the Perspective on
Ministry offered by the CNLC. The commission now recognized four public ministries: (1) ordained pastors, including bishops; (2) commissioned day school teachers; (3) consecrated deaconesses/deacons, and (4) certified and commissioned lay professionals (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 42).

The Design Narrative offered in this report gave two options available for the church. The membership would be the baptized members of the congregations. The congregation role, function and rights would be the same under both options. One of these rights would be to hold title to property. Another is the right to call a pastor or a commissioned lay minister. These must be on the roster of such individuals that the national church provided (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 43). It is at this point that the two plans split.

Design Three called for forty to fifty synods. Each would have a bishop who was a clergy member and a vice-president who was a lay person. The synod would be governed by legislative authority through yearly assemblies. Quota ratios were suggested but there were several options from which to choose (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 46). The next "layer" of Design Three was a Regional Resource Center. There were to be ten of these governed by a board to be made up of
the bishops of the synods plus a representative from the national church. The staff for this office would be hired (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 47). The final level of this option was the national organization. The national church would have a bishop and a vice-president and the governing body would be a biennial assembly. In addition the national church would have a secretary and a treasurer who could be either clergy or laypersons. Quotas for the national assembly were given, but again with several options (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 51).

Design Four used the same congregational format, but the number of synods changed to between eighty and ninety. The governing principles were the same. The Regions of this design were also expanded to between fifteen and eighteen. Rather than meeting once a year, however, the assembly for the region would meet biennially. Design Four also gave more specific direction to the region in terms of boards, offices, and support staff that would be utilized (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 49). The make-up of the national church also included more detail in Design Four with more boards to be utilized (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 60).
The commission also urged membership in Lutheran World Federation, the World Council of Churches, and the National Council of Churches of Christ in the USA. The commission recommended Cleveland, Ohio as the site for the constituting convention of the new church and suggested the dates of May 11-17, 1987 (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1984b, 62).

The next CNLC meeting was in Atlanta on February 16-20, 1985. The commission expressed the opinion that, "For the constitution, the material now in the Statement of Purpose could be more briefly and concisely stated and organized by clustering." With this exception the Statement of Purpose and the Statement of Faith were not changed (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 3). The organization (Design Narrative) was narrowed to one plan. The congregations would continue to own property, as earlier resolved, and would continue to issue their own pastoral calls (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 5). The number of synods would be fifty-five to one hundred depending on the average number of congregations each synod would have. No other changes were suggested in the synod governing process (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 8). The regions of the new church would number between seven and ten. Each region was to have a coordinator and a coordinating
council. The synod bishops would be members of the regional council. Other members of the council would be elected by the synod councils (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 8). No provision was given for any assembly to be organized for the governing of the regional centers. This represented a major change from the previous report.

The national church organization was to be led by a bishop, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. The bishop would be "the pastor of the church and would have administrative responsibility for the functions of the church wide structure." The governing assembly would meet every two years (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 9).

The final recommendations on the quota ratio were issued. At the national assembly 60 percent of the delegates were to be laypersons. Of the lay representatives 50 percent will be women and 50 percent men. Ten percent of the delegates will have to be persons of color or persons with a primary language other than English (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 9). The national church council, which would meet at least three times yearly, would also adhere to the same ratios. Synod assemblies would follow these guidelines
whenever possible (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 10, 7).

Also in the national structure there would be four offices: the Office for Ecumenical Affairs—in the office of the bishop; the Office for Finance—with the treasurer; the Office for Personnel—again with the bishop; and the Office for Research, Planning, and Evaluation—with the bishop. The following six divisions would be established—Congregational Life, Education, Global Mission, Ministry, Outreach—USA, and Social Ministry Organization—and commissions for Church in Society, Communications Services, and Financial Support would be created. These offices, divisions, and commissions, along with a yet to be established unit on women and minorities, would provide the leadership and support for the church as a whole (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 10).

Final recommendations to the churches dealt with changing the dates of the constituting convention to April 28–May 3, 1987, reviewing the relationships between the colleges and seminaries and the new church, and setting up transition teams to facilitate a smooth transition into the new church (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985a, 20).
Even with the CNLC making progress toward unity, the members of the three merging churches were still expressing their doubts. In May, 1985, the first congregation in any of the three denominations asked to change its national affiliation. Trinity Lutheran Church of Minnehaha Falls voted 360-87 to move from the LCA into the ALC. The members of Trinity reached this decision some months after their pastor, Rev. David Barnhart, announced his plans to leave the LCA in favor of the more conservative Association of Free Lutheran Congregations. Barnhart had already made the denominational change but had decided to stay with the Trinity congregation until the end of May (Wolfe 1985, 12[D]).

Bishop Herbert Chilstrom said, "I'm not sure why some members would want to move to the ALC. Our view on Scriptures is pretty much the same, and we're very close on social issues." In addition the two churches are moving toward a planned 1988 merger (Wolfe 1985, 16[D]).

While the movement may have been puzzling to Chilstrom, it may be explained in the constitutions of the two differing denominations. The ALC has provisions for a congregation to leave the national church by a system of two congregational votes. The first must be a majority vote at a legally called congregational meeting. This action must be reported to the synod
(district) bishop and a consultation with the bishop or
geneva and a consultation with the bishop or
his representative is held. If at a second legally
called and conducted congregational meeting, at least
ninety days after the first and with the synod bishop or
his representative present, a majority again votes to
leave, the congregation was released (Beekmann 1986a).
Apparently the LCA had no similar provision for
congregations leaving. The LCA national organization
held the final authority when such requests were made
(Lindberg, 1988). While there is no hard evidence to
prove the intent, it may be that Trinity wanted to change
denominations so it could follow its pastor out of the
new church. If this were the case, or if this is just
speculation and the members of Trinity had other reasons
for changing, this was the first of several congregations
showing signs of unrest over the merger.

While individuals and congregations were
wrestling with the issues of merger, the Commission for a
New Lutheran Church continued with its business. The
eighth meeting was held September 23-27, 1985 (Commission
for a New Lutheran Church 1985b, 1) at Overland Park,
Kansas (The Christian Century 1985, 943). The commission
took action on seven proposals at this meeting:

1. The commission adopted a Preamble, Confession
of Faith and Statement of Purpose to be included in
the constitution for the new church.
2. The CNLC revised the Narrative Design (which shows the organization of the new church) and sent that revision to be translated into constitution and by-laws language.

3. The commission approved recommendations concerning "A Perspective on Ministry."

4. The commission also referred several matters to the transition teams which had been created upon the recommendation of the last CNLC report.

5. The CNLC selected two names for the new Lutheran Church inviting congregations and individuals to indicate their preference by writing the commission. The final name will be chosen at the February, 1986 CNLC meeting.

6. The CNLC indicated a preference for office locations.

7. The commissions approved the boundaries of sixty-three synods and nine regional centers for the new Lutheran Church (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985b, 1).

The names chosen by the commission were "Evangelical Lutheran Church in the U.S.A." and "Lutheran Church in the U.S.A." The locations for church offices were recommended as follows: Chicago would be the site for the church-wide headquarters of the new church; New York would be the location for the ecumenical and international offices; Washington, D.C., would staff offices for federal government relations; Minneapolis and Philadelphia would hold publication offices; and Minneapolis would be the cite for the offices for pension and other benefits (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985b, 32).

The commission would hold its ninth meeting February 13-19, 1986 in Minneapolis and the final meeting would be held June 23-25, 1986, in Seattle, Washington.
The Minneapolis meeting would approve a proposed constitution and send it on to district and synod conventions of participating churches and the Seattle meeting would be to plan and organize the constituting convention (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1985b, 32). The Christian Century expanded this report to indicate that the two names chosen were taken from over two hundred suggested. Of five that were final selections "United Evangelical Lutheran Church,"
"Lutheran Church of Evangelical Unity," and "Lutheran Community of Christ" were rejected (The Christian Century 1985, 943).

In preparation for the February meeting of the CNLC a group of Lutherans and business and government leaders sent new information to the consulting firm that was reassessing Chicago, New York, and Minneapolis as the site for the new church's national headquarters. The group was trying to convince the soon-to-be Lutheran Church that Minneapolis was a better location than the alternatives. Like previous merger actions by the ALC, location of offices had become an issue (Allen 1986c, 3[B]). The main advantages to Minneapolis were the lower cost, a better geographic location, a close proximity to a large number of Lutherans, and good access for air travel. By way of example, there were more Lutherans in
Hennepin County, Minnesota, than in any other county in the nation and both the largest congregations in the LCA and the ALC were in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Also, city leaders stressed, 45 percent of all Lutherans would be in an eight state region (Allen 1986c, 3[B]). The decision for the location of the national offices was expected to be finalized at the February 15, 1986 meeting of the CNLC in Minneapolis (Blake 1986, 12[B]).

The ninth meeting of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church brought with it some surprises. The first revolved around the name for the new church. Neither of the names recommended by the CNLC in previous action was chosen for the name of the new church. A different name, suggested by LCA Bishop Herbert Chilstrom, was chosen instead. The merged church would be called the "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" (Foley 1986b, 1[A]). The name, according to Chilstrom, showed a more inclusive vision than any of those suggested earlier and seemed to have less of a corporate ring. The word "Evangelical" suggested the church's effort to reach out and to show a concern for all people. While the name was agreed upon, the commission still could not chose a location for the headquarters (Foley 1986b, 5[A]).
The second surprise of the meeting came with the voting on February 17th. After seven ballots, none of which gave a clear headquarters for the new church, Milwaukee became the CNLC's choice as site for the national office of the ELCA (Foley 1986c, 1[A]). The commission said that Milwaukee combined the ethnic diversity of Chicago and the affordability of Minneapolis. It was also a neutral site. Milwaukee is also the home of the Siebert Foundation, the largest Lutheran foundation in America. This organization had pledged one million dollars in grant money to offices located in Milwaukee. Of the decision Al Anderson, who had been a Minneapolis supporter said, "It's the best we can do. I think everyone can live with it" (Foley 1986c, 2[A]).

Commenting on the choice of Milwaukee, Dr. Preus, ALC bishop, said, "Milwaukee meets many criteria (for a new church office) and it didn't have a negative of a strong partisanship." Preus also said it was "highly unlikely" that the ALC would go against the commission's wishes at its August convention (Allen 1986c, 3[B]).

In other business the CNLC left all other offices for the new church in the locations suggested in the previous report, changing only the location of the principal office. It also approved the legal documents
needed to accomplish the union of the ALC, the LCA, and the AELC as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. The commission reaffirmed that on January 1, 1988 the new church would assume the mission of the three merging churches if approval from the national conventions was gained and it responded to a request that an additional synod be placed in Florida and another in Wisconsin (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1986a, 1). This final action would need the approval of the district and synod conventions in the areas affected. Several other decisions were deferred until the June meeting in Seattle, Washington (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1986a, 8).

The first flaw in the commission's plan came from another surprising source. The name "Evangelical Lutheran Church in America" was already owned by a tiny Lutheran group in rural Minnesota. Both the Christian Century and the Minneapolis Star and Tribune carried the story. The Minneapolis Star and Tribune reported that the Norwegian-heritage synod had only two congregations left in Jackson and French Lake, Minnesota. Truman Larson, the lay president of the synod leads his congregation in songs, readings, and a sermon: "I've been thinking that I should have gotten ahold of somebody
and reminded them that the name was taken. I don't suppose its any use, I guess" (Allen 1986k, 1[A]).

Larson went on to say that, "The members want to stay separate. I'm in favor of it. We're very conservative you know" (Allen 1986k, 1[A]). The Christian Century, calling the group the Eielsen Synod, explained that the group had originally incorporated in Wisconsin, but no longer had any congregations there. That report also said that the Eielsen Synod had used the name for 140 years. Larson expanded his remarks: "I don't feel like they (the proposed new church) should use the name . . . I feel the name should stay with the church, out of respect for our forefathers" (The Christian Century 1986c, 456). The larger, newer group is using the name Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the smaller is now using Evangelical Lutheran Church of America-Eielsen Synod. According to Mrs. Larson, this is the name as it appeared in early records for the Eielsen Synod (1988, telephone interview by writer). There appears to be no media report on the resolution to this conflict.

While opposition from the various conservative groups to the merger was almost expected by this time, a major objection emerged from an unexpected source. The Lutheran Church in America, one of the three churches
involved for several years in merger negotiations, now appeared to be "reneging on its desire to join the new church" (Allen 1986g, 1[A]).

In a statement issued Saturday, April 5, 1986, the LCA leaders said that if "substantial changes are not made in the proposed constitution of the new church they cannot recommend a merger" (Allen 1986g, 1[A]). The LCA bishops, after two and one-half days of meetings in New York, issued a series of recommended changes in the merger agreement. The issues the LCA targeted centered around the authority of the congregation, the mission of the church, definitions of the ministry, pension funds, and the quota system proposed by the CNLC. LCA spokesman, Charles Austin, said the LCA leaders waited until now to bring up these concerns because they wanted to see the final constitution before speaking out (Allen 1986g, 14[A]).

According to the Minneapolis Star and Tribune the most difficult problem separating the two main bodies (LCA and ALC) was the issue of authority of the congregations. The ALC gave more power to individual congregations than did the LCA. The bishops of the LCA wanted each congregation to adopt the same constitution, one recommended by the national church, within four years of the merger. The merger proposal allowed congregations
to keep current constitutions indefinitely (Allen, 1986g, 14[A]).

The second major stumbling block was in the form of quotas. The idea behind the quota recommendation was called "inclusiveness." The new church was trying to make sure that all constituents were represented. One objection to the system was that it pushed competence aside. The LCA position would be that inclusiveness should not be the first concern when choosing convention delegates or church leadership (Allen 1986g, 14[A]).

Not all of the LCA's clergy was in agreement with the statement, however. Bishop Harold R. Lohr of the LCA's Red River Valley Synod in South Dakota, North Dakota, and Northwestern Minnesota, said of the questions raised:

The concerns raised do not threaten the merger of three mainline Lutheran denominations. The churches of the merger do have some differences and are trying to settle them as they write a new constitution. This will then become the document that defines the way the new church structures itself, governs itself and carries out its mission. So, obviously its an important document (Bolding 1986, 1[B]).

Rev. Darold Beekmann, president of the ALC's Southwestern Minnesota district agreed:

There is a legitimate concern about what the LCA sees as rampant congregationalism within the ALC. There is some of that. We encourage congregations to be responsible for their own ministry and building, but also to see themselves as part of the church. The ALC is afraid that (in the new church) a
congregation won't have any freedom (Allen 1986e, 4[B]).

Beekmann, who authored two pamphlets—Why a New Lutheran Church at this Time and What About This New Lutheran Church—and helped to produce a video in favor of the merger, commented further on the LCA concerns at the Southwestern Minnesota District convention in Marshall, Minnesota, the weekend of April 17-18, 1986:

While the delegates (of this district convention) recognized the need to further define the issues of authority, they also recognize the interdependence of the congregation, synod, and churchwide organization. They could have said, "See, we said there would be problems. Let's not go ahead." But this resolution brings out the concern that we go ahead with the new church (Allen 1986a, 15[A]).

The resolution Beekmann referred to was one passed by his district convention "strongly affirming the desire to join the new Lutheran church" (Allen 1986o, 15[A]). A similar resolution had been passed earlier in that week by the members of Minnesota's Southeast District (Allen 1986a, 14M).

Support for the merger from the ALC came not only from the district conventions, but also from the ALC national church council. In a meeting held Wednesday, May 14, 1986 in Minneapolis, the council voted to reaffirm support for many of the other proposals offered by the CNLC. The council agreed that Milwaukee should be the site for the national headquarters, that its name
should be the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, and that a compromise pension plan should be adopted. The only issue the ALC differed with the CNLC on was the quota system. The ALC council wanted the percentages dropped from the quota statement and wanted to establish "goals" not mandate ratios (Foley 1986a, 6[B]).

While the ALC leadership was reaffirming the church's commitment to merger, conservative congregations were still in protest. A second congregation, this time an ALC church, left the parent organization to become affiliated with a different denomination. The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Cokato, Minnesota joined the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations (Allen 1986m, 1[A]). In addition to this congregation leaving, several pastors had already left ALC congregations to join the clergy rosters of more "conservative" denominations.

While the movement of a congregation or a pastor was still a rare occurrence, the opposition of FELLP and the Conservative Lutheran Association (formerly Lutheran Alert National) was not. The April 8, 1986, Minneapolis Star and Tribune reported that The Fellowship of Lutheran Laity and Pastors in the Twin Cities and the Conservative Lutheran Association in Tacoma, Washington, were still working against the merger. Both were saying the new church would be too liberal (Allen 1986m, 8[A]). Adding
fuel to the conservative fire was the release of David Barnhart's book, *The Church's Desperate Need for Revival*. While this book was not aimed specifically at the merger attempt between the ALC, LCA, and the AELC, it did support the ideas that FELLP, the Commission for Lutheran Cooperation, and others were presenting.

Barnhart dealt with the subjects of "infallibility" and "Inerrancy" and indicted the trend of preaching not "scripture alone," but "scripture and anything else which serves our cause" (Barnhart 1986, 4). In the introduction Barnhart explained his purpose in writing this work:

> This book is not an attack on any church denomination, fellowship or person; rather, it is the cry of a "watcher on the wall" seeking to rally a sleeping church to contend for historical-biblical Christianity against a deadly enemy which has already breached the gates and reaped havoc in many homes and lives within (Barnhart 1986, 5).

In the face of more varied opposition than it had felt previously, the Commission for a New Lutheran Church prepared for its Seattle conference. As the commission members gathered several were optimistic that the group could overcome the "obstacles" that had been placed before it, but that the real test of the merger success would come with the LCA, ALC, and AELC national conventions to be held in August, 1986. Rev. Darold
Beekmann, a commission member from Minneapolis, summarized the CNLC position:

I'm more positive about the commission reaching compromise. If the ALC had postured against the LCA with the commission in the middle, then I wouldn't be so optimistic, but with a strong ALC endorsement and strong support from major segments of the LCA, I'm optimistic that the commission will come up with a proposal everyone can accept (Allen 1986m, 8[B]).

Beekmann continued by stating that he could not say, however, what might happen in August (when conventions take their final merger vote). "It's hard to predict the influence the leadership will have on the issues. The leadership within the LCA is divided right now." With "guarded optimism" the CNLC went to work (Allen 1986m, 8[B]).

The first piece of business was encouraging. Rev. David Preus and Rev. James Crumley helped draft a revised statement on the nature of the church. The new wording staked out some middle ground between the ALC position of great congregational power and the LCA position of very little, saying, "The church exists both as an inclusive fellowship and as local congregations gathered for worship . . . " (Allen 1986p, 5[B]). This wording was more like the LCA constitution. Later in the day the commission also worked out a compromise plan for pension funding (Allen 1986p, 5[B]).
The second day of the CNLC meetings brought a unanimous vote to approve a revised statement on the proposed merged church. The statement included the attitude on congregational authority adopted the previous day. Another major concession by the ALC was a clause that allowed the LCA executive council to decide if any LCA congregation could leave the new merged church. The ALC position allowed the congregation to decide with a two vote procedure. With that compromise, the CNLC had a unified vote to proceed to the next step in the process (Allen 1986n, 3[B]).

On the final day of meetings the commission voted to make Chicago the headquarters for the new church, overturning an earlier decision to make the city of Milwaukee home for the ELCA. The Milwaukee choice, a compromise between Minneapolis and Chicago, had been unpopular with church leaders in all three merging denominations. In spite of the decision by the ALC national council, David Preus, bishop of the ALC, spoke in favor of the CNLC reversing its decision. Preus's position, as he later told the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, was the only way he could see to compromise (Allen 1986h, 10[A]). Only two steps remained for the merger to be accomplished by the January 1, 1988 deadline. The national conventions of each church needed
to approve the documents and agreements, and the ALC congregations had to approve, by a two-thirds majority, the merger proposal. Rev. Preus predicted that no issue would spark serious objection from the ALC convention (Allen 1986h, 10[A]).

With the national convention approaching, The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported what the new church would mean for ALC members in this area:

By nature of its proposed constitution, the new church will be more national, reaching out to people and places it has never ministered to before. The new church will bind the three churches with one constitution, emphasizing the interdependence among congregations and continuity of philosophies.

Many changes are happening at the national level; local members will not see many of them. No new worship book will be developed, individual congregations will still be able to call their own pastors and congregations can keep their individual constitutions indefinitely, although any changes made will have to conform with the church wide document.

Among changes in the church will be an often-debated quota system, or what is referred to as inclusiveness. While there are no specific percentages recommended for individual congregations, at the synod and national levels membership on committees and boards will include 60 percent lay people. That lay representation must be evenly divided between men and women and 10 percent shall be minorities or people whose primary language is not English (Gutierrez 1986a, 4[C]).

Preus's prediction about little opposition to the compromise merger proposals seemed to be coming true. At the ALC national council meeting July 22, 1986, the ALC leadership voted to approve the Chicago site as headquarters for the new church. The council also
approved the other documents that CNLC had forwarded for consideration. These affirmative votes would be the council's recommendation to the national convention. The ALC vote left no major body opposing the merger of the three churches (Allen 1986b, 4[B]).

On August 23, about one week before the national ALC, LCA, and AELC conventions were to be held, the procedure for changing documents of merger was outlined in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune. If two-thirds of the delegates at any convention propose a change, the proposals would be transmitted by telephone copier to the other two conventions. Both of the larger churches, the LCA and the ALC, must have approved any changes before they were made. This procedure kept the smaller AELC from acting as a spoiler during any of the deliberations (Allen 1986j, 1[B]).

The final convention of the American Lutheran Church convened in Minneapolis with one thousand delegates in attendance (Allen and Gendler 1986c, 1[B]). As Preus had predicted, the business of approving the merger went very smoothly. The convention quickly approved the quota guidelines that had been recommended by the CNLC (Allen 1986i, 20[B]). It also voted 664-312 to keep the headquarters for the new church in Milwaukee, but the other two conventions chose Chicago in the
advisory vote and Chicago was selected as the church main office location. With these pieces of business concluded, the final vote to approve merger was scheduled for 12:00 noon, August 29, 1986 (Allen and Gendler 1986a, 1[B]). When these votes were tabulated, and again relayed by telephone hook-up, the results were ALC 891-59 in favor, LCA 640-29 in favor, and AELC 137-0 in favor of merger (Allen and Gendler 1986c, 1[A]). The fate of the merger plan was finally in the hands of the ALC congregations.

The ALC approval for merging was celebrated with clapping, cheering, whistling, and the throwing of confetti by those attending the convention (Allen and Gendler 1986c, 1[A]). Not all ALC members were taking part in that celebration, however. The September 8, 1986, issue of The Christian News reported the formation of a group called "Lutherans Informed for Truth" (The Christian News 1986, 28). An excerpt from the article explains the intent of the group:

Most of the members of Lutherans Informed for Truth (L.I.F.T) were former members of the American Lutheran Church. L.I.F.T. is urging members of the ALC, the LCA, and the AELC not to join the new Lutheran Church (The Christian News 1986, 28).
The paper also carried a copy of the first newsletter published by this organization. The newsletter carried no names but did show a mailing address of Saginaw, Michigan (The Christian News 1986, 28).

About ten days later on September 20, 1986, Dr. Duane Lindberg, an opponent of the merger proposal since the 1982 decision to begin the process, announced that a group of "conservative Lutheran ministers and laity will form its own church if the three Lutheran denominations merge as planned" (Associated Press 1986, 17[A]). This "splinter group," called the "Association of American Lutheran Churches, had first been proposed in August, 1986, and the leaders of this group were the same conservative members of the ALC who had opposed the merger idea from its conception. In a telephone interview, Lindberg listed the first goal of this group as being to urge the ALC congregations to vote "no" on the proposed merger plan. The April 17, 1987 Lutheran Standard confirmed this statement (The Lutheran Standard 1987 25). If that failed, the second goal was to form a separate church (Associated Press 1986, 17[A]).
Unofficial co-chairman of this group, Rev. James Minor, pastor of Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Paul, provided more information in the October 4, 1986 Minneapolis Star and Tribune:

We're just ordinary pastors and people trying to do the ministry we felt a call to do. We're trying to leave in a peaceable, kindly and friendly way, to avoid anger and rancor and bitterness. The thing we are most concerned about and have been all along is the theology of Christ and of the Word. We hold that there's salvation in no one other than Jesus Christ and that the scriptures are the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God. We feel there is a drift away from this . . . in both the ALC and the merged church (Gendler, 1986, 11[D]).

Minor continued that the constitution of the new ELCA does not use these terms. Another concern of the splinter group was autonomy. The trend was toward more control in the higher order of the church. One example was that the LCA did not allow congregations to leave without permission, while the ALC allowed them to vote on leaving. This "double standard" was endorsed by the ELCA and the AALC organizers thought that the LCA position could too easily be adopted later (Gendler 1986, 11[D]).

Throughout the article, Minor and the other co-chairman Duane Lindberg, stressed that no congregations had as yet voted to be included in their proposed church. They also stressed that they were speaking for themselves and not for their congregations. Minor maintained that "one way or another" he would not be
joining the merged church. "How many share that feeling—and want to act on it—is something we'll learn October 20." This was the date chosen for the next association meeting in St. Paul to discuss a proposed constitution and pensions and benefits (Gendler 1986, 11[D]).

On October 20, 1986, two hundred Lutherans, representing ninety congregations from fourteen states, met in St. Paul. At this meeting the group reaffirmed the position that if the ALC failed to approve the merger plan the AALC would be disbanded. However, if the referendum passed, the group would form the Association of American Lutheran Churches (Furst 1986, 3[B]).

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported that by an 81 percent margin, the merger of the American Lutheran Church with the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to form the new Evangelical Lutheran Church had been approved (Gutierrez 1987, 1[C]). With this vote, and with the approval of a second LCA national convention in April, the ELCA was born on January 1, 1988.

As Duane Lindberg had indicated, this merger approval set the wheels in motion for a splinter church. On March 25, 1987, only four days later, the AALC was incorporated. The name had been changed to the "American Association of Lutheran Churches" but the leadership was
the same. In its first newsletter, the AALC introduced itself:

The AALC will provide an option within the conservative-middle of American Lutheranism for those laity, congregations, and pastors who do not wish to be a part of the new Lutheran Church (ELCA).

Under the Lord's guidance, the laity and clergy who are organizing the AALC envision a church body which incorporates the best features of the 1960 ALC constitution. These included: a strong statement regarding the inerrant nature and infallible authority of the Bible; emphasis on the authority and autonomy of the local congregation; priority concern for the salvation of souls through evangelism and world missions.

The AALC believes that it is called to give primary loyalty to Jesus Christ and to His totally reliable and dependable Word, the Bible. Congregations and pastors of the AALC believe that they are called to continue the strong Statement of Faith of the ALC . . . (American Association of Lutheran Churches 1987).

With this statement, the American Association of Lutheran Churches was also born.

**Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was five-fold. First, the events outlined provided a backdrop for the rhetoric that will be examined in Chapter Three. The second purpose was to identify those persons that represented the ALC as spokespersons in favor of the merger proposals. The third and fourth were to identify, through the historical survey, those groups that were opposed to the idea of the merger and to identify the
spokesperson or persons for each of those groups.

Finally, the issues of the merger were to be identified.

**ALC Spokespersons**

Several people were linked to the ALC as spokespersons for the church in this region. While there were others who spoke in favor of the merger, these are the names that surfaced most often. Not only were these people quoted in the press, but they were in a position to have the knowledge of the merger proceedings that made them reliable and credible sources of information.

**Dr. David W. Preus.** Preus, from Minneapolis, Minnesota, was the Presiding Bishop of the American Lutheran Church during all of the formal merger negotiations. He was a member of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church and served on the planning committee for that body. His remarks were carried in *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune, The Lutheran Standard,* and *The Christian Century* (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 7).

**L. David Brown.** Brown, Des Moines, Iowa, was the president of the ALC's Iowa district. His remarks were quoted by *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune* and *The Lutheran Standard.* Not only did Brown speak in favor of the merger, but he also commented about the conservative
groups at work in his district. Brown was a member of the CNLC Task Force on Society (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 19831, 8).

**Darold M. Beekmann.** Beekmann was the president of the Southwestern Minnesota district of the ALC. His remarks not only appeared in the press, but Beekmann was the author of several pamphlets and a video which explained the workings of the new church and encouraged a "Yes" vote on the merger. Beekmann was a member of the CNLC and worked on the Task Force on Purpose (Commission for a New Lutheran Church 1983a, 8).

**Groups Opposing the Merger**

The historical survey shows six groups that surfaced to oppose the merger attempt.

The **Committee for Lutheran Cooperation.** This is the only group that appears to have been active in 1982 when the merger proposals were first given to the ALC national convention for a vote. The group was most alarmed at the speed of this merger and was concerned that key issues would not be resolved before the three churches were united. Another key concern centered around the doctrinal question of biblical authority. The
group was "absorbed" by the American Association of Lutheran Churches in 1987 (Lindberg, 1988).

**The Fellowship of Lutheran Laity and Pastors.**

While this group was formed initially as a reaction to events not linked to the merger proposal, the theological stand of the proposed new church came under fire from its membership. This group also objected to the statement on Scripture adopted by the CNLC and wanted the words "inerrant" and "infallible" used to describe the Bible. This group also wanted the new church to take a clear stand against homosexuality and abortion. FELLP disbanded in early 1987. Several of its members were early supporters of the AALC (Lindberg, 1988).

**Friends for Biblical Lutherans.** While this group was mentioned several times in the press, there was never a clear statement of their objection to the merger proposal. The regional leadership seems to have been almost exclusively LCA clergy and for that reason falls out of the scope of this study. Chris Peterson of the California Bible Institute, Anaheim, California, is the current president for this group (Lindberg, 1988).
Lutheran Alert National. This group had a stand on the merger that was very similar to that of FEELP. Several name changes make the group hard to track. From Lutheran Alert the name changed to "Conservative Lutheran Association" and finally seems to have evolved to the "World Confessional Lutheran Association." The last known president was Lloyd Nelson, Tacoma, Washington.

Lutherans Informed for Truth. LIFT was among the last of the special interest groups to be formed opposing the merger. In its first newsletter, LIFT outlined the position of the new church on thirteen issues that included "the Holy Scripture, Creation, the Virgin Birth, Resurrection, and the New Morality." It then gave the conservative position and invited readers to choose. If you agreed with the LIFT doctrines then a "No" vote was urged. Initially, the AALC used the LIFT materials as an indicator of some of their differences with the merged church.

American Association of Lutheran Churches. The expressed goal of this group, at its first meeting, was to urge congregations in the ALC to vote "No" on the merger proposal. If, and when, that did not work, this group would form its own church and "break" from the ALC before the merger into the ELCA was completed. In their
May 6, 1988, newsletter, Evangel, the AALC reported that sixty-eight congregations had joined and fifty more are "connected" to the group less formally. The clergy roster was also reported to be at sixty-eight.

Spokesperson for Groups Opposing Merger

As is the case for the spokespersons of the ALC, all those people who spoke out in opposition to the merger may not have received attention in the press. If that is the case, then this listing will not be complete.

Dr. Duane Lindberg. Dr. Lindberg was the first person to speak against the merger on behalf of a group. From Waterloo, Iowa, Lindberg first coordinated the efforts of the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation. Later he became the co-chairperson for the AALC. When the AALC was incorporated into a church body, Lindberg was named the Presiding Pastor, a position he still holds today (Evangel 1988, 2).

Rev. James Minor. From St. Paul, Minnesota, Minor was initially a member of FELLP although his name is not linked to that organization in the press (Lindberg, 1988). As co-chairman of AALC, Minor was quoted in the Minneapolis Star and Tribune and was invited to speak at congregations interested in joining
the AALC. When AALC's incorporation was accomplished, Minor became the treasurer (Evangel 1988, 2).

Ray Powell. Powell was one of the speaker's at the first national convention of the Fellowship of Lutheran Laity and Pastors.

Rev. Vernon Hintermeyer, Rev. Donald Richman. and Rev. Jack Aamot. These gentlemen were credited with being the founders of FELLP. Their names appear in the early press releases about that organization, but do not show up in the later reports.

Dr. Benjamin Johnson. Johnson, from St. Cloud, Minnesota, was the local organizer for Friends for Biblical Lutheranism. Johnson is still pastor at Salem at Riverside Lutheran Church, St. Cloud.

Rev. David Barnhart. Barnhart never really linked his name to any organization, but wrote and published a book, The Church's Desperate Need for Survival, which was a message about the need for all Protestant churches to return to more liberal biblical view. Barnhart's ideas were used by many opponents of the merger. Barnhart himself left the LCA to join the
clergy roster of the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

The Issues of the Merger

Over the period of six years that the merger was negotiated, many issues were reported by the press. This listing is not an attempt to prioritize those questions, but is only an attempt to put them all together in one place. If certain concerns were not reported by the press, the list may be incomplete. The issues of the merger include:

1. the definition of the Scriptures,
2. the definition of membership in the church,
3. the role of the bishop,
4. inclusiveness (quotas),
5. the speed of the merger,
6. the definition of the ministry,
7. the definition and amount of congregational authority to own property, to call pastors, and to leave the church body,
8. the need for a new hymnal,
9. the size of the national church,
10. the new church's stand on homosexuality and abortion,
11. membership in the World Council of Churches,
12. the amount, type, and distribution of pension funds,

13. the location of the church offices, and

14. the name for the new church.

With the background information established, this study can now turn to an analysis of the rhetoric these differing elements produced.
CHAPTER 3
THE RHETORIC OF CHOICE

With the historical survey of the ELCA merger completed, a study of the rhetoric of that merger, specifically that rhetoric which urged congregations to make a choice, can be undertaken. Whether this choice was one between a "yes" or a "no" vote on the initial merger referendum, or the choice was between staying in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or leaving the proposed church to join the American Association of Lutheran Churches, rhetoric played a role in the decision-making process. A study of the arguments and forms of support used by speakers promoting one choice over another can also help in gaining an understanding of the differing opinions, attitudes, and beliefs that had an impact on the merger story.

This chapter will be broken into two sections. The first will provide the model for the analysis of the arguments presented. The second section of the chapter will identify the arguments and forms of support utilized by three speakers in their presentations and will analyze these elements in terms of the model chosen.
Basis for Analysis

A survey of several contemporary and classical texts dealing with rhetoric was conducted to aid in the selection of definitions and criteria for this portion of the study. Texts included A. Craig Baird's General Speech: An Introduction; William Norwood Brigance's Speech: Its Techniques and Disciplines in a Free Society; and Thonnsen, Baird, and Braden's Speech Criticism. Newer texts included Cederblom and Paulsen's Critical Reasoning and Bert Bradley's Fundamentals of Speech Communication: The Credibility of Ideas. The text chosen was Principles and Types of Speech Communication by Douglas Ehninger, Bruce E. Gronbeck, Ray E. McKerrow, and Alan H. Monroe. This edition, the tenth, was copyrighted in 1986 and appears to be inclusive of the others and concise. According to Gronbeck et al., an argument consists of the "claim" to be defended, the relevant "evidence" used to support that claim, and the "reasoning pattern" used to connect the evidence to the claim. After identifying these elements, one can evaluate the arguments by applying the "tests of reasoning" (Ehninger et al. 1986, 312).
Definitions

Gronbeck first identifies seven forms of supporting materials that can be utilized as evidence: explanation, analogy or comparison, illustration, specific instances, statistics, testimony, and restatement. After these are identified the other two elements of an argument can also be defined.

Explanation. An explanation is an expository or descriptive passage that makes clear the nature of a term, concept, process, or proposal or offers a supporting rationale for a contestable claim. Three types of explanations are useful: explanations of "what," "how," and "why" (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 125).

Explanations of "what" make ideas clearer and more concrete, explanations of "how" provide information of how something is done or can be accomplished, and explanations of "why" account for a thing's existence or present state. Explanations of why can lay the foundation for remedying problems. If one knows "why" a problem exists, one can move towards solving the problem (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 126).

Explanations must be brief, they must be in specific, concrete terms, and are usually combined with other forms of support (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 127).
**Analogy or comparison.** In this form of support, similarities are pointed out between something that is already known, understood, or believed by the listener, and something that is not. A figurative analogy involves elements which have comparable properties and relationships even though they are basically different. Using a known animals object to clarify a philosophic idea would be an example of this analogy. A literal analogy compares ideas of like phenomenon. Using one way traffic to relieve congestion in city A's downtown section because it worked in city B would be utilizing a literal analogy. To be valid the two instances in the analogy must be more similar than they are different, and at least one item must be familiar to the audience (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 128).

**Illustration.** An illustration is a detailed example in a narrative form. Its two characteristics are its form--it must be narrative, recounting a happening or telling a story--and it should contain vivid description and detail. An illustration is either factual, it actually happened, or hypothetical, it is imaginary. Gronbeck provides three questions that must be considered when using factual illustrations: (1) is the illustration clearly related to the idea that is to be
clarified, (2) is it a typical example, and (3) is it vivid and impressive in detail (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 130)?

Specific instance. A specific instance is an undeveloped illustration or example. Specific instances are used to justify a claim and may be piled on top of one another to establish the impression desired. The key to this form of support is to use instances already familiar to the audience (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 130).

Statistics. Statistics are numbers that show the relationships between or among phenomenon. The relationship may show magnitude, segments, or trends. Magnitude shows the seriousness of a problem, or the dimension of an idea; segments isolate parts to show how the parts relate to the whole; and statistics that show trends are used to indicate where we have been and where we may be going. Gronbeck gives suggestions for the best usage of statistics. First, translate difficult-to-comprehend numbers into more understandable terms. Second, round off complicated numbers. Third, use visual materials to clarify trends or summaries, when possible; and fourth, use statistics fairly by providing fair contexts for numerical data and comparisons (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 133).
**Testimony.** Testimony is the opinion or conclusion of another. It will heighten the impact of the idea. Again the test offers four guidelines: (1) The person quoted should be recognized as an authority. (2) The statement of authority should be based on first hand knowledge. (3) The judgment expressed should not be influenced by personal interest, and (4) The listeners should realize that the person quoted is an authority.

**Restatement.** Restatement is the reiteration of an idea in different words. It must reflect or reinforce the intent and meaning of the original expression (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 135).

One form of support needs extra clarification at this time. For the purposes of this study, any reference to the Bible will be treated as if it were testimony. In a review of the historical survey, and in a review of the forms of support Gronbeck, McKerrow, Ehninger, and Monroe define, it appears that the intent of the speaker, and the attitude of the listeners, would place this form of support in that category and one of the other six offered.

The first step in analyzing an argument, after identifying the forms of support used, is to also identify the type of claim being offered. Gronbeck
offers three types of claims that can be defended through
evidence: A claim of fact, a claim of policy, and a
claim of value.

Claim of fact. This claim asserts that something
is or is not the case. For example, convincing listeners
that price controls result in food shortages is a claim
of fact. Two questions that should arise when dealing
with a claim of fact are (1) by what criteria or
standards of judgment should the truth or accuracy of
this claim be measured, and (2) do the facts of this
situation fit the criteria set forth (Gronbeck et al.
1986, 313)?

Claims of policy. A claim of policy recommends a
course of action. Four questions are relevant: Is there
a need for such a policy or course of action? Is the
proposal practical? Are the benefits of the proposal
greater than the disadvantages it could entail? Is the
offered proposal superior to any other plan or policy
(Gronbeck et al. 1986, 313)?

Claims of value. This claim asserts that
something is either good or bad, desirable or
undesirable, justified or unjustified. Two questions
that must be answered are first, by what standards or
criteria is something of this nature to be judged, and
second, how well does the item in question measure up to the standards specified (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 313)?

After identifying the type of claim to be defended, and identifying the kind of evidence that has been offered, Gronbeck et al. talk of the selection of evidence that has been made. Evidence must seem “rationally relevant to the type of claim being advanced; yet it must be relevant motivationally to members of the audience” (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 314).

Rationally relevant evidence. Gronbeck suggests that the rational requirements for evidence are related to the type of claim being defended. For example, testimony and definitions are kinds of evidence useful in defending the selection of standards of judgment of fact- and value-based claims; statistics, examples, and illustrations are useful when urging that the situations being discussed "fit" the criteria or standards set out. Gronbeck also suggests that when defending policy claims, statistics, examples, and testimony are useful. To show a proposal's benefits explanations and illustrations can be utilized, and the practicality and superiority of a proposal can be demonstrated with comparisons and contrasts. Says Gronbeck et al., "As you consider the questions to ask about each type of claim, ask the
question "What type of evidence is logically relevant in support of this claim?" (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 315).

Motivationally relevant evidence. The motivational link with evidence to the audience is based on strong audience analysis. The two main questions to ask of any audience are (1) what type of evidence will this audience demand, and (2) what actual "pieces" of evidence of a given type will this audience prefer? In other words, the text points out, choose your evidence with both the claim and the audience in mind (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 316).

After identifying the claim and the evidence, the third element of the argument, reasoning or inference, can be explored. This is the element which "connects" the evidence with the claim. Gronbeck defines reasoning as "the process of connecting what is known or believed (the evidence) to some concept or ideas the speaker wants others to accept (the claim). Reasoning patterns, then, are the "habitual ways" in which a culture or society uses inferences to connect that which is accepted to that which is urged upon them. Gronbeck, McKerrow, Ehninger, and Monroe identify five basic reasoning patterns: reasoning from examples, reasoning by parallel case, reasoning from sign, reasoning from causal relation, and reasoning from generalization or axiom.
**Reasoning from example.** This pattern involves examining a series of instances or occurrences (evidence) and drawing a general conclusion (claim). It involves an inductive "leap" and works from the specific cases to the generalities. After enough instances or occurrences are observed a generalization can be made and acted upon (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 317). To test the soundness of the "reasoning from example" pattern the following questions should be asked:

1. Have you looked at enough instances to warrant generalizing?
2. Are the instances fairly chosen?
3. Are there important exceptions to the generalization or claim which must be accounted for (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 318)?

**Reasoning by parallel case.** This pattern does not involve thinking in terms of generalizations, but in terms of similar cases and events. What is good for A is good for B, because A and B are similar. The tests for reasoning from parallel case are found in the questions:

1. Are there more similarities than differences between the two cases compared?
2. Are the similarities pointed out the relevant and important ones (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 316, 319)?
**Reasoning from sign.** This pattern uses an observable mark or symptom as proof for the existence of a state of affairs. When noting that rash spots (the evidence) accompany the measles (the claim), reasoning from sign is being used. Signs, however, are circumstantial evidence and could be wrong. The test for reasoning from sign is the question, "Is the sign infallible?" (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 317, 319)

**Reasoning from causal relation.** Reasoning from this pattern involves associating known antecedents, that which comes before, with observable consequences, that which comes after. The underlying generalization in this pattern is that "every cause has an effect." To test this pattern, ask the following:

1. Can you separate the causes and effects?
2. Are the causes strong enough to have produced the effect?
3. Did intervening events prevent a cause from having a normal effect?
4. Could any other cause have produced a similar effect (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 319)?

**Reasoning from generalization or axiom.** The fifth reasoning pattern, often called deduction, is
essentially the reverse of induction (reasoning from examples). In this pattern the order goes from general to specific. We are taught that buying goods in large quantities is cheaper (the generalization or evidence). Because of this, buying at discount chains that purchase large quantities is cheaper (the claim). The inference takes its power from one of two sources. The generalization is provable through experience or the generalization is provable by definition. The tests for reasoning from generalization:

1. Is the generalization true?

2. Does the generalization apply to this particular case (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 318, 319)?

Finally, to test an argument, Gronbeck suggests that the argument be evaluated to examine its soundness—to test it for fallacies. Here Gronbeck et al. does suggest that the list of fallacies included is probably not complete but does give those that are in this text a "social validity." Just as the five reasoning patterns are the ones primarily used in our culture, these basic errors are also "among those presented most often" (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 320). The fallacies are placed in three categories: fallacies in evidence, reasoning, and language.
Fallacies in evidence. Fallacies in evidence occur in the management of ideas or supporting material. Gronbeck says three stand out (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 320). A "hasty generalization" is made on the basis of too little evidence. Are there really enough instances to warrant the claim being made? A "false division" is an attempt to argue that some processes or ideas can be subdivided in only one particular way, when in fact numerous divisions are possible or are being ignored. The word "only" often signals a false division. The third, a "genetic fallacy" occurs when people argue for an idea by discussing its origins. An idea seated in tradition may be being argued based on this fallacy (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 320).

Fallacies in reasoning. In addition to the test already discussed, Gronbeck offers five additional fallacies in reasoning:

1. An "appeal to ignorance (argumentum ad ignorantiam)" is often argued with double negatives. The argument is one that says "you can't prove that it won't work."

2. An "appeal to popular opinion (argumentum ad populum)" might begin "everyone knows . . ."
3. "Begging the question (petitio principii)" is simply rephrasing the idea and then offering it for its own reason. "Marijuana smoking is immoral because it just isn't right" rephrases the claim (it is immoral) into a reason (it isn't right).

4. The "sequential fallacy (post hoc, ergo propter hoc)" is usually associated with causal arguments. It states that if one event occurs after another, then the first must be the cause of the second.

5. "Either-or (two valued) logic" assumes that there are only two possible solutions or conclusions available based on the evidence at hand. This type of logic ignores the possibility of compromise or a third alternative (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 321).

Fallacies in language. These fallacies occur simply because of the way words are used. Gronbeck identifies five linguistic fallacies that are common.

1. "Ambiguity" is the fallacy of using one word with two or more meanings in the same context.

2. "Nonqualification" is the dropping of important qualifications as an argument progresses. The testimony might be "perhaps this is the best solution" while the argument will be "this is the best solution." Dropping the qualifier "perhaps" distorts the evidence.
3. "Is-faults" occur when the "is" of classification becomes confused with the "is" of attribution. While "John is a man" can be classifying, "John is a radical" is attributing. Not distinguishing the two can create a fallacy (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 321).

4. "Persuasive definition" is arguing by advocating that the definition of an idea, value, or concept be accepted. The idea is that once the definition is accepted, so is the argument.

5. "Name-calling" is the label for several differing kinds of attacks on people and not on their arguments. Two examples are "argumentum ad hominem," which is the attack on a person's special interests and not the argument, and "argumentum ad personam" which is an attack upon a person's characteristics (Gronbeck et al. 1986, 322).

Based on these definitions and summaries, the rhetoric studied in the remainder of this chapter will be analyzed by answering the following questions:

1. What is the claim the speaker is defending?

2. What are the forms of support used as evidence to defend that claim?

3. Does the evidence appear to be relevant rationally and motivationally? Why or why not?
4. What reasoning pattern is used to connect the evidence with the claim?

5. Does the reasoning pattern appear to be sound? That is, does it pass the tests for reasoning and does it appear to avoid the basic errors, or fallacies, as outlined?

The Rhetoric

With a basis for analysis established, three presentations will be studied. The first is a video cassette recording made by Rev. Darold Beekmann. The recording, entitled "CNLC: What About This New Church," was produced in March of 1986. The purpose of the tape was to respond to "questions and issues frequently raised" about the merger plans and about the structure and workings of the new church (Beekmann 1986VCR).

The second presentation to be studied is a speech given by Dr. Duane Lindberg, Waterloo, Iowa. This presentation was titled "Quo Vadis: New Lutheran Church" and was given to the South Pacific District convention of the ALC in March of 1986. This is one of the last presentations Lindberg made while acting as coordinator for the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation. (See Appendix A.)

The final presentation is a speech given by Rev. James E. Minor on August 30, 1987 to the members of
Ascension Lutheran Church in Ames, Iowa. The Ascension congregation was considering the option of leaving the merged church, the ELCA, and joining a different denomination. Rev. Minor's presentation outlined the reasons this option should be chosen, and outlined the reasons that the option of the AALC would benefit the Ascension congregation. The presentation is titled "The Need for an Option and the Option We Need." (See Appendix B.)

"CNLC: What About This New Church"
Rev. Darold Beekmann

Of the three spokespersons identified in Chapter Two, Rev. Beekmann appeared to be the most active in his support for the new church. In addition to his remarks in the press, Beekmann also wrote at least two pamphlets explaining the workings and goals of the ELCA. When his office in Wilmar, Minnesota, was contacted, the video cassette recording "CNLC: What About This New Church?" was recommended as the best source of Beekmann's remarks on the subject. No written transcripts of presentations Rev. Beekmann made were available.

The format of the tape was in a question/answer genre. Audience members asked Beekmann questions about the new church. In his introductory remarks, Beekmann called these questions the "most commonly asked, if not
the most important" questions he had heard about the merger plans (Beekmann 1986VCR). The following questions were asked:

1. What are some of the main reasons for forming this new church?
2. Won't this new church be awfully large?
3. What about the cost for forming this new church?
4. How will our congregation be affected by this merger?
5. Will our congregation get a chance to vote on whether or not we want to see this new church formed?
6. Some are saying the new church is not taking the Scriptures seriously. What about this?
7. We have heard a lot about quotas. Will we be forced to elect persons to delegate assemblies on the basis of their ethnic background rather than on the basis of their qualifications?
8. What about the small congregations in the new ELCA? Will they be forced to merge with neighboring congregations?
9. Will there be a new hymnal?
10. What about our congregation's property? Some people are saying that we will no longer be able to own our own property.
11. Will our congregation have to adopt a whole new constitution?

12. Will we still have the authority to call our own pastors?

13. What about pension plans? Will our pastor lose any of the pension benefits that have accumulated because of this merger?

14. How will we order materials in this new church?

15. How will our congregation contribute to the mission of the ELCA?

16. Will there be a women's organization in the ELCA?

17. Will there be a youth organization in the new church?

18. How will our relationships to such agencies as our bible camps, our church colleges, and our Lutheran nursing homes be carried out in the new church?

19. What if our new congregation does not want to be a part of the new church?

Except for the answer to question number one, what are some of the main reasons for forming this new church, the answers were explanations of procedures or philosophies the new church would be adopting. Most were answered in one or two minutes. By contrast, the answer
to the first question lasted about six minutes and included several "reasons" or "arguments" why the new church should be formed. This study will focus on the answer to that question, as well as on the introduction and conclusion to the taped presentation. Before moving to the analysis of this portion of the tape it should be noted that Gronbeck et al. suggest that the use of explanations is one of the better ways to show the benefits of a proposal. It should also be noted that the questions almost all deal with subject areas that parallel those issues identified in Chapter Two. These explanations, and the choice of subject/content, indicate that this tape was carefully planned and designed as a means of reaching as many people as possible. As such, the video cassette recording is a viable vehicle for persuasive presentations.

In the introduction of this tape, Beekmann hoped that the tape would be "helpful to you as you consider the issues and make preparations to make your decision, and your congregation's decision" concerning the merger proposal (Beekmann 1986VCR). He stressed that the tape would be used by both convention delegates that would be voting on merger and by those individuals who would also be making that decision during the congregational vote. The introduction also contained an explanation of the
format to be used. In a handout that accompanies the tape, Beekmann writes:

When using this tape I wish it to be clearly understood that the content of the tape represents my own personal interpretation of the CNLC proposals regarding the new church and not an official interpretation endorsed by the CNLC (Beekmann 1986VCR).

In his answer to the first question, "Why are we doing this? What are some of the main reasons for forming this new church?" Beekmann offered several arguments why the merger proposal for the new church should be adopted. Although he called these "reasons, not arguments in a debate on the issue," Beekmann does respond with the following claims:

1. Our people have asked for this.
2. We are simply bringing our national and regional church structures into line with where the people are now.
3. We are united in Christ. There are no basic faith differences between the merging denominations.
4. This is the burden of answered prayer.
5. Witness and mission will be more effective.
6. The merger will enrich us with new faith, traditions, practices, and commitments.

Each claim will be examined separately.
Our people have asked for this. In support of this first claim Beekmann offered two types of evidence. The first was a factual illustration that pointed to the merger history of the Lutheran Church. He outlined how the move toward unity had been evident since the middle 1800s and was part of the heritage and tradition that was "part of being Lutheran." His second form of support came from two sets of statistics. The first cited congregational and district polls that were conducted in 1980-81 that indicated "overwhelming support for some form of union" (Beekmann 1986VCR). The second was the citing of the fact that "ninety-one percent of the delegates at the ALC convention in 1982 voted in favor of proceeding with the merger plans." Rationally, the illustration and the statistics defend the idea that this was "asked for by the people." Both forms clearly explain and clarify why Beekmann believes as he does on this point. To link the evidence, Beekmann, referred to the convention delegates as "your" representatives and suggested that they were acting as they had been directed. The audience will also accept this motivationally. If these really are the people they elected as delegates, they will not want to consider that the delegates were acting on their own. That would be an admission of poor judgment on the part of the audience.
Beekmann reasons from example in this instance. He uses the illustration and the two statistics as specific instances to point to the general statement, "the people have asked for this." The generalization seems to be somewhat hasty, however. While there appear to be no important exceptions to negate the claim, the instances are old, 1981 and 1982, and may not be fairly chosen. A more recent poll of a larger number of ALC members would provide more current examples to generalize from. The fallacy here appears to be one in evidence.

We are simply bringing our national and regional church structures into line with where the people are now. In support of this claim, Beekmann defended with an explanation. He explained how people currently move from one Lutheran denomination to another based on what the mission and life is like in any given congregation. Beekmann maintains that the people of the Lutheran churches no longer ask, "What denomination is this?" but rather ask, "What is here for me?" (Beekmann 1986 VCR). Rationally and motivationally there appears to be no problems with the evidence. Again the explanation expands on the claim and gives it clarity. There should be no question what Beekmann means. Motivationally though this may be a little weak for audiences in the Great Plains region. With the large number of ALC
churches in our region, and with stronger family and ethnic bonds than in urban areas, the listeners may not accept this notion. "When we move, we have no trouble finding an ALC congregation: Why should others who move have to search for one?" is likely to be a question these listeners would ask.

In this claim, Beekmann appears to be reasoning from a generalization or axiom. He has already generalized that people are not concerned about denomination (the general) so the main church bodies should reflect "that unity and partnership (the specific)" (Beekmann 1986VCR). The only problem with this pattern, in this case, is that Beekmann offers no proof that his generalization about Lutheran membership and their transfer habits is true. Personal experience seems to negate the generalization, in the opinion of this writer, but Beekmann offers it as fact. If the generalization would stand, it does apply to this case and this argument would be sound.

We are united in Christ: There are no basic faith differences. The defense of this claim came from citing authority. Beekmann explained that unity is God's gift to his people, and people are called to express that unity as fully as possible. Beekmann stated that by writing our structure and efforts we are "uniting a faith
family in fellowship and mission" (Beekmann 1986VCR). As explained early in Chapter Two, the authority of the Scriptures has always been a central issue for Lutherans. To cite Scripture is traditionally the strongest form of support, at least motivationally, that could be offered. In this case the citing of authority from the Scripture also carries strong rational appeal. This audience will likely not question this authority or His intentions.

Again, it appears that Beekmann is reasoning from a generalization or axiom. The Scripture calls for us to be unified as Christians, generally, so this specific merger is a step toward that end. For this audience, and for this speaker, the authority of Scripture is accepted and the pattern is sound.

This is the burden of answered prayer. Beekmann argues that for generations we had prayed for a unified church. Now that the opportunity is upon us it is our burden [responsibility] to merge into one organizational unit. While this is not the only meaning to a unified church "we should not ignore this as one part of the answer--in fact, one of the parts in which we can participate" (Beekmann 1986VCR). As evidence, this is restatement. Rationally this form of evidence does not defend the claim at all, but serves only to clarify what
is meant by it. On the other hand, this is motivationally as strong as citing Scriptures. To this audience the belief is that God answers prayer. When a prayer is answered, it is a gift from God. This gift cannot be ignored, or in this case, voted against.

The reasoning pattern seems harder to clarify. This argument does not seem to be reasoned from example, parallel case, sign, or generalization/axiom. That leaves only a causal relationship. The cause would be the prayer. The effect will be the unified church. In testing the reasoning, one can easily separate the cause from the effect. This audience would say that the cause was strong enough to produce the effect. There may be a "sequential fallacy" in this pattern, but this audience will not believe it to be so. Even though there is no evidence to support the claim and the pattern of reasoning is not clear, Beekmann likely succeeds with this and the audience accepts this argument.

**Witness and mission will be more effective.**

Beekmann used an illustration and an explanation to defend this claim. First he explained that by having fewer Lutheran denominations at work in the U.S. there would be less confusion as to what "Lutheranism is and how it works." Beekmann suggests that instead of
explaining why there are so many Lutheran denominations, we can spend more time in presenting a unified mission.

To show how this would work, Beekmann used a factual illustration. He told of the Central District of the ALC. That district was made up of five states: Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and Oklahoma. Because of the great distance involved in traveling this area, the witness and mission of the district suffered. In the new church the area would be divided into the Nebraska Synod, the Kansas/Missouri Synod, and Colorado would be joined with another neighboring state to form a third synod. Each would have about the same population as the ALC's Central District. By putting the same number of congregations and people into that much less area, the synods would be that much more effective. Says Beekmann, "There can be more focus and concentration for missions" (Beekmann 1986VCR). Rationally, this evidence is quite good. It defends the claim well by showing both what is meant and how that will be accomplished. Motivationally though, the support suffers somewhat. The concentration of Lutherans in this region again eliminates the frame of reference and makes it difficult for this audience to envision the problem, and the solution, Beekmann outlines in his explanation.
Reasoning for this claim comes from example. While Beekmann only uses two specifics to make the generalization, for this argument the examples are sound and sufficient. They provide a clear picture of the claim and also provide enough information to warrant the generalization.

The merger will enrich us with new faith, traditions, practices, and commitments. In defense of this claim, Beekmann offered no evidence of his own. He told listeners to think of their Lutheran neighbors of other denominations. "Think of the faith and practice of that individual and see how you will be enriched" (Beekmann 1986VCR). By doing this Beekmann did not provide the evidence he wanted to present. He had the listeners provide it for him. This could be considered a specific instance, but only suggesting an example is not the same as giving one. Rationally, this would be a good choice of evidence, but Beekmann should have provided several instances for the listener himself. By allowing the audience to fill in this gap, Beekmann lost control of the situation. Motivationally, however, this was excellent. At Beekmann's suggestion each listener chose an instance that had pleasant associations for him or her and would accept that instance without question.
The inferential pattern is reasoning from example. As it stands, however, the instances are not numerous enough to use as the basis for a generalization. Had Beekmann maintained control of this argument, and offered several of his own specific instances, the pattern would be sound.

With these six "claims" presented and defended, Beekmann had answered the question. He had provided six instances and now hoped that the viewer/listener would generalize that (1) these six examples were positive and (2) that these six instances provided good enough "reasons" or "arguments" for a "yes" vote on the merger proposal.

In the conclusion to the tape, Beekmann tells the viewers that he "hopes the discussion will help viewers as they struggle with issues and questions about the new church" (1986VCR). He also expressed the hope that this tape will help others come to a decision about the vote for the new church. In closing, Beekmann suggested that a positive vote for the merger was not so much a vote for the "structure of the church" but a vote in favor of an "attempt to bring the family together" (Beekmann 1986VCR).

With that, the final reasoning pattern of the tape is implied. Just as the six claims in question one
become the examples for a generalization on that specific question, the answers to all nineteen questions become the specific examples that help listeners generalize that the new church would work, would be desirable, and at the congregational balloting, a "yes" vote should be cast.

Taken in its entirety the tape is a better piece of persuasion than the answer to this one question might indicate. The majority of the explanations are clear, concise, and short. They do not raise questions, but answer them. Rationally the mix of evidence used to clarify and enhance the explanations is appropriate to a question of policy. Motivationally, these explanations eliminate questions and serve as a balm for the disquieting notion that the new church will be radically different. As examples for a generalization that shows favorable reaction to the new church, the nineteen presented touch on all the issues raised and are more than sufficient, to the point of being overwhelming, to support the thesis Beekmann offers. When considered as a whole, this presentation appeals to a wider audience than do the speeches of Lindberg and Minor and, as such, is probably the most effective presentation of the three.

"Quo Vadis: New Lutheran Church"

Dr. Duane Lindberg

Dr. Lindberg's presentation will be studied next. When a request for transcripts was made of Dr.
Lindberg, seven were forwarded with the understanding that the choice for analysis could be made by the writer. This presentation, "Quo Vadis: New Lutheran Church," was among the last given by Lindberg before he became connected with the AALC. Because of this, the presentation does not argue for the benefits of the AALC, but is more an argument against the new church, and against the actions of the CNLC. The presentation was given at Camarillo, California at a meeting of the laity and pastors of the South Pacific District of the ALC held on March 14-15, 1986.

In the introduction, Lindberg stated that the purpose of the presentation was to "share from my limited perspective several concerns regarding the direction which the Commission for a New Lutheran Church seems to be guiding us and what changes are necessary if that direction is to lead the new Church to strengthen congregations in their primary mission" (Lindberg 1986, 1). These concerns were listed as:

1. ... the impetus for this new Lutheran church was not coming from the grassroots but rather from the seminaries and church administrative hierarchies (Lindberg 1986, 2).

2. ... the CNLC seems to be more committed to "newness" and "inclusiveness" than to the Bible and the historic confessions of the Lutheran Church (Lindberg 1986, 5).
Finally, Lindberg claimed that he was not "totally optimistic" that the CNLC would be able to change the documents of the new Lutheran Church so that it would be "acceptable to conservative and evangelical congregations" (Lindberg 1986, 11).

After outlining these concerns, Lindberg offered several courses of action that congregations, pastors, and laity could take if the CNLC did not change the documents of the new church as suggested. These actions were listed as six possible scenarios:

1. Remain in the ALC and work through district and general conventions to bring about the needed changes in the proposed constitution and by-laws of the new Lutheran church.
2. Remain in the ALC and work for these changes; however, if no significant changes are made in the CNLC proposals, then vote "no" to the constitution and by-laws during the congregational referendums between September, 1986 and February, 1987.
3. Remain in the ALC until March 1987 and then decide depending on the outcome of the referendum.
4. Leave the ALC at this time and either join another Lutheran synod (Missouri, ELS AFLC, Wisconsin) or become an independent Lutheran church and associate with a group like the World Confessional Lutheran Association.
5. Leave the ALC after March 1987 and either join another Lutheran synod or become an independent Lutheran congregation.
6. Take no action and become a part of the new Lutheran Church on January 1, 1988 (Lindberg 1986, 12-13).

In the conclusion, Lindberg told the listeners that the choice of scenarios could not yet be made. It was his hope that the District and General Conventions
would be sensitive to the concerns that are being raised by conservative and evangelical congregations and pastors throughout the merging churches (Lindberg 1986, 14). Each claim, or concern as Lindberg calls them, will be examined separately.

The impetus for this new Lutheran church was not coming from the grass roots but rather from the seminaries and church administrative hierarchies. Lindberg introduced this claim with his first piece of evidence. He cited a poll conducted at the 1982 General Convention of the ALC at San Diego, California. Lindberg said that 1,167 ALC clergy were polled: 506 responded. Of these respondents 57.7 percent favored this new Lutheran church and 47.3 percent did not. After this use of statistics, Lindberg utilized restatement to defend the claim: "There is not a great groundswell of enthusiasm for or interest in this new Lutheran church (Lindberg 1986, 2). Following this, Lindberg used a hypothetical illustration about two pastors talking unenthusiastically about the merger plans, and followed that with two pieces of testimony. Each of these came from a print source. The first was taken from the North
Pacific District newsletter, *Life Together*. Lindberg quoted from a January 1986 article:

For many, the new church seems too remote from the congregation to stimulate interest. The assumption is that things won't change much in the local congregation, so why worry. That's something like saying that a radical change in the national tax law affects only Washington D.C. (Lindberg 1986, 2).

Lindberg also quoted from an article by Pastor Sanford Mitchell of Ashland, Ohio, originally published in the December 1985 *Lutheran*. This article reported a "considerable disinterest" concerning the new church.

To continue with his defense of this claim, and to show the relevance of his testimony, Lindberg offered an explanation of why this disinterest existed. Again quoting Mitchell, Lindberg pointed to two reasons. The planners of the church were perceived as "they" not "we" and the CNLC seemed to be moving the new church "in a direction that does not offer much help with the concerns which are important for many of us. (Lindberg 1986, 3). Lindberg queried the listeners, "Why should we get excited about an institution formed by a process that talks about things we do not particularly care about and does not seem to talk about the issues in which we are vitally interested?" (Lindberg 1986, 3).

Finally, Lindberg offered an illustration from his past experience to further explain this lack of responsiveness. The Waterloo Conference of the Iowa
District, ALC had used its Conference Convention to debate several issues which the congregations of that conference wished to identify. Both concerns and positive perceptions were shared. The Dean of the Conference had requested that the CNLC, which was meeting in Minneapolis, review this information. The request for the verbal reporting of this debate was denied. The information could have been reproduced and handed or mailed to members of the CNLC, however. In his conclusion to this first claim, Lindberg declared that all of this confirmed the statement by Mitchell that "the CNLC is really not interested in where the grassroots of the church is . . . it [the CNLC] has proceeded to isolate from us" (Lindberg 1986, 4).

The evidence Lindberg uses to defend this first claim is, on the surface, quite good. Rationally, the combination of statistics, testimony, and illustration should be sufficient to prove a statement of fact, which this claim is. However, there are some problems with this evidence. The statistics, as in Beekmann's presentation, come from surveys that were taken before any specific information about the merger proposal was available. The numbers are old. What was the position of the clergy now that more was known about the specifics of the merger? Also the sampling, as in Beekmann's
presentation, may be suspect. In terms of the testimony used, the authorities do not meet the tests Gronbeck outlines. The person, and the newsletter, quoted are not obvious authorities and their intentions in making the statements are not known. More information would need to be included to create a credible authority. A second problem is that while these pieces of evidence are testimony, they do not provide any explanation of the symptoms of disinterest that may exist; they only report it. Because the evidence does not provide detail, it is weak as a specific instance. To be good, Gronbeck et al. also suggest that the instance be familiar to the listeners. Not only are the sources suspect, but there is no additional documentation that what they say is correct.

The best piece of evidence offered is the illustration from Lindberg's experience. This does help clarify the lack of interest the CNLC seemed to have concerning the input of the conference convention, and it also helped explain Lindberg's own involvement in the process. This piece was good for both the argument and the speaker's credibility. While the evidence was of a type and quantity sufficient to defend the claim, the quality is suspect.
Motivationally the evidence is very good. Traveling to the Pacific District and quoting their own newsletter to the listeners gives them a piece of evidence that is easily related to and accepted. Any experience of the speaker, who is right in front of the listeners as a guest, is likely to be taken at face value. It is not until the evidence is tested that it starts to lose its acceptability.

Lindberg utilizes a reasoning from example pattern to link the evidence to the claim. The "we" vs. "they" idea, the nonresponsiveness to the conference input, and the failure to respond to the Waterloo Conference debates, all indicate that the CNLC did not want to respond to the "grassroots" of the ALC in the merger proposal. Because the evidence is not sound, and the examples are not sufficient, the pattern does not stand. It should be noted, however, that the organization, quantity, and apparent soundness of the evidence gives the initial impression that this is a good argument. If the listener did not test the evidence as Gronbeck et al. suggest, he or she would likely agree with the speaker on this first point.
The CNLC seems to be more committed to "newness" and "inclusiveness" than to the Bible and the historic confessions of the church. Lindberg listed seven areas where he feels the CNLC was not heeding the historical or Biblical confessions of the ALC. Said Lindberg:

We would encourage the CNLC to consider changes in its current proposals for the new Lutheran church in regard to the following issues:

1. A strengthened statement on Scripture.
2. Insure control of congregational property by congregations in all circumstances.
3. Eliminate the quota system.
4. Redress preponderance of personnel resources in "social issue" area as compared to Global Mission and Evangelical Outreach areas.
5. Strengthen the authority of the congregation as it pertains to calling of a pastor, property of the congregation, and stewardship of congregation's yearly benevolent offerings.
6. Define the Office of Bishop, concern that the office has not been adequately defined as to "task" and "limits of power."
7. Determine relationship to National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches before a merger is final (Lindberg 1986, 5).

Most fundamental, according to Lindberg, was the issue of the Statement of Faith of the new church and its Doctrine of Scripture. Said Lindberg, "We are of the opinion that these differences are so critical that even if there were no merger on the horizon, our own ALC would need to address these issues" (Lindberg 1986, 6). Lindberg then uses an explanation to track how these differences became so great. Much of the explanation was church history
from the 1940s and 1950s and center around the "neo-
Lutherans" who were approaching the Scripture from a more
historical-critical interpretation than others. These
"new thinking" Lutherans would not accept the verbal
inspiration and inerrancy of the Scripture. The "neo-
Lutherans" suggested that Scripture may not be the final
revelation from God, as do the conservatives, and
suggested that "unrevealed, hidden truths" might still be
discovered.

Lindberg warns that this controversy was not just
a debate:

Some of the practical fruits which this "neo-
Lutheranism" has produced within our church.....I do
not wish to imply that everything about the
historical-critical method has been detrimental to
faith; however, the practice of allowing the
scientific method to sit in judgment upon what does
or does not constitute the Word of God has produced
some rotten fruit. For example, this "new thinking"
has led some Lutheran theologians to deny the
physical resurrection of Jesus, to reject His virgin
birth, to reject the historicity of the miracles of
Jesus and even question the authenticity of the
sayings of Jesus (Lindberg 1986, 7).

Lindberg gives a specific example of this last practice
by showing an article reported in the January 15, 1986,
issue of the Lutheran. The headline quoted reads,
"Scholars Vote on Saying of Jesus" and the synopsis of
the report tells of balloting on the authenticity of the
sayings of Jesus (Lindberg 1986, 8).
Lindberg then contrasts what he sees happening with what the authority of the Bible and what Luther wrote about Scriptures. The Bible says of itself:

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, but the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Luther, according to Lindberg, says this, "Human beings can err, but the Word of God is the very wisdom of God and the absolutely infallible truth," and this, "I have learned to hold the Scriptures alone inerrant." Lindberg concluded this argument by stating that if these words could not be used to describe Scripture, then "find those words which will make clear both to the mentors and members of this church that the Bible is the Word of God and it is totally reliable and the final authority for our proclamation, faith, and life" (Lindberg 1986, 8).

Lindberg then finishes offering evidence by listing four other areas where the new church would be committed to "new and inclusive" ideas instead of the traditional Lutheran values. These are a recap of some of the areas of concern listed at the beginning of this section of Lindberg's speech.

Rationally this argument is the strongest of Lindberg's presentation. The historical explanation not only tells listeners how the conflict has come about, but
it provides strong reinforcement that the conservative members of the church are the "right" members in terms of what it means to be Lutheran. By including the specific examples of the results of this new thinking, Lindberg shows how the neo-Lutherans are attacking the very foundations of Lutheranism. By closing with the authority of the Word and the writings of the founder of the church, he reminds the listeners what a Lutheran is supposed to believe, according to the highest authority.

Motivationally there is nothing in this evidence to "turn off" listeners. They will be receptive to a little history lesson, as well as to the Word of God and the writings of Luther. There is probably no better evidence, motivationally, that could have been presented.

The link between evidence and claim is extremely hard to identify, but again appears to be made with the reasoning from example. Lindberg gives as the first example an extended illustration with the major cause for the problem of Scriptural definition included. He then gives effects of that cause. Also included are four more unsupported examples. From here the audience should generalize that the new church will be more concerned with "newness" and "inclusiveness" than with the traditional Lutheran teachings. Three fallacies exist. First, to achieve this link, Lindberg narrows the
argument to one point of scriptural definition. If you accept this, you accept the entire argument. This is the fallacy of "persuasive definition." Second, there seems to be some element of the "is-fault" in this argument. Lindberg attributes characteristics of the "neo-Lutherans" rather than defining them. Both these are fallacies in the language. Finally, while the examples are plentiful and could support a generalization through number, only one is supported by evidence.

To introduce the last section of the presentation, Lindberg continued to speak of the other issues of the merger and talked briefly about how the ALC leadership was starting to also express concerns "about some of the actions of the CNLC" (Lindberg 1986, 10). He used this section as a transition into his last claim.

The CNLC will not respond to our concerns. Lindberg expresses a hope that through continued work and effort the CNLC would be responsive to these concerns. He also stated that he was less than optimistic about this happening, however. He gave five reasons this was true:

1. The refusal of the CNLC to alter its stand with regard to legalistic quotas in spite of the appeals . . . , suggest to me a rigidity which reveals an unbending and unhealthy attitude on the part of the CNLC.
2. This unhealthy rigidity is reflected by some of our church leaders with regard to their view of
conservative theologians teaching at our Lutheran seminars.

3. There seems to be a growing de-emphasis on World Missions in spite of the fact that there is a growing number in this world, now perhaps three billion, who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

4. There seems to be a preoccupation with political issues and with social issues to the neglect of evangelical outreach.

5. Many of us sense a growing emphasis on the power and position of the ecclesiastical hierarchy (Lindberg 1986, 11-12).

For the second of these reasons, Lindberg did read from two letters written by Bishop Chilstrom of the LCA. In the other four cases, there was no evidence presented.

The claim of this section is implied. It is that the new church will not be addressing our concerns. With no evidence, the rational and motivational link will rest entirely with the credibility of the speaker.

Lindberg here is reasoning from generalizations or axioms. The generalizations are true based on Lindberg's experience and credibility. If the listener believes these generalizations, then the claim is sound. There are enough instances given to warrant the claim.

"The Need for an Option and the Option We Need"

Pastor James E. Minor

The final presentation to be studied is "The Need for an Option and the Option We Need" by Rev. James Minor of Calgary Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Paul, Minnesota. Pastor Minor is currently the treasurer for the AALC. This presentation was delivered on August 30,
1987 to the congregation of Ascension Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa. This congregation was looking for options to the merged church and Pastor Minor was to outline why the need for an option existed and also why the AALC would be a better choice than any other option. In a telephone interview, Rev. Minor indicated that this transcript was the only one available, and that the "reasons" given here for leaving the merged church were the same reasons he would have given in opposition to the merger proposal.

To introduce his topic Minor quoted Scripture:

"O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you. Avoid the Godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge, for by professing it some have missed the mark as regards the faith" (I Timothy 6:20-21).

Minor also quoted II Timothy 1:14 "guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us." Minor defined chatter as "philosophy instead of theology, ruminations by middle-aged theologians who have drifted from a child-like faith in the life, death, resurrection, ascension, and coming again of Jesus" (Minor 1987, 1). Minor then quoted the Book, Christian Dogmatics, which indicated that inconsistencies and contradictions exist in the Lutheran tradition. This, said Minor, was the chatter referred to in Scripture. Minor further explained the point of all this:
So me, please underscore the word "some" have missed the mark. To miss the mark in Biblical language means to sin; it may be a double entremure [sic] of Paul. Not only have they sinned, but they have sinned in such a way that they have lost the faith (Minor 1987, 1).

While it is not specifically stated in the speech, Minor was referring to the new ELCA with this allusion and his purpose was to show how that body had "lost the faith" and also explain how and why the AALC had not. This broke the presentation into two main parts. First, reasons an option to the ELCA was necessary, and second, why the AALC would provide that option.

Minor listed three reasons for needing an option: (1) the authority of the Scriptures, (2) the growth of the church, and (3) the stand on social issues of the ELCA. He then provided three reasons why the AALC would be an attractive option for the people of Ascension Lutheran: (1) Scriptural stance, (2) congregational autonomy, and (3) availability of pastors.

The authority of the Scriptures. Minor utilized the rhetorical question to introduce the first three reasons for an option. In providing the answer to that question he gave the view of the ELCA and then contended that this view was wrong. The implication, as suggested in the introduction, was that the ELCA had "lost the
faith." While Minor never put this implication into words, the choice of introductory material leaves little doubt as to the intent.

The first question asked was "What is the authority of the Word of God?" The constitution and the handbook for the ALC called the Word inspired, inerrant and infallible. This meant that the miracles of the New Testament, according to Minor, had actually taken place. Those who had lost the faith declared that the miracles "may or may not be factual" and some went so far as to call the miracles "literary devices" used to enhance or underscore the reality of "God's salvation activity."

Minor continued with other examples from the writings of what Dr. Lindberg would have called "neo-Lutherans" (Minor 1987, 2).

Minor then concluded the section on the miracles of the New Testament:

I say to you that all of the miracles in the Bible are true! We believe that the N.T. [New Testament] miracles reveal to us the deity of our Lord Jesus: that He is one with God and the power of God. We deny that these miracles were written by other people just to enhance the status of Jesus or written to emphasize his exceptional status.

If these modernist theologians are correct, then the Bible is a book of some lies about Jesus, and we know that the Lord Jesus himself taught that the devil is the father of lies (Minor 1987, 3).

Minor next asked another question concerning the authority of the Scripture: "Are the words of Jesus
recorded in the Gospels and Epistles true?" He again summarized the views of "modernist" theologians who question the "validity of the words of Jesus in the Scriptures." He pointed to the contradictions among these theologians and again referred to the Scriptural passages he used in his introduction and outlined his, and the AALC's position:

Modern theology is full of contradictions, but we in the American Association of Lutheran Churches say, together with three and one-half million other American Lutherans, we believe that what is attributed to Jesus was actually said by Jesus. Our Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth!" It was the devil in Genesis who asked EVE, "Did God say?" Those raising questions about the veracity of Jesus' words are asking questions inspired by the devil, not by the Holy Spirit.

This is why we need an option to merger; to stand for the truth (Minor 1987, 4).

Motivationally this evidence is good for this audience. The fact that Pastor Minor was invited to give a presentation indicates a willingness to listen to his view and an intent to choose a different option, even if not the one Minor suggests. Rationally, explaining and comparing should help this congregation make a choice.

From Gronbeck et al.'s viewpoint, however, there are several problems with this step in Minor's argument. First, Minor becomes trapped in a language fallacy. He attributes to the "modernist theologians" a characteristic that exists in his opinion. He implies
that these people have lost the faith and also implies that this is harmful. The first fallacy is an is-fault.

The implication that these modernists are harmful in some way leads to the second language fallacy, name-calling. Rather than refute the ideas of the modernists, Minor attacked the person, not their arguments.

Finally, Minor gets trapped in the fallacy of either-or (two-sided) logic. As he presents this argument, Minor indicates there are two groups: those that have lost the faith and those that have not. The lack of any other alternative suggests the fallacy in reasoning.

**Church Growth.** For the introduction to this example, Minor asked the question "What is the record of the ALC and LCA during the last twenty to twenty-five years of ministry in America?" Minor turned to statistics to answer this question. Minor told the listeners that the LCA had reported a loss of thirteen thousand members in 1986. The ALC had lost twelve thousand. Minor quoted the *Lutheran* and the *Lutheran Standard*, the magazines published by the two churches, as the source for his statistics. Said Minor, "During one year, the merging churches report net losses of about 26,000 members" (Minor 1987, 4).
Minor contrasted this with the membership numbers for more "conservative" denominations. The AFLC, LCMS, and the Wisconsin Lutheran Synod had gained membership. Minor told the listeners:

The trend in the ALC and LCA toward a loose interpretation of scripture [sic] and permissive practices in our society has led Lutherans to vote with their feet--out of the merging churches. Now we have the opportunity; a God-given opportunity to withdraw from this dying dinosaur and to bring new life and new hope to the Lutheran people who stand up for Jesus (Minor 1987, 5).

The evidence used to defend this claim is a hybrid of example and statistics. Minor uses the numbers to provide the examples he uses to generalize that the new merged church will not be effective and will continue to lose members. Rationally and motivationally the evidence will support this generalization. Americans, Lutherans included, are used to "counting" to show the success or failure of a group, program, organization, or business. The comparison over a twenty-five year period shows a trend. The generalization holds up to scrutiny. It is the next step in the link that breaks down. After showing how the merged church will lose members, Minor attempts to show why with a cause/effect relationship. Minor points to the cause as being "a loose interpretation of Scripture and permissive practices" (Minor 1987, 4). There is no evidence to support the idea that this cause is responsible for the effect of
lost membership in one group and a rising membership in the other. Without that proof the argument falls to a sequential fallacy.

One observation should be made. Note that both Beekmann and Minor assert in their presentations that the opportunity each presents to the listener is "God-given." In Beekmann's case the opportunity is to unite the church and in Minor's it is to save it.

Social issues. Minor moved next to the church's position on two social issues and presented them as "the compromise of faith and the new life that we object to" (Minor 1987, 5). The first form of support is an illustration. The LCA had ordained three homosexuals. The second, a specific instance, dealt with the merged church's stand on the use of "pornographic films" by the Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota. Pastor Minor told the audience, "I won't rehearse for you all the details of the last five years" concerning the history of these issues but did point to both as a sign of the new church's "compromise and accommodation" and took a stand against that compromise.

Motivationally, this evidence is good. This audience is likely to lean toward Minor's point of view and would agree that any hint of condoning either of these practices would be unacceptable. However, to
create a stronger rational link, both examples should be expanded into illustrations paying particular attention to linking the evidence as a harm with the need for an option. The listeners will probably accept this generalization, but acceptance appears to be based more on motivational acceptance of the evidence than on the rational.

These three instances now become the examples for a generalization that an option to the new ELCA is needed. As indicated, two of these instances are based on fallacies suggested by Gronbeck et al. Because two of the three instances are themselves based on fallacies, this generalization also appears to be hasty.

Minor then moved on to develop his second purpose in speaking, presenting the option that should be chosen. He gives three instances and draws the conclusion that this option is the preferred choice.

The authority of the Scriptures. Minor explained the AALC position of Scripture and provided an overview of the Confession of Faith of the AALC. According to Pastor Minor, Scripture was inspired by God. It was given to us that we might know what was necessary to be saved and "to live for Jesus" (Minor 1987, 6).
To summarize, Minor stated:

We must and will proclaim that there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved; no name but Jesus' name. This is the faith of our spiritual parents in the Lutheran and Christian churches in which we have been raised (Minor 1987, 7).

**Congregation.** Again Minor offered an explanation of the attitude of the AALC:

The local congregation should have control of its own affairs; and we have modified our constitution to allow a congregation to withdraw from the AALC in accordance with the rules of its own constitution. In other words, the local congregation controls its own destiny. As long as we walk in fellowship in the AALC, then we walk together. However, any congregation which is led in some other path by the Holy Spirit, we freely let them go, believing God will deal with their leaders and people in His own good timing and we don't need Bishops or Boards to dictate to the people (Minor 1987, 8).

**Pastors.** In this example Minor explained that many Pastors were willing to join a "Lutheran fellowship that honors Lord Jesus as the Savior of the world, and which honors the Bible as the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of God" (Minor 1987, 8). He also indicated that Lutheran and independent seminaries were willing to train new pastors. Minor stated that a Board of Trustees had been established and that health insurance and a pension plan were available for any clergy on the roster of the AALC.
When mentioning the Board of Trustees, Minor concluded this half of his presentation:

The AALC is going and growing, the Lord Jesus has provided us with furnishings for our offices, a computer, and a marvelous new copy machine; all without cost to our newly formed group. We have been careful with our funds and have taken action to hire the most important people for our staff; a couple of fine secretaries. Volunteers are handling speaking assignments and the tasks of the entire group, this is indeed a group with its foundations in the congregation.

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord. Grace alone; Faith alone; Word alone (Minor 1987, 9).

In the second half of the presentation Minor presents an extremely good argument. Each of the instances he presents is also an explanation of some aspect of the AALC. While Minor does not provide nineteen examples, as did Beekmann, the three he does offer center around the issues of merger that created the most controversy. Rationally the explanations are clear and, like Beekmann's, do not raise more questions. They are also much shorter than what Minor had presented in the first segment of the presentation. The second reason or example, on congregational authority, leaves all major decisions at the local level. This provides the strongest motivational link of any of the evidence presented thus far. Through explaining the congregation's role, and pointing out how much control the listeners will retain, no one doubts the example and
it serves to gain acceptance of the other instances presented.

Minor reasons through generalization. In these cases, says Minor, this is what will happen. Although he does not say it in the conclusion, the listener knows that Minor has chosen the AALC and wants the listener to choose it as well. There is nothing in what is said to make a listener believe that he should not choose this option.

The success or failure of this presentation is in the listener's acceptance of the first half of the speech. If the listeners agree with Pastor Minor when he moves into the second portion of this speech, he/she will likely be with him at the end.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was two-fold. First a model for rhetorical analysis was developed. This model identified and defined the several forms of support, reasoning patterns and fallacies in evidence, reasoning, and language. From this, several questions that can be used to analyze arguments were suggested. Second, the model was applied to three presentations that were given for the purpose of promoting one choice over another in the merger process.
The text, *Principles and Types of Speech Communication* by Bruce E. Gronbeck, Ray E. McKerrow, Douglas Ehninger, and Alan H. Monroe was chosen to provide the model. Gronbeck et al. identify seven forms of support:

1. Explanation
2. Analogy or comparison
3. Illustration
4. Specific instance
5. Statistics
6. Testimony
7. Restatement.

Three types of claims were identified: a claim of fact, a claim of value, and a claim of policy. The first step in analyzing an argument, according to the authors is to identify the claim, then the forms of support utilized. Once the evidence is identified, it can be tested for soundness and for its rational and motivational appeal. With this accomplished, the reasoning pattern can next be identified.

Gronbeck, McKerrow, Ehninger, and Monroe define reasoning as the "habitual ways" in which a culture or society uses inferences to connect that which is known (the evidence) with that which is unknown (the claim).
Five reasoning patterns common to our culture were
identified:

1. reasoning from examples
2. reasoning by parallel case
3. reasoning from sign
4. reasoning from causal relations
5. reasoning from generalization or axiom.

Several fallacies, flaws in the connection, can
destroy a reasoning pattern. The fallacies can be in
evidence, in reasoning, or in language. Based on this
information, five questions were developed to aid in the
analysis of the presentations chosen:

1. What is the claim the speaker is defending?
2. What are the forms of support used as
evidence to defend that claim?
3. Does the evidence appear to be relevant,
rationally and motivationally? Why or why not?
4. What reasoning pattern is used to connect the
evidence with the claim?
5. Does the reasoning pattern appear to be
sound? That is, does it pass the tests for reasoning and
does it appear to avoid the basic errors, or fallacies,
as outlined?
"CNLC: What About This New Church"
Rev. Darold Beekmann

Rev. Beekmann's presentation was taken from a video cassette recording. Beekmann spoke in favor of the merger through a question and answer format. The answer to one question--What are some of the main reasons for forming this new church?--was utilized for this study. Beekmann offered six "reasons" in this answer:

1. Our people have asked for this.
2. We are simply bringing our national and regional church structures into line with where the people are now.
3. We are united in Christ. There are no faith differences.
4. This is the burden of answered prayer.
5. Witness and mission will be more effective.
6. The merger will enrich us with new faith traditions, practices, and commitments. Beekmann uses predominately reasoning from example in these six claims and loses three of them to fallacies in evidence.

In addition to this question being a generalization based on these six claims, the entire tape is a generalization based on the answers to nineteen questions. The majority of the evidence is explanation and the reasoning is sound.
"Quo Vadis: New Lutheran Church?"
Dr. Duane Lindberg

Lindberg's presentation was delivered in Camarillo, California. Lindberg wished to share several "concerns" regarding the direction the new church and the CNLC appeared to be heading. His concerns included:

1. The impetus for the new church was not coming from the grassroots of the church, but from its leaders and teachers.

2. The CNLC was more committed to newness and inclusiveness than it was in upholding traditional Lutheran values.

3. There was no indication that the CNLC would change its position.

With these concerns addressed, Lindberg offered six possible courses of action churches, laity, and pastors could take. Lindberg's first and second concerns were reasoned from example and both were weak. Fallacies in evidence and in language were detected. The third concern is sound and was based on reasoning from generalization or axiom.

"The Need for an Option and the Option We Need"
Pastor James Minor

Pastor Minor generalized two claims:

1. There is a need for an option to the ELCA.
2. The AALC can provide that option.
In defending the first claim, Minor used three examples or instances to support his first generalization, but falls into the fallacies in language and in reasoning. The first claim is not sound. The second claim, however, is.

Minor uses three examples to support this generalization, but the examples are based on explanations and have good rational validity and excellent motivational links to the listener. There appear to be no fallacies in evidence, reasoning, or language and this second argument by Pastor Minor is among the best of those offered in this study.
CHAPTER 4
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary
This study represents an attempt to identify and analyze the rhetoric of the American Lutheran Church, and the various interest groups within this organization, as it applied to the merger with the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches to form a new group, The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. To achieve this purpose the study was divided into two parts.

The first provided a historical background of previous mergers in the ALC and also provided the survey of events that outlined the latest merger--that of the ALC into the ELCA. While conducting this survey the special interest groups and spokespersons for these groups, as well as for the ALC spokespersons were identified. Also identified were the issues that created a need for rhetoric in this matter.

The second segment of this study provided a model for analyzing the arguments and forms of support utilized by the spokespersons identified in the survey of events.
The model chosen was developed from definitions found in the text, *Principles and Types of Speech Communication* by Bruce E. Gronbeck, Ray E. McKe row, Douglas Ehninger, and Alan H. Monroe. This source was chosen because it appeared inclusive of the others surveyed, and indicated that those forms of support and reasoning patterns included were those "habitually used" in American society today. Not only did Gronbeck et al. base their definitions on classic rhetorical thought, but also on the contemporary usage in our current culture. This analytical model was then applied to three presentations that had been given either in favor of or in opposition to the merger proposal.

Each presentation was studied to identify the claims being made, the forms of support offered, and the reasoning pattern or patterns used to link the evidence to the claim. Each inferential pattern was then tested for fallacies in evidence, reasoning, and language. An attempt was made, based on the model suggested, to determine the soundness of each argument.

**Conclusions**

Based on a comparison of the history of previous mergers and the survey of the current merger, three recurring issues are evident:
1. the definition of the Scriptures.
2. the definition and amount of congregational authority to own property, to call pastors, and to leave the church body, and
3. the location of the church offices.

As the definition of Scripture and the authority of the congregation are issues that have a basis in doctrinal policy, one may conclude that the ELCA, as well as other Lutheran denominations in America, will continue to struggle with these two questions. The continued controversy over the location of church offices appears to be unlikely.

If the presentations selected are accepted as being representative of the rhetoric of this merger, and the analysis of these presentations is based on the model developed, then the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The most popular form of support appears to be a combination of explanation and specific instance.
2. The most popular inferential pattern appears to be reasoning from example.
3. Approximately 50 percent of the arguments presented appear to be sound by the standards recommended by Gronbeck, McKerrow, Ehninger, and Monroe. This would indicate that about 50 percent are not sound.
4. The most common fallacy appears to be a fallacy of evidence.

These conclusions are based on a descriptive analysis of the arguments presented in this study. This is an evaluation of the construction of arguments. This is not an attempt to measure the effectiveness of those same arguments. It is hoped the reader will be able to distinguish between the two.

**Recommendations for Further Study**

As with any undertaking of this nature, there is a hope that additional study will be prompted; that the conclusions and methods utilized will be tested. It is the nature of scholarly inquiry to raise, as well as answer, questions. To stimulate inquiry, the following recommendations for study are offered:

1. A similar study of the rhetoric of the Lutheran Church in America and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches as it pertains to the merger into the ELCA could be beneficial.

2. A study of religious rhetoric not as sermons, but as persuasive speaking, could be undertaken.

3. A detailed study of the process and rhetoric of the birth of the American Association of Lutheran Churches could be undertaken.
4. The model for analysis utilized in this study could be applied to the political or business rhetoric in America to check its social validity.
APPENDIX A

DUANE R. LINDBERG
QUO VADIS: NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH?

I. INTRODUCTION:

Pastor Hiepler, Pastor Villa, Pastor Swedberg, laity and pastors of the South Pacific District...It's my pleasure to be invited to share the warmth of your southern California sun and most of all the warmth of our fellowship in the SON Jesus Christ our Lord to whom be the glory in His church forever and ever. Amen!

Because I share with you a commitment to our Lord Jesus Christ, a love for His family as we experience it in our beloved Lutheran church. Precisely because of this commitment, love and loyalty it's a privilege for me to share from my limited perspective several concerns regarding the direction which the Commission for a New Lutheran Church seems to be guiding us and what changes are necessary if that direction is to lead the new Church to strengthen congregations in their primary mission.

I am not a member of the CNLC; therefore, I cannot claim any kind of expertise with regard to the inner workings of the Commission. I do not come as an expert (even though I am more than 50 miles from my home) but I do come like all of you as concerned laity and pastors who love our Lutheran Church...I do serve as the volunteer coordinator for the Committee for Lutheran Cooperation which is an loose connection of pastors and laity in the ALC committed to attempting to communicate the Commission's actions and the implications of these proposals as well as attempting to bring a conservative and evangelical influence to bear upon the process of forming this new Lutheran Church.

We began in 1982 prior to the San Diego Convention by surveying a sampling of 1,167 ALC clergy (a response of 506) to determine the ALC pastors' perceptions regarding the formation of a new Lutheran Church. The results of our survey were that 57.7% indicated they favored this new Lutheran Church whereas 42.3% indicated
either opposition or uncertainty regarding the proposed merger. It is also apparent from our survey that pastors perceived that the impetus for this new Lutheran Church was not coming from the grassroots but rather from the seminaries and church administrative hierarchies. Of course their perceptions may have been in error; nevertheless, this is the way the majority felt.

Since San Diego we have not taken another survey so I do not want to presume that these percentages have necessarily remained the same. However, it seems very apparent that throughout the ALC at least and I hear also in the LCA there is not a great groundswell of enthusiasm for or interest in this new Lutheran Church. I’m not implying that a majority are not in favor of it; however, I am saying that it seems that among those who are in favor there are not many who are enthusiastic. Perhaps the level of interest was accurately suggested by the cartoonist who depicted two Lutheran pastors conversing about the new Lutheran Church:

STORY: One pastor asks "What is your opinion about the new Lutheran Church?"
    The second pastor yawns... And the first responds: "Oh, I can't get that enthused about it."

This lack of concern on the part of congregations seems to be evident even on the west coast. I note from the North Pacific District Newsletter, Life Together, (January '86) a cover article urging congregations and pastors to take a more active interest in this process of forming a new Lutheran Church. The author of that article writes:

"For many, the new church seems too remote from the congregation to stimulate interest. The assumption is that things won't change much in the local congregation, so why worry. That's something like saying the a radical change in the national tax law affects only Washington, D.C."

Pastor Sanford Mitchell of Ashland, Ohio in an article quoted from the December 1985 issue of the The Lutheran indicates that there is a "considerable disinterest" concerning the new Church.
He goes on to ask why this considerable disinterest. His observations are that for many people those who are forming the new Church (no offense to you Pastor Villa) are perceived not as "we" but as "they". Furthermore he points out that the CNLC has proceeded to isolate themselves from us, the grassroots. Though they have told us they want to get our "grassroots input" yet it seems that neither groups of congregations, individual lay people or pastors or expressions of judicatories within the churches can have much effect upon the CNLC. This may not be a completely fair statement; however, this is the way many of us feel. For this is the way we perceive the ballgame being played.

Pastor Mitchell goes on in his article to say, part of the reason for the "considerable disinterest" among congregations, laity and pastors is that the CNLC seems to be headed in a direction that does not offer much help with the concerns which are very important for many of us, such as strengthening the outreach of the church to those who do not know Jesus as Lord....He goes on to ask "why should we get excited about an institution formed by a process that talks about things we do not particularly care about and does not seem to talk about the issues in which we are vitally interested?"

This insulated and isolated, supposedly prophetic, stance of the CNLC was painfully demonstrated to us in the Waterloo Conference of the Iowa District recently....In order to stimulate concern for the new Lutheran Church the Dean of our conference and his council decided to utilize our Conference Convention as a forum for debating issues which the congregations wish to identify. He also requested that congregations share the good things that they perceived regarding the proposed new Lutheran Church. In response there were a number of congregations that identify issues on the basis of the CNLC Report #6. These were written in the form of resolutions to the CNLC which then were debated on the floor of our Conference Convention.
Prior to the convention our Dean notified Dr. Arnold Nickolson and our Iowa representative, Mrs. Audrey Mortensen informing them of the six areas that were to be debated and requesting that the outcome of this debate be shared with the Commission since this represented a judicatory of 47 ALC congregations. (These six resolutions and the official vote tabulation are included on handout #1).

Since the CNLC was meeting in Minneapolis at the time our Dean telephoned the results of our conference action. According to Mrs. Audrey Mortensen, member of the CNLC, she was denied the opportunity to share this information verbally with the CNLC. She could only have it reproduced and handed out or mailed to the CNLC members.

Though we are well aware that as individuals or even individual congregations, information must be sent prior to the CNLC meeting so that it can be distributed to each one. Nevertheless, in this instance where a judicatory of the ALC consisting of 47 churches, which has an assigned convention date, requests prior to the CNLC meeting for the opportunity to give this input, it seems to me that the CNLC's refusal to hear the concerns of the Waterloo Conference of the American Lutheran Church is simply another illustration that the CNLC is really not interested in where the grassroots of the church is. It simply confirms for us the statement by Sanford Mitchell that the CNLC has proceeded to isolate from us. As he said "they may be playing a very good brand of baseball, but they are playing in a different ballpark than most of the grassroots folks."

II. WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ISSUES IN THE FORMATION OF THIS NEW LUTHERAN CHURCH?

What, then, are the issues which conservative and evangelical congregations wish to communicate to the CNLC? In other words what are the changes that must be made in the CNLC's proposals from the perspective of pastors and congregations who form the conservative and evangelical wings of our merging church bodies?
I do not presume to speak for everyone; however, I feel I can speak with some integrity for those pastors and congregations which are linked together in our Committee for Lutheran Cooperation. First of all, there is a concern on the part of some of us that the CNLC seems to be more committed to "newness" and "inclusiveism" than to the Bible and the historic confessions of the Lutheran church. We would encourage the CNLC to consider changes in its current proposals for the new Lutheran Church in regard to the following issues:

1. Strengthen statement on Scripture.
2. Insure control of congregational property by congregations in all circumstances.
3. Eliminate the quota system.
4. Redress preponderance of personnel resources in "social issue" areas as compared to Global Mission and Evangelical Outreach areas.
5. Strengthen authority of the congregation as it pertains to:
   a. Calling of a pastor.
   b. Property of the congregation.
   c. Stewardship of congregation's yearly benevolent offerings.
6. Define the Office of Bishop; concern that the office has not been adequately defined as to "task" or "limits of power".
7. Determine relationship to National Council of Churches and World Council of Churches before a merger is final.

Of these concerns, I believe that the most fundamental of all is the issue of the Doctrine of Scripture in the Statement of Faith of the new Church. The underlying issues which are reflected in the written statements are perhaps well known to you:

1. What is the relationship between the Bible and the Word of God?...
   Is the Bible as a whole and in all its parts the divinely inspired, revealed and inerrant Word of God or does it just "contain" the Word of God?
2. Is the Bible absolutely dependable; that is, is it inerrant and infallible, or is the theological message of Scripture that which is inerrant and infallible?
III. AT THE ROOT OF THE DOCTRINAL ISSUE:

We are of the opinion that these differences are so critical that even if there were no merger on the horizon, our own ALC would need to address these issues. These matters are of importance to both laity and pastors. In order to suggest the scope of the conflict, I ask your forebearance if I retrace, briefly, some of the historic roots of our current debate regarding the Doctrine of Scripture within our Lutheran Church.

According to church historian, E. Clifford Nelson, the fundamental change in understanding the relationship between the Bible and the Word of God occurred within American Lutheran circles in the 1940's and 50's. This new approach to the relationship between the Bible and the Word of God is referred to by Dr. Nelson as "neo-Lutheranism" ("new thinking"). This point of view held that the theological message of Scripture is the Word of God and it is this which is infallible.

According to this "new thinking", the Word of God and Scripture are distinguished, though not separated. The "neo-Lutherans", who by 1956 were heavily represented on the faculties of ALC seminaries and college religion departments, would not accept the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. These theologians approached the Scripture more from the historical-critical method of Bible interpretation. (See "Shibboleth or Substance" for a discussion of the historical-critical method.)

Regarding this fundamental shift, Dr. Nelson writes:
"What was a small voice in 1947 (i.e. a few professors at Luther Theological Seminary) became a large sound within a decade. By 1956, when the proposed constitution of the new American Lutheran Church was voted on by the Evangelical Lutheran Church, several if not most of its professors of theology were teaching a view of Scripture at variance with the statement on the Bible in the new constitution. That is, while the church administrators sought to uphold "old Lutheranism", many college and seminary professors were teaching "neo-Lutheranism". (Lutheranism in North America, p. 164.)

Many of these "neo-Lutheran" theologians would claim that the Bible "contains the Word of God"; however, they would deny that the Scripture "as a whole and in all its parts" is the Word of God. This is quite a different position from historic conservative Lutheranism which teaches that the entire Scripture is the Word of God to be interpreted in the light of the centrality of Jesus Christ as the one who has fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament.

Another issue within the Doctrine of Scripture debate may be stated in this manner Is Scripture the final and absolute source and norm for our preaching, faith and life or is there a later revelation from God?" There are those theologians who suggest that Scripture is not God's final revelation. These theologians suggest there is still unrevealed, hidden, divine springs of truth with some barefoot theologians roaming in the wilds of their creative imaginations will yet discover.

Lest some think that this concern for the Doctrine of Scripture is merely something for ivory tower theologians to debate, let's consider for a few moments some of the practical fruits which this "neo-Lutheranism" has produced within our church......I do not wish to imply that everything about the historical - critical method has been detrimental to the faith; however, the practice of allowing the scientific method to sit in judgment upon what does or does not constitute the Word of God has produced some rotten fruit. For example, this "new thinking" has led some Lutheran theologians to deny the physical resurrection of Jesus, to reject His virgin birth, to reject the historicity of the miracles of Jesus and even question the authenticity of the sayings of Jesus.
As an example of the ends to which this "new thinking" has taken us, I call your attention to the following quote from the article in the January 15, 1986 issue of The Lutheran entitled "Scholars Vote on Sayings of Jesus":

"A group of New Testament scholars is voting on the authenticity of sayings attributed to Jesus. Guided by biblical critical scholarship and their own insights, the scholars are trying to determine how many words were put on Jesus' lips by Gospel writers or by church tradition."

"In initial balloting last fall the Beatitudes and the Sermon on the Mount did not do well. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God" was blackballed. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" got only six pink or red votes out of 30 cast."

Though this may represent a more extreme position than most "neo-Lutherans" could identify with; yet, we must take this seriously for it represents the logical conclusions to which the method of "higher criticism" will lead. It represents a point of view and spirit at complete variance with what the Bible says about itself:

"All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and training in righteousness, but the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."
(II Timothy 3:16,17)

This new thinking is also at odds with what Luther taught regarding Scripture:

"Human beings can err, but the Word of God is the very wisdom of God and the absolutely infallible truth." (Luther's Works, 1:122)

"I have learned to hold the Scriptures alone inerrant." (Luther's Works, 41:25)

The Lutheran Confessions also take their stand on the final authority and utter reliability of Scripture. The epitome of the formula of Concord states clearly that Scripture does not err.

It seems imperative that we as conservative and evangelical Lutherans should be very concerned that the Doctrine of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith of the new Lutheran Church clearly emphasizes that all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole and in all their parts are the divinely inspired, revealed and inerrant Word of God. If these exact words cannot be used then let us find those words which will make clear both to the mentors and members of this church that the Bible is the Word of God and it is totally reliable and the final authority for our proclamation, faith and life.
IV. WHAT ARE OTHER KEY ISSUES?

In the light of this fundamental theological revolution which has occurred within our Lutheran church, it is not surprising to learn that the CNLC has removed the words "revealed, divinely (inspired), infallible and inerrant" from the Statement of Faith. Furthermore the CNLC has refused to state that this new church will accept all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, as a whole and in all their parts as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God.

In our opinion, the CNLC proposal has been watered down to accommodate those within our Lutheran churches who do not believe that the entire Bible is reliable or that the Bible as a whole and in all its parts is the divinely inspired Word of God. This issue regarding the nature and authority of the Bible is in my opinion the fundamental issue in our time within American Lutheranism.

However, there are other important matters at issue in this new Lutheran Church proposal. Our Committee for Lutheran Cooperation has identified these issues in the form of four resolutions to the CNLC which bear the following titles (see enclosure):

1. Regarding a stronger Statement on Scripture.
2. Regarding the control of congregational property.
3. Regarding the removal of ethnic and sex quotas in structure of new Lutheran Church.
4. Regarding redistribution of personnel resources at division and commission levels in the new Lutheran Church.

We are recommending that these issues as well as other important matters be brought in resolution form to the district (synod) and General Conventions of our churches in order to bring about the necessary changes in the constitution and by-laws of the proposed new Lutheran Church.
As a specific example of how this may be done on the conference or district level, I wish to make reference to the six resolutions which were debated at our Waterloo Conference, Iowa District by representatives of 47 congregations.

It is of real significance to note that within our conference where a majority of the pastors seem to favor the new Lutheran Church; yet, the votes on five of the six issues oppose the position of the CNLC as expressed in report #6. On the congregational property issue, especially as it relates to a congregation wishing to become an independent Lutheran church, the vote was 155 in favor of the change and only 68 in favor of the CNLC’s position. Also with regard to the matter of legalistic quotas suggested by the Commission the vote was 125 opposed to the Commission’s position to 75 in favor.

Though we were very discouraged by the fact that the CNLC refused to allow our Iowa representative to report from the floor of the Commission meeting regarding our resolutions and the results of the Waterloo Conference debate, yet we are encouraged to note that leaders of our ALC, especially Dr. David Preus and Dr. Lloyd Svendsbye have also expressed deep concerns about some of the actions of the Commission. We are encouraged by the fact that the ALC Church Council has asked the CNLC to reconsider its recommendations regarding control of congregational property. We were encouraged to receive this communication from Bishop David Preus in a letter to Rev. Homer Larsen on Sept. 9, 1985 in which he states:

“There is presently a move, initiated by me, which is seeking to reduce the 100% requirement to only 75%. (This is in reference to congregations desiring to leave the new Lutheran Church to become independent Lutheran congregations). It is ridiculous to think that any congregations can respond 100% to any recommendation. Though it is our interest in making it difficult for a congregation to leave the national church body, it is not appropriate to make it impossible for a congregation to leave the church body.”

We are also aware that several Commission members, individually, do not support the emphasis on legalistic quotas. One of these Commission members, Dr. Lloyd Svendsbye, in a speech in Minneapolis in November, ‘85 stated that he was not in favor of the CNLC’s legalistic quota language and asked that we (pastors and laity) work through the president of the church and the district conventions to change this.
V. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Though these words from some of our leaders are encouraging, we need to ask ourselves, where do we go from here? Can we as conservative and evangelical congregations and pastors have any real influence on the shape of the new Lutheran Church?...Can our efforts help to "rein" this galloping steed in the direction of conservative and evangelical concerns?

In my naivete', I still believe we can, therefore, I encourage conservative congregations to stay within the ALC at this critical time and work diligently for a new Lutheran Church which will be fully responsive to Christ' great commission rather than to the "latest social issue".

Because we will not know the final verdict until March of 1987, we must also consider the possible scenarios which may occur with regard to the final shape of the new Lutheran Church. I would be less than honest if I were to say that I am totally optimistic regarding the probability of our bringing about the necessary changes in the documents of the proposed new Lutheran Church to make it acceptable to conservative and evangelical congregations...Why do many of us have these worries and reservations?

1. The refusal of the CNLC to alter its stand with regard to legalistic quotas in spite of the appeals from individuals, congregations, districts, Church Councils and general conventions, suggest to me a rigidity which reveals an unbending and unhealthy attitude on the part of the CNLC.

2. This unhealthy rigidity is reflected by some of our church leaders with regard to their view of conservative theologians teaching at our Lutheran seminaries. I quote from Bishop Chilstrom's answer to Dr. Robert T. Jensen (Sept. '85):

"In my opinion, people who believe in the inerrancy of Scripture should be welcomed to remain with the new Lutheran Church. Dan Fiberg is a case in point. He has a right to his opinions regarding the inerrancy of Scripture. But it is clear from his own statement that he realizes that his conjectures about errors or lack of errors in the first writings are speculation. I do not argue with those who say that they hold that as an opinion, so long as they do not make their opinion a standard for the new Lutheran church."
It is for this reason that I would not support the employment of Lutheran theologians who hold a view similar to that of Dr. Friberg....It would be out of character with any of the churches which are identifying with the new Lutheran Church.

This same leader reveals his own operative and Biblical hermeneutics in the following letter to Mr. George Hulstrand, Jr. (Sept. 1981) with regard to the issue of the Bible and its relevance for the debate regarding abortion. Bishop Chilstrom states:

"I have not sighted any Biblical references in what I have written. I could have. Although disputed by some scholars, most would agree that Psalm 51 and 139 attest to the authors' belief that life begins at conception...But I am afraid Biblical references may not be helpful. Why? Because we are dealing again with the belief of these authors. These same persons also believe the world was flat. I've had to adjust my understanding of the Bible on that score."

3. There seems to be a growing deemphasis on World Missions in spite of the fact that there is a growing number in this world, now perhaps three billion, who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. One ALC church leader wrote to me recently and stated: "Global Mission I do not see as a priority, unless you mean calling people from dynamic, fast-growing Third World churches to come over here and staff the offices."

4. There seems to be a preoccupation with political issues and with social issues to the neglect of evangelical outreach.

5. Many of us sense a growing emphasis on the power and position of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Finally, what does all this mean in terms of our own course of action as congregations and pastors?...We of course need to seek the Lord's will in prayer as we confront the several options which are before us; we need to pray that what we do and the decisions we make will be to the glory of Christ Jesus and to the upbuilding of His Kingdom.

What then are the possible scenarios for pastors and congregations?

1. Remain in the ALC and work through district and general conventions to bring about the needed changes in the proposed constitution and by-laws of the new Lutheran Church.
2. Remain in the ALC and work for these changes; however, if no significant changes are made in the CNLC proposals, then vote "no" to the constitution and by-laws during the congregational referendum between Sept. '86 and Feb. '87.

3. Remain in the ALC until March 1987 and then decide depending upon the outcome of the referendum.

4. Leave the ALC at this time and either join another Lutheran synod (Missouri, ELS, AFLC, Wisconsin) or become an independent Lutheran and associate with a group like the World Confessional Lutheran Association.

5. Leave the ALC after March 1987 and either join another Lutheran synod or become an independent Lutheran congregation.

6. Take no action and become a part of the new Lutheran Church on January 1, 1988.
VI. CONCLUSION:

Of course the conclusion to this talk and the final decision regarding which of the above options you as congregations and pastors will choose cannot yet be written. We will all need to ask ourselves whether we can in good conscience accept the new constitution and by-laws of the new Lutheran Church on the basis of our own congregational constitutions. For most of us this decision will depend on the outcome of these next months of negotiation.

My prayer is that the District (synod) Conventions and the General Conventions of our churches will be sensitive to the concerns that are being raised by conservative and evangelical congregations and pastors throughout the merging churches. I also pray that we who take issue with the Commission for a New Lutheran Church will also exercise charity and patience as we work hard to influence the shape and direction of this proposed new Lutheran Church. To this end may the Lord Jesus Christ grant us His grace.
APPENDIX B

JAMES E. MINOR
"THE NEED FOR AN OPTION AND THE OPTION WE NEED"
by Pastor James E. Minor
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WANDERED FROM THE FAITH

READ: I Tim. 6:20-21 (also II Tim. 1:14 which also read "spirit")
"Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care!"

1. Gospel of Jesus - forgiveness, new life, eternal life
   Law and Gospel, repentance and forgiveness of sins
   Sin and grace.

2. Turn away from godless chatter - LIVING BIBLE: "Keep out of foolish arguments with those who boast of their 'knowledge'."
   Chatter is philosophy instead of theology, ruminations by middle-aged theologians who have drifted from a child-like faith in the life, death, resurrection, ascension and coming again of Jesus.
   KJV - "Avoiding profane and vane babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called."
   RVJ - "Avoid the godless chatter and contradictions of what is falsely called knowledge."

Contradictions?

In the book CHRISTIAN DOGMATICS by Drs. Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jensen, Lutheran Professors at Lutheran Seminaries, in the preface of Vol. 1, page xvii (17) says: "Although all of us stand within the Lutheran tradition, the differences among us, and the consequent inconsistencies in the book are considerable. At some points the authors simply disagree, and this disagreement occasionally reaches the point of contradiction."

Here are Lutheran theologians, from a confessional Lutheran church--we would hope it is a confessional body, and at the outset, in the preface they caution the readers that they often disagree and sometimes go so far as to contradict each other.
This is an example of godless chatter, and contradictions that Paul warns Timothy about in I Tim. 6: 20-21. We are asked to join these theologians in the church of the latest confusion and contradictions with many compromising positions.

3. Finally Paul says to Timothy, that some, please underscore the word "some" have missed the mark. To miss the mark in Biblical language means to sin; it may be a double entendre of Paul. Not only have they sinned, but they have sinned in such a way that they have lost the faith.

KJV says "Some--have erred concerning the faith."
NIV says "Some--have wandered from the faith."

Prayer - Let us pray that those who are wandering or have wandered from the faith will return to the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, and return to the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God, the Holy Bible.

THE REASON FOR THE NEED OF AN OPTION

What is the authority of the Word of God?

(READ the United Testimony on Faith and Life, approved 1952 by the uniting churches (ALC handbook, page 349.) - inspired, inerrant and infallible - same words in ALC Constitution of 1960.)

Do you believe that the Lord Jesus walked on water? The gospel lesson for today says that our Lord Jesus walked on water. Do you believe in miracles? Rudolph Bultmann, in 1941, wrote his essay on the "New Testament and Myths" and he demythologized the Bible. Since then the movement to declare that the miracles are not or may not be factual has continued to spread throughout our theological seminaries, and colleges. Braaten and Jensen deal with Miracles on page 282 and 283 of Vol. 2 - Dogmatics. They say first of all that "miracles are intrinsically related to the work of salvation." Then they go on to say: "Of course one could object that miracles are literary devices to underscore the reality of God's salvational activity. Thus there might be no historical reality that pertains to them. "We must concede the possibility that miracles
may have been attributed to people simply to enhance their status, that is, their special relationship to the gods. It should not be excluded that some of the miracles attributed to Jesus may have no historical basis and serve only to emphasize his exceptional status (Vol. 2, pp 282/283).

I say to you that all of the miracles in the Bible are true! We believe that the N.T. miracles reveal to us the deity of our Lord Jesus; that he is one with God and has the power of God. We deny that these miracles were written by other people just to enhance the status of Jesus or written to emphasize his exceptional status.

If these modernist theologians are correct, then the Bible is a book of some lies about Jesus, and we know that the Lord Jesus himself taught that the devil is the father of all lies.

**ARE JESUS' WORDS TRUE**

Are the words of Jesus recorded in the Gospels and epistles true? The modernist theologian, whose god is humanistic knowledge and philosophy, questions the validity of the words of Jesus in the scriptures. One theologian examines a gospel record and says, "Oh yes, Jesus said that." The second modernist theologian examines the same text and says, "No, Jesus did not say that; perhaps the Gospel writer or his church people years later attributed their sayings to Jesus." The third modernist theologian says, "Maybe Jesus said it, and maybe Jesus didn't say it; we can't say for sure, so we should take it seriously if not literally." This theology of doubt is godless chatter, and contradictions that Paul warned Timothy about. I have said this at many meetings with Bishops and other Pastors in attendance; not one has ever said that I unfairly represented the modernists' position because they know that is a brief summary, in lay language, of what the famous Swedish theologian, Gustaf Aulen, addresses in his little book simply entitled "Jesus": Modern theology is full of contradictions; but we in the American Association of
Lutheran Churches say, together with 3½ million other American Lutherans, we believe that what is attributed to Jesus was actually said by Jesus. Our Lord Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth!" It was the devil in Genesis who asked Eve, "Did God say?" Those raising questions about the veracity of Jesus words are asking questions inspired by the devil, not by the Holy Spirit.

This is why we need an option to merger; to stand for the truth.

CHURCH GROWTH

What is the record of the ALC and LCA during the last 20 to 25 years of ministry in America? The LCA reported in the Lutheran magazine in the fall of 1986 that they lost 13,000 members. The Lutheran Standard of July, 1987, reports that the ALC lost over 12,000 members. During one year, the merging churches report net losses of about 26,000 members.

This continues a 20-year decline in membership of the ALC and I suppose the LCA. During 25 years, the ALC started 945 congregations; but during the same period they closed 942 congregations. These same church leaders are promising a hundred and fifty new churches per year. How many churches will be closing? In about 25 years the ALC had a net gain of only three congregations. Is that something to boast about?

I could quote Dr. Lloyd Svendsbye, Dr. David Preuss and an official ALC report of June, 1981, all of which deplore the decrease in membership in the ALC.

During the same period that the ALC opened a net of only three congregations, the AFLC INCREASED from 47 congregations to 151 congregations. The Wisconsin Lutheran Synod increased from 878 congregations to 1,139 congregations; a gain of 251 congregations; the LCMS had some growth during most years. It is the merging churches which have lost members and closed churches. The trend in the ALC and LCA toward a loose interpretation of scripture and permissive practices in our society has led Lutherans to vote with their feet--out of the merging
churches. Now we have the opportunity; a God-given opportunity to withdraw from this dying dinosaur and to bring new life and new hope to the Lutheran people who stand up for Jesus.

SOCIAL ISSUES

I won't rehearse for you all of the details of the last five years when many Lutheran Bishops and Pastors of these merging churches voted by majority votes in favor of the MCC Statement on Homosexuality or voted to retain the pornographic films used by Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota. One bishop elect assured me that our protests had been heard, and that LSS/MN no longer showed 20 minutes of pornographic film; now they only show 17 minutes of pornographic films. Compromise and accommodation are the acceptable style of many who are eager for the merging church.

Bishop Chilstrom reported to a congregation in the Dakotas that he had only ordained three homosexuals in his years as Bishop of Minnesota for LCA and they had promised not to practice homosexual activity (to be celibate). There was apparently no call for repentance, nor the new life in Christ. During their ministry, they promise not to act out homosexual behavior, BUT, once they retire, they are free to return to their sinful life. They did not renounce homosexuality as a sin, they apparently only promised to refrain from this sin during a life of ministry. This is the compromise of faith and the new life that we object to.

(PAUSE) These are some of the reasons why we need an option of the merger.

In politics, they say that if you can't respond to a person's policies, then you attack the person; if attacking the person doesn't work, then you attack the person's family or dog! When we raise theological questions, quoting from books, journals, and Lutheran publications, in some places some leaders call some of us liars. Some also charge that we may be "bearing false witness" which is breaking the commandments. Every AALC speaker that I have heard has
quoted the facts from ALC and LCA materials. When someone writes or speaks on a topic, they may be quoted; it is quite correct to point out the errors of their theologies. Jesus, Paul, Peter, John and Jude all spoke out against false teachers; and warned the people not to listen to them.

The reformers were pretty tough about pointing out the false theologies of the Catholics and other Christians of their day. We cannot be silent in our time; for every day, more and more Lutherans are leaving Lutheran churches to find a place where the truth of Christ may be heard.

THE OPTION WE NEED

The response of many to the idea that we form a group as an alternative to the option has been great! "That's just what we need." Discouraged by the drift in theology and practices in the merging churches, we were looking for a way out.

The way out is for ALC churches to form an alternative fellowship to the ELCA, the merger of the ALC, the LCA, and the former members of the Missouri Synod, The AELC.

1. Scripture

We are coming together in the American Association of Lutheran Churches around the basic Christian theme that the Lord Jesus is the Savior of the world. We want to be specific in the face of universalistic trends in those merging churches; we say the Lord Jesus is the only way to salvation.

We also want to say that the Bible is the inspired word of God. We believe that it is the Spirit of God who has given us this Bible. We believe that God inspired human writers to take their style and information and record for us what was necessary for us to know in order to be saved and to live for Jesus. We love the Bible in the same way that our forefathers in the faith loved the Bible as the treasure house or cradle of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus.
We are unashamedly committed to the GREAT COMMISSION of Jesus. We believe this Gospel of forgiveness, new life and eternal salvation is for the whole world.

From the very beginning, our hearts have been charged up with the idea that we need to move out in evangelism at home, and missions overseas to bring this good news to the world in so far as the Holy Spirit uses us before our Lord Jesus returns in power and authority to judge the living and the dead. Evangelism and mission are our two main themes. We believe that the Gospel is the power of God to salvation to the Jew first and also the the Greeks. (Romans 1:16-17) To the Jews and to the non-Jews; to every tribe and race on earth we are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus. We believe that apart from faith in Jesus Christ a person is lost in sin and unbelief and will be judged at the last day by a Holy God for his/her unbelief, unrepentant and sinful condition.

We do not bat an eye or waffle a bit— as the modernist theologians do— when face to face with other religious claims. We must and will proclaim that there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved; no name but Jesus name. This is the faith of our spiritual parents in the Lutheran and Christian churches in which we have been raised.

II. Congregation

We believe that the local congregation is the most important unit of any church body. We intend, with God's help, to provide the support and the vision which will enable the congregation to be the Spirit-led front line of the Army of God, in Christ. The local congregation should have control of its own affairs; and we have modified our constitution to allow a congregation to withdraw from the American Association of Lutheran Churches in accordance with the rules of its own constitution. In other words, the local congregation controls its own destiny. As long as we walk in fellowship in the American
Association of Lutheran Churches, then we walk together. However, any congre-
gation which is led in some other path by the Spirit, we freely let them go,
believing God will deal with their leaders and people in His own good timing and
we don't need Bishops or Boards to dictate to the people.

We will have some congregations, and already have a couple, who for local
reasons will not officially become part of our fellowship. These associated
congregations may have their pastor on our clergy roster; probably will take part
in our insurance and pension plans, and will participate in evangelistic
missions of this American Association of Lutheran Churches.

One church I visited in Minnesota had been independent for about 50 years
in their history. Their Pastor had been president of a small Lutheran synod and
they allowed him to do this, although they never officially joined that synod.
Such things were possible and are still possible in our Lutheran fellowships.

III. Pastors

We will have many Pastors ready and willing to join a Lutheran fellowship
that honors the Lord Jesus as the Savior of the world, and which honors the
Bible as the inspired, inerrant and infallible word of God. We have applica-
tions already from ALC, LCA and other Lutheran ministers. We have some semi-
narians who want to join us, and more will be raised up by the Holy Spirit.

We have Lutheran and independent seminaries that are willing to train our
students and we have a vision for a seminary which will honor the Lord and his
word right into and through the 21st Century until Jesus comes again.

Some of those here have already received recommendations for Pastors who
may lead their congregations as they join the American Association of Lutheran
Churches, or become independent congregations for some time.

IV. The Board of Trustees has already done a great job of planning for a
Pension and Medical plan for our Pastors. We are about ready to proceed with
the implementation of this benefit package; which we believe will match most
ALC, LCA plans and, in some cases, exceed their benefits. Pastors will not be left to drift without modern protection for them and their families.

The AALC is going and growing, the Lord Jesus has provided us with furniture for our offices, a computer, and a marvelous, new copy machine; all without cost to our newly formed group. We have been careful with our funds, and have taken action to hire the most important people for our staff; a couple of fine secretaries. Volunteers are handling speaking assignments and the tasks of the entire group; this is indeed a group with its foundations in the congregation.

Conclusion

We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord.

We proclaim: Grace alone
Faith alone
Word alone.
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1986d City hopes to bring church offices here. Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 12 January, 3 (B).
1986e Lutheran leaders face difficult odds for merger. Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 13 April, 1 (B) and 4 (B).
1986f Lutheran merger gives church a strong identity. Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 31 August, 1 (A) and 14 (A).
1986g Lutheran merger hits snag. Minneapolis Star and Tribune, 6 April, 1 (A) and 10 (A).
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<thead>
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<td>1986j</td>
<td>Lutherans to seek a final pact on merger. <em>Minneapolis Star and Tribune</em>, 23 August, 1(B) and 2(B).</td>
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<td>1986k</td>
<td>New name for Lutheran church has a familiar ring for a few. <em>Minneapolis Star and Tribune</em>, 5 March, 1(A).</td>
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<td>Old-time religion lures unhappy Lutherans to a new congregation. <em>Minneapolis Star and Tribune</em>, 8 April, 1(A) and 8(A).</td>
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<td>Two Lutheran leaders say they're hopeful church merger can go through on time. <em>Minneapolis Star and Tribune</em>, 24 June, 3(B) and 5(B).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>New church challenged, 22 February</td>
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<td>Lutherans Chicago bound?</td>
<td>23 October</td>
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<td>Lutheran Splinter</td>
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<td>1986b</td>
<td>Lutherans pick Milwaukee</td>
<td>5 March</td>
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<td>1986c</td>
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<td><strong>The Christian News</strong></td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Lutheran Informed for Truth organized</td>
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<td><strong>The Commission for a New Lutheran Church</strong></td>
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<td>1983a</td>
<td>Progress report #1</td>
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<td>18 November</td>
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<td>1984a</td>
<td>Report to 1984 church conventions</td>
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<td>1984b</td>
<td>Progress report #4</td>
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<td>ALC leaders reaffirm their commitment to plan to merge churches</td>
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