Walt Lampi Speeches

Ministers camp 2016

Walt Lampi: [15:30] It is difficult to think about these things. The presentations that we have heard and in view of the different meetings. Agree with my spirit … For many of us, not so close to the details. We trust that the Lord has appointed various brothers. I would see questions about this … my children in various parts of Minnesota … cause people to stop and realize that this is a very serious matter. Need to ask for the guidance of His spirit, not put forth our own feelings or thoughts. Have the humility of the spirit … I am frightened. my own flesh and blood … those of us who have lived through the heresy. Concerned that there is a wrong spirit. I pray to God that he would guide us. I feel the same spirit as the brother that presented [18:17]

Walt Lampi [12:55]: … question, what is the effect of the sermon? Thinking back to the sermon … the sermon caused dissent. I personally listened to it. I personally was concerned with a particular part of it. Of course, we know that the spirit is a spirit of unity … Yet, as said [there was] dissent and confusion, accusations … and so forth. That is coming down into the congregation. Personally, I don't think that it is only words, weak words … spirit … thought of some people, might feel it is a sermon of concern and some people think that it is a good sermon. I think the gift to discern is given to some people and not to all people. We cannot think that everyone is going to agree or disagree … It has caused … The Holy Spirit … I just think there is a real issue.

Walt Lampi [43:25]: Scriptures instruct … to preaching the gospel. My mother went into heresy. I was called to the emergency room, seeing she had [gone into a coma]. When she came to, the first thing that she said was, will you bless me? I said, yes, I can do that. Believe all your sins forgiven in Jesus' name [and blood] – you can believe even the sin of heresy and false spirit. She said, you know, I never understood that. I told her that we can visit about it. I went to visit her. She was back … My thought is that … wasn't that small. So, fast forward quite a few years to the end of her life … went into some kind of medical state where she tried to speak but it was [disoriented] it was not Finn … it was a strange [laughter] We went to visit her. My sister said, was it a coma or similar. She was just laying there. My sister [said] why don't you try to speak Finnish to her. I tried. There was zero response. I asked my wife, why don't you try to say something to her. She was reluctant … [recognize] her name grandma … She opened her eyes. [She had] five minutes max of lucid thought. We basically asked her, does she want to believe? Does she want us to bless her? She said, yes. So, we did. She expressed her … then she went back into whatever it was. She died within a few days. The point being … thief on the cross … needed more clarification … We just preached [the gospel]. We leave it in God's hands. You know, some of these situations [are not always] so clear. [47:10]

- Walt Lampi [1:40:15]: I will just relate my personal psalm. It has been good to be here. I came with reluctance and tried to find excuse why I could stay home. It has been good to be here. It is a very important meeting. It seems that … in spite of the fact that I have been in this office [for] quite a few years. [I have had this thought], maybe it was a mistake [to be in this office]. As many have said, I feel more and more that I need the assurance of the brothers in service … Am I really a child of God? I need

encouragement. I feel myself poor and weak, to encourage others, because I need this encouragement myself. It has been good to be here. I marvel, too, at the gifts of so many people [who are] experienced … brothers … I realize that God has placed in particular places those that [the gifts to] serve at that place and at that time. Most of all, I need … ask that you speaker brothers bless me [1:42: 46]

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LLC Board member's workshop 29 April 2017

Walt Lampi: It's good to be here. I enjoyed the presentation. I believe it was just the way that the brother presented. I think it's a good discussion. I think we have much to be thankful for the children of God, even if we're not servants in some way. It's a very blessed thing to be able to see God's kingdom in all of her beauty and her majesty. And to be on this path that leads to eternal life, I'm sure, and hopefully, if we did a poll today and asked. each of you, what is more important that you get to heaven, or that you're a servant of the kingdom in some way, I'm sure, and hope that we would all answer that most of all, it's important that I would be a child of God and get to heaven. I came to live here in Minnesota about three months back. I was not only in part aware of the many questions that have arisen, some of which we saw on that screen. So, I related to some of the brothers that we are kind in our own world of experience and so forth. But I want to say, as one of my points, since coming here, being part of the work of the Kingdom on a five day a week plus basis, working with the staff of the LLC and meeting many other brothers and sisters that work in the vineyard that I have felt nothing but love and kindness.

36:26

I'll be pointed in this particular thought that I've never seen heavy handedness by anybody that I've worked with that is part of the LLC board. I've been part of their meetings and many discussions. I think it's important to say that, but that's my experience. The other thought I had was one that Sam had put up there. I happened to have read something in Finnish years ago, and it's the same thought. The first place of watching is to care for our own consciences. If we lose that, the enemy of the soul can lead us in any kind of direction. [It would] probably be like Jesus said to Peter, Satan desires to sift you as wheat. And that's what he would do. So, there again. I don't think we can overemphasize that in the life of a servant of God, board member, speaker, any child of God. Of course, that matter of taking care of the conscience. And I know there's a lot of, to me, very strange comments that I've heard that stem from different parts of our Zion of America. I don't know where they come from, and I don't know if anybody does, but it's necessary, and it's good that we always gather around God's word, as we are doing today, to ponder, what does God's Word say? Of course, that requires a childlike mind, too, because the Scripture is not of any private interpretation, where we can make our own way and we make our own call, but we can we in God's kingdom through the power of the Spirit. We understand God's word in the way that it is intended by those that wrote with the inspiration of the Spirit. So I think that's important too, because once I was confronted with that question or more of an accusation that I had said or intended that no one should study the scripture in private. And of course, we encourage that, but it's also good that understanding, that we individually can certainly make some big mistakes in understanding and context and so forth. So, we need that

humility when we approach God's word to read and study and to ask is it says the way that the children of God understand.

But the other thing I want to point out. I hope that the brothers won't be offended. There were three speeches today that I wasn't sure where the brothers were coming from. I went to the back room during the break to seek clarification. If I understood [correctly]. I think it'd be good if those were clarified. John Lehtola mentioned about times that have passed when there was kind of a spirit of hierarchy, or Lordship, or however it may be characterized. I thought I detected a worry that this question came in. [Is he] worried that we have such a situation today. And so, I went and talked to him, and he said that, No, he doesn't believe that that is the case today, but that in times past that, it had gone to that kind of extreme mark where boards or leaders were authoritative. My personal view, understanding of God's Kingdom is I don't see that. I see the humility and kindness that I have expressed. [There is a] willingness to serve Him, faithfulness, all the things that were described in the presentation and many more. So, I think God's kingdom here in North America has a very bright future. And I think that, just like Eric had mentioned, that is still time for this discussion. Some of these things should be discussed. But I think when we say something, it can be taken differently too. Like I jumped to the conclusion that John was worried about the way we have this kind of situation. He assured me, he didn't feel that way.

42:22

I thought that one other brother that I spoke to wasn't sure what was behind his comments. It was Craig, our brother. Craig, there was nothing wrong with the words. But then we had a good conversation. He had his concerns and his issues too, and fears and so forth. I think we can all have fears. I have fears at times too. Public speaking is one of my better suits [?], even though I'm not a speaker. So, it's kind of a strange combination. But I thought that I just wondered if there was more to the speeches, and I talked to Ken Haapala. I wondered about love. I believe that love is the central issue. God is love, and we need to love one another with that love of the undying soul. There's human love and that kind of love too. But there again, I'm just being free. I wondered if Ken felt that there was no love. To me, it seems like there's love. But you know, the enemy of the soul is a pretty clever being. He has caused, even in these recent times, all kinds of issues and people to push forth strange understandings of doctrines that are not according to God's word. But we have such a blessed time, such a blessed situation where we can be together and, in the light, and the Spirit of God's word, discuss things. As in one of my discussions. Certainly, if we believe something, strongly believe we have the right understanding, and we should speak about it. But I think that has to be tempered with humility. I know myself that I've gone up the clock [?] like we say it. And I think I'm right in my understanding, only to find out that I don't have the right understanding. And I think we need that mind of a child and humility when we have questions: is it so? What does the congregation think? And have that approach instead of being -- I can remember going to one meeting years and years ago. I was so sure I understood things, and I was so completely wrong. But it was a learning process. You got to ask for the help of God, for the guidance of the Spirit. If I'm not a speaker, it doesn't mean anything. But I want to remain a child with God. I want to remain on the path. So, I probably won't talk [much] longer anymore. These were the psalms of my heart.

46:41

Let's realize that we are part of God's kingdom. That's a great gift. 40 years ago, many of us almost lost it. [It was] the times of heresy. Many of the issues that are talked about today are very similar to 40 years ago. So, we're worried about that and worried, like so many thoughts have been about teachers and heresy and so forth. They're very similar. But let's be thankful that God has given us His kingdom. But let's realize that we're just little boys in this kingdom too. We're not all-knowing and all-seeing, and I've experienced that. I wanted to say that, too. Working with the brothers, there's such concern that the work of the Kingdom would be done in love and patience, and according to God's word. I was amazed. I have to say that I've been probably too much of a Yooper, to put it that way. I've been up in the boondocks. It is kind of half frozen up there. I come and be immersed in the work. And I see this diligence, and its carefulness to do the work according to God's will and spirit. I got to be so thankful for that. But let's not -- let's be united in our battle against the three-fold enemy. Let's not let him trip us up and have us hold on to some thoughts that may not even be correct. I related to one of my relatives that passed away. He was so strong in his understanding and his thoughts, what he believed. He traveled in God's kingdom for 60 some years. He left and died in unbelief. He had that view of God's Kingdom in the end that he didn't even know where it was anymore. I mean, was critical of what was taking place, and critical of the workers of the kingdom. He just completely lost sight of the mother, never again to see her again, to see her in her beauty, or find that place of repentance. So, this is, you know, to me, it's -- I want to be thankful, and I want to be in the care of God's kingdom. This is a good place to be. I experienced the motions of sin corruption. How easily I could go astray, if it were not for the care of God's Kingdom or not for the throne of grace that has been set in our midst. It would not be a long time, if we didn't have the hearing of God's Word or fellowship with His children. But the enemy is attacking us. We need to really, really -- if people have had wrong understandings, you know what? You know what the solution to that is, it's the gospel. It's to put things away in Jesus' name and blood. Not just to say, well, I'll stop talking about that, that go over to that or something. It's like in the name and the blood of Jesus. Put people's pride away and become little children again in God's kingdom. I want to be a child of God. I ask that. Can I believe?

50:58

Minister's Teleconference, 11/2/2017 at LLC Office

Prayer: Jim Jurmu

Keith Waaraniemi: Welcome. Adrian is taking care of technical details. Next year it is on November 1.

Walt Lampi: Opening presentation. We are living trying times. Thanks for the faith that we have, and that we have been preserved in faith. How do I know that this is God's kingdom? It is through the power of the gospel that I experience. It is not found elsewhere. We have a bright future. He gave examples the pastoral committee work, education committee, home and family, camp renovations, Silver Springs, building projects. These have been told of in LLC updates. I have experiences personally, while working this past year at the LLC office. It is transparent – joy, peace, etc. There are signs of life. Luther says: he would plant an apple tree today, even if he knew the world would end tomorrow. We have unity with

SRK and SFC. It was apparent at the April meeting in 2017. It was positive and uplifting. We had many days of discussions. We talked about forgiveness, sacraments, etc. An operating plan was prepared. This unity is only through the Holy Spirit.

Sacraments have been discussed four times this year. There has been a question about whether or not there is forgiveness in communion. The latest issue of Paivamies talks about communion. We have not found differences in our understandings. I have to lament of the unrest in North American Christianity. It is not because of a power struggle, personality differences, differences of opinion, etc. We have a plea for God's help. The gospel is powerful and is able to help.

Why the unrest? What is the issue? It is because of defiled conscience and rationalization. I will address five different points. 1) Forgiveness and communion, 2) Birth control, 3) carnal view of God's kingdom, its teachings and teachers, 4) not letting go of the 1970s and 1980s, 5) contacts in Finland.

1) Forgiveness comes through the oral proclamation. Some say that this is not the only way. It can be received through prayer and communion, as well. Some say that forgiveness is never withheld. There is a reluctance to forgive the past errors. There is a reluctance to preach the gospel in sermons. Some say that there is continual forgiveness (my sins are always forgiven). Discussion about the robe of righteousness. Confession has lost its value (for some).
2) Birth control. It is a background issue. The Bible does not prohibit it (thus it is okay). There are two messages out there on birth control. Some say that it is a matter that is just between the couples.
3) Carnal view of God's kingdom. Some say that Finland preaches grace. There has been discussion about watchmen on the walls. Past decisions have been made by man (sports, social drinking, etc.). There has been talk about self-righteousness. People have been critical of sermons. There has been an intense study of Luther, etc. It is good on the one hand. But why? Trying to prove a point? Some people have their own private interpretation of Scripture, by-passing the kingdom's understanding.
4) Caretaking in the 1970s and 1980s. People are referring to the authoritarian leadership of the Large Firstborn heresy. Continued today? The 1970s was driven by law-minded people. Since it happened in Finland, it was so here as well. We should not talk about heresies in sermons (some say).
5) Contacts in Finland. It is this way in Finland (they say). There is one-mindedness. Who is different? They have a negative view of the kingdom. They are against people in positions of leadership. They don't have a healthy view of the kingdom as a pillar and ground of truth, the mother, etc. One needs to put away bitterness and sin (Which is causing this understanding).

Lastly, we (ministers) are watchmen. What can we do? Be faithful. Keep your conscience pure. Help the troubled ones in love. We are not fighting each other. Love is returned with the gospel. What we believe is written in the Bible. We need the full armor of faith. This has been a confession of my faith.

Walt Lampi [Full presentation]: [12:15] God's peace! It's … a presentation. It is a good thing to stand before the servants of God to keep a presentation. So, I have to say that I feel my poorness and inadequacy ask for your prayer and blessing. Can I hear the gospel? The times that we live are trying. Dear brothers, I first thank God for the gift of faith and the hope of eternal life that we have and for caring for and preserving us in his kingdom. Recently someone asked me that how do I know that this is God's kingdom? I answered, I personally experienced the power of the gospel in my life and witnessed it in the lives of others. That is why I believe this is God's kingdom. This life-giving gospel is not found in other faiths. There is a bright future for North American Zion. I will explain why. There is a heart to do the work. It is evident in the various work forms within the LLC, such as pastoral and Christian education, home and family, mission and publications, and Stony Lake and Camp Kipa renovation projects, and Silver Springs and Saskatchewan camp purchases, and in the local congregation building projects, such as Monticello and Elk River, and as related from the LLC update. I can personally witness being here for nine months that the staff works in a transparent way characterized by love, peace, patience, weakness, gentleness, goodness and temperance for all people. These are signs of life and hope for the future. The willingness to plant … even suspect that the end of time is near. Unity with our sister organizations, SRK and SFC, the April meeting with our sister organization representatives was positive and uplifting. It has been noted in several presentations and updates as well as in the Voice of Zion. We had several days of discussion on such weighty topics, as the sacraments, current concerns, forgiveness of sins and many other matters. The LLC, SRK, SFC have written a plan for guiding the many areas of mutual work for the kingdom on an international level mission work. Such unity is only possible if the Holy Spirit is guiding and leading.

Sacraments: The sacraments were discussed four times this year, including the spring meeting with our sister organizations, most recently at the Stony Lake Bible camp. Finnish and American brothers shared in the presentations. In recent times the following question has risen. Does one receive absolution in communion? The most recent Paivamies Reformation 500 article is on communion. It gives a simple answer to that question. "Sins can be forgiven in only one way, by believing the absolution from sin proclaimed by a child of God." These occasions were God-given, meaning these various times that we had to discuss these timely matters. These occasions were God-given [enabled us] to compare how we believe with Scripture, confessional writings and … understandings in our faith with our brethren in the SFC and SRK. We have not found even the slightest difference either in doctrine or in spirit.

Peace and Unrest: Even on the one hand, we rejoice and are thankful, we lament that there is unrest and a different mindedness with some in North American Zion. The Holy Spirit does not cause this. It is not the result of misunderstandings, differences of opinion, personality conflicts or power struggles. It cannot be resolved by compromise. It is the result of the successful planting of the seeds of doubt by the enemy. The situation is impossible to solve with human effort. Yet with God all things are possible. We cannot bear witness to how he can open even the coldest heart. And we plead for his help. The most powerful attacks against God's kingdom are no match for the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation for all that believe.

At this point we get into, we could say, matters or points of view that are difficult to describe. It is unknown why there is unrest now or if there is a single underlying issue or source. Although in general, unrest comes from a defiled conscience and the rationalization of Scripture, the following are some positions or statements that individuals have taken and yet some observations. They are offered as a point of beginning for our discussion. There are five points. I will read them. They are major headings. Each heading has a subpoint that we can use to consider the main point. The first point. The following positions taken on forgiveness in communion have caused questions and seem to contradict themselves. That is the first point. We will come back to that. Second, birth control seems to be a background issue. The third point – a carnal view of God's kingdom, the office of the Holy Spirit and distrust of individuals. Caretaking mistakes of the 1970s and 1980s seems to be a prism through which some [people] view current Zion (the fourth point). The fifth point is contacts in Finland.

So, back to the first point. The following positions taken, forgiveness, confession. The oral preaching of forgiveness. We could step back and say. I am not making statements that are my point of view, but points of view that have been offered to me through emails and personal conversations and through discussion. The oral preaching of forgiveness is not the only way to way receive forgiveness. There are other ways, prayer and communion being two examples. Those are coming from individual people. The congregations ~~that~~ feel that. I think this part of the presentation is to try to give a feel for, we could say, what is out there. Some say that there is never a situation, which the gospel cannot be preach. We have heard that before. On the other hand, there seems to be a reluctance to forgive the errors of the past. It seems that in some sermons, there is a reluctance to freely preach the core message of the gospel. Some maintain that since we have a righteousness of Christ, we are always forgiven. [There are] discussions of the robe of righteousness, and do not need to continually hear the gospel. Confession and its place as a grace privilege seems to be losing its value with some. So, here again I feel like … part of this that we see in here, but we don't perfectly understand all that is taking place. But these are, we could say, symptoms or characteristics.

Point two. Birth control seems to be a background issue. I will quote a couple of people that said close to the same thing – words of the Bible/ God/ Jesus don't forbid birth control. This seems to be related to the theological concept of adiaphora as a justification for one's action. This is what the Bible does not strictly forbid, [such] is permissible. I have heard reference to this. Another quotation coming from a sister in a certain congregation. There are two messages coming from the pulpit in one congregation, referring to birth control (Minneapolis). Open-ended instruction on reproductive issues strictly between the couple and the doctor, whereas the reminder to keep faith and a good conscience, where that is pointing to.

Third point. A carnal view of God's kingdom and the office of the Holy Spirit and distrust of individuals. American preachers preach the law while the Finnish brothers preach grace. Some don't accept the teaching of ministers/ board members as watchmen on the wall. Past positions and warnings made in North American Zion were merely the decisions of men, rules, law-minded, for example sports, personal aberrations [make-up], social drinking. Again, these are based on personal firsthand commentaries, those particular [points]. Accusation of self-righteousness or work

righteousness. Critical examination of sermons. A quote from a sister that was far away. “I once believed that way”. What she was referring to was the doctrines and teachings of Laestadians. She is still part of the certain congregation. One is not able to tell by looking at her why, who is the … Intense study and examination of [Lutheran] presentations from Finland and USA. Of course, we have to say that the study of spiritual topics is common in living Christianity and is helpful when it is done in faith and humility as a student of the word. We could question, are they done in a search of something which would overturn long-held understandings or a legalistic mind of trying to prove a point. Also perhaps related to that, private interpretation of the Bible. Some believe that the spirit can reveal to an individual differently than to the congregation. That comes also from a personal firsthand contact.

Point four. Caretaking mistakes of the 1970s and 1980s seem to be a prism through which some now view American Zion. Reference to the first-born heresy in Lapland, elders, the first-born heresy included an authoritarian, controlling and unforgiving approach. It seems that some see a parallel to North American Christianity. The caretaking in the 1970s in Finland was driven by some law-minded spirit in the past, therefore all caretaking of that period is dismissed by some because of the errors that were made. What is in Finland comes to America. Also, we hear, we should not talk about heresies, because it causes heresies. It, of course, is not based on Scripture.

The fifth point. Contacts in Finland. The comment is sometimes heard that in Finland it is understood this way or something similar to that. What does the individual really mean? As noted already, we enjoyed a unity of spirit with the Finnish brethren and on all matters of Christian doctrine. The understandings of various issues have been of one-mindedness. We can ask: who in Finland would understand it differently? If there is one underlying commonality, it seems to be a negative view of God’s kingdom. Some positions or statements referred to are directed toward individuals or boards, some are directed towards the doctrines and beliefs that we have. Some are false doctrine. They seem to indicate a distrust of brothers that God has called into positions of trust and a distrust of the teachings of our faith. Where does it lead? When one starts to feel that he doesn’t belong and yet persists in his wrong understandings. We don’t see it in any of the above noted positions. That is not all the positions or statements that people have made. We don’t see the above noted positions a healthy view of God’s kingdom, such as pillar and foundation of truth, household of God, the office of the Holy Spirit, support for spiritual duty of boards, or anything positive. The love and beauty of the congregation of God as the mother of us all can only be restored by putting away sin and resulting bitterness that has collected on the heart and blinded the eyes.

The final part here, dear brothers, is personal, as I must take it personal. We are watchmen on the walls of Zion. Dear brothers, we have our own place of watching, too. Let us keep faith and a good conscience and live of the gospel. Let us remain faithful to the word. Preach it at all times. Grace abundant and with truth. Understand that this is not just a Midwest problem. Help those who are troubled to open their hearts and speak. Encourage them of the gospel. Encourage dialogue and visiting. Do so with love and respect. We are not battling against each other but against the enemy of the soul. Emphasize that the love and trust can only return when the matters are cared for with

the gospel. Wrong watching, erroneous statements, accusations whether public or private are sin. Emphasize that what we believe is based on scripture and the teachings of the spirit in the congregation. Avoid debates and arguments. Be united in spirit. Remember, we must give an account of the souls of others. Pray for those who are troubled that none would be lost. Remember that we need the full armor of God in these matters. Brothers, let us bring the battle onward in the path that our king has trod, where our hero goes before us with his vestures dipped in blood. When I was given the assignment, which for me was a major assignment, I was urged to confess my faith. So, this is a confession of my faith. [33:15]

RLLC Discussion afternoon. Walt Lampi gave the presentation on January 21, 2018

Walt's presentation

Let us pray. Holy and righteous God, our dear heavenly Father. We as your children have gathered together before your holy face and in the presence of your Holy Spirit. Dear father, we ask that you would be present with us through your spirit. Guide our discussion, so we would be strengthened in faith and be encouraged to continue in this way that leads to life eternal. Dear Father, we thank you for all of your gifts, most importantly that you have given us the gift of faith and given us God's Kingdom, which is our refuge here in time. We thank you also for your holy precious word, which you caused to be proclaimed to us. From it we receive strength and continuing faith. It is a light unto our feet and path. Dear Father, we pray that this gift of faith would be for all people, neighbors, friends and the people of our nation. But we especially pray to understand for ones who are not partakers of this Grace calling, our friends who were once with us. We pray on their behalf that you would call them back to your kingdom to repentance and the Forgiveness of sins, so they could be partakers again with us of this joy of salvation and the hope of eternal life. Dear Father, we thank you for the temporal blessings that you have given us -- our nation where we can freely gather together to discuss your word and to praise your message, the gospel of the forgiveness of sins, for the protection of this government. We thank you for this. Dear father, we enclose all of our petitions, our silent groanings in that prayer that you have given us by your Son. Our Father who art in heaven … [11:01]

First, I am going to say, God's peace. There are a lot of people here today. It is good together to discuss the many aspects of our life of faith, the reason for the hope of salvation that we have. As you can see, the presentation is a report or introductory remarks. Is not your typical presentation. This was used last year at the speaker's teleconference. When I read it at that time, it took about 15 minutes. Some of it is on a PowerPoint. About 90% of it is on Powerpoint. As you can see, it is made up of bullet points. I did not make any hard copies of it. We discussed at the office whether I should or should not. At least at this time we have decided not to distribute hard copies, because it is largely in a bullet point format. But I did make a copy for the moderator. He can go back and use the powerpoint.

Many are aware that for the last several years there has been a minister's teleconference early in November. The purpose of the teleconference is to gather the speaker brothers together.

There are 30 ministers here in southern Minnesota. In total there are 121 at this time. The purpose is to gather together and be given the opportunity to discuss the work of God's Kingdom.

There are several major bullet points and then some sub-points. The first half or two-thirds of the presentation I wanted to concentrate on, too. There's a lot of reason for thanksgiving and joy for the things that are happening in God's Kingdom. So for the people, the presentation [would not] be strictly of concerns that we have at this time. Let us not forget that there are many reasons for joy and thanks.You are able to see and read what is before you, except for some words. Otherwise, it would be long and cumbersome.

I would open the report in this way. Dear brothers, let us thank God for the gift of faith and the hope of eternal life that we have and we are caring for, and for preserving us in his kingdom. That is a personal confession [of my faith]. I was recently asked, how do I know that this is God's Kingdom. I answered. I personally experienced the power of the Gospel in my life and I have witnessed it in the lives of others. That is why I believe that this is God's Kingdom. This life-giving gospel is not found in other faiths. This question was asked to me during the time when I have lived here in Minnesota. I have been here almost 12 months. When I was asked the question, it was startling. If you read the last Voice of Zion, you can see an article that is very similar.

Here are the main bullet points that we discussed. Maybe I would back up even a little bit further. A pastoral committee has been formed. They decided that last year I would keep this presentation. They said that they would not tell me or coach me what I should write. So, it started at this point. They are my experiences from February 1st until the end of October. What have I experienced as part of the LLC staff? How do I perceive things? They are not just my thoughts. It was read through and looked at, and I was asked to clarify my thoughts. What do I mean by this point and that point? So, people had a chance to look at it.

Here are the points: We have a bright future in North American Zion. Let us not forget that. There is unity with our sister congregations [SRK, SFC], the sacraments [it became a point of discussion several times] ... Watchmen on the walls of Zion [exhortation to the speakers]. The sacraments were discussed many times this year. Why do we think that there is a bright future for the North American Zion? Because there is a heart to do the work. We can see the evidence in the various bullet points. It's evident in the various work forms within the LLC, such as gospel and Christian education, home and family, mission and publications. You can see the Stony Lake and Camp Kipa renovation projects, Silver Springs, the Saskatchewan Camp purchase, and the local congregation building projects such as Monticello and Elk River. As related, Eric Jurmu brought back many messages from the congregations [from the LLC update], which were very positive and supportive messages. And as I have personally witnessed, the LLC staff works together in a transparent way, which is characterized by love, peace, joy, patience, meekness, gentleness, forgiveness and temperance among all people. I wanted to put that in there, becausel have heard some negative comments. My time working there has been characterized by the fruits of the spirit. We talked about many sensitive matters. It is always with the love of Christ, love for the individuals. I have not seen anything that is

heavy-handed or demanding. So, all of these are signs of life and hope for the future. Luther says to plant an apple tree today, even if we see that the end of time is near. These are the signs of hope and the signs of spring.

The second point, as your recall, is the unity with the sister organizations [SFC, SRK]. This past spring, not long after I came to the office, we had a lengthy meeting with the representatives, the three chairman of the SRK and two representatives from the SFC. It took place in April. It was positive and uplifting. It has been noted in several presentations, in updates and also in the voice of Zion. There were several days of discussions. It was a special time. It was eye-opening to some degree. We talked in detail about some matters that are on the minds of some in a heavy way, the sacraments, forgiveness of sin, and many of the current concerns. We talked in openness and freedom. We exchanged about how we believe on these matters. It is probably the only time that I will be a part of it. My time of service at LLC will end this year. So we had a heavy spiritual discussion about all matters. You may have heard the saying already. The Swedish brother [Timo Lopponen] said: We have visited for three days and we have not even found a wrinkle of difference. I want you to leave you with that -- of doctrine and of spirit, there was no difference between us. There is a written plan for many of the work areas. much of it is mutual work across the kingdoms at an international level. We talked about 12 different forms. How can we work together in unity? There are many different people with different personalities that came together. You don't see that type of oneness in life. You see that only in God's Kingdom. We did see it. It was the work of the Holy Spirit. To me it was a contrast [to what one experiences in the world around us]. Such unity is only possible if the Holy Spirit is leading and guiding.

We talked about the sacraments last year. Some people seem to be questioning, what do we believe about the sacraments? We were able to discuss this topic on four different occasions. One was a spring meeting, another one was at Howard Lake [summer services], another was at the speakers and wives camp. Many of you were at the Stony Lake Reformation 500 special Bible Camp, where we had the brothers from Finland present. During the entire weekend, one of the presentations was on sacraments. We verified that we share the same understanding … about the sacraments. What their purpose is for the Believers. It was a hot button question during the recent times. Does one receive absolution in communion? In the recent Paivamies there was a Reformation 500 article on communion. It gives a simple answer. Sins can be forgiven in only one way, by believing the absolution from a child of God [29:00]. That is how we care for our conscience. During the camp in October, Antti Paananen gave a presentation. He talked about the Lord’s supper. He had pretty much the same statement. We do not receive absolution or the forgiveness of sins, the cleansing of our conscience, by taking the body and blood of Christ. These four occasions were god-given. It allowed us to compare how we believe with the scriptures and the confessional writings and long-held understandings of our faith with our brothers in the sister organizations. We did not find any difference in doctrine or in spirit. We have had peace and rest. On the one hand, we rejoice and are thankful. We lament that there is unrest and a different mindedness with some people in North American Zion. The Holy Spirit does not cause this. It is not the result of misunderstandings or differences of opinion, personality conflicts, power struggles. It cannot be resolved by compromise or negotiation. It is the result of successful planting of the seeds of doubt by the enemy. The situation is impossible

to solve with men but with God all things are possible. We can all bear witness how God can open even the coldest heart … The most powerful attacks against God's Kingdom are no match for the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation for all that believe. If we had time, one could go into a little more detail there. A major lesson in my life, when God gave the grace of repentance and faith to a couple that I knew. I thought in my mind, there is no way that they would ever come to faith. I was happily proved to be wrong. I cannot open any person's heart. Why does this happen? It is unknown to us why there is unrest? We don't know if there is a single underlying issue or source. In general, unrest comes from a defiled conscience and from rationalization of scripture. The following are some positions that individuals have taken, statements have been made and some observations. How do these positions come about? During my time here, I have talked to individuals who think and believe differently than I do on certain things. We have been able to talk about them. Comments that have been made. You may look at these and think that you have never heard this happen. You could talk to me and I may think that I have never heard that. That is not the point that we all heard everything. It gives us a background for why we are concerned. There are five main areas, positions that individuals have taken and made statements: forgiveness, confession and communion. I will just simply read them. The five major points: Christianity's position on birth control is challenged by some. The third point is a carnal viewpoint of God's Kingdom. The office of the Holy Spirit and distrust of positions. Fourth, caretaking mistakes of the 1970s and 1980s seems to be a prism through which some now view American Zion.

I will go back to the first one. The positions on forgiveness and confession. In recent times the following question has arisen. Does a person receive absolution in communion? We just talked about that one. The Paivamies article noted a simple answer -- sins are forgiven in only one way. It Is by believing the absolution of sin proclaimed by a child of God. Sub-point number two. Some say that there can never be a situation when the gospel could not be preached. On the other hand, some who say that are reluctant to forgive the errors of the 1970s and 1980s. Many of you who are here today, I do not think that you were there at that time [in the 1980s]. Some feel that there is never a situation when you cannot preach the gospel. On the other hand, they themselves do not want to forgive the errors of the 1970s and the 1980s. At the same time, a peculiar phenomenon has been noticed in some sermons. There is a reluctance to freely preach the core message of the Gospel -- believe all sins forgiven in Jesus' name and blood. There is much discussion heard about the robe of righteousness. Some maintain that since we have the righteousness of Christ, we are always forgiven. We do not need to continually hear the gospel. Confession, which is a grace gift, seems to be losing its value for some. Those were the sub points under the heading of forgiveness and confession.

Beneath second heading, Christianity's position on birth control is challenged. Some claim that the Bible does not forbid birth control. And that what the Bible does not strictly forbid is permissible. I was in a personal discussion where that came up. If you would turn to the Bible you would not find the word birth control at all. They had some sort of disconnect. The Bible speaks that the children are gifts. We should receive them. It is telling us that we do not restrict the birth of children. One mother said that there are two different messages of birth control coming from the pulpit in her congregation. That was a personal discussion. Some said that discussions about reproductive issues are strictly between the doctor and a couple. This has

sent a confusing message. There are some very difficult reproductive health issues. In this, is to trust God and a reminder to keep faith and a good conscience in these issues.

Third point, a carnal Viewpoint of God's Kingdom.The office of the Holy Spirit is entrusted to individuals. There is criticism that American ministers preach the law or are law-minded. The Finnish brothers preach grace. We discussed this point with the Finnish Brothers. Since 2017, there have been nine different Finnish and Swedish brothers that have come to America. We discuss this point. They have openly assured us they do not perceive or feel that there is any law-mindedness among the speakers here that they have interfaced with. Some are offended about the Biblical teaching that ministers and board members are watchmen on the walls of Zion. That comes from scripture. They may be fears that some people have had. We believe that God has placed ministers and board members into spiritual positions to be watchmen. Not that we don't watch in faith ourselves as individuals. We are all watchmen in the sense. Ministers and board members have a calling. Pasts positions made in North American Zion are viewed as the decisions of men, rules and law-mindedness. Examples are sports, personal adornment [makeup and earrings], social drinking and drunkenness. I have heard that question about social drinking twice since I have been here. The Bible only mentions drunkenness, so social drinking is okay. Critical accusations of self-righteousness or works righteousness are directed at ministers and others who are in the love of God's Kingdom. Some are critical of sermons which speak of the concerns of the times. There is an intense Luther study and an examination of sermons and presentations from Finland and America, which pertain to the issues of the time. The study of spiritual topics are common in Christianity, when it is done in faith and humility. It is not that we study but it's the way that we do study. It is a search for something that will overturn long-held understanding, with the idea of proving a point. Private interpretation of the Bible. Some believe that the spirit can reveal to an individual differently than to the congregation. Some speak of the authority of the Bible, but forget that the word and the congregation cannot be separated. Jon Bloomquist had a presentation about this two months ago. You cannot separate congregation from the word, Christ from the word. It is a very strange understanding.

Point four [44:09]: caretaking mistakes of the 1970s and 1980s. This seems to be the prism through which some now view American Zion. Some have made references to the First Born heresy and the Lapland elders. The First Born heresy included an authoritarian and controlling and unforgiving approach. Some seem to see a parallel to North American Christianity today. Some pointed out that the errors that were made in the 1970s caretaking. Some have pointed to the errors made in the 1970s caretaking in Finland. They have stated that the caretaking was driven by some who were law-minded. Since that was the case, all caretaking of that period was to be dismissed because of the errors … I can speak to that myself. I will say this, in my congregation in Ishpeming. We had caretaking meetings. Some of them went too far. We also had caretaking meetings that were very good for us. Once the matters are cared for, each person takes away their own part, we receive the unity of the spirit. We were able to be united and build the church, the camp and so forth. We could not have done that [otherwise]. I think the danger here is to paint everything everywhere ... One point one week and a half ago. We were able to discuss certain things with the SRK brothers. We talked about the time in the 1970s.

One brother put it quite simply in this way. God's kingdom is a battling kingdom. at that time there was a … God preserved us.God was victorious.

The final point [46:56]. Contacts in Finland. Comment is sometimes made that in Finland it is understood in this way. What does a person who is making this statement really mean? We enjoy the unity of the spirit with the Finnish brothers in all matters of Christian doctrine. Our understandings of various issues are of one-mindedness. Question -- who in Finland understands it differently? … We do not understand faith matters differently. If you looked at all of these comments. It is a negative view of God's Kingdom. That is a dangerous thing. If there is one common underlying thing, it is the view of God's Kingdom. All positions or statements made individuals or boards … is a false Doctrine. It seems to indicate a mistrust for the brothers that God has called into positions of trust. It is a mistrust of the teachings of our faith. Where does it lead? This is a question? Where does it lead when one starts to feel that he doesn't belong and yet he persists in such wrong understandings? There are wrong understandings. We can take care of them to the power of the Gospel. We are battling and remain united through the spirit in the kingdom. It is a really dangerous thing to hold on to ideas that are not supported by scripture and are not accepted in God's Kingdom. We don't see this as a healthy view of God's Kingdom. People with critical views do not see God's Kingdom as the pillar in the household of God. We believe that this is the ground in the pillar of truth. This is the way we relate to the truth of God's word. If you just see people as men in positions and decisions .. I can speak of an individual in my life who lost not only living faith but eternal life. They do not have a wholesome view of the office of the Holy Spirit or of the spiritual duty of the boards. The love and the beauty of the congregation of God as mother of some. It is restored by putting away sins. It results in bitterness, which has corrupted the heart and blinded the eyes.

The last part [50:43], since it wasn't a speaker teleconference … good to remind the speakers. Dear brothers, you have your own place of watching. We have our own place of watching in our life of faith. Let us keep faith in a good conscience. Let us live the Gospel. Let us be faithful to the word, preaching at all times with grace, love and truth. Let us understand that this is not just a problem in Minnesota or the midwest congregations. Let us help those who are troubled embolden their hearts to speak. Encourage them with the gospel. Encourage dialogue and visiting. Do so with love and respect. We are not battling against one another, but against the enemy of the soul. Let us emphasize that love and trust can only return when matters are cared for -- wrong watching, erroneous statements, accusations [public or private] are sin. We emphasize what we believe is based on scripture and the teachings of the spirit in the congregation. Avoid debates and arguments. Be united in the spirit. Remember that we must give an account for the souls of others. Pray for those are troubled, so that none would be lost. Remember … the full armor of God in these matters.

The presentation ended with the words that we sang, Let Us bravely battle onward in the path that our King has trod, for our hero goes before us with his vestures dipped in blood.

This was a presentation that was kept at the last minister’s teleconference.

Ministers camp april 2018

Walt Lampi, Friday evening: [1:54:18] Some brothers have already expressed similar thoughts that I had. I would quickly say ... I won't say briefly, because that is kind of a difficult word. When I was a kid growing up, the children of my grandfather ... my grandfather died in faith and left a testimony. But some of his children said that dad was under the law. I will make this quick. He died in faith. About fifteen years later came the so-called Torola heresy, the time of leniency and so forth. Many of those children that thought that he was law-minded went into leniency. So, as some have said —where are you? ... [You could think someone is under the] law because you are lenient. Or think [someone is lenient] because you are under the law. The other is ... I came through the time of heresy as a young person. I don't recall hardly at all what you could say warnings, admonitions that are found in Scripture concerning sin by at least the ministers in the area that I lived in at that time. I do recall that some of the people of my age went way far to the left — we could say — [into the] permissiveness of sin. I think the point that I want to make is that preaching sin as sin is not the law. It is love when it comes from the power of the spirit. As a young person, we could have used that kind of teaching. That kind of warning was not there. Worldliness was quite close to us. I think there could be other things that I could comment about. If there is time tomorrow ... [maybe I will touch on those] [1:57:36]

Walt Lampi, Saturday afternoon: [1:38:40] It's good to hear the presentation. I too felt very comforted. I do have … even when taking my speaking turn, doubts and fears. I need to be strengthened with that gospel message. It is always a challenge to get to the point even as an editor. But the thought that has reoccurred to me at different times both this weekend and over the past, I suppose, few months. I would say that it is a topic or a question of false watching. I am sure that everyone here tries to understand what has happened? Why do we hear these foreign, different voices and concepts? All I can do is express what thought comes to mind. I believe that the present-day accusations of law-mindedness are false watching. False watching is something I experienced many years back. It is easy to fall into. When you start to see something that is not really there. If you look for it, you can find it, or at least in your mind and heart you think you find it. So, I think that when we hear that law-mindedness has come from Finland back in the 1970s through certain preachers. Maybe that it is still here. That is one statement that has been made and you hear about. I do get a chance to talk to a variety of people that have a different view, a different mind, a different picture of God's kingdom. It is my opinion. But that kind of premise I would say is [exaggerated]. I interpret or perceive it that way. There is an underlying thought that there is law-mindedness or law-spiritedness or something similar to that. That is has come in the 1970s, and it is still here. I think that when we hear these different teachings of forgiveness. There is something strange about it. Something that doesn't quite ring clear. The positions that some seem to take about watchmen on the wall or robe of righteousness, or confession, or sacraments. I think they go – in my mind – back to protect that premise or thesis that some have taken that there is law-mindedness here in North America. So, it is kind of a way to protect or making a point or establishing that it is a true premise. Others have spoken, I think, in a similar way. When we talk about the care taking of the 1970s and 1980s and not being able to let go of that. We all – at least those of us who are old enough – we remember that there were excesses in the 1980s. … In the end, forgiveness was preached. I have had the opportunity, at least with a few people, [speak with people] from that time to go

back and ask them what they recall. It is without a doubt that nobody wants to go back there to experience that. Even some of the care taking [was] in a way that maybe excessive. They do not hold anything from that time. But I think that some do. It goes back to these [repeated] comments about the comparisons to Gellivare heresy or any of these dry or law-minded heresies. Kind of a premise that some of that is still the situation here or is the situation here in North America. I think it resonates, too, [with] a picture or role of the boards and local congregations, kind of a skewed view of those that [are] going back to the 1980s, and so forth, and the mistakes that were made. I think some would have a chance to discuss this with some of the brothers in Finland. Why [were] the 1980s or public statements made that refer to boards and refer to false spirits, and so forth, why were those positions statements made? When were able to visit about them. The understanding of the speakers in Finland is that boards have a spiritual responsibility. They are not Lords over the flock. It could happen that they would be Lords over the flock. They are not … But they have spiritual responsibility. We have heard it many times this weekend in reference to that presentation at board member's workshop … speakers and board members we have been called to this duty. But again, the present-day accusations of law-mindedness are false watching. To me, all of these somehow in some way connect to that basic idea. So, it is kind of like … If somebody looks for evidence of law-mindedness, law-spiritedness or something that would … Trust me, you could find those things if you look for them. You are already predetermined that [you are going to find it]. I don't want to carry it too far. But I thought that I would use an analogy from hunting. I hunt when I get a chance. Lots of times it is in the evenings. You can be standing at the edge of a swamp. You are looking. Your senses are keen. Your eyes are keen. All of a sudden, there is a deer standing there. You look. It is chewing its cud. Its ears are flickering. I look and I look, but it doesn't move. I look again. Sure, that is what it is. Finally, I realize, it was just the shadows of the trees. It is just some brush. It is how you could get that way spiritually too. So, I have this premise. I believe that the present-day accusations are false watching. I could change that into a question. Those that are thinking that way – we make a question. Are the accusations of law-mindedness false watching to those people?

Walt Lampi, Minneapolis 6 May 2018

[1:56:40] I was hoping it would be lunchtime … first I would like to say that … I have felt that John and Janelle have been very gracious to me. Janelle is kind of a chip off the block of her mother. Gracious. Always thankful. I don't feel like I have any personal history with either one of them, negative history … [Like to give my] perspective of coming to the cities 18 months ago to work at the LLC office … heard vague echoes … something happened. One of the experiences that I had was about one year back [in the spring] at this church. It was the board member's workshop. Sam Roiko gave a presentation related to the watchmen on the walls. I felt that it was very scriptural, very clear. … There were a few comments during that meeting aroused my interest as to why seemed so different. One of those comments was John's comment related [immediately] research he had… made about the law-minded spirit, the heresy from Finland[i]
[1:59:23] The people were very demanding. They withheld the gospel … I'm not sure of all of the aspects of it … I did ask John during the intermission [lunchtime] what he meant by that?

Did he [think] that it was here? I believe that he said no. Then at one other point he said that, well, what has been in Finland has come here. I think that relates to the time of Heikki Saari. That thought has been in conversations that I have had with John in smaller, one-to-one … and so forth. I asked him why he always refers to that situation? It almost seems like he is making a statement that we have a problem here. He referred to the Paivamies sentence – he even translated it for me – regarding the doctrine of the government of the household of God. It referred to a very difficult time in Finland, during the 1970s. I think that statement, as far as I have been able to gather, was written in the context of that time … can go too far. So, I asked for clarification through others in Finland. Word came back that boards do indeed have a spiritual responsibility. It is an entirely different thing if … the boards become Lords over the flock. So, I have thought … I think that … statement comes up when John was at Rockford [Mary's Day, March 2018] ... a heresy back in the 1930s … they did not trust in the power of grace, or that grace could teach – or something to that effect. So, they instituted instructions and so on and so forth.[ii] To me, to my perspective, it is telling a common theme that it is either a warning not to go there or it is a belief that we are there. … John said that he doesn't believe it. But it kind of raises its flag. Some believe there is something wrong in North American Christianity. I could say … some of the people who are here today believe that from that time of the 1970s that there was a turn in American Christianity that changed to something negative. Let's put it that way. Something bad took place in those times. I have heard that there have been many meetings in Minnesota that experienced those times too. Not all meetings of that era were bad. There may have been some here that were some here that went too far … [There were some] in the UP that went too far. But also, there was good … I share this freely with those that I talk with that – I would say are – of a different mind. It is unfair to characterize those times as all "off the track" … I would probably have other thoughts. But one thought that that was to me … I wish we could talk about it more. I was with Brian Johnson, myself and several others, including John, where the topic of television came up. He made a statement that the television decision made back in the day was obsolete. Maybe it is related to what he said of the content, and so forth, videos … I personally don't think that it is obsolete. I always thought that it was about content. But I worry why we would go there to try to undercut that congregational decision. Because it has brought much good to the believers. I am kind of wondering where people are coming from. I guess the other thought – I am taking more time than I wanted here but -- I have talked to many people that would probably say that they believe like John. But I don't think that they all do believe like John. But for some reason they gather around him. I think to some degree he has become the face … cloud of dissent, unrest. Some of the people that place themselves with him have a confession, have a feeling – like one of them said – in faith, out of faith. John expressed that at the Rockford meeting (January 2018). I didn't talk to John. I never had a chance. I did talked to a different brother. Why did he say that? I don't know anybody that is teaching that way that they are in and out of faith when we fall into sin. The individual said —well, it is implied. It [implied in] the same way with confession teaching … I guess I have the mic. I guess I want to say. When I was a college student in the UP just before the break of the heresy. We didn't have teachings about the endeavor of faith, keeping faith and a good conscience, the beauty of God's kingdom. The things went way to the left for some people. Some went to the right. I rejoice in this time that we live that we hear about God's kingdom … It is a unique place. It is a special place. it is a dear place to me. My family all went

[into the heresy]. I should have gone too. But God by His grace he spared me. I am thankful for that teaching. I didn't grow up with a strong teaching of putting away sin when sin attaches. I sure am thankful and happy that that that is a teaching … I could say that it is emphasized more than that time. I think that it is because we live in such a dark time. We need to hear about the righteousness of faith, but righteousness of life too. Because that is the way we are. We are very corrupt, so … I don't think that we are living in a dry time, a self-righteous time or a law-minded time. Although individuals can go that way. I guess that is it. [2:09:06]

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[i] John Lehtola speech at LLC Board Member Workshop at MLLC in 29 April 2017. This presentation [that we heard by Sam Roiko] was based on Paul's first letter to the Corinthians chapter 12. It says [in the same chapter] that the gifts are many, but the spirit is one. So, each person has a position or a place in the body of Christ. We must remember that in the same chapter is stated: the hand can't say to the mouth, I have no need of you. The ear can't say to the foot: I have no need of you. Also, further on in the same chapter it says to heap more honor on the most dishonorable members. This is also an important point to note as well. There was a document written by the SRK and published in the Paivamies – a so-called position statement. I will frame it in this way. In the beginning of the 1900s and the end of the 1800s, there was a heresy (Large First-Born Heresy) that departed. One of their wrong doctrinal tenets was this that a certain group of people in a certain location (with them it was in Gellivaara), who have more [authority] or the most wisdom. To them one must turn to receive answers to all questions. This was refuted back at the beginning of the 1900s. But that [notion] sort of resurfaced [again], in a way, in the 1970s. So, this statement written in the Paivamies in October of 2011, and it was republished in issue 21 in 2012. It goes in this way. "Also, the wrong doctrine that the SRK or local boards would form as if a certain governance of God over the household of the kingdom." So, this is called the wrong notion that there is a certain government in the household of God. We have been talking [lately] about watchmen on the walls. I have some quotes here. Einari Lepisto was here [in USA and Canada] for the first time in 1958-1959. Several times he took a text from Nehemiah chapter four. This time it happened to be in Detroit on December 21, 1958. Maybe, Don Lahti remembers when he was there on New Year's Eve. He says, "we must not think that only ministers are watchmen on the walls. But all believers are watchmen on the walls." In the Siionin Lahetyslehti in 1970, it says in this way: "We, the children of God [each of us] are watchmen on the walls." (Hannes Paukkunen, Siionin Lahetyslehti, 1970, p.221) The most important task and duty of the watchmen is to watch. Elmer Alajoki in his book, 'God is Love', says, "we, too, [generalizing that all of us] are watchmen on the walls of Zion and messengers of the Holy Spirit." That came out clearly in Sam Roiko's presentation. Sam Roiko also said in his presentation that one is lowered into that duty and position. Usko Typpo said in suviseurat in 1978: "But when the Lord Jesus presents such a servant, who has been set as a speaker out of the command of the Lord Jesus (and as we heard) and a servant of the congregation, there is no exaltation in question – no – but God has taken and placed him as a servant and lowered him to serve the congregation. The Lord Jesus once asked a question: 'He who sits and dines is not greater than the one who serves'. So, the one who serves has not

been raised up in the congregation, but he has been lowered to serve the congregation." (Usko Typpo, suviseurat 1978, pages 268-269) Arvo Perala wrote in one of his books: "May it be said that God has not opened these gifts of understanding only to the servants of the word, but to all the members in the congregation, which is the pillar and ground of truth." (Profeetallinen Sana, Arvo Perala, pg. 20) I have listened to quite a few sermons [lately] on Nehemiah chapter four. In one [sermon] that I listened to a couple of days ago, the minister said that in chapter four it says that a high pulpit was erected. It wasn't for this reason that the person who was behind the pulpit was in a more-lofty position. But it was only for this reason that they had no sound systems back then. They needed to project the voice. The people in the audience wanted to have eye contact with the [speaker]. So, it needed to be in an elevated place. He [Jukka Palola] said that it does not mean that he [the speaker] was any stitch higher than anyone else. He [Jukka Palola] went on to say about speakers. They are servants of the word [Jukka Palola]. Servant. Sam Roiko referred to this. The minister [Jukka Palola] gave an example of Jesus on Maundy Thursday evening who washed the feet of his disciples. Jesus was Lord and Master, who did the task of a servant or a slave. We remember that Peter was offended that Jesus was doing the task of a servant – this lowly and humble task of being a servant. Jesus gave the example and said: What I do to you, do to one another. End of speech
[ii] Quote from Siionin Lahetyslehti: Too much grace? We have begun to hear a foreign voice from their mouths: too much grace has been preached. We must speak more truth. This foreign voice is a result of when some have begun to secretly belittle grace. They have preached truth in the demanding spirit of the law. They have [tried to] remove grace from the truth. In other words, [attempted to take] the gospel out of the instructions. Thus, they divide the word [of God] into three parts: the law, gospel, and the instructions. [The word of God] is divided into only the Law and the Gospel. They turn the instructions of the gospel into the Law, with which they oppress [the children of God] and lead the freely purchased [flock] under the yoke of bondage, so they would not believe by grace alone. Oh, what darkness, when a child of light begins to belittle and despise the grace of God, and one begins to think that the power of the Old Adam can be guided better [with the Law] than with the love of the heavenly Father. When one belittles grace, one belittles the entire redemption work [of Christ]. If this is not an incorrect teaching, then nothing is. (Siionin Lahetyslehti, January 1935)].

Walt Lampi, Meeting in Monticello, 14 June 2018

I thought that the presentation was good. I could feel the voice of the Good Shepherd. I marvel, too, at how great God's patience is. I have been here about 18 months, since I came to be part of the LLC office staff. It is kind of fearful to think about these things, what they [mean]. I think in great timidness [timidity], for trying to speak to them. I feel really timid myself … to try to speak. I think we are talking about some particular brothers, some of the speaker brothers. I don't mean to say, including myself, some of us as brothers have lost the trust apparently of all other servants and have lost the trust of the kingdom of God in general. So, I think that is an important point. Trust has been lost. Some have been called to serve – have taken a wrong turn, somehow. They appear to have a different understanding or at least a different emphasis on parts of doctrine. That has caused distress among the children of God, the lambs of God. It has

caused distress to me. I sometimes find myself under heavy doubts. I start to think, is this God's kingdom? What has happened? The joy of salvation becomes, something distant or endangered. So, I think those are the effects of these kinds of teachings I am talking about. The teaching and preaching is very close to that [what] we have called our teaching. We believe according to God's spirit to be teaching that has come from God, that of living Christianity. It is very close to that, but it is not the same. I could ask the question. Are we seeing a difference of spirit? I don't mean to say that everybody that has made a comment is of a different spirit. There is some sort of process that takes place for people, all of us. Let us put it that way. All of us struggle with a wrong doctrine, spirits … told by the enemy of soul that [at] some point some other spirit or some other understanding governs our heart. Then we see that things that we see here. I have been part of the Cokato congregation for the time that I have been here. I don't think the board members that are here tonight see it any differently. Increasingly that question is coming up in congregations, not only in Cokato but otherwise, boards are questioning whether certain brothers should any longer be in the position of trust as ministers or teachers. I think that is a basic, fundamental question. God has been very, very patient, from what I can see and what I have experienced. But it seems like we are becoming very weary with this situation. So, that is the question. There is a reluctance to call some of these brothers to spiritual events or that they would be used as a minister or teacher. [Some don't go to] services where a particular minister will be present. So, I think those are very real things. Like I say, it seems to me that I am the last person to be talking about them. But yet, that is what I believe in my heart. I am professing the way [that] I see the situation. I am here, dear brothers, as one of your brothers. That is all that I can say. I am a poor brother, at that. We also hear a demand to be shown by the written word where error has occurred. I think that is a proud statement. It is a [haughty] statement, because no one can be shown or proven anything without the spirit guiding and showing. We understanding scripturally partly at best. We were taught less [?] about doctrine … [Finnish] … shown doctrine. Doctrine simply means teaching. Teaching is emphasized differently … can be taken differently in different things. So, we can't prove everything. But as so many have said, we don't feel good. We feel troubled by the speeches of some of our own, some of our family. I speak that in a spiritual sense. We are the family of God. In that regards, we are as a family discussing what concerns us, like probably what we have experienced in our own natural families when situations occur. I think, maybe it is not so much doctrine, but I can't say that it is not doctrine that is the difference. But at least in part it is that pride or self-exaltation that demonstrates itself with that kind of high … kind of like, I will believe you if I understand first. That is, like the scriptures say that charity edifies but knowledge puffs up. In these various points … congregation discussions … they want to prove they are right. Love is not there. Understanding has gone ahead of faith, I think. There have been numerous meetings, many proceeding the time that we came here. There has been several, including this meeting, in the last couple of months. They don't seem to resolve anything. Maybe I missed the clarification of what the current concerns are … [law-mindedness]. But other than that, it seems to be holding on to some kind of different ideas. Personally, I think this is very detrimental to God's kingdom in North America that these brothers serve. I don't say that with animosity towards them. I don't have any baggage. Some of them I would regard as my friends. But there is a difference in understanding. It is causing only negative things in God's kingdom. I don't believe they are carrying the baggage of … teaching falsely in any one number of things. But when brothers

resist the Holy Spirit … should they serve God's kingdom, when they are that kind of heart? We in good conscience [can't] allow it to be that way. I really feel, dear brothers, timid to speak of this. But I am so worried for the flock of God in North America. By certain brothers not speaking, it doesn't mean that all problems will go away. But I feel now that it is a matter of conscience, for me that they should not continue [serving] any further. As many have said, we ask for God's grace and blessings in these very serious situations. It is not … the goal is not just to relieve somebody of their duties, but the goal is the preservation of souls, first for those that seem to have a [different] understanding or emphasis, but also for all of us, of the flock of God. I think this is, to me, where we are at. I think, although this group of people can't make any decisions at this time. I think it is time for us to think about … our brothers that teach in otherwise, and there is contention about them, around them, is it now time for congregation boards to consider this matter very seriously? Take it to their congregations. Is there a change that should be made? This is what is in my heart. I put it before you. I feel timid about it. It doesn't make me feel happy to think about these things. It makes me very sad that some of these brothers have gathered people around them that seem to have some root of bitterness against God's kingdom or individuals in God's kingdom. I pray for them. I, like many, wake up many times in the night. The first thing on my mind is this situation. I pray for those that are opposed and those that think differently. I pray that we could all be united through the power of the Spirit, experience the joy of salvation and continue as children in the kingdom of children in the kingdom of grace and forgiveness. I need your prayers, too, to remain in faith. I need to hear, as weak as I am, that I can believe my sins forgiven. [Meeting in Monticello, 14 June 2018]