

## Test The Spirits: Can We Join In Fellowship With This?

The following is a sampling of real, actual quotes by pastors, theologians, seminary professors and the creators of various church bodies and religious organizations. A few quotes are ones that I personally have invented. Not all of the ones I made up agree with the Bible.

Our Lord says in I John 4:1, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” This worksheet is an opportunity to put into practice these words from I John as well as an opportunity to expose you to a wide range of teachings that exist in the greater Christian Church (and more common Christian cults).

It is not my intention in this exercise to elevate the WELS as the only perfect church on earth. We also struggle with sin in this world and you can certainly find Christians in other Christian denominations whose faith and Bible knowledge rival and surpass the faith of our own members. When I put forth our Lutheran Confessions as a clear and accurate expression of biblical doctrine, this is not done in arrogance. It is only by God’s grace that we have been blessed with this.

In the line next to each of the quotes, answer the following question with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ answer: Can we join in religious fellowship with someone who teaches this? Many of the quotes will be followed up with a brief explanation of what the quote is saying, unless the language of the quote is overwhelmingly clear. These explanations will be written in red. A document with the correct answers, as well as the source of these quotes, will be provided in another link.

Yes/No

1. \_\_\_\_\_ “The ultimate authority of Christian theology is not the Biblical canon as such, but the gospel of Jesus Christ to which the Scriptures bear witness – the ‘canon within the canon.’ Jesus Christ himself is the Lord of the Scriptures, the source and scope of its authority”  
**Explanation: The only true authority of Christian doctrine is only the words of Jesus Christ in the four gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The rest of the Bible is not a part of that ultimate authority.**
  
2. \_\_\_\_\_ “Our Communion table and worship services and baptisms are truly open regardless of belief or tradition.”  
**Explanation: People of all beliefs can come and receive communion and be baptized regardless of their beliefs.**

3. \_\_\_\_\_ “There is one Divine Essence which is called and which is God: eternal, without body, without party, of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible; and yet there are three Persons, of the same essence and power, who also are coeternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.”  
**Explanation: There is one God, yet there are three persons in the Godhead—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—and each one is equal in essence and power.**
4. \_\_\_\_\_ “When Jesus said, “This is my body...This is my blood...” he actually meant that his body and blood were present in, with, and under the bread and wine. He was not saying that the bread and wine merely represent his body and blood.”
5. \_\_\_\_\_ “I believe a woman’s right to be in control of her own reproductive rights.”  
**Explanation: Women have the right to abort their babies regardless of the reason.**
6. \_\_\_\_\_ “The Bible is the inspired, inerrant word of God, containing all we need for salvation and for godly living.”  
**Explanation: The words inspired and inerrant mean that it came from God and it is without error.**
7. \_\_\_\_\_ “Through the grace of God, all may, by the cooperation of God, perform what is necessary for their soul’s salvation.”  
**God gives his grace to us so that we can earn heaven by our good works.**
8. \_\_\_\_\_ “We let everyone who comes into our building know that they are loved by God (in whatever form God takes for them) regardless of gender, sexuality or income. We inform them truthfully that life and faith are a personal choice and no one has the authority to tell them what or how to believe about God and Jesus.”  
**Explanation: It says that God loves all people, regardless of anything about the person. Yet it also says that each person has the ultimate right to decide what or who to believe about God and Jesus.**
9. \_\_\_\_\_ “The notion of the preexistent Son of God becoming a human being in the womb of a virgin and then returning to his heavenly home is bound up with a mythological picture of the world that clashes with our modern scientific world view”  
**Explanation: The Bible’s account of the incarnation of Christ (the Son of God becoming also man when he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary) is a myth.**
10. \_\_\_\_\_ “Can modern people still be expected to accept the creed (Apostle’s Creed), with its mythological elements?... Therefore the story of the descent of the Son of God to earth and his ascent into heaven cannot be taken literally.”  
**Explanation: The Apostle’s Creed does not record actual history, but is only a myth.**

11. \_\_\_\_\_ “Baptism is not merely an outward symbol of the forgiveness Jesus gives to us through faith in him, baptism itself actually gives to us the blessings of forgiveness, new life, and salvation. Therefore, we baptize even little infants, because even infants are in need of these things, as evidenced by the sad fact that infants can and do sometimes die.”
12. \_\_\_\_\_ “So for Jesus to provide the ransom, he must be a perfect man, no more and no less. Further if Jesus had been a spirit garbed in flesh, he could not really have died at man’s hands...But the Bible is clear that Jesus did provide the ransom and that he was a man, not God clothed in flesh”  
**Explanation: Jesus was only a man and not also true God**
13. \_\_\_\_\_ “He (Jesus) is God, eternally begotten from the nature of the Father, and he is man, born in time from the nature of his mother, fully God, fully man, with rational soul and human flesh, equal to the Father as to his deity, less than the Father as to his humanity; and though he is both God and man, Christ is not two persons but one, one, not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God.”  
**Explanation: Jesus is fully God, fully man. In respect to his divine nature, he is equal to the Father. In respect to his human nature, he is less than the Father.**
14. \_\_\_\_\_ “Thus the facts make clear that the Trinity is not a Bible teaching...How could the holy spirit be a person, when it filled about 120 disciples at the same time?”  
**Explanation: There is no Trinity and the Holy Spirit is not a personal being.**
15. \_\_\_\_\_ “It is absolutely necessary for salvation to submit to the Roman Pope.”
16. \_\_\_\_\_ “The \*\*\*\*\* retain a religious requirement for membership but allow it to be made to any god or to a substitute for God.” (And an adult ceremony for the same body says:) “We, the members of the \*\*\*\*\* , united by a belief in God and acceptance of the \*\*\*\*\* , do dedicate ourselves to the purpose of inspiring \*\*\*\*\* with the highest ideals of character, conduct, patriotism and service.”  
**Explanation: This organization makes it clear they are a religious organization. They also allow people of all religions to be members of it. Each person is to confess that they are united by a belief in God.**
17. \_\_\_\_\_ “Genesis 1-11 is not meant to be scientific history. There is no way that we can check the events to be sure things happened just as described. Rather, these stories were written to give answers to the religious questions the people had.”
18. \_\_\_\_\_ As man now is, God once was; As God now is, man may be.
19. \_\_\_\_\_ In reference to Jesus’ resurrection: “These accounts are not meant to be journalistic reports of facts.”

20. \_\_\_\_\_ “Since all people are by nature dead in sin and separated from God (Ephesians 2:1), they are unable to reconcile themselves to God by their own efforts and deeds.”
21. \_\_\_\_\_ “[Grace] does not directly flow from Christ’s atoning work, since Christ’s death did not earn any measure of forgiveness for unbelievers, and therefore did not merit the blessings of common grace for them either.”  
**Explanation: Jesus’ death only paid for the sins of believers, not for the sins of unbelievers.**
22. \_\_\_\_\_ “Since God has elected certain individuals out of the mass of fallen humanity to receive eternal life, it follows that there must be a permanence to their salvation.”  
**Explanation: Once you have come to faith in Jesus, there is nothing you can do to lose that faith.**
23. \_\_\_\_\_ “Perfect truth is not attainable anywhere...it is our duty always to press forward in the search; for though absolute truth is unattainable, yet the amount of error in our views is capable of progressive and perpetual diminution; and thus \*\*\*\*\* is a continual struggle toward the light.”
24. \_\_\_\_\_ “\*\*\*\*\* has taught each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation.”
25. \_\_\_\_\_ “Life (ie eternal) does not come by a sacrament, nor is it maintained by a “sacramental substance” but by a Divine Person consciously revealed in us as a present redeeming, life-giving Saviour.”  
**Explanation: In Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, believers do not receive the blessings of forgiveness of sins, new life, and salvation. Therefore, this church does not use the sacraments.**
26. \_\_\_\_\_ “A nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry (interreligious or interdenominational). To accomplish these goals, we invite people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.”  
This organization’s highest priority is to improve people’s circumstances on this earth.  
Fuller (the creator of this organization) credits Walter Rauschenbusch, who has been called “the father of the social gospel movement in America,” with shaping his thinking. In his book, Fuller includes the following quotation from Rauschenbusch: “The non-ethical practices and beliefs in Christianity nearly all center on the winning of heaven and immortality. On the other hand, the kingdom of God can be established by nothing except righteous life and action” (pp. 21,22).  
In his book, Fuller approvingly quotes the slogan, “Doctrine divides, service unites.” (p. 80).

He says unity comes about when people of diverse religious beliefs work together to build homes for the poor: “Maybe, just maybe, God wants to use the theology of the hammer as a means to draw his divergent family closer together” (p. 79). Important point to note: Since devotions, prayers, and dedication services are common at Habitat sites, there is also the potential for involvement in expressions of church fellowship that are not based on agreement about what the Bible teaches.