

**DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY AND OUTREACH WITHIN
THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD**

John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.

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DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY AND OUTREACH WITHIN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH—MISSOURI SYNOD

John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.¹

Introduction

During a course on American Lutheranism at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis in 1978, Dr. August Suelflow observed that a study of the history of American Lutheranism is a study of the tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach. That statement came to mind recently as I reflected on the latest disturbing events that have unfolded within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and I tried to put things into proper perspective.

Doctrinal integrity and outreach are inseparably related, for both are at the heart of what it is to be Lutheran. To be true to our Lord, His Word, and our Confessions, we must maintain both doctrinal integrity and outreach. Doctrinal integrity is the desire and determination to remain true to the teaching of God's Word in both teaching and practice. There is a strong sense of stewardship of God's mysteries (1 Cor. 4:1-2) as we seek to hold and confess the faith once delivered to all the saints (Jude 3). Outreach is the desire and determination to share that treasure (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; Romans 1:16), the pure doctrine of the Gospel, through confession of faith, evangelism, missions and the formal recognition of the unity of faith wherever God the Holy Spirit has established it.²

Like other paradoxes in theology though, doctrinal integrity and outreach must not be either/or but both/and.³ To emphasize one point to the exclusion of another means

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² Some have used the phrase "pure doctrine and missions" to describe this same idea. I prefer "doctrinal integrity and outreach" because it seems more comprehensive than "pure doctrine and missions." Doctrinal integrity includes pure doctrine, but also more. It involves doctrine and practice. It embraces honor and honesty; saying what you mean and meaning what you say. Similarly, outreach is a broader, more comprehensive term that includes missions, but involves confession, social welfare, the recognition of Christian fellowship and more. Dr. Alvin Barry used the terms "doctrine and evangelism" in his excellent article, "Doctrine and Evangelism: Always Both/And—Never Either/Or!", <http://www.lcms.org/president/literature/essays/doctrineandevangelism.asp>. Here Dr. Barry writes: "Therefore this paper is entitled, "Doctrine and Evangelism." It is really just one more way of playing that one same violin string: "faithfulness and outreach," keeping the message straight and getting the message out." Ibid. As Dr. Barry noted, others have suggested using "faithfulness" in place of "doctrinal integrity" or "pure doctrine." However, "faithfulness" could be misunderstood to be a reference to the *fides qua creditur* (the faith that is believed or personal faith), rather than the *fides quae creditur* (the faith that is confessed). Because only God can know and judge the *fides qua creditur*, we focus our attention on the *fides quae creditur* or the confession of faith and how that confession is put into practice (doctrine and practice). No matter which terms are used, there is the risk that someone will think that his or her personal "integrity," or "purity of doctrine," or "faithfulness" is being impugned. Therefore, it should be understood clearly that only the public profession of faith (*fides quae creditur*) is being analyzed and compared to the standards of Holy Scripture as God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions as a true and correct exposition of doctrines set forth in Holy Scripture.

³ Dr. Barry wrote: "Doctrine and evangelism are wedded in the history of the early church. This union lies embedded, for example, in the book of Acts. Let no one put asunder what God has joined together! I like to

a denial of Scriptural teaching resulting in heterodoxy or heresy. For example, consider the doctrine of Christ, particularly His two natures, during the early history of the church. Those who went to one extreme or another espoused heretical views: Arius⁴ who denied the Deity of Christ; Nestorius⁵ who denied the communication of attributes; the monophysites⁶ who taught that the humanity of Christ was absorbed in His divinity. We also see this in teachings about predestination, where ignoring or denying Scriptural truth results in the synergism of Pelagius⁷ and Arminius⁸ or the double predestination and denial of objective justification of John Calvin.⁹ In each case of theological paradox, there is a tension that remains without resolution. And so it is with integrity and outreach. They must both stand together. An overemphasis of one can mean a rejection or denial of the other. But in Scripture we see these things held in balance. Take the example of St. Paul, a theologian/missionary. Pure doctrine drove him into outreach, and outreach was formed by pure doctrine. This balance is maintained by confessional Lutherans today.

The Preface to the Book of Concord clearly defines this both/and of doctrinal integrity and outreach:

We took up... and again unanimously subscribed this Christian confession, based as it is on the witness of the unalterable truth of the divine Word, in order thereby to warn and, as far as we might, to secure our posterity in the future against doctrine that is impure, false, and contrary to the Word of God. This we did that we might testify and declare...to everyone... that it was in no way our disposition and intention to adopt, to defend, or to spread a different or a new doctrine. Rather, with divine assistance, it was our intention to remain and abide loyally by the truth once recognized and confessed at Augsburg in the year 1530, in the confidence and hope that thereby the adversaries of pure evangelical doctrine would be constrained... and that other good-hearted people would have been reminded and stimulated by this our reiterated and repeated confession the more seriously to investigate the truth of the divine Word that alone gives salvation, to

recall that two events stood out as so important in the church of the apostolic era that each comes up three times in Acts. First is the conversion of St. Paul, which is described in chapter 9. Paul repeats it when he defends himself in chapter 22 and again in chapter 26. The other event is the conversion of Cornelius' household. Acts 10 gives that account. Peter, who preached to Cornelius and his family, tells the story again in chapter 11 and mentions it once more in chapter 15. These two incidents provide a powerful clue to the message of Acts. They also say something about the church's faithfulness and outreach, not as an "either/or" proposition but a "both/and." Ibid.

⁴ Arius (d. AD 336) was a priest in a suburb of Alexandria Egypt who denied the deity of Jesus Christ, holding that he was created, was not true God, and not eternal.

⁵ Nestorius (d. AD 451) was a patriarch of Constantinople who taught that there is no communion of natures in the person of Christ, that Mary is not the mother of God (*theotokos*), and that according to his human nature, Jesus Christ is in effect the Son of God only by adoption.

⁶ Monophysitism is the view that there is only one nature in Christ, namely the divine.

⁷ Pelagius (d. AD 420) was a British ascetic who held that man's nature is not depraved since the fall but is still in its original state of moral indifference. Thus, neither grace or salvation by Christ are necessary. Peaglius was opposed by Augustine.

⁸ Jacobus Arminius (AD 1560-1609) was a Dutch minister who taught that man cooperates in his conversion by free will.

⁹ John Calvin (AD 1509-1564) was a French theologian who established a church in Geneva, Switzerland and who stressed the sovereignty of God, which included God's election of some to salvation and the rest to damnation as well as irresistible grace and final perseverance (once-saved-always-saved).

*commit themselves to it, and for the salvation of their souls and their eternal welfare to abide by it and persist in it in a Christian way without any further disputation and dissension.*¹⁰

Doctrinal integrity and outreach: it is what Lutherans are all about.

Therefore, I would like to examine how the tension of maintaining both doctrinal integrity and outreach has fared in the history of the Missouri Synod. I do so recognizing that even in the study of church history--particularly that of our own church body--we face the danger of extremes as well. On one hand, there is the hazard of what might be termed nostalgic repristination--creating a sectarian or triumphalistic *Heilsgeschichte* ["holy history"]. On the other hand, there is the quandary of what may be described as ecclesiastical amnesia, which results in a denial, rejection, or altering of what has been true in the past and what continues to be true today.¹¹

This too involves a paradoxical tension. We want to study history in order to identify how the church has guarded the truth in the past. Yet, we want to avoid creating an exclusivistic holy history or an historical study that bypasses a reevaluation of Scripture and the Confessions with regard to current issues.¹²

Some would want to remove the tension that exists by avoiding the past altogether, by rejecting an understanding of the church as guardian of the truth, by simply saying that things are different now. The Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, once stated that one cannot step into the same river twice. Later his students postulated that one cannot step into the same river even once. But it is absurd to imply that truth is in a state of constant flux and therefore purely existential, culturally driven or nonexistent. Another word for this is relativism, something we unfortunately confront more and more in this post-modern age. Thus, we study the history of the church in order to recognize the truth that has been guarded. Furthermore, we study history to take note of mistakes made by those who have gone before in order to avoid them in the present and the future, as George Santayana¹³ observed: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it."

¹⁰ *The Book of Concord*, Translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 5-6.

¹¹ Consider David Scaer, "Missouri at the End of the Century: a Time for Reevaluation," *Logia* 7 (Epiphany 1998): 39-40.

¹² Theodore Graebner, former editor of *The Lutheran Witness*, professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis until 1948, and signer of "A Statement" of the 44 in 1945, felt that the Missouri Synod, in dealing with its past, carried a burden of infallibility: "That there is in our Synod a tendency to give undue weight to the opinions of the fathers is evident from...factors absolutely unique in the history of the Lutheran Church. In the first place, no discussion of any doctrinal subject has taken place within the last thirty years which has not operated without quotations from Luther, Walther, Pieper and the first thirty volumes of *Lehre und Wehre* and our body of synodical essays....The assumption is that our testimony has been infallibly and incontestably Scriptural and sound in the past." Theodore Graebner, "The Burden of Infallibility: A Study in the History of Dogma," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* [CHIQ] 38 (July 1965): 88-94. Although Theodore Graebner expresses a valid concern, it is important to note that in attempting to validate this concern, he himself made historical errors. His intention was to justify the position of the "Statementarians," which we will address later. Further, in raising a concern over the Synod's use of its past, he does not offer an appropriate corrective, which again opens the door for the other extreme, namely, holding that there is no truth in the past to be found.

¹³ George Santayana (AD 1863-1952), philosopher and Harvard professor who tried to justify religious myth on the basis of intellectual grounds.

Hopefully, reasonable men will not misconstrue this study of Synod's past as an exclusivistic exercise of nostalgic, sectarian navel gazing. I want to show that the current issues facing the Missouri Synod are much more than political power struggles, despite how it is often portrayed in the popular press or in statements from those seeking change within the Synod. There are critically important, theological issues involved, and the struggle over these issues has been developing within the Synod for more than fifty years.

A confessional Lutheran will analyze the past in conjunction with an ongoing study of Scripture and the Confessions. Intentional, disciplined study is required to grow in understanding of the truth. A simplistic attitude that says, "this is not our grandfather's church," must be avoided at all costs, just as one cannot ignore, avoid, or deny the cloud of witnesses that surround us according to Hebrews 12:1-2. Biblical truth is the same throughout every age. To see how that truth has fared, we study the past. In order to avoid both triumphalism and ecclesiastical amnesia, we take a confessional Lutheran approach that affirms both doctrinal integrity and outreach.¹⁴

As we look at the Synod's formative period in the 19th century, we will examine the first Constitution, union efforts, the recognition of church fellowship, and mission endeavors, as well as the struggle to deal with doctrinal controversy and the discipline of erring pastors and teachers. During the formative period, doctrinal integrity was heavily stressed, but not to the exclusion of outreach. Following that, we will look closely at developments during the first half of the 20th century, in which a movement began to emphasize outreach over doctrinal integrity. We will then consider how doctrinal integrity was further eroded during the second half of the 20th century through an overemphasis on outreach. A concerted effort from within--a movement to "Americanize" the Missouri Synod--facilitated this erosion. We will trace this movement to the present, and then evaluate doctrinal integrity and outreach today, particularly with regard to Missouri Synod mission endeavors and the participation of LCMS officials in interfaith services. The current disturbance in the Synod over unionism and syncretism is but one facet of the ongoing struggle over the paradoxical tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach. Although both sides employ church politics in this struggle, there are substantive theological issues at the root of this disturbance.

¹⁴ See Erling Teigen, "Confessional Lutheranism versus Philippistic Conservatism," *Logia* 2 (Reformation 1993): 32-37.

Chapter One Doctrinal Integrity and Outreach in the Synod's Formative Period

Those Who Formed the Synod

Two groups came together to form the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on April 26, 1847, in Chicago. Each emphasized one of the two points in our study, but not to the exclusion of the other. While the Saxons of Missouri emphasized confessional or doctrinal integrity, it was not to the exclusion of outreach. Approximately 700 Saxon immigrants had followed Pastor Martin Stephan from Germany to Missouri in 1839. After landing in St. Louis they went on to establish a Lutheran colony in Perry County, Missouri. They left Germany to flee the bankruptcy of rationalism, the threat of forced union with the Reformed, and to maintain purity of doctrine and true Christian living. However, only a few months after their arrival, the Saxons deposed their bishop, Martin Stephan, for immorality. This resulted in almost two years of spiritual and emotional turbulence on top of the physical hardship they had to endure as settlers. The people wondered if they were still Christians, if the church still existed in their midst, and if their pastors still had valid calls. Some influential laymen believed that the only solution was to repent and return to Germany.¹⁵ At the Altenburg Debate in April 1841, Pastor C.F.W. Walther set forth a series of theses which addressed the nature of the church and the validity of their pastors' calls. Theses VI and VII spoke to the nature of the church in view of their situation:

VI. Even heterodox companies have church power; even among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.

VII. Even heterodox companies are not to be dissolved, but reformed.

Thesis VIII addressed the issue of doctrinal integrity:

*The orthodox Church is chiefly to be judged by the common, orthodox, public confession to which its members acknowledge and confess themselves to be pledged.*¹⁶

Beginning on September 7, 1844, C.F.W. Walther began a publication called *Der Lutheraner*, which was sent to other Lutherans throughout America. This is a good example of outreach. Not only did this periodical set forth sound confessional Lutheran theology, but it served to draw other confessional Lutherans to the Saxon colonists and helped toward the formation of the Missouri Synod.¹⁷

Even before the Saxons of Missouri arrived in the New World, Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken came to America from Germany in 1838 to serve as a Lutheran pastor. Outreach was his motivation after reading about the plight of Lutheran immigrants in various theological journals. Although greatly concerned about reaching out to others

¹⁵ Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), pp. 171-506.

¹⁶ The German original is found in J.F. Koestering, *Auswanderung der saechsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1839, ihre Niederlassung in Perry Co., Mo., und damit zusammenhaengende interessante Nachrichten* (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), pp. 51-52. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, pp. 523-525.

¹⁷ August R. Suelflow, "Walther's Significant Contributions to Lutheranism in America," *Proceedings of the Eleventh Convention of the Montana District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Assembled in Laurel, Montana October 2-6, 1961*, p. 28. See also Carl S. Meyer, ed, *Moving Frontiers*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 142-143.

with the Gospel, Wyneken advocated confessional Lutheranism, had great appreciation for liturgical forms and rejected the “New Measures” associated with C. H. Finney and the Second Great Awakening. Because of his confessional commitment, Wyneken broke with the General Synod, which had formed in 1820 on the East Coast and was not doctrinally strict. Through Wyneken’s influence, Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria began to train and send Lutheran pastors to America.¹⁸ Loehe sent missionaries to the United States with instructions, pledging them to “renounce the fellowship of all sects and false churches,” and to “embrace with deep devotion the Confessions and doctrine of the Lutheran Church....”¹⁹ Through Loehe’s efforts, the Franconian colonies in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan were founded with the specific purpose of instituting mission outreach to Native Americans. Pastor August Craemer led the colony that established Frankenmuth in 1845. A school was established for Indian children in 1846. Other colonies in the area followed in subsequent years.²⁰

The Synod’s Constitution

The Loehe *Sendlinge* [“sent ones”] of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan, and the Saxons of Missouri came together in Chicago in April 1847 to found what we refer to as the Missouri Synod. The first Synodical Constitution gave as reasons for forming a synodical organization:

- 2. *The preservation and furthering of the unity of pure confession... and to provide common defense against separatism and sectarianism...*
- 6. *The unified spread of the kingdom of God and to make possible the promotion of special church projects. (Seminary, agenda, hymnal, Book of Concord, schoolbooks, Bible distribution, mission projects within and outside the Church.)*

Therefore, conditions for membership included:

- 1. *Acceptance of Holy Scripture, both the Old and the New Testament, as the written word of God and as the only rule and norm of faith and life.*
- 2. *Acceptance of all the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church...as the pure and unadulterated explanation and presentation of the Word of God.*
- 3. *Separation from all commixture of Church or faith, as, for example, serving of mixed congregations by a servant of the Church; taking part in the service and Sacraments of heretical or mixed congregations; taking part in any heretical tract distribution and mission projects, etc.*²¹

¹⁸ David A. Gustafson, “A Confessional Lutheran Encounters American Religion: the Case of Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken,” *Logia* 2 (Holy Trinity, July, 1993): 44-48; *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 90-97.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 99. In the Schwabacher *Erklaerung* of October 9, 1851, nine theologians under the leadership of Loehe stated: “There is no emergency situation which demands mixed communion. And so we maintain that there cannot be any such situation. Emergency knows no commandment; but it knows the Commandment of God. God’s Word is above emergency. God’s Word prohibits Altar Fellowship with those who have different teachings and will not desist from them; it prohibits such a narrow fellowship with them. “Martin Wittenberg, “Church Fellowship and Altar Fellowship in the Light of Church History,” translated by John Bruss, *Logia*_1 (Reformation/October 1992), p. 23.

²⁰ Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 71-74. W. H. T. Dau, ed. *Ebenezer* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 87-94; *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 104-117.

²¹ “Our First Synodical Constitution,” translated by Roy Suelflow, *CHIQ* 16 (April 1943): 2-3. Christoph Barnbrock makes clear that both the Saxons of Missouri and the Loehe *Sendlinge* played a substantial role

Because of its relevance to current issues that will be addressed later in this study, it is important to offer a closer evaluation of point number three under Conditions for Members.²² This paragraph from the first LCMS constitution has remained essentially intact throughout the Synod's history, both in the German and eventually in the English editions, down to the present. There is a slight difference between the German original and the later English language translation. Notably, in the German version, the technical terms, "unionism" and "syncretism" are not translated from their strict German counterparts, *Unionismus* and *Synkretismus*. Rather, the less-technical *Mengerei* ["mixture or mixing up"] is compounded first with *Kirche* ["church"] and then with *Glaube* ["faith"]. Literally translated, it is "church-mixing and faith-mixing." August Suelflow noted:

*The original constitution called this **Glaubensmengerei**, that is, "ecclesiastical and confessional mixing together." It could also be translated as a homogenization of various faiths or blending them together. **Gemischter Gemeinden** refers to congregations where differing faiths or beliefs have been mixed together.*²³

Both the original German Synodical Constitution and the subsequent English translation require "separation from all commixture of Church or faith" or "renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description." However, this particular condition for membership was related to specific concerns of the Synod during the early days of its formation, and therefore, specific examples are mentioned. Neither the Loehe *Sendlinge* nor the Saxons of Missouri wanted to see pastors of the new Synod serving mixed congregations, participating in services and sacramental rites with heterodox ministers, or being involved in heterodox tract and missionary activities.

The reference to mixed congregations, and in fact, the term "unionism" itself, grew out of two union efforts: the Prussian Union in Europe and the establishment of union churches in America. The Prussian Union was a forced joining of the Lutheran and Reformed churches in Prussia and Silesia, first established in 1817 and further enforcement by Kaiser Frederick Wilhelm III with his Common Agenda in 1830. Those

in drafting the constitution. Christoph Barnbrock, "Composing a Constitution in Context: Analytical Observations on the First Draft of the Missouri Synod's Constitution (1846)," *Concordia Journal [CJ]*, 27 (January 2001): 38-56.

²² What is now VI.2 of the current *Synodical Handbook*: "Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following: ...2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description, such as: a. Serving congregations of mixed confession, as such, by ministers of the church; b. Taking part in the services and sacramental rites of heterodox congregations or of congregations of mixed confession; c. Participating in heterodox tract and missionary activities." The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Handbook of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 2001 Edition* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 2001), p. 8.

²³ August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), p. 215. E. Eckhardt, in his *Homiletisches Reallexikon Nebst Index Rerum*, defines *Glaubensmengerei* as "*Ineinandermengen von Wahrheit und Irrtum*" – "the mixing together of truth and error." E. Eckhardt, *Homiletisches Reallexikon Nebst Index Rerum* (St. Louis: Success Printing Co., 1907-1917), Vol. 6, p. 14. Franz Pieper, in his *Christliche Dogmatik* uses *Unionismus*, *Religionsmengerei*, and *Synkretismus* together, offering a firm Biblical prohibition against all three. Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917-1924), Vol. 3, p. 490. "*Religionsmengerei*" or "religion mixing" is inexplicably omitted from the text of the English translation. *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950-1957), Vol. 3, p. 425.

pastors refusing to comply were removed from office, and some were imprisoned.²⁴ On the American frontier, pioneers settling in an area would sometimes pool their money and efforts for a pastor and church building. They would call themselves “Lutheran-Reformed” and call a pastor who would serve them according to their wishes.²⁵

The Constitution’s concern about participation in heterodox tract and missionary activities grew out of the numerous mission societies that developed throughout Europe and America in the 19th century. Many of these organizations were outside of the organized church, doctrinally ambiguous, and staffed by a mix of Lutheran, Reformed, and other Protestant missionaries. In many of the mission fields, tracts became a tool used to spread the Gospel. Yet, often these tracts were mixed with views at odds with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.²⁶ Thus, the Missouri Synod ruled out participation in this form of outreach.

The examples provided in the constitution were not intended to limit the renunciation of unionism or syncretism of every form or to exclude the renunciation of other forms of commixing of church or faith, which could develop in the future. Although the terms “unionism” and “syncretism” were used somewhat interchangeability during the Synod’s formative period, one may suggest that these terms appear to apply respectively to an aberrant practice and theology. “Unionism” (*Kirchenmengerei*), with its connection to the Prussian Union and union churches in America, means to put a mixed confession into practice in joint worship. The technical term “syncretism” means to mix up (*Glaubensmengerei*) the teaching of Scripture and the Confessions (*fides quae creditur*) with error.

Church and Ministry

The Loehe men and the Saxons of Missouri were not the only Lutheran immigrants who professed a loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions. In 1839, a group of approximately 1000 Prussian and Silesian Lutherans had fled Germany because of the Prussian Union. Led by Pastor J.A.A. Grabau, this group settled around Buffalo, New York, and Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and in 1845 organized what became known as the Buffalo Synod. In December 1840, Grabau issued his *Hirtenbrief* [“pastoral letter”] in an effort to instruct his scattered congregations about the duties of the ministry and their obligations to pastors. He sent a copy of this letter to the Saxons of Missouri. When the Saxon pastors responded, they disagreed with Grabau on his doctrines of the ministry, the call, ordination, and the church. They argued that Grabau and then the Buffalo Synod went beyond Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions in maintaining that the true church was visible and outside of it there is no salvation, that ordination existed by divine command and must be practiced according to the old *Kirchenordnungen* [“churchly

²⁴ *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 57-61. *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, edited by Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, revised edition 1975), p. 784. Nicholas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 336-348. Concerning this movement, Hermann Sasse noted: “The Union movement which passed through Germany from 1817 on, belongs to the fanatically revolutionary movements which shake the church from time to time, and which are not victorious because of truth, but because they satisfy emotional desires.” Hermann Sasse, “Union and Confession,” *Christ and His Church: Essays by Hermann Sasse*, Vol. 1, Matthew C. Harrison, ed., (St. Louis: The Office of the President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1997), p. 11.

²⁵ *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 102-103.

²⁶ Stephen Neill, *A History of Christian Missions*, Vol. 6, *The Pelican History of the Church* (New York: Penguin Books, 1964), p. 324, 348-351.

ordinances”] of Germany, that the ministry gave validity to the Sacraments, that the Office of the Keys can be exercised by the minister only, and that a pastor must be obeyed in all things not condemned in Scripture.²⁷

Shortly after the Synod’s formation, it adopted a series of theses on the doctrines of church and ministry entitled *Die Stimme Unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* [“The Position of our Church on the Question of Church and Office”].²⁸ Thesis VIII, “Concerning the Church,” is especially important to this study of doctrinal integrity and outreach:

*Although God gathers for Himself a holy church of elect persons also there where His Word is not taught in complete purity and the sacraments are not administered totally according to the institution of Jesus Christ, if God’s Word and the sacraments are not denied entirely, but both essentially remain; nevertheless, everyone is obligated by his salvation to flee all false teachers, to avoid all heterodox congregations or sects, and to acknowledge and adhere to orthodox congregations and their orthodox pastors, wherever he finds such.*²⁹

Select theses on the Office of the Ministry are also important to this study of doctrinal integrity and outreach within the Missouri Synod:

- I. *The holy preaching office or ministerial office is a distinct office from the priestly office, which all believers have.*
- II. *The preaching office or ministerial office is no human ordinance, but an office instituted by God Himself.*
- III. *The preaching office is no optional office, but one that the church is commanded to establish and to which the church is ordinarily bound to the end of days.*
- IV. *The preaching office is no particular, holier order over against the ordinary Christian order, as was the Levitical priesthood, but is an office of service.*
- V. *The preaching office has the authority to preach the Gospel and administer the holy sacraments and the authority of spiritual judgment.*
- VII. *The holy preaching office is the authority transferred [**uebertragen**] by God through the congregation, as possessor of the priesthood and of all churchly authority, to exercise the rights of the spiritual priesthood in public office for the community.*

²⁷ Roy A. Suelflow, “The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866,” *CHIQ* 27 (April 1954): 1-19; *CHIQ* (July 1954): 57-73; *CHIQ* (October 1954): 97-132. August Suelflow, “Walther’s Significant Contributions to Lutheranism in America,” pp. 40-41.

²⁸ This was adopted at the 1851 synodical convention. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Die Stimme Unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1852). Resolution 7-17a, adopted by the 2001 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod convention, upheld “*Kirche und Amt*” as the official position of the Synod on the doctrine of church and ministry. It should also be noted that there are those who are critical of the doctrinal position set forth in “*Kirche und Amt*.” See Lowell C. Green, “Grabau and Walther: Theocentric versus Anthropocentric Understanding of Church and Ministry,” *Logia* 5 (Eastertide 1996); 25-40.

²⁹ C.F.W. Walther, *Walther on the Church* translated by John M. Drickamer, *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther* August R. Suelflow, series editor (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 45-46.

VIII. *The preaching office is the highest office in the church, from which all other churchly offices [Kirchenaemter] flow.*³⁰

Even more unfortunate than the controversy between the Missouri and Buffalo Synods, was the involvement of Wilhelm Loehe and his break with the Missouri Synod. During the course of the controversy, Loehe not only disagreed with Walther and the Missouri Synod over the doctrines of the church and ministry, but he also held to a millennialist view on the end times. The Bavarian pastor developed a view on “open questions” – that there are teachings, which the Bible did not define and the Confessions did not address, which the church is then free to develop. In 1853, Loehe bade farewell to the Missouri Synod and the following year helped to organize the Iowa Synod, which then held to Loehe’s views on the church, the ministry, chiliasm, and open questions.³¹

The Definite Synodical Platform

The middle years of the 19th century constituted a period of great divergence among Lutherans in America. It was a time in which strenuous efforts to redefine Lutheranism took place. Because of the confessional antagonism among many eastern Lutherans and because of the strong desire on the part of some to unite with other Protestants, an attempt to modify the Augsburg Confession was issued in 1855. Although published anonymously, what was called the “Definite Synodical Platform” was initiated by Dr. Samuel Schmucker, President of the General Synod’s Gettysburg Seminary, Samuel Sprecher, President of the General Synod’s Wittenberg College, and Dr. Benjamin Kurtz, President of the General Synod and editor of the General Synod’s *Lutheran Observer*. Their “American Recension of the Augsburg Confession” sought to delete so-called “Roman errors”:

1. *The Approval of the Ceremonies of the Mass.*
 2. *Private Confession and Absolution.*
 3. *Denial of the Divine Obligation of the Christian Sabbath.*
 4. *Baptismal Regeneration.*
 5. *The Real Presence of the Body and Blood of the Savior in the Eucharist.*
- With these few exceptions, we retain the entire Augsburg Confession, with all the great doctrines of the Reformation.*³²

The Definite Synodical Platform changed the doctrine and practice of Biblical, confessional Lutheranism. Because of this, the Missouri Synod vigorously condemned it. So did many other Lutherans. Only three small eastern synods subscribed to the Recension. The Missouri Synod saw this as a hopeful sign, and Walther envisioned the

³⁰ Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, *Die Stimme Unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Verlag von Andreas Deichert, 1852), pp. 174-343. Resolution 7-17a, adopted by the 2001 Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod convention, upheld “*Kirche und Amt*” as the official position of the Synod on the doctrine of church and ministry.

³¹ John H.C. Fritz, “Missouri and Iowa,” *Ebenezer*, edited by W.H.T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 160-173. Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 106-108. *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 122-125. C.F.W. Walther, “Foreward to the 1860 Volume, Do We Draw the Lines of Fellowship Too Narrowly,” *Editorials from “Lehre und Wehre”*, translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman, *Selected Writings of C.F.W. Walther*, August Suelflow, series editor (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 74-101.

³² Richard Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), pp. 98-104. *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 41-44. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), pp. 216-219.

possibility of one, united, Confessional Lutheran Church in America.³³ In order to facilitate this dream, he published an appeal for free Lutheran conferences in *Lehre und Wehre*.³⁴

Four free Lutheran conferences were held: October 1-7, 1856 in Columbus, Ohio; October 29-November 4, 1857 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; August 5-11, 1858 in Cleveland, Ohio; and July 14-20, 1859 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. The conferences were attended by members of the Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, Pittsburgh, Tennessee, and Norwegian Synods or Ministeriums. Each session began with a brief devotional, and then discussed articles of the Augsburg Confession. But Walther and Pastor F.W. Lehmann of the Ohio Synod were unable to attend the 1859 free conference. Because of the lack of leadership and a dispute between the Missouri and Ohio Synods over pastors that each body had accepted into membership, the conferences were discontinued in 1860. The following year the Civil War began, thus sealing the fate of the free Lutheran conferences.³⁵

Although the free Lutheran conferences came to an abrupt end and did not succeed in establishing the one, united, Confessional Lutheran Church in America that Walther desired, they helped stem the tide of what became known as “American Lutheranism”³⁶ and its “Protestantizing” of the Augsburg Confession. The conferences did much to further confessional Lutheranism in America and helped lead to the formation of both the General Council and the Synodical Conference.

Colloquies and the Synodical Conference

Despite the fact that efforts were made to attract the Missouri Synod and other conservative Lutheran synods to the General Council³⁷ in the late 1860s, the Council’s vague position on pulpit and altar fellowship, the lodge question, and chiliasm caused several member synods to withdraw and then join forces to form the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America. Neither the Missouri Synod nor the Norwegian Synod joined the General Council. Walther and the Missouri Synod continued efforts to overcome doctrinal differences among the various synods. However, instead of free conferences, two other means were used: common education and colloquies. By agreeing to educate members of the Norwegian Synod at Missouri Synod institutions, a common position on confessional subscription, doctrinal agreement and fraternal

³³ C.F.W. Walther, “Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856,” *Lehre und Wehre* 2 (January 1856): 3, translated by Erwin Lueker, in “Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859,” *Concordia Theological Monthly [CTM]* 15 (August 1944): 532. Also, consider John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., “Walther and Confessional Lutheranism in America: a Distinguishing Factor,” *CJ* 15 (October 1988): 337-362.

³⁴ Walther, “Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856,” pp. 3-6. Lueker, p. 534.

³⁵ A thorough account of the four meetings can be found in Erwin Lueker’s article, “Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859.” *Ibid.*, pp. 543-563.

³⁶ The movement at the middle of the 19th century which sought to accommodate Lutheranism to its American environment, resulting in the issuance of the Definite Synodical Platform.

³⁷ In reaction to the Definite Synodical Platform and the “American Lutheranism” of the General Synod, a confessional movement was initiated and several of the more confessional Lutheran synods and ministeriums formed the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church November 20-26, 1867. However, the General Council did not go far enough in addressing such issues as unionism, lodge membership, and millennialism to suit the Missouri Synod. In 1917, the General Council merged with the General Synod and the United Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the South to form the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA), whose congregations are now in the ELCA.

relations were established. Also, seven colloquies preceded the organization of the Synodical Conference in 1872. Colloquies are to be differentiated from free conferences in that colloquies were conducted between Missouri and a specified synod while free conferences were open to representatives from various synods.³⁸

A detailed analysis of all seven colloquies that preceded the formation of the Synodical Conference is beyond the scope of this paper. However, a few highlights may be helpful in showing how doctrinal integrity and outreach were inseparably related in the Synod's formative period. Union movements are but one aspect of outreach. Yet, church union was based only on the recognition of complete agreement in doctrine and practice.

In 1857, the Missouri Synod proposed a colloquy with the Buffalo Synod in order to resolve their long-standing controversy over the doctrines of church and ministry. When internal difficulties within the Buffalo Synod brought a younger leadership to the fore, a colloquy was finally held November 20 – December 5, 1866. Following the colloquy, twelve pastors and their congregations left the Buffalo Synod and joined the Missouri Synod.³⁹

The second colloquy was held with the Iowa Synod November 13-19, 1867. Tension between Missouri and Iowa had continued since the Iowa Synod's formation in 1854. In 1867, the Iowa Synod had adopted a set of theses declaring that "complete unity of doctrine has never existed in the church and must not be made the condition of fellowship," that "the unity of the church is truly a fundamental unity and not an absolute one," and that such doctrinal agreement as was necessary does not refer to matters mentioned incidentally in the Confessions.⁴⁰ Iowa Synod theologians also maintained that they subscribed only to the fundamental doctrines set forth in the Book of Concord.⁴¹ The colloquy between Missouri and Iowa reached no agreement with respect to chiliasm, the Antichrist, the doctrine of Sunday, nor on open questions and confessional subscription. Thus, church fellowship between the Missouri and Iowa Synods was not recognized.

The following year, Walther responded to the Iowa Synod's position in a *Lehre und Wehre* article entitled, "The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions." Here Walther discussed fundamental and nonfundamental doctrines, the nature of the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of Scriptural doctrine, his firm belief that doctrine is not gradually developed but instead taken from Scripture, and the perspicuity of Scripture. In this lengthy article that continued over the course of six issues of the Synod's major theological journal, Walther stated that the doctrines embodied in the Lutheran Symbols (the Book of Concord) were not included in the various articles in order that they might become doctrines of the church. Instead, they were included

³⁸ August Suelflow, "Walther's Significant Contributions to Lutheranism in America," p. 39.

³⁹ Roy Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (October 1954): 127-131.

⁴⁰ Fred W. Mueser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church* (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1958), pp. 58-59, 280.

⁴¹ Sigmund Fritschel, "Worin besteht nach dem Sinne der Aelteren lutherischen Kirche die Uebereinstimmung in der Lehre, welche nach Art. 7 der Augsburgischen Confession zur kirchlichen Einigkeit noethig ist?" *Theologische Monatshefte* 1 (1868): 17-25, 47-55, 83-92, 97-109; translated in *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America 1840-1880*, Theodore G. Tappert, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 78-100.

because they are already doctrines of the church by virtue of the fact that they are doctrines of the Scripture. Walther went on to state: "In the second place, our Confessions do not claim to be a complete system of all doctrines taught by our church. They are just a summary of the chief doctrines which our Church was compelled to defend in the critical Reformation period."⁴² Yet, the assumption is false that a doctrine becomes a dogma of the Lutheran Church only after gaining symbolic status or that a doctrine is an open question if it has not been addressed in the Lutheran Confessions, as Walther went on to state: "For even if every true Biblical doctrine is not clearly defined in the Lutheran Symbols, yet every truly Biblical doctrine belongs to the doctrines of the Lutheran Church."⁴³

The colloquy with the Ohio Synod held at Columbus in March 1868 eventually proved to be much more successful than the colloquy with the Iowa Synod. Here the synodical and district presidents of both bodies met and reached agreement. Both synods recognized one another as orthodox. However, pulpit and altar fellowship was not established until after 1870 when the Ohio Synod agreed to adopt the Missouri Synod's understanding of the doctrine of the ministry.⁴⁴

Relations between the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods originally were quite strained. The Wisconsin Synod had been associated with a union mission society in Germany and had considered the Missouri Synod too conservative ("Old Lutheran"). However, a desire for closer cooperation and fellowship began after 1863 when the Wisconsin Synod adopted a confessional platform which included an acknowledgement of all the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments as the sole standard of faith and the symbolical books as the proper interpretation of the Word of God.⁴⁵ Then, in 1867, the Wisconsin Synod issued a statement declaring itself against unionism. This provided the understanding necessary for a colloquy.⁴⁶ Colloquents from both synods met on October 21 and 22, 1868, and reached full agreement. That year, the Wisconsin Synod also decided to send their theological students to Concordia Seminary, St. Louis for their ministerial training.⁴⁷

Similar colloquies were held with the Illinois Synod in August 1869 and the Minnesota Synod in June 1872.⁴⁸ In addition, between 1869 and 1872, the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois Synods withdrew from the General Council.⁴⁹

A seventh colloquy was held in Gravelton, Missouri with pastors and laymen from the Tennessee and Holston Synods, August 17-20, 1872. Complete agreement was

⁴² C.F.W. Walther, "Die falschen Stuetzen der modernen Theorie von den offenen Fragen (Fortsetzung)," *Lehre und Wehre* 14 (Juli 1868): 202; "The False Arugments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions," translated by Alex Wm. C. Guebert, *CTM* 10 (September 1939): 657-658.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 663.

⁴⁴ Wolf, pp. 180-185. *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 262-264.

⁴⁵ *Constitution der Deutsch-Evangel.-Lutherischen Synode von Wisconsin und andern Staaten*, 1863 (Watertown, Wisconsin: Gedrukt in der Weltbuerger Office, 1863). Cited in August Suelflow, "Walther's Significant Contributions to Lutheranism in America," p. 42.

⁴⁶ Missouri Synod *Proceedings*, 1869, pp. 87092. [C.F.W.] W[alther], "Wieder Eine Friedensbotschaft," *Der Lutheraner* 25 (November 1, 1868): 37-38.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* Wolf, pp. 181-182.

⁴⁸ John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, edited and translated by Leigh D. Jordahl (St. Cloud, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Co. 1970), p. 129.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* Wolf, pp. 181-182.

reached and the English Evangelical Lutheran Conference of Missouri was formed. In time (1911), this small body would become the English District of the Missouri Synod.⁵⁰

Already in 1870, an invitation to negotiate for “a plan of cooperation in the work of the Lord” had been issued by the Joint Synod of Ohio to the Missouri, Wisconsin, and Illinois Synods. The proposal was received with joy and resulted in two conferences in 1871, which led to the formation of the Synodical Conference in July 1872, including the Missouri, Ohio, Norwegian, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota Synods. C.F.W. Walther was elected as the first President of the new federation. The new organization’s constitution maintained:

II. Confession: The Synodical Conference acknowledges the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments as God’s Word, and the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of 1580, called the “Concordia,” as her own.

III. Aim and Purpose. The external expression of the spiritual unity of the respective synods; mutual strengthening in belief and confession; furtherance of unity in teaching and practice, and the elimination of potential or threatening disturbance thereof; common activity for mutual aims; the endeavor to fix the limits of the synods according to territorial boundaries, provided that language does not separate them; the consolidation of all Lutheran synods of America into a single, faithful, devout American Lutheran Church.⁵¹

As a result of the Missouri Synod’s commitment to maintaining both doctrinal integrity and outreach, the desire of Walther and other members for one, faithful, united Lutheran Church in America almost came to fruition with the formation of the Synodical Conference. Unfortunately, within the span of about one decade and before the participating synods could work out a complete amalgamation, the Synodical Conference was rocked by controversy over the doctrine of election. In 1881, the Ohio Synod withdrew, and the Norwegian Synod followed suit in 1883. Yet, the Missouri Synod would not compromise its doctrinal integrity. It stood firm on the Scriptural and confessional understanding of *sola gratia* [“by grace alone”] over against *intuitu fide* [“in view of faith”] with respect to the doctrine of predestination. Missouri Synod theologians based their doctrinal position on Scripture and the Formula of Concord, Article XI, rejecting the *intuitu fide* formulation of 17th and 18th century theologians as held by those in the Iowa, Ohio, and Norwegian Synods. A detailed analysis of the Predestinarian Controversy is beyond the scope of this paper. However, it is important to note that polemics became so heated during this period that Synodical Conference colloquents refused to pray with representatives from other Lutheran synods in subsequent meetings.⁵²

⁵⁰ English Evangelical Lutheran Conference of Missouri, *Proceedings of a Free English Lutheran Conference, Held in the Town of Gravelton, Wayne Co., Mo., August 17-20, A.D. 1872* (Columbus, Ohio: John J. Gassmann, Printer, 1872): p. 33.

⁵¹ Wolf, p. 196.

⁵² For an analysis of the Predestinarian Controversy, see: William Schmelder, “The Predestinarian Controversy, Review and Reflection,” *CJ* 1 (January 1975): 21-33; Roy A. Suelflow, “A History of the Missouri Synod During the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence, 1872-1897,” unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO., 1946, pp. 68-203. J.T. Mueller, “The Predestinarian Controversy,” *Ebenezer*, pp. 406-421; *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 267-278; Wolf, pp. 198-206.

Doctrine, Practice, and Discipline

In his opening address to the 1866 synodical convention, Walther made clear that the bond of unity within the Missouri Synod based on an unconditional subscription to the Lutheran Confessions was not merely a verbal acquiescence:

When our synod came into being, it committed itself before friend and foe not only to all the Symbols of the Old Evangelical Lutheran Church, openly and without reservation, and adopted as its motto, “God’s Word and Luther’s doctrine pure shall to eternity endure,” and thus joyfully began its work – but it also undertook really to act in accordance with those symbols and its motto, in teaching and defense, in structure and practice.⁵³

This is not to say that there were not those who taught false doctrine and practiced immorality within the Missouri Synod during its formative period. From the very beginning, the synodical convention disciplined pastors and teachers. The Synod delegated the initial steps of discipline to the districts in 1854 when these administrative divisions of the Synod were established. However, final disposition of the cases still took place at the synodical convention. In each case, however, the person charged with false doctrine or immoral acts voluntarily excluded himself before the Synod took final action. In other words, these men all knew that unless they withdrew, the Synod at convention would have taken action against them.⁵⁴

Mission Outreach

Efforts toward Lutheran unity, struggling with doctrinal controversy, and dealing with errant pastors and teachers are not the only measure of doctrinal integrity and outreach. Already in 1847, the newly organized Missouri Synod confronted challenges with respect to missions, growth, and its understanding of the doctrine of the ministry. During the later half of the 19th Century, German immigration in the United States often exceeded 100,000 persons per year. The German Missouri Synod sought to make efficient use of the available pastoral manpower in reaching out to German immigrants. But it was always shorthanded. The Synod rejected outright the practice of other Lutheran synods and ministeria of the east, which “licensed” theological candidates in an effort to meet the desperate need for clergymen. The Missouri Synod theologians argued that such licenses were contrary to Scripture and proper practice. This was seen as a part-time call, which was unacceptable because it diminished the divinely mandated Office of the Holy Ministry.⁵⁵ Attempts were made to restrict the scattering process by drawing German Lutheran immigrants into planned colonies or by meeting them at the port cities with immigrant missionaries who could then direct them to areas where Missouri Synod

⁵³ C.F.W. Walther, “Rede zur Eroeffnung der Sitzungen der Allgemeinen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u.a. Staaten, gehalten in der Dreieinigkeitskirche zu St. Louis, Mo., am 31 October 1866,” *Lehre und Wehre*, translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman, *Editorials from “Lehre und Wehre”*, p. 116.

⁵⁴ “The individual resigned from the Synod....In other words, they understood they had a choice: resign voluntarily or be removed against your will. In either case the result was the same. Early Missouri tolerated neither immorality nor false doctrine on the part of its pastors and teachers and doctrinal purity was an extremely high priority.” Daniel Preus, “When Is Enough Enough? What Are the Limits, Historically?” <http://www.confessionallutherans.org/papers/Enough.html>

⁵⁵ Karl Wyneken, “Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission,” *CHIQ* 45 (May 1972): 69-88. Karl Wyneken, “The Development of the Itinerant Ministries in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1847-1865,” unpublished S.T.M Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1963.

congregations were already in existence. Yet, these methods met with only limited success. Another way of using the available pastors was the multiple parish, a rural form of the St. Louis *Gesamtgemeinde* [“combined congregation”] in which a *Muttergedmeinde* [“mother congregation”] started *Filialen* [“branches”]. However, new territories and states were opening to settlement almost overnight, particularly after the Homestead Act of 1862, and the Missouri Synod was simply unable to reach them fast enough.⁵⁶

Other methods proved to be more controversial within the Synod. There was reluctance toward an itinerant ministry on the part of some Missouri Synod members because many of the German immigrants were used to the well-ordered parish system of the fatherland where they had personal pastoral care. Additionally, Missouri Synod pastors and laity were cognizant of the aberrant theology and practice, often described as “new measures,”⁵⁷ which were frequently used by the Methodist Church, employing itinerants widely. Furthermore, an itinerant minister, some held, would have to spread himself too thin and could not provide the proper care of souls (*Seelsorge*). Another major objection was due to a rigid application of the understanding of transference or *übertragungslehre*, as it came to be called. When carried to its extreme, this position held that a congregation had to be established first, then the office of the ministry.

Both synodical and district conventions discussed the issue of itinerant ministry for several years. Different churchly offices were instituted, including *Besucher* [“visitor”],⁵⁸ *colporteur* [“traveling book salesman”],⁵⁹ and *Reiseprediger* [“riding preacher”]. Finally, at the 1865 Western District convention “Twenty-Eight Theses Concerning the Call and Position of a Riding Preacher” were discussed. These theses argued that strict adherence to the idea of transference could result in an incongruity. If it were strictly maintained that a congregation had to come first, before establishment of the Office of the Holy Ministry, the very goal for which God had established the Office, namely, the salvation of souls, would be discarded. The result of the 1865 Western District convention was that Friedrich Liebe, a pastor, was sent out as a *Reiseprediger*. He was authorized to preach and baptize, and administer Holy Communion, though only

⁵⁶ Karl Wyneken, “Missouri Molds a Ministry for Mission,” p. 71.

⁵⁷ “New measures” included tent revivals, synergism, use of the anxious bench, and emotional displays such as rolling in the isles and the “barks.”

⁵⁸ The Missouri Synod did have an itinerant ministry from its very inception. In the Synod’s first Constitution, Article V.8, the position of *Besucher* (visitor) was established. At the 1847 Chicago convention Candidate Carl Fricke was sent out to tour southeastern Wisconsin. The *Besucher* was to gather information, which would lead to the organization of congregations and the calling of resident pastors. Because Fricke was not ordained at that time, the *Besucher* was considered to be a layman. He could do some teaching, as well as emergency baptisms. However, his instructions set limitations on the actual pastoral duties he could perform. Fricke completed one tour and then accepted a call to a congregation in Indiana. The 1848 convention proposed that they send Pastor Fricke out again, and a neighboring pastor would fill in for him while he was gone. However, this second trip never took place. A discussion ensued that basically continued in the Synod until 1865. Should a formal call be extended by the Synod so that an ordained *Besucher* could “serve the scattered Lutherans with Word and Sacrament?” This proposal was opposed by those who maintained that such a call could only be extended by those who would be served. It was finally decided that: “. . . a *Besucher* might consider himself called to work among the scattered and forsaken Lutherans only to the extent that the law of brotherly or neighborly love and the authorization of Synod gave him a call to help them fulfill in their stead the duty incumbent upon them.” *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

in cases of extreme spiritual need. He was to gather scattered believers into congregations, which would then call pastors. The other three districts of the Missouri Synod then followed the Western District's lead and called *Reiseprediger* as well.⁶⁰ Thus the Missouri Synod in the 19th century took on the challenge of outreach on native soil while maintaining doctrinal integrity. The Synod began its involvement in foreign missions late in the century (1893), developing this outreach further in the early 20th century.⁶¹

⁶⁰ The following significant points were made: "9. Love is the queen of all laws, more so than all regulations, i.e., in cases of necessity it knows no commandment, much less any regulation. Matt. 12:7; Rom. 13:10. 10. There are cases of necessity in which also the regulation of the public office of the ministry cannot and should not be observed. Exodus 4:24-26. 11. A case of necessity occurs when, by legalistic observance of the regulation, souls would be lost instead of saved and love would thereby be violated." It was granted that the Synod or a district could authorize such ministries, but only on the grounds of the law of love, and not by virtue of the fact that it was the church-at-large. *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86. Another form of the Office of the Holy Ministry, which in some ways is itinerant, developed in the midst of the debate over itinerant ministers. In March 1862, Pastor Friedrich Wilhelm Richmann, while serving as pastor of a congregation in Schaumburg, IL, received a call to serve as chaplain to the 58th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteers of the U.S. Army. Richmann was the only Missouri Synod chaplain to serve during the Civil War. He regularly held worship services, baptized, and conducted funerals. After only three months of service, Chaplain Richmann returned to his congregation. During the Spanish American War, Christian J. Broders served as a chaplain with the Rough Riders. When the United States became involved in World War I, the Missouri Synod had three chaplains already serving in the military. Fred Wambsganns, Sr., "Five Decades of Pastoral Activity," *CHIQ* 30 (Winter 1958): 150. Also, consider Dale E. Griffin, "A History of the Missouri Synod's Participation in the Military Chaplaincy, Part I," *CHIQ* 72 (Winter): 251-256; Dale E. Griffin, "Effects of Missouri's Involvement in the Chaplaincy," *CHIQ* 73 (Summer): 100-127. The Lutheran Church Board for Army and Navy was appointed in 1917. The Board called and supported 194 "camp" (civilian) pastors, seventy of whom were full-time, who visited the various military installations in the United States. The Board regretted that only thirteen of some one hundred Missouri Synod pastors offering their services were actually appointed as active duty chaplains in the United States Army or Navy during the war years. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *Proceedings of the Thirty-First National Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, Assembled at Detroit, Mich., as the Sixteenth Delegate Synod June 16-25, 1920*. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), p. 106.

⁶¹ In 1893, the Missouri Synod, in convention, resolved to open a mission in some foreign field. It was first decided to begin work in Japan. However, in India, two missionaries, Pastor Theodore Naether and Pastor F.J. Mohn, severed their relationship with the Leipzig Mission Society because of its liberal views. On October 13, 1894, both men were formally called and commissioned by the Missouri Synod. A third missionary from the Leipzig Mission Society in India, Pastor O. Kellerbauer, joined the Missouri Synod on November 25, 1895. In 1913, Miss Louise Ellerman was sent to India as a nurse, and Miss Angela Rehwinkel followed in 1921. Concerning further mission work of the Synod, William J. Danker noted: "After every war the Synod saw new opportunities to spread the Gospel of peace through Christ. After the Civil War it opened missions to the freed slaves. After the Spanish-American War it discussed missions to Hawaii, Cuba and Puerto Rico, though its primary interest centered on Germans in these places. In 1899 C. J. Broders [who had served as a chaplain] began the work in South America, in Brazil. In 1901 William Mahler became the first resident pastor of the Missouri Synod in Brazil. A seminary was established and a church paper was launched. The success of the work in South America encouraged the Synod to begin mission work in the Caribbean area. Central America, too, was the scene of further Lutheran missionary action. *Moving Frontiers*, p. 303. On May 1, 1912, Pastor E.L. Arndt began the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Company for China. Calls were issued to Pastor Arndt and Pastor O.E. Heilmann to serve as missionaries to China. By 1917, the Missouri Synod adopted the China Mission as its own. By 1922, the Missouri Synod's China mission included fourteen missionaries and one woman teacher. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-235. Karl J.R. Arndt, "The Birth of Our China Mission (1912-62)," *CHIQ* 35 (January 1963):113-118.

Concluding Comments

From its formative years into the beginning of the 20th century, the Missouri Synod held firmly to both doctrinal integrity and outreach. This is readily identified in its confessional subscription, its rejection of unionism and syncretism of every form, its relations with other Lutheran synods, its discipline of pastors and teachers who fostered false doctrine or were involved in immorality, and its many forms of outreach. As the Synod wrestled over the establishment of itinerant ministers, it was determined that those called to such positions were to be pastors or holders of the *Predigtamt* [“Preaching Office”]. Such men were called and sent to preach the Word publicly and administer the Sacraments for the salvation of souls and the establishment of Christian congregations. In the argument over which should come first, the chicken (the church) or the egg (the office of the ministry), it was determined that normally it is the chicken, but sometimes, for the sake of love, it is the egg. However, both go hand-in-hand. Furthermore, it was recognized that in the situation of war, where there is no possibility of establishing a congregation, a pastor might be called or sent to preach the word and administer the Sacraments to those who have been displaced from their congregations and for the salvation of souls in this life-and-death situation. We note also one problematic issue that affected outreach during the formative period, yet which did not become completely apparent to many in the Synod until the beginning of the 20th century. In the first half-century of its existence, both doctrinal integrity and outreach were closely linked to the German language and the German heritage by synodical pastors, teachers, and congregational members. As the 20th century unfolded, the abrupt loss of German would dramatically affect the Synod in upholding the paradoxical tension between both doctrinal integrity and outreach. Coupled with this was the sharp decrease in German immigrants upon whom the Missouri synod had focused its outreach efforts in the 19th century. How could a culturally German but English-speaking Lutheran church now retool and reach out to surrounding Americans without losing its confessional distinctives? The answer for some would be to downplay doctrinal integrity in favor of outreach.

Chapter Two

Doctrinal Integrity and Outreach in the First Half of the 20th Century

As we look at the early 20th century, we note that there were a number of cultural forces at play, which would exert a strong influence on the development of confessional Lutheranism. This was the time of great immigration. Many new arrivals to these shores were Roman Catholic. The Protestant majority reacted with alarm, assuming that the Catholics, with their ethnic enclaves and parochial schools, would be politically loyal to the pope and resist assimilation into American culture. Reactionary groups were organized, among which was the Ku Klux Klan—originally an anti-Catholic, not an anti-black organization. Concerning this period, John O’Sullivan observes:

*One hundred years ago, the great wave of migration to the U.S. produced not only ethnic diversity but also theorizing about cultural pluralism—as in the writings of Randolph Bourne and Horace Kallen—that is very similar to today’s multiculturalism. Bourne, for instance, argued in **The Atlantic Monthly** in 1916 that America would become ‘a cosmopolitan federation of national colonies, of foreign cultures.’ He hoped that this new America would become ‘not a nationality, but a transnationality, a weaving back and forth with other lands.’ Kallen similarly called for the U.S. to be ‘a federation of nationalities.’ But this cultural pluralism was firmly countered by the ‘Americanization’ campaign led by some of the most significant figures in the America of that day, including Teddy Roosevelt, Louis Brandeis, and Woodrow Wilson, who argued fiercely against these ideas in favor of melting-pot assimilation. And once the American electorate realized what was at stake—i.e., would the immigrant adapt to America or vice versa—the Americanization campaign swept all before it.⁶²*

Hence, for the Lutherans, with their ethnic enclaves and parochial schools, there was pressure to assimilate even before the anti-German hysteria that arose with America’s entry into World War I in 1917. This of course was nothing new in America. George Washington had said in his Farewell Address that “With slight shades of difference, [Americans have] the same religion, manners, habits, and political principles.”⁶³ These pressures had formed the identity of East Coast Lutherans, who, from colonial times, had spoken English and assimilated into the broader American religious culture. As persecution broke out against Lutherans during and after WWI, it would be East Coast Missouri Synod clergy who challenged the parochial Midwesterners to conform, not only in terms of culture, but in doctrinal integrity as well.

Thus, several factors affected the balance and tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach within the Missouri Synod during the first half of the 20th Century. These include the language issue, the development of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, the issue of prayer fellowship, continued unity attempts, and a differing position on the doctrines of church and ministry that developed within the Wisconsin Synod.

⁶² John O’Sullivan, “Ideologues Without Borders,” in *National Review* (September 30, 2002): 34-37.

⁶³ Cited in O’Sullivan. *Ibid.*

The English District

As noted above, the English Evangelical Lutheran Conference of Missouri and Other States was founded in August 1872. In 1887, this small, scattered group of English speaking, confessional Lutherans petitioned the much larger but German-speaking Missouri Synod for membership. Even though *The Lutheran Witness*, an English-language Missouri Synod periodical, dates from the 1880s, the Synod declined its request because, “according to the constitution, our Synod is purely German. Therefore, it is hardly reconcilable with this condition that we establish an English district in our midst.” The English Conference was then encouraged to form its own English Lutheran Synod and apply for membership to the Synodical Conference.⁶⁴ This it did in 1890.⁶⁵

Although full doctrinal agreement had been recognized between the German and English Missouri Synods, the barrier of a language difference remained. In 1899, members of the Synodical Conference agreed that German congregations should seek German synodical affiliation and that English congregations should seek English synodical affiliation. However, by 1905, practically all of the districts of the Missouri Synod were engaged in English mission work. That year, the English Synod again requested Missouri to reconsider its admission. By 1908, the German Synod resolved that union with the English Synod was desirable and appointed a committee to confer with it. The merger took place at the 1911 Missouri Synod convention in St. Louis when the English Synod became the nongeographical English District.⁶⁶ As English became the predominant language throughout the Synod, the English District was repeatedly urged to amalgamate with the Synod’s geographical districts. The English District’s pride in its historic self-identity may have led to its persistent rejection of amalgamation, and this may have been in direct reaction to the Missouri Synod’s earlier German parochial attitude. During the second half of the 20th century, many members of the English District supported the Christ Seminary in Exile (Seminex) faculty, Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELIM), and joined the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) through the influence of English District members Martin E. Marty and John Tietjen.⁶⁷

World War I and Anti-Germanism

Had Missouri Synod members sensed the difficulties that were to follow the initial shots fired in Sarajevo on June 28, 1914, they undoubtedly would have taken action to prevent potential sources of dispute with their fellow American citizens. Unfortunately, no one in the Synod had the needed insight.

As early as 1915, the Missouri Synod as a whole, its congregations and their members, were under attack for being pro-German and therefore unpatriotic. Frederick Nohl has given six reasons for this reaction:

⁶⁴ Roy Suelflow, “The History of the Missouri Synod during the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence, 1872-1897,” unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1946, pp. 352, 384-385.

⁶⁵ *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 286-287.

⁶⁶ Baepler, p. 254-256.

⁶⁷ For a more in depth analysis see John C. Wohlrabe, Jr. “The Missouri Synod’s Unity Attempts During the Pfotenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935,” unpublished S.T.M. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, 1982, pp. 48-53.

1. *The Synod's perpetuation of the German language, though understandable, almost inevitably identified it with the enemy...*
2. *...the unwillingness of some members, rightly or wrongly, to give in to the demands of wartime pressures.....*
3. *...some United States citizens could not forget the sympathy that many in the Lutheran Church had shown for Germany during the neutrality period.*
4. *... the Synod strongly urged the separation of church and state.... The Synod also opposed unionistic practices, especially where its clergy were concerned. Many Missouri Synod pastors, therefore, refused to participate in patriotic church services and programs involving also pastors of other denominations. The public often viewed such refusal as an insult to the United States.*
5. *...widespread public confusion on two matters involving identity.... Some Germans, including a few whose actions had made them highly unpopular, were considered Lutherans even though they actually were not.*
6. *Finally, the war hysteria gave some "professional" anti-Lutherans a chance to vent their opposition and antagonism....*⁶⁸

Besides the attacks in newspapers and magazines across the country, the Missouri Synod also had to deal with anti-German language legislation in several states and personal attacks against congregations and pastors.⁶⁹

Anti-German attitude in America during World War I had a profound effect on the Missouri Synod's policy on the use of the German language. Although it did not bring about complete transition to the English language, the war did hasten the shift. At its 1917 synodical convention in Milwaukee, WI, the Synod adopted a new constitution, which dropped the word *Deutsche* ["German"], from the Synod's official title and translated the name to English. The Synod was now officially called "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States."⁷⁰ Because of the anti-German pressure and the reluctant approval from synodical leadership, changes began to occur throughout the Missouri Synod. By June 1918, English was to be the only language used in Nebraska Lutheran schools. Previously bilingual congregations began to drop their German service, while those using only German added an English service. The synodical constitution, as well as those of congregations and districts that restricted services and transactions to German were changed to allow for the use of English. Congregations translated their names into English and dropped the word "German" where it appeared. War-inspired pressures did much to condense into less than two years what would have undoubtedly taken much longer.⁷¹

The American Lutheran Publicity Bureau

Even before World War I broke out, Lutherans across the country were beginning preparations for the Quadricentennial of the Reformation. In New York City, the Lutheran Society of New York, an organization of over 500 laymen from many different Lutheran synods in the Greater New York area, including members of Missouri Synod

⁶⁸ Frederick Nohl, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Reacts to United States Anti-Germanism During World War I," *CHIQ* 35 (July 1962): 63-65.

⁶⁹ Neil M. Johnson, "The Patriotism and Anti-Prussianism of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1914-1918," *CHIQ* 39 (October 1966): 103-110.

⁷⁰ LCMS, 1917 *Proceedings*, p. 43.

⁷¹ Nohl, pp. 58-59.

congregations, were making plans for the celebration of the four-hundredth anniversary. From this Society, the New York Reformation Quadricentenary Committee was formed, which also included several New York City Missouri Synod pastors.⁷² The Missouri Synod participants in the Lutheran Society of New York organized the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau (ALPB) in 1914. Its purpose was to promote Lutheranism in a positive way in the face of American anti-Germanism. In January 1918, the ALPB began publishing the *American Lutheran* under the editorial guidance of Pastor Paul Lindemann, carrying the slogan “A Changeless Christ for a Changing World.”⁷³ In its first issue, the *American Lutheran* explained that its objectives were to make the Missouri Synod better known and help correct misunderstandings concerning the Synod’s stand on the war and other issues. They also hoped that the publication would help make the Synod more conscious of its obligation to evangelize among the non-German, English-speaking portion of the American populace. With the formation of the ALPB and the printing of the *American Lutheran*, there began a movement to Americanize⁷⁴ the Missouri Synod from within, a movement that would also emphasize outreach over doctrinal integrity.⁷⁵

Army and Navy Board and Rebellion in New York

After the United States Congress declared war against Germany, the June 1917 synodical convention directed President Pfotenhauer to appoint an Army and Navy Board to care for Missouri Synod servicemen.⁷⁶ Because President Pfotenhauer lived in Chicago and the Synod office was at his home, the members of the Board were selected from congregations in this city. Two Missouri Synod pastors (F.J. Wenchel and D.H. Steffens), with parishes located in Washington, D.C., were chosen as the government liaisons.⁷⁷ In the midst of rising anti-German pressure, the Army and Navy Board conducted its first sessions and recorded its first minutes in German; incredibly, it also proposed to deal with a government at war against Germany under the title: “*Evangelische Lutherische Missionsbehörde für Heer und Flotte*” (Evangelical Mission Board for Army and Navy).

⁷² O.H. Pannkoke, *A Great Church... Finds Itself* (Quitman, Ga.: Private Printing, 1966), pp. 44-45. Missouri Synod members were encouraged to celebrate the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation only with those with whom they were in fellowship. Articles appeared in *The Lutheran Witness* stating such. Pannkoke, the director of the New York Reformation Quadricentenary Committee took this as a personal attack. Pannkoke, p. 54. However, no evidence can be found that Missouri Synod officials spoke out specifically against the New York ceremonies. Apparently, the mass meeting sponsored by the Lutheran Society of New York on October 3, 1917, was not considered a worship service. Yet, even at this time, it can be seen that there were individuals within the Synod who began taking issue with their church body’s emphasis on pure doctrine and confessional integrity.

⁷³ Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), pp. 28-29. *Supra*, pp. 92-93.

⁷⁴ To assimilate the church body into American culture, making it more acceptable to the non Lutheran American public.

⁷⁵ Johnson, pp. 105-107.

⁷⁶ LCMS, 1917 *Proceedings*, p. 35. By the end of the war, 30,066 Missouri Synod parishioners would be serving in America’s Army or Navy. *The Lutheran Witness* 37 (November 26, 1918): 369.

⁷⁷ Alan Graebner, “World War I and Lutheran Union: Documents from the Army and Navy Board, 1917 and 1918,” *CHIQ* 41 (February 1968): 49.

Fortunately, Pastor Wenchel in Washington, D.C. had the good sense to request a change to English.⁷⁸

Because of the short supply of regularly commissioned military chaplains, the government assigned certain volunteer clergy as full-time camp pastors who were assigned to specific camps. Government officials also decided that all Protestants must work through either the Federal Council of Churches or the Y.M.C.A. It soon became clear that the government might give Lutherans special consideration as a group, but it was unlikely to recognize distinctions among them. In view of its policy on unionism, the Missouri Synod officials had to make some practical decisions.⁷⁹ The National Lutheran Commission for Soldier and Sailor Welfare (NLCSSW) was formed, and the Missouri Synod's Army and Navy Board drew up five points of agreement for working with the NLCSSW. However, this action upset several Missourians, chief among them Theodore Graebner, who perceived this as unionism, particularly after other Lutheran church bodies claimed this involved joint mission work. Thus, in December 1917, the Missouri Synod Army and Navy Board resolved to sever all relations with the NLCSSW. This action, in turn, upset the New York City Pastoral Conference of the Missouri Synod.

Early in January 1918, the New York Pastoral Conference held a "mass meeting" to protest the Chicago Board's action. To settle the problem, the St. Louis seminary faculty was called upon to render a *Gutachten* (opinion, judgment, decision). It was then decided that the Missouri Synod Army and Navy Board could work with the NLCSSW in external matters⁸⁰ and a new agreement was drafted. However, this again upset the New York City Missouri Synod pastors, who felt that the Synod should have stuck to its original five-point agreement. The New York City Missouri Synod pastors again met, and declared that they would work with the NLCSSW on their own. In the face of such bold action, President Pfothenhauer and three Vice-Presidents of the Synod went to New York City, where a meeting was held February 26, 1918, with about one hundred pastors in attendance. At the meeting a compromise was reached and it was decided to allow the New York Board to continue and to stick to the original five points of agreement with the National Lutheran Commission, with the understanding that work be conducted only in external matters. However, the Synod's Army and Navy Board located in Chicago retained the power to issue calls and the power of the purse. Matters became worse when, in the summer of 1918, the NLCSSW paved the way for the National Lutheran Council (NLC). The Missouri Synod Army and Navy Board refused to work with the NLC. The New York City pastors again protested. Tension continued until the Armistice of November 11, 1918. At the 1920 Missouri Synod convention, all Army and Navy Boards were dissolved.⁸¹

The struggle that occurred during World War I within the Missouri Synod was a struggle over the tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach. Missouri Synod

⁷⁸ Minutes of the Board for Army and Navy, July 13, 1917 and July 19, 1917, Concordia Historical Institute [CHI].

⁷⁹ Alan Graebner, pp. 51-52.

⁸⁰ External matters were those that did not involve altar and pulpit fellowship: liaison with the government, cooperation in social efforts, and the like.

⁸¹ Documentation can be found in Minutes of the Board for Army and Navy, CHI. A complete analysis is given in Wohlrahe, "The Missouri Synod's Unity Attempts During the Pfothenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935," pp. 95-107.

officials were willing to cooperate with the NLCSSW, but on the terms of cooperation only in external matters. The other Lutheran leaders in the NLCSSW wanted a more open-ended cooperation. The Missouri Synod appeared quite content with the original five-point agreement until articles appeared in other Lutheran synods publications calling the work of the NLCSSW a joint mission endeavor. This drew the concern of confessional Missouri Synod pastors. More “progressive” Missourians on the East Coast then tried to force the Synod into a more open-ended position on cooperation with the NLCSSW through power plays and tactics that could even be considered rebellious. A split in the Synod was avoided because the war ended and the synodical convention dissolved all outreach to members in the military. However, a dissatisfied group centering in New York City remained – dissatisfied not only with the parochial German attitude of many of the synodical officials, but also with the Synod’s doctrinal integrity, which prevented the Missouri Synod from total cooperation and eventual union with the other American Lutheran church bodies.

Politicking at the 1935 Convention

Although this tension seemed to settle down in the 1920s, outward dissatisfaction again showed itself in the 1930s. Leading members of the ALPB, including Paul Lindemann, editor of the *American Lutheran* and then pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church, St. Paul, MN, Professor E.J. Friedrich of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Dr. O.P. Kretzmann of the Walther League, and Pastor O.A.F. Geiseman of Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL, devised a plan to bring about change within the Synod. The plan called for altering the Synod’s home mission policy (particularly the linguistic and nationalistic ties), changes in education (the Synod had a surplus of ministerial candidates due to the Great Depression, and a change was demanded for quality instead of quantity), changes in financial planning (“much money has been poured into hopeless places”), and a change in the local congregational life (“a cultivation of the spirit of worship” and meeting the needs of a media-crazed age). It was proposed that the *American Lutheran* run articles calling for these changes, which it did. Special retreats for pastors and lay leaders in the year leading up to the 1935 synodical convention were also arranged. Lawrence (Lorry) Meyer, the Synod’s Director of Publicity, got word of this plan, which he and other synodical officials saw as being politically driven. By the time of the 1935 convention in Cleveland, extensive politicking was the order of the day. When it became clear that the ALPB group could not get Paul Lindemann elected as synodical president, they worked to unseat Frederick Pfothhauer. John Behnken was elected, the first American-born Missouri Synod president.⁸²

⁸² Wohlrabe, “The Missouri Synod’s Unity Attempts During the Pfothhauer Presidency, 1911-1935,” pp. 158-166. This is based on personal interviews with Dr. C.W. Spiegel who was pastor at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Cleveland at that time and Dr. Martin Scharlemann who was in attendance at the convention. John W. Behnken, in the “First draft” of *This I Recall*, in the possession of William Schmelder, wrote: “However, in all honesty I must say that if I had known at the time of the Cleveland convention what I learned about five years later, I would not have accepted the Presidency. From a man, whose reliability I cannot doubt, I learned that there was very much electioneering or propaganda. This occurred in the lobby and had also taken place through the mails. It is hardly believable that anyone would resort to such political tactics and maneuverings, against or for a candidate, in church elections. But it happened. The reader will understand, then, why I have warned repeatedly against electioneering at our conventions. It simply is improper and inexcusable in synodical elections. May God graciously preserve our Synod from practices

The Brux Case

Further agitation was stirred by the case of Rev. Dr. Adolph Brux. Dr. Brux was called to serve as a missionary to the Muslims in India. In November 1932, he was recalled from the missionary field because he had engaged in prayer and private devotions with another missionary who was a Presbyterian. The case went before the 1935 Cleveland Synodical convention, and the following report was presented:

We are happy to report that agreement has been reached on the following statement with respect to prayer-fellowship, which we consider satisfactory:

- 1. So far as direct Scripture teaching on prayer-fellowship is concerned, there is no passage, so far as we know, that expressly prohibits prayer-fellowship with erring Christians whom we must still regard as members of the universal Christian church.*
- 2. There are, however, passages which prohibit compromise of the truth, indifference to doctrine, unionism, and giving of offense.*
- 3. Hence every kind of prayer-fellowship which involves one of these objectionable features must be avoided.*

He [Dr. Brux] states that this has always been his doctrinal position.... Furthermore, he states that if there is any passage in his essay which anyone is inclined to interpret as being unscriptural, he is willing to reconstruct such a statement or to withdraw it entirely....

Therefore we hold that Brother Brux is eligible for the ministry.

Since Dr. Brux has spent so many years in very special preparation for the work as minister to the Mohammedans, and since he has proven himself especially qualified to bring the gospel to Mohammedan peoples, we recommend to Synod to instruct the Board of Foreign Missions to reinstate him in his chosen work.⁸³

Dr. Brux was not reinstated to his position by the members of the BFM, which included Dr. Brand, Dr. Arndt, and Dr. Pfothner. Dr. Arndt also published a booklet on prayer-fellowship, which had originally been given as an essay to the Missouri Synod's Oklahoma District, holding that prayer with Christians outside the Synodical Conference is unscriptural.⁸⁴ However, by 1936, the BFM determined to reinstate Dr. Brux. They sent him money to get the necessary medical exams for himself and his family, received \$3,000 from the synodical Board of Directors for his transportation to India and determined to pay Dr. Brux remuneration for the monthly pay of a missionary on furlough from December 1, 1932 to July 31, 1935. Yet, Dr. Brux refused this. He maintained that the BFM erred in dismissing him and that the South Wisconsin District

which would make a political football out of our elections. Where this is done the church is on slippery paths, and these lead downward.”

⁸³ Adolph A. Brux, *Re-Appeal to Synod*, Private Printing, submitted to delegates of the 1938 Synodical Convention, pp.2-3. After the wording of the last paragraph of the Committee's report had been accepted unanimously, it was felt by some of the members of the Board of Foreign Missions that the words “instruct the Board of Foreign Missions (BFM) to reinstate him in his chosen work” were unnecessarily severe in an amicable settlement and that a “recommendation” by Synod “to reinstate him in his chosen work” would serve as well. The representatives of the BFM stated that the “Board would understand the word ‘recommend’ in the sense of ‘instruct.’”

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-68.

erred in refusing to uphold his eligibility for a call. Brux also went public with his charges, and appealed to synodical President Behnken. Therefore, the committee appointed to deal with the Brux case recommended that his appeal be declined because he had taken a personal matter with Dr. Arndt public without following the admonition set forth in Matthew 18: 15-18.⁸⁵ Dr. Brux was listed in the *Lutheran Annual* in Racine, WI in 1938-1939, and in Chicago, IL on C.R.M. status from 1940-1941. His name is not listed in the 1942 *Lutheran Annual*.⁸⁶

Unity Attempts

In addition to the Brux case, other issues led to the growing tension during the first half of the 20th century within the Missouri Synod. Chief among those was the fellowship discussions between the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church.

From 1882 until the turn of the century, the Predestinarian Controversy continued and no official discussions were conducted between the Missouri and Ohio Synods. However, in 1902, a free conference of individual pastors from various synodical affiliations was held in Beloit, Wisconsin. The conference members called for official intersynodical conferences to discuss doctrinal differences that existed between the Synodical Conference and the Ohio and Iowa Synods. The first intersynodical conference was held in Watertown, Wisconsin, April 19-30, 1903. Subsequent meetings were conducted in Milwaukee (1903), Detroit (1904), and Fort Wayne (1905 and 1906). The various conferences were attended by hundreds of pastors, but no agreement was reached.⁸⁷

The Quadricentennial of the Reformation served as an impetus for several Lutheran union attempts. Within the Synodical Conference, a movement for merger began in 1913 among the laymen, and was referred to as the *Laienbewegung* [“lay movement”]. This was not successful because the Wisconsin Synod was developing its own merger with the Minnesota, Michigan, and Nebraska Synods.⁸⁸ Beginning in 1915, Synodical Conference pastors in Minnesota called for discussions with Ohio and Iowa Synod pastors to resolve the Predestinarian Controversy. Several meetings were held, and in 1916, a document, *Zur Einigung* [“Toward Unity”], was drafted.⁸⁹ This led to the Intersynodical Conferences between the Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, Buffalo, and Norwegian Synods from 1918 to 1926. The Intersynodical Theses were drafted. However, the Buffalo Synod was the only church body to accept them. Meanwhile, the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synods had been engaging in their own discussions, which led to the formation of the American Lutheran Church in 1930.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ LCMS, *1938 Proceedings*, pp. 323-324.

⁸⁶ Letter from Mark Birkholz, CHI Research Assistant dated 15 April 2002.

⁸⁷ John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, reprinted 1975). *Moving Frontiers*, p. 286. Fred W. Meuser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church* (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1958), p. 115.

⁸⁸ David Schmiel, “The History of the Relationship of the Wisconsin Synod to the Missouri Synod until 1925,” unpublished S.T.M. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, 1958, p. 30.

⁸⁹ For a more detailed analysis and a translation, see: Wohlrabe, “The Missouri Synod’s Unity Attempts During the Pfothenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935,” pp. 76-80.

⁹⁰ Meuser, pp. 250-251; Wohlrabe, “The Missouri Synod’s Unity Attempts During the Pfothenhauer Presidency, 1911-1935,” pp. 111-135.

Following its 1929 synodical convention, President Pfothenauer appointed a committee of Dr. Franz Pieper, Prof. W. Wenger, Rev. E.A. Mayer, Rev. L. A. Heerboth, and Dr. Theodore Engelder to formulate theses “which present the doctrine of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions in the shortest, most simple manner.”⁹¹ These theses would be the basis for future intersynodical discussions. The “Brief Statement” was published in the May 1931 issue of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, as well as in pamphlet form sent to all the pastors and congregations of the Synod. At the 1932 synodical convention, the Brief Statement was adopted as the Synod’s position for future dialogues with other Lutheran church bodies.⁹² Concerning unionism, the Brief Statement set forth the following:

*28. On Church-Fellowship. – Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church...all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies,...and, in case they have strayed into heterodox church-bodies, to leave them.... We repudiate unionism, that is, church-fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedient to God’s command, as causing divisions in the Church...and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely....*⁹³

In 1938, the American Lutheran Church issued its own statement called the Sandusky Declaration. The 1938 Missouri Synod convention assembled in St. Louis then resolved that the “Brief Statement” and the “Sandusky Declaration” could “be regarded as the doctrinal basis for future church fellowship....” and if remaining differences were worked out, and fellowship could be declared, it was to be “announced officially by the President of Synod.”⁹⁴ However, the Wisconsin Synod protested this action, as did some pastors and congregations within the Missouri Synod. Therefore, the 1941 and the 1944 Missouri Synod conventions rescinded the “Brief Statement” and “Sandusky Declaration” as a basis for fellowship.⁹⁵

“A Statement” of the 44

In response to what was considered to be a growing liberal movement within the Missouri Synod, Pastor Paul H. Burgdorf of Red Lake Falls, Minnesota began publication of yet another unofficial publication called *The Confessional Lutheran* in January 1940. This publication was opposed to the *American Lutheran* and the agenda of the ALPB, as well as the declaration of church fellowship with the American Lutheran Church.⁹⁶

As noted, the movement for change within the Missouri Synod, which had begun in New York City at the beginning of World War I, developed further during the United States’ involvement in the War when dissatisfaction arose in New York over the Synod’s

⁹¹ LCMS, 1929 *Proceedings*, pp. 112-113.

⁹² Wohlrabe, “The Missouri Synod’s Unity Attempts During the Pfothenauer Presidency, 1911-1935,” pp. 135-136.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 388.

⁹⁴ LCMS 1938 *Proceedings*, pp. 231-232.

⁹⁵ John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., “An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962,” unpublished Th.D. Dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1987, p. 172.

⁹⁶ “An Open Forum?” *The Confessional Lutheran* 1 (January 1940): 4.

attempts to minister to Armed Forces personnel. This movement led to the politicking at the 1935 synodical convention. Discontent continued to grow over the handling of the Adolph Brux case, the issue of prayer fellowship, the rescinding of the fellowship decision with the American Lutheran Church, and the beginning of *The Confessional Lutheran*. These were considered evidence of legalism and a loveless attitude in Missouri. Additionally, some people within the Synodical Conference took positions against life insurance, lightning rods, dancing and card playing. Such views were also considered to be legalistic, as well as the synodical position against lodge membership and how that was implemented in some congregations. Then there was the application of Romans 16:17 to other Lutherans, opposition to the emerging liturgical movement, and opposition to the Lutheran Laymen's League and the Walther League.⁹⁷

The result was the 1945 document entitled "A Statement," originally signed by forty-four Missouri Synod pastors (some of whom were synodical officials and professors) as well as laymen. The men who called the meeting that resulted in "A Statement" were serving as the editorial board for the *American Lutheran*: E.J. Friederich (former professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and Director of the Wheat Ridge Foundation), O.A. Geiseman (pastor of Grace Lutheran Church, River Forest, IL), O.P. Kretzmann (now President of Valparaiso University), and Oswald C. J. Hoffmann, Director of the ALPB and later Lutheran Hour Speaker. At a meeting in April 1945, they decided to gather together like-minded men on September 6-7, 1945, at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago. This date and site was chosen because the *American Lutheran* editorial board was meeting September 4-5, 1945, at the same location.⁹⁸ Apparently, "A Statement" was drafted by O.P. Kretzmann. A continuation Committee, chaired by E.J. Friederich, was appointed, and on October 9, 1945, this committee mailed "A Statement" to all clergy of the Missouri Synod with a cover letter. This was also accompanied by a series of articles and editorials in the *American Lutheran* and a book entitled *Speaking the Truth in Love*. The result was considerable unrest and polarity within the Synod—a conflict that was not resolved then, and continues to the present day.

"A Statement" included twelve theses, being divided into a "We affirm" section and a "We therefore deplore" section. That which was deplored included the following: legalism, substituting human judgments, synodical resolutions, or other sources of authority for the supreme authority of Scripture, man-made, ecclesiastical barriers that hinder the free course of the Gospel, a loveless attitude that included suspicions of brethren, impugning of motives, and condemnation of those expressing differing opinions, that Romans 16:17 had been applied to all Christians who differ from the Missouri Synod in certain points, the misuse of 1 Thessalonians 5:22, organizational loyalty taking the place of loyalty to Christ and his church, anything that reduced the warmth of the Gospel to a set of intellectual propositions, the tendency to decide the question of prayer fellowship on any other basis beyond the clear words of Scripture, and the tendency to apply the non-Biblical term "unionism" to any and every contact between

⁹⁷ Richard R. Caemmerer, "Recollections of 'A Statement,'" *CHI Q* 43 (November 1970): 156. Thomas Coates, "'A Statement' – Some Reminiscences," *CHI Q* 43 (November 1970): 159. *Speaking the Truth in Love: Essays Related to A Statement*, Chicago Nineteen Forty-Five (Chicago: The Willow Press, no date), passim. Jack Tron Robinson, "The Spirit of Triumphalism in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: The Role of the 'A Statement' of 1945 in the Missouri Synod," unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972, pp. 132-150.

⁹⁸ Robinson, p. 211.

Christians of different denominations.⁹⁹ Of special importance for our discussion here are Thesis Six and Thesis Eleven:

*SIX: We affirm the historic Lutheran position concerning the central importance of the **una sancta** and the local congregation. We believe that there should be a re-emphasis on the privileges and responsibilities of the local congregation also in the matter of determining questions of fellowship. We therefore deplore the new and improper emphasis on the synodical organization as basic in our consideration of the problems of the Church. We believe that no organizational loyalty can take the place of loyalty to Christ and his Church.*

ELEVEN: We affirm our conviction that in keeping with the historic Lutheran tradition and in harmony with the Synodical resolution adopted in 1938 regarding Church fellowship [with the ALC], such fellowship is possible without complete agreement in details of doctrine and practice which have never been considered divisive in the Lutheran Church.¹⁰⁰

With these theses, “A Statement” proposed selective fellowship. It also held that church fellowship was not based on the recognition of complete agreement in doctrine and practice.¹⁰¹ Furthermore, matters of church fellowship were taken out of the area of dogma and put into the area of ethics and personal pastoral casuistry, allowing for a confusion of the *fides qua* and the *fides quae creditur*.¹⁰² “A Statement” made no reference to the Lutheran Confessions in support of its position. President Behnken then sent a letter to the clergy of the Synod in which he stated:

We voiced our disagreement with some of the points in “A Statement” and insisted they be corrected or withdrawn.... There are some points with which we were not then and are not now in agreement. This holds true also for the ‘Deplorations’ and also of the ‘Accompanying Letter.’¹⁰³

At the 1947 synodical convention, Synodical President John Behnken reported to the Synod that on more than one occasion members of the praesidium (the President together with the Vice Presidents of the Synod) requested that “A Statement” be withdrawn, but each time the request was declined. Behnken then approved a procedure whereby ten of the signers of “A Statement” and ten pastors appointed by him would serve on a committee, which came to be known as the “Ten & Ten.” However, again no agreement was reached. When it became apparent that there would be no resolution, Behnken and the Praesidium chose an approach that brought both parties together to sign an “Agreement” according to which “A Statement” was withdrawn from discussion. Yet, “A Statement” was never retracted by its signers. Many in the Synod were upset by this action, or lack thereof. Not that the signers were totally happy with this lack of closure either. According to Thomas Coates, one of the Forty-four, “Unfortunately the impression was created that “A Statement” itself was being withdrawn. This was definitely not the case. At any rate, the proposal was accepted and the Signers emerged

⁹⁹ *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 422-424; Robinson, pp. 228-252.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ The Missouri Synod had always held that church fellowship was based on complete agreement in doctrine and practice based on Augsburg Confession VII understood in light of Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration X, 31.

¹⁰² The *fides qua creditur* is the faith that is believed or personal faith. The *fides quae creditur* is the faith that is confessed or the confession of faith.

¹⁰³ A.T. Kretzmann, “The Statement of the 44,” *CHIQ* 55 (Summer 1982): 163.

from the Chicago Convention unscathed, still members in good standing of the Missouri Synod. The whole business was just a bit too Machiavellian.”¹⁰⁴

V-E Day and V-J Day Events in St. Louis

In 1945, Dr. Theodore Graebner,¹⁰⁵ a Professor at Concordia Seminary, former editor of *The Lutheran Witness*, and a signer of “A Statement,” presented a study to the circuit representatives and visitors of the Western District of the LCMS, which was later published as a treatise titled *Prayer Fellowship*. The document came about as a reflection on the joint meetings between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod, which almost led to fellowship based on the “Brief Statement” and the “Sandusky Declaration.” These meetings were begun with prayer, but there were some within the Synodical Conference who considered such prayer to be unionistic. Thus, the primary question that Graebner confronted is “whether the Scriptures forbid our praying jointly with those who cannot be denied the name Christian, but who are not synodically affiliated with us or who teach error in one point or another concerning which they are willing to discuss with us the Scriptural basis of their teaching and of our own.”¹⁰⁶

Following a review of the Scripture passages adduced by those who would prohibit such prayer fellowship, Graebner concluded that “neither the texts nor the contexts in which they stand have anything to do with prayer fellowship. In fact, not a single one of them refers to prayer at all.”¹⁰⁷ For Graebner, the context in which such prayer occurred was crucial to determining whether or not it may be considered unionistic. He would not consider table prayer with non-Lutheran Christians as a case of unionism.¹⁰⁸

In addition to context, Graebner distinguished between the “essence” and “accidents” of the organization sponsoring public prayer. Whether it was an organization or an occasion, “the purpose defines its essence, and where there is not a purpose to make a meeting expressive of a common religious sentiment and of Christian discipleship, we cannot speak of unionism in the proper sense of the term, nor can participation be condemned as unscriptural.”¹⁰⁹ For example, such organizations as the Boy Scouts, the Red Cross, or even the American Congress treat all religions on an equal basis. This could be a problem, except that none of these organizations demand their members or participants view all religions as equally commendable.

Graebner concluded his treatise by recounting a specific case in St. Louis during the celebration of V-E Day in May 1945. Missouri Synod members, including Pastor Karl Krauth and Dr. Richard Caemmerer, were involved in advising the mayor’s committee on the nature of the celebration. Pastor Krauth and the other Missouri Synod Lutherans sought to avoid involvement in a religious service, and, in fact, counseled the mayor of St. Louis to make the event a predominantly civic affair, encouraging its citizens to worship in their own congregations that morning. This publicly testified to the

¹⁰⁴ Coates, p. 163.

¹⁰⁵ It is important to note that Theodore Graebner shifted his theological position. In 1918, he had raised the issue of unionism with regard to the Missouri Synod’s involvement in the National Lutheran Commission for Soldier and Sailor Welfare. However, by 1945, he was a signer of “A Statement.”

¹⁰⁶ Theodore Graebner, *Prayer Fellowship* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), pp. 3-4.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

mayor and other authorities that, because of conscience and creed, Missouri Synod clergy could not participate in unionistic or syncretistic worship. It further allowed individual members of the Missouri Synod—for whom German language and culture were still highly valued—to be represented in the celebration of V-E Day over German Nazism. Most importantly, the nature of involvement was arrived at and approved by the local pastor's conference, and involved Concordia Seminary in consultation and participation.¹¹⁰

By contrast, Graebner noted in the final words of his paper that on V-J day, which followed in August 1945, he urged the mayor to make this celebration also civic in nature, with military bands and marching troops, speeches by civic leaders, and the like. Nevertheless, the mayor's committee decided on having a service of prayers on the Plaza. A rabbi and an African-American preacher participated in this, while Graebner and the Roman Catholic clergymen chose not to attend. At the committee meetings prior, when Graebner protested the nature of the event, he was told that the people of St. Louis "wanted an emotional outlet to their religious sentiment," which a civic event or a service in their own church could not give them.¹¹¹ In his book, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong*, Graebner stated: "To participate in religious ceremonies with those who either do not worship the true God at all (idolatry) or worship Him in a manner He has forbidden (unionism)...these things do not agree with elementary Christianity."¹¹²

Other Unity Issues

Other issues of doctrinal integrity and church fellowship (restrictions on church fellowship are considered impediments to outreach by liberal thinkers in the church) developed within the Synodical Conference during the first half of the 20th century. This included fellowship declarations with the Slovak Synod as well as a differing understanding of church and ministry that developed within the Wisconsin Synod.

During the 1890s, the German Missouri Synod extended the hand of friendship and assistance to the scattered Slovak Lutheran churches in America.¹¹³ When the Slovak Synod was organized, September 2, 1902, it declared itself to be one in doctrine with the German Missouri Synod. A few years later, the Slovak Synod sought to join the Synodical Conference. There were some concerns, however, because at this time, the Slovak Synod still belonged to the Slovak Evangelical Union, a broader organization of Slovak congregations including pastors and congregations outside the Slovak Synod, which were reported to have been involved in unionistic and syncretistic activities. Once membership in the Slovak Evangelical Union was broken, the Slovak Synod was unanimously accepted into membership by the Synodical Conference, New Ulm, Minnesota, convention in August 1908.¹¹⁴

¹¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 30

¹¹² Theodore Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1951), p. 110. Even this statement could be stronger. It not only does "not agree with elementary Christianity," it is wrong and totally inappropriate.

¹¹³ J.L. Neve and Willard D. Allbeck, *History of the Lutheran Church in America*, 3rd ed. (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 249.

¹¹⁴ George Dolak, "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902-1927," unpublished Th.D. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO 1953, pp. 88-95.

Another issue of integrity developed in the Missouri Synod's relationship to the Wisconsin Synod within the Synodical Conference. This started with a congregational disciplinary matter within the Missouri Synod and the intersynodical dealings with the Wisconsin Synod, resulting in a reevaluation and restatement of the doctrines of church and ministry by leading Wisconsin Synod theologians. In 1899, a Mr. Schlueter of the Missouri Synod congregation Trinity Lutheran Church in Cincinnati, Ohio, was excommunicated (the congregation maintained that he excommunicated himself) because he desired to send his son to the public school instead of the congregation's parochial school. This excommunication was deemed inappropriate and Pastors A. and E. von Schlichten (father and son) and the Trinity congregation were suspended by the Missouri Synod's Central District. In 1904, A. and E. von Schlichten and their congregation applied for membership to the Wisconsin Synod. Wisconsin reported that the application would not be considered because the situation between the ousted pastors, their congregation, and the Missouri Synod had not been settled. The 1905 Missouri Synod convention required that the suspended parties retract their accusations against the Synod, which they had aired by way of pamphlets and in the public press. The von Schlichtens and their congregation then reapplied for membership in the Wisconsin Synod. Committees from both the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods discussed the issue for several years. However, in the meantime, several Wisconsin Synod pastors were engaging in fellowship with the former Missouri Synod congregation, despite warnings from Wisconsin Synod officials, particularly the faculty of the Wisconsin Synod's Wauwatosa seminary. By 1911, the Trinity congregation deposed the von Schlichtens and the council, which supported them, and then returned to the Missouri Synod.¹¹⁵

Meanwhile, discussions on the role of parochial school teachers in relation to the Public Office of the Ministry were developing throughout the Synodical Conference. In view of this and the Cincinnati Case, Professors Koehler, Schaller, and August Pieper (brother of Franz Pieper), all from the Wisconsin Synod Seminary, worked together in order to clarify their understanding of the doctrines of church and ministry. And, according to Koehler, all three men "stood shoulder to shoulder."¹¹⁶

However, it was August Pieper, albeit with the complete agreement and support of Koehler and Schaller, who pushed the issue forward, beginning with a series of articles in the 1911 issues of the Wisconsin Synod's *Theologische Quartalschrift*. With the background of the Cincinnati case in mind, August Pieper discussed "Lording It Over Others in the Church." Here Pieper maintained that suspension from synodical fellowship is synonymous with excommunication, and that any form of the church, district, synod, as well as a local congregation, had full churchly authority. The Missouri Synod had long held that a congregation was properly understood as church, while a synod was of human arrangement. In 1912, August Pieper published an article, which took issue with C.F.W. Walther's *Kirche und Amt* ["Church and Ministry"]. Pieper held that because of Walther's method of quoting from the Confessions and the church fathers, there was

¹¹⁵ This information was gathered from Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, and Synodical Conference Proceedings and can be found in John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 114-116.

¹¹⁶ John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, translated and edited by Leigh D. Jordahl (St. Cloud, MN: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970), p. 234.

much room left for misunderstanding the fathers and for misunderstanding Walther. Pieper also maintained that at times Walther himself misunderstood Scripture, the Confessions and the church fathers. Pieper went on to defend his own understanding with respect to the church, particularly the view that any gathering of believers, whether a congregation or synod, could properly be considered church, and thus hold all churchly authority. With respect to the ministry, August Pieper believed that not only the office of preaching in a local congregation, but every form of the public ministry is instituted and established by God. He maintained that God established the Public Office of the Ministry only in an abstract form, and it was up to the church to determine how this was established in concrete forms (what is sometimes described as the functional view of the ministry).¹¹⁷

Meetings were held between members of the Missouri Synod's St. Louis seminary and the Wauwatosa faculty. No agreement was reached, and apparently the issue was dropped by the Missouri Synod for the time being.¹¹⁸ However, August Pieper continued to set forth his position openly in the Wisconsin Synod's *Quartalschrift* through the 1920s and into the 1930s.¹¹⁹ During the intersynodical discussions of the 1920s, when discussions of the doctrines of church and ministry came up, disagreement was not between the Missouri Synod and the Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo Synod theologians, but instead between Missouri and Wisconsin.¹²⁰ An attempt at another organic union of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the early 1930s was derailed when August Pieper again published his differing view on church and ministry.¹²¹

At its 1939 synodical convention, the Wisconsin Synod resolved that the military chaplaincy was not compatible with Lutheran theology. It was held that it involved a violation of the principle of the separation of church and state and that service in the military chaplaincy would necessitate unionism. The Missouri Synod, on the other hand, took an entirely different position and was actively involved in the military chaplaincy. During World War II, a dispute over the chaplaincy continued within the Synodical Conference. Following the War, the 1946 convention of the Synodical Conference resolved to appoint an Interim Committee to discuss the chaplaincy as well as the doctrines of church and ministry. During the discussions that followed, the Wisconsin Synod theologians maintained that the differences within the Synodical Conference on church and ministry were not differences in doctrine as such, but rather application. However, the difference over the military chaplaincy was thought to involve unionism, and was therefore an issue of doctrine. Furthermore, a different understanding of fellowship was developing between the Missouri Synod, on the one hand, and the Wisconsin Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Synod ("Little Norwegian Synod" or ELS) on the other. The Wisconsin Synod and ELS held a unit doctrine on church fellowship that included altar and pulpit fellowship as well as prayer fellowship and cooperation in matters external (joint social efforts and contact with the government). The Missouri

¹¹⁷ Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 118-120.

¹¹⁸ Koehler, p. 238.

¹¹⁹ Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 120-122..

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 144-

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 197-204.

Synod considered church fellowship to be properly identified only with the marks of the Church, the Word and the Sacraments. Therefore, church fellowship was properly identified only as altar and pulpit fellowship. This had allowed the Missouri Synod to work with the National Lutheran Council (NLC) in matters external during World War II so that Lutherans could present a united front to the government in providing ministry to the Armed Forces. No resolution on these issues between the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods was reached.¹²²

Wisconsin's doctrinal innovation on the Office of the Ministry began to affect the Missouri Synod. During World War II the functional view of the ministry began to take root. August C. Stellhorn, Secretary of Schools for the Missouri Synod (1921-1960), worked hard to get male parochial school teachers and those training to be teachers the same exempt status from the draft that pastors and those training to be pastors received. Then, in the March 1948 issue of *Lutheran Education*, editor Arnold C. Mueller published an article entitled "Do I Have a Divine Call to Teach Arithmetic?"¹²³ Here Mueller began to demonstrate his agreement with the position held by many in the Wisconsin Synod regarding church and ministry. A.C. Stellhorn also began expressing similar views in correspondence at this time. On March 24, 1948, A.C. Mueller issued a paper entitled "The Status of the Parochial School Teacher." Here he articulated the position that God established the Public Office of the Ministry only in the abstract, and that it was up to the church to determine the concrete forms it takes. Thus, according to A.C. Mueller, pastors and teachers were both partakers in the office of the ministry on equal but different terms. From that point on, both Mueller and Stellhorn would openly advocate this view within the Missouri Synod, and it became the position taught at the Synod's teacher colleges in Seward, Nebraska and River Forest, Illinois.¹²⁴

Concluding Comments

During the first half of the 20th century, the Missouri Synod became involved in intense internal struggle over the tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 205-213.

¹²³ A.C. Mueller, "Do I Have a Divine Call to Teach Arithmetic?" *Lutheran Education* 83 (March 1948): 391-397; Wohlrabe, "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 1231-239..

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp. 241-247. In the Eggen Case of 1949, significant statements on the status of the Lutheran teacher were presented before the Federal Government. In order to secure for teachers the tax-free housing status that pastors enjoyed, synodical officials presented to the Internal Revenue Service a doctrinal position that was more closely in line with the Wisconsin Synod's teaching on the ministry than that of the Missouri Synod as set forth in *Kirche und Amt*. The result was that the Synod adopted nomenclature that would satisfy the government's requirements for offering clergy tax benefits to teachers and others serving in churchly offices. This new nomenclature did not necessarily reflect long-standing ecclesiastical terminology or the Synod's doctrinal position with respect to the Office of the Holy Ministry and churchly offices. Those called to the Office of the Holy Ministry, the Preaching or Pastoral Office, were called "Ministers of Religion – Ordained," while those holding churchly offices were called "Ministers of Religion – Commissioned." Eventually, this was changed to "Ordained Ministers" and "Commissioned Ministers," which the Synod uses today, but which still does not accurately reflect either ecclesiastical terminology or our Synod's doctrinal position. For a more in depth analysis, see: John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 247-252; or John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., *Ministry in Missouri until 1962* (Private Printing, 1992), pp. 43-47.

Brought on largely by the forced language transition and anti-Germanism of the First World War, the Synod faced a growing movement for change from within, organized primarily around the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau and the publication *American Lutheran*. The issue of prayer fellowship and continued unity attempts with other American Lutheran church bodies created further tension. Was prayer with others to be considered part of church fellowship? How could Missouri Synod pastors participate in civic events that involved other clergy? Furthermore, a differing position on the doctrines of church and ministry developed within the Wisconsin Synod, which carried into the Missouri Synod and was adopted then by those who strongly advocated the position of parochial school teachers. Was the difference over church and ministry in fact a matter of application instead of a matter of doctrine, while the issue of the military chaplaincy was a matter of doctrine and not application? Was church fellowship associated purely with the marks of the church, Word and Sacraments, or did it encompass more, including prayer and work in external matters? As the members of the Missouri Synod struggled over these issues--and therefore over the tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach--there were some who perceived an emphasis on maintaining doctrinal integrity as loveless legalism, particularly those associated with the ALPB and "A Statement." They thereby emphasized outreach above or to the exclusion of doctrinal integrity and sought to change the long-standing position of the Missouri Synod. This would lead to further erosion of doctrinal integrity in years to come. This tension and division that developed would lead to a split within the Synod during the second half of the 20th century.

In later years, according to one report, Dr. Behnken was asked how Concordia Seminary filled up with liberals on his watch. He broke down in tears and exclaimed, "What could I do when they lied to me?"

Chapter Three

Doctrinal Integrity and Outreach in the Third Quarter of the 20th Century

Struggle over maintaining both doctrinal integrity and outreach within the Missouri Synod took on even greater intensity during the second half of the 20th century. This struggle, which built during the third quarter of the 20th century, resulted in a split within the Synod at the beginning of the fourth quarter. Marked divergence developed over issues of Law and Gospel, particularly the Third Use of the Law, Biblical interpretation, understanding of church fellowship and the doctrine of the ministry.

“A Statement” Paves the Way for Change

Some may say that the “Statement of the 44” was swept under the carpet. The lack of action established a strong precedent. The Rev. Daniel Preus noted the following: *Completely apart from the issues involved, the fact that a statement of faith and conviction which had been made and mailed to all LCMS clergy and was contrary to official church doctrine and practice was simply withdrawn from discussion without retraction was a very bright green light to those who wished to see Missouri embrace a more open fellowship practice. But the implications do not end there. When people were permitted to publish a position statement contrary to our doctrine, and were not disciplined or required to retract, it became apparent that people would be able to publish or set forth other statements contrary to our doctrine. To many who believed Missouri too rigid, the 44 became a heroic example of a new permissiveness which would slowly invade the synod and lead eventually to the deplorable positions held by the St. Louis Seminary faculty majority in the early 1970s....The fact remains that these men were able to flaunt the doctrinal practice of the church body to which they belonged with no significant consequences....*¹²⁵

“Gospel” Centered Emphasis

Dr. Richard Caemmerer, a signer of “A Statement,” was professor of homiletics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, from 1940 to 1974. In 1947, Caemmerer published “The Melanchthonian Blight,” in the *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Here he traced what was described as the wane of vitality in Lutheranism, attributing it to a “Melanchthonian”¹²⁶ approach to theology, which he described as the “intellectualization of the Christian religion.” Caemmerer held that the church must strive to overcome intellectualism by emphasizing the “evangelical” character of its ministry.¹²⁷

While Caemmerer did not provide a substitute for intellectualism beyond advocating a Gospel-centered ministry, Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan, another Concordia

¹²⁵ Daniel Preus, “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: Holiday from History,” <http://www.confessionallutherans.org/papers/dantalk.htm>, pp. 11, 13.

¹²⁶ This term is derived from the name of Philip Melancthon, lay professor in Wittenburg during the Reformation and author of the Augsburg Confession, Apology of the Augsburg Confession, and the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, all contained in the Lutheran Confessions, *The Book of Concord*.

¹²⁷ Richard Caemmerer, “The Melanchthonian Blight,” *CTM* 18 (May 1947):321-338. See Scott R. Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), pp. 46-50.

Seminary professor, built on Caemmerer's thesis in his book *From Luther to Kierkegaard*, published in 1950. Pelikan accepted the existential philosophy of Kierkegaard and called into question the third use of the Law.¹²⁸ This was based, in part, on overemphasizing the views of the "young" Luther, as noted by Scott Murray in his recent book, *Law, Life, and the Living God*:

*Pelikan and other theologians associated with the Valparaiso school joined their suspicion of reason in theology with their denial of the validity of an objective and eternally valid moral law of God. This excessive suspicion of reason was based on an overemphasis on the "young" Luther's rejection of Aristotelian philosophy. Gerrish and later Luther interpreters revised this view because they researched more in the work of the later or more "mature" Luther.*¹²⁹

Meanwhile, as a celebration of the Centennial of the Missouri Synod in 1947, a special series of essays was commissioned and published as *The Abiding Word*. The first volume of essays was presented at the District Conventions in 1945, and published in 1946. The essays were to be "based on the writings of our fathers," and as such were to present the classic Missouri position on the topics at hand. A second volume consisted of essays read at District Conventions in 1946 and published in 1947.¹³⁰ It appears that the old Missourians were attempting to push the pendulum the other way, stressing doctrinal integrity. However, they may have been pushing too far. Scott Murray observes:

*The LCMS still gave lip service to Lutheran orthodoxy, but in reality it tended to deviate from orthodoxy. The theologians who contributed to **The Abiding Word** were more legalistic in their doctrine of the third use of the Law, suggesting that the Law was susceptible to human manipulation. They also introduced a tendency to distinguish the Law and Gospel in an anthropological fashion, with the Law making an impact on the mind, the Gospel on the heart.*¹³¹

Bad Boll Conferences

In support of war-torn Germany, the Missouri Synod began a series of seminars for German clergymen at Bad Boll, a summer resort near Stuttgart, in 1948. The discussions were theological and aimed at a reappraisal of Lutheran confessionalism. From the beginning, the conferences were open to all German Lutherans, and as essays were presented, the Missouri Synod clergymen who attended were directly confronted with modern German scholarship, particularly in the area of contemporary Luther studies and historical criticism. The Missouri Synod commissioners met personally with men like Werner Elert, Helmut Thielicke, Peter Brunner, Heinrich Bornkamm, Edmund Schlink,

¹²⁸ Jaroslav Pelikan, *From Luther to Kierkegaard* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950). Murray, pp. 50-53. The third use of the Law is the didactic or teaching aspect of the Law for Christians. It teaches those who have been brought to faith in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, which the Holy Spirit has worked through the Gospel, what should and should not be done to lead a God-pleasing life. It serves as a guide. However, the power to live according to the Law comes from the Gospel. *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), p. 95.

¹²⁹ Murray, p. 53.

¹³⁰ A third volume to the *Abiding Word* collection of essays was published in 1960. Todd Peperkorn, "The Use of C.F.W. Walther's *Kirche und Amt* in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod to 1947," unpublished Master of Sacred Theology thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, IN, May 1999, p. 130.

¹³¹ Murray, p. 74.

and Adolf Koeberle. By 1956, the Bad Boll conferences were confined primarily to the German Free Churches. Yet, the early direct confrontation with well-developed, rationalistic German scholarship had a profound effect on the Missouri Synod clergymen who attended.¹³² Scott Murray notes three results of the Bad Boll conferences:

*First, the Missouri Synod commissioners returned to the United States with an altered view of the place of Scripture in theological prolegomena. This has affected the course of Missouri Synod history to the present. Second, the commissioners encountered an ambivalence about the significance of the Formula of Concord for which they were unprepared. Third, the commissioners returned to their teaching posts eager to recommend these great Lutheran scholars to their students for graduate studies.*¹³³

During the Forties and Fifties those students would filter back into the Missouri Synod, finding positions of influence, particularly at Concordia Seminary, from which they could advance their liberal agenda.

Resolution 9

Out of a growing concern within both the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference over what was considered to be the inroads of liberal theology through a rejection of the third use of the Law as articulated in Formula of Concord Article VI and the use of historical criticism with respect to the Bible, the 1959 convention of the Missouri Synod reaffirmed the Synod's traditional position on the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture. It did this by first adopting the "Statement on Scripture," which had been drafted for and adopted by the Synodical Conference convention in 1958.¹³⁴ Secondly, the 1959 synodical convention resolved that "every doctrinal statement of a confessional nature adopted by Synod as a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures is to be regarded as public doctrine (*publica doctrina*) in Synod," and "Synod's pastors, teachers, and professors are held to teach and act in harmony with such statements."¹³⁵

The Scharlemann Essays

Yet, even before the 1959 synodical convention, Dr. Martin Scharlemann, Graduate Professor of Exegetical Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, had begun a series of "exploratory" essays on the nature of inspiration and revelation with respect to

¹³² *Moving Frontiers*, p. 429.

¹³³ Murray, p. 67. Concerning the influence of Werner Elert, David Scaer has noted:

"Werner Elert, who out of all the Bad Boll conferees on the German side would make the biggest impression on the Missourians, was part of the Erlangen tradition. He had been a pastor and professor in the Breslau Synod, a church body that has grown closer and closer to the Missouri Synod. He also appeared as a chief attacker of Karl Barth on the matter of Law and Gospel. Elert's essay **Law and Gospel** was a direct reply to Barth's **Gospel and Law**. All this endeared Elert to the Missourians. But the elevation of "Law-Gospel" as the controlling theological theme was the weakness of Elert's position. The Missourians did not determine that Elert had provided no basis for his theology apart from a functional use of Scriptures and Luther. Elert like Barth had a Scripture divorced from history. Elert was in fact a "Lutheran-Barthian." His "Law-Gospel" principle hung suspended in theological thin air, almost in the same fashion as the Erlangen theology a century before." David Scaer, "Law Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod," *Springfielder* 36 (December 1972): 162-163.

¹³⁴ LCMS, *1959 Proceedings*, p. 189. LCMS, *1959 Reports and Memorials*, pp. 483-486.

¹³⁵ LCMS, *1959 Proceedings*, pp. 191-192.

Scripture.¹³⁶ Scharlemann saw a greater threat to the confessional understanding of the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture in fundamentalism than in historical-criticism. In one such article, he attempted to “defend the paradox that the book of God’s truth contains errors.”¹³⁷ In defending against a fundamentalist, wooden understanding of Scripture, Scharlemann viewed Scripture as “A MEANS OF REVELATION...”¹³⁸ Scharlemann even recognized his understanding of revelation as “Barthian.”¹³⁹ In trying to avoid a docetic understanding of Scripture,¹⁴⁰ Scharlemann sought to emphasize both the human and divine side of Scripture. He believed that applying the word “inerrant” to Scripture could give a false understanding if understood in a scientific sense.¹⁴¹ Yet, in fighting against fundamentalism, Scharlemann did not guard against the dangers of historical-criticism.

Throughout the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference, Scharlemann was severely criticized for what many saw as a rejection of the inerrancy and inspiration of Scripture. The criticism began approximately in the fall of 1959, and by the time of the 1962 Missouri Synod convention there were numerous resolutions asking that Professor Scharlemann be removed from office.¹⁴² For many delegates, this was the primary concern at the 1962 synodical convention. Dr. Scharlemann apologized to the Synod for having created a disturbance and publicly assured the members of his church body that he held to the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture. But the doors had been opened for the further incursion of historical criticism.¹⁴³

The 1962 Convention – “A Turning Point”

Other issues faced the Missouri Synod’s 1962 Cleveland Convention as well. There were questions with respect to the constitutionality of the 1959 resolution which had established all synodically adopted doctrinal statements as public doctrine and required the Synod’s pastors, teachers and professors to live and teach accordingly. Some saw this as the establishment of a new confessional subscription within the Missouri

¹³⁶ The titles of the essays were “The Inerrancy of Scripture” (1958), “The Bible as Record, Witness, and Medium” (1959), “God’s Acts as Revelation” (1961), and “This Matter of ‘Inerrancy’ Once Again” (1961). The original manuscripts are located in the Concordia Seminary Library Rare Book Room, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. For a thorough analysis of the controversy over Scharlemann’s essays see Richard Donald Labore, “Traditions and Transitions: A Study of the Leadership of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod During a Decade of Theological Change, 1960-1969,” unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, St. Louis University, St. Louis, MO, 1980, pp. 123-225.

¹³⁷ James Adams, *Preus of Missouri*, (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1977), p. 127.

¹³⁸ Martin Scharlemann, “God’s Acts As Revelation,” *CTM* 33 (April, 1961): 209-210.

¹³⁹ Martin Scharlemann, “Revelation and Inspiration,” Concordia Seminary Library Rare Book Room, St. Louis, MO. Karl Barth (1886-1968), was a leading proponent of Neoorthodoxy in Europe.

¹⁴⁰ From the Greek word “to seem;” as to imply Scripture only seems human. In the Early Church, Docetism was a form of Gnosticism which maintained that Christ only seemed human.

¹⁴¹ Martin Scharlemann, “The Inerrancy of Scripture,” Concordia Seminary Library Rare Book Room, St. Louis, MO.

¹⁴² Beginning with the November 1959 issue, the Scharlemann controversy dominated the pages of *The Confessional Lutheran* until well after the 1962 convention. LCMS, *Reports and Memorials to the Forty-Fifth Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Meeting at Cleveland, Ohio, June 20-30, 1962* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), pp. 164-165. Also see John Behnken, *This I Recall* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), p. 199.

¹⁴³ LCMS, *1962 Proceedings*, pp. 106-107.

Synod.¹⁴⁴ Also to be considered was the Missouri Synod's relationship to the Wisconsin Synod (The Wisconsin Synod suspended fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1961) and the future of the Synodical Conference (the Evangelical Lutheran Synod had broken fellowship in 1955). There were calls for the establishment of a new agency for all Lutheran bodies in America that would include newly-formed-by-merger The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America. The Synodical Survey Commission submitted another report, which recommended changes in the Synod's Bylaws. The creation of a new agency to study doctrinal concerns and interchurch relations was recommended. In the wake of increasing budget deficits, the Board of Directors of the Synod proposed a special offering for synodical needs. The Council of Presidents proposed a resolution that changed the definition of ordination and separated the Public Office of the Ministry from the congregation, and in some cases, from the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments. And finally, the Missouri Synod's president for twenty-seven years, John W. Behnken, was stepping down and the 1962 convention had to elect a new synodical president.¹⁴⁵

The emotion-filled 1962 Cleveland Convention was a turning point in the Missouri Synod.¹⁴⁶ The pendulum was pulled decidedly from a balance and tension between both doctrinal integrity and outreach toward a marked emphasis on outreach at the expense of doctrinal integrity.¹⁴⁷

In a presentation to district presidents and seminary faculties on December 2, 1963, Synodical Vice-President Roland Wiederaenders made the following significant observation:

Despite repeated efforts we have not dealt honestly with our pastors and people. We have refused to state our changing theological position in open, honest, forthright, simple and clear words. Over and over again we have said that nothing was changing when all the while we were aware of changes taking place. Either we should have informed our pastors and people that changes were taking place and, if possible, convinced them from Scripture that these changes were in full harmony with "Thus saith the Lord!" or we should have stopped playing

¹⁴⁴ [Editorial] "Resolution 9," *American Lutheran* 45 (April 1962): 5-6.

¹⁴⁵ LCMS, *1962 Reports and Memorials*, passim. See Wohlraabe, "An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod until 1962," pp. 368-371.

¹⁴⁶ The 1962 Cleveland convention elected Oliver Harms as President of the Synod, heard Martin Scharlemann ask forgiveness for his actions, withdraw his essays and then voted to forgive him, heard that Resolution 9 (that all synodically adopted doctrinal statements were public doctrine) was unconstitutional, voted to reestablish relations with the Wisconsin Synod, voted to work toward the establishment of a new inter-Lutheran agency that would include The American Lutheran Church and the Lutheran Church in America, established the Commission on Theology and Church Relations, started the "Forward in Faith" funding appeal, and resolved that pastors could be ordained to calls apart from those to a congregation (district, synodical and professorial positions). *Ibid.*, p. 372; *LCMS 1962 Proceedings*, pp. 66, 103-109, 123-124, 130-131, 154.

¹⁴⁷ Martin W. Mueller well summarized this shift toward outreach over doctrinal integrity in an editorial entitled "Turning Point" in *The Lutheran Witness*, although he undoubtedly saw this as a positive move. Interestingly, this is also the last entry in the 1964 "Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," entitled *Moving Frontiers*, edited by Carl S. Meyer. This section of the book was co-edited by Thomas Coates, a signer of "A Statement." [Martin W. Mueller], editorial, "Turning Point," *The Lutheran Witness*, 81 (21 August 1962), pp. 406, 407, 415; *Moving Frontiers*, pp. 431-435.

*games as we gave assurance that no changes were taking place. With increasing measure the synodical trumpet has been giving an uncertain sound.*¹⁴⁸

The Valparaiso School and Gospel Reductionism

As noted above, some Concordia Seminary professors in the late 1940s and 1950s began stressing the Gospel while rejecting a third use of the Law. This became the predominant position at the Seminary in the 1960s. Scott Murray refers to such Missouri Synod theologians (who invoked Law-Gospel as the ruling or only hermeneutical presupposition in Lutheran theology and who emphasized Gospel to the exclusion of the third use of the Law) as the Valparaiso Theologians or the Valparaiso School, although not all of them taught at Valparaiso University. Some taught at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis or elsewhere within the Missouri Synod. The Valparaiso theologians included Edward Schroeder, Robert Bertram, Walter Bartling, Robert Hoyer, Paul Bretscher, Walter Bouman, and Robert Schultz. Of these, Schroeder, Bertram, Hoyer, Bretscher, and Schultz taught at Valparaiso University.

These theologians were strongly influenced by the Erlangen school of theology, particularly the works of Werner Elert. Elert focused his theological approach on a Law-Gospel foundation. His anti-Calvinistic bias led him to denigrate the Law's didactic purpose. Edward Schroeder identified Elert as the person who most influenced the rediscovery of the centrality of Law and Gospel for Lutheran theology and hermeneutics.¹⁴⁹

John W. Montgomery referred to this as "Law/Gospel reductionism" which in time became known as "Gospel reductionism." Gospel reductionism was rightly criticized by Missouri Synod theologians such as Robert Preus, David Scaer, Kurt Marquart, and Ralph Bohlmann because it functioned as a hermeneutical presupposition rather than strictly as a theological principle. For many of the "Valpo" theologians, Law and Gospel had become "the hermeneutical touchstone" of the Lutheran Confessions. Though Law and Gospel was *a* basis, it certainly was not the *only* basis in the Lutheran Confessions. "The Law and Gospel" theme had extensive norming significance in Lutheran theology, but it was itself normed by the text of Scripture.¹⁵⁰ Gospel reductionism created a false either/or, a choice between Gospel and Scripture. It reduced the authentication of points of Lutheran doctrine to whether they were "Gospel or not-the-Gospel." As a result, the third use of the Law was excised. The Valparaiso theologians reduced Law-Gospel reductionism to mere Gospel reductionism, which in turn was based on a very narrow definition of Gospel.¹⁵¹

Thus, the theologians of the Valparaiso school were extremely suspicious of church authority, especially when that authority enforced doctrinal standards. As Scott Murray observes: "Often the rigid application of the 'Occam's razor' of Gospel reductionism accompanied or was even occasioned by the rejection of any doctrinal discipline imposed by church authorities."¹⁵² He continues:

¹⁴⁸ LCMS Public Relations Department new release, January 24, 1974, cited in Daniel Preus, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Holiday from History," p.3.

¹⁴⁹ Murray, p. 91-95.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 105.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 106-107.

¹⁵² Ibid., p. 111.

*This perspective led to a view of lawful church authority that was low indeed. For in principle there could be no church authority apart from the existential character of truth, itself a slippery notion. An existentialistic Gospel is not susceptible to codification in doctrinal standards or enforcement of those standards. Thus, doctrinal orthodoxy is not a piety to be pursued in faithful service to the Lord of the church, but a positive evil to be avoided at almost any cost.*¹⁵³

Historical Criticism and Concordia Seminary

During the years 1963 to 1969, the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis took on a different theological cast, as more and more new faculty members taught and used the historical critical method.¹⁵⁴ Between 1963 and 1964, many within the Missouri Synod became concerned about the symbolic interpretation given to Genesis 2 and 3 in an essay by Dr. Norman Habel, a St. Louis Seminary professor.¹⁵⁵ Many exegetes who used historical criticism at the St. Louis seminary also held to the Gospel reductionism of the Valparaiso school. Because they understood the Gospel to be the sole norm for Christian faith and life and maintained that it is the Gospel which gives Scripture its normative character, these theologians did not equate Scripture with Word of God. Instead they held that only the Gospel as proclamation of salvation through Christ equated to the Word of God.¹⁵⁶ Because only the Gospel was considered to be the Word of God, these Concordia Seminary theologians saw the Bible as nothing more than an historical account, like any other human work.¹⁵⁷ Since the Bible was seen as only human history, Edgar Krentz and other Concordia Seminary professors felt it must be evaluated as such using the historical-critical method, which is a method “based on a secular understanding of history.”¹⁵⁸ For Edgar Krentz, the historical accounts of the Bible are not inspired because they do not have to be inspired.¹⁵⁹ The inspiration of Scripture, therefore, does not refer to the way in which the Scriptures were transmitted to man, but to the power that the Gospel has to work faith.¹⁶⁰ From this, it is concluded that the Scriptural accounts do not have to be factual, only the meaning is important: “The fact

¹⁵³ Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁵⁴ Board of Control, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO, *Exodus from Concordia: A Report on the 1974 Walkout*, (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Publicity Office, 1977), p. 7.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 13.

¹⁵⁶ Edgar Krentz, “A Survey of Trends and Problems in Biblical Interpretation,” *CTM* 40 (May 1969): 286.

¹⁵⁷ Edgar Krentz wrote: “The Bible’s time-conditioned words speak to specific situations in the literary conventions and forms of their day. They have the appearance of the accidental because they are written more **humano et historico** (in a human and historically conditioned manner). As the ancient dogmatic formula put it, the Scriptures are **panta anthropina**, completely human. This basic recognition about the nature of the Bible entails the axiom that one interprets the Bible by the same methods and procedures used on any other book. No serious Bible student denies this evaluation.” Edgar Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 62.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

¹⁵⁹ “Faith believes in response to the address of the Word of Promise – and that is the sole basis. It needs no support in a doctrine of the Bible that offers a guaranteed, inspired history. It is free and open to every means that God has given the mind for the understanding of the Bible...” Edgar Krentz, “Book Review: *After the Purifying* by Paul G. Bretscher,” *Lutheran Quarterly* 3 (August 1975): 260.

¹⁶⁰ “Accordingly, the inspiration of the written Word pertains to the effective power of the Scripture to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel. We affirm, therefore, that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God.” “Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord,” An affirmation in two parts by the Faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1973, p. 36.

that a given biblical episode is historical is not important in and of itself. The importance of such historical events lies in what God was doing in and through them.”¹⁶¹ Krentz summed up the historical-critical method as follows:

*According to Troeltsch, the historical method of thought and explanation has three basic principles: 1) the principle of criticism or methodological doubt, which implies that history only achieves probability. Religious tradition must also be subjected to criticism. 2) The principle of analogy makes criticism possible. Present experience and occurrence implies that all events are in principle similar. 3) The principle of correlation (or mutual interdependence) implies that all historical phenomena are so interrelated that a change in one phenomenon necessitates a change in the causes leading to it and in the effects it has.*¹⁶²

In *Anatomy of an Explosion*, Kurt Marquart discusses the implications of the use of historical criticism:

*It is clear from Krentz’ short book, and more so from standard authorities like the German scholar Hans Joachim Kraus, that the historical critical method arose out of the rationalistic Enlightenment and differs from traditional biblical scholarship in that it insists on treating the Bible not as an unquestioned authority, but as one ancient book among others. All biblical statements are therefore open to challenge before the court of sovereign human reason.... This means that the critic and his reason are judge and jury, while the Bible, like all other ancient documents, is on trial whether as defendant or as witness; for even as a witness its credibility depends entirely on the findings of the critical court. This situation, of course, represents a complete reversal of the classic roles of reason and Scripture in Lutheran theology. Under the new, critical regime, reason is master and Scripture is servant, whereas formerly it was the other way round. For this reason alone,... using the historical-critical method with Lutheran presuppositions is as futile and absurd an undertaking as eating ham with Jewish presuppositions.*¹⁶³

Gospel reductionism and the historical critical method in Biblical studies adversely affected outreach in the Missouri Synod, resulting in outreach at the expense of confessional or doctrinal integrity. This can be observed specifically in the Mission Affirmations of 1965, the Missouri Synod’s participation in the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA) also begun in 1965, fellowship with The American Lutheran Church declared in 1969, and a further denigration of the Office of the Holy Ministry through Oscar Feucht’s emphasis on *Everyone a Minister* in 1974.

The Mission Affirmations

At the 1962 synodical convention, a study of LCMS missions was suggested. Dr. Martin L. Kretzmann, long-time resident missionary and professor in India, was commissioned to make the detailed study.¹⁶⁴ The mission study was published in November, 1964, entitled “Mission Self-Study and Survey.” The reaction to Kretzmann’s study in official Missouri Synod publications was very positive. *The Lutheran Witness*

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁶² Krentz, *The Historical-Critical Method*, p. 55.

¹⁶³ Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p. 119-120.

¹⁶⁴ LCMS, *1962 Proceedings*, p. 96.

carried several pieces lauding Kretzmann's report. The April 1965 issue of *Concordia Theological Monthly* was devoted to missions, and included an article by Kretzmann further articulating his views.¹⁶⁵ Unofficial attacks on the Kretzmann report came from a publication begun by Pastor Herman Otten in 1962, then entitled *Lutheran News* (later renamed *Christian News*). Otten criticized Kretzmann for not stressing the necessity of belief in Christ and for pushing the contemporary view of ecumenism.¹⁶⁶ Using the "Mission Self-Study and Survey" as a guide, Professor William Danker, former missionary and now professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, together with a sub-committee, drew up a series of resolutions on missions submitted to the 1965 synodical convention. These resolutions were adopted and became known as the "Mission Affirmations."¹⁶⁷

In order to study the implications of the Mission Affirmations for implementation, the 1965 Detroit convention established the Commission on Mission and Ministry in the Church (CMMC).¹⁶⁸ The CMMC published a special edition of the Mission Affirmations that was mailed to every congregation and pastor of the Synod. The Synod's official publications continued to support the Mission Affirmations.

Three resolutions to the 1967 New York synodical convention expressed concern over the implications of unionism, a confusion of terms resulting in an emphasis on the social gospel, and the possibility of a universalistic understanding in the Mission Affirmations (MA).¹⁶⁹ In response to these overtures, the 1967 synodical convention resolved: 1) that the MA do not confuse "an ethic of love with the speaking of the Gospel"; 2) that they "remind us that those who proclaim the message of God's love in Christ should also witness to Christ in Christian actions"; 3) that the MA are "no license for unionism or separatism"; 4) that the "whole man" does not imply any false doctrine; and 5) that the MA should be studied and used by all members of Synod.¹⁷⁰ At the 1969 Denver synodical convention, two resolutions were adopted calling for synodical, district, and congregational constitutions to be examined "in light of Mission Affirmations."¹⁷¹

After the 1969 synodical convention and the election of J.A.O. Preus as synodical president, the Mission Affirmations came into further question. This resulted in their being eventually discounted but not rejected. In October 1972, Martin Kretzmann was removed from his position on the Board of Missions. The student newspaper of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and the *Concordia Theological Monthly* both protested this action.¹⁷² The delegates to the 1973 New Orleans convention were greeted with two reports from the Board of Missions, that of the Board Majority and that of the Board Minority. The Board Majority maintained that the Mission Affirmations presented an improper emphasis:

We believe that the Affirmations lack clarity and are ambiguous at certain points and have allowed for some confusion in mission doctrine and practice. They seem

¹⁶⁵ Martin L. Kretzmann, "The Self-Understanding of the Church," *CTM* 36 (April 1965): 230-238.

¹⁶⁶ Herman Otten, "The Convention Workbook," *Lutheran News* (May 3, 1965): 3-5.

¹⁶⁷ LCMS, *1965 Proceedings*, pp. 80-81.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

¹⁶⁹ LCMS, *1967 Convention Workbook*, pp. 77-78.

¹⁷⁰ LCMS, *1967 Proceedings*, p. 93.

¹⁷¹ LCMS, *1969 Proceedings*, pp. 80, 239-240.

¹⁷² See various articles in *Spectrum*, (October 4, 1972): 4-5; Herbert T. Mayer, "Structure and Mission," *CTM* 43 (November 1972): 643-644.

*to lack a proper emphasis in the Word of God as Source and Norm of mission, of the necessity of faith through which salvation is obtained (subjective justification), on the recognition of the visible and invisible church (and the reality of differences between denominations), on the political involvement by the church as an institution (no clear distinction between the Two Kingdoms), the use of the Law and Gospel in missions, the hostility of the sinful world against the faithful church, the proper balance between Gospel proclamation and social involvement, the eschatological aspect of missions (Matt. 24:14), and on the ultimate goal of eternal life. The Mission Affirmations are somewhat outdated because they do not address themselves to some of the major issues of mission concerns in the 1970s: Problems of humanism, universalism, synergism, ecumenism, the so-called “anonymous” Christian, and revolutionary liberation theology.*¹⁷³

The Board Minority reported the following:

*The Mission Affirmations are positive, enabling, and inspiring. They successfully avoid the pitfall of an invalid separation between word and deed, vocalization and demonstration. At the same time they make the communication of the Gospel of Jesus Christ central to the whole mission to which we are wholly and unqualifiedly committed.*¹⁷⁴

In 1974, the CTCR completed and published its study of the Mission affirmations, which verified many of the weaknesses noted previously by the Board for Missions Majority.¹⁷⁵ At the 1975 Anaheim synodical convention, a “Supplementary Report of the Board of Directors” made several recommendations pertaining to the mission program of the LCMS. Recommendation 9 stated:

*That beyond approving the Mission Affirmations, reviewed by several committees and more recently strengthened by the CTCR document, “The Mission of the Christian Church in the World,” they no longer be debated but be used to implement new efforts in missions.*¹⁷⁶

In other words, the Synod’s Board of Directors stated that with the new CTCR document on the Mission Affirmations, the case was closed. No further discussion was deemed necessary. Instead, it was time to move into new areas of mission activity. Unfortunately, because the Mission Affirmations were not officially rejected (just like “A Statement” of the 44), their spirit and overall philosophy have continued to shape Missouri Synod mission thinking and efforts to the present day.

LCUSA

The move toward the formation of the Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA) actually began before the 1962 Missouri Synod convention. Apparently, in 1960 President John Behnken wrote to the leadership of the National Lutheran Council (NCL) that the Missouri Synod was willing to engage in doctrinal discussions. Meetings with representatives from the United Lutheran Church in America

¹⁷³ LCMS, *1973 Convention Workbook*, p. 11.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁷⁵ Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, “The Mission of the Christian Church in the World: A Review of the 1965 Mission Affirmations,” September 1974.

¹⁷⁶ LCMS, *1975 Convention Workbook*, p. 30.

(ULCA) and Augustana Synod (which became the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1962), The American Lutheran Church (TALC--formed by a merger of the American Lutheran Church of 1930 and the Norwegian Synod in 1960), and the Missouri Synod met in Chicago July 7-9, 1960 and St. Louis November 18-19, 1960. "Guiding Principles Regarding a Possible Future Cooperative Association of Lutheran Churches of America" were established. These "Guiding Principles" maintained that all Lutheran church bodies in the United States were invited to participate, the new organization was primarily for common theological study and Christian service, each participating body would be free to decide with respect to their participation in the functional activities of Christian service, conversations looking to established pulpit and altar fellowship and organic unions would be outside the sphere of the new agency, and participating bodies would be free to enter into or continue other relationship outside the new organization.¹⁷⁷

As noted above, the 1962 Missouri Synod convention approved working toward the formation of this new agency. Another meeting was held in January 1963. Subcommittees for the new agency were established, which would include Mission Services, Welfare Services, Education, Public Relations, Theological Studies, and Special Services. In January 1964, the name of the new agency was adopted: Lutheran Council in the United States of America (LCUSA).¹⁷⁸ The 1965 Missouri Synod convention approved participation in LCUSA, and the constituting convention was held November 16-18, 1966.¹⁷⁹ Despite marked theological differences between the participating church bodies,¹⁸⁰ the Missouri Synod worked closely with the Lutheran Church in America and The American Lutheran Church in matters not only external (social welfare work or cooperation with the government), but in mission work that included military and institutional chaplaincies, international Lutheran congregations (located in Germany, Guam, Japan, and South Korea), foreign mission work, and comity agreements with respect to mission congregations and campus ministries throughout the United States.¹⁸¹

Of special note is the calling of a Missouri Synod pastor, Dr. John Tietjen, to serve as the Executive Secretary of the Department of Public Relations for LCUSA. Tietjen had completed an S.T.M. and Th.D. at Union Seminary in New York, had served as pastor of a Missouri Synod congregation in Leonia, New Jersey, and was also editor for the *American Lutheran* publication of the ALPB.¹⁸² His doctoral dissertation was

¹⁷⁷ Edward C. Fendt, *The Struggle for Lutheran Unity and Consolidation in the U.S.A. from the Late 1930's to the Early 1970's* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1980), pp. 263-286.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-296.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 297.

¹⁸⁰ See Lutheran Council in the USA, "The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church," 1978, *passim*.

¹⁸¹ Hermann Sasse has noted: "The serious Roman Catholic, the serious Lutheran, the serious Calvinist, the serious Anglican, the serious Baptist, all stand nearer to the eternal truth than the one who hazards making no confession, because he maintains that the truth is finally undiscernible... There is no unity of Christianity without deep and serious wrestling over the truth; without the seriousness that, in the dialogue of confession with confession, glosses over no difficulty... But where the gospel and the sacraments have been displaced by heresy, there, for the sake of the truth, we can exercise no church fellowship, because we can have no fellowship with false doctrine. But we will still believe that the *Una Sancta* remains in such churches, so long as the gospel has not been totally lost and the sacraments are generally still administered." Hermann Sasse, "The Question of the Church's Unity on the Mission Field," translated by Matthew Harrison, *Logia 7* (Holy Trinity 1998): 59.

¹⁸² John H. Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), p. 9. Tietjen notes: "During my years as a parish pastor I served also as editor of the *American Lutheran*, an influential independent journal

later published under the title *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?*. Here he maintained the following:

*What should be the basis for uniting the Lutherans of America? I suggest that it should be consensus in recognizing the Holy Scriptures as the norm and standard of teaching and in regarding the Lutheran Confessions as the correct exposition of the Scriptures – that much and no more.*¹⁸³

This position on Lutheran unity was basically that of the ULCA Knubel-Jacobs statement, “The Essentials of the Catholic Spirit in the Church,” of 1919.¹⁸⁴ In striving for Lutheran unity, Tietjen sought pragmatic results by basing union on the least common denominator and by mixing the *fides qua creditur* and the *fides quae creditur*.¹⁸⁵

Concerning his work in LCUSA, Tietjen wrote:

*For the first time in its history the LCMS was to be a member of a major cooperative agency, and I was being asked to help implement that by being a LCMS member of the LCUSA’s staff. As the organization that was to bring together the three major Lutheran churches of America, LCUSA held promise of being the means to bring about Lutheran union. I was convinced that as I had worked for Lutheran union on the local level, it was now God’s will that I should do so at the national level.*¹⁸⁶

Fellowship with The American Lutheran Church

Meanwhile, officials of the Missouri Synod had been discussing establishing altar and pulpit fellowship with officials of The American Lutheran Church (TALC). In 1962, commissioners of both church bodies met in Chicago and drafted a “Joint Statement of the Representatives of The American Lutheran Church, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches” (Slovak Synod which became the Slovak District of the Missouri Synod in 1969). Three essays were presented and adopted as part of the “Joint Statement”: what commitment to the ‘*sola gratia*’ of the Lutheran Confessions involves; the Lutheran Confessions and ‘*sola Scriptura*’; and the doctrine of the church in the Lutheran Confessions. Despite long-standing theological differences on the issues of church and ministry, open questions, confessional subscription, chiliasm, and predestination, these issues were not addressed. Further negotiations consisted primarily of formal letters exchanged between President Fredrick

within the LCMS, which advocated such causes as fellowship with other Lutherans, participation in the ecumenical movement, a common hymnal for all Lutherans, and responsible advocacy of social issues before state and federal governments. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹⁸³ John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966, reprinted Clayton Publishing House, 1975), p. 151.

¹⁸⁴ Wolf, pp. 301-312.

¹⁸⁵ The *fides qua creditur* is the faith that is believed (subjective), while the *fides quae creditur* is the faith that is confessed (objective). Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?*, pp. 150-159.

¹⁸⁶ Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile*, p. 11. Consider also what Tietjen wrote: “Observers described the Cleveland [1962] convention as a turning point in the life of the Missouri Synod, signaling a move away from rigidity in theology and isolation in church life toward more openness in both theology and mission. Within a few years under Harms’s (sic) leadership the LCMS had helped form the LCUSA, was proposing to enter into fellowship with the ALC, had begun discussions looking toward fellowship with the Lutheran Church in America, and had adopted a series of profoundly significant mission affirmations to help shape its work of outreach around the world.” *Ibid.*, p. 6. It is unfortunate that an effort to maintain doctrinal integrity was viewed and characterized as “rigidity in theology and isolation in church life.”

Schiotz of TALC and President Oliver Harms of the LCMS. At TALC convention in 1968, altar and pulpit fellowship with both the LCMS and the LCA was declared. The 1969 Missouri Synod Denver convention, after electing J.A.O. Preus as President of the Synod, disregarded Preus' recommendation against fellowship with TALC, and approved the "Joint Statement" as a basis for altar and pulpit fellowship with this church body. The triangulation of TALC's fellowship with both the LCMS and the LCA was not the only issue impacting the doctrinal integrity of the Missouri Synod. In 1970, TALC convention approved the ordination of women into the pastoral office.¹⁸⁷ Fellowship between TALC and the LCMS continued throughout the J.A.O. Preus presidency of the Missouri Synod (his cousin David Preus was president of TALC at the same time), and was officially broken at the 1981 Missouri Synod convention, at which Preus retired and Ralph Bohlmann was elected.¹⁸⁸

Everyone a Minister

As noted above, the functional view of the doctrine of the ministry was adopted by the Wisconsin Synod and some within the Missouri Synod during the first half of the 20th century. In 1962, the Council of Presidents resolution separating ordination and the pastoral office from the congregation was adopted. The denigration of the Office of the Holy Ministry continued through the Mission Affirmations of 1965 where the distinction between the pastoral office and the priesthood of all believers was blurred:

VI. THE WHOLE CHURCH IS CHRIST'S MISSION:

*WHEREAS, Every Christian is commissioned a missionary through baptism, for through the selfsame water and Word the Holy Spirit makes us both God's children and His witness to the world when He says: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you"*¹⁸⁹

Then, in 1974, Oscar Feucht published a book entitled *Everyone a Minister: A Guide to Churchmanship for Laity and Clergy*.¹⁹⁰ Feucht stressed that the pastor's main job is equipping the saints for the work of the ministry according to his erroneous exegesis of Ephesians 4:11-12. Everyone is to be taught that they are ministers and have a ministry in the places where they live and work in the world. In order to have an active, living, growing church, the pastor must be a "change-agent" and a "dispatcher." Brent Kuhlman has noted:

*The parallels between **Everyone a Minister** and pietism are unmistakable. Both Spener and Feucht offer proposals for reforming the church. Both of their proposals reflect a shift in theology from God's objective external gifts [Word and Sacrament] to the subjectivity and activism of the believer.*

For both Spener and Feucht the real center of the church's life is not the divine service where Jesus delivers the benefits of his dying and rising through the preached gospel and the sacraments... For Feucht, the goal is changing the

¹⁸⁷ Fendt, pp. 300-314.

¹⁸⁸ LCMS, *1981 Proceedings*, pp. 153-155. See also August Suelflow, ed., *Heritage in Motion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998), pp. 126-128.

¹⁸⁹ LCMS, *1965 Proceedings*, p. 81.

¹⁹⁰ Oscar E. Feucht, *Everyone a Minister: A Guide Churchmanship for Laity and Clergy* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1974).

believer's life so that he exercises his priesthood by doing his ministry of evangelism. When the believer carries out this one vocation, Christ is present, and an irrelevant church becomes a most relevant church....

*The Pietism of **Pia Desideria** and **Everyone a Minister** is quite dangerous. The **extra nos** character of the preached gospel and the sacramental gospel are exchanged for an **intra nos** subjectivity and activism of the believer. This is a confusion of law and gospel that does not serve the church faithfully or well.¹⁹¹*

This position of *Everyone a Minister* would have a profound impact on the Missouri Synod after the 1974 Seminex Walkout through the Synod's evangelism programs and support of the Church Growth Movement during the Bohlmann Presidency.

Opposition Arises

Opposition to the theological changes within the Missouri Synod had been loosely organized prior to the 1960s, while those who fostered change had long been well organized and were in positions of power throughout the Synod. Paul Burgdorf had begun publishing *The Confessional Lutheran* beginning in 1940. In 1962, Herman Otten began publishing a weekly paper, first called *Lutheran News* and then *Christian News*.

In 1964, the "Faith Forward—First Concerns" group was organized, presenting its confessional concerns to President Oliver Harms in a formal statement signed by 7,000 members of the Synod or synodical congregations, including 1,500 pastors and 24 district presidents. Between the 1965 and the 1969 synodical conventions, the United Planning Council (UPC) was organized. The publication, *Balance*, was issued approximately one month before the 1969 Denver convention, published out of Springfield, IL by A.O. Gebauer, John Lutze, Larry Marquardt, E.J. Otto and J.A.O. Preus. J.A.O. Preus became the group's candidate to unseat Oliver Harms. However, *Balance, Incorporated*, was not formally organized until after the synodical convention that elected J.A.O. Preus. Preliminary meetings were held in November 1969 in Chicago, IL. The First issue of "Table Talk," a communication sheet, was published in January 1970. Dr. Robert Preus was elected the first President of *Balance, Inc.* on June 26, 1970. The first issue of *Affirm* was published in March 1971.¹⁹²

In discussing the development of conservative/confessional political opposition to the liberal movement within the Missouri Synod in his *Memoirs*, Dr. John Tietjen overlooks or ignores the long history of political activism on the part of those who were trying to change the Synod's theological position. He particularly passes over the machinations of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, of which he was a member, giving the impression that those who organized to stop the doctrinal changes were the first to be involved in politicking within the Synod.¹⁹³ In time, those seeking to change the Synod's long-standing position of doctrinal integrity would continue to ignore or overlook this important fact.

¹⁹¹ Brent Kuhlman, "Oscar Feucht's Everyone a Minister: Pietismus Redivivus," *Logia* 8 (Reformation 1999): 35.

¹⁹² Information attained from Mr. David Tuttle, current President of *Balance, Inc.*

¹⁹³ Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile*, p. 14.

The Walkout at Concordia Seminary

Before the 1969 Denver synodical convention, Alfred Fuerbringer decided to step down as president of Concordia Seminary (CS), St. Louis. John Tietjen writes:

*Under Fuerbringer's leadership CS had been undergoing a quiet revolution. Biblical studies were receiving major attention, replacing dogmatic theology, the task of organizing and systematizing the church's doctrine. Several members of the faculty were helping CS and the church body come to terms with contemporary issues of biblical criticism.*¹⁹⁴

On May 19, 1969, John Tietjen was notified that he had been elected as the new president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He was the choice of then Synodical President Oliver Harms.¹⁹⁵ On July 12, 1969, conservative forces succeeded in electing J.A.O. Preus, unseating incumbent Oliver Harms as president of the LCMS at its synodical convention in Denver.¹⁹⁶ With both opposing forces on the track with a full head of steam, the long-anticipated Missouri train wreck was now imminent.

In Seminary President Tietjen's first meeting with his faculty in September 1969, various professors raised questions about certain theological emphases in an article he had published entitled "The Gospel and the Theological Task."¹⁹⁷ The theological differences at Concordia Seminary were further brought to light in January 1970, when a St. Louis based group, which included several seminary faculty members, protested the non-reappointment of Dr. Richard Jungkuntz as executive secretary of the CTCR by issuing a document entitled "A Call to Openness and Trust." In the February 11, 1970 issue of "Brother to Brother," synodical president, J.A.O. Preus addressed this, and stated:

*Make no mistake about this, brothers, what is at stake is not only inerrancy but the Gospel of Jesus Christ itself, the authority of Holy Scripture, the 'quia' subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, and perhaps the very continued existence of Lutheranism as a confessional confessing movement in a Christian world.*¹⁹⁸

In April 1970, the CTCR conducted a full review of "A Call to Openness and Trust," noting the following:

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 3. The details of the events that led to and involved the Walkout at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis and the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC) are well documented in the Concordia Seminary Board of Control book *Exodus from Concordia*, as well as John Tietjen's *Memoirs in Exile*. However, it is recommended that one read Tietjen's *Memoirs* with *Exodus* side-by-side to compare the facts and interpretations given. This paper will touch on a few of the pertinent details.

¹⁹⁷ John Tietjen, "The Gospel and the Theological Task," *CTM* 40 (June, July, August 1969): 114-123. Dr. Scharlemann prepared a set of propositions he called "animadversions," which noted major theological difficulties in the Tietjen article. Tietjen believes that this was done out of spite because Scharlemann was not elected as Concordia Seminary president. *Memoirs*, p. 21 "Animadversion" means "a critical and usually censorious remark."

¹⁹⁸ *Exodus from Concordia*, p. 20. The word *quia* means "because." A *quia* subscription to the Lutheran Confessions is a subscription "because" they are the correct teaching of Scripture. This is in contrast to a *quatenus* or "in so far as" subscription. A *quia* subscription is unqualified, while a *quatenus* subscription is qualified or conditional.

1. *The document fails to distinguish adequately between God's presence in judgment and His presence in grace.*
2. *The document does not observe the necessary limitations to freedom and diversity within a confessional church.*
3. *The document downgrades the importance of true Christian doctrine not only by its failure to distinguish between true and false doctrine, but especially by treating articles of faith as open questions.*¹⁹⁹

President Preus wrote Dr. Tietjen, requesting him to deal with the professors involved and to provide evidence that they continued to profess the doctrine of Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. Dr. Tietjen assured President Preus that the matter had already been satisfactorily resolved.

Meanwhile, Dr. Robert Preus, Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, and Dr. Martin Scharlemann expressed concerns about the teaching of various faculty members, particularly within the Systematic and Exegetical Departments. On April 6, 1970, Dr. Scharlemann wrote President J.A.O. Preus requesting him to conduct an inquiry into the theological situation at the Seminary.²⁰⁰

On April 20, 1970, President Preus wrote the St. Louis Seminary Board of Control that he intended to appoint a Fact Finding Committee. In early July 1970, synodical President Preus met with Seminary officials to discuss the procedures for the inquiry at the Seminary. Dr. Tietjen, a PR expert, responded by issuing news releases regretting the investigation and denying that the faculty was teaching false doctrine.²⁰¹ It is interesting to compare these claims with what Tietjen later wrote in his *Memoirs*:

*But I did not appreciate what I thought was less than candor in the seminary's repeated claims that nothing had really changed in CS teaching. I resented the efforts to demonstrate that what was happening at CS was really the "old" Missouri Synod after all. I thought that it would have been not only more honest but also more helpful for CS to capitalize on the changes that were going on by showing how those changes were enabling CS and the LCMS to be more faithful to the Synod's confessional position.*²⁰²

Faculty interviews began December 11, 1970, and continued through March 6, 1971. Each professor was interviewed for approximately two hours. The interviews were taped, with a transcript furnished to the Seminary President, the professor interviewed, and the members of the Committee. The Fact Finding Committee included Dr. Paul Zimmermann, Dr. Karl Barth, Dr. Armin Moellering, and Pastor Paul Streufert.²⁰³ During the period of the interviews, the faculty majority repeatedly issued individual statements as well as a combined formal resolution condemning the investigation. On June 13, 1971,

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. The 1971 Milwaukee synodical convention resolved to "repudiate the inadequacies of "A Call to Openness and Trust," admonished "all those who have disturbed the Synod by circularizing this document," and finally resolved "That the Synod ask those who are publicly identified with this document to publicly assure the Synod through the office of the President of Synod that they are faithful to the confessional stance of the Synod and repudiate the inadequacies pointed out by the CTCR." LCMS, *1971 Proceedings*, p. 128.

²⁰⁰ *Exodus*, p. 22.

²⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²⁰² Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 23

²⁰³ Ibid., pp. 35-36.

the Fact Finding Committee submitted its report to the synodical president, which included hundreds of pages of transcripts.²⁰⁴

The July 1971 Milwaukee synodical convention upheld the constitutionality of the Fact Finding Committee and directed the Board of Control to take appropriate action on the basis of the report.²⁰⁵ However, the Seminary Board of Control proceeded to conduct its own interviews with the faculty while basically ignoring the content and conclusions of the Fact Finding Committee report.

On March 3, 1972, President Preus issued “A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles,” which he intended to be used as guidelines by the Board of Control in identifying and dealing with the doctrinal issues, particularly with respect to the normative nature of Holy Scripture. However, the Board of Control decided not to use “A Statement” as a guideline. Instead, it distributed the document to the faculty and asked them to respond to it. The Board of Control did not equate “A Statement” with the official doctrinal position of the Synod. The faculty attacked the procedure of issuing “A Statement” as “improper,” “Alien to Lutheran confessional theology,” and “inadequate theologically.”²⁰⁶

At this time, the Board of Control decided not to renew the contract of Dr. Arlis Ehlen, a professor of Old Testament theology, because of his views on the historicity of Old Testament accounts. President Preus then directed Dr. Tietjen to see that Dr. Ehlen herewith teach no course in which he would have opportunity to advocate higher criticism. Dr. Tietjen declined this directive.²⁰⁷

On June 22, 1972, the Board of Control issued a report stating that in their interviews they found no false doctrine among the members of the seminary faculty. However, two members of the Board, Dr. E.C. Weber and Mr. Walter Dissen, vigorously contested the Board’s evaluation.²⁰⁸

On September 1, 1972, President Preus issued the “Report of the Synodical President to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” (the so-called “Blue Book”). It was a summary of the findings of the Fact Finding Committee. The Blue Book documented that some of the professors held or permitted the following:

1. *A confusion on the doctrine of Scripture, especially its verbal inspiration and inerrancy, as well as disagreement on the relationship between the formal and material principles of Scripture.*
2. *A commitment to the use of the historical-critical method as a valid and preferred method for the interpretation of the Bible.*
3. *A possibility that many of the Old and New Testament stories are not really historical.*
4. *An acceptance that words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels were in fact never spoken by Him, but were later additions or interpretations made by the Christian community after the death of Jesus.*

²⁰⁴ *Exodus*, pp. 25-28.

²⁰⁵ LCMS, *1971 Proceedings*, pp. 165-166.

²⁰⁶ *Exodus*, pp. 30-31.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

5. *A reluctance to attribute Old Testament prophecies as pointing directly to Jesus Christ; that is, the minimalization of predictive prophecy in the Old Testament.*
6. *An insistence that Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch, Isaiah did not pen his entire book, and Paul may not have written all the books attributed to him in the New Testament.*²⁰⁹

On September 8, 1972, Dr. Tietjen issued to the entire Synod a thirty-five page document entitled “Fact Finding or Fault Finding” (the so-called “Brown Book”) which took issue with the entire Fact Finding Committee, its inquiry, and its report, claiming it to be slanderous and filled with inaccuracies and half-truths. In the “Brown Book” Dr. Tietjen and the faculty majority accused President Preus and the members of the Fact Finding Committee of false doctrine, misrepresentation, and ignorance.²¹⁰

Then, on September 21, 1972, the Council of Presidents, through Central Illinois District President Rudolph Haak, requested the faculty provide a concise statement of its position on certain doctrines. Instead of responding directly to the Council of Presidents, the faculty majority, in January 1973, sent their response to the pastors and congregations of the Synod in the form of a document entitled “Faithful to Our Calling—Faithful to Our Lord.” This booklet contained a joint faculty majority confession of faith, personal confessions of faith from each professor, and material to aid in the discussion of the controversial issues.²¹¹

On January 15, 1973, the Board of Control, by majority vote, decided to commend all faculty members “on the basis of the Fact Finding Committee report”—despite the fact that the Board interviewed only twenty-nine of the forty-four Seminary professors and basically ignored the Fact Finding Committee report.²¹²

In preparation for the 1973 New Orleans synodical convention, J.A.O. Preus appointed a special committee to deal specifically with “Seminary issues” – Committee Three. This Committee gathered all the documentation that had been gathered and distributed by all sides to that point in the Seminary controversy and conducted their own interviews.

The fiftieth regular convention of the LCMS met in New Orleans, July 6-13, 1973. That convention adopted “A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles” as a clear and concise doctrinal statement in accordance with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. The convention further adopted a resolution acknowledging the deviations in doctrine of the faculty majority with respect to the subversion of the authority of Scripture, Gospel reductionism, which included a denial of the third use of the Law, and charged the Board of Control of the seminary to deal with these charges. Several new members were elected to the seminary Board of Control by the convention. John Tietjen was given opportunity to resign as President of Concordia Seminary, which he declined. The convention then passed a resolution turning the case of Dr. Tietjen over to the Board of Control, after first deciding that it did not have sufficient time to deal with the issue at the convention itself. John Tietjen then addressed the convention, calling the

²⁰⁹ J.A.O. Preus, “Report of the Synodical President,” *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, September 1, 1972, pp. 21-25.

²¹⁰ *Exodus*, p. 36; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 103-113.

²¹¹ *Exodus*, pp. 38-39; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 116-119.

²¹² *Exodus*, pp. 39-40.

actions of the convention unconstitutional, saying that he had been grievously wronged, and then declaring that even though he had been grievously wronged, he forgave the convention delegates because he did not think they knew what they were doing.²¹³

On July 24, 1973, the seminary faculty majority issued a formal protest stating that the convention distorted their position, violated the synodical constitution and bylaws on the procedures for evangelical discipline, judged them by a theological standard different from Article II of the Synod's constitution, elevated tradition above Scripture, and used coercive power to establish the true doctrine of Scripture.²¹⁴ The faculty protest also called for the formation of an anti-synodical protest movement throughout the church body.²¹⁵ On August 18, 1973, Evangelical Lutherans in Mission (ELIM) was formed in Chicago. In October, this group began publication of *Missouri in Perspective*.²¹⁶

The seminary Board of Control held a special meeting August 17-18, 1973. The Rev. E.J. Otto was elected Chairman, Dr. Edwin Weber, Vice-chairman, Mr. Walter Dissen, Secretary, and Mr. Charles Burmeister, Treasurer. Mr. Dissen reported that he received a letter dated August 8 from Pastors Leonard Buelow of Green Bay, Wisconsin, and Harlan Harnapp of North Platte, Nebraska, in which they specified charges against Dr. Tietjen in accord with Resolution 3-09 of the New Orleans convention. Copies of the letter were also sent to Dr. Tietjen and President J.A.O. Preus. Both Harnapp and Buelow had served on Committee Three at the New Orleans convention and had studied the documentation extensively.²¹⁷ A meeting was held the evening of August 17 between Dr. Tietjen and his accusers. Tietjen protested the action as illegal. In his meeting with Harnapp and Buelow, Tietjen told the pastors that they had not properly approached him privately (in accord with Matthew 18), to which they responded that this was a matter of public knowledge. Tietjen then said that he was not ready to respond to the charges.²¹⁸ Pastors Buelow and Harnapp reported to the Board that they were unable to reach an amicable resolution. Dr. Edwin Weber then made a motion that Dr. Tietjen be suspended from the office of president and professor of the seminary immediately. This resolution passed, whereupon Tietjen stated that he believed this action to be illegal. The Board of Control's attorney was then contacted by Dr. Tietjen's attorney, who threatened a lawsuit if the suspension was carried out. Therefore, the Board resolved to delay implementation

²¹³ Ibid., pp. 53-60; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 149-159.

²¹⁴ *Exodus*, pp. 61-62, 163-164; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 170.

²¹⁵ *Exodus*, p. 63.

²¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 68-69, 75.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 65.

²¹⁸ *Exodus*, p. 67; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 164-165. "Necessity requires one to report evil, to prefer charges, to attest, examine, and witness...where the sin is so public that the judge and the whole world are aware of it, you can without sin shun and avoid the person as one who has brought disgrace upon himself, and you may testify publicly concerning him. For when an affair is manifest to everybody there can be no question of slander or injustice or false witness. For example, we now censure the pope and his teaching, which is publicly set forth in books and shouted throughout the world. Where the sin is public, the punishment ought to be public so that everyone may know how to guard against it." Martin Luther, "The Large Catechism," *The Book of Concord*, Theodore G. Tappert, translator and editor (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), pp. 402-403.

of the suspension until they received legal opinion from the Board's counsel as well as the Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM).²¹⁹

The Board of Control met twice in September, dealing primarily with other administrative matters. On September 25, the CCM released its opinion that upheld the validity of the suspension of Dr. Tietjen, stating that he had been well aware of the accusations since before the New Orleans synodical convention. However, it was felt that Dr. Tietjen might not have had sufficient time to answer the charges. The Board then decided to give Dr. Tietjen ample time to respond.²²⁰ Meanwhile, with the formation of ELIM and the beginning of the publication *Missouri in Perspective*, the faculty majority and even some students then began circulating throughout the Synod, speaking at various congregations, rallies, and pastoral conferences. Pastors Harnapp and Buelow met again with Dr. Tietjen November 28, 1973, with no resolution.²²¹

The Board of Control was scheduled to meet December 17, 1973, at which they would again address the suspension of Dr. Tietjen. On December 13, however, Dr. Arthur Carl Piepkorn, a distinguished member of the faculty majority, died. The funeral was held on December 17, and upon the request of the family, the Board rescheduled its meeting for January, over the strong protest of Dr. Tietjen.²²²

The Board of Control held a special meeting on January 7, 1974, but took no action, deciding to allow Dr. Tietjen more time to respond to the accusations. On January 20, 1974, the Board met again, and formally suspended John Tietjen. It should be noted that the Board's action was only a temporary suspension from his duties. Dr. Tietjen's full salary and other benefits, including housing, were continued.²²³

On the morning of January 21, the students held an assembly at which John Tietjen accused the synodical president and Board of Control of collusion and called the proceedings a "sham," a "mockery," and a "charade." The students voted to declare a moratorium on all classes (274 in favor, 92 against, 15 abstentions). The Board of Control asked all students and professors to return to their classes.²²⁴ On January 22, 1974, the faculty majority issued a statement to the Board of Control claiming that in suspending Dr. Tietjen, the Board was guilty of "silencing the teaching of the Word of God." They also claimed that the Board thereby suspended all of the faculty and executive staff officers.²²⁵ Beginning January 25, students and faculty majority members began their "outreach," which included publishing materials and traveling about the Synod speaking about their cause.²²⁶ On February 12, the faculty majority issued an ultimatum to the Board of Control, stating that they would return to teaching only if John Tietjen was reinstated. The Board met February 17-18. They resolved that any faculty members refusing to resume their responsibilities on February 19 would be considered as having breached their contracts and thereby terminated their employment with the Seminary.²²⁷

²¹⁹ *Exodus*, p. 67-68; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 166-167.

²²⁰ *Exodus*, p. 73-74

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 77-86; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 177-178.

²²² *Exodus*, pp. 89-90; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 183-184.

²²³ *Exodus*, pp. 93-94; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 185.

²²⁴ *Exodus*, pp. 94-96; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 187-196.

²²⁵ *Exodus*, pp. 100-101; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 196-198.

²²⁶ *Exodus*, pp.105-112; Tietjen, *Memoirs*, pp. 198-206.

²²⁷ *Exodus*, pp. 115-117.

On the morning of February 19, 1974, the majority of faculty members and students made their exodus from Concordia Seminary and marched into self-imposed exile, after leaving cross-like grave markers in the main quadrangle and boarding up the entrances to Luther Tower with the word “Exiled” inscribed across the boards. Of course, there was ample media coverage of the entire event. The next day, those who left formed a seminary in opposition to Concordia Seminary, first called Concordia Seminary in Exile (Seminex) and later Christ Seminary in Exile (still Seminex). They initially met in classrooms provided by St. Louis University and Eden Seminary. Eventually they rented space atop an office building on 607 North Grand in St. Louis.²²⁸ As time went by, Seminex gradually declined and became no longer viable as an institution. Finally, in the summer of 1982, the Seminex faculty disbursed to join the faculties of Lutheran School of Theology Chicago, Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, and Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary, Berkley, CA.²²⁹

Dissident District Presidents, the AELC, and the ELCA

After the Walkout at Concordia Seminary and the formation of Seminex, a colloquy program was established for Seminex graduates to be called and ordained to serve in Missouri Synod congregations. However, eight district presidents defiantly ordained Seminex graduates apart from the established synodical colloquy program. The 1975 Synodical Convention resolved that district presidents should ordain or authorize the ordination of only those candidates who are endorsed through the duly authorized synodical process. If they could not in good conscience uphold the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod, then they should resign from the office of district president. If such district presidents did not resign or alter their position in ordaining Seminex graduates, then the synodical president was authorized to suspend them from office.²³⁰ Of the eight district presidents who persisted in ordaining uncolloquized Seminex graduates, President J.A.O. Preus eventually suspended four of them.²³¹

The Coordinating Council for a new church body made up of disgruntled LCMS pastors and congregations met on April 14, 1976. By the end of April they were incorporated in the state of Illinois as the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). The constituting convention was held in Chicago on December 3-4, 1976. The number of congregations that helped form the AELC or that joined it later was considerably less than expected by the Coordinating Council, only 250 when Martin E. Marty had confidently predicted that a third of the Missouri Synod would follow Seminex. Concerning this situation, John Tietjen writes:

A number of factors worked to keep the AELC small. Pastors who wanted to join could not bring their congregations along because they had neither properly informed them about the events in the Missouri Synod nor adequately prepared them for the formation of a new church. In many instances a majority of congregational members could not make the move into a new church because they

²²⁸ Ibid., pp. 119-128.

²²⁹ Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 312.

²³⁰ LCMS, *1975 Proceedings*, Resolution 5-02A, pp. 122-124.

²³¹ The following four district presidents were suspended: Herman Frincke - Eastern District, Harold Hecht - English District, Rudolph Ressemeyer - Atlantic District, and Robert Riedel - New England District. The following four district presidents were not suspended: Herman Neunaber - Southern Illinois, Paul Jacobs - California & Nevada, Emil Jaech - Northwest, and Waldemar Meyer - Colorado. Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 268.

*could not get the necessary two-thirds majority required by their constitution. Vocational and security concerns caused previously outspoken pastors to be silent when the time for decision arrived. Some pastors and congregations chose rather to “stay and fight.” Some did not want to risk conflict within the congregation for the sake of their mission. Others decided that institutional affiliation was not that important.*²³²

The fact that many pastors and congregations, who sympathized with the theology and practice of the Seminex faculty and those who formed the AELC, then decided to stay in the Missouri Synod has had serious implications for the LCMS to this day, particularly with respect to maintaining the Synod’s doctrinal integrity. More on this later.

At its convention April 14-16, 1978, the AELC adopted “A Call for Lutheran Union.” The LCA approved the AELC proposal at its convention July 12-19, 1978. In 1979, a Committee on Lutheran Unity (CLU) was established with representatives from the AELC, TALC, and LCA. The CLU met regularly, drafting proposals for a planned merger.²³³ On September 8, 1982, the three church bodies held concurrent conventions, but in separate locations. At approximately 5:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time the AELC, TALC and LCA all voted for a new church body.²³⁴ A Commission for a New Lutheran Church (CNLC) was formed. On August 29, 1986, all three church bodies approved the plan for merger.²³⁵ The constituting convention for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) took place in Columbus, Ohio, April 30-May 3, 1987. At 12:01 a.m. Central Standard Time, January 1, 1988, the three predecessor church bodies formally dissolved into the ELCA.²³⁶

At the constituting convention of the Chicago Metropolitan Synod of the ELCA, June 5-6, 1987, John Tietjen was elected as bishop. A few turbulent weeks after his installation, he resigned. Concerning this, he wrote: “Even with the formation of the ELCA, exile is still our condition. The ELCA did not bring the kingdom of God. It is an organization like any other, with all the problems inherent in human institutions.”²³⁷

Concluding Comments

The rise of Gospel reductionism paved the way for use of historical criticism in Biblical studies, a new mission emphasis that no longer focused on the formation of confessional Lutheran congregations, an altering of the Synod’s position on church fellowship and fellowship practices, and a differing view on the doctrine of the ministry that separated the Office of the Holy Ministry from the congregation, the proclamation of the Word and the administration of the Sacraments, eventually declaring everyone a minister. The result was outreach to the exclusion of doctrinal integrity within the Synod. This led to marked struggle within the Missouri Synod between those who wanted to maintain the Synod’s confessional Lutheran integrity and those who wanted to alter or change it. Approximately 250 congregations and their pastors left the LCMS to form the AELC, which eventually helped unite with the LCA and TALC to form the ELCA. Yet, many remained within the Missouri Synod who sympathized with the views of John

²³² Ibid., p. 269.

²³³ Ibid., pp. 300-303.

²³⁴ Ibid., p. 314.

²³⁵ Ibid., pp. 327-335.

²³⁶ Edgar R. Trexler, *Anatomy of a Merger* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1991), pp. 231-243.

²³⁷ Tietjen, *Memoirs*, p. 341.

Tietjen, the Faculty Majority involved in the Walkout, and those who formed the AELC. This would have marked repercussions within the Synod in the years that followed, continuing even to the present.

Chapter Four

Doctrinal Integrity and Outreach in the Fourth Quarter of the 20th Century and Beyond

Despite the split that took place within the Missouri Synod in 1976, many pastors and lay people who held views similar to those who formed the AELC remained within the LCMS. Three movements that are prominent throughout American church life made further inroads into the Missouri Synod: the liberal movement, the evangelical movement, and the charismatic movement. Because of this, there would continue to be a marked struggle over doctrinal integrity and outreach. This struggle can be particularly noted in the areas of women's issues, missions, and church fellowship. Although a member of the faculty minority at Concordia Seminary during the years of the Walkout,²³⁸ Dr. Ralph Bohlmann would allow or further these movements within the Synod. When he was unseated as synodical president by Dr. Alvin Barry in 1992, Dr. Bohlmann would work within dissident groups to promote further change. In 1999, three dissenting groups came together to form Jesus First/DayStar, which would continue to stress outreach to the exclusion of doctrinal integrity within the Synod. This attempt at a hostile takeover of the Missouri Synod was vigorously opposed by a group of more conservative, or confessional, pastors and theologians, led by Dr. Robert Preus, President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Ft. Wayne. The confessional Lutherans, while not neglecting outreach--the Ft. Wayne seminary has been a beehive of mission activity, particularly in the foreign field--has sought to restore a proper emphasis on doctrinal integrity to the LCMS.

Dr. Ralph Bohlmann

After the temporary suspension of Dr. John Tietjen as President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Dr. Martin Scharlemann was appointed as Acting President on January 20, 1974. Due to the intensity of the harassment he received, Dr. Scharlemann resigned from this position in early April 1974.²³⁹ Dr. Ralph Bohlmann was then appointed Acting President, and in May 1975 he was installed as the seminary's seventh president.²⁴⁰ Dr. Bohlmann continued in this position until 1981, when he was elected to the position of synodical president upon the retirement of J.A.O. Preus. President

²³⁸ The faculty minority included Ralph Bohlmann, Richard Klann, Robert Preus, Martin Scharlemann, and Lorenz Wunderlich. This group of men did not participate in the Walkout, and upheld the historical theological integrity of the Synod. However, Ralph Bohlmann was on a leave of absence from Concordia Seminary at the time of the Walkout to serve on the CTCR. Ralph Bohlmann was instrumental in the formulation of "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles," which was adopted at the 1973 synodical convention and used to identify false teaching with respect to the faculty majority.

²³⁹ *Exodus*, pp. 102-103.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 145-147.

Bohlmann continued in this position until 1992, when he was unseated by Dr. Alvin L. Barry.²⁴¹

At some point after the Walkout at Concordia Seminary, Dr. Bohlmann's theological position changed. While serving on the CTCR in the early 1970s, he was intricately involved with the drafting of "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles," which takes a strong stand against Gospel reductionism. Similarly, two papers by Dr. Bohlmann presented to the Division of Theological Studies for LCUSA entitled "The Position of the LCMS on the Basis for Fellowship" and "Our Commitment to the Gospel" represent a conservative/confessional stance on church fellowship.²⁴² By 1995, however, Dr. Bohlmann was lauding the influence of the ALPB in his own life and advocating "A Statement" of the 44 for its "Gospel primacy." As we have seen, this document also promoted selective fellowship.²⁴³ More on this to come. In an interview with Rick Mueller, this change was noted directly:

Sentiments such as these have caused some to wonder whether Bohlmann has changed. "I am not conscious of really changing my convictions," he said. "I've become more 'basic' in my own faith and theology ... less concerned with 16th-century minutiae" and more concerned about whether family and friends "are strong in their relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ." He said he's "more conscious of the lack of certainty about a lot of theological questions. There are things I was once quite sure of [as a young, practicing, academic theologian] ... but today, I don't know."²⁴⁴

Between 1988 and 1992, Synodical President Bohlmann became personally involved in trying to remove Dr. Robert Preus from his office as President of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. Concerning this sad situation, Dr. Robert Preus wrote:

No, there is only one logical and charitable explanation for the radical and unprecedented action of forcing me out of my call as president of the Seminary. Although many of the majority Board members do not realize it and would not admit it, the reason I was put out of my office and the reason the leaders of the BOR persisted in their actions so intransigently is doctrinal. Again and again the Seminary faculty with me as its president opposed and even foiled the plans

²⁴¹ *Heritage in Motion*, p. ii. Both Balance, Inc. and *Christian News* strongly supported the election of Alvin Barry as synodical president.

²⁴² Ralph Bohlmann, "The Position of the LCMS on the Basis for Fellowship" and "Our Commitment to the Gospel," *The Function of Doctrine and Theology in Light of the Unity of the Church*, Lutheran Council in the USA, 1978.

²⁴³ Ralph Bohlmann, "Missouri Lutheranism, 1945 and 1995," *Lutheran Forum* 30 (February 1996): 13. It should also be noted that in 1981 both Balance, Inc. and *Christian News* supported the election of Ralph Bohlmann for Synodical President. That support was withdrawn by 1992, and both supported the election of Dr. Alvin Barry.

²⁴⁴ Rick Mueller, "Interview with Ralph Bohlmann: LCMS & ELCA: Patience, Please," <http://www.thelutheran.org/9608/page40.html> Dr. Bohlmann went on to show his affinity toward the ELCA: "As a past or who headed a large churchbody for 13 years and as a former seminary president, Bohlmann has high praise for the ELCA's new bishop, H. George Anderson, who shares a similar background. "I think highly of his theological orientation toward the gospel. He knows his Scripture. He's an extremely good historian and a likeable man, who can deliver his point of view with crispness, with authority and with humor." Anderson, he added, is a person of great "modesty," who recognizes "he doesn't have all the answers to all the problems.""

President Bohlmann had for the Synod in the area of doctrine. We opposed his new erroneous doctrine of church fellowship and his impossible theory of levels of fellowship or relationships. Our Exegetical Theology Department's position on the place of women in the church displeased him. We thoroughly disagreed with his views on the "ministry of laymen and women in the church," pushed forth at the Wichita Convention of the Synod. We were too aggressively critical of the "Church Growth Movement." Our doctrinal assessment of the newly formed Evangelical Lutheran Church in America interfered with his plans for the Missouri Synod posture toward the ELCA. In all the aforementioned doctrinal issues Bohlmann was overtly critical of the Seminary, and many district presidents and other leaders in the church agreed with him. By 1988 the majority of the Board decided it would be to the advantage of the seminary if I retire and am removed from the scene. I had always tried not to aggravate Bohlmann as I tried to lead the Seminary to remain faithful to our confessional Lutheran heritage, but in retrospect I see could not please him.²⁴⁵

Following his defeat at the 1992 synodical convention, Dr. Bohlmann sent what many saw as a bitter letter to all Missouri Synod pastors, condemning church politics. In that letter, he also tried to explain that the reason he sought to remove Dr. Robert Preus was doctrinal. Referring to a "Highly organized network" which had opposed his presidency, Bohlmann said:

A few comments about its theological focus might be helpful.... In fact, many in the political network hold positions to the right of the Synod's in such key areas as women in the church, inter-Christian relationships, the pastoral office, and the manner of exercising Christian discipline. They have labeled their own position as 'confessional' or 'conservative'.²⁴⁶

After that, Dr. Bohlmann became instrumental in both the "Lutherans Alive" and "Jesus First" political organizations noted below. Dr. Alvin Barry died unexpectedly in office while visiting family in Florida on March 23, 2001. Dr. Gerald Kieschnick was then elected as synodical president at the convention held during the summer of that year.

Three Dissenting Movements Lead to One

Following the formation of the AELC in 1976, three dissenting movements have remained within the Synod, movements that are also dominant in American church life today: liberal, charismatic, and evangelical. These three dissenting movements have now joined forces to form one dissenting organization called Jesus First; its organizers and supporters intent on altering the doctrinal integrity of the Missouri Synod, under the banner of "outreach".²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ Robert Preus, "A Report by Robert Preus Delivered at a Conference in St. Louis," (October 15, 1993), p. 8. This can also be substantiated by Mr. Robert Doggett, who served on the Missouri Synod Commission on Appeals, which, in 1992, exonerated Dr. Robert Preus of the charges pressed against him by Ralph Bohlmann, August Mennicke, Robert King, Robert Sauer, Eugene Bunkowske, and Walter Maier.

²⁴⁶ Ralph Bohlmann, "Letter to Pastors" (August 1992), p. 3.

²⁴⁷ Martin Noland, "An Unholy Trinity: The Liberal, Charismatic, and Evangelical Movements in the Lutheran Church Today," a paper delivered at the Lutheran Bible Conference at Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Cupertino, CA, June 20, 2001. http://www.lcos.org/f/newsArchive/2001_07_02/un.pdf

The Liberal Movement – Lutherans Alive

The development of the liberal movement in the Missouri Synod has been noted above with its emphasis on Gospel reductionism, the use of the historical critical method in Biblical studies, and ecumenism or church fellowship based on a standard that is less than that articulated in the Lutheran Confessions. Not all of its adherents left the Missouri Synod at the formation of the AELC.

In response to the confessional or conservative movement that proved dissatisfied with the Bohlmann presidency, and which resulted in the election of Dr. Alvin Barry as synodical president at the 1992 convention, many of those involved in the liberal movement within the Missouri Synod formed a counter political organization called Lutherans Alive in 1995. This group published a regular newsletter entitled *Forward* under the editorial leadership of Pastor Henry Koepchen, former Atlantic District President. This group attempted to present themselves as a mediating position within the Synod.²⁴⁸ Lutherans Alive continued their political activities until they participated in the formation of Jesus First in 1999.

The Evangelical Movement – Church Growth And the Pastoral Leadership Institute

The evangelical movement in America can be traced to John Wesley and the First Great Awakening in the mid 1700s. This mutated and arose again in the Second Great Awakening of the early 1800s, which involved “New Measures” such as the anxious bench and revival meetings. Evangelicals share a Reformed rejection of the sacraments as a means of grace. They believe that natural man has sufficient ability to approve of the divine Law and to accept God’s offer of grace in the Gospel. These American Protestant influences were of course felt in Lutheranism in the 19th century, as seen particularly by Samuel Simon Schmucker’s radically altered edition of the Augsburg Confession—a classic case of neglecting doctrinal integrity in favor of outreach. In the 1900s, Evangelicals began to use altar calls, which stressed the ability of an unregenerate sinner to make a personal decision for Jesus Christ. Such conservative evangelicals were instrumental in the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California, the journal *Christianity Today*, the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS), and the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy (ICBI). During the “Battle for the Bible”²⁴⁹ within the Missouri Synod several confessional LCMS leaders became involved in the ETS or ICBI, and some LCMS pastors attended Fuller Theological Seminary for

²⁴⁸ “Lutherans Alive began in early 1995 when some leaders in Synod and District came together in response to the 1992 Synodical convention. In reporting for the 1995 convention it was felt that many in the Synod were not being heard. There were voices on the right and on the left. Lutherans Alive desires to resist either of those extreme positions and to have the Missouri Synod move forward as an Evangelical and Confessional Lutheran Church. For nearly a generation, there have been groups formed to circulate their views throughout the Synod. Some have tried to find a **Balance**, while others wanted to **Affirm** their understanding of the issues. **Christian News** has been publishing for nearly 40 years. One laymen’s group declared itself the **Vanguard** of the faithful and has since gone out of existence. In most cases, these groups often turn vicious in their attacks on leaders in our Synod and Districts. They come together to control the Synod from their particular viewpoint. Some like to call themselves conservatives and view all others as rampant liberals. The reality is that in most cases they are “Confusionists.” By their attacks they reveal they do not have mind of Christ.” <http://www.li-christian.com/non-profit/LutheransAlive.htm>

²⁴⁹ This was a phrase used by Harold Lindsell, *The Battle for the Bible* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1976), pp. 72-88.

postgraduate studies.²⁵⁰ At Fuller Theological Seminary, Donald McGavern and C. Peter Wagner developed the Church Growth Movement. In 1979, Concordia Seminary President Ralph Bohlmann was instrumental in bringing Dr. Elmer Matthias on the faculty. Matthias, a graduate of Fuller, taught Church Growth and Evangelism. Meanwhile, Pastor Leroy Biesenthal, a synodical executive, adapted the *Evangelism Explosion* of the successful Presbyterian minister Dr. James Kennedy for Lutheran use, calling it *Dialogue Evangelism* and providing seminars at Concordia Seminary and throughout the Synod.²⁵¹ Dr. Kent Hunter, a prolific writer, has written several books on the Church Growth Movement for use in Lutheran churches, as has David Luecke. Both are rostered LCMS pastors with close ties to Fuller and the Church Growth Movement.²⁵² Both *Dialogue Evangelism* and the Church Growth Movement are heavily saturated with the perspective of Oscar Feucht in *Everyone a Minister*. The pastor is identified primarily as an equipper and manager so that congregational members “do ministry.” Marketing techniques, sociological principles, and management tools coupled with a good dose of contemporary worship practices and the use of small groups designed to “meet peoples’ needs” are used to “grow the church.” Accordingly, they argue, only those churches that use such Church Growth practices are considered to be vibrant.

In order to further train and equip pastors in these practices, the Pastoral Leadership Institute (PLI) was established in 1996. It was not formally incorporated, however, until 1998. That year PLI was incorporated in the state of Missouri by Pastors Greg Smith, Steven Hower and Vernon Gundermann. On January 16, 1998, Pastors Greg Smith, William Thompson, Michael Ernst, Stephen Wagner, Stephen Hower, Vernon Gundermann, and John Kieschnick extended a call to Dr. Norbert Oesch to serve as the executive director of PLI. That same year, PLI received gifts of \$340,000 from the Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF), despite the fact that the Institute had not received Recognized Service Organization (RSO) status within the Synod. When people throughout the Missouri Synod questioned the validity of Dr. Oesch’s call to PLI, extended by pastors within the Synod and not congregations or synodical entities, District President Loren Kramer extended a Divine Call to Dr. Oesch on March 15, 2000 on behalf of the Pacific Southwest District. PLI then applied for RSO status. However, the CCM determined that a ministry of a District, which is a part of the Synod, cannot apply to the Synod for RSO status. The CCM also declared that “districts cannot call someone to serve beyond their district.” Then, at the January 18, 2001 meeting of the Synod’s Board for Higher Education (BHE), PLI was refused RSO status. The Commission on Constitutional Matters also determined that PLI was not eligible to receive funds from the LCEF. Yet, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is willing to give 18 credit hours toward a Doctor of Ministry Degree to those pastors who attend PLI.²⁵³

²⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 20-23.

²⁵¹ This is based on personal experience as a M.Div student at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, from 1978-1981.

²⁵² See Klemet Preus, “The Theology of the Church Growth Movement: An Evaluation of Kent Hunter’s *Confessions*,” *Logia* 10 (Epiphany 2001); <http://www.confessionallutherans.org/papers/klemet.html> .

²⁵³ When Dr. Oesch announced his call as Executive Director of PLI to the congregation he was serving, St. John’s Lutheran Church, Orange, CA, on February 18, 1998, he stated the following about PLI: “I want to say a word about the Pastoral Leadership Institute. It is to create an in-service training program for 300 of the top pastors, the most promising pastors in our Synod, trying to get them equipped with

PLI is governed by principles of the Church Growth Movement. The primary theological principle of the Church Growth Movement is that the true church is visible and can be measured. A church is measured by its growth and size – the bigger, the better! This is in direct opposition to articles VII and VIII of the Augsburg Confession, which asserts that the true church is invisible and therefore cannot be measured. Furthermore, the Augsburg Confession professes that the visible church is a mixture of members of the true church, of hypocrites, and of evil men, and only God knows who are truly members of the *Una Sancta* (the One, Holy Christian or catholic Church).²⁵⁴ Once again, we see here a classic case of ignoring doctrinal integrity in favor of outreach.

The Charismatic Movement – Renewal in Missouri

The modern charismatic movement grew out of early 20th century Pentecostalism, which in turn had sprung from the Holiness groups of Methodism. Thus there are theological ties between Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism. John Wesley (1703-1792) had taught that there was a “second blessing” unto complete sanctification following conversion, though he never claimed to have received it himself. The American revivalist Charles Finney (1792-1875) taught a special “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and used methods that led to emotional responses in his hearers. In October 1890, revivalist Charles Parham began Bethel Bible College in Topeka, Kansas, which taught that the evidence of the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” was speaking in tongues. In April 1906, a student of Charles Parham, William J. Seymour, began holding meetings at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles. A sustained Pentecostal revival began. The Pentecostal movement then spread throughout North America. Denominationally, it can be found in the Assemblies of God, the Four Square Gospel churches, the Church of God in Christ, the Pentecostal Church, as well as in many independent, non-denominational congregations. During the 1950s, the Pentecostal movement spilled over into mainline Protestant churches, spread predominantly through the Full Gospel Businessman’s Fellowship, offering prayer meetings with a charismatic emphasis. Larry Christenson, a graduate of Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, began speaking in tongues in August 1961, and became the founder of the Lutheran charismatic movement.²⁵⁵

leadership skills, to be able to lead large and very large or mega church congregations, like ours is.... to try to engage in the task that is set before me, it takes something that is only in a creative mind, on paper, and bring it to reality. And maybe the picture that will help you to see that more clearly is like creating a seminary without walls.” Georgann McKee, “Presentation to the Lutheran Concerns Association on the Pastoral Leadership Institute,” <http://www.concordtx.org/cpapers/mckee.htm>. Other PLI officers include Dr. John Kuddes, the Rev. Ron Burcham, Ms. Michelle J. Chaffee, Col. Carol Reineck, Dr. Karen Soeken; Advisory members include The Rev. Dr. John Johnson (President of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis) and the Rev. Dr. William Meyer, (Executive Director of the BHE). See also Florence Misseldine and Georgann McKee, “Update on PLI Investigation,” *Consensus* 1 (October 2002): 3.

²⁵⁴ The official stated vision for the organization is: “PLI provides an opportunity for LCMS pastors to gain advanced knowledge and skills helpful in fulfilling the Great Commission. PLI will maximize on the proven experience of more seasoned pastors, theologians, and leadership experts to assist younger and less-experienced pastors. PLI will do so by providing positive peer and mentor relationships, allowing for courageous ministry visions to take shape. PLI will remain committed to Biblical and Lutheran confessional standards. And PLI will challenge and empower pastors to pursue their full potential as gifted servants of the church, called to lead their congregations into excellence in mission and ministry as they connect people to Jesus.” <http://www.pli-leader.org/overview/index.html>

²⁵⁵ Noland, “An Unholy Trinity,” pp. 25-27.

Charismatics within the Missouri Synod began coming together in the 1970s, and went on to form an organization called Renewal in Missouri (RIM) in 1988 with a publication using the same name. RIM stresses that their members love Jesus, believe the Gospel, emphasize the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit, want to be in agreement with the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and emphasize personal experience in relationship with Jesus.²⁵⁶ By 2001, the Rev. Del Rossin, head of RIM, maintained that there are 600 charismatics on the LCMS clergy roster.²⁵⁷

Despite clear Scriptural and Confessional testimony that God does not work apart from the means of grace, the charismatic movement is characterized by a firm belief in God's direct communication to believers apart from Word and sacrament through the speaking in tongues, prophesies, and an "inner voice."²⁵⁸

Regarding doctrinal integrity, the Evangelicals have an old saying, "Deeds, not creeds." Or as the Pentecostals/Charismatics put it, "It's better felt than telt." One can see how both of these groups would share an aversion for dogma and intellectual rigor. What is not so apparent to the casual observer is the natural affinity of Evangelicalism and Pentecostalism—superficially conservative in some areas such as biblical inerrancy, women's ordination, and opposition to abortion—with classic Liberalism. The common ground of all three groups is subjectivism. The subjective approach to religion grew out of the Romantic Movement in 18th century Germany and influenced the teachings of theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), from whom all liberalism derives. In reaction to the dry intellectualism of the Enlightenment, Schleiermacher put forth his "taste and feeling for the infinite," resulting in a personalized and ego-centered approach to Christianity. With this in mind, one can easily see how all three groups would find common cause against the confessional Lutherans who insisted on doctrinal integrity.

Jesus First and DayStar

The organization Jesus First was founded as a not-for-profit religious organization in April 1999. It is governed by a thirteen-member board, and publishes a popular magazine entitled *Jesus First*.²⁵⁹ A connected organization, DayStar, sponsors symposiums and publishes papers and articles espousing views similar to that of Jesus First.²⁶⁰ The *Jesus First* magazine encourages its readers to attend DayStar free conferences, and leaders of Jesus First have been speakers at these symposiums.²⁶¹ Jesus First was instrumental in electing Gerald Kieshnick—an ostensibly conservative Church Growth advocate whose platform was "Mission is Job One"—as president of the Missouri Synod in 2001, and both Jesus First and DayStar continue avidly in their support of his policies.²⁶²

²⁵⁶ Renewal In Missouri began publication of the newsletter *Renewal In Missouri* in the fall of 1988 after a summit meeting May 11-13, 1988. "Over 400 Attend RIM Summit May 11-13," *Renewal in Missouri* 1 (Summer and Fall 1988), p. 1.

²⁵⁷ Delbert Rossin, "From The Editor," *RIM Report*, Issue 48 (July 2001), p. 2.

²⁵⁸ Consider: "The Charismatic Movement and Lutheran Theology," A Report of the CTCR, 1972; "The Lutheran Church and the Charismatic Movement: Guidelines for Congregations and Pastors," A Report of the CTCR, 1977; "Spiritual Gifts," A Report of the CTCR, 1994.

²⁵⁹ <http://jesusfirst.net/>

²⁶⁰ <http://www.day-star.net/index.htm>

²⁶¹ Martin Noland, "What Is 'Jesus First'?", *Affirm* (May 2001): 8.

²⁶² <http://209.219.130.233/> and <http://www.day-star.net/index.htm>

In the May 2001 issue of *Affirm*, Dr. Martin Noland provided a detailed analysis in an article entitled “What Is ‘Jesus First’?” Based on a thorough analysis, he concluded that this organization is made up of a diverse network of dissenting groups within the Missouri Synod.²⁶³ Dr. Noland observed that in June 2000, there were 522 people who endorsed the Jesus First statement entitled “A Call to Affirm Jesus-First Leadership.” Of these endorsers, 67% were Missouri Synod pastors (this included retired and those listed as CRM). Therefore, 33% of the endorsers were lay people or those holding other churchly offices (teachers, DCEs, and deaconesses). Thus, pastors outnumbered lay people two to one. The Missouri Synod pastors who endorsed the Jesus First statement constituted 18% of all LCMS pastors on the synodical roster. Noland further analyzed the pastors who endorsed the Jesus First statement, and found that many had belonged to other dissenting groups, including supporters of Seminex and John Tietjen.²⁶⁴

In summarizing the nature of Jesus First and the intent of those involved in this organization, Dr. Martin Noland stated:

²⁶³ “Out of the thirteen member board of directors (a.k.a. the “Steering Committee”), eight hold an office or serve on a working committee for publications or elections. Of those eight, six have been associated in the past with dissenting groups in the synod: 1) Richard Lessmann has been a member of “Renewal in Missouri (hereafter RIM), a group of charismatic pastors and lay leaders advocating tolerance toward charismatic teaching and practice. Lessmann was also an author for the “Lutherans Alive” group in their magazine “Forward!”, which advocated a liberal agenda on issues of church relations, altar fellowship, and women’s issues at the 1995 and 1998 conventions. 2) David Luecke has been an editor for “Worship Innovations,” a glossy, full-color magazine produced by the “Fellowship Ministries.” “Fellowship Ministries” advocates the use of Evangelical hymns and worship practices, under the guise of “contemporary” or “blended” worship. Luecke has authored several books defending this position, coining the phrase “Evangelical style and Lutheran substance.” He also was a co-signer of the 1974 “Pastoral Letter” of the St. Louis clergy in support of John Tietjen and his allies. 3) Wayne Graumann is one of the officers of the “Pastoral Leadership Institute,” (hereafter PLI) an organization dedicated to indoctrinating LC-MS pastors in the principles of the “Church Growth Movement.” The fact that the synod’s Board for Higher Education refused “Recognized Service Organization” status to the PLI indicates that a number of people have serious concerns about its theology. 4) Charles Mueller, Jr. has been an editor for “Worship Innovations,” was associated with “Fellowship Ministries”, was an author for the “Lutherans Alive” magazine, and is a PLI officer. 5) Vernon Gundermann was a “Lutherans Alive” author and a PLI officer. 6) August Mennicke, a former Vice-President of the synod, was an author for “Lutherans Alive”. This listing of names and associations is not intended to pre-judge the merits of the respective organizations or their causes. It simply proves that “Jesus First” has a history in previous groups and that its leaders are connected to a diverse network of dissenting organizations.” Noland, “What Is ‘Jesus First’?”, pp. 6-7.

²⁶⁴ “Each number represents the number of endorsers of the “Jesus First” statement which have been also involved with the following groups: 1) Signers of the July 1973 “A Declaration of Protest and Confession,” which consisted of Concordia St. Louis faculty and staff protesting the New Orleans’ convention of the synod = 1; 2) Signers of the January 1974 “A Pastoral Letter Regarding the Seminary Controversy,” which consisted of St. Louis area clergy in support of John Tietjen and the seminary faculty majority = 5; 3) Signers of the statement in the March 1974 *Badger Lutheran*, which consisted of Milwaukee area clergy protesting the suspension of the Concordia St. Louis professors who had “walked out” = 2; 4) “Evangelical Lutherans in Mission” (ELIM) District Chairmen = 2; 5) Seminex graduates = 8; 6) District Presidents ordaining Seminex graduates and disciplined by J.A.O. Preus = 1; 7) Frederick W. Danker’s Honor Roll of the “Martyrs” who suffered for the cause of Seminex = 2; 8) “Lutherans Alive” Executive Committee = 1; 9) “Lutherans Alive” Authors = 14; 10) Members of the Committee for “A Declaration of Eucharistic Understanding and Practice,” in favor of open communion = 9; 11) RIM members = 15; 12) “Fellowship Ministries” associates = 4; 13) Authors of “Different Voices/Shared Visions,” advocating woman’s ordination = 1; 14) PLI officers = 4. This is only the tip of the iceberg, as it is reasonable to conclude that the majority of the endorsers of “A Call to Affirm Jesus First Leadership” have sympathized with one or more of these organizations or causes.” *Ibid.*, p. 8.

I believe that “Jesus First” may best be described as a “coalition of dissenting organizations and movements.” Chief among the dissenters are: 1) Seminex supporters, 2) Charismatics, 3) “Church Growth Movement” advocates, 4) advocates of “contemporary worship,” 5) advocates of woman’s ordination, 6) advocates of open communion, and 7) advocates of ecumenical fellowship practices. In order to succeed politically, these divergent dissenters have been forced to work together for a common cause, i.e., the overthrow of traditional Lutheran theology and practice in the Missouri Synod.²⁶⁵

Gospel Reductionism and Jesus First/DayStar

At the heart of this dissident movement in the Missouri Synod today is the same Gospel reductionism that began in the latter part of the first half of the 20th century, opened the way for the use of the historical critical method, fomented the Walkout and led to the schism that was the formation of the AELC. Now it continues to impact the Missouri Synod in the areas of women’s issues, missions, and the nature and practice of fellowship.

The fiftieth anniversary of “A Statement of the 44” was celebrated by the ALPB at a banquet in White Plains, New York, on October 22, 1995, with Dr. Ralph Bohlmann serving as guest speaker. Dr. Bohlmann expressed his appreciation to the ALPB for the catalytic role they have played in American Lutheranism, and in his own life. Dr. Bohlmann stated that the issues raised by the 44 are issues that still concern Lutherans in every age. He notes that “A Statement” identified the deep cleavage that exists among those whose theology and practice are Gospel centered, and those whose focus is in large part driven by the Law. He sees the Statementarians as having a sense of Gospel primacy.²⁶⁶ Of course those who push for doctrinal integrity are seen as legalistic Pharisees who have no passion for lost souls.

More current Gospel reductionism can be identified in the writings of Pastor Stephen C. Krueger, although he calls it “The Promising Tradition.” Krueger is a graduate of Seminex who colloquized into the Missouri Synod, and readily acknowledges:

The Promising Tradition is associated with voices like those of Bob Bertram and Ed Schroeder. I, with many others, have been a shameless borrower of many of the things they taught me. But, then, so were they, as they would be the first to say. It was Richard Caemmerer, “Doc,” who opened their eyes and rescued them, as he did so many, from the staid and dead dogmatism and legalism which seem to ever dog Missouri.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Dr. Bohlmann also asks: “Why do so many forget the freedom of the Gospel as they seek to turn our synodical conventions and other gatherings into opportunities to gain power or exercise control? Why? Because, simply put, it is the Law, not the Gospel, that dominates such actions. We too, like the 44 and many others in the course of church history, need to encourage one another to let the Gospel hold sway among us, as we stand fast in the liberty with which Christ has made us free.” Ralph A. Bohlmann, “Missouri Lutheranism, 1945 and 1995,” *Lutheran Forum* 30 (February 1996): 13.

²⁶⁷ Stephen C. Krueger, “The Promising Tradition,” p. 1, <http://www.day-star.net/promising.htm>

Krueger calls for acceptance of a Gospel without accountability or responsibility. Those who maintain a third use of the Law as set forth in Formula of Concord Article VI are referred to as legalists who impose a “rigid and dead pathology onto the rest...”²⁶⁸ Krueger compares the Missouri Synod after its 1998 synodical convention to the medieval papacy, which forced the hand of the Lutheran Reformers.²⁶⁹

As understood in Gospel reductionism, Gospel becomes “a carte blanche for moral and doctrinal freedom,” which can result in doctrinal and moral anarchy.²⁷⁰ Dr. Kurt Marquardt observed in *Anatomy of an Explosion*: “‘Law and Gospel’ also have been turned into ‘a lifeless speculation.’ In *chic* Lutheran usage, ‘evangelical’ means tolerant, and the ‘Gospel’ is identified with a kind of secular permissiveness.”²⁷¹ The Law is not dissolved by the Gospel, as those who hold to Gospel reductionism maintain. Jesus Christ fulfills the Law and pays the penalty for the sin of the world in His vicarious suffering and death. “The Law is not merely set aside by the Gospel, but in Christ the Gospel confirms God’s righteousness and holiness in the Law.”²⁷² Formula of Concord Article

²⁶⁸ Krueger goes on to state: “The legalists claim to champion this central doctrine [justification by faith alone]... Yet, if they believed that Christ alone was the only justification necessary for all our lives before God, then why do they persist in imposing rule after rule, Synodical resolution after resolution on us all, as if the Gospel alone was not the sole sufficient norm for the Church? If Christ alone was the only justification necessary for all our lives before God, then why do the legalists persist in charge after charge against anyone who dares speak out differently than merely to puppet the “official position of Synod?” *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²⁶⁹ Krueger further charges: “The legalists have not understood the essence of Christian freedom. They are worried that Christians who are free will abandon Biblical Christian doctrine. What they do not understand is that it is precisely that Christian doctrine which authorizes Christian freedom.” *Ibid.*, p. 4. Krueger also basis his position regarding Christian freedom on a study of Luther on Galatians (1531). Stephen C. Krueger, “The Blessed Duel: How Christ Is the Christian’s Victory over Law, A Brief Study in Luther’s Galatians (1531),” <http://www.day-star.net/duel.htm>. Yet, Krueger ignores more recent Luther studies, which show that Luther did hold to a third use of the Law. See Scott Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, pp. 213-219. One must ask Pastor Krueger: where will this freedom lead? Where does it stop? Consider the announcement of the Gay Pride Week interfaith service at Central Lutheran Church, Seattle, WA (ELCA): “With the Pride Week’s interfaith service theme, “The Doors Are Opening,” the doors of Central Lutheran Church were wide open on June 23 and invited the Gay community to come in. Each year, the interfaith service grows in attendance. This year’s service was no exception. At Wednesday’s service, where Christian, Jewish, Wiccan and Buddhist faiths were represented, organizers said 155 people turned out compared to 108 last year.” Seattle Gay News, “Religious Doors: They Are a Opening,” <http://www.sgn.org/Archives/sgn.6.25.99/faith.htm>

²⁷⁰ David Scaer, “The Law Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod.” *Springfielder* 36 (December 1972): 167.

²⁷¹ Marquardt, *Anatomy of an Explosion*, pp. 143-144.

²⁷² Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God*, p. 138. Consider Dr. Richard Klann’s analysis of this issue: “The Christian no longer lives under the Law (legalism), nor above the Law (antinomianism), but in the Law. ‘To live in the Law’ is the equivalent of asserting the congruence of the will of the Christian with the will of God in sanctification. The Christian never asserts any kind of moral or ethical autonomy. Christian discipleship is obedience to God’s will.” Richard Klann, “Reflections on Disputes Regarding the Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel,” *CJ* 1 (January 1975): 35. Horace Hummel noted: “The problem of how to take a firm stand against breakdown of discipline and dogmatic aberrations without stifling theological creativity and genuine ecumenical engagement is anything but new. It is, however, especially acute today, especially among those whose concepts of ‘freedom’ are apparently more informed by certain modern ideologies than by the Gospel, and for whom, as a result, the very notion of doctrinal discipline is offensive and to whom virtually any authority represents ‘authoritarianism.’ The possibilities of miscarriages of church discipline are great (how liberalism loves to highlight them!) and, obviously, everything should be done to prevent them. But I submit that most recent Protestant history better illustrates the sad results of its absence than its excesses. Any organization maintains some sort of discipline

VI states that the doctrine of the Law is still needed even for believers because in this life, believers can only be *simul justus et peccator* (simultaneously saint and sinner). Scott Murray noted the following:

*The anthropological dimension of the Christian's life as simul justus et peccator can never be left out of the doctrinal equation. The justus et peccator dichotomy also cuts across Lutheran theology.*²⁷³

Gospel reductionism coupled with changing societal influences have influenced the life of the church in many areas. We note especially the impact on the role of women in the church, the nature of missions, and the understanding of church fellowship, specifically, what constitutes unionism and syncretism.

Feminism and the Changing Role of Women in the Church

The feminist movement that overtook our society the latter half of the 20th century had a marked impact within the Missouri Synod as well. As noted above, the first female ordained as a Lutheran pastor occurred within TALC in 1970. Those who supported Seminex also favored the ordination of women, and after the AELC was formed, that church body began ordaining women. It is no secret that there are some women with connections to the Missouri Synod who strongly advocate the ordination of women within the Synod; there are men, including pastors, who advocate this position also. Many of them are associated with the ecclesio-political group Jesus First and its connected organization DayStar.²⁷⁴ If the ordination of women cannot be done directly and expeditiously by way of convincing delegates to adopt such a resolution at a synodical convention, then it will be attempted by the process of absorption or evolution. Women will fill more and more positions traditionally known as “male-only” or which were traditionally filled only by ordained men until finally the thought of a female pastor would be readily accepted throughout the Synod.²⁷⁵

Institutional chaplains (hospital, police, fire department, prison, work force, etc.) were first listed in *The Lutheran Annual* in 1971. The Missouri Synod currently lists 21 women as “Institutional Chaplains” in *The Lutheran Annual*, 2002 edition.²⁷⁶ The first

consonant with its *raison d'être*, and if doctrine ceases to be a significant part of the Church's discipline, then obviously only factors really extrinsic to the essence of the Church are externally holding it together.” Horace Hummel, “No Other Gospel!” *Lutheran Forum* (October 1969): 4. At that time, Hummel was teaching at Lutheran School of Theology, Chicago, after having left Concordia Seminary in the 1950s. After the Walkout, Dr. Hummel rejoined the LCMS and taught again at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

²⁷³ Murray, p. 145.

²⁷⁴ Jesus First, <http://209.219.130.233/>, DayStar, <http://www.day-star.net/index.htm>.

²⁷⁵ See Mary Todd, “Unopened Gifts: Women and the Call to Public Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” *The Crescent* 56 (March 1993): 4-9; Mary Todd, *Authority Vested: A Story of Identity and Change in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2000), pp. 259ff. This has happened in the Southern Baptist Convention (see Leon McBeth, “The Changing Role of Women in Baptist Life,” *Southwestern Journal of Theology*, 22 (1980): 84-96; and Leon McBeth, “The Ordination of Women,” *Review and Expositor*, 78 (1981): 515-530 and the Christian Reformed Church (see “Synod Allows Endorsement of Female Military Chaplain,” <http://www.iclnet.org/pub/resources/text/reformed/archive98/nr98-062.txt>).

²⁷⁶ The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *The Lutheran Annual*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), pp. 360-360. Some 440 institutional chaplains are listed, including fire and police chaplains. In comparison, there are 253 military, VA, and Civil Air Patrol chaplains listed under Military Chaplains. This includes 83 active duty chaplains (1 of whom is Canadian), 126 reserve or guard chaplains (6 are Canadian), 16 CAP chaplains, and 27 VA chaplains, 11 of whom are full-time.

female institutional chaplain cited in *The Lutheran Annual* was Julie Schmidt of Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1987. However, she was listed as “J. Schmidt” until 1990, when her full first name was then given. That same year, three other women were listed as well, together with the statement: “List includes women who served in specialized ministries (bylaw 2.15h) and who may be designated as chaplain by the institution they serve.”²⁷⁷ Yet, in a survey of current LCMS female institutional chaplains, three women have indicated that they served in institutional chaplain positions since the 1970s, one as early as 1972. Several others acknowledged holding this title since the 1980s. Most LCMS female institutional chaplains are trained as deaconesses either at Valparaiso University or Concordia University, River Forest, IL. However, a few of the women listed as institutional chaplains have received training outside of Missouri Synod institutions or Valparaiso University.²⁷⁸ Serving as institutional chaplains has enabled some LCMS women, as well as women from other denominations that do not embrace women’s ordination (like Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism),²⁷⁹ to preach and administer the sacraments and conduct a ministry of personal pastoral care without ordination and apart from direct male pastoral supervision.²⁸⁰

Probably the most vocal proponent of women’s ordination in the Missouri Synod is Dr. Mary Todd, professor of history at Concordia University, River Forest, IL. Like many proponents of Gospel reductionism, Dr. Todd reduces the Word of God to a narrow understanding of the Gospel and rejects the normative nature of Scripture as a whole. She thereby also rejects the verbal inerrancy of Scripture. As a consequence, she questions the

²⁷⁷ Interestingly, from 1987-1990, only J. Schmidt was listed without the full first name being given. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, *The Lutheran Annual*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1990). Information provided by e-mail from Mark Loest, mloest@chi.lcms.org, Concordia Historical Institute, dated 12 February 2002 and e-mail from Mark Birkholz, reference@chi.lcms.org, Concordia Historical Institute, dated 27 February 2002.

²⁷⁸ A questionnaire was sent to the female institutional chaplains listed in *The Lutheran Annual* (2002), twenty-one in all, as well as to Deaconess Kristin Wassilak, Director of the Deaconess Program at Concordia University, River Forest, IL. Out of the twenty-one queries solicited from institutional chaplains, twelve responses were received. Deaconess Dorothy Prybylski stated: that “My service in chaplaincy ministry has endured for thirty years.” Deaconess Kathy Brown responded: “I have been an institutional chaplain since I was consecrated as a Deaconess in 1977.” Deaconess Dianna Bonfield verified that she has served as an institutional chaplain for 24 years.

²⁷⁹ Valerie A. Karras, “Women in the Eastern Church: Past, Present, and Future,” 10th Annual Conference of Orthodox Christian Laity, <http://www.voithia.org/content/qmpCWINWOR3.htm>; Paula D. Nesbitt, “Women’s Ordination: Problems and Possibilities: Five Lessons from Episcopal Women Clergy,” Women’s Ordination Conference 20000, <http://www.womensordination.org/pages/Nesbitt.htm>. It is interesting to note that a female Roman Catholic sued the Veterans Administration to be admitted as a Roman Catholic chaplain, but lost the suit because she was not endorsed as an ordained Roman Catholic priest. “Catholic Women Chaplains: Yes and No in Veterans’ Hospitals,” *Christian Century* 110 (May 19-26, 1993), p. 547.

²⁸⁰ Recommendations for this expanded role of women’s ministry can be found in various sources, including the following: Mark Chaves, *Ordaining Women: Culture and Conflict in Religious Organizations* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 22-23; “Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling,” Hartford Institute for Religion Research, http://www.hartfordinstitute.org/bookshelf/clergywomen_abstract.html; Paula D. Nesbitt, “Women’s Ordination: Problems and Possibilities Five Lessons from Episcopal Women Clergy;” “Women’s Service in the Church,” *Issues in Christian Education* 26 (Fall 1992): passim; Barbara Brown Zikmund, Adair T. Lummis, Patricia Mei Yin Chang, *Clergy Women: An Uphill Calling* (Louisville, KE: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), pp. 117-119.

Missouri Synod's stated position prohibiting the ordination of women, which is based on specific Scriptural passages and the theological concept known as the order of creation. Further, Dr. Todd rejects the objective mediation of a call as articulated in Augsburg Confession Article XIV, basing a call to the Office of the Holy Ministry on subjective feelings. Because she and other women "feel" called to the pastoral ministry in the Missouri Synod, Dr. Todd asserts that this is both necessary and sufficient to override the Synod (which she identifies as the dominating male clergy), the long-held position of the historic catholic church, Scripture and anyone else that tells her she cannot be a pastor in the LCMS.²⁸¹

Missions and Changes in Mission Understanding

Gospel reductionism and outreach at the expense of doctrinal integrity have severely impacted the LCMS in missions and chaplaincy work. In this important area of outreach, the Missouri Synod has intertwined itself with a church body that the Synod, at its 2001 convention, officially acknowledged as being no longer orthodox.²⁸² Yet, the

²⁸¹ Mary Todd, *Authority Vested*, pp. 259-280; Mary Todd, "On Fences and Fears," <http://www.day-star.net/fences.htm>. Compare this to the position against women's ordination as articulated in official LCMS statements and by various theologians: A.L. Barry, "What About...The Ordination of Women to the Pastoral Office," *Unchanging Truth in Changing Times*, (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The Office of the President, 2001); Peter Brunner, *The Ministry and the Ministry of Women* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971); Armin-Ernst Buchrucker, "The Ordination of Women and Feminist Theology," *Logia* 9 (Epiphany 2000): 9-20; Ulla Hindback, "Women and the Ministry," *Logia* 9 (Epiphany 2000): 21-22; John W. Kleinig, "The Ordination of Women and the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity," from Reformation Today Web Site, <http://reformationtoday.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/kleinigpaper.pdf>; "The Ministry: Offices, Procedures, and Nomenclature," A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, September 1981; Samuel H. Nafzger, "The Doctrinal Position of the LCMS on the Service of Women in the Church," *CJ* 18 (April 1992), pp. 112-131; David P. Scaer, "Christology and Feminism," *Logia* 9 (Epiphany 2000): 3-7; Robert W. Schaibley, "Gender Considerations on the Pastoral Office in Light of 1 Corinthians 14:33-36 and 1 Timothy 2:8-14," *Logia* 2 (Reformation 1993): 48-54; George F. Wollenburg, "The Office of the Holy Ministry and the Ordination of Women," (Minneapolis, MN: University Lutheran Chapel, Private Printing, 1990); "Women in the Church: Scriptural and Ecclesial Practice," A Report of the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, September 1985.

²⁸² When the ELCA was formed in 1988, LCUSA was disbanded. However, the LCMS continued to work closely with the ELCA in mission and chaplaincy work. In 1997, the ELCA declared itself in full fellowship with the United Church of Christ, the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the USA. That same year, the ELCA also declared that there is no longer any substantial disagreement between the Lutheran and Roman Catholic understandings of the doctrine of justification. Finally, during its church-wide assembly in August 1999, the ELCA voted to adopt full communion with the Episcopal Church and the Moravian Church in America. Even before the ELCA declared itself in full fellowship with various Reformed bodies and the Episcopal Church, questions of Lutheran identity and confessional commitment were ignored in various mission areas. The LCMS does not believe, teach, and confess the same as the ELCA with respect to the nature of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, confessional subscription, the ordination of women, church fellowship, the sanctity of human life, and membership in certain ecumenical organizations. With the recent ecumenical declarations of the ELCA, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper, the doctrine of justification, and the doctrine of the ministry are called into question as well. Furthermore, the ELCA has permitted on its clergy roster pastors and theological professors who deny or question the following: the virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Christ, whether the New Testament teaches that the death of Christ was an atonement for sin, whether Jesus Himself actually claimed to be God, whether Jesus did, in fact, speak the words of institution, and whether the miracles recorded in Holy Scripture are real or merely myths. See John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "Needed: A

Missouri Synod continues to work hand-in-hand with the ELCA overseas in both missions and the four so-called International Lutheran congregations, as well as in the military and institutional chaplaincies. The LCMS continues to support missions like LAMP, which are not committed to starting confessional Lutheran congregations.²⁸³ The Board for Mission Services calls people “missionaries” who are sent to various countries to teach the English language. Missions are now identified with a “ministry of presence,” “sharing the Gospel” (personal witnessing without concern for follow-on discipleship), and social welfare work, not with preaching the Word and administering the Sacraments so that people will be brought to faith and establish or join orthodox Lutheran congregations. As noted above, institutional chaplains are endorsed by synodical districts, some of whom are female, as well as missionaries and “lay ministers” who are not ordained, and yet some of these people preach and administer the sacraments in direct opposition to Scripture and the Confessions (specifically Augsburg Confession Article XIV). It seems that the philosophy of the 1965 “Mission Affirmations” remains in effect in Missouri Synod mission outreach today.²⁸⁴

Paradigm Shift In Missouri’s Mission Outlook,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 64 (April 2000): 149-154.

²⁸³ Matthew Harrison, “Lutheran Missions Must Lead to Lutheran Churches,” *Logia* 7 (Holy Trinity 1998): 29-34.

²⁸⁴ A personal e-mail exchange this author had with a Missouri Synod mission executive, who will remain nameless, will further illustrate the change in mission emphasis. He wrote: “Dear John, I just wanted to share a quotation I remember from Werner Elert’s, *The Structure of Lutheranism*, where he quotes Luther’s view of moving forward aggressively with the Gospel in the world of the unbeliever without even a call, ‘But when the Christian is at a place where there are no Christians, there he needs no other call than that he is a Christian who is inwardly called and anointed by God. There it is his obligation to preach to the erring heathen and non-Christians and to teach the Gospel as a duty of Christian love, even though no one calls him to do this.’ (WA 11, 412, 11ff. Ehlert, pp. 389-390) Brother John, I am troubled by your statements... God’s very mission is at stake when we communicate with others “charges” that fan the flames of dissension. Jesus’ very high priestly prayer shows concern for the Gospel moving forward, ‘May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.’ John 17:23. As God’s “sent ones” we need to use every ounce of energy to move the Gospel forward. We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘What is the ultimate goal of my activities and communications? Are they to reach the souls of those who are heading straight to eternal damnation?’ My response: “Dear [‘so-and-so’], I would like to share a quotation from Luther’s ‘Sermon on suffering and the cross’ (W.A. 32.37f): ‘And we can see – unfortunately it is a general thing – that many abuse the Holy Gospel, behaving as if they were freed from all obligations through the Gospel and that there is nothing more they need do, or give or suffer. This is a sin and a shame.’ In Jesus’ high priestly prayer, our Lord also says: “Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.’ (John 17:17) Christ calls us to reach out with the Gospel (outreach), true; but He also calls us to be faithful (integrity). Brother [‘so-and-so’], I am troubled by what seems to be an ‘exception makes the rule’ approach, or worse yet, a no rule approach (antinomian, Gospel Reductionism) to missions in our beloved Synod. Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations by baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and by teaching ALL that He has commanded. It is not an either/or; it is a both/and! Outreach and integrity must go hand-in-hand. I can share with you many horror stories, beginning with my vicarage, but particularly involving 20 years as a Navy chaplain, where those LCMS pastors, chaplains, and missionaries who repeatedly let the exception make the rule caused severe damage, gave a faulty or poor witness, and made things extremely difficult for those who followed and who sought to remain faithful. As Luther said, “This is a sin and a shame.” By the way, no reply to this e-mail was received.

Church Fellowship and Changing Involvement in Interfaith Services

The balance and tension between doctrinal integrity and outreach has been seriously tested with respect to the Synod's position on church fellowship and participation in interfaith events, particularly in regard to the understanding of Article VI.2 of the Synod's Constitution.²⁸⁵ There are many who are pushing for a change in this area of the Synod's doctrine and practice.

The 1998 synodical convention was again memorialized to study fellowship principles and practices. Prior to the convention, the President of the Southern District, Orval Mueller, participated in a wedding service for his niece in Watertown, South Dakota. The congregation belonged to the ELCA, and District President Mueller co-officiated with a relative who was also an ELCA pastor. Both the President of the South Dakota District, Raymond Hartwig, and the President of the Synod, Alvin Barry, had recommended that Mueller not participate in the wedding; but he did anyway. Shortly thereafter, a tornado ripped through Spencer, South Dakota, seriously damaging the town, including the Missouri Synod congregation there. The pastor of the LCMS church asked for approval from District President Hartwig to conduct a community service of thanksgiving that would involve local ministers of other Christian denominations. Hartwig approved this request. Both of these events caused considerable unrest throughout the Synod. Some disapproved of both Dr. Mueller's participation in the wedding, as well as the community service of thanksgiving in Spencer, SD, and therefore, Dr. Hartwig's approval of that event. Others, particularly those associated with Lutherans Alive, believed that both Dr. Mueller and the LCMS pastor in Spencer, SD had done the right thing, and they felt that Dr. Hartwig was not consistent in his views in rejecting one while approving the other. Prior to the 1998 synodical convention, the Southern District President issued a written apology for his participation in his niece's wedding, and the South Dakota District President apologized for allowing the community worship service following the tornado. The convention resolved that the President of the Synod and the CTCR jointly develop and promote a Biblical and Confessional study on church fellowship.²⁸⁶

On September 9, 1998, Atlantic District President David Benke participated in an interfaith prayer service in New York City. After appropriate ecclesiastical oversight and

²⁸⁵ "Article VI Conditions of Membership: Conditions for acquiring and holding membership in the Synod are the following...2. Renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description..." LCMS, *2001 Handbook*, p. 8.

²⁸⁶ LCMS, *1998 Convention Workbook*, pp. 170-171. Gerald Kieschnick, "The Dr. Martin and Regina Maehr Lecture Series, Concordia University – Seward," March 7, 2002. <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/kieschnick-seward-2002.pdf>; <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/seward.doc>; <http://www.consensuslutheran.org/modules.php?op=modload&name=News&file=article&sid=181&mode=nested> President Kieschnick also noted: "As soon as these actions became known on the convention floor, one delegate rushed to the microphone and, with words that would be echoed by many three years later in the aftermath of the Yankee Stadium event, said, "It's a sad day when a pastor of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has to apologize for doing something pastoral!" His short speech was met by spontaneous, sustained applause and an emotional standing ovation by many, if not most, of the delegates." Yet, this understanding of what is "pastoral" appears to be based more on emotions and situational ethics in matters of casuistry than on the objective truth of God's Word and the Scriptural doctrine of the Lutheran Confessions.

admonition by then Synodical President Alvin L. Barry,²⁸⁷ District President David Benke signed an apology on October 22, 1998.²⁸⁸

The 2001 synodical convention passed a resolution commending “The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship” and “A Report on Synodical Discussions” for continued use and guidance in building unity of doctrine and practice in the Synod. Then Texas District President, Dr. Gerald Kieschnick, served as chairman of the CTCR for the triennium leading up to this convention, which prepared these documents. As noted above, he was also elected as synodical president during that convention.²⁸⁹ It is important to note that this CTCR document, together with the “Report on Synodical Discussion,” was not adopted as an official doctrinal statement of the Synod (comparable to “Church and Ministry” in 1851, “A Brief Statement” in 1932, or “A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles” in 1973). These documents were adopted simply as guidelines for use in building unity of doctrine and practice. Such documents do not redefine or supersede the synodical Constitution.

On September 8, 2001, Dr. Gerald Kieschnick was installed as the 12th President of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Less than 72 hours later, on September 11th, terrorists crashed airplanes into the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon in Washington, D.C., and a field outside of Pittsburgh, PA.

The Atlantic District President was directly involved in providing pastoral care and relief to those in need, as well as supervising the pastoral response of Missouri Synod

²⁸⁷ Bylaw 2.27 g reads: “Because the President of the Synod has ecclesiastical supervision of all District Presidents, the President of Synod shall proceed in the same fashion as a District President if he receives a complaint relative to a District President. In cases under this subparagraph the synodical President shall not participate as a member of the Praesidium (section 1., 1 and b). If disqualified for the reasons set forth in section b, the next qualified officer of the Synod shall function in the place of the President.” *LCMS, 2001 Handbook*, p. 27.

²⁸⁸ “My participation in this service was a direct violation of the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and consequently, violation of the Constitution, Bylaws and doctrinal resolutions of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. I also recognize that my participation in this interfaith prayer service was a violation of my duties and responsibilities as an elected officer of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. While well-intended, what I did was wrong. I therefore sincerely and publicly apologize to the Synod for my actions in this connection. I assure the Synod that I will not repeat this error in the future by participating as an officiant in ecumenical services.” “Benke Apologizes to Synod over Prayer Service,” *LCMS News*, Nov. 20, 1998:

http://www.cuis.edu/ftp/lcmsnews/999581-BENKE_APOLOGIZES_TO_SYNOD.-981120

²⁸⁹ “Not every occasion where worship takes place is necessarily a manifestation of church fellowship. There are situations where discretion is appropriate....

“... Offering prayers, speaking and reading Scripture at events sponsored by governments, public schools and volunteer organizations would be a problem if the organization in charge restricted a Christian witness. For instance, if an invitation requires a pastor to pray to God without mentioning Jesus, he cannot in good conscience accept. Without such a restriction, a Lutheran pastor may for valid and good reason participate in civic affairs such as an inauguration, graduation or a right-to-life activity. These occasions may provide opportunity to witness to the Gospel. Pastors may have honest differences of opinion about whether or to what extent it is appropriate or helpful to participate in these or similar civic events. In these cases, charity must prevail.

“There are also “once-in-a-lifetime” situations. It is virtually impossible to anticipate all such situations or to establish rules in advance. Specific answers cannot be given to cover every type of situation pastors and congregations face. These situations can be evaluated only on a case-by-case basis and may evoke different responses from different pastors who may be equally committed to LCMS fellowship principles. The LCMS has always recognized this.” *LCMS, 2001 Convention Workbook*, p. 50.

clergy in the New York City area. For his tireless efforts, only months after recovering from a heart attack, Dr. David Benke should be commended. However, on September 19, 2001, both Synodical President Kieschnick and District President Benke participated in two worship services with officials of the ELCA at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church (ELCA). An identical bulletin with liturgy and the names of participants was printed for both services.²⁹⁰ The Rev. H. George Anderson, Bishop of the ELCA, Missouri Synod President Gerald Kieschnick, and District President David Benke spoke at these services. In his remarks, Benke stated: ‘Everything is connected and nothing is connected.’ At one service, he went on to state that the differences that separated the ELCA and LCMS “seem so trivial,” while at the other service he called the differences “idiotic.”²⁹¹

On September 23, 2001, despite his previous apology, District President Benke participated in the nationally televised interfaith “Prayer for America” service at Yankee Stadium in New York City. Synodical President Gerald Kieschnick supported his participation in this public prayer service based on the statements from the 2001 convention-approved “The Lutheran Understanding of Church Fellowship” and “A Report on Synodical Discussions.”²⁹² In this emotional service, sponsored by the Mayor of New York City, Rudolph Giuliani, and organized and directed by celebrities Oprah Winfrey²⁹³ and James Earl Jones, one member of the clergy after another stepped up to offer prayers or readings from their scriptures: Jews, Roman Catholics, Muslims, Hindus, Protestants, Sikhs, and Eastern Orthodox. District President Benke was introduced by the Rev. Calvin Butts, who identified him as “the Rev. Dr. David Benke, who is President of the Atlantic District of the Lutheran Church, the Missouri Synod.” President Benke called everyone sisters and brothers, told them that they are stronger due to their participation in the service, asked them to hold hands and join him in prayer.²⁹⁴

²⁹⁰ <http://reformationtoday.tripod.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/elcajointservice.pdf> This detailed, printed bulletin was prepared in advance. Yet, President Kieschnick maintains that his participation in this service (actually two services were held) was impromptu, and he did not know what to expect.

²⁹¹ <http://listserv.elca.org/cgi-bin/wa.exe?A2=ind0109&L=elcanews&D=1&H=1&O=D&F=&S=&P=1745> Atlantic District President Benke wrote a summary of the 2001 LCMS synodical convention in his district newsletter. Here he explained to the people of his district his involvement in Jesus First and DayStar: “What is important is what Jesus First and Daystar represents. You should know that, because I have been involved in them, and I want NOT to be a voice of divisiveness in our church body. Jesus First and Daystar represent the following, in my opinion: A desire for a mission-driven denomination A desire for open and honest communication, exploring differences without assigning of blame and guilt Progressive voices not “stuck” in past traditions. Gospel and means of grace as central, rather than rules and rulebooks. Synod as advisory to its members, both individual and congregation, as originally constituted. A desire for expanded ecumenical exploration and action in this country and globally. A desire for the utilization of the gifts and talents of all of God’s people, the “priesthood of all believers.” Appropriate respect for the office of the holy ministry.” http://www.day-star.net/exine/dp_comments/01-08-23.htm. Although this site is no longer available, the information has been quoted in its entirety

²⁹² http://video.c-span.org:8080/ramgen/gdrive/ter092301_nyprayer.rm , New York City Prayer Service: Beginning at 2:14:41; <http://www.cspan.org> , Watch New York City Prayer Service: Beginning at 2:05:22; <http://www.msnbc.com/news/628163.asp?cp1=1>; http://web.journalgazette.net/content/fwgazette/2001/09/24/news/24i_2a_nws_memorial.htm ; <http://www.elca.org/dcs/disaster/sept11.html#Sept.20>

²⁹³ For a good summary of Oprah Winfrey’s views on spirituality, see Amy Welborn, “The feel-good spirituality of Oprah,” <http://www.osvpublishing.com/periodicals/show-article.asp?pid=645>

²⁹⁴ “Oh, we’re stronger now than we were an hour ago. And you know, my sisters and brothers, we’re not nearly as strong as we’re going to be. And the strength we have is the power of love. And the power of love

Reaction both for and against the involvement of Benke and Kieschnick was immediate and pronounced. Two pastors pressed charges against Synodical President Kieschnick for supporting District President Benke's involvement in the 23 September service at Yankee Stadium.²⁹⁵ In an emergency meeting on December 9, 2001, the LCMS Commission on Constitutional Matters (CCM) ruled that only the LCMS convention could bring charges of false doctrine against the Synodical President.²⁹⁶ In addition, twelve pastors and one congregation pressed formal charges against District President Benke.²⁹⁷

On December 27, 2001, the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, issued "A Pastoral Response to the Events of September 11, 2001." In the classic form of a *Gutachten* (German term for a faculty opinion, judgment or decision), the Fort Wayne faculty analyzed the prayer service and concluded that the involvement of District President Benke in this service evidenced both unionism and syncretism.²⁹⁸

you have received from God, for God is love. So take the hand of one next to you now and join me in prayer on this "field of dreams" turned into God's house of prayer:

O Lord our God, we're leaning on You today. You are our Tower of Strength, and we're leaning on You. You are our Mighty Fortress, our God who is a Rock; in You do we stand. Those of us who bear the name of Christ know that You stood so tall when You stooped down to send a Son through death and life to bring us back together, and we lean on You today.

O Tower of Strength, be with those who mourn the loss of loved ones; bring them closer to us day by day.

O Heavenly Father, we pray at this time that You might extend Jacob's ladder for those who ascended the stairways to save us, as others escaped the fire and flames.

O Tower of Strength, open innocent and victimized hearts to the sacrifice of the Innocent One; pour Your consolation upon the traumatized, especially our children.

O Heavenly Father, un-bind, un-fear, un-scorch, un-sear our souls; renew us in Your free Spirit. We're leaning on You, our Tower of Strength. We find our refuge in the shadow of Your shelter. Lead us from this place—strong—to bring forth the power of Your love, wherever we are. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen." <http://www.cat41.org/News/Archives/BenkeResources/YSTranscript.txt> ;

<http://www.msnbc.com/news/628163.asp?cp1=1>

²⁹⁵ "Missouri Synod President Faces Charges for September 11 Prayers," *New York Times*, November 20, 2001.

²⁹⁶ <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/ccmruling.htm>

²⁹⁷ <http://reformationtoday.tripod.com/reformationtoday/id12.html>

²⁹⁸ "Reviewing what happened will prove helpful. To introduce the event, Oprah Winfrey said: "To give the invocation for today's service here are Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York, and Rabbi Joseph Potasnik, Chaplain of the Fire Department of New York City." Examples of doctrinal confusion and error continued throughout the service. For example, The Most Rev. Thomas V. Daily, Roman Catholic Bishop of Brooklyn, while mentioning the Father and the Holy Spirit, concluded his prayer, "Mary Queen of Peace, pray for us." Rabbi Alvin Kass, New York Police Department Chaplain, struck a distinctly universalistic note when he prayed that the families who had lost loved ones might be comforted by the fact that "these victims have now been welcomed into the arms of the almighty, where they can know no more hurt; and from on high, where they will bless us." Dr. Inberjit Singh of the Sikh Temple, Richmond Hill, New York, opened his remarks: "In the name of our God, who is true, who is without fear, who is without enmity, who is timeless, who is self-created." Imam Izak-EL M. Pasha, New York Police Department Chaplain and a Muslim cleric, prayed to the "the merciful benefactor, the merciful redeemer" and stated that we "beg for assistance, we beg for strength and guidance, and his mercy," and stated that "we witness that he is one, and we witness to all of his messengers and prophets." He further said: "We are one with members of faith, both Jewish, Christian, and others here today and those who are absent. We are believers." Because Islam holds that Jesus is no more than a special prophet and not God, the "redeemer" in his prayer is the Islamic god. Shortly after President Benke's prayer, Oprah Winfrey closed the event with these words: "Here with the benediction for today's service, His Eminence Archbishop Demetrios, the

The Northern Illinois Confessional Lutherans issued and signed a document on December 20, 2001 entitled "That They May be One," as a response, taking issue with District President Benke's involvement in "A Prayer for America" and Synodical President Kieschnick's support of that involvement. In a manner similar to the Formula of Concord Epitome, "That They May be One" is divided into fourteen articles or theses, each of which consists of a "We believe, teach, and confess" statement and a "We reject" statement. There are currently over 1000 signatures to this document.²⁹⁹ Jesus First and DayStar issued their own "Affirmation of Support" for Benke, listing more than 600

Greek Orthodox Archbishop of America. Archbishop Demetrios will be followed by Pandit Roop Sukhram of the Hindu Sreeraam Temple in Brooklyn, who will offer a Hindu prayer."

The combination of such prayers, statements, and readings gave the impression to many that all participants prayed to the same god, or that the gods of all religions were equal. For example, Pastor Chuck Boyer, LaVerne Church of the Brethren, comments on the Yankee Stadium event:

"I believe that praying or worshiping with persons of other faiths implies that one recognizes that the Creator works in and through a variety of religious institutions and manifestations. Since I believe that no religion, including my Christian branch of the faith tree, contains all the truth, I am happy to participate in interfaith services. Isn't it presumptuous to imagine that the Holy One has revealed all wisdom to only one group?" (Letter to the Editor, Los Angeles Times, December 7, 2001).

Again, consider this comment from an editorial in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch: "Shouldn't everyone recognize that there are many different ideas about spirituality, all of them to be respected? Shouldn't the members of one faith feel comfortable worshiping their God, even in the company of people worshiping another? Aren't we more alike than different?" (St. Louis Post-Dispatch, December 3, 2001)

The conclusion seems unavoidable: the participation of a Christian pastor in the interfaith service at Yankee Stadium gave the impression that prayers to gods other than the true God--Father, Son and Holy Spirit--are compatible with Christian piety and belief.

To pray to Jesus means to pray only to Jesus. To pray or to appear comfortable with prayers to Jesus and any other entity blurs His exclusive Lordship and places an obstacle in the way of His life-giving Word and presence.

The Holy Scriptures speak clearly about these things:

"You shall have no other gods before me." (Exodus 20:3, The First Commandment)

"All the gods of the nations are idols." (Psalm 96:5)

"Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.... No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's table and the table of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:14,20-21)

"Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.' Therefore come out from them and be separate." (2 Corinthians 6:14-17a)

After prayers were offered to Mary, to the gods of Islam, Hinduism, and Sikhism, President Benke began: "Oh, we're stronger now than we were an hour ago. And you know, my sisters and brothers, we're not nearly as strong as we're going to be. And the strength we have is the power of love. And the power of love you have received is from God, for God is love. So take the hand of one next to you now and join me in prayer on this 'field of dreams' turned into God's house of prayer..." Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, "A Pastoral Response to the Events of September 11, 2001," adopted December 14, 2001; <http://www.ctsfw.edu/pastoralresponse.htm> . Also consider "A Reply to 'A Pastoral Response'," on the DayStar Network, <http://www.day-star.net/hannah-reply.htm>

²⁹⁹ <http://cat41.org/NICL/TTMBO/index.htm>

signatures.³⁰⁰ On January 4, 2002, District President Benke issued his lengthy “Response to Charges.”³⁰¹

Meanwhile, on December 14, the Rev. James Bauer, one of the twelve pastors who pressed charges against District President Benke, asked the Praesidium to rule “on whether or not President Kieschnick, because of his specific involvement with the case, can legitimately decide” on charges that he and eleven other pastors brought against Benke.³⁰² After the Praesidium deadlocked on the issue, the CCM ruled that they had to reach a position. Thereupon, on January 31, 2002, the Praesidium determined that Synodical President Kieschnick should be recused from determining the case of District President Benke since he supported the action in the first place. First Vice President Daniel Preus recused himself because he had already made a public statement that Dr. Benke’s actions were inappropriate and a clear violation of the Synodical Constitution. Therefore, the case was to be determined by Dr. Wallace Schulz, Second Vice President of the Synod.³⁰³ Also, in February 2002, the Synod’s Board of Directors urged all those involved in the dispute resolution process to desist from “press releases, mass e-mail distributions, articles printed in the official periodicals of the Synod, and Internet postings.”³⁰⁴ The CCM ruled in April 2002 that the President of the Synod cannot give publicity to the particular matter in dispute.³⁰⁵

Synodical President Kieschnick and District President Benke maintain that the Yankee Stadium “Prayer for America” was not a prayer service, but rather a civic event. Dr. Kurt Marquart answered this with the following:

Finally, I deeply deplore the fact that instead of applying the true balm of Gilead to our Synodical wounds, as is your solemn duty, you in fact deepen the confusion by continuing to misapply a brief CTCR reference to “civic events” as though that was ever meant to justify crass syncretism like that of the Yankee Stadium affair. To make a mere “civic event” out of what the whole world knows to have been an “inter-faith service,” consisting largely of pagan readings, “meditations,” and prayers, and framed within Roman Catholic and Jewish “invocations” and Greek Orthodox and Hindu “benedictions,” is to destroy the obvious and honest meanings of the words. President Benke himself bore witness

³⁰⁰ <http://www.day-star.net/affirmation.htm>

³⁰¹ http://www.ad-lcms.org/response_to_charges.html

³⁰² <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/reporter01.01.02praesidium.htm>

David Mahsman, “President Challenged Veeps Deadlock,” *Christian News*, January 21, 2002.

³⁰³ <http://www.lcms.org/ccm/>

L. Blecker, “Praesidium Finally Acts,” *Christian News*, February 11, 2002, p. 3.

³⁰⁴ Statement of the Board of Directors, *Reporter*, February 2002, p. 1. This statement was based on Bylaw 8.21.e. of the 2001 Handbook, *The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*: “While a matter in dispute is still undecided or while an appeal is contemplated or pending, publicity shall not be given to the issues in the matter by any of the parties involved.”

³⁰⁵ “. . . the bylaw prohibition against publicity in a proceeding under Bylaw 2.25. f. is applicable to the President of the Synod since he is a party involved in the matter. . . . The President cannot give publicity to the particular matter in dispute. Some confusion appears to exist as to the Commission’s use of the term “matter in dispute” to which the prohibition of publicity applies. This phrase includes the details of the charges or allegations made, the correspondence and other communication which follow, the status of proceedings or deliberations, the President’s actions pertaining thereto, and his opinion as to who is right or wrong.” Commission on Constitutional Matters Minutes, April 15-17, 2002 Opinion 02-2251.

to this truth when he said that “this field of dreams” had become not a civic event but a “House of Prayer.”

*The Lord rescue our poor Synod from bureaucratic and pragmatic evasions—however well disguised under frothy rhetoric about “missions”—and restore to us the truth and unity of the purely preached Gospel and Sacraments. It is my earnest prayer that you, Brother President, may yet prove to be not an obstacle but rather our gracious Lord’s instrument in the restoration of our lost evangelical unity. To Him and His mercy I commend us all.*³⁰⁶

The other argument given by Synodical President Kieschnick and District President Benke is that this was a “once-in-a-lifetime” event. However, as noted above, even those Missouri Synod individuals who participated in the St. Louis V-E Day celebration, which could certainly be classified as a “once-in-a-lifetime event,” took great care to insure that it was a predominantly civic event. Moreover, in the time of Walther the city of St. Louis was devastated by fire on Ascension Day, May 17, 1849. There is no

³⁰⁶ <http://www.crisisinthelems.org/marquart.htm> To further address the issue of what constitutes a civic event, consider how the issue is identified in the *LCMS Chaplain Guidelines*. LCMS military chaplains have long had to distinguish between what is a legitimate civic event and what constitutes a worship service: “VI. The Ministry of Word and Sacrament. F. Norms for Ministry of Chaplains. 6. Inter-Christian Rites and Ceremonies (pp. 33-34): LCMS chaplains are expected to represent our church body’s confessional position and practices. They will not participate in inter-Christian/Faith worship rites nor will they participate in military ceremonies in which their presence would be unfaithful to the tenets of their faith. LCMS chaplains are free to jointly officiate at worship services only with those with whom the Synod is in altar and pulpit fellowship. In facing difficult cases, a LCMS chaplain should seek counsel from senior LCMS chaplains, the Director, Ministry to the Armed Forces, or his District President. VII. Ceremonies and Military Funerals (pp. 36-37). A. Ceremonies, General: A ceremony is a patriotic or recognition event for a particular purpose; it is not a religious service and reflects no particular denominational doctrine or liturgy. A chaplain may be requested to participate along with others in conducting the ceremony. It is command oriented and often involves mandatory attendance of whole units. A ceremony may include the national anthem or other music, an invocation and/or appropriate Scripture reading, the Pledge of Allegiance, and remarks from a speaker. The military chaplain will be in uniform for such an event. Traditions of the service foster ceremonies at graduations, commissionings of ships, dedications of buildings, changes of command, etc. B. Memorial Ceremonies: A memorial ceremony is an activity recognizing a deceased member or members of a particular organization, ship, war, etc. Normally a memorial ceremony includes music, an invocation, appropriate Scripture reading, reading of the Service record, obituary and/or remarks (often from the commanding officer), prayer, a silent tribute, and taps. LCMS chaplains may conduct memorial ceremonies at a chapel, graveside or elsewhere, for deceased service members (active duty or retired). It is important to understand that this is a ceremony and not a religious service. The chaplain’s presence represents the government, not the church, and carries no implication of fellowship. C. Memorial Services: While the memorial ceremony is a patriotic event with the solemnity of remembering the fallen comrade(s) and has religious implications (i.e., thanking God for the service of the deceased), the memorial service is a religious service guided by the rites of the chaplain’s denomination. Attendance at a memorial service is voluntary. The chaplain has a responsibility to advise the commander on whether the memorial activity should be a ceremony or a service. D. Military Funeral: A military funeral is a worship service at which the remains of the deceased are present and the customs of the Armed Services observed. When possible, LCMS chaplains should conduct such a service in accordance with “Burial of the Dead,” *Lutheran Worship Agenda*. Rubrics state, “This service is intended for the burial of those who departed this life in the Christian faith.” The chaplain may have the commander or his representative read the service record and/or obituary.” Legitimate civic ceremonies are those coordinated through the command or by local civic leaders where the military or civic purpose predominates, not the religious, and the impression of unionism (joint worship where there is not doctrinal agreement) and syncretism (the mixing of faith) is not given. As a chaplain in the U.S. Navy, I have followed these guidelines in determining what is an appropriate civic ceremony and what is not.

record that the first president of the LCMS advocated or participated in any kind of interfaith or unionistic service even in the face of a once-in-a-lifetime disaster.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, in a sin-filled world where major catastrophes occur with fair regularity in every generation, one must ask: what is a “once-in-a-lifetime” event? Those who serve in the armed forces, police forces, fire departments, medical professionals and those involved with disaster relief are confronted with catastrophes regularly, each of which could be considered a “once-in-a-lifetime event.”

A more realistic appraisal would identify the Yankee Stadium “A Prayer for America” as an opportunity for those who are dissatisfied with the Synod’s longstanding position on syncretism and unionism, as articulated in the synodical constitution, to change or alter that position.³⁰⁸ DayStar has been very active publishing articles that view the Yankee Stadium service as an opportunity for change within the Synod.³⁰⁹ In his

³⁰⁷ August Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), pp. 80-81.

³⁰⁸ In a December 10, 2001 Associated Press article, President Kieschnick’s response to the charges of two pastors was noted: “It means that a few people are disagreeing with the decisions I’ve made,” Kieschnick said Monday in an interview. “But guess what? Leaders are always disappointing somebody.” “When obstacles arise,” he said, “I just see those as speed bumps on the road.” Kieschnick on Monday said his first major speed bump as synod president is behind him. The synod’s 1847 constitution demands that its congregations and pastors reject both the mingling of Christian and non-Christian beliefs. Traditionally, Missouri Synod leaders have not led prayer services with leaders of other religions, or even other Lutheran denominations. But in Kieschnick’s view, times change. He also said that a report approved by the convention in July allows leaders to lead services with those of other faiths at civic events. “This is not your grandfather’s United States of America,” he said. “Things have changed a bunch in the past 30, 40, 50 years. Were there people of the Islamic faith in the country in the middle of the 20th century? Maybe. But not as many as there are today.” <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/ap12.10.01.htm> Regarding involvement in the Yankee Stadium service, Kieschnick also said: “We are members of the body of Christ, not a cult.” Others who have supported District President Benke’s involvement in the Yankee Stadium “A Prayer for America” have used even stronger rhetoric in attempting to characterize opponents, both explicitly and implicitly.” <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/stltpd12.24.01.htm> . In a December 2, 2001 Letter to the Editor of the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, the Rev. Rodger Venzke, Ministry to the Armed Forces, LCMS, wrote: “I am deeply saddened and immensely embarrassed that a few of my fellow clergy persist in giving the world the impression that The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is the Taliban of Christianity. Regrettably, their endless obsession with inward purification of the church only results in driving more and more away from the compassionate and loving savior whom we try to proclaim. In contrast, our representative at Yankee Stadium, before thousands of suffering people, offered a clear statement of the eternal hope that is ours in Jesus Christ. How commendable of Synod President Gerald Kieschnick to support and defend such a clear Christian witness! It is high time that the laity of our church rise up to the clergy extremists among us and say “Enough already!” If we are to Christ’s ambassadors in the world, then people must see Christ in us.” The above is no longer available at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* website. It is, however, printed above in total. Others have used terms like “pharisaic,” “fascist,” “Nazis,” “legalistic,” to describe those who have taken issue with Dr. Benke’s involvement in the Yankee Stadium event.

³⁰⁹ “Just as in our nation, however, also for the Missouri Synod these dreadful events could turn out to be productive of change for the good. One such good end would be that we re-examine the strange notion that when one celebrates the presence of God together with others, as in these public-square events in our pluralistic society, one is tacitly condoning or endorsing the divergent beliefs the others may have, and thereby compromising or watering down one’s own confession.” http://www.day-star.net/exine/terrorism_01-10-06.htm . This site is no longer available. “President Benke has called these charges an “opportunity” for dialog in the church, to see what kind of a church we want to be. God bless him for his optimism. Perhaps it is an opportunity. It certainly has the markings of a turning point as Missouri comes to a crisis. Shall we continue to turn inward and serve the myth of our superiority/purity? Or, like the Savior himself, are we willing to lay aside the theological nitpicking and get “down and dirty”

lengthy response to charges against him, District President Benke articulates his call for change.³¹⁰ In this regard, it is also important to note that on January 14, 2002, the Rev. Dr. David Benke served as guest speaker at an interfaith Martin Luther King, Jr. Service at the First Congregational Church of Middletown, New York.³¹¹ Was this “Memorial Service” also a “once-in-a-lifetime civic event”?

Despite the clear prohibition against going public during the dispute process as set forth in the synodical constitution (Bylaw 8.21) together with the CCM ruling which substantiated that this also applies to the synodical president, and despite the admonition of the synodical Board of Directors,³¹² Synodical President Kieschnick and District President Benke have repeatedly given publicity to the matter in dispute and offered their opinions as to who is right or wrong. Examples of this include a “Memo” to all pastors and congregations of the Synod on February 11, 2002 devoting 11 pages of material related to the charges against President Benke, an address delivered to the students and faculty of Concordia University, Seward, NE on March 7, 2002, the “Pastoral Letter to the Synod” of July 9, 2002, Dr. Kieschnick’s appearance at a media-staged “pep rally” for the Rev. Benke in New York City on July 11, 2002, President Kieschnick’s participation in interviews such as appeared in the July 18, 2002 issue of *Newsweek* magazine, and Rev. Benke’s interview on a PBS “Frontline” documentary.³¹³

On June 25, 2002, the Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz, serving in his capacity as Second Vice President of the Missouri Synod, completed his investigation and found all charges

in the muck and mire of human life? How long will we hide the Gospel light under the bushel of separatism? How long will we retreat from speaking the “name by which all must be saved” in the public square? How long will our “best and brightest” be hindered and jeopardized in the ministry they do among life’s walking wounded?” http://www.day-star.net/exine/weep_01-01-12.htm This site is no longer available.

³¹⁰ “This point is crucial. At civic events and once-in-a-lifetime situations, and, I will posit, in the changed world situation now emerging, pastors of the church must continue, as I was, to be ENCOURAGED to participate in any and all settings in which they can pray or proclaim the Name of Jesus. The opportunity presented on September 23, 2001 to be present on behalf of God’s Lutheran people and to pray in Jesus’ Name was one that could NOT BE MISSED when it was presented. This was President Gerald Kieschnick’s crystal clear signal in granting me permission to be at Yankee Stadium. In my opinion he signaled first of all to the world a desire on the part of LCMS Lutherans to engage with the Gospel, and not absent themselves from the arena. Secondly, he signaled to the LCMS a direction and intention that I believe is most important for the future of the church body, because **things have changed.**”

http://www.ad-lcms.org/response_to_charges.html
³¹¹ <http://www.recordonline.com/archive/2002/01/13/nslatebr.htm> ;
<http://www.recordonline.com/archive/2002/01/14/bedell14.htm>

³¹² The Synod’s Board of Directors issued two statements calling for all parties in the dispute to abide by the Synodical Bylaws. The first statement was issued February 1, 2002: <http://www.Crisisinlcms.org/bodstatement.htm>. The second statement, issued August 15-18, 2002, specifically took issue with the Synodical President and was sent to all pastors and congregations of the Synod. <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/bodpreamble.htm>.

³¹³ <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/frontline.htm> Although much of the publicity has been sympathetic to District President Benke and Synodical President Kieschnick, there have been a few articles that have presented an opposing or more balanced view: David Brickner, “The Mosque, the Synagogue and the Church,” <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/jewsforjesus01.02.htm>; Hal Lindsey, “Participating with Pagans,” <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/lindsey07.10.02.htm> ; Gary Stern, “Minister’s Suspension Exposes Debate on Interfaith Relations,” *The Journal News*, <http://www.thejournalnews.com/newsroom/o72302/23benke.html> ; Mollie Ziegler, “Interfaith Is No Faith,” *Wall Street Journal*, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/taste/?id=110002011> .

against District President David Benke to be substantiated, and thereupon placed the Rev. Benke on suspended status. This decision was appealed by Rev. Benke on July 8, 2002.³¹⁴

On July 12, 2002, Lutheran Hour Ministries issued a “Crisis Statement” and then announced that the Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz had been relieved of his duties as Lutheran Hour Radio Speaker. This action was reportedly taken due to adverse telephone calls threatening a withdrawal of support from Lutheran Hour Ministries by those who opposed Dr. Schulz’ decision on the Benke matter.³¹⁵ Although Dr. Schulz was to be recognized for 25 years of faithful service to the Lutheran Hour at the International Lutheran Laymen’s League (ILLL) convention, meeting in Ottawa, Canada the following week, he was then directed not to attend this convention. Meeting at the convention on July 21, 2002, the ILLL Board of Governors accused Dr. Schulz of unethical behavior for not recusing himself in the Benke decision. The Board stated that Dr. Schulz could be reinstated to “some” position at the Lutheran Hour “if” he agrees to certain unspecified conditions. When Dr. Schulz refused to agree to the undisclosed, specifications set forth by Executive Director Rodger Hebermehl, he was terminated as an employee of the ILLL.³¹⁶

“A Prayer for America” at Yankee Stadium has become a catalyst for further change in the Missouri Synod according to the agenda of Jesus First and DayStar.³¹⁷ Both District President Benke and Synodical President Kieschnick, along with other District Presidents and officials in other synodical organizations, are part of this call for change, placing outreach over doctrinal integrity within the Missouri Synod. The retaliatory action of the ILLL, an auxiliary agency of the Synod, in suspending the Rev. Dr. Wallace

³¹⁴ The Rev. Dr. Wallace Schulz did not release his report to the media, but sent it directly to District President Benke. The report then appeared on the DayStar web site: <http://www.day-star.net/schulz.htm> and subsequently in *Christian News*: “Schulz Report on Allegations Against Benke,” *Christian News*, July 8, 2002, pp. 6-7.

³¹⁵ <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/llstatement07.12.02.htm> It should be noted that the Executive Committee of the ILLL accused Dr. Schultz of violating the ILLL’s Code of Ethics. This same Committee had initially told Dr. Schulz that they would support him regardless of the decision he made as Second Vice President of the Synod in the Benke case. Then, they later asked him to recuse himself. When Dr. Schulz asked the Executive Committee to present this request to the Synodical Presidium, they did so. The Synodical Presidium responded to the Executive Committee of the ILLL that Dr. Schulz was still assigned to the Benke case. Therefore, Dr. Schulz issued a ruling on the matter as Second Vice President of the Synod. If Dr. Schulz thereby violated the ILLL’s Code of Ethics, it appears that the ILLL’s Code of Ethics are in conflict with the Synodical Constitution.

³¹⁶ <http://www.lhm.org/shulzreturn.htm> A complete chronological listing of all these events has been compiled by the Rev. Marcus Zill and may be found at the following web site: <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/summary.htm>. It is interesting to note that when the Rev. Dr. Oswald Hoffmann was called to serve as the Lutheran Hour speaker, he had already signed “A Statement” of 1945 (see above). In addition, during his tenure as Lutheran Hour speaker, Dr. Hoffmann sympathized with the Faculty Majority at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis during the Walkout. And yet, he was not considered to have engaged in unethical behavior nor to have violated the ILLL’s code of ethics.

³¹⁷ In another interview, Synodical President Kieschnick stated: “While some may see it as a rift, I see it as a pivotal moment in defining who we are and why we’re here.” Jim Suhr, “Rift In Lutheran Denomination Widens,” *Waterville Morning Sentinel*, Waterville, ME, August 3, 2002. Also, in this regard, consider the anniversary memorial service for 9/11 at Valparaiso University Chapel on September 11, 2002. <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/valpo.htm> ; <http://www.crisisinthelcms.org/valpotext.htm> . The Rev. Joseph Cunningham, Dean of Chapel at Valparaiso University and an LCMS pastor, coordinated an interfaith service at the campus chapel that included clergy from various religions.

Schulz from his position as Lutheran Hour Speaker for the action he took in his capacity as Second Vice President of the Synod, has added yet another dimension to this drive for change and has created further polarity within the Missouri Synod.

Conclusion

There is no denying the deep polarization within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod at present. However, it should be recognized, as this paper demonstrates, this is not a recent occurrence. It has been developing for some time. Nor can it be characterized simply as a political power struggle. In reality, for more than fifty years there has been a battle within the Synod over the both/and of doctrinal integrity and outreach, as well as over the proper distinction between Law and Gospel. While some have sought to advocate outreach at the expense of doctrinal integrity, confessional pastors and lay people have sought to pull the pendulum back from an either/or to a both/and. The outcome of this ongoing struggle is unclear.

Members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod must take seriously their Lord's call to maintain **both** doctrinal integrity **and** outreach. It is who we are as confessional Lutherans. The current polarization within the Synod results from a denial or a rejection of this paradoxical imperative.

I have shown that the both/and of doctrinal integrity and outreach is closely linked to a proper distinction between Law and Gospel. Again, there is a tension involved. However, this tension is not resolved by excluding the third use of the Law. In difficult issues of casuistry, where it seems as though one may sin or cause offense no matter what is done, we must not discard Scriptural mandates, claiming freedom in the Gospel. The Law still stands, and when Christians break God's Law, we turn to our gracious God for forgiveness, trusting that for Christ's sake, He graciously gives it. This is the Gospel. Therefore, **both** Law **and** Gospel stand!

Finally, there is the issue of integrity and trust with respect to the stated position of the Synod's Constitution, which under conditions for membership includes renunciation of unionism and syncretism of every description. Military personnel and government officials take an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. Violations of this pledge can be considered a matter of treason or insurrection. As a Navy chaplain now and as a member of the Armed Forces for over twenty-nine years, I am very much attuned to this. The mission of a command, good order, morale, comradeship, *esprit de corps*, all depend on people bearing good faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution. Should allegiance in spiritual matters and in what is often referred to as "churchmanship" be considered less significant or less binding than matters of a civic nature? Can we expect anything but tension, conflict, a lack of trust, and polarization within a church body when people do not hold to that to which they have agreed – namely, an unconditional subscription to the Holy Scriptures as God's Word, the Lutheran Confessions as a true exposition of the doctrine set forth in Scripture, and as members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to abide by the Synodical Constitution?³¹⁸

³¹⁸ All LCMS pastors agree to this at their ordination.

It is regrettable that we have such turmoil in the Missouri Synod at present. The average Missouri Synod parishioner says, “Why can’t we just stop all this hair-splitting and squabbling about abstruse points of doctrine and get on with the mission of the church: to save souls.” It is unfortunate that Jesus First and other groups that press for outreach at the expense of doctrinal integrity should make such vicious attacks on those who seek to restore balance in the LCMS with accusations of being Nazis, the Taliban of Christianity, Pharisees, and other such malicious rhetoric. None of us wants to fight. But at such a critical time in our Synod, we should bear in mind the words of our first synodical president, C.F.W. Walther:

*Manifold are the difficult and arduous tasks of a minister of Jesus Christ; but the most difficult and arduous of all, beyond question, is the task of proclaiming the pure doctrine of the Gospel of Christ and at the same time exposing, refuting, and rejecting teachings that are contrary to the Gospel. The minister who does this will discover by practical experience the truth of the old saying: **Veritas odium parit** (telling the truth makes enemies).*

If faithful Athanasius in his day had been content to proclaim his doctrine that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father in eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary; if he had not at the same time vigorously attacked Arius and the Arians, who denied this doctrine, he would undoubtedly have finished his life in honor and pleasant peace, for he was a highly gifted man. Had Luther followed the example of Staupitz of quietly teaching the pure Gospel to his brother monks without at the same time attacking the abominations of the Papacy with great earnestness, not a finger would have been raised against him. ...

Worldly men and all false Christians cannot but attack those who teach a faith and doctrine different from theirs and to regard them as disturbers of the peace, as peace-hating, quarrelsome, and malicious men. These unfortunate people have no idea of the blindness which enshrouds them; they do not know how gladly the boldest champions of Christ would have kept peace with all men, how much they would have preferred to keep silent, how hard it was for their flesh and blood to come out in public and become targets for the hatred, enmity, vilification, scorn, and persecution of men. However, they could not but confess the truth and at the same time oppose error. Their conscience constrained them to do this because such conduct was required of them by the Word of God. ...

*The Church is not a kingdom that can be built up in peace; for it is located within the domain of the devil, who is the prince of this world. Accordingly, the Church has no choice but to be at war. It is **ecclesia militans**, the church militant, and will remain such until the blessed end. Wherever a Church is seen to be, not **ecclesia militans**, but **ecclesia quiescens**, a church at ease, that—you may rely on it!—is a false church.³¹⁹*

It may seem to some that the confessional movement in the Missouri Synod today is emphasizing pure doctrine at the expense of outreach. But the opposite is the case. There has been for too long an emphasis on outreach at the expense of doctrinal integrity. True Lutherans know that both doctrinal integrity and outreach must be kept in balance.

³¹⁹ C.F.W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel* (St. Louis: CPH, 1929, 1986), pp. 265-266.

For if pure doctrine is lost, we are reaching out with an empty message. St. Paul understood this, and kept his own ministry in balance as both theologian and missionary. The early church understood this as well, as Hermann Sasse points out:

What would have happened if in the second century Basilidians, Valentinians, Marcionites and Catholics, Montanists, Theodotians and Modalists had had a round table discussion and said: For the sake of missions, let us bury the war hatchet. As followers of Jesus we desire nothing other than to follow the Master, to build one church in which everyone may carry on his particular tradition within the realm of a common truth, over against the one Lord of the one church. What would have come of the church of the fourth and fifth centuries if for the sake of the mission task it had not battled through the Arian and Nestorian controversies, if Arian, Homousian, Homoiousian, Nestorian, Monophysite, Pelagian and followers of Augustin had allowed themselves simply to be united in one great ecclesiastical communion? This question is posed in order to find the only answer which can be given to it: Today the church would simply no longer exist. The church would have been ruined. Just as a man whose kidneys no longer eliminate poisons which have accumulated in the body will die, so the church will die which no longer eliminates heresy.³²⁰

In summary, it should be crystal clear to pastors and laity throughout our Synod that both doctrinal integrity and outreach are vital to our identity and mission as confessional Lutherans. Hermann Sasse once noted:

The old Missouri Synod—and I hope in this respect it will never change in spite of all legitimate theological growth—has been for all churches in America the great example of a church that cares for purity of doctrine. In spite of all mistakes and shortcomings it has shown to other churches that the Gospel of the saving grace of God in Christ, the proclamation of the love of God is inseparably linked up with the never ceasing fight against the heresies with which the old evil foe tries to destroy it. But this fight must begin in ourselves with the daily prayer that God may keep us in His Word. We ourselves cannot do that.³²¹

At a recent Navy Senior Chaplain Leadership Conference, Robert Greenleaf's Servant Leadership concept was studied, which is derived from Jesus' leadership example. And a statement was made that is worth pondering: "Leaders manage meaning." In his acceptance speech at the 1992 synodical convention in Pittsburgh, Dr. Alvin Barry said: "Keep the message straight, Missouri. Get the message out, Missouri." Dr. Barry had a way of putting things simply and clearly, and thus, he had a gift for managing meaning. Doctrinal integrity and outreach: our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, has indeed called us to both. "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, to God our

³²⁰ Hermann Sasse, "The Church's Unity on the Mission Field," in *The Lonely Way*, Volume II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, forthcoming).

³²¹ Hermann Sasse, "On American Lutheranism," *Logia* 4 (Reformation/October 1995): 53. Although not a theologian, another expounder on American Lutheranism, Garrison Keiller, noted: "I'm wary of ecumenism. I see nothing wrong with having six or 10 or 15 different churches of Christ in town and people tramping to each one. If the alternative is some nondenominational New Agey all-purpose homogenized feel-good exercise, then give me schism." Todd Etshman, "Visiting Lake Wobegon," *The Lutheran*, February 2002, <http://www.thelutheran.org/0202/page20.html>

Savior, who alone is wise, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and forever. Amen.” (Jude 24-25).

John C. Wohlrabe, Jr.
Captain, Chaplain Corps, United States Navy

Born 2 September 1953, in Mankato, MN, Captain John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., CHC, USN, is currently serving as Command Chaplain, Naval Air Station, Brunswick, Maine. He is ordained to the pastoral office of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, serving as pastor of Mount Calvary Lutheran Church, Fort Lupton, CO (1982-84), Guest Instructor, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (1984-86), Assistant Director, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, MO (1986-87), and as an active duty Navy chaplain for the past fifteen years.

Chaplain Wohlrabe received a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, MI, in 1978. He received the Master of Divinity Degree in 1981, Master of Sacred Theology Degree in 1982, and Doctor of Theology Degree in 1987, all from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO. In addition, he has done post graduate study at University of Denver and Iliff School of Theology in Denver, CO, and with the Naval War College through its non-resident curriculum. He has written numerous articles for theological journals, church and military publications.

Tours of duty in the Navy have included the USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (1973-76), various Naval and Marine Corps Reserve units (1976-87), Naval Mobile Construction Battalion FORTY (1987-90), Naval Construction Battalion Center, Port Hueneme, CA (1990-92), Naval Facility, Brawdy, Wales, United Kingdom (1992-95), Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, IL (1995-98), and USS BLUE RIDGE/Commander SEVENTH Fleet, Yokosuka, Japan (1998-2001). Military awards include: Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (two awards), Navy Meritorious Unit Commendation, Naval Reserve Meritorious Service Medal, National Defense Medal (three awards), Humanitarian Service Medal, Navy Sea Duty Ribbon (five awards), Overseas Service Ribbon (five awards), and the Armed Forces Reserve Medal. Other awards include: the Walther Faculty Development Fellowship, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, MO (1984-86), Laymen’s National Bible Association Witherspoon Chaplain Award (1990), the Sabre of Boldness Award (2001) from *Gottesdienst*, and the Bronze Martin of Tours Medal from the Ministry to the Armed Forces, LCMS (2002). He was promoted to the rank of Captain on 1 October 2001.

Chaplain Wohlrabe is married to Julie nee Schulz Wohlrabe. They have three children: Greta – 18, John III – 16, and Nathan – 14. The family resides in Brunswick, Maine and holds membership at Redeemer Lutheran Church, Cape Elizabeth, ME.

Soli Deo Gloria