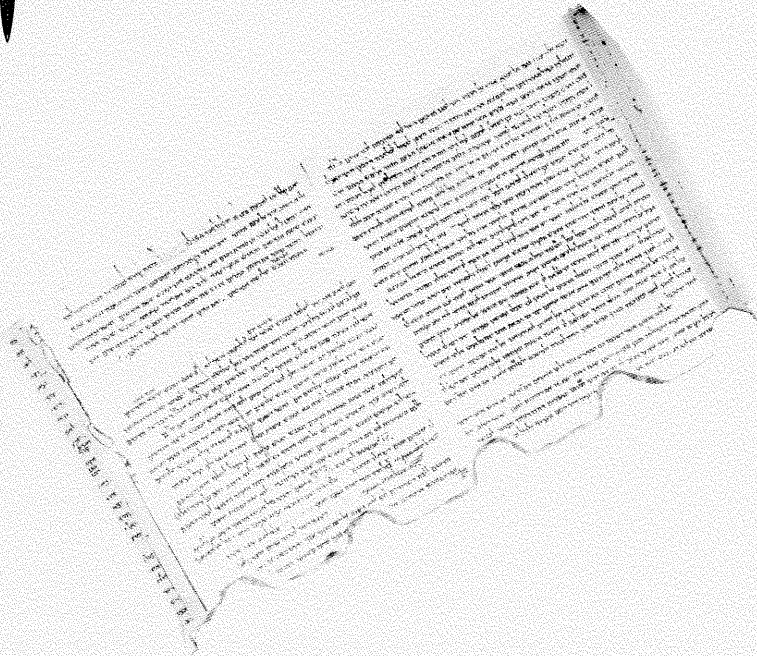




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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

REFORMATION LECTURE II

Dr. Oesch

Book Reviews

### LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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LECTURE II  
ANALYSIS OF THE PRESENT SITUATION  
OF CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANISM IN AMERICA  
AND IN THE WORLD

Delivered in the afternoon  
of October 30th, 1969

by W. M. Oesch\*

A. The Background of Confessional Lutheranism in  
America

Dear and honored fellow-Lutherans:

The second theme before us is the most exacting in our trilogy, making it our duty to analyze the present situation of Confessional Lutheranism in your vast country. It can only be approached in a spirit of utter humility. How can an individual assess a whole generation in that aspect which really counts? If I were not still a teacher of theology on modified service and the editor-in-chief of a theological

\*Author's Note: The Reformation Lectures delivered on October 30th and 31st, 1969, at Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minn., are here presented in the form in which they were prepared in view of publication. The oral presentation differed, especially in Parts II and III, substituting for sections of the written detailed material ex tempore address adapted to the situation and audience. In the course of Lectures II and III a number of pertinent documents were distributed. In the printed form they must to some extent be incorporated, which adds to the lengths, of course.

journal with the call behind me, I would have turned down this lectureship offer. So I will follow the Spirit's guidance through the Word, beseeching your intercession. Since the theater of action now is America, not as close to me as to you, I am doubly amenable to your corrections.

It is passing strange that when the subject of Confessional Lutheranism (which in fact is proper ecumenism) is broached today, the continent chiefly in question should be North America and not Germany, where the Protestants, whether called Lutheran or not, in both halves of the present country have practically only one church type, which came down to them from the great Prussian Union, namely a church giving equal right to Reformed doctrine and, in addition, to any anti-doctrine there may be. I told you this morning that even if they should now invent a way to abuse the name of Luther and amend articles of the Augsburg Confession in order to decorate a helpless church bound to general profane society, nothing would be changed in essentials. We must praise God the more for visiting you in the New World with a bountiful revelation of His truth during a total century, which is still so near to you that you can contact it.

Nevertheless something altogether different must be recalled for justice's sake: In Germany, and, in a sense, also in Scandinavia, there was a confessional revival coming slowly and not being uniform, yet of tremendous scope, tying up with underground Lutheranism, undoing Rationalism's and Philosophy's inroads of the previous century, even to some extent reclaiming the university sphere, producing high quality sermons and devotional literature, founding practically all the German and then Scandinavian mission societies, extending its beneficent sway, for home missions, to America and Australia and, for foreign missions, to huge areas of the colored world all over the globe. What would you and the Australians have been without that? But, as we regretted this morning, this miracle of explicit faith's return did not mature into a normal Lutheran Church in the homeland, some-



thing which did come to pass in America, and at that under new conditions.

I must trace with you the origins of Lutheranism in America back farther than Europe's revival of the nineteenth mid-century and acknowledge with you that it came from quite simple strands, which, later on, were strongly augmented by August Herman Franke's Halle. The elementary root in America, waiving the sending of some pastors, was pious belief present in families, which often had been carrying on since the Reformation. I'm here ever thinking of my mother's family, where they read Luther's Hauspostille in home circles because the pastor was a Rationalist, before they settled in Madison, Co., Ill., in 1860 and joined a Missouri congregation which consisted mostly of Westphalians straight from the *Minden-Ravensberger Erweckung*. Thus they, as did thousands and soon hundred-thousands in the Middle West, experienced that in the Old Country there had been a blessed turning of tables, which was now reaching out for them in the New Country or had already been brought along. Here comes to my mind a grandmother in my father's family, who had received splendid instruction in the Starnberg Bavarian area. Then my father himself, later a Missouri Synod travelling missionary and then local pastor in Colorado and Wisconsin, had during his secondary schooling attended the almost ideal confirmation classes of Oberkonsistorialrat Dr. Karl Heinrich August von Burger in Munich. These are just examples which admit of countless parallels, also in the case of Scandinavians coming to America's hospitable shores.

God sent to America from Europe's Lutherland more than individual pious hearts and pastors following them. Unique confessional Lutheran emigrations were organized, reaching into or planting various synods, also in distant Australia. Again, there was on the move to the Western Continent, either with the immigrants or following them, a veritable literary invasion. In journal and book shipments it transmitted the heartblood and, coupled with the heart and thus

genuine, the intellectual depth of the homeland's Confessional Lutheranism, as it began to challenge the post-enlightenment and anti-dogmatical unionist world. Most of that truth inundation flowed to the Germans and also Scandinavians of the Middle West. But men like Spaeth, Charles Porterfield Krauth, later T. E. Schmauck in the East, in fact the remarkable initiative of the General Council, also the later history of the Ohio Synod and the origin of the Iowa Synod would have been unthinkable save for that influx. Cartloads, if not shiploads of writings of Luther, of Concordias, of sermon books, of hymn books and devotional books, but also Latin tomes of depth and many newer dependable German or Scandinavian standards were bought up in the ancient literary centers and got a new lease of life in new world towns and out on the open, stretching prairies. Thus *America's Lutherland was the first-born child of continental revived Lutherland*. Paradoxically, in spite of outwardly modest numbers, it rapidly grew up to be the peer, perhaps more.

For in Europe the lethal *state church* stayed. No really responsible congregations ever came into being and in every case where an individual territorial church came close to reclaiming its heritage, this was a temporary shift permitted by favorable political circumstances. Everywhere clergy training remained exclusively tied to the universities. As stated in the first lecture, these were in the hands of the governing class and, of course, ruled by philosophies. Neither at Erlangen nor at Leipzig nor even at Rostock was there a confessional Lutheran faculty standing on solid ground and staying straight. (Rostock perhaps came close to it, as did the newly-founded faculty of Christiania, now Oslo).

May I point out four things on the American side of my on-going comparison? No. 1: At long last there appeared congregations with elders granted a position as in the Lutheran congregations of Antwerp and Amsterdam. Tried out already in the East, they were accepted throughout the West. Thus the counterpoint (or con-

trapuntist) relationship between the pastors and their congregations at last came to its own in these Lutheran churches beyond the direct sway of Emperor Constantine's fateful settlement. No. 2: Confessional theology, now for its livelihood responsible to congregational and synodal assemblies, felt that high quality preaching and teaching was a "must", and in the case of a few men of God preaching rose to a truly commanding one-time level, whereas in the case of many it reached a blessed, thorough medium. No. 3: Simultaneously, confessional theoretical thinkers became conscious of the remarkable independent leverage which was gradually being placed into their hands and which they were duty-bound to wield over against Europe's checkered social history upsetting the Church and its theology. These theologians were no longer in the fangs of the huge Church-State ideological machine. While the Middle-Westeners increasingly took cognizance of what was going on about them (to some extent aided by the Lutherans of the East who being more environmentally acculturated could well trace U.S. institutions back to England), two local factors operated in the interest of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi: the prolonged isolating language barrier and the cordial openness of an Anglo-Saxon democratic country still being built in spite of that. These for a long time protected the more recently immigrated stock against direct pressure both from the crude popular and from the dangerously sophisticated types of New World opinion. To boot, at the head, in important centers, were men whose academic training from the Continent surpassed that of most of their counterparts in surrounding native society. This enabled them to conceive and to a large extent to implement (in spite of inevitable exasperating frontier crudities) their own system of church-centered education. No. 4: Since the chief leaders of a providential century had escaped unionistic, rationalistic church-state pressures, their passion was for Confessional Lutheranism, a circumstance to expand on later. They in consequence developed keen eyes for the causes of the sad reversals in the parent churches, particularly for the soon on-going decline of the

Confessional Awakening, but no less even for early deficiencies in Reformation church structure. This made them tremendously conscious of a whole series of points which Europe had too long neglected in all types of its more sophisticated theology. For one: Law and Gospel received unheard-of attention (2 series of C.F.W. Walther, besides other labors traceable in sermons, in essays at synodical and pastoral meetings and in periodicals). But this emphasis was of one cloth with the determination to let the open Bible have the final say with its divinely inspired text. As Lutherans always were convinced, in Scripture, and, as borne out by practice, it is simply a given that God wants the material principle of justification and the formal principle of Sola Scriptura to function as 2 foci of one ellipse. Secondly, as attention turned to historical disturbances, Melancthon's later deviations were first in time. Most prominent was the retreat from Grace Only which had after some time tainted the great teacher's doctrine of conversion and election. The keen, somewhat wavering scholar had actually introduced the human will as a third factor contributory to salvation. This in turn inevitably offered support for what was going on alongside in contemporary Europe, for the man-centered Renaissance culture, let us say that of Erasmus and his pupils. In a few areas, the New World theologians who were profoundly grateful to the Lutheran dogmaticians and knew how close they had been to Luther -- not withstanding detected spots of uncleanness -- some 17th century expressions on the grace point and also on the relation of the church to society were not clean-cut. In their ecclesiology they had unfortunately treated the social estates as constituent agents of the church in action (*drei Stände in der Kirche*). These discoveries, which did not come easy to them, increased their loyalty to the New Testament and to the original straight-forward impetus of the Reformation. They issued into the total rejection not only of every trace of synergism, but no less of state-churchism as well as church-statism, of theocracy and of its reverse, Erastianism. Their Luther-oriented spirituality loathed and shunned both Reformed holy politics

as well as the idealist confusions which from philosophy had entered into the continental church thinking. Schleiermacher and Ritschl are names for it. Taking it all around, thus was written *in the land of Washington a Lutheran Declaration of Independence*. It gained stature as the Lutheran churches, particularly in the Middle West adventitiously drawing on a tremendously increasing immigration and on high birth rates, were growing apace and spreading out lustily in all directions.

### B. The Walther Century

I must now single out the *Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States*. This body was the ruling factor in the confessional Lutheran advance of a hundred years as depicted.

By the way, we for this reason count the American Century of Growth different than the German ones, where we had settled on the key date 1577, the acceptance of the Formula of Concord. Let us risk dating from 1837, the year of C.F.W. Walther's ordination. (Severance from the Saxon Church indeed came a year later, in 1838, followed in 1839 by the arrival of the Saxons and their young destined leader in the State of Missouri. Coincidentally in 1838 also Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken, representing Lutheran confessionalism's awakening in North Germany, came to America.) This C.F.W. Walther focus, which I propose, is detracting nought from the actual stature of the Eastern men we mentioned, nor of Middle West men with German names such as the Wisconsin Synod's first rate dogmatical figure Adolph Hoenecke, nor of contemporary Ohio and Iowa men or of illustrious Norwegian families.

To illustrate at once the decisive weight of Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther and his Synod I merely quote German verdicts which appeared in print both before Walther's death in 1887 and following it, laudations such as were never otherwise printed to honor non-Continental Lutheran figures. Says Albert

Robert Broemel in his *Homiletische Charakterbilder* of the sixties and seventies of that century (quoted in Carl Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon* VII, 1900, p. 167): "Walther is as orthodox as John Gerhard, but also as fervent as a Pietist, as impeccable in form as a university or court preacher and yet as popular as Luther himself. If the Lutheran Church again wants to bring its teachings home to the people, she will have to prove once again as faithful and as certain in doctrine and simultaneously as appealing and adapted to time and audience (*zeitgemäss*) in form, as is his preaching. How different would be the condition of what is the Lutheran Church of Germany if such sermons could frequently be heard."

Immediately after Walther's decease in 1887, Luthardt's world-famous *Ev. Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (Leipzig) wrote: "Gone to the eternal home is one of giants in the Church of Christ, a man who was not only an epoch-making personality in American church history and there the eminent leader and the uniting power of Lutherans, but one whose activity was felt as a mighty stimulating one in all parts of the world. The success of his work is well-nigh un-exampled in the more recent history of our church. It proves him not only a man of comprehensive endowments, of unwavering industry, and of rare energy, but also one of those providential personalities whom the Lord of his Church chooses to send wherever he intends to lead his Church along new paths."

But, my friends, before you take such assessments of Missouri's founding figure for granted I must answer two awkward questions.

(a) The first refers to the later Dr. Walther as a dogmatician. Did he get too close to Calvinism in the lamentable Predestinarian controversy? Those perhaps hailing from synods then opposed will bear with me if I reply that the very opposite was the case. We're back to the Lutheran Declaration of Independence we spoke of. We are now discovering its historical sweep and spiritual depth. Walther at long last again

joined hands over a span of some 350 years with the Luther of *De Servo Arbitrio* ("That the Free Will Avails Nothing"), the book the Reformer himself treasured most highly, allowing only his Catechisms to be a near second. Authentic, indomitable Luther had in 1525 struck out against the chief heresy of modern man, who is none other than old carnal, self-centered man after having been inflated with certain cultural, intellectual hopes. These were basic for the pagan strand of the early Renaissance, vaunting Greece, but they related also to governmental Rome's system of synthesizing. The Mediterranean stresses had long been in the grain of Greek and of Roman Catholicism. God's Word in the Reformation created a miracle, the very opposite of cultured man's self-centeredness. Now it was hard for the adored Christian humanist Erasmus to kick against the pricks. Be that so, even the cautious type of self-determination championed by this prince of scholars to correct the Reformation sufficed to reduce the God of salvation to becoming the chief party in a scheme of cooperation. If this was much less heady and cocky than later Enlightenment, it was nevertheless already headed that way. Surely the espousal of any cooperation theory on this score makes the full distinction of Law and Gospel in preaching impossible. For it winds up in making legalistic man, who "does his best", a co-savior. Hence Luther's passionate No and Never. Watch this point today wherever sociological notions invade theology proper. Seen thus, it was not an aberration, but Walther's greatness that he gave no quarter whatever to Germany's 19th Century synergistic *Luthertum* of the universities. He dared not only to ignore contemporary Europe, also two centuries of deeply ingrained Pietism, but he even stepped away over the bodies and tomes of the great Lutheran dogmaticians from Hunnius and Hutter on. Doctrinally totally at one with them in opposing both solutions, Calvinism and synergism, he yet chose to discard their useless bridging effort, their formula *intuitu fidei finalis*. Rather where logic totally lacks resources he opted for Luther's and the Formula of Concord's Scripture-bound reverent silence. Won

over by the Reformation, he bowed to wisdom from on high, affirming the Law's and the Gospel's non-rationality. Facing *Deus absconditus* he yet trusted in the bald promise of Christ's world-saving sway. In this connection it is imperative to state that the humble Saxon at St. Louis, Mo., since the middle of the century both editor and professor of theology, had hardly a peer even in Germany in his profound knowledge of Luther and of the whole 17th century Lutheran literature in addition to observing TODAY.

(b) Yet another major objection to Walther must be faced. It is the earlier one. The hue and cry was raised to reverberate in Europe till of late, in some cases even anew, that in polity Walther and Missouri had surrendered to American democracy. The Saxons and Franconians, escaping Christ's rule, had accepted ignorant people's rule. This accusation was hurled at the Missourians in so many words by high-church Grabau soon after his coming to Buffalo. It was against this charge, muttered in passing also by Loehe, that Walther wrote *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Lehre von Kirche und Amt*. (The Voice of our Church as touching the doctrines of Church and Office, Erlangen 1852 - of which my dear American friends lack a complete English translation, an almost unbelievable neglect.) This volume contained far more than Walther's own theses with proof texts as later translated by W. Dau, of which indeed it must be said that they were true to the One spiritual Church of believers. This precisely can be located only by the Means of Grace as in function. The genuine arms of heaven, Gospel and Sacraments, guard against the impostures on which we dwelled in opposing modern Ecumenism at the beginning of the first lecture. The theses, hailing back to the outline of the Altenburg debate, were of an advanced post-Constantine character and provocative as originally Lutheran, yet also suitable for direct practical application. But in the book men encountered more voices, those of the Confessions on each point, Luther's testimony extensively rehearsed, and the authentic dogmaticians' teachings in German and Latin. This makes the sum total a dogmatical and



historical pandect on this topic, what they call a "universal book". Bishop Simon Schoeffel, visiting with me at Hamburg in 1945 before the War's end, quite correctly evaluated Walther's production as the greatest Lutheran delineation of these doctrines in print, the one outstanding fruit of the great church debate of the German mid-nineteenth century. If you want to try a specimen, carefully study Part I, theses 4 and 5 or 8, in one breath with the *consensus historicus Lutherianorum* offered as support. So it was that at long last also the details on the Lutheran doctrine of Church and Office had emigrated to the West. They there asserted the freedom from alien controls or slants which Luther's classics had once upon a time regained for them escaping Mediaevalism. Let us as 20th century men register the assets, seeing them as anti-Constantine. Gone is not only this-worldly, society-dictated subservience, and sweet New Testament freedom vindicated all around in congregational or synodical mission and polity. But along with that there is swept off the floor also the main by-product of the Constantine Settlement, the customary upper-class semi-popish aggrandisement of stated clerics. It is again recognized in theory and practice that also the lay Christians gathered about the means of grace are God's holy messengers, being authorized in every respect to carry out God's mission. And yet, this does not in any way make the pastoral office a mere "social contract" (a la Rousseau). The facts are quite different. The Word of God commands Christians for the public dissemination of the means of grace to take recourse to an additional gift from on high (Eph. 4:8-12), to the pastoral office as instituted by Christ himself (2 Cor. 5:18-20). Accordingly the incumbents of this office are directly responsible to Christ (1 Cor. 4:1-5) beyond their given responsibility to the congregation. The same Walther who was tremendously conscious of Luther's full New Testament emphasis on the General Priesthood, was equally close to Luther's subsequent outspoken planks against the enthusiasts. As he rejected aggrandisement over the congregation, so he fought tooth and nail mere temporary calls. He rejected every approach

to limiting the tenure of a called pastor by human authority. We witness the spectacle that yet another conundrum was solved in a free country along New Testament and Luther lines. Proper attention having again been given to the Notes of the Church, this did away also with pitting the large church organization against the smaller units of the church, as always happens in territorial churchism, with a corresponding opposite vice rising in Independentism. But is the church basically not always the One Holy Christian Church of all who believe in Christ? Wherever the Church is present at all according to the testimony which the means of grace as locally given and received offer, there Christ the Head is apprehended functionally and, in a sense, as institutionally joined to his body. The whole administration of the means of grace consonant with Scriptures is the Head's doing through his body. Thereby Christ's own reign is present in order to abide with us. At a given place the whole Church, Christ's spouse, acts wherever the local congregation is agent of the Means of Grace. This agent, no matter how small (Matt. 18: 20) is directly responsible to Christ and not to a Pope of any type. For it acts out Christ's bounty and it gathers human beings under the wings of Christ. But the granting of this full local dignity does not fragmentize. There being only One Christ, the acting together of all congregations is in principle given beforehand. Thus, in doing as Christ commanded, the total Church everywhere is one grand unit of action, replete with a harmony pre-stabilized. All is posited and conditioned on the relation to Christ and his Word. Beware, no more of a prerequisite. But again beware, no less is stipulated -- lest heterodoxy, ever latent through foes in and about us, impede and introduce revolution against Christ's reign and rule. For in this case previous ties and historical coherence are not to be respected, since God demands loyalty and severance from disloyalty. What forms may be chosen by loyal units for joint action is of itself a matter of dogmatic non-interest, of sanctified sense meeting the challenge of circumstances. These were the principles on which the Ev. Luth.

Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States had been organized in 1847, thus advanced in *Der Lutheraner* and in *Lehre und Wehre* for decades.

Augsburg VII/VIII spells out precisely the points just taken by the founding fathers of New World Lutheranism, and so again does Formula of Concord, Article X. The Lutheran Symbols stipulate as sole requirement for visible church fellowship that the divine church purpose be served, so that Christ's One Church can duly act in truth and purity. Such activity, moreover, is in the last analysis always the scriptural Law and Gospel activity and never a political or social activity wrapped up in a pre-dominantly this-world context. As to the latter areas, God has long provided for them through a procedure totally separated from redemption. From the very beginning he founded his Left-Hand-Kingdom. This, when the Son of God became man, was neither abrogated nor even supplemented. Mutual benefits are of God's plan, but no mixing. As we pointed out, New World Gnesio-Lutheranism carefully distinguished the two realms.

Why this waste of words of a teaching nature? We went to extra pains to clarify all that pertains to the conception of the Church and Office as entertained by Walther and as practiced in his synod, for given reasons. One chief point was to establish that nothing as yet of democratic ideology was incorporated by authentic Missouri, be it as it may with Walther's later and less discriminate successors. Fix your gaze on Walther's chief books and not at mere administrative directions he gave subject to various interpretations, and you will find the rare spiritual charisma of balance all over. In a true Law and Gospel church neither the pastor nor the laity "lord it", the thing legalism can never avoid, even if it effects compromises. The servant of the Word is neither boss nor slave, but the Word is itself all-powerful, all-decisive, and he has to stick to it. The relics of the Constantine system were at long last brushed aside not by aping Anglo-

Saxon Congregationalism, but by giving full sway to the Reformation impulses uncurtailed by princes and magistrates. Let it be said right here that if in the later dispute between Missouri and Wisconsin terms did not always reflect what I called inter-historical and intercontinental breadth, both C.F.W. Walther and Adolf Hoenecke (*Ev. Luth. Dogmatik*, IV, para. 67, 68) were innocent. They beforehand set out plenty of checks and balances. But later generations lacked overall background.

The two special doctrinal areas which we have examined, that of Grace and the Word and that of the Church in all relations, have brought out the spiritual as well as historical maturity and therefore the firmness of this new start. If one compares in detail the two main ventures at consolidation of the Lutheran resurgence on the Continent, the high church group, with men like Loehe and Vilmar leading, and the Erlangen university theology, with men like von Harless but also von Hofmann, they are unbalanced in comparison, either containing a bourgeois Romanite or a bourgeois rationalist germ, full balance reserved for exceptions from the rule such as Friedrich Brunn.

In a sense I must now beg your pardon for omission to get on. There is, to be exact, a third objection raised against the claim that St. Louis reestablished authentic Lutheranism, and it must be coped with yet. It runs something like this: "Was it not progress beyond the Reformation and their Confessions which was brought about in Germany where the confessional resurgence began to attempt something new, eschewing what they called repristination and establishing some sort of connection with concepts of idealistic philosophy? Were not also the techniques of exegesis undoing former proof text methods and thus also supporting belief in a new day? Was it not precisely the conception of *Lehrentwicklung*, of evolution even in the doctrine of Christ's Church, which also as staunch a Lutheran as Wilhelm Loehe had in his mind, who for this very reason emancipated the Iowa Synod? Did this in yet another form not also

turn up in the General Council's later dogmatician, Heyster E. Jacobs, when he turned to Erlangen theology? In short, why did St. Louis not cooperate with this general new type of authentic Lutheranism, since thereby one united Lutheranism would have been effected in America?" Yes, but the logical consequence would have been to take fatal steps on the way toward losing both the Scriptures and Luther a hundred years before the decline of the Post-Walther Century. The germ of evolution of doctrine in a vigorous center like St. Louis would have produced astonishing, perhaps very learned results throughout not in the service of heaven. The issue of "Evolutionists" was involved either unconsciously or consciously in the battles which first Missouri, then the Synodical Conference, fought through on the new Western continent in order to remain unenslaved and to keep at freeing souls. To cut things short, witness the take-over of abject pseudo-ecumenism now accomplished with left and center sections in the first half or second quarter of this century, first in the LCA and then in the ALC, all this totally without an existential fight, as it is going on in the sections toward the right. This tells the story that Lutheranism has no power left to resist capitulation after it once admits an amalgam, be it ever so small, with the world's hopes. To point out details requires a turn-aside or excursus not fitting in here. For it is necessary to connect two things, what the first lecture had to say on the Schleiermacher idealist thrust and the evolutionary Hegel summit of Enlightenment, on the left, with continental Lutheran reawakening, on the right, in order to gauge the switch of its most influential leaders and centers toward an *aggiornamento*, an adjustment to the day similar to what was always in Rome's view of the Church as an institution in history, changing with history in order to change history, of which we have seen a radical development after Vaticanum II. Only note the difference. For Lutherans who draw their life-blood from a much higher view of Christ, of the Gospel as proclaiming free grace without cooperation, marked out by clear-cut separation between Law and Gospel, and who thus are posited on

Scripture Alone, evolutionism in doctrine was even in initial stages turning 180 degrees away from the moorings. In the impossible position of State Churches and public universities run by semi-heathen philosophies no amount of erudition and even of Lutheran spirituality could save the maneuvers. Now, this second lecture has to stay close to the American scene and so in print a footnote must take care of additions chiefly on the European side, explaining some things of some import against Missouri committing suicide (see footnote 9).

Having defined and defended the essence of the Walther venture in authentic Lutheranism, let us now record the uniting effect on Lutherans of various degrees in the vast country. After Free Conferences had been vigorously espoused not very long after the founding of the Missouri Synod certain then separated Synods bearing the names of Ohio, of Wisconsin, of Illinois, and of Minnesota became convinced of a given joint mandate and a common way to walk upon. Cooperating with Missouri, they founded the Ev. Luth. Synodical Conference in 1872. This was a victory of Lutheranism seen at its best. Wisconsin overcame former Basel and Berlin unionist influences and became a thoughtful Lutheran body through Hoenecke. By definition the confessional union thus realized was the opposite of all pan-Lutheran, pan-sectarian unions propagated then already, as we shall hear of the General Synod, and with much greater gusto in our decades. A victorious new manifesto was called *Denkschrift*, affirmed at Fort Wayne on Nov. 16th, 1871, the exact title being, "An Exposition of the Reasons why the Lutheran Synods who are now clasping hands to found a Synodical Conference cannot affiliate with one of the synodical federations already existing." (For the German text see *Lutherischer Rundblick*, 1962, pp. 3-42). The main thrust and part is enlightening. It treats of the General Council, organized by eastern conservatives a few years earlier, and points out that the good principles verbally espoused are still being habitually compromised by haphazardly fellowshiping and by lack of doctrinal

control. The charge is that the old leaven of indifference is thus still being preserved, for you cannot have it both ways. A veritable gem of Walther's is Augsburg Confession's Article VII interpreted honestly -- think of this morning's lecture and Denver 3-15.

All of this was the position on which the whole Synodical Conference agreed. Gradually also the greater Lutheran church organization outside (excepting the General Synod till very late) drew closer and closer to the Lutheran Confessions. We are face to face with a rare spectacle. Here is a tremendous expanse of land projecting into the future, free from the Old World's false line-up of the Church and the secular State, and here, where you might expect anti-confessionalism, the secret "Christ Only and Christ Total", embracing sinners but condoning no sin and no doctrinal error, being as separated from the world's course as light is from night, is the ascending star and is proving victor in a thousand ways. All told we have here indeed a unique upward surge and advance of Confessional Lutheranism, of ecumenism according to the notes of the One Church. Unfortunately resistance to this full breadth and depth of Oneness did provincialize parts of America. This prevented one attuned voice sounding forth abroad, yet a clarion call was issued also to Europe.

Let us glance back once more to our First Lecture. In the Old Country Lutheran affairs after having become a factor of note were again steadily going down the hill. It was provincialism of the worst type sticking to state-churchism and in a sense also to union without unity, when all this while famous leaders on the other side of the ocean could not, yea, would not comprehend that they now dare no longer go on with tying things up as they had done. They would not own up that they had to quit sacrificing the Church's mandate to cultural symbiosis. Was God's two-pronged challenge not plain enough? God was demanding at long last to give free reign to the function and organization of congregations worthy of the name, this as one side of a new course. The

other side was that churchmen were duty-bound to return to the rule of the One Special Revelation instead of men's opining. Their God-given duty was to work indefatigably for letting Scripture and the Confessions insure the Law and Gospel sway on all levels, local and provincial, national and international. This would have been *Kirchlich*, churchly indeed, giving to God's Church, the *Una Sancta*, and Jesus Christ, the Head, what they owed. What was all that boast of buildings, of money, and -- mind you -- of prodigious learning, some of it helpful, perhaps most of it rather in the Old Enemy's employ, worth if pitted against a grand move forward, toward which a light growing ever brighter out of the West was beckoning them? We dare say that through a sort of anachronous recalcitrancy the Old World territorial Lutheran leaders were digging their churches' graves. In addition they were at the same time exerting a constant baneful influence on the American Lutheran bodies outside of the Synodical Conference, tutoring them not to fall in line with consistent authentic or confessional aims. As the 19th Century progressed, the cultured pundits and worshipful high priests of continental Protestantism became vitriolic in their criticism of what they deemed a new-fangled intolerant Lutheranism of the West. The butts of this attack were not the faults that occurred alongside, but the virtues of true American Lutheranism. The constant attacks produced a festering sore in the consciousness of lesser Missouri men.

One point more before we turn a little. Missouri with its emphasis both on doctrine and on the people's congregational responsibility achieved another victory before its Walther century came to a close. In the wake of the first World War's anti-German rancor and blasts this Synod of necessity became an English speaking body. But lo and behold, due to its vigorous congregational base it turned the gigantic language transition, naturally a threat to further growth, into a tool to advance. The "Lutheran Hour", sponsored by the Lutheran Laymen's League, became a tremendous force in America, beginning to reach out beyond



its borders. Simultaneously, the Synod was branching out with new missions and congregations into all states of the Union and provinces of Canada, and also expanding in South America and elsewhere. When Dr. J. W. Behnken was inducted into office in 1935, a wave of growth no longer in any respect due to immigration was making the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod the most rapidly multiplying body which yet was at heart orthodox and truly evangelical.

So far we have seen American Lutheranism rise to a summit or zenith. This characterized a span of one hundred years after frail, thoughtful Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, himself thanking God to have been borne across from rationalism to Christianity, had been ordained at Braeunsdorf in Saxony, as a member of the Stephan exile band, reaching a new haven in the American State of Missouri in February 1839. We admit that we tailored our hundred years up to 1937 to suit the case of Walther and of the Missouri Synod's responsible leadership as it marked a century still true to sober, genuine Lutheranism coupled with loyal congregations. However, this is not saying that we're quite through with these hundred years. Is there not, perhaps, a need to line up against the singular positive points scored thus far some critical ones at the end?

### C. Deficiencies of the Walther Century Showing Up Toward the End -- With De-Lutheranization Next Door

The Church's life on earth must cope with all sorts of practical circumstances and makeshifts which, often contrary to obedient planning, nevertheless affect the outcome. And there is Satan, the World, and the Flesh. The following queries are in order beginning at the head, referring not so much to the thousand angles of life as to theology concentrated at St. Louis: Had full justice been done during many decades to all three movements or actions inherent in theology? They comprise (a) to go to the Bible to get the genuine saving message from the sources in

the original languages (exegetical theology), yet (b) to comprehend this message in its given teaching unity, in its straight drive overarching its marvelous manysidedness, this of necessity also comprising insights as to how this unity must take shape in confession and confessions over against the assaults of man in his unruly history (dogmatical and symbolical theology, as twins), and finally (c) no less to ponder the way how the message must be passed on to the people with their Now Generation out in congregations, in the sticks and in the ghettos, and on the mission fields far away (practical theology).

In driving home the point as to (a), one can justly ask the following: Who immediately followed up in dead earnest the exegetical resourcefulness and thoroughness of Georg Stoeckhardt? (This gift of God certainly did not come too early from Germany's Erlangen Dozentenschaft, then the Saxon Free Church; but for mature scholarly approach Synod's preparatory schools had ever tolerably equipped youth in Biblical languages.) Then let's turn to dogmatics and symbolics (b) where on the basis of clear Scriptures personal penetration had been greatest, in the case of Walther marvellous (check the details of his Walther-Baier dogmatics comprising several volumes). The follow-up question here reads whether even with Francis Pieper at St. Louis replacement at the Seminaries sufficed since those died who had breathed the air of the gigantic German *Auseinandersetzung*. In other words, was there world-wide confrontation in spite of all contracting in the Middle West? Were enough men present who not only conducted the upshot of that past into today, but who at the same time were blessed with the singular grace to view things comprehensively as they come up? Was such overview applied to all challenges posed since Walther? To the modern American thought patterns, as well as to what came over afresh from strange distant Germany? For Europe's center was exporting captivating thought schemes even after 1918. If what was true orthodoxy up to a point in history tries to avoid adverse winds and does not face bravely the direction of incoming

gusts, then men will slough it off as irrelevant. Here Francis Schaeffer in his review of the first half of this century censures all conservative forces in America.

Just a minute, I must annex a 'd' to a-c above. Such a grasp at St. Louis would have required, both for long and short range observation, a department of church history worthy of that name (historical theology). However, was there ever even an approach to such a thing? Was a huge effort in Wisconsin's Wauwatosa ever sized up properly? No wonder neophytes followed after, and a new theological climate as well. Again, where was a place in the Synodical Conference to train future professors responsibly, or where at least the nucleus for one? After our watershed of 1937 it happened that earned academic degrees were desired and that the basic training of the Seminary professors became the job of America's and Europe's secular universities. The St. Louis' Graduate School came too late and as a compromise.

If the influence of St. Louis theology waned as a global hour was approaching lamentable results were not slow in showing up. There was at St. Louis and also out in the field a swing back toward the ancient soft-peddling Pietism, an emphasis on personal *bonhomie* surnamed Christian, more yet a turn to only practical church and mission work. The latter, great in itself as we pictured it, at the same time became an alibi for not wrestling with the presuppositions all around. Men of stature watch presuppositions, as Francis Schaeffer insists. No doubt God still blessed Missouri with many very good congregations. However, was there really adequate total leadership? As 210 Broadway grew too naively the great Behnken era mission effort, highly to be praised, began to accentuate the visible church, organizational and statistical progress, perpetrating a shift inimical to the best in authentic Lutheranism. The inevitable language transition to boot, the historic Middle West *Sprachuebergang*, made things getting poorer outrightly bad. For it was bound to sweep out of view many past

written signposts, a vast Old World and Missouri literature. The taking over of American mental pictures was a concomitant decreed by God, but did God want swallowing of current false presuppositions to follow suit? Big business airs, money dictatorships, politics as in the state, above all journalism as customary - all absent? My friends, who says so? Witness the rise of that Eastern half-baked, increasingly no more orthodox monthly, *The American Lutheran*. Last but not least, could doctrinal discipline, last resort to keep heresy down, persist in the face of an air of breezing optimism, of sentimental togetherness, of accented success standards where robust man-centered security was difficult to expose? Would the Giant, Secular Democracy, not stretch out his arm to take over the church, and, as an antidote, could flowing gowns of High Church men strutting along suffice? In spite of the surprising successes of mission efforts extending to Americans not of German origin, self-reliance and boasting wherever cropping up were totally out of place.

There was yet another reason for pronounced modesty. Missouri's outward prestige was dimming. Since the end of World War I Missouri and the Synodical Conference, just now growing in men, means, and popularity, no longer offered the *Leitbild*, the next door inspirational and educational patterns, to the diverse Lutheranism adjoining in the East, Middle West, and West. For them the MERGER ERA had arrived.

To catch up with what was animating the bodies outside of the Synodical Conference permit me to step back a trifle beyond the second decade of our century. Past fragmentation, mostly connected with language and settlement, was resented by Lutherans all of the same stripe moving hither and thither across all States. As doctrinal convictions shrivelled not only pragmatism played a role, but also the impact of the inevitably externalized slogan, "All Lutherans unite". This urge was running parallel to the general pseudo-ecumenism which was rushing about to envelope the globe. America's universities having taken over

German extreme specialization, worship of secularized scholarship moved in from the Old Schleiermacher and now soon Barth World also into the Western Lutherland. A bull-headed determination to be great in this-worldly influence began stamping the ground. Satan was turning the heads of the East and of the West ever more toward counting Lutheran numbers, Lutheran dollars. The door opened wider and wider to power politics disguised by, "We office holders and journalists are your most humble servants." Make-belief agreements as to doctrine appeared on the scene. They scored success first among those who responded to the magic spell of the name Luther and later among those who as persons and bodies became primarily interested in the Ecumenical Movement. Since 1910 Edinburgh and after, this was the ecclesiastical world power No. 1, with the earlier Federal Council as its U. S. counterpart (now NCC).

Let's be more specific and pick up a few dates along the way of what had already taken place and provided the immediate background when in 1935 Dr. Behnken took office. Around 1917 it had happened that the venerable General Council, which had been lead on to a higher confessional level by as towering a figure as Theodore Emmanuel Schmauck, was tripped on its way by laymen of little doctrinal concern. Believing in practical things they were eager to create united Lutheranism first of the East and South. The United Lutheran Church of America (ULC) had thus come into being in 1918 as a body of compromise. Victorious on the one hand were the unionist traditions that had been predominant in the General Synod, for in 1820 this ambitious amalgam united to match the great Prussian Union by Pan-Protestantism in America. On the other hand there was the inflowing current of surrounding Anglo-Saxon sectarianism, especially of the penetrating Methodist type, elevating feeling above doctrine, with activism jumping across the Two Realms. Good Schmauck's way out, the National Lutheran Council, had proved no help for the U.L.C., for it was of the same counterfeit coinage and had gotten the countersignature of Europe's wayward territorialism

through the Lutheran World Convention (after 1947 called Federation). Synchronized was the union of the larger Norwegian Synods in what was called the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC, 1917), strongly promoted by ethnic Norse sentiment. It had come through as soon as the *Opjör* gave liberty to move in two directions, to be guided by two mechanically connected documents, which presaged in the end to have no direction at all. Well now, what about our middle-west German stock? If such had been the surrounding circumstances for some years already, who can be surprised that Ohio and Iowa, the synods close to Missouri, had vowed to band together, come what may, and speculated that they probably would get the Scandinavians to join. In 1930 Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo formed the first ALC. Already in the earlier stages, decades before taking in the ELC to form TALC, they boasted of being the Strategic Center of American Lutheranism. Why not go it all the way? Should in fact it be impossible to draw into one accord dogmatically stubborn Missouri (together with the Synodical Conference), on the right, and undogmatic ULC (dainty Augustana Synod with them), on the left? Wishful thinking received impetus from the great American charitable undertaking in Germany after World War I. It was cheered by the formation of the Lutheran World Convention at Eisenach in 1923, which conjured up the larger vision of one Lutheran World Church.

Concrete Middle Western negotiations had begun with Missouri under General President Pfotenhauer. Respectable theologians of the past era had done the work, I mention Martin Reu. But even he was not willing to go all the way in the Gnesio-Lutheran direction. He had been sent to America as a missionary, had gradually arisen a distinguished figure, but had a secret dread to loose back-door connections with cultured territorial Lutheranism, with learned resources and splendid personalities dear to him, and perhaps, as a studied man, he was no match for politicians. The early deliberations with Missouri and her allies had indeed not been in vain. They

had approached full orthodoxy, as evince the "Chicago Theses". Yet it was falsely claimed that this amounted to a full settlement. This had caused Missouri not to ratify the proposal and to make sure of loose ends by adopting the "Brief Statement" (1932). Soon even the stringent "Brief Statement" was taken into the deal, but on a two document basis and thus in a way very similar to *Opjör*. As early as 1936 I gravely warned Missouri Synod President Dr. John W. Behnken of developments. After receiving some expert help from the Rev. R. F. Webber (who knew the ULC and Missouri's Eastern situation, having hailed from the General Council) I dispatched to Missouri headquarters some 100 pages (perhaps still in presidential files) entitled "The Cuckoo's Egg in the Lutheran Nest". Its documentary evidence quoted above all said journal, *The American Lutheran*. The colors of legions coming in were depicted: Crypto-Calvinism, an externalized and enthusiast conception of the Church for which the pure Means of Grace are not pivotal and the spheres blurred; but also Crypto-Romanism, to make what had been reduced to less, in essence, look more, in appearance, and thus to cheat the devil. The statement was that these two strands were converging toward a version of the Social Gospel. Dr. Behnken brushed it off writing back that his friend, the Rev. Paul Lindemann, sufficed to guarantee orthodoxy. The cuckoo's egg with its double egg yolk was in the course of time duly hatched.

But too long we have been in earshot of what's on the other side of our divide between the centuries.

#### D. American Lutheranism's First Post-Walther Century

With the year 1937 we are in the orbit of another hundred years both for America's Confessional Lutheranism and for all of American Lutheranism, still totally unpredicable as a whole, the last date being 2037.

At the same time, since this number follows on plentiful material regarding the union matter presented already by No. 2, it can well afford to introduce the announced detailed questions concerning doctrinal control in our midst. In so doing it must begin to discuss false teachings in regard to the Church - - at all times the barometer of orthodoxy - - and especially the Church's relation to social problems. See the new department: Church and World [of our periodical].

Strange attitudes and even openly heretical sentences have in the last five years entered our body, mostly by way of unofficial publications which did not know what they were doing, while our watchmen slept. No less is at stake than both principles of Christ's Church - the material, Sola Gratia, and the formal, Sola Scriptura. In particular the whole difference between a Lutheran Church of the Gospel and a Reformed or Roman church of the Law will come to the fore, and the distinction between Law and Gospel will be ventilated anew with an eye fixed on the present world-church situation.

[The periodical was after No. 3 no longer sent from London owing to the War. The editor could not return to England after a routine family vacation trip to Germany.]

Vicissitudes a-plenty ask to be reported. Mis-souri's Conservatives of the time after 1939 were a match for Synod's Committee on Lutheran Union. They not only defeated the tie-beam "two, now three documents, no document", but they even called a halt to the subsequent unsatisfactory COMMON CONFSSION as a functioning document. In spite of the fact that Part Second had added notable improvements to it, this One Document by wordy emotional verbiage anticipated later "Theology of Fellowship" evasions. A fateful sign of the times was the "Statement of the 44". It became a major factor in the gradual shift



Outwardly Lutheranism in America had now come to claim its rewards; even politicians had this scent. But if we are on the search for what is genuine ecumenicity, namely the divine grace to remain both in teaching and practice true to the One Church, the overall picture portrays erosions of doctrine multiplying by leaps and bounds.

Which, then, were the chief shifts? The ALC's Sandusky Convention said that it is neither possible nor necessary to agree on all points of doctrine. Some months after Missouri's 1938 too sanguine St. Louis Convention, which had rejoiced in the recognition accorded to the "Brief Statement" by the ALC, it came as a bolt out of a clear sky that the "Pittsburg Agreement" with the ULC, certainly of a different tenor, was signed by the same ALC representatives who had cheered Missouri. It made certain of spacious room for endless double-talk, in particular to say that the Bible is and that it is not the Word of God. So we're back to "two standards, no standard" again. Thereupon a short-lived new journal which had been mailed all across the Synodical Conference, called "The Crucible" (of which I was the London, England, editor) rang the bell. By way of a PREFATORY it spoke out:

This number is dedicated to completing the survey of the present intersynodical situation. Since the publication of the three-point "Agreement" between the A.L.C. and the U.L.C., things have become so simple that there remains no excuse for any theologian in our midst for one minute longer to support the dangerous past *modus procedendi* of our Committee on Lutheran Union. In the light of Sandusky and what followed, this Committee itself is in honour bound to repudiate the multiple "doctrinal basis" which it hitherto advocated and bequeathed to Synod with the help of Committee 16 [of St. Louis 1938] and to give up claiming that the other side adopted the "Brief Statement" in toto. *Domine Jesu, fiat lux.*

toward syncretist looseness since Dr. Theodore Graebner had signed it and through an artifice of Dr. Lorrie Meyer the report of a Committee of 10 was made ineffective. So it was left ever hovering in the air. In spite of all evidence presented to stop Synod's meandering toward confessional annihilation the acting powers in Missouri continued to evince false predilections. In the negotiations between the four synods of the Synodical Conference carried on through their Doctrinal Commission this came into the open. Difficulties between the four committees became the very order of the day. As always happens, first the peripheral symptoms of the final disagreement were hotly debated (Boy Scouts, Chaplaincy, etc.), for the feeling was that more was in store. In between better things came to pass. Dr. Behnken sincerely aimed at preserving the Synodical Conference, for personally he wanted pure doctrine. The 1959 San Francisco Convention's Resolution No. 9 declared the "Brief Statement" to be binding for all teaching. Unfortunately it referred to minor synodical pronouncements as well. We intersperse the tragedy that this Resolution was declared unconstitutional 3 years later, when Dr. O. Harms, of a very insecure theological stance, became the General President of the LC-MS. Instead of clarifying the San Francisco intentions, which had been 100% valid, the popish ruling of the Commission on Constitutional Matters (Dr. Repp played a role in it) carried the day in the Cleveland Assembly of 1962. The artifice aimed at the very opposite of loyalty. In the place of the confession San Francisco wanted total revolution was substituted. What on that gloomy day changed the nature of the Missouri Synod as an authentically Lutheran body? It amounted to this that no doctrinal point can today or tomorrow be settled at all, for finality attaches solely to what is and remains past. How so? Simply because Art. II of the Constitution points only to Scripture and the Symbols. The chain of reasoning against making any up-to-date spiritual decision binding of course was pure sophistry. For Article II was framed in order to effect the directly opposite, that Scripture and the Confessions judge issues in all future

days. This in line with Solid Declaration, Rule and Norm, para. 14, 17 (Tappert, pp. 506, 507); see also Preface to the Book of Concord, Tappert, p. 14. But to get at the root of matters in progress to this very hour we hurry back from Harms to the last phase of the Behnken administration, which is still our topic. In 1959, on the heels of the San Francisco Convention, the Synodical Conference, at Oakland (Calif.), determined to call in Overseas Delegates, representatives of the sister churches on other continents, to get their help in subjecting the disagreements between the 4 doctrinal committees to the light of God's Word. These outside representatives came and reported to the American synods' representative committees both in 1960 and 1961. They offered as their general criticism that the pure Means of Grace as the marks of the One Church (*NOTAE UNIUS ECCLESIAE*), by which everything on the local level has to be determined, had not been sufficiently placed into the center of the arduous fellowship negotiations. When they addressed themselves to the Recessed Convention of the Synodical Conference in 1961, this was their pivotal point, there expanded in 15 theses. They combined their detailed presentation to the 4 Committees with some criticism also of the Wisconsin Synod and ELS presentations, to wit, that the *NOTAE PURAE* of the *UNA SANCTA* ought to have been brought out more clearly as drawing the line between the orthodox visible church, always a singular, and heterodox churches. To use Latin, the point of departure ought to have been the notes of the One Church as *fundamentum dividendi* between *ecclesia orthodoxa* and *ecclesiae heterodoxae*. For it is only by asking whether the means of grace are administered without alloy that one can distinguish between church fellowship arrived at genuinely or spuriously, it being either as God wants it or as God wants it altered before any approval. It was cause for thankfulness that the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod soon after our meeting improved its Presentation by a balancing statement on the Church and its totally objective Notes which was sent to Dr. Blaess in Australia and later formally ratified, and that the

ELS was immediately willing to make the slight clarifications necessary. It would be totally unfair not to mention that the formal antitheses which the Wisconsin presentation had directed against the Missouri position spelled out God's own Word excepting that of a certain practical differentiation marred the prayer antithesis. What has so far been mentioned were the "light weight" critiques as contrasted with the "heavy weight" strictures which paragraph 28 of the SUPPLEMENT to the EUROPEAN COLLECTION advanced against Missouri's Presentation. Also the Australian Overseas' critique was here most severe. Our point of attack was a lapse into a most hoary fault, into Pietist doctrinal indifference on the part of Missouri's Committee on Doctrinal Unity. This had become evident black on white in what the "crash program" draft of Missouri's "Theology of Fellowship" had at long last presented as Second Part. We alluded to this already when we concluded the doctrinal background of Lecture One, but must here present the details in order to be duly on guard for the final presentation at New York in 1967. Our criticism, offered on rather short notice in April 1961, included these sentences:

(On pp. 15, 16:) "Going beyond mere symptoms the real alternative facing the Synodical Conference seems rather to be: practice of fellowship regulated by the *NOTAE PURAE* or a general fellowship resting on the assumption that others are also Christians though gathered around *NOTAE IMPURAE* and that we must practice some sort of fellowship with all who as individuals claim to be Christians and whose claim we cannot directly disprove." [*NOTAE IMPURAE* meant in the sense of conflicting marks designating a church body, those of the *UNA SANCTA* and those of Satan's counter church being lumped together.]

(On pp. 17-27 the specific disapprobations directed against Missouri's Committee were presented in this fashion:)

"The profound truth (Luther's *abscondita est ecclesia, latent sancti*) at the base of C.A. VII has been wiped out by concentrating only on the concept of fellowship... To guard the fellowship becomes too much a point of ethics, a mistake already of the 'Common Confession', Part I"... "There is in this new Mission stance an individualism which reminds one of the 'Reformed American type'. (After castigation of the pietist slanting practiced on Gal. 2:14, which, in spite of the whole letter, had wrapped up doctrine in life as though doctrine were not pure from heaven whereas the new life on earth always remains tainted by the flesh, the stricture hit out:) "The concerns of sanctification seem to be made as ultimative and primary as those of justification." "Insufficient room is left for the functioning of continuous *doctrina divina* [God-given propositional doctrine]. As a result heresy cannot be seen properly as a revolt against God's revelation and against the foundation of the One Church, and fellowship with heresy is not seen as bringing in a Counter-Church against the One Church."

In footnote 39 there was offered a long quote (culled from Heinrich Schmidt's "Geschichte der synkretistischen Streitigkeiten", 1846, p. 415) representing a *Gutachten* of the mild university faculty of Jena aimed at Georg Calixt, explicit on the total impossibility of dealing with members of heterodox communities as though they were personally not involved in the error taught. Taking this standard of comparison seriously, leaves Neo-Missouri closely akin to Calixt and the then Syncretists, the historic precursors of Rationalism, whom all honest Lutherans of the 17th Century rejected, including the blessed singer Paul Gerhard. The SUPPLEMENT to the EUROPEAN COLLECTION went on to say:

"The basis of all 'degree theories' is the Reformed notion that confessional churches (for that matter also non-confessional churches) are

approximations of an idea - merely an effort at historical embodiment of the purity and unity of the church."

"Neither unionism nor separation can be properly defined [by crash program's Part Two] because the *fundamentum dividendi* is lacking [the point from which to operate]. This can only be found in the *NOTAE PURAE* of the *UNA SANCTA*."

Permit once more a digression to get the American scene into proper perspective. Whoever wants to rescue a patient must note the duration and the malignity of the disease. It is a fact that such abandonment of the specific Una Sancta or Lutheran stance became rather fixed even in Dr. Behnken's days, who indeed strove to retain orthodoxy, yet was quite a bit like Philipp Spener, the father of Pietism (as keen Professor Werner Elert remarked). This helps account for Missouri's later total deafness to our official testimony procured by the Synodical Conference at great expense.

Judging by what we noted as a hardened situation even in Missouri one must say: Surely if these things happened to the tree still relatively green, "What shall be done in the dry?" Worse degrees of defection and secularization were to be expected in the bodies of a looser Lutheran tradition and of less spiritual vitality. Where once there had been uphill advances toward a glorious future the anticlimax was quickly dropping down to molehill level, approaching outer darkness. I mean the nether regions where all beasts prey and all religions meet, as in Free Masonry and also in modern Ecumenism, whose chief liberal strands have run to seed in atheism and Marxism. As proofs for the downfall of ajoining American Lutheranism I point on the one hand to the LCA's official church paper, "Lutheran", also the new LCA constitution, and to their seminary at Maywood (now affiliated with Chicago University) and a man like Dr. Joseph Sittler famous there, on the other hand, however, to Augsburg Publishing House's well-known ALC series, to their

Luther Seminary in its swift decline, and to ALC representative professors who are existentialistic Liberals (like Warren A. Quarbeck, to whom I devoted a whole "Lutherischer Rundblick" article), also to President Schiotz' unabashed falsification of the present ALC constitution's basic plank which acknowledges the Bible as God's Word. By way of adding to the countless shades of theological Liberalism imbibed at universities or from literary exchange, all these bodies have succumbed to unprincipled Ecumenism. This is the heresy of this age and of all its sects, and bodies like the LCA and ALC lie prostrate to do its bidding. What was issuing the death warrant to the other bodies, as an acute epidemic disease progressing usually from egghead to foot and from east to west, was for years already getting next also to Missouri to lure it step by step into full fellowship with the ALC and into half-fellowship with the LCA, in order to end up with the final ecumaniac embrace. But in the case of Missouri, the subject of our story, how was the anticlimax being reached?

It was an unfortunate accident that Wisconsin's suspension addressed to Missouri soon after the Synodical Conference's recessed convention of 1961 terminated our negotiations also with the then Missouri Synod representatives at St. Louis. The promise of Dr. Harms to the Overseas Delegates to be given an opportunity to meet the chief Missouri men again at the headquarters was not followed up. The Harms/Fuerbringer/Bouman leadership switched to launch the Cambridge undertaking, later called the International Lutheran Theological Conference. This was imprudently accepted also by the English, Germans, and French, for here Missouri's leadership could call in any of their overseas missionaries, particularly the ones amenable to the Harms administration. The Conference largely spent its time in endless talk about the LWF, in order to tell the Missouri Synod in the CTCR's report before Denver that at least some outside bodies were also for joining the LWF. No root questions were so far ever dealt with conclusively. None the less the once German Overseas Delegates kept the real issues in view.

Now fix your mind's eye on three Missouri Synod General Conventions, the procession beginning with Detroit in 1965. They are all double-marked, they are haphazardly earmarked by loyal confession and by disloyal denial, by truths affirmed along the old lines of a Gnesio-Lutheran body and by adroit weasel-word resolutions headed, turn-about, in the opposite direction, that is, to court sham Lutheranism ever more avidly and to throw the door ajar ever farther letting in the errors formerly divinely excluded. Detroit 1965 adopted as contraband smuggled in from enemy camps the enthusiast AFFIRMATIONS ON GOD'S MISSION. On the point of the mission of the church to the church (resolves 11 and 20) the affirmations are as pseudo-ecumenical as you can possibly make them. In addition they built at least a bridge for the Social Gospel, the 20th century lethal power to destroy all missions of Christendom. That two years later the Lutheran Council in the USA (LCUSA) could begin to function was due to the insincere bait of doctrinal discussions having been held out to old-type Missourians in Detroit, enlisting even aged ex-President Dr. Behnken to make an impromptu speech. In reality the whole venture was by the adepts plainly modeled after Federal Council, LWF, and WCC precedents. Next the New York Convention 1967 ratified the final version of Theology of Fellowship. Misled by sounding brass and tinkling cymbals in reports, the rank and file most unfortunately became party to brazen affrontry. It declared that negotiations with the American Lutheran Church had resulted in the essence of the thing, in true doctrinal accord. Barring synodical repentance for lying and deceiving in God's name, the logical sequence was now "the thing". Theater talks, far and wide but well managed, having intervened for two consecutive years, logic demanded to declare pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC thereafter. No doubt some of you were present when this was done on July 17th of this year (1969) at Denver. A pitiful majority, a small percentage of eyes more, decided the issue. Many were swayed by administration and outside "pro" talk, and too many were blind to the fixed doctrinal deviations and



corresponding insuperable entanglements that characterized the other body. The ALC in practicing its political amours since decades can go ahead unabashed in seeming unison, for it is already past the stage of serious doctrinal considerations. Accordingly it is not for the time being a so-called black swan, acting out the antics of a cross-breed. In this year, 1969, Missouri is still caught in this pitiful condition. At Denver Dr. J.A.O. Preus was elected president, which meant that Dr. Oliver Harms was ousted. Yet the latter's chief move (3-15) came through - against what Preus had previously stood for, who now before the vote was taken promised obedience not to God, but to men. Again, some resolves were most excellent, bearing the name of floor committee No. 2, even as had happened two years previous in New York where also good confessional resolutions had been adopted alongside of humbug. Unpredictability, then, is the present word. Here we have a body totally at cross-purposes, settled Missouri resembling a jigsaw-puzzle, a chameleon, a Proteus. How long? Satan observes strategy, his secret is always to break down the defenses first: if the armor is strong beginning with practice and what's sold for practice, and, proceeding to avowed doctrine thereafter, now headlong engaged in the offensive, strokes at head and heart getting worse and worse while the proverbial pietists hope and hope. There was left only that small hope of Milwaukee 1971, dimmed in less than no time by the success of politicking maneuvers against honest men and congregations (See footnote 10).

So America's Confessional Lutheranism, after completing a marvelous uphill ascent second only to the tremendous Luther movement in Europe, threatens at present in swift overthrow to reach the bottom pit. Christ warns us that the first shall become the last - if the course of superficiality, ungratefulness and the criminal eagerness of politicians to "have it both ways" continue.

Bear with me, friends. I thought such a substructure necessary to get at the real past and to defeat

propaganda. But let me now say that what is still to some extent in progress before Milwaukee's final word is to be met of course not by just recording the facts and leaving it at that, but rather by applying the divine Word as far as God grants grace and by expostulating with brethren once in the same fold or still in the same fold, trying to get a hearing before it's altogether too late.

#### E. European Overtures

So, during the rest of this second period, I am no longer interested in sad history, but I propose chiefly to cite the steps taken from our European side by bodies as yet doctrinally straight and by representatives of theirs both just before and at once after Denver in an effort to preserve to some extent Confessional Lutheranism's latter day mainstay. Be it far from me to say that the divine truths brought out in what now follows were first publicly testified to by men of Europe. But since I am from Germany I do also want to make a certain record plain beyond a doubt. What is more important, precisely thus clear verdicts of God's Word are on record and even summarized for future conscientious reference. Here follow such items.

On June 17th, 1969 - a month before the adoption of that ill-fated resolution 3-15 - the theologians who had become known as the German Overseas Delegates addressed A LAST WORD to the LC-MS to assemble at Denver, from which we shall quote instantly. The present speaker had at once received the full consent of the co-signers for an attachment to the LAST WORD called COROLLARIES, which was mailed shortly after as explanatory and supplementary. A few sentences from the COROLLARIES serve best to lead us on.

"You of the LC-MS have been our model and still are. Your transition from a German culture church to the great American speaking mission church of the Lutheran Hour was turning defeat

into a truly notable victory. Naturally, this offers no justification for forsaking the full confessional position which characterized your first hundred years. The latter as a singular gift of grace, which historically came from a great European Lutheran resurgence, was committed to you by Christ, the Truth and the Head of the Church, and it alone was the source of your mission strength... Of course, emphasis on missions is never a sole concern. It would mark the beginning of the end for a confessional church in the Old or New World, for blessed heirs of Paul and Luther (please see Gal. 5,9 and compare Luther's Great Commentary on that verse), to play off the Christ for all against the whole Christ. It would be worse than foolish to make much of the zeal to share the Gospel of Christ, but meanwhile to spurn Christ only and the whole Christ as He becomes ours through the pure means of grace. The Great Commission is to share eternal life, and not a counterfeit, with all whom we can reach... We would lack proper words to characterize an 'ego theology' saying: 'To be as insistent on God's doctrine - as were Paul, Luther, and C.F.W. Walther - is just to whittle away time in this urgent global age, yes, this attitude casts aside love, vision, future history, the Holy Ghost, the fellowship in Christ's One Church'. We would have to counter: 'Since when are 'human egos' permitted against Scripture naively to parrot today's slogans and thereby to lord it over the Kingdom of the Heavens?' In truth and very humbly, brethren, cannot perhaps the greatest danger for all of us today arise from a sort of semi-Methodist, even semi-Universalist Enthusiasm and from Activism run riot? This frame of mind can easily line up even with learned radicals like Bultmann, Cox, etc."

I think my honored audience understands me perfectly well. It was necessary that the setting of the Overseas and European (also in one case Queensland) reaction first to the Praesidium's plans for

Denver 1969 and then to 3-15 had to be clarified sufficiently before the documentation now to follow could proceed full swing. Involved is not the slightest tainting by what is depreciated as "dead orthodoxy" as you may just have noted. Again, one purpose of the minutiae which were last embodied in my lecture, extending even to certain otherwise seldom known details of the last Behnken years and covering all the years of the Harms administration, was to gain a hearing for our conclusions by anticipating the major instinctive objection: "Men tucked far away in old Europe could not arrive at safe conclusions as to 1967 to 1969 because they could not observe living facts". Quite to the contrary, gentlemen, they were next door, in fact in your rooms all this while, as you could register. So let's go on, letting Continental European Free Lutheranism continue to this period's end to speak to you, first on the fateful year 1967, then on Denver's 1969 break-down, as seen by us and others, the chief message being the spiritual appeal.

As the COROLLARIES continue to point out with reference to the fellowship stance adopted in New York, the whole formal principle of Christ's Church and therefore all that is distinctive of Lutheran and truly ecumenical doctrine was there repudiated in favor of pseudo-ecumenism, and this was done in gross violation of the Symbols and Missouri's adamant Constitution. What follows could not yet have been said as early as April 1961, when we had spoken out as the German Overseas against the crash program's fellowship caricature, but it was a fully motivated item in our 1969 critique of the adopted document and what was behind it:

"For two, some actions not merely of stated officers, but also of general Conventions have already severely jeopardized the very doctrinal identity of your church. For directed against each other a Yes and a No with reference to one and the same matter and aspect cannot be genuine. The fact is: the fellowship stipulations of your

most definite CONSTITUTION and of the LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS behind them do not square with the neo-ecumenical principles enunciated in the 'Theology of Fellowship'. This attracted attention when Part II appeared in the 1960 tentative form, against which a severe critique was directed by Australia's delegation and also by our presentation, called 'Conclusions as to the present Synodical Conference Impasse', that formed Part III of 'European Supporting Documents' in 1961 (the analysis touching Missouri's fellowship crash program comprises para. 31 of the total book and pp. 17-27 of our Part III. An exact copy of all we submitted in 1961 was, on request, deposited with CONCORDIA HISTORICAL INSTITUTE). In spite of all fraternal remonstrances the basic false elements reappeared. They now constitute Part III of the document presented already in Detroit 1965 and then ratified in New York (see WORKBOOK 1969, pp. 527-546). Self-contradiction had indeed been added. The carefully worked Part II of the final edition, placed in front of said Part III, embodies so much of sound Lutheran dogmatics that it contradicts much of what then follows. The total document lacks consistency. Yet a deliberate slant, curtailing the doctrine of the Church, was worked also into the new Part II. Neo-ecumenism is the dominant note, only now accompanied by discordant sounds defying all efforts at harmonization.

"As to the changes in doctrine (at least partly admitted by Dr. Harms in 'Toward Fellowship'), they comprise the following details:

"(a) Divergence [clash] between true church and false church (*ecclesia particularis orthodoxa* and *ecclesiae particulares heterodoxae*) is done away with. That is, the 'Theology of Fellowship' not only plays down, but actually throws overboard the distinction between the orthodox visible church, on the one hand, which in spite of

admixed hypocrites is true to the name and voice of the One Church by faithfully clinging to God's means of grace and not permitting public contrary marks to become lodged in its organization, and, on the other hand, its opposite, its antithesis. We must here be aware of the motley assembly of heterodox congregations and of corresponding larger church units, which in church history, ever since the apostles died and apostolicity was not properly upheld, have developed and are, perhaps more than ever, evolving anew. Uncounted true believers are among them and tremendous differences obtain between them. The constant appearance also of hopeful situations and special duties then arising is to be not ignored. But the fact that false churches are currently, rapidly being drawn into one GREAT MIXTURE can be bypassed just as little.

"(b) Again injury is done to the divine commands to avoid false teachers and of necessity to shun gatherings in league with them. Said document, overstressing the original historical circumstances by applying a sort of historico-critical reduction to the texts, restricts their scope to a few out-and-out heretics. So it is that attention is gently lead away from organized camps and focussed on footloose individuals. Thus all Reformed and similar bodies, even Rome herself, and primarily all nominal Lutheran groups, no matter how liberal and modernistic they may have become, somehow slip under the one overall caption: 'Just erring Christians, with whom we must commune in love'. Even formal representatives of erring bodies propagating false doctrine are not looked upon as representing error itself (not seen such as they are, *qua tales*, as the Latin goes). In this respect the Confessions and past positions are misrepresented.

"(c) There is in consequence of general fellowship thinking even now no strict division

between the specific functions of Christ's Church and the duties of Christians in society, between what Luther calls the divine right hand and left hand kingdoms (less mingling of realms than in the first printing; but still note No. 18 of Part III; and thus no barrier against common Social Gospel tendencies in America is the outcome).

"(d) Summing up then, the 'Theology of Fellowship' actually rejects Missouri's past doctrine and practice, in spite of all the talk about the Church's notes in the new Part II. It voices a ringing No also to our 15 Overseas Theses, although these had been acknowledged as showing the way by the Synodical Conference Convention of 1961 with wholehearted Missouri support. The false teaching of a doubtless revolutionary nature naturally at once produced strange acts on the mission fields, being abetted by almost identical false coins, mixed with true coins, in that 'Affirmation on God's Mission'. The new theology serves to justify the innate inconsistencies of LCUSA and contributes to the currents pressing toward the ALC/LCA amalgam and is headed for all camps of contemporary false ecumenism.

"For three, there is a related idea. What does it posit? This, that since only the local congregation is a church in the New Testament sense, it alone (this, if you stress it, only for itself as for the time being), bears responsibility for the scripturalness and orthodoxy of fellowship relations between churches. To counter [replies to be expected], the local congregation is indeed the primary unit, since here the means of grace reach and supply most directly the gathered people. But the wild, in its way atomizing, conclusion drawn fits exactly into the official Congregationalist [if not Existentialist] pattern and is by definition anti-Lutheran and anti-Missourian (see Brief Statement, para. 28). By the logic of this additional deviation all

larger church bodies, because voluntary, are equated with non-church. Therefore they are exempted from strict truth duty and given license to align themselves almost with anybody and anything that seems advantageous. Although all of this was in the air before, in Europe [at least] the supposition was first voiced by Dr. Theodore Graebner in his 1949 speech at Strasbourg (France) and was again resorted to as an easy way out of the past confessional confinements by Dr. Carl A. Gaertner at 'Cambridge II'. Perhaps this extra theory has contributed to the strange ease with which the Praesidium and a majority of district presidents suggested to Denver the expedient of partial Selective Fellowship, one group of congregations 'to follow the line' of official altar and pulpit fellowship, but a second group, in deference to scruples of conscience, temporarily to be empowered to refuse such fellowship. Certainly, if to the One Church belong the pure means of grace (it is to the *Una Sancta* that Augsburg Confession VII, para. 1 (and 2), attaches 'pure' and 'recte' [Latin text] and so does Walther's classic on Church and Office, Part I, Art. V), then God, through them, both makes possible and also demands, as pertaining to honesty in jointly confessing, one orthodox communion, which in principle is world-wide and in point of time ranges from the apostles to the Lord's return (cf. the import of 1 Cor. 10 and 11)."

As you know, dear friends, the authority of the given Revelation from on high was now also whittled away and reduced to chips at the St. Louis Seminary, River Forest Teachers' College being a close second. This catastrophe followed some years after it had become common sport in the LCA to flout the written Word of God, soon joined in by ALC terminal schools. After Dr. Martin Scharlemann, with his original position which made the first great dangerous impact, had held his post against Dr. Behnken's request to him to resign, representatives of the so-called



"historico-critical position" began to multiply at Walther's and Pieper's school and of late broke through fully in the Missouri Synod's official *Concordia Theological Monthly*. The Baron in our *Lutherischer Rundblick* staff, Dr. Cornelius Freiherr von Heyl, prepared a study for *Christian News* [it was first printed in 1970, Jan. 26th issue] entitled: "Denver, - and now?". The German version appeared in *Lutherischer Rundblick* 1969, pp. 220-227. [He followed this up by details in "Survey - Doctrinal Chaos in St. Louis" with particulars on Drs. Rich. R. Caemmerer and John H. Tietjen in *Christian News* of April 4th, 1970, German text printed in *Lutherischer Rundblick* 1970, pp. 144-150.]

As you all know, Missouri's College of Presidents early in 1969 put forward a detailed proposition for Denver (proposing altar and pulpit fellowship with the ALC, though permitting congregations with doctrinal scruples to practice non-fellowship), which in substance was identical with the subsequent resolution 3-15 of Denver. This document published in Synod's papers it was which had forced the former Overseas Delegates to take that overt step to issue the LAST WORD just referred to, pressing home therewith to Missouri the either/or for their Post-Walther Century. Chief officials and professors received the document. In spite of some promise held out by Dr. Harms it did not appear in the SUPPLEMENT to the WORKBOOK and was not even mentioned in the sessions, whereas LUTHERANS ALERT, July issue, 1969, graciously printed it. I beg your pardon if I again read to you at some length words on the gravity of the situation (Drs. Kirsten, Oesch, and Roensch placed their signatures to this LAST WORD):

"So we must settle for truth. Surely, if the sole right-of-way for the pure means of grace is demanded from above (point 2), but if this divine condition is flouted (according to the evidence pointed to under points 3 and 4) by the ALC-LCA as organized church bodies and by the LWF as a fellowship organization (on that

please see CTCR minority report, WORKBOOK, p. 70f.), the conclusion then inescapable before the church all over the world must be put down on paper. It reads:

If the LC-MS accepts the proposal of altar and pulpit fellowship with the ALC, she will identify herself with the status of the ALC, that means she will identify herself with a church which has for good a broken theology and which is committed to tolerate false doctrine in her midst, and so the LC-MS also can then no more maintain the claim to be a church of the pure marks. For Missouri will then no longer continue to exhibit, without legally lodged self-contradiction, the marks of the One Holy Christian Church - which consist in the means of grace as they normally function in truth and purity according to Scripture. Instead of being a free church this great historic body will have become a captive church. Instead of being orthodox it will be sectarian. The Book of Concord in the church's museum does not avert this, but adds more dishonesty yet.

On the additional live issue, raised by the favorable majority report of CTCR, we, the LAST WORD signatories, offered this:

"To claim that this Genevan sub-organization has established a positive record, having advanced in its subjoined bodies, especially dependent ones, Biblical and confessional loyalty borders on the ridiculous, exceptions excepted. As to the well-known territorial and state churches in Europe, which comprise the bulk of the LWF constituency, these folk churches (*Volks-kirchen*) are in their basic structure geographical units of Europe, or, where they compete with Rome, they are sections, [merely] called Evangelical, of post-Christian secular society which is still traditionally defined as functioning also along religious lines. Of

the Protestant population the church-going average is well below 5%, nevertheless in Germany on this side of the Iron Curtain the tax income supplying these broad membership churches and levied with some sort of government aid is tremendous. The doctrinal condition is worse than ever, and of late it includes large factions of scoffing Marxist theologians. This demonstrates anew that the official position of the Lutheran Symbols since the Enlightenment is, by and large, only one of a historical nature, assigning to them a deceptive niche in the particular church body's museum. Soon the intercommunion, regularly practiced between so-called Lutherans and so-called Reformed all along, will be advanced to 100% union status on the basis of illusive doctrinal agreement. Worst of all is the hodge-podge of theologies and philosophies governing the state-paid, allegedly Lutheran or at least Evangelical, theological faculties, with a few men of true Lutheran intention in-between. Liberalism had repeated heydays, and it did not vanish in the least after War II.

"Of late things have gotten to a point in Continental Europe where those who were for two centuries conditioned to changing union patterns in order to accommodate truth and falsehood simultaneously seem to have reached the utter limit and declare, also in these nominally Lutheran Churches, to be unable still to go along. This has caused *BEKENNTNISBEWEGUNGEN* and [*KIRCHLICHE*] *SAMMLUNGEN* of a type close to us to spring up all over. Can you bear responsibility for stabbing these last-minute remnants in the back by an LWF embrace of the *Volkskirchen*?"

The concluding section of A LAST WORD has this to say:

"We deem it fortunate that the stage in Denver has officially been set for decision, not

postponement. The official proposal to split the church into two camps of synodical congregations, viz. one group "following the line" and the other group gradually to be "brought into line", is, it seems, hardly worth a moment's notice. It plainly is unconstitutional and in fact would spell the end of the present church body. There is thus at hand for the LC-MS the hour to take its twentieth and twenty-first century choice. It is the solemn option between turning to the right, in repentance and holy determination, or to the left, headed toward the bitter end. The right choice is to be loyal to the Redeemer and His One Holy Christian Church and to lost mankind, namely by continuing to administer, as a doctrinally united body acting on the level of all its congregations, the Holy Spirit's means of grace in all truth and purity in accordance with the Holy Scriptures. The opposite and wrong turn means the irreversible decision to cast all the singular strength and mission hitherto granted by God to the winds in exchange for an 'ecumenical' pottage of lentils. In case of this latter turn, the Synod will inevitably expose God's congregations to variants of deception, every one of which is pregnant with infinite increase. Furthermore, evangelical and evangelistic power is dissipated, decimated, and given the lie as soon as doctrinal control is once and for all ruled out. Doctrinal honesty toward the affiliated congregations can never be recovered in the ALC-LCA-LCMS amalgam that is now being propagated. Contrari-wise, if God grants to Missouri repentance and victory over the present keen blast and whirlwind of temptation, it will thereby break through the clouds and ascend as a shining light, pointing also others to the right way. Then your Synod can, under God, become the truly Evangelical Center of all Christendom. Indications of this definite possibility are already coming in view, to which we Europeans can now witness from our outside

vantage even as the eminent church historian, Dr. Hermann Sasse, has repeatedly pointed out your Church's true vocation from God. The Australian theologian has also emphasized your unheard-of asset over against European Lutherans during the last three hundred years, namely live, church going, self-governing, spiritually responsible congregations in a free country. Why must Lutheran churches thus singularly blessed die - as they are almost extinct in Europe?"

The following sentences of concern, which I take from the "Earnest Fraternal Appeal", had been penned in Queensland earlier yet. The Appeal had also been signed by a group of affiliated Europeans (the paper called BALANCE printed it before Denver):

"There are scattered throughout the world congregations and churches faithful to Scripture and the Confessions. For a hundred years your great Missouri Synod was the acknowledged leader and champion of these churches. But as your Synod became troubled by the problems of liberalism, its administrative apparatus at any rate turned its attention more and more toward the worldly-wise Ecumenical Movement and neglected the Synod's former brothers-in-arms in other countries. As a result, the formerly solid Confessional front is in danger of fragmentation. Certainly, if you join in fellowship with A.L.C.-L.C.A., you will break up our worldwide Confessional fellowship. Make no mistake about that. But surely you will not abandon those with whom you are one, in order to join those with whom you are not one in doctrine?"

In this connection I must call your attention to the fact that all the continental European sister churches of the LC-MS officially intervened at this stage. This of course principally as touching the global Lutheran World Federation, favorably reported on by the CTCM majority, but also mentioning the ALC issue. In fact they did this twice, at first in a

formal joint Overture, appropriated by the Brazil Districts and printed in the SUPPLEMENT of the WORK-BOOK, and once more in individual letters (by Chairman Dr. Gerhard Rost of the German inter-synodic agency and by the presidents of the French and Finnish Free Churches, see German texts in *LUTHERISCHER RUNDBLICK*, 1969, pp. 108-112).

It is here necessary to refer to President Oliver Harms' reaction on receiving from me lines accompanying the three main memorials (cc to the Vice-Presidents). When Dr. Harms got the first one of the extended appeals - the one originally penned in Queensland - he wrote me five pages. And when I sent him the Overseas' LAST WORD he wrote me six pages and a seventh page of documentation. He was always a gentleman and thanked us for our concern, but showed that he had hardly gotten anything in the whole life and death issue straight. Just to establish pulpit and altar fellowship in his opinion didn't amount to much at all, for synodical safety consisted in this that there was no merger in the technical sense of the term. In his strange way of thinking the only thing seriously to be considered would be legal fusion. As to our explicit remarks on the Praesidium's proposition for Denver re ALC he was at a loss to comprehend our qualms and perturbation. He talked about his top-flight theologians, the best Missouri could produce. He had never done his theological homework. He warned that what Missouri had undertaken to help Lutheran Free Churches did not mean the support of opposition altars to Lutheran folk church altars.

(An exchange of letters immediately after Denver with the new President Dr. J.A.O. Preus and remarks of his when he came over in person late in 1969, will be referred to in the final lecture.)

The fact that "the deed" is done, that the protested church fellowship is now a law till 1971 through resolution 3-15 and its implementation, has already witnessed some logical sequence on the

European mainland. Several documents portray that, from which I take my concluding items.

I first quote our Southern District Synod's minutes (of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church, on Sept. 15th at Stuttgart): "Honorary President Fr. Noack (Queensland) reported on Denver, where he had been present. It shocked the delegates to hear that a consensus in all [truly] doctrinal points is no longer synod-wide considered as being demanded in the Augsburg Confession's Art. VII [para. 2]. President Dr. Hans Kirsten supplemented what had been reported by referring to a meeting with delegates of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod who had stated that there were two theological factions in the Missouri Synod and that such a situation logically must lead to separating the parts into two churches, adding that the Missouri Synod is no longer in a condition to render a decision through which matters are to be decided on the basis of the Confessions."

This spelled out agreement with the words of Seminary President Carl Lawrenz in the *Northwestern Lutheran*, Aug. 31, 1969 - somewhat later published in German by our theological journal, *Lutherischer Rundblick* 1969, pp. 213-218.

It may be worth your trouble also to listen to the way the American decision is being commented on by some responsible Europeans outside of our communion. Pastor G. Schmolze of Bremen, who had published a long article analyzing the Lutheran Free Churches in widely read *Evangelische Kommentare*, now wrote on *MISSOURI-SYNODE in der Zerreihsprobe* (Missouri Synod at the point of splitting), this time in *Lutherische Monatsblätter* (Oct. 2nd, Hamburg). The fact that the LC-MS did not accept the invitation of the LWF had just proved a point of considerable interest for church news, and the Bremen pastor utilized the chance. Schmolze quotes Dr. Robert Preus on Denver from *The Lutheran Layman* at some length. A type of cooperation between the Springfield, North Adelaide, and Oberursel theological

faculties, as he sees it, would be essential for what he, Schmolze, evidently has at heart. It is this that among the multiplicity of only nominally Lutheran churches the world over "Missouri remain Missouri", as his last line puts it.

I next quote a few lines from the declaration of what is at present a personal *Status confessionis* on the part of the editors of *Lutherischer Rundblick* (Drs. Kirsten, Oesch, Roensch in issue 3/69, p. 212):

"Also the *LUTHERISCHE RUNDBLICK* resorts to a *Status confessionis* to condemn this Resolution - of course not directed against the Synod itself as far as the Conservatives begin to assemble. After all that was written before, the *LUTHERISCHE RUNDBLICK* does not have to substantiate its position anew. Besides it is up to the Missourians to articulate their protest and to pass it on to all concerned. Excellent interpretations of *Status confessionis* have already appeared in print, well qualified to liberate faithful congregations from immediate cooperation and to strengthen them for future action. It is self-understood that not only we, but also the many who have in advance protested this scheme, as witnessed in our issue No. 2, will intervene or at least give brotherly support to the Missouri Conservatives, by their prayers and otherwise."

Our nobleman, Cornelius Freiherr von Heyl, declared at the end of his review of C.T.M.: "I personally, much in love with the great history of the Missouri Synod and in accord with their principles, declare that I am over against these gentlemen in *statu confessionis*".

Finally I must bring to your attention rather in full the first semi-official action. Within the community of our Free Churches it transpired in the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church in France and Belgium. The brethren speak in the name of all those among us on the Continent who are close to the



American scene. (The Confessional Lutheran Church of Finland has a representative here, their conclusions are an even stronger parallel, but they can speak for themselves.) The general officials of the French body living in Alsace (the well-known German-speaking part of the country) came together in their home province with the elders of all the local congregations, which have furnished most of the funds necessary for the Synod's work. (The French-speaking congregations in France itself came straight from the Roman Catholic Church and do not fully understand things yet.) All assembled were of one single opinion. This was put to paper and conveyed to President Preus on October 19. This whole document, written in English by President Frédéric C. Kreiss, is being published in America and, translated, in *Lutherische Rundblick*, quarters three and four of 1969, pages 201-203. As in the presence of God President Kreiss and his men spell out the significance and import of the decisions in Denver. Let me just read the conclusion:

"The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod through this decision has shown that it has become a different Church from what it was, a Church which in such matters as church-fellowship or the necessity of an internal doctrinal consensus practices now a theology different from that which had so far been accepted and which had so far been the basis for our fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. We are forced to conclude that a majority of its constituency has now willfully abandoned the basis of the fellowship which existed between their church and the allied Confessional Lutheran Free Churches in Europe, in general, and our Free Church in France and Belgium, in particular. After having repeatedly raised our voice in warning we now declare again that we cannot condone the fellowship which has now been officially established and proclaimed between our sister Church and the present ALC as the latter stands today in its doctrine and practice. We

consider such fellowship as incompatible with the Word of God and therefore repudiate it as an expression of anti-Scriptural unionism. We pray the Lord of the Church that He may guide the hearts and minds of the present leaders of our dear sister Church so that they may find the proper ways and means to remedy this false fellowship decision. We now consider it is our urgent duty to actively and thoroughly inform our Church in all its congregations, especially also our so far uninformed young mission congregations in the solidly Roman Catholic parts of France, concerning this situation, so that our church may, after a necessary period of delay and reflection - if it should still be necessary - then take note of the fact that the former basis of God-pleasing church fellowship with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod no longer exists and take appropriate action accordingly. [And in the meantime, they declare that for their own persons, they are in the protesting state over against all such persons who in any way want to implement this false fellowship.]

"This declaration was adopted and signed by a number of pastors and leading laymen after an information meeting attended by elders and officers of a number of congregations of the *EGLISE EVANGELIQUE LUTHERIENNE - SYNODE DE FRANCE ET DE BELGIQUE* in Strasbourg on October 19th, 1969, and sent to President Jacob A.O. Preus by the Rev. Fred C. Kreiss of the French Synod."

So here you witness the normal reaction for the Lutheran Free Churches, for authentic Lutheranism all over the world. *Status confessionis* first on the part of individuals who know all the details, this is the immediate counter-action. But then, giving the Missouri Synod those two years after July 1969, immediately when they are past, the final decision as to whether after the Milwaukee Convention's

turning again to the right or remaining on the left, the basis of fellowship, which had existed for over a hundred years in some of the cases still exists or not. This may suffice on the gravity of the present situation and the stress of overseas appeals.

The movement of the First Post Walther Century within the compass of the first four decades has been the calamitous reverse of Confessional Lutheran ascendancy in America; it has triggered the almost complete repudiation of the Walther Century by Walther's Synod.

Additional points, including further appeals as we only gradually learned all of the details, I have chosen to reserve for the last lecture, as starting point for tomorrow's "Mandatory Look at the Future."

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#### FOOTNOTES

Note 9:

In order to be quite clear on the necessity of independence for the Walther Century it is necessary to fill in a few further details on the then contemporary German Neo-Lutheranism. This will incidentally show how little can be expected from Continental Lutheranism today, which on the whole is little more than a WCC division. Only students need read on.

Being the immediate parent of all serious U.S. descendants, last century's Lutheran Confessional Movement in Germany, when it had moved on from its early hopeful heyday, split up into "Lutheranisms" (*Luthertuemer*). None was the Lutheran Church, none was fully attuned to its unchanging ecumenical voice, reiterating the standards of the One Church. For political and philosophical strains had almost at once entered alongside and effected all sorts of breaks with Scripture and the Confessions. Excepting

a figure now and then there was no profound knowledge of Luther's writings, which for Germany was rather strange to say. The radical revolution in thinking since Enlightenment and Pietism's even earlier peculiarities had all over remained influential in the joint units consisting of state and church. This affected the best of the learned exponents in the gradually stabilizing process of the Lutheran revival. Even if they were anti-revolutionaries, they more and more opted for ego-theologies.

To point out a chief detail in every quarter, there appeared the Romantic notion of "Organism", of a "historically given whole, being in advance structured along the lines of estates". This structuredness was philosophically assumed to be in back of the various appearances of the State and also of the Church. In many respects the two were believed to be fairly alike, state-churchism tenaciously clouding the vision. A closely allied second postulate built firmly on history's ordered unravelling somehow always begetting progress, ever something better.

Sanguine expectancy was in the grain even of the confessionally vocal High Church Lutherans (in "highness" akin to your J.A.A. Grabau), such as Julius Stahl, who was a conservative Prussian politician of Israelite extraction, above all the churchmen Loehe, Vilmar, and Kliefoth. In the High Church party it took on the strange form of making out of pastors governing priests, hoping thus to pull people out of the vast secularizing process toward the spiritual. The pneumatic nature of the New Testament Church, it being direct to Christ everywhere where faith is, was no longer understood.

But as we turn to the other end of the neo-Lutheran line we note this buoyed-up bourgeois progressivism to be even more potent. The Erlangen type of university theology, first presenting the less subjective and in many respects even profound premises of early Adolf von Harless, progressed to

a peculiar Schleiermacher revival and embodied Schelling and Hegel ingredients as well. Not without these admixtures did it conquer Leipzig and some other sites of learning. Erlangen's feted exegete, von Hofmann, as a member of the party of the Kenoticists, went so far as to cut Christ's humiliated humanity loose from his divinity and to deny the Vicarious Satisfaction, making it impossible freely to trust in the justifying verdict as rendered purely from the outside. To J. Ch. K. von Hofmann the Bible is a fabric of God's handmaiden, history's product and not to be equated with God's Word. A watchword of this professor was that he, the Christian, was to him the theologian, the first source of doctrine. (Note that ALC Professor Gerhard O. Forde seems to be trying hard to be the 20th century American von Hofmann copy). Kahnis as dogmatician went farther yet and muddled almost everything.

In line with their "Evolutionitis" both the High Church men and the rank and file of Erlangen theologians were millennialists, hailing in the expected 1000 years a sort of crown, topping Organism's progress from on top. Of course you authentic Lutherans know that the government of *DEUS ABSCONDITUS* in history cannot be pressed into any beforehand system of thought at all. Man thus trespasses on God's grounds.

Fairness concedes to the groups mentioned that they were not alone nor are exceptions today. The governing hypothesis, hailing history as evolving ever to the better rather than being unpredictable, with superdimensional casualties pushing in between where least expected, was modern. It no doubt hailed largely from technical victories, as it does in our days of the moon journeys. In those decades progress faith was running amuck with at least the same terrific speed in Anglo-Saxon and French as in German thinking. How understandable all that sounds to our American and German ears today. We're still close to these gods. Romanticism, achieving systematic finality in Schelling's and Hegel's mighty specula-

tions, simultaneously exercised a magic spell even on the Roman Catholic Tuebingen School, as it does on Hans Kueng at Tuebingen just now.

All High Church business in the end defeated itself, its sacred orders enthusiasm supported in effect the rule of educated officialdom. However, the Romanticist wings attached either to Eternal Rome or to Lutherland stopped short of "totally liquidating givens of the past". They did not run the full Hegelian course, as did Karl Marx with his new mankind aims in mind, rather they drew fixed historic results in wherever they were appealing. Yet *Schwaermerei* prompted virtually all prominent Neo-Lutheran university celebrities and even most of the powerful preachers of the epoch to concoct some special doctrinal departures and additions, especially on Church and Office and on Eschatology. The formulation of these doctrines was in fact looked upon as free territory, as within the God-given peculiar mandate of the 19th and 20th centuries. It is not hard to see how akin is today's chief World Church and theological faculty force. The extreme "Situationalitis," which at the same time hard-core, almost Marxian activism, is heeding no word of God, is run by wild enthusiasm and running both the WCC and LWF offices at Geneva, being to some extent latent also in the AFFIRMATIONS ON GOD'S MISSION. Yet it is related not only to several other sires, but also to Neo-Lutheranism as one of its great grandfathers.

Such, then, was the background of the Synodical Conference's objection to Evolution of Doctrine (*Lehrentwicklung*) and of their theologians' tireless insistence strictly to delimit "Open Questions", points which were urged especially against Iowa. The full import of the ideas struggling to conquer Lutheranism could only be seen in Europe. Fortunately Missouri's original minds, the Hoeneckes, the Korens no less, were present as much in Europe as in America. In-depth vision saw how the land lay. If you can subject the body of Christ's doctrine to varying additions or subtractions, going by the moment's glow and

not heeding strictly the Word of Scripture nor the analogy of faith therein given, why, in principle, must you somewhere arbitrarily stop short, let's say, of the most radical Modernism? What was to be expected, if Enthusiasm's snake'shead was tolerated, showed up rather early. In the last century's sixties and seventies, already, all types of Continental Neo-Lutheranism lacked the logical *Njet* to radical Biblical criticism's and to Social Gospel Ritschlianism's taking over at all schools.

Nevertheless, while the theological systems developed were off-hand impossibilities for authentic Lutherans, as the outspokenness of St. Louis, Wauwatosa, and Decorah did solemnly register, the huge literary output, particularly in exegesis and history, deserved discriminate observation. Some conservative Lutheran circles put on the market as late as the turn from the 19th to the 20th century the extremely valuable 7 volumes of *Kirchliches Handlexikon* (which had been started by Carl Meusel). Who knows these volumes among those influential today in American Lutheranism? Can Know-nothingism know where its fathers stood?

But let's get back to the middle of that 19th century. It was the time when the ardent hope to recover the Lutheran Church of Germany became a lost cause and when German Christian fervor as far as extant among the common people switched anew to variant forms of Pietism. Believers wanted to find at least some outlet for actions of the Christian heart and took recourse to conventicles, to *ecclesiolae in ecclesia*. So in the main things remained in Germany and also in Scandinavia till our times. At present many leaders of pietist conventicle groups realize that separating the Word and the Spirit undoes them, too. But where is full-force Lutheranism to which to turn? What purported to be the Lutheran Church became strangely estranged from people, even the believing people that were left, a fact not gainsaid by that lingering of Lutheran piety, say, in Franconia and around Hermannsburg. Legitimistic conservatism

was related to reactionary politics. The High Church party in the forties started out under Julius Stahl with conservative organic State ideals for the purpose of hitting out against French revolution and similar ideals. In their approach to ecclesiology, to that for them closely related topic of church and office, this party acknowledged a debt to the semi-Hegelian Roman-Catholic Johann Adam Mùhler of Tuebingen and was thankful for the stimulation offered from across the Channel by English Tractarian victories. The subjectivist pietist impulse, frantically hailed at the same time by purely rationalist humanists, remained active and pushed toward synergisms, God and man company business, all over the landscape. Without this Walther's and Hoenecke's genuine Conversion and Election stand would not have been so stoutly and so persistently opposed in the New World. Dr. F. Pieper's subsequent attacks on the avalanche of subjective and speculative innovations were totally in order. Only thus could the New World's Declaration of Independence be upheld.

Although Wilhelm Loehe as the preacher and the chief head of the Franconian Lutheran upsurge and as blessed planner of long enduring foreign and inner mission endeavours had inklings that the Constantine World Church symbiosis was detrimental and soon would be at wit's end, and although August Vilmar told his not too worthy Hessian prince, "Sire, let the Church be free", they all did not risk a break. Thus German Lutheranism, excepting the valiant Lutheran Free Church people, remained tied down to a huge ancient block on the road. One further result was that Lutheranism was looked upon as merely a historical family among historical families to be viewed and handled morphologically (even Werner Elert's pattern, though his instincts and details often were better than his ground-plan).

Let me at this point suggest that there has not been sufficient research on the impact of the alien speculations concerning "Idea, Organism, and History" and also of the Constantine realities on the continental



19th century *Luthertuemer*. The genial genre of biography, which everywhere first gains attention, fastens on a certain man and his merits, less on the epoch. I'll try to be a bit helpful since publishers and the LWF have flooded American Lutheranism with debris from Europe. This massy wreckage cannot be recognized for what it is without real church historians arising again in your midst. Men I mean knowing the connection between the 19th and 20th centuries and enjoying the grace granted by God to show America how to dispose of the dust storms, oddments and dregs blocking its road to Wittenberg and Christian origin beyond. Mentioning a few names, Hans Felix Hedderich offers much help indeed on the main Neo-Lutheran currents in his *Die Gedanken der Romantik über Kirche und Staat* (Bertelsmann 1941) checking on Friedrich Schleiermacher and Julius Stahl. He shows that both tried to fix secular straight-jackets on the Church, as we explained in Lecture I, the one as a carnal enthusiast trusting to the universal religious instinct, the other injecting legitimist governmental premises into ecclesiastical polity. The former right now deserves being declared the patron saint of all who trust people blindly, who advocate situation ethics and see the cure of church ills in ever more democracy, enfranchising children, etc., etc. (as Keith R. Bridston). (As to the latter, he wanted to be a believer. But he spoiled his confessional approach by making the pastor the sole avenue of grace toward the people and God's sole instrument of government over the people, even in areas where God wants the Christians to have free choices. Vilmar and Loehe got drawn into that same current, and today they in turn draw almost all German theologians who eschew Liberalism and want confessional truth into this egregious right fringe current.) Another important writer, very recent, is Fr. Wilh. Kantzenbach of the LWF's Strasbourg Institute. It is to be conceded, of course, that in his theology he is a far cry from the freedom granted by becoming captive to Christ Only and Total. But he recently rendered truth a service by exploring the quite spectacular speculative influences that were a-work on the *Gestalten und Typen des Neuluthertums*

(*Giltersloher Verlagshaus* 1968). It is not superfluous to mention that Bengt Håggglund has produced a "History of Theology" (Concordia 1968) worth its price in spite of the evident drawback that he does not know a thing about your Walther Century, nor ought Holsten Fagerberg's *Bekennntnis, Kirche und Amt in der deutschen konfessionellen Theologie des 19. Jahrhundert* (Uppsala 1952) be passed by (with perhaps tiresome listing of details under separating heads but, for instance, on p. 244 making plain just about the whole line-up of Missouri's Theology of Fellowship in an essay by F.A.Ph. Philippi). If in America's Lutherland real church historians could somewhere in a late hour exercise due influence, short breath books like "Which Way to Lutheran Unity?" would become ludicrous. Who would then even cast a look at immature writers, with booklets and periodicals like *Una Sancta*, von Schenk, Herbert Lindemann, *Lutheran Forum* dashing in to trace things? Also the main output of *Lutheran Quarterly* and *Lutheran World* would then appear as almost equally inadequate. Help might thus accrue for reconnecting those, who today in pulpit and pew are longing to remain Lutheran, with the *consensus historicus Lutheranorum* drawing out the line of the Confessions. There was, is, and will ever be such a thing, the secret of true ecumenical balance. The upshot of the long stretch of two hundred early years after 1517 was its great incarnation head ahead, it it was, and body still attached, though jostled. This continuation of doctrinal integrity was first of all emotionally discredited by later individualist Pietists and then haughtily cast to the winds by the rationalist neologians. But the Walther Century, though steeped in Luther and emphasizing the 16th century, rediscovered also the 17th century as being far nearer to the pure marks of the One Church of Christ than all 19th century Neo-Lutheranism had offered. This even though several disapprobations had to be voiced regarding practice putting up with the unbroken Constantine sway, and *Kirchenordnungen* and theory following suit, and formulations using too much Neo-Aristotelianism and getting weaker. Drs. J.A.O. and Robert D. Preus have

made the tremendous Lutheran equipoise accessible again to America, by the two tomes just appearing which are to be followed by two more tomes.

Note 10:

An American author deserves mention. Much of the material on the Missouri Synod disintegrating, counting from the 4 Doctrinal Commissioners' disagreements to the break-up of the Synodical Conference, facts which my Lecture II recorded in the form it became evident to our European vantage point, has been committed to the printed page in the pragmatic and spiritual manner of a U.S.A. pastor who was on the scene for a small synod. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod's total uphill fight is incidentally commemorated, which my lecture thus could omit. I refer to Theodore A. Aaberg's *City Set On a Hill* (Mankato, Minn., 1968). The E.L.S. author naturally offers details which I skipped, particularly on pp. 164-202, mentioning the "Doctrinal Affirmations", his synod's suspension of direct pulpit and altar fellowship in 1955, which in part produced the demotion of the "Common Confession" by the LC-MS in 1956, and also later weighty details. Also more stages of "Theology of Fellowship" from the first crash program to the final New York version are depicted.

Again, if Concordia Publishing House is to have a future and not just to go down the drain as a dependency of Augsburg and Fortress, it ought to aspire to become a non-provincial clearing house for all good Lutheran or otherwise helpful literature, particularly including also historical sources and in-depth works, and Concordia Historical Institute ought to be quickly detached from the Neo-Seminary's home propaganda.

## Notice on Summaries' Attachment Following

It's now some time since these 1969 Reformation Lectures were delivered in Mankato's Bethany. It thus seems appropriate here to affix the three outlines which had been handed out to all attending. They are reproduced for the reader's benefit to enable him to connect the Second Lecture with the First One, which the previous issue of this Quarterly printed, and with the Third One, which will follow after. However, note that the outlines were guide posts to the considerably shorter verbal lectures and enabled the speaker to point to them to save time. They help quickly getting the thoughts even now. For these printed lectures they do not, however, supersede the service rendered by the divisions as marked by underscoring superscriptions in each case, following a capital letter enumeration.

### THE PRESENT STATE OF CONFSSIONAL LUTHERANISM IN AMERICA AND THE WORLD

by Dr. W. M. Oesch

Lecture I

October 30, 10:00 A.M.

#### General Division and Basic Approach:

Past, Present and Future will be the aspects developed in the three lectures.

But first the doctrinal background must be filled in -- as to what CHRIST ONLY means and how the ONE CHURCH, in responsible action locally, can only be made sure of by its pure notes, i.e., by the means of grace taught and administered according to Scriptures. Such an orthodox church is truly ecumenical, and for that reason it cannot fellowship with heterodox churches (although there are Christians in them) because it would thereby be approving of Babylon which is suppressing Zion.

## Remainder of First Lecture:

After the finalizing of the doctrinal background in the Formula of Concord of 1577, four post-Reformation Centuries will be pointed out, confined to Continental Europe. (The fourth is still in progress, so that this First Lecture, as to Europe, will go beyond sketching the background and will already include the analysis of the present state, attaching a notice concerning expansion into other continents.)

## Details on the Four Centuries:

First post-Reformation Century: 30 Years' War, Paul Gerhard, slow drift downward -- Last year 1677.

Second post-Reformation Century: first Pietism, then Enlightenment -- intellectual and enterprising upper-class man ready to take God's place now also in Protestant Germany -- Last year 1777 (one year after Declaration of Independence in U.S.A.).

Third post-Reformation Century: eclipse of Christian doctrine and faith; a revival after Napoleon, which at many places developed into a remarkable Lutheran Confessional Re-awakening. The first date for the latter is the birth of the first Lutheran Free Church, another center is Bavaria. In reviewing the further development: Bible criticism and doctrinal decline win out, issuing into the Ritschlian pseudo-Lutheranism cultural Gospel. However, the small Lutheran Free Church movement has nevertheless spread across Germany -- Last date 1877.

Fourth post-Reformation Century (still in progress, therefore already an analysis of the present state): the decline reaches almost the final low in all the state and territorial Lutheran churches of Continental Europe, so that these are practically only units of the total secular society (Norway still better).

Nevertheless there are some Christians left, mostly in various pietist associations; and a few really Lutheran territorial pastors are left over, who are terrifically baffled. Parishes are beyond the hope of any recovery, and so is theological teaching at all universities. This is the sad story in spite of the hopes that arose prior and after the Second World War. Karl Barth led on to Bultmann, etc. More promise than ever attaches to the Lutheran Free Church counter-movement to be finally recognized as offering the Lutheran confessional alternative. American large-body-Lutheranism is spoiling things. Scandinavian state church situation similar to German, Sweden and Denmark even worse. What sort of Last Date will be coming in 1977?

## THE PRESENT STATE OF CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANISM IN AMERICA AND THE WORLD

### Lecture II: An Analysis of the Present Situation

Oct. 30, 1:30 p.m.

Background and analysis of the present situation in America, introducing the Walther Century and the First post-Walther Century.

#### Preliminary Remarks:

Naturally Lutheranism in America after 1577, more of a factor after 1677, would start as shaped by the Old World, moving, however, without state support, with less emphasis on learning and with more attention to gathering continental immigrant people into congregations, which offered some protection against a rapid going down after 1777.

Yet, in case it should be true that God brought about an enriched, perhaps even more consistent development of Lutheran Confessionalism somehow, somewhere in America, we might be justified in counting its centuries from a different starting point. We in

fact must begin with 1837, when C.F.W. Walther was ordained in Saxony, which he soon left.

The basic WALTHER CENTURY of Confessional Lutheranism in America, being projected in point of time straight into the third and fourth continental post-Reformation centuries. Last date 1937.

This century saw various extensions of Europe's Confessional Re-awakening, operating in America. But through C.F.W. Walther, more than through what had in some practical aspects preceded in the East, the shape of New World Lutheran Confessionalism received an impetus not only closer to confessing congregations, but also more consistent in teaching and preaching than contemporary Europe, in some respects even transcending the Reformation's own decades. The influence of the Missouri Synod, as founded together with Loehe Lutherans in 1847, was tremendous. It amounted to a God-pleasing spiritual Declaration of Independence. This continued to go by our dating, in the Lutheran heartlands up to 1937, which was 50 years after Walther's death.

While not denying other contributions, also those from Scandinavia, nor being unaware of sidetracking influences, the chief factors involved in the "onward and upward" movement demand being recognized as they culminated in the Synodical Conference (1872). We must register the clarion call sounded to Europe, which proved deaf through cultured provincialism, the Lutheran Free Church movement excepted.

Post-Walther achievements, even great post-World War I victories in missions must be noted. Yet also dark clouds ascending around about the Synodical Conference and serious new developments endangering above all the Missouri of the great language transition must be portrayed.

General Council merges into United Lutheran Church, and National Lutheran Council is organized in 1918.

Norwegian Merger in 1917 produces ELC and ELS.

Ohio and Iowa together with the Synodical Conference produce the Chicago Theses, which Missouri did not accept.

Missouri adds the "Brief Statement" in 1932.

The German background ALC had appeared on the scene in 1930, seven years before the Walther Century's LAST DATE, 1937.

The FIRST POST-WALTHER CENTURY (the emphasis turning either to the "post" or to the "Walther"). The Last Date is 2037, D.V., of which a full third part has transpired.

The (German background) ALC's and Missouri's joint two document attempt was presented and acknowledged as future basis by the 1938 St. Louis Convention. But a few months later it was vitiated by the Pittsburgh Agreement and by the increasing ALC approaches to the ULC. ("The Crucible", London, England, spoke out on that). The TALC merger, taking the ELC in, and other developments left also the now following one document "Common Confession" suspended in midair.

The anti-past oriented "Statement of the 44", the Armed Services' Agreement and post-War arrangements increased the Synodical Conference troubles, which centered on "Theology of Fellowship, Part II" (still in its crash program stage). Overseas Delegates were called to the scene in three consecutive years after 1959. Their 15 theses, stressing the pure notes of the One Church, were presented in 1961 to the four synods' four doctrinal committees with individual applications.

The Recessed Synodical Conference Convention in 1961 approved of the Overseas' presentation as offering avenues for a new start. A severe critique of Missouri's "Theology of Fellowship" had been included



in the Overseas' "European Collection, Part III"; the sections of this part were handed over to the individual committee concerned only, not to all committees.

Wisconsin suspends church fellowship with Missouri after the 1961 joint Synodical Conference Convention, although Missouri is still represented through official Observers at the last meeting of the four Committees with the Overseas in 1962 before Missouri's Cleveland Convention.

The Synodical Conference of 90 years standing then reached an ignoble end in 1962, both Wisconsin and the ELS leaving it and Missouri embarking more or less on the Harms course, the Slovak Synod running along. "Theology of Fellowship" was being expanded into the three parts adopted in New York, the outcome being but a little less pseudo-ecumenical than the first attempt had been. On this basis LCUSA had been approved of and the "Mission Affirmations" passed already 2 years earlier. (The substituted international conferences of a new type, Cambridge I and II lacked the Overseas' doctrinal presuppositions and, haranguing mostly about the LWF, in essentials have proved useless.)

New York 1967 (everybody knows the details.)

Denver 1969 was preceded by a succession of Australian and European doctrinal appeals ("AN EARNEST FRATERNAL APPEAL", "A LAST WORD OF FORMER OVERSEAS DELEGATES", "COROLLARIES") also by official European Overtures, which were all neglected. Denver's 3-15 was followed by the declaration of the *status confessionis* in print by the editors of the *LUTHERISCHE RUNDBLICK* (see 1969 issue for the quarters III and IV), and, with reference to the Lutheran Free Churches of France and Finland, by their representative men announcing the state of protest.

Epilogue.

THE PRESENT STATE OF CONFSSIONAL LUTHERANISM  
IN AMERICA AND THE WORLD

Lecture III: A Mandatory Look at the Future

Oct. 31, 10:20 a.m.

Consolatory meditation and explanation of term.

Afterthoughts in Europe, after the full text of Denver 3-15 had become known and the violation of doctrine in reference to Augsburg VII was seen. Two Overseas men at once sent "A Statement" against subjecting Christ's Church to man-made rules as contrary to the Confessions and to the Constitution. At the same time they noted some superb Denver resolutions which emanated from Floor Committee 2.

The necessity of the *status confessionis* on the part of all who are true to the divinely ordered ecumenical mission of confessional Lutheranism is next to be dealt with.

After so much of a breakdown of American Lutheranism's First Post-Walther Century, REALIGNMENTS all across America's Lutherland are inevitable, as we see it.

Individual lessons are to be noted.

*Vexilla Regis prodeunt.*

Three conclusions are to be drawn:

- A) Forward in the America of Walther.
- B) Forward in the Europe of the Lutheran Free Churches, not forgetting the Southern Hemisphere.
- C) Forward together in Confessional Lutheranism, that is in proper Ecumenism fighting the confessional battle with a true ecumenical approach, trusting in free salvation

according to the immovable Word. "The Word they still shall let remain. . . . He's on our side."

Ed. Note: With this number we resume the publication of Dr. Oesch's lectures. The Third one will appear after a brief interval.

We have a supply of the two short documents referred to in this second lecture, A LAST WORD OF FORMER OVERSEAS DELEGATES, addressed to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and especially to the Denver Convention, and "COROLLARIES OR EXPLANATORY POINTS with reference to A LAST WORD OF OVERSEAS DELEGATES." For 20¢, on a "first come, etc." basis, we will send a copy of each of these to those who request them. If we get more orders than we have copies, we would like to feel free to channel the 20¢ sent into the Reformation Lecture Fund, as a donation. (We do not have the office personnel to go into any "refunding" operation.)

## BOOK REVIEWS

Joseph R. Rosenbloom, The Dead Sea Isaiah Scroll: A Literary Analysis. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1970. Pages xiii-88. Price, \$4.50.

This book treats of the complete scroll of Isaiah which was found in 1947 in a cave near the northwestern corner of the Dead Sea. This scroll is probably the most valuable individual scroll of all the Dead Sea Scrolls. First, it is a complete scroll. Not only does it contain all of the chapters of Isaiah, but it includes them all in the same order as given in our Bible, and as a unit. This surely is a strong argument for the unity of Isaiah, which the higher critics

attack. It is also valuable because it corresponds to a remarkable extent to the Hebrew text in our Hebrew Bible, and as we had it before 1947. Although there are numerous variant readings, as we can learn from a study of the unpointed Hebrew words at the bottom of each page of Isaiah in Kittel's BIBLIA HEBRAICA, these are few in comparison to the number of words in the Hebrew text on each page. Moreover, in most of the instances in which this manuscript (called the St. Mark's Isaiah Scroll) differs from the Masoretic text, the variants are relatively insignificant, often involving the letters waw and yodh, which are optional in many Hebrew words.

In his study Dr. Rosenbloom, who teaches in the Classics Department at Washington University in St. Louis, takes up most of the variant readings in the St. Mark's Scroll. This manuscript is very old, having been dated by reputable scholars at about 150 to 100 B.C. This is almost 1000 years older than manuscripts of Isaiah or other parts of the Old Testament which were available to us before 1947. (When manuscripts became old and worn, they would be discarded by the Jews and replaced by new copies.) Yet it is interesting to know that the author of this book speaks of the copyist (or copyists) of the St. Mark's manuscript as having before him (them) a Hebrew text which was essentially the same as the Hebrew text in our Bible, and that most of the variant readings in the St. Mark's scroll are the result of carelessness, a misunderstanding of the text, or an attempt at simplifying the text. In the vast majority of cases Dr. Rosenbloom prefers the Masoretic Text (MT) to the St. Mark's scroll (MS), which, he alleges, in some instances destroys the poetic quality of the MT.

In his introduction Dr. Rosenbloom makes the following statements which, we feel, give a good description of this study:

"The present study is an analysis of the variants of the MS and the MT from a literary orientation: the relationship of the MS to the MT, together

with an explanation of the purposes which the scribe had in making the changes. In general, these changes are seen to grow out of the motivation noted in other studies: the development of a text which was more easily understandable to a readership which no longer used Hebrew as their primary language. The MS is seen as a simplification of the MT with the greater number of variants explicable for this reason. This is true for stylistic changes as well as for the reasons noted above and in other studies of linguistic factors.

"Seen in the light of this and other studies, the MS becomes a popularization of the Book of Isaiah which developed to meet the requirements of a particular audience. It also indicates that a single 'fixed' text was not the prevailing practice at the time of the MS although such may have been the ideal of the Masoretes. Liberties were apparently taken with the Holy Scriptures which moderns would hesitate to take. On the other hand, the MS may be seen as standing in relation to the MT or the mastertext of its time as the Newly Revised Version stands in relation to the King James Version." (p. xiii.)

This reviewer found it helpful and rewarding to read the entire Book of Isaiah in the Hebrew with various English versions for reference, and noting the variants as pointed out in this little book, which can prove very beneficial to any student of the text of Isaiah, we had occasion to disagree with the author's conclusions in only a few instances. We are indebted to both the author and the publishers for this book, which we would recommend as a convenient and helpful guide.

Rudolph E. Honsey

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The Layman's Parallel New Testament. Grand Rapids:  
Zondervan Publishing House, 1970, \$7.95; paper-  
back, \$4.95.

Several parallel editions of various translations of the New Testament have appeared in recent

years. This is the newest and contains the King James Version, the Amplified New Testament, the Living New Testament, and the Revised Standard Version. Readers of the LSQ are generally familiar with all of these translations except the Living New Testament, which is a revised edition, in turn, of the American Standard Version, though paraphrased. If one remembers the weaknesses of the translations and uses them properly, these four parallel columns will be great aids to Bible study.

G. E. Reichwald

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The Zondervan Expanded Concordance. Grand Rapids:  
Zondervan Publishing House, 1968, \$14.95

A good concordance is a valuable tool, as every pastor knows. But one of the problems is tracing a word through a translation which has no concordance to open the way. One may use the original, but when one is interested in how a translation uses a word, this cannot be done too readily. This concordance combines several translations to meet this need: the King James Version, the Amplified Bible, the Berkely version, Phillip's translation, the Revised Standard Version, the New English Bible, the English Revised, plus some words from the new edition of the Schofield Bible. Bible students will find it a most helpful reference work.

G. E. Reichwald

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Wold, Joseph Conrad. God's Impatience in Liberia.  
Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.,  
1968, \$2.95

Eerdman Publishing Company has been publishing a series of monographs on various mission fields throughout the world. While our synod does not have any African missions, it is most interesting -- and informative on methods -- to read what other groups, including Lutherans, are doing in Liberia.

G. E. Reichwald