

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY

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CTS at 175 Years

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Wilhelm Sihler

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(1846–1945)

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Birth Announcement of Concordia Theological Seminary: The Lutheran Seminary at Fort Wayne

Wilhelm Sihler (1801–1885)¹

Since it has pleased the almighty and all-merciful God to revive our precious Lutheran church on both sides of the ocean, even by means of the false union of our times, faithful members of the church in the German fatherland lovingly worked for their brothers in faith here in America. For this purpose, they have made it possible during the past four years for nineteen believing and churchly minded men to come over here in order to serve the Lutheran church as preachers and schoolteachers after having been prepared, examined, and specially instructed at home. Recently, the love of these devoted men for their American brothers has gone even further. Because of the current need, and in anticipation of increased future need, they have decided to establish a seminary in Fort Wayne, so that faithful, qualified young men can receive the necessary training to take over the holy preaching office in the Lutheran church. To this end, they have not only made money available already for the building project, they have also sent a candidate of theology as well as eleven young men, who for a shorter or longer period of time have just received instruction by seasoned Lutheran pastors.

These have already arrived here last month, and another candidate of theology, who will also work as a teacher, will soon join them. After the most basic arrangements have been made (work on the proposed seminary building will not commence until next spring), classes are expected to start already this month, with the help of the almighty God.

At this time, we are not releasing details concerning these classes. For now, we only want to call the attention of the reader and the faithful, Lutheran congregations to two particulars: one is a short explanation of the purpose of the seminary, and the other is a request to all faithful members of the Lutheran church who do not yet have such an institution to support, that they will help take care of this little seedling, that they will help tend it with their assistance and prayers. Referring to the purpose of the seminary, we freely admit that it is our heartfelt desire and will to prepare servants for our church, under the mercy and with the blessing of the triune God:

¹ Wilhelm Sihler, “Das lutherische Seminar zu Fort Wayne,” *Der Lutheraner* 3, no. 5 (October 1846): 29–30. This text was translated for Project Wittenberg (<http://www.projectwittenberg.org/etext/cts/ctsborn.txt>) by Erika Bullmann Flores in 1994 and edited by Nathaniel Jensen in 2020. You may freely distribute, copy, or print this text. Please direct any comments or suggestions to Rev. Robert E. Smith, Kroemer Library, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 N. Clinton St., Fort Wayne, IN 46825. Email robert.smith@ctsfw.edu or call (260) 452-3149.

1) who cling to the pattern of the saving doctrine and remain in what has been entrusted to them, just as the orthodox church—called Lutheran—from the beginning believes God’s word, confesses and teaches it;

2) who do not wish to become associated with this anti-scriptural “church-merging” [*Kirchenmengerei*] and false “unionism” of our times. Regretfully, many of the so-called Lutheran synods are embroiled in this matter in either word or deed.² Rather, we desire those who fight for the faith which has once been given to the saints, who wish no other union, nor join it, than that of the same faith, confession, and doctrine in all articles as given to us through God’s word of truth, leading to salvation;

3) who have a healthy and thorough knowledge of the truth and, if God will, have personally experienced this truth;

4) who diligently teach this truth to others, who rightly divide and connect the word of God, law and gospel, and thus thwart the rabble rousers and false religious enthusiasts;

5) who humbly and sincerely love their church, in whose clear conscience is embedded the mystery of faith;

6) who are willing to bear all sorts of internal and external troubles and tribulations for the sake of the most dear confession and the one, pure doctrine;

7) who take care of themselves and the flock which might be entrusted to their care by the Arch-shepherd, who will faithfully tend to them with the pure word and sacrament, both individually and as a group, and by their lives and conduct will bear the fruit of the spirit and be an example to them;

8) who finally strive to hold to unity in the spirit through the bond of peace with one another, always conscious that not only have they been created by the same Father, were redeemed by the same Son, and sanctified by the same Spirit, but that they serve God in this most holy matter—the building of *his* holy church as *his* co-workers.

It is our intent, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to produce such servants for the church, sooner or later, depending on their age and talents. To reach this goal, to make this possible—and this is another reason for my brotherly address—prayer and help is needed not only from those precious brothers in the faith in Germany, but also here in America, for whom this institution is being established.

² [Note from the original text:] It is a well-known fact that the so-called Lutheran General Synod, for instance, teaches the Reformed view of the holy sacraments, and in church practice is in many ways Methodist; also, members of the Lutheran synods of Ohio and Michigan serve mixed congregations as such, which means that, for instance the administration of Holy Communion is Lutheran for the Lutherans and Reformed for the Reformed.

How many of those here are building houses and barns and are planting orchards, with their children in mind? They carefully tend to these buildings and plantations so that their children and children's children can enjoy the earthly benefits of them. Should they not also help groom this spiritual plantation and tend to it with their faithful prayers and assistance, from which they and their children will, with God's blessing, reap the heavenly reward? Would they willingly watch their friends work their fields and build their houses, while they themselves are fit and strong enough at least to help?

Therefore, I am hopeful that I am not asking the faithful sons of our beloved church in vain—though because of her current decay and distortion there may not be many—to help the German brothers and brothers in faith with prayerful hearts and open hands in the cultivation of this seminary, this spiritual work of love. Are not our feet willing to carry the entire body in whatever direction the head guides it; in return the eyes and hands, yea the entire body bends down to the feet and cares for them, whenever ill has befallen them? Should then we, who are one spiritual body in Christ, be shamed by our physical body, and not tend to one another and together do works of love?

Should we, to whom the precious treasure of the pure saving doctrine and the unadulterated sacraments has been given by the Lord to perpetuate and propagate, remain cold, mistrustful, and idle? Should our fervor for the preservation of the pure, saving truth be surpassed by the fervor of the papists and enthusiasts for the preservation of their soul-destroying false doctrine? Therefore, beloved brothers and brothers in faith on this side of the sea, you who still love your church as the pillar and foundation of the truth, who are concerned with the preservation thereof among the thousands of emigrating brothers in faith who come every year, give a hand here! Together let us—as Nehemiah and his followers of old—with the one hand fight the papists and enthusiasts, false brothers and all anti-scriptural and unecclesiastical union, and with the other hand, however, let us build!

Now the faithful Lord and God, who lets the sincere succeed, will make this lovely word of promise come true for us also in this sense. May he do this out of grace! Amen.³

Dr. W. Sihler
Luth. Preacher at Fort Wayne, IN
Currently Director of the Seminary
Fort Wayne, October 24, 1846

³ [Note from the original text:] Every donation for the seminary will be published quarterly in *Der Lutheraner*, with the permission of the publisher, which certifies receipt thereof.

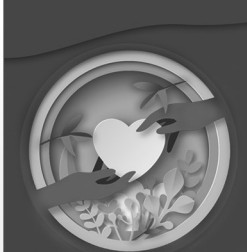
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Concordia Theological Seminary: Practical Lessons from its German Period (1846–1945)

Charles P. Schaum

Introduction

Christians, like any other people, respond to systemic challenges when cooperating for the sake of the Gospel.¹ Here we remember both joys and challenges in the life of Concordia Theological Seminary (CTS) before 1945. During this time, it was housed in Fort Wayne, Indiana (1846–1861), merged with Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri (1861–1875), and located in Springfield, Illinois (1875–1976). See the first nine chapters of Heintzen’s *Prairie School of the Prophets*.² We seek the best perspective of the past to prepare for the future as we study CTS within the larger context of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS).³

Why Two Seminaries?

The early LCMS developed from the cooperation of two strong-minded, independent groups, each with its own seminary. The Saxon immigrants were located with C. Ferdinand W. Walther (1811–1887) and others in and around St. Louis and Altenburg, Missouri. The Franconians were located with F. August Crämer (1812–1891) around Frankenmuth, Michigan. Crämer was the pastor of St. Lorenz, who also engaged in missionary work with local American Indians.⁴ Crämer, with Friedrich C. D. Wyneken (1810–1876) in Fort Wayne and Wilhelm Sihler (1801–1885) in Pomeroy, Ohio, laid the early groundwork for the formation of the LCMS by separating from the Ohio and Michigan synods,

¹ The approach of this article is informed by Sidney Dekker, *The Field Guide to Understanding ‘Human Error’* (Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate, 2006).

² Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary 1846–1976* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1989).

³ “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” George Santayana, *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress*, 5 vols. (London: Archibald Constable, 1905–1921), 1:284. We use “LCMS” and “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” also to mean *Die deutsche evangelisch-lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten*.

⁴ Ludwig E. Fürbringer, *Persons and Events* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1947), 14–19. A number of LCMS sources refer to Crämer as “August[us] Friedrich.”

supported by J. K. Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872) in 1845–1846.⁵ Yet LCMS history mostly became Saxon history by 1866. Both Johann F. Köstering (1830–1908) and Christian F. Hochstetter (1828–1905) give Wyneken a secondary role, even though he was first in the country.⁶ Still, both Walther and Wyneken were valued for their respective talents. Walther was an administrator, author, and professor, while Wyneken was a preacher and missionary: “As the saying went, with respect to doctrine, wherewith Professor Walther brings the true Light, Wyneken’s word [preaching] is like thunder that follows lightning!”⁷

Group origin did not cause strict factionalism. Many immigrants set aside their pride of origin and liturgical traditions for the sake of LCMS unity. For example, only after the Great War (First World War) did Concordia Publishing House print an agenda with more than Saxon dialectal spellings and liturgical forms. Ironically, the transition to English during that time rendered the issue moot.⁸ Nevertheless, some regionalisms from the “old country” persisted for some time.⁹ To many LCMS

⁵ See August R. Suelflow, “The Missouri Synod Organized,” in *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia, 1964) 142–143; Christoph Barnbrock, “Composing a Constitution in Context: Analytical Observations on the First Draft of the Missouri Synod’s Constitution (1846),” *Concordia Journal* 27, no. 1 (2001): 38–56.

⁶ Johann F. Köstering, *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1838* (St. Louis: Wiebusch, 1866), 66–84; Christian F. Hochstetter, *Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode in Nord-Amerika, und ihrer Lehrkämpfe* (Dresden: Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), 91–119; William H. T. Dau, ed., *Ebenezer: Reviews of the Work of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of a Century* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1922), 1–52; Georg Mezger, ed., *Denkstein zum fünfundsiebzigjährigen Jubiläum der Missourisynode* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1922), 1–37. Compare Augustus L. Graebner, *Kurzgefaßte Geschichte der Missouri-Synode* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1893).

⁷ Hochstetter, *Geschichte*, 116: “Man pflegte zu sagen, im Verhältnis zu der Lehre, womit Professor Walther das rechte Licht bringe, sei Wynekens Wort wie der Donner, der dem Blitze folge!” All translations are by the present author unless otherwise noted. See also H. G. Sauer and J. W. Miller, *Geschichte der Deutschen Ev.-Luth. St. Pauls-Gemeinde zu Fort Wayne, Ind., vom Jahre 1837 bis zum Jahre 1912* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1912), 16; Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 18–19; J. W. Theiss, “F. C. D. Wyneken,” in Dau, *Ebenezer*, 52–65.

⁸ Compare LCMS, *Kirchen-Agenda für Evang.-Luth. Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1902) and LCMS, *Kirchenagenda für Ev.-Luth. Gemeinden ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1922). The 1902 agenda preserves, for example, a form of the Lord’s Prayer in the Hauptgottesdienst that has spellings and usage from old Saxon agendas (e.g., *Brod für Brot*, p. 55), while the 1922 agenda follows the 1901 spelling reform. Wilhelm Löhe’s *Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses* was used among the Franconians at least for a time in the LCMS, then presented its influence through the Common Service that entered the LCMS in 1911 with the English Synod merger. The Saxons in Missouri had a noted antipathy toward the Common Service before heartily embracing it in English. See John W. Fenton, “Wilhelm Löhe’s Hauptgottesdienst (1844) as Critique of Luther’s Deutsche Messe,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 64, no. 2 (2000): 127–148; C. F. William Dallmann, *My Life* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1945), 56–58.

⁹ For example, Ludwig Fürbringer recalled the difficulty that Franz A. O. Pieper faced when dealing with the Franconians and Bavarians around Frankenmuth. This was exacerbated by Pieper’s background as a speaker of *Plattdüütsch*, Low German. See Ludwig E. Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1944), 152–153.

members today, such conservation might seem quaint. Yet such acts reaffirmed love of family, close community, and group history in a strange new land. Dresden and Neuendettelsau (New Dettel's Meadow) are about half the distance by highway as are St. Louis and Fort Wayne. Yet (Upper) Saxony and (Middle) Franconia are distant with respect to history and culture.

Lutheranism was born and given official privilege in Saxony, yet the electoral Albertine branch of the House of Wettin became Roman Catholic when offered the Polish-Lithuanian crown in 1697, which it lost in 1763. The Wettins aided the Habsburgs against Brandenburg-Prussia's House of Hohenzollern. Rationalist Lutheran court preachers dominated the theology and worship life of the Saxon territorial church.¹⁰ In 1806, Napoleon (1769–1821) created the Kingdom of Saxony to offset Prussia. At the 1815 Congress of Vienna, Prussian king Frederick William III (1770–1840) partitioned the Saxon kingdom and took both the city and university of Wittenberg, subsuming the latter into the university at Halle. The Prussian Union Church became a sociopolitical tool.¹¹

Franconia was a hodgepodge of small territories connected to both Catholic bishops and Protestant nobility, including the Brandenburg-Ansbach branch of House Hohenzollern. Franconia was adjacent to the Upper Palatinate, an exclave of the Rhenish Palatinate, which had ties to Calvinism and the Jacobite monarchs of England. The Upper Palatinate was annexed by Bavaria in 1623 during the Thirty Years' War. Franconia was absorbed into Bavaria by the Treaty of Paris, 1814. Both were dominated by the regional Catholicism. The faithful, confessional Lutherans in Franconia had not experienced the political favor and identification of Lutheranism with a large "established church" that existed in Saxony. Yet a key part of the German revival movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) arose in Franconia. The theological faculty in Erlangen and Löhe's work in Neuendettelsau helped to grow a pietistic, liturgically Lutheran confessional renewal.¹² The Saxons were informed by this work, as well as that of Johann G. Scheibel (1783–1843) in Prussian Silesia.

¹⁰ See *Reinhard und von Ammon als Dogmatiker: oder kritische Bemerkungen über Ammon's Summa theologiae christianae mit steter Rücksicht auf Reinhard's Vorlesungen über die Dogmatik* (Leipzig: Steinacker, 1813); Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1987), 210–214. Franz V. Reinhard was of the older Tübingen School, while Christoph Friedrich von Ammon was closer to Schleiermacher's mediating theology. Both were Rationalists.

¹¹ G. C. Adolf von Harleß and Theodor Kliefoth, "Selected Lectures from Die allgemeine lutherische Konferenz in Hannover, am 1. und 2. Juli 1868," in *International Lutheran Council—26th (11th) Conference, 25–28 September 2018, Antwerp, Belgium*, trans. Charles P. Schaum (St. Louis: Concordia, 2018), 134–158.

¹² See additionally Gottfried Thomasius, *Das Wiedererwachen des evangelischen Lebens in der lutherischen Kirche Bayerns* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1867); Charles P. Schaum, "Church and Ministry before Altenburg: Franz Adolph Marbach and the Saxon Parish Order," in C. F. W. Walther: *Churchman and Theologian*, ed. Edward A. Engelbrecht (St. Louis: Concordia, 2011), 86–111.

The Saxon immigrants tried to escape Rationalism, only to be ensnared by the sins of Martin Stephan Sr. (1777–1846). After his ouster, they adopted the Saxon Parish Order (*Parochialordnung*) of 1839–1840, which established congregationalism and lay ruling elders. They also avoided private confession and absolution due to Stephan.¹³ Prussian emigrant pastor Johannes A. A. Grabau (1804–1879) of the Buffalo Synod sharply criticized the Saxons in the *Kirchliches Informatorium* and other publications. He even suggested that the Saxons deserved their lot by choosing Stephan.¹⁴ The Saxons, who felt deep guilt from seeing their kin perish because of their choices, became highly defensive and mistrustful, even sparring hotly at times with the Franconians.¹⁵ The latter had very different, more positive experiences with clergy. Related tensions flared up periodically in the LCMS, at least through the 1880s.¹⁶

Such tensions, coupled with the “theoretical-practical” seminary paradigm, created distance between the Saxons and Franconians. When Löhe ceased his support in 1853, the early LCMS coalesced around the Saxons in St. Louis.¹⁷ Unity remained a common goal. LCMS conventions were held in both St. Louis and Fort Wayne. Wyneken was called to Trinity in St. Louis to assist Walther. Saxon Ottomar Fürbringer (1810–1892) was called to St. Lorenz in Frankenmuth to replace Crämer. Sihler followed Wyneken at St. Paul’s in Fort Wayne. Both the latter remained until

¹³ Conflict over private absolution in the LCMS erupted in 1847. See LCMS, *Erster Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1847* (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1847), 6–8.

¹⁴ Schaum, “Church and Ministry before Altenburg,” 106. Prussian Lutheran immigrants believed that they had suffered more for resisting the Union Church than had the Saxons within their territorial church. For why that might be, see Johann G. Scheibel, *Actenmäßige Geschichte der neuesten Unternehmung einer Union zwischen der reformierten und lutherischen Kirche vorzüglich durch gemeinschaftliche Agende in Deutschland und besonders in dem preußischen Staate*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Friedrich Fleischer, 1834).

¹⁵ Both Ernst Moritz Bürger (1806–1890) and C. F. W. Walther struggled with the sin of abandoning their parishes in Germany. See Bürger, *Sendschreiben an die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche zunächst in Wisconsin, Missouri, Preußen und Sachsen* (Leipzig: Kößling’sche Buchhandlung, 1846), 15; Martin Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1890), 41–42.

¹⁶ Charles P. Schaum and Albert B. Collver III, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man: Scripture, Philosophy, Dialogue, and Conflict* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2019), 129–143; Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1953); Albert B. Collver III, “Lay Elders—A Brief Overview of their Origin in the Missouri Synod: Implications for Elders Today,” *Concordia Journal* 32, no. 1 (2006): 38–53.

¹⁷ Carl A. W. Röbbelen, *Wie stehen wir zu Herrn Pfarrer Löhe?* (St. Louis: Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1855). In 1848, the constitutional amendment granting congregational polity failed. In 1854, congregationalism was incorporated into the “New Constitution.” See LCMS, *Die Neue Verfassung oder Constitution der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten* (St. Louis: Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1854), 5.

they died.¹⁸ Yet “growing pains” amid resource shortfalls tested that unity and affected the seminaries.

Which “Seminary” Came First?

From Altenburg onward, today’s Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (CSL) was the first to “graduate” five ministerial candidates between 1847 and 1850. Yet it was not the first seminary of the Missouri Synod. Both seminaries have been known at times as “Concordia College” (the official name of CSL), “*Concordia Seminar*,” and “Concordia Theological Seminary.”¹⁹

In the minutes of the first LCMS convention in 1847, the institution in Fort Wayne was called a “seminary” (*Seminar*), while the school in Altenburg was referred to as a “theological college” (*theologisches Collegium*).²⁰ Already in 1846, there had been some talk of moving the Altenburg *Gymnasium* (prep school) to Fort Wayne and joining it with the practical seminary.²¹ Since the Franconians financially supported their own seminary, as did the Saxons their own theological college, that original plan never came to fruition.

After convening on Monday, April 26, 1847, the LCMS discussed CTS on Friday, April 30, and CSL on Monday, May 3.²² CTS, with Sihler as president, traced its history to Wyneken’s 1844 tutelage of candidates in his Fort Wayne parsonage and the financial backing of Wilhelm Löhe in 1846. The synod directed its new president, C. F. W. Walther, and secretary, F. Wilhelm Husmann (1807–1881), to write a letter (May 6) to Löhe, asking him to transfer well-funded CTS, with its large campus and growing physical plant, to the young synod. In a letter dated September 8, 1847, Löhe warmly granted this request. In 1848, the synod officially thanked Löhe and drafted governing statutes for CTS.²³ The charter of the “German Theological Seminary” in Fort Wayne was approved on January 21, 1850. The original campus has been owned by Indiana Institute of Technology since 1953.

¹⁸ Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 5–25; Dennis R. Rathert, *A History of Trinity Lutheran Church and School* (St. Louis: Trinity Lutheran Church, 1989), 29.

¹⁹ Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1965), 20–21. N. p., *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum des praktischen evang.-lutherischen Concordia-Seminars zu Springfield, Ill. (1846–1896)* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1896), *passim*; Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 86; Norman F. Elliott, ed. *Patterson’s American Education* (Mount Prospect, Ill.: Educational Directories, Inc., 1962), 654, 686.

²⁰ *Erster Synodalbericht*, 9, 11.

²¹ *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 100.

²² *Erster Synodalbericht*, 9, 11.

²³ Text of the documents is in *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 57–65; LCMS, *Zweiter Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1848* (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1848), 15–17. Only here does CTS come first; from 1849 onward, CSL always gets pride of place.

Three of the five members on the first CTS board of directors had ties to the Altenburg college: pastors Walther, Christoph Heinrich Löber (1828–1897), and Ernst G. W. Keyl (1804–1872). The other two were from Fort Wayne: “Pastor Dr. Sihler” and layman Christian Piepenbrink. Thus, CTS became the first seminary of the Missouri Synod.²⁴

In 1848, the Altenburg college was still the property of the Saxon congregations. The term *college*, a university prep school, was the equivalent of a German *Gymnasium*. The school was founded and advertised as such in August 1839. In St. Louis, Ferdinand’s elder brother O. Hermann Walther (1809–1841) handled admissions.²⁵ The school opened in December 1839 and was coeducational before 1843. It occupied the historic log cabin in early 1841, but instructors J. Friedrich Bünger (1810–1882), Ottomar Fürbringer, and Ferdinand Walther all received calls elsewhere during 1841. Instructor Theodore J. Brohm (1808–1881) received a call in 1843, leaving the college in the parsonage of pastor Gotthold H. Löber (1797–1849). The deaths of both Hermann Walther in 1841 and Löber in 1849 left about nine students with pastor Ernst G. W. Keyl and instructor Johann J. Gönner (1807–1864).

Ferdinand Walther’s leadership was key to moving the college from Altenburg to South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis. In 1847, the *Gymnasium* had started to become distinct from the seminary program, completing that process in 1850 with the call of Adolf F. T. Biewend (1816–1858) from CTS.²⁶ In St. Louis, Walther led CSL to become a scholarly “theoretical seminary,” together with a classical *Gymnasium*. CSL’s 1850 deed of transfer and its statutes are similar to the 1848 documents for CTS.²⁷ “Concordia College” was chartered on February 23, 1853, and approved on March 22 of that year.

²⁴ LCMS, *Synodalhandbuch der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und Andern Staaten* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), 105–109; Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 20, 30–39. We dismiss the 1826 activity of General Synod pastor Benjamin Kurtz (1795–1865) mentioned in *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 3. This date was proposed to deflect an 1896 threat to close the Springfield seminary.

²⁵ Köstering and Walther, *Auswanderung*, 66–71; Fuerbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 17; *Geschichte des Concordia-Collegiums der Ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St. zu Fort Wayne, Indiana* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1889), 14.

²⁶ *Geschichte des Concordia-Collegiums*, 15–16; Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 16–26.

²⁷ LCMS, *Vierter Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre [1850]* (St. Louis: Niedner, 1851), 15–20. The title page has a misprint that shows 1851 as the convention year. See also *Zweiter Synodalbericht*, 15–17.

The Itinerant “Practical Seminary”

In the 1847 constitution of the LCMS, the plan (Chapter V, §9) was to develop two kinds of educational institutions:

It shall be the duty of Synod to erect, support, and supervise institutions for the preparation of future pastors and teachers for service in the Church: These institutions may be of two kinds. In one kind the goal is to be a thorough theological training. In the other kind the goal is to be a predominantly practical training.²⁸

On the one hand, this approach wisely understood both the immediate need to engage the American mission field and the long-term need to provide a strong, comprehensive doctrinal foundation. On the other hand, this approach led to organizational stratification and helped to enable ethnocentrism. For example, CSL pastors were curated and preferred for leadership over those at CTS. In the 1880s, missionaries usually were paid \$400 per year, while at least one missionary to English-speakers received only \$300 per year.²⁹ Nevertheless, the “practical seminary” thrived during the 1850s, blessed also by the indefatigable August Crämer.³⁰ Most of the Missouri Synod’s pastors before 1870 came from the practical program, at times by a two-to-one margin.³¹

In the 1850s, the practical seminary hosted other fledgling programs while the theoretical seminary stabilized itself. In 1857, CTS hosted the first synod-wide teacher training program. Today’s Concordia University Chicago began with LCMS convention action in 1857, which built on the education of teachers at CTS (1846–1857) and private teacher training in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (1855–1857) under pastors Friedrich J. C. Lochner (1822–1902), Philipp Fleischmann (1815–1878), and Ludwig Dulitz. Fleischmann became the director of the program in 1857. Christian A. T. Selle (1819–1898) was called to the presidency of the growing teacher seminary in 1861, which moved to Addison, Illinois, in July 1864.³²

Additionally in 1857, CTS helped with the founding of a short-lived English Academy in Fort Wayne run by Swiss immigrant Arnold Sutermeister (1830–1907),

²⁸ William G. Polack, “Our First Synodical Constitution,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (1943): 7.

²⁹ Dallmann, *My Life*, 33–35. William Dallmann, onetime president of the English Synod, recalled struggles about language, culture, and money.

³⁰ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 42–53.

³¹ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 39.

³² Compare Köstering and Walther, *Auswanderung*, 82–84; and the more detailed account in Alfred J. Freitag, *College with a Cause: A History of Concordia Teachers College* (River Forest, Ill.: Concordia Teachers College, 1964), 20–32. Compare again the speculative analysis in Carl S. Meyer, “Teacher Training in the Missouri Synod to 1864,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 30, no. 3 (1957): 97–99.

a mathematics instructor who, during the US Civil War, became captain of the 11th Independent Battery Indiana Light Artillery. This academy cast a long shadow. It influenced the formal study of doctrine at district and synodical conventions in the LCMS into the 1920s.³³

Despite these early successes, the storm clouds of the Civil War were gathering. Missouri exempted students of divinity from military service; Indiana did not. This situation gave impetus to the merger of CTS and CSL in 1861, while the *Gymnasium* was moved to Fort Wayne. The *Gymnasium* continued to trace its roots to the schools in Altenburg and St. Louis.³⁴ The relocation also unified all sources of funding to support one larger enterprise whose leadership was in St. Louis. Wilhelm Sihler wrote that this move caused hurt feelings in Fort Wayne, even if most agreed to it.³⁵

In Fort Wayne, the *Gymnasium*, officially still Concordia College, operated under the original CTS charter together with CTS in Springfield, Illinois, from 1875 to 1921. That was not in compliance with Indiana law. An act of the Indiana legislature amended the charter of the “German Theological Seminary” to legalize all actions up to April 5, 1881.³⁶ By 1889, the *Gymnasium* had 200 students and eight instructors. Starting in 1911, students who were not planning to study in St. Louis could enroll at the *Gymnasium*. In 1916, LCMS congregations in Fort Wayne established a Luther Institute for business vocations. That merged with the *Gymnasium* in 1935, becoming today’s Concordia Lutheran High School (at its present campus since 1964). The *Gymnasium* offered an Associate of Arts degree from 1952 to its closure in 1957.³⁷

Below is a summary of seven points made at the 1860 synodical convention, which are covered fully in Sihler’s *Denkschrift (Memorial)* that was designed to explain the actions of that year. At the time, Sihler did believe the move to be the best course of action for the following reasons:

1. The greater number of instructors assembled in one location would promote the understanding of true doctrine and provide a greater defense against false doctrinal tendencies.

³³ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 127; *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 93–94; W. Czamanske, “Synodical Conventions and Pastoral Conferences in the Missouri Synod,” in Dau, *Ebenezer*, 484–485; W. Broecker, “Dr. William Sihler,” in Dau, *Ebenezer*, 76. The best information on Sutermeister is at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnold_Sutermeister.

³⁴ *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 39, 109–111; *Geschichte des Concordia-Collegiums*, 8–16.

³⁵ Wilhelm Sihler, *Lebenslauf von W. Sihler als lutherischer Pastor, u.s.w.: Auf mehrfaches Begehren von ihm selbst beschrieben* (New York: Lutherischer Verlags-Verein, 1878–1880), 2:187.

³⁶ *Synodalhandbuch* [1924], 109.

³⁷ *Geschichte des Concordia-Collegiums*, 55; Concordia Senior College opened in 1957, remaining until 1975. Only in 1976 did CTS return to the city of its birth, taking up residence at the Senior College campus.

2. The various abilities (*Gaben*) of the instructors could be used more profitably to meet the goal of educating the pupils. Since the instructors would be able to concentrate more on those abilities related to the subjects in which they were trained, a generally higher level of education could be reached. This would hinder the situation where one had to be responsible for everything, subdivide one's efforts, and thus, regardless of how much effort and time were invested, produce nothing profitable in any subject of education. Thus, more sufficient results could be obtained from the pupils.

3. With the addition of new instructors, it is not only necessary but also imperative that they find colleagues who can help orient them as they adapt to the duties of their office, that one need not fear with every change of an instructor that there is also a change in the method of instruction or even a change in seminary administration.

4. Simpler oversight regarding the abilities of the developing students (*Zöglinge*) during their education, with specific aim to mitigate any misconceptions that could develop into irrecoverable errors.

5. In part, students who are more mature in years and have a few more Christian experiences behind them can have a positive influence on the younger pupils who are being schooled from their youth onward. In part, students who have received less preparatory instruction might have greater interaction with those students who are more accomplished in a scholarly way and thus develop a greater ambition to press on and mitigate possible bias. With this, it is hoped that through such common life, one might see a salutary melding of group and mutual instruction.

6. The theological faculty could work in wholly different, more influential directions, such as publishing theological periodicals, drafting theological concerns, and raising a voice concerning contemporary issues.

7. The union of the seminaries is advantageous with respect to budgetary issues.³⁸

While serving as pastor of St. Paul's, Wilhelm Sihler presided over the practical seminary (1846–1861) and the *Gymnasium* (1861–1885). In the latter institution, he worked with, among others, directors Alexander Saxer and C. J. Otto Hanser (1832–1910, later at Trinity, St. Louis), assistant headmaster R. Bischoff (1847–1916), instructor C. H. Rudolph Lange (1825–1892, later called to CSL), and “Rector” Georg Schick (1831–1915), who served 1856–1914 and, like August Crämer, was

³⁸ *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 102–106. This is a paraphrased translation for the sake of brevity. Compare the full version in Wilhelm Sihler, *Denkschrift zur eingehenden Darlegung der Gründe für die Vereinigung der beiden theologischen Lehranstalten in St. Louis und für die Verpflanzung des Gymnasiums nach Fort Wayne nach einmüthigen Beschlusses der vom 10. bis 20. October A.D. 1860 zu St. Louis abgehaltenen Versammlung der allgemeinen Synode* (St. Louis: August Wiebusch und Sohn, 1860).

remembered for being a tough, yet beloved leader. Later, Sihler regretted the events of 1860–1861:

In any case, the experience of later years apparently has indicated that quite a few aspects of those seven points of fact that were advanced at the time have not been fulfilled, and no small number of us, myself included, later came to the opinion that it would have been better to leave the *Gymnasium* in its natural connection to the theological seminary in St. Louis, and to leave the so-called practical seminary here in Fort Wayne.³⁹

Still, Walther did not neglect the practical division after it had been absorbed into CSL. In 1860, at Walther's urging, a pre-seminary prep school (*Proseminar*) was established by Pastor Friedrich Brunn (1819–1895) in Steeden, Nassau, in the German state of Hesse. The practical division at CSL had its own *Proseminar* in St. Louis. Adding to that were students from Hermannsburg in the Lüneburg Heath in Lower Saxony. They were sent by Louis Harms, who founded the Hermannsburg Mission, noted for work in South Africa and India. Into the 1880s, pro-German sentiments and connections with Germany existed at the *Gymnasium* and at the seminaries.⁴⁰

Walther and others disliked having too many pastors with minimal education—whether in St. Louis or in Springfield.⁴¹ This bias emerged among two parties on the issue of moving the practical seminary to Springfield, as seen in the 1874 *Proceedings* of the Western District (now the Missouri District). The discussion occurred at the district level because synodical institutions were locally funded. Not until the late 1870s did the income provided to the synod by Concordia Publishing House (CPH) begin to allow the LCMS and its educational institutions to gain financial independence and develop a separate institutional character. We summarize the convention discussion over the next several paragraphs.⁴²

³⁹ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 55; Sihler, *Lebenslauf*, 2:187: “Uebrigens hat es die Erfahrung späterer Jahre so ziemlich ausgewiesen, daß gar Manches in jenen 7 Gründen angeführte nicht in Erfüllung gegangen ist; und nicht wenige von uns, darunter auch ich, sind später der Meinung geworden, es wäre besser gewesen, das Gymnasium in der naturgemäßen Verbindung mit dem theologischen Seminar in St. Louis gelassen zu haben und das sogen[ante] praktische Seminar hier in Fort Wayne.”

⁴⁰ *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 39; Meyer, *Log Cabin*, 46–48; Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 53, 57–59, 65, 127–128; W. Wöhling, *Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Freikirche in Sachsen u. a. Staaten* (Zwickau/Sachsen: Verlag des Schriftvereins [E. Klärner], 1925), 18–20; Ernst Gottlieb Sihler, “College and Seminary Life in the Olden Days,” in Dau, *Ebenezer*, 261; Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 157–159.

⁴¹ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 66–67.

⁴² Charles P. Schaum, “The Highest and Ultimate Gift of God: A Brief History of Concordia Publishing House in the German-Era LCMS,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 83, nos. 1–2 (2019): 14–16. See LCMS, *Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Districts der deutschen evang.-luth.*

Fresh from the financial panic of 1873, one party wished to expand the St. Louis campus by building a new central structure (*Mittelgebäude*) between the two recently enlarged seminary wings, therewith keeping all future building projects related to the combined seminary in St. Louis. They claimed that this course would minimize future costs. They opposed moving the practical seminary to Springfield because it and the recently relocated *Proseminar* would experience overcrowding and create even more building costs. Despite advancing cost minimization as their position, the “stay combined” party argued that, since a physical plant for a St. Louis congregation costs about \$100,000 to build, the synod should have no problems raising \$200,000 for seminary renovations. Yet they presented no reckoning of any costs related to Springfield.⁴³

The “relocation” party stated that the need for space was so pressing and the costs so immediate that a building program in St. Louis was infeasible. They questioned expressly why no student yet had died due to unsafe conditions. They maintained that relocation is an *adiaphoron*, thus a business decision and not one of doctrine and conscience.

The convention examined both sides of the issue. The advantages for keeping the seminaries together included the following: (1) Financial: Instructor salaries were saved due to no duplication. (2) Social and academic: Both types of student lived together and established friendships. (3) Homiletical: All preachers would be cast from the same mold.

The disadvantages for staying combined included the following: (1) One had to refrain from a full scholarly presentation in lectures because too much consideration needed to be given to the needs of the practical students. Separation would increase the level of scholarship for the students in the theoretical program. (2) Then again, since one also had to give consideration to the scholarly presentation, the practical students were always going to remain at a loss in some regard. While this effect was minimal in practical theology, it presented a major problem in, for example, historical theology. The original-language sources in the CSL library were essential to the curriculum.⁴⁴

Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, Anno Domini 1874 (St. Louis: Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874), 62–63.

⁴³ No one addressed the costs of the *Gymnasium*, borne by the congregations in and around Fort Wayne without the benefits once provided by the practical seminary. The LCMS funded capital improvements at Springfield from 1884–1891. Economic uncertainty from the financial panics of 1893 and 1907 led the synod to withhold capital funding until the end of 1916. See Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 92, 115.

⁴⁴ The library catalog was published in book form: LCMS, *Katalog der Theologischen Bibliothek des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Concordia Collegiums zu St. Louis* (Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874). The book followed the same structure as C. F. W. Walther, “Lutherisch-theologische Pfarrers-Bibliothek,” *Lehre und Wehre* 1–4 (1855–1858).

A motion came to the floor of the convention: That the district-synod consider it to be appropriate, given the current circumstances, to move the practical seminary to Springfield, to establish the required professorships, and to provide for faculty housing and other domestic needs. Many delegates balked at that motion, so it was set aside. Instead, it was moved 89–57 that (1) the district-synod recommend to the general presidency (*das allgemeine Präsidium*) to call a special convention of the general delegate-synod in the current year [1874] for discussing this business, and that (2) it be recommended that the convention be called to assemble in St. Louis. Later that year, a special session of the LCMS general delegate-synod voted overwhelmingly (117–21) to move the practical seminary to Springfield.⁴⁵

The Springfield campus to which the practical seminary relocated was the site of an earlier project in Lutheran education, with hopes to educate the West for Christ. In 1847, the Synod of Illinois chartered and founded the “Literary and Theological Institute” in Hillsboro, Illinois, under the leadership of Rev. Francis Springer (1810–1892), who had been educated at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. In 1851, plans were underway to move the institute to a new “Melancthon College” in Springfield. The name was changed to “Illinois State University,” which was not a state school, nor quite a university. Despite the support of future US president Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865) and Lutheran leader William A. Passavant (1821–1894), this Lutheran school could not overcome theological disagreements between strict and lax Lutheranism. The institution closed in 1869. Springfield-area LCMS congregations, especially Trinity, took action in 1873 to purchase the campus.⁴⁶

In 1874, the synod voted for the relocation, and August Crämer had to move again. Doctrinal and moral fidelity to the Bible and the Book of Concord turned a failed university into a thriving seminary. CTS did business in Springfield under the old Indiana charter, even though that charter was amended in 1881 to include the Fort Wayne *Gymnasium*. This arrangement was nullified by an Illinois court in 1921, leaving Springfield with no charter. A new charter was obtained in 1939.⁴⁷

In 1896, the general convention *Proceedings* listed nine institutions: the seminaries in St. Louis and Springfield; the teacher seminaries in Addison, Illinois, and Seward, Nebraska; the *Gymnasien* in Fort Wayne, Milwaukee, and St. Paul,

⁴⁵ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 65–66. The LCMS *Praesidium* first included the general president and the district presidents. Later, the district presidents formed the College of Presidents (*das Präsidies-Kollegium*), and the *Praesidium* was defined as the general president and vice presidents of the synod. See Jacob A. O. Preus II, *The Council of Presidents, the Synodical President, and the District Presidents, with Reference to Their Duties under the Constitution and Bylaws of the Synod* (St. Louis: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, September 1974).

⁴⁶ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 69–82. Among fundraising and other activities, Passavant brought the Lutheran deaconess movement from its connections in Kaiserswerth and Neuendettelsau to the US.

⁴⁷ *Synodalhandbuch* [1924], 99–122; Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 151–152.

Minnesota; and the *Progymnasien* in Concordia, Missouri, and Neperan (Hawthorne), New York.⁴⁸ CSL reported in the same *Proceedings* that it was growing and needed money. CTS reported that it was celebrating its fiftieth jubilee and that it was both growing and successful.

The LCMS had been incorporated since 1894, and it did business from CPH in St. Louis until 1951. The old Saxon-Franconian dynamic gave way to a new desire for corporate centralization. Immediately after CTS gave a favorable report to the convention, a certain party suggested closing the Springfield seminary. A heated discussion smoldered for the entire afternoon session of the convention. The result was this:

1. Springfield was limited to 175 students, starting with the 1897–1898 academic year. The other points also would apply as of that year.

2. Students younger than 17 and older than 25 could no longer be accepted at Springfield.

3. Pupils from any other LCMS prep school could only be accepted at Springfield if so recommended by the respective faculties of said schools. (Otherwise, they would go to St. Louis.)

4. These regulations had to be followed, except in the rarest of cases.

5. Pastors were urged to recommend for study at Springfield primarily those men studying at secular (*falschgläubige*) institutions, who developed an interest for the ministry.

In contrast, CSL received full support from the synod and was allowed to grow unhindered.⁴⁹ The Springfield faculty claimed that CTS was the premier practical and mission seminary of the LCMS, engaged with aspects of US church relations.⁵⁰

Practical engagement was needed as American culture and the LCMS changed. Americanization and increasing use of English rankled the old guard, even at Springfield.⁵¹ The English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States taught students German at Concordia College, Conover, North Carolina, so that they could study at LCMS seminaries. Yet these English Synod pastors served English-speaking congregations.⁵² The Concordia system educated laymen who

⁴⁸ LCMS, *Dreihundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, versammelt als achte Delegatensynode zu Fort Wayne, Ind. im Jahre 1896* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1896), 47–74.

⁴⁹ Condensed from *Dreihundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht*, 47–54. See also Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 102–103; Meyer, *Log Cabin*, 144–146.

⁵⁰ *Zum 50jährigen Jubiläum*, 4–5.

⁵¹ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 126–132. Dallmann reported on a significant amount of pro-German bias in *My Life*, 33, 36–38, 41–42, 57–58, 63–65.

⁵² See Henry P. Eckhardt, *The English District: A Historical Sketch by H. P. Eckhardt* (St. Louis: English District of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, 1946).

became doctors, lawyers, diplomats, and businessmen—all American leaders. Change increased with persecution during and after the Great War.⁵³

The changing idea of being “practical” affected more than just the “practical” seminary. Social and mission needs were causing realignments that united graduates of both seminaries in new ways. In 1901, the Associated Lutheran Charities was founded in Chicago by F. W. Herzberger (1859–1930), August Schlechte (1868–1920), and Frederick Theodore Ruhland (1873–1945). In 1919, the Lutheran Deaconess (now, Diaconal) Association was formed in Fort Wayne, supported by the Charity Conference (*Wohltätigkeitskonferenz*) of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America and Associated Lutheran Charities. Between 1911 (when St. John’s College in Winfield, Kansas, founded in 1893 by layman John Baden, became coeducational) and 1917 (considering the growth of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois), coeducational institutions went from being an outrage to becoming an accepted reality in the LCMS.⁵⁴

In New York, Henry Ressmeyer helped to form the Lutheran Education Society in 1907, which moved the *Progymnasium*, later Concordia Collegiate Academy, from Neperan (Hawthorne) to Bronxville, New York, in 1908. He supported the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, founded January 21, 1914.⁵⁵ Both Ressmeyer and the ALPB promoted a pan-Lutheran outlook. The ALPB used its *American Lutheran* magazine to great effect in such efforts.⁵⁶ This created an ambiguity of praxis between the Scholastic exegesis of the LCMS and the Hegelian exegesis of the United Lutheran Church in America, formed in 1917.⁵⁷

Although it lost a seminary in 1861, Fort Wayne continued to be a center for Lutheran higher education. Circa 1919, Pastor John C. Baur, a CTS graduate serving in Fort Wayne, emerged as executive secretary of a Midwestern, lay-centered movement: the American Luther League (ALL). The LCMS lost over 400 schools during the war years. The ALL was part of a larger effort to standardize and protect

⁵³ Dallmann, *My Life*, 21, 33–35; Stephen Scott Gurgel, “The War to End All Germans: Wisconsin Synod Lutherans and the First World War” (MA thesis, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2012).

⁵⁴ Richard Baepler, *Flame of Faith, Lamp of Learning: A History of Valparaiso University* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2001), 136–138; Freitag, *College with a Cause*, 136–137. One finds a different treatment in Mary Todd, *Authority Vested* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

⁵⁵ The bureau had the same acronym (ALPB) as the English Synod’s American Lutheran Publication Board, which had merged with CPH in 1911. Henry P. Eckhardt, who had served as president of both the English Synod and the English District, was also bureau president.

⁵⁶ Charles L. Fry, “The World’s Debt to the Reformation,” in *Manual of Practical Church Work*, 4th ed. (New York: Lutheran Press, 1945), 174. The *Manual* contained reprints from *American Lutheran*.

⁵⁷ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 65–66, 273–294; Baepler, *Flame of Faith*, 136–138.

LCMS education against secularism. Several districts took the lead.⁵⁸ From such efforts, again with Baur at the forefront, emerged the Lutheran University Association (founded July 15, 1925), which still does business as Valparaiso University (VU) in Valparaiso, Indiana.

Others recognized the need to do more than circle the wagons. Founded in 1917 in Milwaukee, with the support of St. Louis-based LCMS treasurer and CPH general manager Edmund Seuel (1865–1951), the Lutheran Laymen's League (LLL) helped to pay off a \$100,000 debt owed by the synod. On December 14, 1924, it established KFUE, "The Gospel Voice." In 1930–1931, then from 1935 onward, the LLL, with KFUE and CSL professors John H. C. Fritz and Walter A. Maier, launched a world-reaching juggernaut, *The Lutheran Hour*.⁵⁹ Both the ALL (which fizzled during the Great Depression) and the LLL channeled lay funding and effort in ways previously unknown to the synod. Imagine the original 1846 plan bearing fruit, locating the practical seminary and the *Gymnasium* in Fort Wayne. Imagine Baur leading those institutions to greater heights. Instead, VU helped to define an ecosystem where LCMS institutions either changed or failed. Ironically, the presence of VU may have saved Springfield from being closed.

New leaders emerged from the English Synod and English District, including two former presidents of Concordia, Conover. VU called William H. T. Dau (1864–1944) to be president (1926–1929); he had been president in Conover (1892–1899) and a professor in St. Louis (1905–1926).⁶⁰ Henry B. Hemmelter (1869–1948) had served three terms as president in Conover (1902–1905; 1914–1918; 1928–1935, its closing year). He became president at Springfield (1936–1945), leading CTS safely through the Great Depression. After Dau at VU was Oscar C. Kreinheder (1877–1946) from 1930–1939, who had been president of the English District from 1918–1927 and was the brother of Conover president Oliver W. Kreinheder (1885–1970), who served from 1917–1928. Following next at VU from 1940–1968 was O. P. Kretzmann (1901–1975), who had been a professor at CTS from 1924–1934, as well as executive secretary of the Walther League from 1934–1940. No longer was being "practical" seen as foreign to being scholarly. Under Louis J. Sieck, seminary

⁵⁸ A. C. Stellhorn, *History of the Superintendents Conference: Supervision and Promotion of Christian Education by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1956).

⁵⁹ Baeppler, *Flame of Faith*, 131–144; Arthur Preuss, *A Dictionary of Secret and Other Societies* (St. Louis: Herder, 1924), 504; Paul L. Maier, *A Man Spoke, a World Listened: The Story of Walter A. Maier and the Lutheran Hour* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), 110–126, 164–191. Compare also the analysis in Milton L. Rudnick, *Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1966), 92–102.

⁶⁰ Baeppler, *Flame of Faith*, 152–155.

president from 1944–1952, even CSL began to embrace a more “practical” posture, albeit one beginning to favor mainline Protestantism.⁶¹

Some voices had been reminded in convention debate that decisions about LCMS institutions are adiaphora, not doctrine. Other voices began to “reimagine” points of doctrine in a paradigm whose metric for truth was the worshiping community seen through a Hegelian lens. Between these poles, many simply wanted to maintain the pure teaching of the word and administration of the sacraments (the criteria of unity in AC VII). Still, the Lord mercifully continued to provide faithful pastors for his church, both from St. Louis and from Springfield.

Walther and Sihler Compared

From 1847 to 1945, much was made of the distinction between the “theoretical seminary” and the “practical seminary.” Here and in the next section, we consider the first presidents of those seminaries. The “practical” nature of CTS depended on the conditions under which Wilhelm Löhe, with Johann F. Wucherer (1803–1881), deeded the school to the LCMS. Yet in 1847, it seemed that Sihler would be the scholar and Walther would be the practical theologian.

Dr. Wilhelm Sihler (1801–1885) matriculated at Breslau and graduated in 1829 from Berlin. Before university, he completed *Gymnasium* and entered the military at eighteen, following his father. This second lieutenant studied with the best, including future German chief of staff, the elder Helmuth von Moltke (1800–1891). Sihler left the army to become a professor. His teachers were elites: for classical studies, August Böckh (1785–1867); for literature, August W. Schlegel (1767–1845, brother of linguist Friedrich Schlegel [1772–1829]). Sihler disliked the philosophy of Georg W. F. Hegel (1770–1831); instead, he was drawn to Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher (1768–1834), whom he later rejected. Sihler knew several major literary figures; his circle also included composer Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (1809–1847). By 1828, Sihler had published two volumes: *Arabesques* (*Arabesken*), a collection of humorous essays in the manner of Jean Paul (Johann Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763–1825), and *Symbolology of the Face* (*Symbolik des Antlitzes*). The latter book gained immediate fame; later, Sihler rejected it.⁶²

⁶¹ Baepler, *Flame of Faith*, 163f., 193f.; James R. Blackwood, “Inside Missouri Synod,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 23, no. 6 (1952): 428–443.

⁶² The pseudoscience of physiognomy was popular throughout the nineteenth century, but debunked already in the 1860s. See Fürbringer, *Persons and Events*, 34. Compare Sihler, *Lebenslauf*, 1:65. Fürbringer is incorrect when he claims that Johann K. Lavater (1741–1801) influenced Sihler (35). Sihler states (1:65) that his *Symbology* was “derived from life experiences, without knowledge of Lavater’s *Physiognomics*.”

Sihler tutored in Breslau for a year, then became an instructor of geography and other subjects at the Blochmann Institute in Dresden (1830–1838). He got to know Friedrich A. Philippi (1809–1882), had a conversion experience, and gained a mentor in Andreas G. Rudelbach (1792–1862), who warned him about Martin Stephan (1777–1846). Sihler tutored in the Baltic region (1838–1843) until heeding Wyneken’s *Notruf* (distress call). With Löhe’s urging, Sihler planned to become a professor of theology at Capital University in Columbus, Ohio. The Saxon Territorial Church permitted Rudelbach to examine Sihler for the ministry. Rudelbach published Sihler’s written exam work, which was critical of Pietism, in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*.⁶³ In Columbus, Sihler was directed to the parish in Pomeroy; in 1845, he replaced Wyneken in Fort Wayne.⁶⁴ There he served St. Paul’s and guided CTS, publishing a sermon collection, journal articles, and an autobiography.

When the two seminaries were merged, Ferdinand Walther presided over both theoretical and practical divisions. Walther started out as a regular pastor, in contrast to the grand image of “Professor Dr. Walther” that we see throughout Hochstetter’s history. He matriculated at Leipzig and passed his first exams in 1833. He served as a private tutor in Kahla (1834–1836) and passed his second exams. He received a call to Good Shepherd (*Zum guten Hirten*) in Bräunsdorf, where he was ordained on January 15, 1837. He resigned his call on September 30, 1838⁶⁵ to immigrate with the Stephanites to Missouri. In 1841, Ferdinand defeated the position of attorney F. Adolph Marbach on the doctrine of the church, thereby creating his first major theological work, the theses of the Altenburg Debate.⁶⁶

In the same year, Ferdinand received a call from Trinity, St. Louis, to follow in his brother Hermann’s footsteps after the latter’s death. Ferdinand began to flourish as a gifted preacher and an outgoing, decisive leader. Trinity also began to flourish with its new pastor. In 1842, Trinity occupied its first church building at Third and Lombard in St. Louis. In 1844, Ferdinand launched *Der Lutheraner*. His prodigious publishing efforts shaped the synod for the remainder of the century. His storied synodical presidency remains precedent-setting in the LCMS to the present day. Yet he did not become “Professor Dr. Walther” until January 25, 1878. He had rejected an honorary doctorate from Göttingen in 1855 for his work in 1852, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (*The Voice of Our Church in the Debate concerning Church and Office*). In its general session (October 23–25, 1877),

⁶³ Sihler, *Lebenslauf*, 1:153.

⁶⁴ Fürbringer, *Persons and Events*, 40.

⁶⁵ Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther*, 13–32. Father Gottlob Walther was unsympathetic to his sons and his son-in-law Keyl. Extreme actions ruptured family relations. See August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2000), 36.

⁶⁶ Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther*, 44–46.

the Ohio Synod directed Capital University to grant Walther the title *Doctor Theologiae*.⁶⁷ Ironically, Löhe had encouraged Sihler to teach there.

Walther and Sihler on Slavery

Few in the LCMS have discussed this topic at length with a thorough depth of scholarship, yet through it we might get a better glimpse of theological challenges during the Civil War years. No people in the LCMS were known to own slaves, and none condoned cruelty. Yet both Ferdinand Walther and Wilhelm Sihler wrote against abolitionism.⁶⁸ Both men observed that socialists, communists, atheists, and others used the abolitionist movement to advance their own causes. Both pointed out that many abolitionists rejected original sin and promoted human self-perfection, thereby nullifying the vicarious atonement of Christ. Both observed that abolitionists offered no clearly defined outcome for freed slaves, focusing rather on harsh penalties against slave owners. Both feared the misuse of Scripture for political goals.⁶⁹ Both attributed slavery to original sin. Both wrote that God will punish any abuse of slaves, and that they should be treated with kindness.⁷⁰ Additionally, Sihler urged Christians to work within the established political system to make incremental change.⁷¹

We recognize some major shortcomings. Both Walther and Sihler built on a naive principle of servitude (*Knechtschaft*) already extant in the 1850s.⁷² This principle equated ancient slavery, European serfdom, and American slavery. It

⁶⁷ Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther*, 128–137.

⁶⁸ See Carl S. Meyer, “Early Growth of the Missouri Synod,” in *Moving Frontiers*, 234. Walther personally opposed slavery, but he supported states’ rights; see Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 220–229. Walther had no quarrel with Frederick Bertram, a member of his congregation who enlisted in the Union army; see Dallmann, *My Life*, 44–45. Walther believed that the Union was the properly instituted government, even if he disagreed with it; see Andrea Schultz, “C. F. W. Walther and the Civil War,” *Historical Footnotes* 57, no. 1 (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 2012): 5–6. Some who characterize the LCMS and Walther as “pro-slavery” are quick to identify German ethnicity with supporting slavery; see Nicholas Tavuchis, *Pastors and Immigrants: The Role of a Religious Elite in the Absorption of Norwegian Immigrants* (Dordrecht: Springer, 1963), 55–70. Such analysis correlates poorly with the sources; see Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 217, 313–314, 487–488.

⁶⁹ C. F. W. Walther, “Vorwort,” *Lehre und Wehre* 9, no. 2 (1863): 1–8, 33–46; Wilhelm Sihler, *Die Sklaverei im Lichte der heiligen Schrift betrachtet* (Baltimore: A. Schlitt, 1863). Sihler’s language can cause offense to modern readers, while Walther is more reserved. See also Cameron A. MacKenzie, “The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Public Square in the Era of C. F. W. Walther” in David L. Adams and Ken Schurb, *The Anonymous God* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004), 93–119.

⁷⁰ C. F. W. Walther, “Vorwort,” 39, 45; Sihler, *Sklaverei*, 3–4, 8, 18.

⁷¹ Sihler, *Sklaverei*, 23f.

⁷² Compare K. B., “Die Sklaverei und die Bibel,” *Lehre und Wehre* 2, no. 8 (1856): 225–233; “Luther und Melancthon über die Sklaverei,” *Lehre und Wehre* 2, no. 11 (1856): 352.

sidestepped assertions that Black people were less than human. William Dallmann confronted such racism in the Ozarks during the 1880s.⁷³ Neither Walther nor Sihler examined the christological implications of such prejudice in light of verses like Matthew 25:34–40 and 1 Corinthians 13:1–3. We do not see racism here; rather, we see a cultural ignorance that failed to oppose it.

Reflecting a defensive stance in the LCMS that had emerged since the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, both Walther and Sihler focused on the defense of doctrine, even though they expressed concern for their Black neighbors.⁷⁴ Neither man supported slavery. The LCMS was committed to loving people even as it opposed the politics of the 1860s, which mutated into a failed Reconstruction, Blaine amendments, attacks on parochial schools from 1875 to 1925, and Woodrow Wilson's "100 Percent Americanism." In the 1870s, LCMS parochial schools in St. Louis allowed Black children to enroll. In contrast, St. Louis public schools did not desegregate until 1947–1954.⁷⁵

St. Louis Needed the Practical Seminary

In 1849, Walther struggled to turn a college with nine students into a top-tier institution. He relied on CTS, which had at least sixteen students. CTS lost instructor C. L. August Wolter (1818–1849) to cholera. Adolf Biewend had come to the United States with Wyneken, serving as a pastor in Washington, DC, and as an instructor at Columbian College, the original college of George Washington University. At the urging of Sihler and Wyneken, Biewend replaced Wolter at CTS. In 1850, Walther recruited the talented young Biewend as the deputy headmaster (*Konrektor*), later, headmaster of the *Gymnasium* in St. Louis. There Biewend remained, a champion of English instruction, community outreach, and educational excellence, until his untimely death on April 10, 1858.⁷⁶

Walther continued to search for qualified instructors. Apart from adjunct instructors in the *Gymnasium*, some of whom were seminary students, Georg Schick was installed in 1856. Gustav Seyffarth (1796–1885), a noted scholar from the

⁷³ Dallmann, *My Life*, 40, 44–45.

⁷⁴ The Sihler family personally experienced discrimination; see Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 50. On the defensive climate in the LCMS, see Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 153–156.

⁷⁵ C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, John P. Hellwege Jr., and Thomas E. Manteufel, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), 308; Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 17–24. See the helpful scholarship in John G. Nordling, *Philemon*, Concordia Commentary (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004). Compare also Samuel L. Hoard, *The Truth Will Set You Free* (St. Louis: Concordia, 2004); Richard C. Dickinson, *Roses and Thorns* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977); Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1991).

⁷⁶ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 39–40; Meyer, *Log Cabin*, 28–30.

University of Leipzig, was a professor of theology (1856–1859). He left CSL because he was an abolitionist and lacked scholarly resources in St. Louis.⁷⁷ Hermann Baumstark (1839–1876, *Proseminar* instructor 1865–1869) and Eduard Preuss (1834–1904, professor 1869–1872) both converted to Roman Catholicism.⁷⁸ Only with the 1878 arrival of Licentiate K. Georg Stöckhardt (1842–1913) did permanent stability arise.⁷⁹ CSL continued to draw faculty from Springfield, including former Michigan District president Theodore C. Engelder (1865–1949, at CTS 1914–1926; at CSL 1926–1946) and Frederick E. Mayer (1892–1954, at CTS 1926–1937; at CSL 1937–1954).⁸⁰ Both seminaries had well-qualified faculty.

Perhaps the greatest difference between the seminaries was not the instructors; rather, it was the six years of formation at the *Gymnasium* before going to CSL. From age eleven or twelve onward, pupils learned how future pastors ought to learn, think, speak, and act. At CSL, they had no rough edges, or they were experts at hiding them.⁸¹ CSL professors were older colleagues.

The practical students had a later, shorter period of formation. They were not allowed to form a student government with the same voice and influence as their St. Louis counterparts. Even so, in 1857 they formed a *Kollegium Fratrum* that turned from a student club into a mission and social welfare society. After 1910, more incidents of conflict between students and faculty arose, escalating in severity.⁸² CTS professors had to be more authoritarian because they needed to break in the raw recruits, unlike their CSL counterparts.

Notable Instructors

Pride of place among faculty members must go to Friedrich August Crämer, CTS president (1875–1891) following Sihler (1846–1861) and Walther (1861–1875). Crämer was so thoroughly “August” that Ludwig Fürbringer presents him as “August Friedrich,” while Erich Heintzen uses both name forms. From 1850 to 1875, he served as an instructor before becoming president.

⁷⁷ Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 216–221.

⁷⁸ Fürbringer, *Persons and Events*, 164–170; Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 230–238; Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 55–56.

⁷⁹ Some faculty members at Fort Wayne and St. Louis presented their lectures almost verbatim from books. Competence in topics could vary; see Dallmann, *My Life*, 14–15, 24.

⁸⁰ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 218; Meyer, *Log Cabin*, 297–298.

⁸¹ Dallmann, *My Life*, 11–35; Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years*, 26–144; Sihler, “College and Seminary Life,” 247–264; Bruce Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1994), 17.

⁸² Compare Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 50–52, 63–65, 94–95, 104, 109–110, 112–115, 126–146; Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower*, 115–143, 205–232.

“Onkel” Crämer was known as a verbose lecturer, yet he was a gifted scholar with much to share. He spent six years in prison for the student uprising in Frankfurt-am-Main during the 1833 session of the German parliament. After acquittal, he completed his university studies in Munich, had a conversion experience, and was sponsored by Count Carl Friedrich Hildebrand von Einsiedel (1805–1876), a staunch Lutheran who helped Crämer become a tutor in the home of William King, Earl of Lovelace, and his wife, Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace. She was the only legitimate child of Lord Byron and was one of the top mathematicians of the day, a collaborator with computer pioneer Charles Babbage. Influenced by William Frend and others, she and her husband were Unitarian and incompatible with Crämer. He tutored German at Oxford before clashing with the Tractarians and returning to Germany. Löhe steered Crämer toward work in America, thence to St. Lorenz.⁸³

Reinhold Pieper (1850–1920) was a parish pastor before and after he succeeded Crämer as CTS president (1891–1914). During his presidency, his works were just as influential as those of brother Franz, president of CSL. Chief among them was his *Homiletik* (Homiletics).⁸⁴ With doctrinal proceedings, *Lehre und Wehre*, and *Der Lutheraner*, Pieper’s *Homiletik* is one of the most frequently cited sources in Ernst Eckhardt’s *Reallexikon*. One might call it a “practical dogmatics.”⁸⁵ Pieper’s compendious study of Luther’s Small Catechism superseded the work of E. G. W. Keyl.⁸⁶ In addition to sermon collections, Pieper also updated the list of scholarly works that a pastor should consult, thereby updating the work of Ferdinand Walther.⁸⁷ Instructor J. H. Herzer (active 1892–1914) produced the most thorough treatment of catechetics in the LCMS.⁸⁸ Reinhold Pieper’s leadership brought a level of scholarship comparable to the theoretical seminary.

Richard D. Biedermann (1864–1921) was the first American-born president of CTS from 1915–1921. He improved facilities, tightened up finances, and successfully

⁸³ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 42–43; Fürbringer, *Persons and Events*, 1–31; Robin Hammerman and Andrew L. Russell, *Ada’s Legacy*, ACM Books #7 (n. p.: Association for Computing Machinery and Morgan & Claypool Publishers, 2016). See also Lawrence R. Rast Jr., “Friedrich August Crämer: Faithful Servant in Christ’s Church,” *CTQ* 64, no. 1 (January 2000): 39–60.

⁸⁴ See Adam C. Koontz, “Speak as the Oracles of God: Reinhold Pieper’s Classical Lutheran Homiletic,” *CTQ* 85, no. 1 (January 2021): 23–36.

⁸⁵ Reinhold Pieper, *Evangelisch-Lutherische Homiletik: Nach der Erläuterung über die Praecepta Homiletica von Dr. J. J. Rambach* (Milwaukee: Germania, 1895); Ernst Eckhardt, *Homiletisches Reallexikon nebst Index Rerum*, 8 vols. (St. Louis: Success, 1907–1917).

⁸⁶ Reinhold Pieper, *Der kleine Katechismus Luthers aus der Heiligen Schrift und Luthers Werken*, 3 vols. (Milwaukee: Germania, 1899); Ernst G. W. Keyl, *Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den symbolischen Büchern*, 4 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia, 1878–1889).

⁸⁷ Reinhold Pieper, *Wegweiser durch die theologischen Disciplinen und deren Literatur* (Milwaukee: Germania, 1900). See Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 190–202.

⁸⁸ J. H. Herzer, *Evangelisch-lutherische Katechetik* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1911).

retained the pre-seminary class (*Vorklasse* or *Proseminar*), solidifying the identity of CTS as a practical, pastoral institution. He struggled with the limits on enrollment set in 1896 (see above), and defended CTS from wartime anti-German hysteria. He died suddenly of heart problems before the 75th anniversary of the practical seminary.⁸⁹

Henry A. Klein (1869–1935) oversaw a number of faculty changes and continued to preserve a markedly pastoral character for CTS during his time as president from 1922–1935. In 1928, students with neither German nor Latin skills were admitted to the pre-seminary class for the first time. Development of a campus master plan and the clear acquisition of deeds and titles to land that had been donated in patchwork occurred at this time. The affectionately known “Daddy” Klein and his wife died in an automobile accident before Christmas, 1935.⁹⁰

Henry B. Hemmeter, president from 1936–1945, steered CTS through the Great Depression, when there were too many candidates and too few calls. New Testament Greek became a mandatory course. He oversaw the reestablishment of a corporate charter in 1939. He managed interaction with draft boards and civic leaders during the Second World War, and retired after V-E Day, May 8, 1945.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to show the deeds of individuals and groups as part of a larger set of pressures and dynamics that motivated people to take certain actions. By learning about those dynamics, one can understand better the decisions that were made. The goal is to understand our forebears as vulnerable sinner-saints who faced challenges similar to our own, yet who were still committed to good-faith cooperation in the gospel.⁹¹

The history of Concordia Theological Seminary during its early years is uniquely suited to teach practical lessons about leadership decisions amid the vicissitudes of life, especially when facing a dearth of resources. The study of history is neither looking in the synod’s “attic,” nor finding “pieces of the past” to be mildly diverting. The study of history creates a better focus on the present in preparation for the future.

CTS history shows us that mistakes are recoverable. Jockeying for position today may have unintended consequences tomorrow. God can bless the church greatly through a stalwart “backbencher” who shores up the faithful. *Kritisch*

⁸⁹ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 111–122.

⁹⁰ Heintzen, *Prairie School*, 124–125, 129–130, 143–144. Through 1938, opposition arose against full use of English.

⁹¹ Challenges of LCMS historiography are shown in Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God*, 401–406.

betrachten, to appraise something critically, is a time-honored German academic tradition. Trouble happens when one is not more critical of oneself than of one's neighbor. Let us not deceive ourselves, as if we had no sin (1 John 1:8).

As the LCMS prepares to face coming trials, such as decreasing membership, closure of congregations, decrease of calls, closure of institutions, and societal and cultural challenges, we can take comfort in knowing that our forebears faced similar challenges. They turned to the Lord, sought forgiveness in Christ, and commended themselves into his care. Hopefully, we can learn from their mistakes and make their strengths our own, as we walk together in the churchly unity confessed by AC VII.



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Concordia Springfield as the “Conservative” Alternative to St. Louis

Cameron A. MacKenzie

For most of its history, Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, was “another way” into the ministerium of the Missouri Synod. Although Fort Wayne became the synod’s first seminary in 1847,¹ the Perry County congregations also turned their school over to the synod a couple of years later. So the synod then had two schools, the second one relocated from Altenburg, Missouri, to St. Louis.² But they were very different schools. The one in Fort Wayne resulted from the thinking of Wilhelm Loehe (1808–1872), Wilhelm Sihler (1801–1885), and others to recruit and prepare men for ministry on the American frontier, whereas the Saxon men wanted to create an orthodox version of what they had left behind. The former would train men from various walks of life in what they needed to proclaim the Word of God faithfully but without a classical liberal arts education or an in-depth exposure to languages, church history, and dogmatics of the sort that the latter school would require of its students. Over the next several decades as the Missouri Synod grew, it put considerable resources into schools that prepared men for St. Louis. By the time of the synod’s hundredth anniversary in 1947, there were ten of these “prep” schools (basically high schools and junior colleges) stretching across the continent and one seminary, St. Louis.³ That was the synodical system for training its clergy.

Oh yes, there was still that other seminary—our seminary. It survived (although not in Fort Wayne) as an alternative to the “system” for men who somehow did not fit the ideal, often because they were too old to go back to high school—late bloomers, so to speak, who still could make good pastors if just given enough training. And as long as the synod was growing as it was by leaps and bounds over

¹ The most complete history of CTSFW is Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary, 1846–1976* (St. Louis: CPH, 1989), but, as the subtitle indicates, it does not include the seminary’s second sojourn in Fort Wayne, 1976–. According to Heintzen, at its first convention in 1847, the LCMS requested “the founders” of the seminary to transfer their institution to the new church body, and in September of that year, Wilhelm Loehe wrote to C. F. W. Walther that he and his colleague, Johann F. Wucherer, would do so (37).

² For the history of the St. Louis seminary from its founding to 1964, see Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower* (St. Louis: CPH, 1965).

³ See the 1947 *Reports and Memorials*, 31–61.

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the first several decades, fueled by massive German immigration and committed to organizing the newcomers into Lutheran congregations, it could readily use a second way of preparing men for ministry.

So the Fort Wayne seminary survived after moving first to St. Louis (1861) and then to Springfield, Illinois (1874–1875), where it stayed for the next one hundred years. But it was not a part of the system; it was an alternative to the system, and by the time of the synodical centennial, Springfield was offering a comprehensive program of ministerial training for high school graduates: four years in residence (ostensibly the equivalent of a BA degree), a year of vicarage, and then a “graduate” year, once again in residence.⁴ The ideal was still the prep school/St. Louis route, but as long as there was the need for pastors, the Missouri Synod would continue to train men outside of the system at Springfield.

But from time to time, some in the synod made the case that it no longer needed the alternative, at least, not one with its own campus in Springfield.⁵ In the depths of the Depression, this was practically self-evident. St. Louis was not placing many of its graduates—and neither was Springfield.⁶ But that changed with World War II. After its conclusion, Springfield was perfectly positioned for training former military men who had experienced firsthand the horrors of war and the consolations of the gospel that they now wanted to preach.⁷ Once more, an alternative to the system made good sense, but it was a practical choice, not an ideological one. Or was it?

The postwar years were boom years for America and for the Missouri Synod. Both seminaries experienced great growth and significant change. And some of that change was theological.

The terms *conservative* and *liberal* make very good sense when talking about post-Napoleonic France. But I am not sure about Missouri Synod Lutheranism in the middle decades of the twentieth century. Nevertheless, the terms were used to describe the differing viewpoints that began to surface in the LCMS. In fact, I used

⁴ Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Blessing, 1846–1946* (Springfield, Ill.: Concordia Theological Seminary, 1946), 35–36, and its academic catalogue for 1945–1946, *Concordia Theological Seminary Founded 1846* (Springfield, Ill.: n.p., 1945–1946), 10.

⁵ See Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 168–185.

⁶ *Christian Cyclopedia*, s.v. “Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, The. VII. Expansion, 1932–. 1.” accessed October 29, 2020, <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org>. Heintzen indicates that fourteen men from the class of 1937 did not receive placements (twenty-two vicarages had been assigned to that class the year before), nor did fifteen men from the class of 1938 (fifteen vicarages had been assigned to that class the year before). See *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 150, 221.

⁷ Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 159, 161–162, 222. The number of students grew enormously each year from just 152 in 1944–1945 to 229, 265, 296, 337, and 387 over the next five school years.

them and will continue doing so here to describe the polarization that set in and finally led to the great Missouri Synod Civil War of the 1960s and 1970s.

There were many issues that revealed this polarization, but two of them were clearly momentous in importance for our church body. First, there was the question of how the Missouri Synod should relate to other Lutherans—the “fellowship question” that dominated the early phases of controversy between synodical wings in the 1930s and 1940s. Then, emerging clearly in the 1950s and quickly becoming for many *the* issue: the question of biblical inerrancy. With respect to both of these, the forces of movement, the “liberal” side, included prominent St. Louis professors. In fact, especially with respect to the Bible, Concordia St. Louis was the institutional center for the liberals.⁸

That was not the case with respect to the fellowship question, but nonetheless when the liberals moved overtly and dramatically in 1945 to challenge the synod’s approach to dealing with American Lutherans by issuing the so-called “Statement of the Forty-Four,” they numbered five St. Louis seminary professors among the original signers, including one of their most prominent: Theodore Graebner,⁹ editor of *The Lutheran Witness*.

Given the prominence of the St. Louis men among the “forty-four,” almost by default, Springfield had to be the synod’s “conservative” seminary, but was there anything more to it than that? Yes, but perhaps not without at least one complication. The recently retired president of Springfield, H. B. Hemmeter, was also one of the forty-four men who had issued the Statement.¹⁰ He was the only one

⁸ Still the best theological analysis in historical perspective of the polarization is that of Kurt Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion: Missouri in Lutheran Perspective* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Press, 1977).

⁹ *Christian Cyclopedia*, s.v. “Graebner, Theodore Conrad,” accessed October 29, 2020, <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org>. The other St. Louis men among the forty-four were William Arndt, Paul Bretscher, Richard Caemmerer, and William Polack. See a photocopy of the Statement along with its signers in Jack T. Robinson, “The Spirit of Triumphalism in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: The Role of the ‘A Statement’ of 1945 in the Missouri Synod” (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 1972), 240–241. Robinson’s work is very informative, but his sympathies (and sources) are very much tilted toward the forty-four. Similarly, the November 1970 (vol. 43) issue of the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* is devoted to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Statement and includes reminiscences by seven signers, a letter by another, and just one four-page conservative critique of the Statement from 1947. More than a decade later, the *Quarterly* published an article by A. T. Kretzmann, a critic of the Statement and one of those appointed by President Behnken, to deal with the signers, “A Statement of the 44, 1945–79,” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 55 (1982): 69–81. On the occasion of the Statement’s fiftieth anniversary, Ralph Bohlmann, erstwhile president of the LCMS, argued for the ongoing applicability of the Statement to the LCMS fifty years later, “Missouri Lutheranism 1945 and 1995,” *Lutheran Forum* 30, no. 1 (February 1996): 12–17.

¹⁰ According to Heintzen, Hemmeter’s farewell banquet was “one week after V-E Day” (May 8, 1945). (See *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 157.) The forty-four issued their Statement on September 20, 1945.

from the “other” seminary who had done so, but he had done so. So why would anyone suggest that somehow Springfield was more conservative than St. Louis? Well, with Hemmeter gone, the Springfield faculty did something rather unusual for the times. It decided to respond formally to the Statement by means of a letter to E. J. Friedrich (1889–1982), chairman of the Statement’s continuation committee, that condemned the Statement in no uncertain terms.¹¹

The faculty characterized the Statement as “a loveless, unmotivated, and widely disseminated attack . . . on brethren in synod” and criticized it sharply for “getting rid of Scripture proof that is a sedes [for the doctrine of fellowship],¹² countenancing selective fellowship, agreeing to fellowship before ‘there is agreement among them (the A.L.C. and us) in doctrine and all its articles,’ and opening the door to genuine unionism.” Finally, the Springfield men described themselves as appalled that synodical leaders, including “worst of all, five members of a theological faculty in our synod,” could sign onto a document that seems to be “veiled propaganda for a *liberal* and loose Lutheranism” [emphasis mine].

On the day following the date of the letter, the acting president of the Springfield Seminary, Richard C. Neitzel (1875–1951),¹³ sent a copy of it to G. Christian Barth (1883–1965), a synodical vice president who had apparently¹⁴ admonished Neitzel and another professor previously on the need to speak out about such matters. As a result, wrote Neitzel, he was offering the faculty letter as “some evidence of our *conservatism*” [emphasis mine]. And interestingly, he offered as an excuse for earlier failures, “We knew that we could not get anywhere as long as our former president sat in his armchair and ruled with an iron hand.” But with Hemmeter gone, Springfield’s faculty was now acting on its “conservatism.”

Two additional points need to be made in connection with the Statement of the Forty-Four. One is that the recipient of Neitzel’s letter, Vice President Barth, became

¹¹ F. Wenger (faculty secretary) to E. J. Friedrich, October 26, 1945. See Robinson, “The Spirit of Triumphalism,” 266–270.

¹² That is a reference to the Statement’s conviction, “We therefore deplore the fact that Romans 16:17, 18 has been applied to all Christians who differ from us in certain points of doctrine.” See “A Statement” of the forty-four, Thesis 6.

¹³ Neitzel had been a member of the synodical committee appointed to review the so-called Intersynodical Theses that representatives of the Wisconsin, Iowa, Ohio, Buffalo, and Missouri Synods had negotiated in the 1920s as a way to settle the doctrinal issues that had divided the synods and prevented church fellowship. The review committee criticized the theses sharply and in 1929 Missouri rejected them. See Walter A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847–1947* (St. Louis: CPH, 1947), 319.

¹⁴ “Remembering the admonition you gave Prof. Coyner and me in St. Louis, it is my conviction that I owe you some evidence of our conservatism.” R. C. Neitzel to G. Chr. Barth, October 27, 1945.

Hemmeter's successor just a few months later.¹⁵ Obviously, this was a move in a conservative direction. A second point of evidence for the seminary's conservatism was a publication by Springfield's leading systematician, Walter Albrecht (1885–1961),¹⁶ that directly challenged a comparable work by Graebner on the question of prayer fellowship, a central concern of the forty-four.¹⁷ Basically, Graebner argued that synodical conservatives were misusing Bible passages that warned against infidels, idolators, or heretics who were undermining the foundations of faith. These passages, maintained Graebner, were not talking about praying with Christians who erred in non-fundamental doctrines.¹⁸ Albrecht responded that Graebner's position justified not only prayer but all forms of fellowship with persistent errorists of all types. In other words, for Albrecht, Graebner's position plainly opened the door to unionism. Not insignificantly, while Graebner's pamphlet was published by Concordia Publishing House, Albrecht's was published by Northwestern, the publishing house of the Wisconsin Synod.¹⁹

In the mid-1940s, Concordia Theological Seminary was certainly conservative by the standards of that day. Indeed, in a pamphlet prepared for the 1944 synodical convention to make the case for maintaining the seminary, President Hemmeter himself had insisted that a principal result of the Springfield system was that "our graduates have been *known for their conservative Lutheranism*" [emphasis original].²⁰ However, it remained only an alternative to the system and was not a conservative alternative to *St. Louis*. In fact, students from the prep schools were not allowed to enroll at Springfield without special permission from their school, usually based on their potential for ministry but without the requisite foreign language skills

¹⁵ He was called in November and installed on December 16, 1945. *The Lutheran Witness* 64 (1945): 390. This was after calls had been declined earlier that year by Harold Romoser and Alvin Wagner.

¹⁶ Perhaps Albrecht's greatest contribution to synodical theology was his preparation of the index volume for the English version of Pieper's *Dogmatics*. Earlier for his Springfield students, he had prepared his own translation. It did not become the printed version, but it was used in its preparation. "Preface" in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 4 (St. Louis: CPH, 1950–1957).

¹⁷ Theodore Graebner, *Prayer Fellowship* (St. Louis: CPH, 1945) and Walter W. F. Albrecht, *Dr. Theo. Graebner's "Prayer Fellowship": In the Light of Scripture and the Faith of Our Fathers* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1946).

¹⁸ The forty-four had included this statement on prayer, "We affirm our conviction that any two or more Christians may pray together . . . if the purpose for which they meet and pray is right according to the Word of God," Robinson, "The Spirit of Triumphalism," 240.

¹⁹ For an excellent treatment of the fellowship issue during these years, see Mark Braun, "Changes within the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America That Led to the Exit of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod" (PhD diss., Concordia Seminary St. Louis, 2000), 111–179.

²⁰ Henry Hemmeter, *The Springfield Concordia Case* (Saginaw, Mich.: Synodical Convention, 1944), 12.

that St. Louis required.²¹ They also had to be high school graduates and, as of 1946, at least twenty years old.²²

However, American education was changing greatly in the postwar years, and so was that of the synod. For one thing, by the end of the 1950s, Springfield was actively seeking accreditation.²³ That meant eliminating its pre-seminary program and making a bachelor's degree the standard for admission into a ministerial training program that culminated in a BD.²⁴ It took a while, but that is where the school was heading by the beginning of the 1960s.

Because of such changes, one could more easily imagine Springfield as an alternative to St. Louis, but was it still "conservative"? Of course, it still was not St. Louis, where some of the more vocal advocates of change were holding forth, including Martin Scharlemann (1910–1982), the first prominent proponent of higher criticism in the Missouri Synod²⁵; but the Springfield faculty was no longer what it had been fifteen years earlier. For one thing, there were more of them. To accommodate growing enrollment, the faculty had increased from eleven in 1949 to more than double that—twenty-six—by 1956. And still more were on the way—thirty-four in 1964–1965.²⁶

They were also different in kind, especially under George Beto (1916–1991), who served as president from 1959 to 1962. New professors were supposed to have their doctorates or be working on them—and if the latter, the seminary would assist by granting sabbaticals or study leaves. According to Lorman Petersen (1915–2009), one-time academic dean, "More faculty members joined the staff in the three years of Beto's presidency than the total faculty in the hundred years previously."²⁷ But in terms of the LCMS battles that were coming, our question would be this: Were these new faculty members liberal or conservative? The answer is some of both. Raymond Surburg (1909–2001) and Eugene Klug (1917–2003) would certainly belong to one side, and Curtis Huber and Richard Jungkuntz (1918–2003) to the other. Of course,

²¹ Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 180–181. In response to a question from the acting president of Concordia Milwaukee, Springfield President Walter A. Baepler wrote, "We cannot accept any student from our preparatory schools unless said student has an unqualified recommendation of the Faculty." Walter A. Baepler to Henry Gienapp (February 27, 1953).

²² Baepler, *A Century of Blessing*, 36.

²³ Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 204–205.

²⁴ According to Heintzen, the 1962 seminary catalogue first announced the policy of training men for the ministry who already had a bachelor's degree, and in 1964, more than 80 percent of the entering class had that degree (*Prairie School of the Prophets*, 198–199).

²⁵ Ed Schroeder, "The Wars of Missouri That Led to Seminex. A Retrospective. Part II," *Crossings: Where the Gospel Meets Our Daily Lives*, September 13, 2007, accessed November 9, 2020, <https://crossings.org/the-wars-of-missouri-that-led-to-seminex-a-retrospective-part-ii/>.

²⁶ Lorman M. Petersen, "Epilog: The Golden Years (1945–1975)" in Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 195, 197–198.

²⁷ Petersen, "Epilog," 197.

the battles were mostly ahead of them, so one could not say definitively regarding those who were joining the faculty on which side they would eventually land.

But what about Beto himself? It is difficult to know for certain, of course, but on a few occasions in the pages of *The Springfielder*,²⁸ Beto addressed issues that marked the synodical polarization. In the fall of 1961, for example, he dismissed the idea of applying Romans 16:17 to other Lutherans, a position that had characterized the forty-four signers of the Statement and had raised the ire of the Springfield faculty at that time. Beto wrote, "Missouri . . . in the past used this passage somewhat indiscriminately in her relations with other Lutherans and with other Christians," and then added, "In the past we could never develop any enthusiasm for the use of Romans 16:17–18 in describing the people of another Lutheran body pledged in their loyalty to the same Scriptures and same Confessions which we accept."²⁹

In the summer issue of 1961, Beto also ascribed the origins of the synod's burgeoning conservative movement to "difficulties arising from our Synod's passing from a cultural and social isolation into America's mainstream."³⁰ Perhaps, but did that really explain the concerns that those conservatives were raising over inerrancy, evolution, and the like?

So it is unclear how "conservative" Springfield would have been in the 1960s under the leadership of Beto. However, Beto's tenure was short lived, for early in 1962 he left the seminary to become director of the Texas Department of Corrections (as well as its chief of chaplains!),³¹ and he was succeeded by J. A. O. Preus II (1920–1994), under whom the seminary finally became a real alternative to the St. Louis seminary. The new president also became a champion of the conservative cause in the LCMS.

Upon Beto's leaving, the seminary Board of Control indicated its confidence in Preus by appointing him interim president. So perhaps he was their choice from the beginning. But something else seems to have been at work as well, for when *The Lutheran Witness* reported on nominations for Springfield's presidency, Preus was the choice of forty-seven congregations. William Poehler was the next most popular choice with only ten nominations.³² Just three years earlier, when the synod had last

²⁸ Under Beto in 1959, *The Springfielder* was repurposed from a student journal into a theological journal. See "An Introduction," *The Springfielder* 23, no. 5 (December 1959): 1–2.

²⁹ *The Springfielder* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1961): 2.

³⁰ *The Springfielder* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1961): 2.

³¹ Paul M. Lucko, "Beto, George John (1916–1991)," Texas State Historical Association, *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed October 20, 2020, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/beto-george-john>.

³² *The Lutheran Witness* 81 (1962): 326.

filled the same office, the man with the most nominations was Walter Stuenkel with nineteen.³³ So Preus was really in a league of his own. But why?

A possible answer is that people were actively supporting his nomination. I know of at least one person who was—a Springfield seminary student at the time, Mark F. Bartling (1939–2013). More than once, he told me about his promotion of Preus when Beto left the seminary. Mark was much impressed by Preus as a teacher and a theologian and thought he would make a great seminary president. So when the position became open, he sent a letter recommending Preus to those on his father's mailing list for *The Confessional Lutheran*, probably the first unofficial conservative publication in the LCMS, edited by Paul Burgdorf. Mark's father, Fred, was the longtime secretary of the Confessional Lutheran Publicity Bureau. Mark always believed that his letter had something to do with those forty-seven nominations.

Of course, it is hard to say after so many years and even harder to know the degree to which the presidential electors were influenced by the number of nominations. But the facts remain that Preus received not only the nominations but also the call and so became the seminary's eleventh president (1962–1969). Of course, this is not the place to investigate the connections between Preus and other synodical conservatives, but even when he was still acting president, he signaled his identification with the conservative cause in a brief remark about the synod's *Brief Statement*, which by that time had become a shibboleth for conservatives.

For one thing, the *Brief Statement* summarized doctrinal positions that the LCMS had taken on a range of issues that differentiated Missouri from other American Lutherans. Approved by the synod in 1932, it had quickly become a rallying point for those opposed to fellowship with the old American Lutheran Church³⁴ unless, of course, it accepted the *Brief Statement*. However, because the statement also addressed doctrines of inerrancy and creation, conservatives continued to value it for its affirmation of their position on these doctrines as well. In fact, in an effort to rein in those who were seeking to accommodate higher criticism and evolution in the synod, conservatives at the 1959 convention managed to persuade the synod to adopt Resolution 9, which required "Synod's pastors, teachers, and professors . . . to teach and act in harmony" with "every doctrinal statement of a confessional nature adopted by Synod as a true exposition of the Holy Scriptures." If members of the synod did not agree with such statements, they were

³³ *The Lutheran Witness* 78 (1959): 22.

³⁴ Basically a merger of the Iowa and Ohio Synods in 1930, this version of the American Lutheran Church was similar to the Missouri Synod in its rejection of "liberalism" and so always seemed a possible candidate for church fellowship. See Fred W. Meuser, *The Formation of the American Lutheran Church: A Case Study in Lutheran Unity* (Columbus, Ohio: Wartburg Press, 1958).

"not to teach contrary to them, but rather to present their concern to their brethren in the ministry." In the "whereas's," the resolution listed the *Brief Statement* as such a "statement on doctrine and practice formally adopted by Synod."³⁵

While pleasing to conservatives, this resolution was painful to liberals who wanted freedom to teach differently from synodical doctrinal statements while still maintaining that they were good Lutherans because they had subscribed to the Confessions (an approach called by Kurt Marquart "using the confessions as a rabbit's foot"³⁶). So in preparation for the 1962 convention, the St. Louis faculty—at least as represented in the pages of the *Concordia Theological Monthly*—not only devoted several articles and many pages to the *Brief Statement* but also editorialized in favor of further study of the document³⁷ (always a good move when you think you might lack the votes to do what you really hope for). Conservatives wanted the synod to approve a resolution that explicitly made the *Brief Statement* binding, while the liberals wanted to rescind the 1959 resolution altogether.³⁸ So what about Preus?

He used the pages of *The Springfielder*, in the spring issue, before the 1962 convention, to say it was a good idea for church bodies to bind its members to doctrinal statements like the *Brief Statement*. The 1961 autumn issue had included a criticism of the *Statement's* position on inerrancy by Robert Bertram,³⁹ but in the first issue published during his "acting" presidency, Preus wrote that Resolution 9 of the 1959 convention "is a good, proper, and perfectly correct procedure." Then he added, "A church body has a right to insist upon a doctrinal position, and it has

³⁵ 1959 *Proceedings*, Resolution 9, Committee 3, p. 191. See also Carl S. Meyer, "The Role of A *Brief Statement* since 1932," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 33, no. 4 (April 1962): 208.

³⁶ Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion*, 66–76.

³⁷ "To appoint a representative committee, possibly the proposed Commission on Theology, whose responsibility it will be to review thoroughly A Brief Statement from the exegetical, symbolical, dogmatic, historical, and practical points of view, with special attention also to its adequacy and relevancy for our day, and to submit its report at a future convention of Synod." "A Brief Statement: Guidelines and Helps," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 33, no. 4 (April 1962): 223.

³⁸ For overtures concerning the *Brief Statement*, see 1962 *Reports and Memorials*, 148–151, 164–165. As a matter of fact, before the 1962 convention, the Committee on Constitutional Matters had ruled that the 1959 resolution was unconstitutional because it elevated synodical doctrinal statements to confessional status. The convention itself adopted that position, Res. 3-17, "Resolution 9 and Synodically Doctrinal Statements," 1962 *Proceedings*, 105–106. That position turned out to be an obstacle to reestablishing synodical orthodoxy until dealt with at the 1973 New Orleans convention by Res. 2-12, "To Understand Article II of the Synod's Constitution as Requiring the Formulation and Adoption of Synodical Doctrinal Statements," 1973 *Proceedings*, 30–31, 111–115. See also John W. Behnken, *This I Recall* (St. Louis: CPH, 1964), 197–198.

³⁹ Robert Bertram, "The Confessions for Today's Student of Theology: A Session with Schneeweiss on Scripture," *The Springfielder* 25, no. 3 (Autumn 1961): 31–35. While not explicitly rejecting it, Bertram contends that the *Brief Statement's* position on inerrancy neglects (or even perverts) the christocentric character of the Bible.

the right to exercise discipline upon those who fail to uphold this position. This is so axiomatic . . . that it needs no further elaboration.”

And how about the *Brief Statement*? While acknowledging that he did not want to add it to the Confessions, Preus nevertheless affirmed its value: “It has served us well. It has kept us sound in doctrine . . . it still serves a valuable purpose in our church, . . . it gives much help in a day when we are still talking about creation, evolution, inspiration, inerrancy, justification, church fellowship, and the rest.” Then he challenged the opponents, “Let those who want to repudiate this document on theological grounds show us what kind of theology they wish to substitute for that of our historic position. Those who worry about its constitutionality should remember that it teaches only what we have always believed.”⁴⁰

Just a few lines, but to people who were paying attention to synodical polarization, it was a pretty good indicator of where Preus stood.⁴¹ And if the president stood somewhere, it was likely that the seminary was standing in the same place. Springfield was still “not St. Louis,” the center of synodical liberalism; and now Springfield also had a conservative at the helm. Perhaps as seminary president Preus did not always satisfy conservative activists;⁴² nonetheless, in just a few years, he was leading conservatives to a major victory in the synodical conflict. So under Preus, Springfield was ready to become a “conservative” alternative to St. Louis and, in fact, it finally did so in 1967.

By that time, the prep school system was beginning to crumble. Since fewer people were eager to send their children away for high school anymore, especially

⁴⁰ J. A. O. Preus, “Toward the Cleveland Convention,” *The Springfielder* 26, no. 1 (Spring 1962): 2–3.

⁴¹ During his seminary presidency, a number of men who became prominent synodical conservatives joined the faculty, including Harry Huth (1917–1979), Walter Maier II (1925–2019), and David Scaer (1936–). But that would not be true of everyone whom Preus brought in. See Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 219–220, for the entire list of new faculty from 1962 to 1969.

⁴² This is not the place to examine Preus’s connection with conservative activists in the synod, but Preus’s first biographer, James E. Adams, *Preus of Missouri and the Great Lutheran Civil War* (New York: Harper and Row, 1977), 116–119, describes what he calls the “ambiguity” of Preus’s conservatism as seminary president. James C. Burkee, *Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011), 45–46, contends that Preus demonstrated his conservative *bona fides* by seeing to it that neither Huber nor Jungkuntz had their contracts renewed. Burkee also states that before becoming president, Preus had represented the synodical position on inerrancy in a meeting convened by President Behnken. Interestingly, the first issue of the conservative newspaper *Lutheran News* (December 15, 1962), 2, reported that The State of the Church Conference had decided at its meeting of November 9 and 10 to contact Springfield about training “conservative” men for the ministry. However, late in 1965, *The Confessional Lutheran* 2, nos. 11–12 (November and December 1965): 133–134, included an article by recent graduate Mark Bartling that was critical of Springfield for putting up with Curtis Huber as long as it did and that, as a result, “some students at Springfield accepted Huber’s approach to theology and began doubting historic Christian doctrines.”

when there was a local Lutheran high school at hand, the prep schools were beginning to close their high school departments and were eager to become four-year colleges instead.⁴³ That in turn would make it more difficult to maintain the Senior College⁴⁴ in Fort Wayne as the requisite way into St. Louis. Meanwhile, Springfield greatly reduced its own pre-seminary program but was attracting significant numbers of students from non-system colleges.⁴⁵ In its waning hours,⁴⁶ the 1967 synodical convention, already something of a turning point in the development of conservative synodical politics,⁴⁷ adopted Resolution 6-52, "To

⁴³ In its report to the 1962 convention, the Board for Higher Education (BHE) had listed as Planning Proposition Five, "Residential coeducation on the high school level, except at Edmonton and Selma, is to be eliminated on all synodical campuses. Where community Lutheran high schools are a live option, even nonresidential coeducation is to be eliminated." 1962 *Reports and Memorials*, 54. That same *Workbook*, 85–86, includes resolutions regarding expanding teacher training to four years at St. Paul and Bronxville. In the 1965 *Workbook*, 263–270, there were resolutions for expanding to four-year courses of study at Ann Arbor, Bronxville, St. Paul, and Winfield, Kansas. In 1967, the BHE report indicates that only River Forest and Fort Wayne no longer had synodical high schools (of course, Ann Arbor and St. Louis never had had one) (1967 *Workbook*, 140). Nevertheless, the BHE recommended the closure of the high school in Austin and requested synodical authority to close the high schools at Bronxville, Oakland, Seward, St. Paul, and Winfield if "their continued existence can no longer be defended" (150). The convention adopted both recommendations (1967 *Proceedings*, 127, 128). Again, in line with BHE recommendations, the convention refused to authorize the expansion of either Ann Arbor or Bronxville to four-year colleges (1967 *Workbook*, 151, and *Proceedings*, 141–142).

⁴⁴ Founded in 1957, the Senior College was an addition to "the system." Graduates of the prep schools would earn their bachelor's degree in two years of residence at the Senior College before going to St. Louis for graduate theological education. The synod closed it in 1977. See Edgar Walz, *Diamond Bricks Live on in the Scandinavian Village* (Freeman, S.Dak.: Pine Hill Press, 1998).

⁴⁵ In 1959, Springfield requested the synod to make a bachelor's degree a requirement for admission in line with the accreditation standards of the American Association of Theological Seminaries (1959 *Reports and Memorials*, 20). The convention authorized the seminary's faculty to determine its own admissions policies with the concurrence of its Board of Control and BHE (1959 *Proceedings*, 126). In its 1960 catalogue issue of *The Springfielder* 24, no. 13, the seminary explained, "It is now the policy of the seminary to train men for the ministry who have attained the level of the bachelor's degree." It also indicated its decision to terminate the pre-seminary program: "For a limited number of years the seminary will continue to receive into pre-seminary some men" [emphasis mine]. Academic Dean Lorman Petersen ("Historical Review of the Springfield Seminary Faculty, 1940–1973," unpublished paper, April 25, 1973, File 863, in the library of Concordia Theological Seminary, 6) reported that "1961–62 was the last year of the college department." In spite of or because of such changes, enrollment reached new heights. From school year 1959–1960 through 1966–1967, the average Springfield enrollment was 417 students, whereas during the Baepler presidency (1953–1958), the average was 323. See Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets*, 222.

⁴⁶ In fact, after 12:00 noon, when the convention by common consent agreed to continue "until the completion of the convention business" (convention minutes for "Session 16, July 14, 1967, Morning, in 1967 *Today's Business*, 437).

⁴⁷ According to Burkee, the 1967 convention was the first to occur after the organization of the United Planning Conference, which successfully put in place a structure for electing convention delegates who, in turn, would elect conservatives to the synod's boards and committees (*Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod*, 85–87). In his convention analysis, conservative activist Herman

Allow Fort Wayne [i.e., Senior College] Graduates to Enter Springfield.” The seminary itself had not proposed this action, nor had the Board for Higher Education.⁴⁸ In fact, the convention floor committee had presented a resolution that rejected those overtures that had called for opening up Springfield to system graduates, but the convention selected one of these same overtures as a substitute for the floor committee’s proposal and then had passed it.⁴⁹

Once again, it is difficult to say now whether conservative activists had planned this move or whether it was more or less accidental. In his final recommendations to the convention delegates, conservative activist Herman Otten in *Lutheran News*⁵⁰ made thirty-five recommendations but did not address this particular issue at all. But in his convention wrap-up, he “rejoiced” at the convention’s decision, while remarking also that “liberals want most Fort Wayne graduates to go to St. Louis.”⁵¹ It is also worth noting, however, that the Central Illinois District—Springfield’s home district—had itself memorialized the synod “to declare that Senior College graduates may attend either seminary.” Obviously, the convention’s decision had some significant backing other than a random congregation or two.⁵² Conservatives in the Missouri Synod still had a long way to go before they could claim victory in the synodical wars, but as far as the Springfield seminary was concerned, the New York convention marked a real milestone in its history.

Lorman Petersen, who became academic dean also in 1967, wrote that even before the New York convention, Springfield had already become a “functional” part of the synodical system for training its clergy because it had upgraded its admission standards and was well on its way to accreditation. Moreover, it was also producing more than a third of the pastors needed by the synod each year. However, the Board for Higher Education was still expecting it to recruit its students from outside the

Otten (1933–2019) commented on the elections, “Seldom in recent years has such a high percentage of true Missourians been elected to responsible positions. This is one of the few times we can recall when so many of those nominated from the floor were actually elected.” Herman Otten, “The New York Convention: Where Do We Go from Here?” *Lutheran News* 5, no. 15 (July 24, 1967): 9.

⁴⁸ 1967 *Workbook*, 151: The BHE recommended (1) that St. Louis and Springfield continue functioning as they were; and (2) that Springfield continue to upgrade its offerings and intensify its recruitment efforts at public and private colleges and universities.

⁴⁹ 1967 *Proceedings*, 142; and *Today’s Business*, 439. From the Forty-Seventh Regular Convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, New York, New York, July 7–14, 1967.

⁵⁰ Begun in 1962 by Herman Otten, *Lutheran News* (later *Christian News*) quickly became a principal vehicle for synodical conservatives to promote their views, plans, and candidates. Largely on account of his newspaper, Burkee (*Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod*, 7) describes Otten as “the single most influential conservative in the synod before 1969.”

⁵¹ Herman Otten, “How We Would Vote,” Editorial, *Lutheran News* 5, no. 14 (July 3, 1967): 4; Otten, “The New York Convention,” 8.

⁵² 1967 *Workbook*, 210–211.

prep school/senior college system.⁵³ So that is what the convention floor committee had recommended to the convention. But some now-anonymous delegate moved the substitute resolution, and it passed! In Petersen’s words, Springfield had now become an “integral” part of the system. But that also meant that Springfield had become a real alternative to St. Louis—after 120 years!

History, of course, never stands still, and that was certainly true of Concordia Theological Seminary in the years following 1967. Not only did Jack Preus leave Springfield in 1969, so did the seminary in 1976! In its new home, it has certainly remained an alternative to St. Louis—or is St. Louis an alternative to Fort Wayne? Today, both schools are equally part of the synodical system, but what about tomorrow? Perhaps by God’s grace, twenty-five years from now, Concordia Theological Seminary will be celebrating the answer to that question.

⁵³ “. . . qualified students at public and private colleges and universities,” 1967 *Workbook*, 151.



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Christ under God's Wrath: A Pauline Perspective

Adam C. Koontz

Why the Death of Christ?

C. S. Lewis wrote to his friend Arthur Greeves about the atonement shortly before his conversion from a stunted theism to full-blown Christianity:

What I couldn't see was how the life and death of Someone Else (whoever he was) 2000 years ago could help us here and now—except in so far as his *example* helped us. And the example business, tho' true and important, is not Christianity: right in the centre of Christianity, in the Gospels and St. Paul, you keep on getting something quite different and very mysterious expressed in those phrases I have so often ridiculed ("propitiation" – "sacrifice" – "the blood of the Lamb")—expressions [which I could] only interpret in senses that seemed to me silly or shocking.¹

The atonement of Christ had been in the way of Lewis's embrace of Christianity, but he could see that the blood sacrifice of Jesus was at the heart of the New Testament. Lewis was neither the first nor the last to stumble at atonement. He was also one among billions of readers of the Bible to understand that Christianity's center is the atonement of Jesus.

Atonement is an unusual theological term, Middle English,² not Greek or Latin.³ The "Early Version" (1382) of Wycliffe's fourteenth-century Bible translations used

¹ *They Stand Together: The Letters of C. S. Lewis to Arthur Greeves (1914–1963)*, ed. Walter Hooper (New York: Macmillan, 1979), 427.

² The early fourteenth-century Middle English romance *Bevis of Hampton* speaks (l. 3510) of two parties reconciled to one another as, "So þai atonede wiþ oute sake" (Modern English, "so they were reconciled without strife"), and at the end of the fourteenth century Wycliffe's translation from the Vulgate rendered Ezekiel 37:17 where the prophet has two sticks in his hand, one representing Judah and one Israel, and then puts the sticks together in one hand, as "And ioynе thou tho trees oon to the tother in to o tree to thee; and tho schulen be in to onement in thin hond." The bringing together of two things once separated is "onement."

³ "atone, v.," OED Online, March 2020, Oxford University Press, accessed April 3, 2020, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/12596?rskey=AIVe03&result=2>. The noun *atonement* was used in the sixteenth century, though the verb form, *atone*, did not enter the English Bible until the 1611 KJV. In 1513, thirteen years before Tyndale's translation, Thomas More used the noun in a discussion of English history, "the late made attonemente" between two political groupings (*The historie of the pitifull Life, and unfortunate Death of Edward the Vth* [London: Wm. Sheares, 1652]).

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the word to describe what the blood sacrifices would accomplish on the day of sacrifice called “the day of cleansing, that is, the day of atonement” (Lev 23:27, 28; 25:9), called also in Numbers 29:7 the “day of atonement.”⁴ In the sixteenth century, Tyndale used *atonement* to express the reconciliation Christ’s sacrifice achieved, translating the noun καταλλαγή as “atonement” and the verb καταλλάσσω as “to atone” in many (but not all) of its appearances in the New Testament, especially Romans 5 where he alternately used *reconciliation* and *atonement* for the same Greek word.⁵

Atonement was not nearly so popular with the New Testament translators of the Geneva Bible (the Bible of Puritan New England and much of early America)⁶ and the 1611 Authorized Version or King James Bible,⁷ appearing in both versions only at Romans 5:11. The word *atonement* survived in the King James mainly as a term set within the Old Testament sacrificial system, separated from the more common use of *reconciliation* in the New Testament, such as in 2 Corinthians 5 or Romans 5:10. *Atonement* survives in the English Standard Version, the English Bible most often used in the LCMS today, only as an Old Testament cultic term with no verbal echo in the New Testament.⁸

These vagaries within atonement’s language of origin reflect the indeterminacy with which *atonement* has often been connected with Christ’s sacrifice, so that *atonement* can appear in constructions such as “his scheme of . . .,” “his model of . . .,” or “one’s theory of . . .” Removed from its biblical relationship to the Old Testament cultic sacrifices, the *meaning* of Christ’s death occurring “according to the Scriptures” (1 Cor 15:3) becomes harder to discern. When something is termed

Tyndale was taking an extant English term to render the sense of the reconciliation of an offended party with the offender.

⁴ Unless otherwise marked, all Scripture quotations are the author’s translation.

⁵ For example, in Romans 5:10, “we were reconciled to God,” and in 5:11, “we have received the atonement.” Tyndale employed *atonement* for what priestly sacrifices and/or the removal of bloodguilt accomplished at Leviticus 5:10, 13; 16:34; Numbers 6:11; 15:25, 28; 25:13; 28:22, 30; 29:5, 11; 35:33. At 2 Corinthians 5:18, the office of the ministry of the New Testament is specifically “the office to preach the atonement.”

⁶ Despite *atonement*’s appearing fifty-four times in the Old Testament, especially heavily in Leviticus and Numbers, it is almost entirely absent in the Geneva New Testament.

⁷ *Atonement* was more prevalent in the AV/KJV than in the Geneva Bible with which it was a major competitor when first published in 1611. *Atonement* appeared sixty-nine times in the Old Testament, but like the Geneva Bible, it appeared only once in the New Testament. This verbal disconnect between sacrificial vocabulary in the Old Testament and the sacrifice of Christ in the New Testament puts asunder what God joined together: the Old Testament sacrifices and Christ’s sacrifice.

⁸ *Atonement* and *atone* appear eighty-two and ninety-three times in the ESV Old Testament, largely in connection with sacrifices, priests, and blood, but neither word appears at all in the New Testament, whether in connection with Christ’s work, his sacrifice, his priesthood, his blood, or anything else.

a “scheme,” a “model,” or a “theory,” there is a lightness about it that does not accompany other theological terms such as *Christ* or *Trinity*. The weightiness of *Christ* stems from its obvious importance in the Old Testament (1 Sam 2:10, 35; 12:3, 5; 2 Sam 22:51; Ps 2:2) and New Testament Scriptures, the debate about the identity of Christ in the Gospels (e.g., Matt 2:4; 16:13–20; 22:41–42; 24:24; 26:63), and the subsequent adjudication of the doctrine of the person of Christ in the church’s theological battles in the centuries after the formation of the Christian canon. *Trinity* is not a “Bible word” but is the church’s hard-fought formulation of the biblical revelation of the one and only true God in three persons (Matt 28:19). Proposals for another model of Christ or of the Trinity other than the confessionally definite formulations of the church in antiquity or Reformation times are not on the table for orthodox Lutherans.

Why is *atonement* different? Does the Bible present differing models of the atonement? One has first to ask what the atonement means. If one uses the word’s natural English sense of an accomplished reconciliation between offender and offended, the only means of atonement between offending humanity and the offended God is Christ’s bloody sacrifice as the propitiation for God’s wrath upon sin. This is why each of the Gospels includes the atoning passion of Jesus as its penultimate event before his resurrection.

If one’s doctrine of atonement does not express this *necessity* of Jesus’ suffering and death, then one’s doctrine of atonement is out of line with the Bible.⁹ Simeon Zahl has noted that despite the confusion among theologians and church historians about schemes, models, or theories of the atonement, many Christians instinctively profess a penal substitutionary doctrine of the atonement of Christ: “The vehemence of reactions against substitutionary and forensic models over the centuries has often obscured recognition of their sheer effectiveness in a wide variety of contexts and over many centuries.”¹⁰ It is as if penal substitutionary atonement comes naturally to the faithful when they hear the story of Jesus and read the Bible. Why?

There is something underneath the story of Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross driving that story. Every biblical doctrine is related to every other doctrine generally, as all divine revelation has one Author whose truth is coherent, but those relationships of one doctrine to another are specific, as Scripture’s Author determines. Christ’s sacrifice, for example, is biblically related to the Old Testament sacrificial system, as some English Bible translations make clear. The sacrifice of Jesus thus has to do with the same topics found in the Old Testament sacrificial system: blood, the need for

⁹ Matthew 16:21; 17:12; Mark 8:31; 9:12; Luke 9:22; 17:25; 24:26, 46; John 3:14; 12:27, 34; cf. Acts 17:3.

¹⁰ Simeon Zahl, “Atonement” in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology and Modern European Thought*, ed. Nicholas Adams, George Pattison, and Graham Ward (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 637.

atonement, forgiveness for sin and transgression, repentance. The sacrifice of Christ is not *unlike* Old Testament blood sacrifices in its aim of propitiation. It is not that God was wrathful in Old Testament times so that a blood sacrifice was then necessary, but now God has no wrath upon sin so that Christ's blood does not need to propitiate divine wrath. Jesus' sacrifice is not unique in being unrelated to wrath; it is unique in how it supersedes all other propitiatory sacrifices. All other sacrifices for sin are needless now that Christ has died once for all.¹¹ Beneath the edifice of atonement and sacrifice in both the Old and New Testaments is the substructure of divine wrath, as a building has far more supporting and anchoring it than meets the eye.

The divine wrath (ὀργή) is a major theme in Paul's letter to the Romans especially (e.g., Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8; 3:5; 4:15; 5:9). When the divine wrath is neglected as a factor in the death of Jesus specifically or a factor in how God deals with sin generally, one's understanding of the death of Jesus and thus of atonement will be off. When the nature of the divine wrath is understood, the urgency, the power, and the beauty of Christ's atonement all become clearer. However else one may want to speak of "atonement," one must build on the foundation of Christ's vicarious suffering as a blood sacrifice propitiating God's wrath.

Why God's Wrath?

Paul's formulation of divine wrath offers an especially clear and significant exposition of how divine wrath relates to Christ's sacrifice, particularly in the cover letter for his mission to the nations: the letter to the Romans. In Romans, he made particularly clear the necessity of God's wrath upon all human sin and the revelation of God's righteousness in Christ's sin-bearing death.

Wrath Present and Wrath to Come

Divine wrath is revealed in the present, the tense for the verb ἀποκαλύπτω in Romans 1:18. There is no caprice in God's wrath because it is poured out on "every ungodliness and unrighteousness of men" who are actively suppressing the manifest truth of God's power and divinity (Rom 1:18). Divine wrath is present in the horrors human beings busily practice in devoted unrighteousness. The practices of idolatry and homosexuality are linked later to the exchange of a godly piety and wholesome sexuality according to one's created nature as male or female for idolatry and destructive sexuality that is contrary to nature (Rom 1:24–32). Those who suppress the truth in unrighteousness may practice unrighteousness or merely approve of

¹¹ See ἐφάπαξ in Romans 6:10; Hebrews 7:27; 9:12; 10:10.

those who do, but Paul says unrighteousness is so manifest that even those who merely approve and lack personal acquaintance with ungodliness know that ungodliness and unrighteousness are “worthy of death” (Rom 1:32) from the divine judge.

Wrath is revealed against ungodliness and will be revealed in the day of wrath and revelation of the judgments of God (Rom 2:5), who renders to each according to his work (Rom 2:6; John 5:29). Secrecy is important in Romans 2 because there are both open idolaters practicing ungodliness and secret idolaters practicing what they themselves preach against (Rom 2:1–2). Neither class shall escape the judgment of God (Rom 2:3). There is no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God for the sexually immoral or the unclean or the covetous, whose actions have brought “the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience” (Eph 5:6). There is a present divine wrath upon sin that will be revealed in awful fullness at the second coming of Jesus. Paul thus exhorts the Ephesians not to become *συμμέτοχοι* (sharers, companions) with the sons of disobedience but to walk as sons of light who will receive their reward at Christ’s coming (Eph 6:8).

God’s kindness at present is meant to lead people to repentance, not harden them further. The unrepentant person is accumulating treasures of wrath for the day of wrath, when God will repay him for his hardheartedness with divine wrath (Rom 2:5). In 1 Timothy 5:24–25, people’s sins are described as either manifest sins, which “[go] before them to judgment,” as to a destination common to all, or as presently disguised, which will “follow” the sinner though now hidden from human eyes. What Paul calls “the other [works],” that is, evil works, cannot in the end be hidden. The power of divine judgment will overcome men’s efforts to suppress their own evils. All will be revealed, and each will receive what is due (Rom 2:6).¹²

The righteousness of divine wrath is so obvious to Paul that it is included once in Romans 2:3 and once in Romans 3:5 in rhetorical questions. Could God’s wrath possibly be unrighteous or out of place? “By no means!” Obviously God shall judge the entire created world (Rom 3:6). The manifest nature of divine wrath makes it more substructure than superstructure because it rests on the foundation of God’s righteousness and goodness. Paul proclaims the gospel, which is a mystery of God, revealed solely by God’s grace. The gospel in a broad sense for Paul is that God will judge the secrets of mankind “according to my gospel through Jesus Christ” (Rom

¹² Cranfield’s catalog (C. E. B. Cranfield, *Romans*, Vol. I, I–VIII, ICC [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1975], 146) of Romans 2:6’s echoes is extensive: Psalm 62:12; Proverbs 24:12; Ecclesiastes 12:14; Isaiah 3:10; Jeremiah 17:10; Hosea 12:2; along with Matthew 7:21; 16:27; 25:31–46; John 5:28–29; 2 Corinthians 5:10; 11:15; Galatians 6:7–9; Ephesians 6:8; Colossians 3:24; 2 Timothy 4:14; 1 Peter 1:17; Revelation 2:23; 20:12; 22:12.

2:16). The circumcision of the heart will alone receive praise from God in that day (Rom 2:28–29).

Our present justification in Christ's blood is the seal that we shall in the day of his mighty coming be saved "from his wrath" (Rom 5:9). Salvation from divine wrath at the second coming of Jesus also exists according to his grace because present realities of salvation—justification in his blood (Rom 5:9) and reconciliation to God through the death of Jesus (Rom 5:10)—are the seals of God's mercy toward believers, who shall at the coming of Jesus be saved from God's wrath (Rom 5:9) and by Christ's resurrection life (Rom 5:10). Apart from regeneration by the Holy Spirit, human beings are "children of wrath" (Eph 2:3). The riches of God's mercy is his salvation given by faith in Jesus Christ apart from works, which creates a new man walking in the good works God has prepared beforehand for him.¹³

Wrath is not absent from the world still engaged in the practice of ungodliness, nor will wrath be absent from the second coming, but believers look forward to shelter from righteous wrath in the day of judgment. Wrath is already present in the world upon sin but shall also come at the last day, so that the Thessalonians, having turned from the service of idols to the living and true God, now await his son "from the heavens," Jesus, "who saves us from the coming wrath [of God]" (1 Thess 1:10). That same God has not ordained his faithful "for wrath" but "for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thess 5:9–10). Christians remain awake and sober in this present age because they are sons of light and expect to receive resurrection at the coming of Jesus (1 Thess 5:5–8).

The connection between wrath and the second coming illumines the final articulation of divine wrath in Romans, where in Romans 9:22–24 Paul names some human beings as "vessels of wrath" whom God endures in a display of his long-suffering. Though these vessels of wrath proceed from the evil wills of the devil and corrupted human beings, they will not impede God's purposes for salvation in Christ for his elect vessels of mercy (Rom 9:23; cf. FC SD XI 80–82). The connection between wrath, the second coming, and the election of grace, Paul's main topic in Romans 9–11, is that they all solely depend on God's determination.¹⁴ God shall

¹³ Ephesians 2:10; cf. FC SD II 26; IV 7.

¹⁴ I agree with Middendorff that one's interpretation of Romans can best be tested in the interpretation of 9–11, especially of 9:6–13, but disagree that seeing predestination in Romans 9 is somehow "about 'me,'" (Michael Middendorff, *Romans 9–16* [St. Louis: Concordia, 2016], 867). The word of promise (Rom 9:9) concerns both God's deeds and his sure salvation for his people. They cannot consider themselves or their salvation apart from considering his deeds, nor are his deeds for something or someone other than the objects of his mercy (Rom 9:23): "We have a glorious comfort in this salutary teaching, that we know how we have been chosen for eternal life in Christ out of sheer grace, without any merit of our own, and that no one can tear us out of his hand. . . . In the midst of our greatest trials we can remind ourselves of them, comfort ourselves with them, and thereby quench the fiery darts of the devil" (FC Ep XI 13). Robert Kolb and Timothy

pour out judgment upon sin and bring final salvation for his people at the time of his own choosing. He alone is divine, and everything and everyone else is under his control. This is so basic as to often go unmentioned in our sermons and teaching, yet so profound as to merit far more examination as the basis for the proclamation of the gospel to undeserving sinners.

Church Practice

Paul's church practices are incomprehensible without the understanding that divine wrath is coming upon sin. The forsaking of judgment of the brother commanded in Romans 14:10 is because everyone will appear before God's judgment seat and will have to give an account of his own doings, not of his brother's. Excommunication has the same basis in the sure and just judgment of God upon the righteous in praise and upon the unrighteous in wrath. The excommunication of the man sleeping with his mother-in-law in 1 Corinthians 5:1–5 is *not* an exercise in "judging" according to the contemporary understanding of "being judgmental," a capricious bothering with someone else's problems while neglecting and concealing one's own flaws. Paul himself does not submit to human judgment and is unaware of gross sin on his own part but is not in 1 Corinthians 4:4 thereby justified. The only Justifier shall come and reveal the secrets of men's hearts and give out due praise at that time. Excommunication is intended to discipline the man's flesh so that his spirit might be saved "in the day of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 5:5). Excommunication operates in view of Christ's coming and hopes practically for repentance prior to the Lord's Day, the day of judgment. If the man had not been excommunicated, the congregation would have confessed that πορνεία was not actually a sin, or that they did not care enough about the man's spirit to discipline his flesh.

There is a clarity about mankind present already in the church (cf. the description of the Divine Service as the revelation of the secrets of men's hearts in 1 Cor 14:24–25) that necessitates clarity about sin and its forsaking in the church's practice. The ὀλεθρον, the destruction or discipline of the flesh that was temporary and instructive according to 1 Corinthians 5, shall become "unending" according to 2 Thessalonians 1:8–9 when those who have not "obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus" receive "unending destruction away from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power." The church's present discipline is meant to save someone from the certain ruin he will experience under the wrath of God apart from Christ. The

J. Wengert, eds., *The Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. Charles Arand, et al. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 518.

church is the place where judgment is already present upon sin according to Peter: “For it is time for judgment to begin at the household of God; and if it begins with us, what will be the outcome for those who do not obey the gospel of God?” (1 Pet 4:17).

The one “gospel of Christ” (Phil 1:27) and its attendant practices of unity in faith and in suffering that Paul mentions in Philippians 1 are for unbelievers signs of their destruction but for the church signs of their salvation, and these are all “from God” according to Paul. Similarly in Philippians 3:17–4:1, the commanded imitation of Paul’s way of life is also an avoidance of the way of life of those who “walk as enemies of the cross of Christ” (Phil 3:18). Their end point will be destruction, as, conversely, the end point of the believers will be reception of the Lord Jesus “from the heavens” (Phil 3:20), the location in Romans 1:18 of the revelation of divine wrath. But this coming of Jesus is good news for the Philippians whose bodies of humiliation will be transformed at the coming of Jesus to be conformed to the body of his glory, even as now their bodies are conformed to the body of his humiliation in their sufferings with him and with Paul his apostle (Phil 3:21). Christian suffering is, thus, a testimony of hope in the coming transformation of the body through the simultaneous judgment and salvation of Jesus Christ at his coming.¹⁵

In a phrase reminiscent of Ephesians 5:3, Paul exhorts the Colossians to put to death their members that are “of the earth,” that is, what in them savors of ungodliness such as “sexual immorality, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry” because on account of these things the wrath of God is come (Col 3:5–8). The Colossians themselves once did such things, but now they must put off all such practices along with “[human] wrath” and a host of other evils. Repentance is shaped according to divine judgment and wrath, forsaking what would earn further divine wrath and conforming to the pattern of Christ, who has passed under the yoke of wrath already and now lives forever. The proclamation of divine wrath on sin is certainly not the human assumption of a wrathful attitude toward other creatures. Neither Paul’s proclamation against sin nor the communal practices of excluding open sin from the congregation are occasions for human wrath, recrimination, or judgment. The proclamation of wrath now before Christ’s coming and the mortification of sinful flesh before the day of judgment are intended to bring peace in Christ between God and Christians and between Christians themselves.

¹⁵ E. A. Judge, “Changing Ideals of the Great Man,” in *Paul and the Conflict of Cultures: The Legacy of His Thought Today*, ed. James R. Harrison (Eugene, Ore.: Cascade Books, 2019), 135.

The proclamation of the word of God “in season and out of season” is commanded in view of the coming of Jesus Christ to judge the living and the dead (2 Tim 4:1–2). The gospel is heralded forth *prior to the judgment*; the gospel is public now *although the judgment is hidden now*. The reward of the servant of the gospel is now hidden but shall be received as a crown of righteousness in that day when the righteous judge shall reward Paul and “not only [Paul] but all who have loved his appearing” (2 Tim 4:8). The Christian looks forward to the second coming of Christ not as a day of wrath but as a day of reward. Contrarily, Alexander the coppersmith who did Paul much harm shall receive his own “reward” “according to his works” at the coming of the Lord (2 Tim 4:14).

The preaching of Paul recorded in Acts seconds all the evidence about divine wrath and judgment we have gleaned from his own letters. In Athens, he preached that the times of ignorance are now over, and a definite time for repentance has now been divinely appointed *because* God has established for himself a day when he shall judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:30–31). The seal that this is true and that Paul’s God is true, that the day of judgment shall come to pass, is that he has raised a man from the dead whom he has appointed for this judgment. The resurrection of Jesus is the seal of God’s coming judgment and the earnest of his command to mankind to repent of their sins.¹⁶

The newness of the resurrection for Paul was not that resurrection would occur at some future date. He clearly told Felix that he shared that hope with his opponents and accusers (Acts 24:15). The uniqueness of the gospel is that the end of the ages has begun already and shall be completed in and because of Jesus Christ. Paul claims that the difference between himself and his accusers is a matter of “the resurrection of the dead” (Acts 24:21). He sincerely believes that their difference concerns when and how that resurrection has begun to take place uniquely in Jesus Christ. In view of that resurrection of Jesus, Paul’s message to Felix and Drusilla is summarized as “righteousness and self-control and the coming judgment” (Acts 24:25). Those three themes in Paul’s preaching result from his apocalyptic sense of the world’s transformation through the resurrection of Jesus. Since Jesus was crucified for sin and raised from the dead, vindicated in his innocence, Felix and Drusilla’s lives should change. In Christ, wrath, judgment, works (both good and evil), and repentance hold together.

¹⁶ Eckhard J. Schnabel, *Early Christian Mission*, vol. 2: *Paul and the Early Church* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2004), 1562–1568.

Christ under God's Wrath

Divine wrath upon sin and its concomitant divine judgment of sinners are “substructure” because they are not the sum of Paul’s gospel. They are part of Paul’s gospel according to which through Jesus Christ the world shall be judged, but they are not the entirety of his gospel, which is *the* gospel (Rom 16:25). Neither the scriptural articulation of Christ’s sacrifice nor our present preaching of the gospel make sense within the Bible or to anyone listening to our preaching without this substructure of divine wrath upon sin.

Christ is the recipient of the wrath of God upon sin, having purchased our redemption, as Paul says in Romans 3:24. The display of God’s righteousness is the blood atonement divinely put forth in the death of Jesus. Where Paul speaks of the gospel, he *must* speak of human sin and blood because righteous divine wrath against sin is satisfied only by the blood of Christ. Christ is specifically the one who was delivered up on account of our trespasses (Rom 4:25). The reason for his death is the substitution of him for us. He wrought the satisfaction of divine wrath through death and was raised from the dead for our justification (Rom 4:25). Paul’s surprised delight is that these things were done “while we were yet sinners” (Rom 5:8), but he maintains clearly that Christ did not die for people who treated him as a friend.¹⁷ Rather, Christ died for people *deserving of wrath*, but justified right now in his blood, *we shall be saved from his wrath* at his coming (Rom 5:9). Blood is the only means of drawing near to God, so that the blood of Christ is the only way the Ephesians are no longer strangers to the divine promises (Eph 2:13). The death of Jesus effects the new creation, ending hostility between peoples and between God and man through his death, so that God may now be called “Father” commonly by all, whether far off or near (Eph 2:17–18). Everything in the cosmos changes because of Jesus’ sacrificial blood.

The proclamation of peace in Christ’s blood comes from the fact that he has made peace already through the “blood of his cross” (Col 1:20). This reconciliation is the removal of divine wrath, so that peace between God and men can now exist through his blood. He now presents us “holy and blameless and without reproach before his face” (Col 1:22). The one made alive with Christ through Baptism has been forgiven all his trespasses, a removal of wrath and its penalty through burial into Christ because the record of debt standing against the sinner in God’s righteous wrath has been removed through Christ’s payment of blood. The so-called “Christus victor” model of atonement (“He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him” [Col 2:15]) cannot be separated

¹⁷ Simon Gathercole, *Defending Substitution: An Essay on Atonement in Paul* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2015), 97–101.

from the fundamental penal substitution of Christ mentioned in the verse just prior: "by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross" (Col 2:14). There would be no disarmament of powers lording it over us unless Christ had suffered divine wrath for us, paying in his body the penalty due for sin.¹⁸

The distinction between Christ and all those who are "in Christ" on the one hand and those who are not in Christ on the other is that only in Christ is God's righteous wrath extinguished. The things of wrath, especially death, have no hold on Jesus (Rom 6:9), so that the one who is in Christ should reckon himself even now as no longer a slave to sin but present himself as a slave of Christ. This is why human judgment can be dismissed so easily in Romans 8. Condemnation is no longer possible for the one who is in Christ Jesus (Rom 8:1, 2, 34). Human judgment is laughably light compared to the weightiness of Christ's glory. Christ has already died under God's wrath for sinners and has already been raised, so it is impossible that we should be separated from his love (Rom 8:35, 39). He has passed through wrath, judgment, and death, and been vindicated in the Spirit through resurrection (1 Tim 3:16). Wrath is not absent from Paul's understanding of how the world works or what God will do in the future to "those who do not obey the gospel of God" (1 Pet 4:17). Wrath is no more, *only* and *blessedly* in Christ alone.

Paul grounds the reason for a new life individually and corporately among the Corinthians in the death of Christ our Passover (1 Cor 5:7). New things belong to this new age that has dawned with the passing from death into unending life that Jesus has accomplished. The cleansing that church discipline should effect in 1 Corinthians 5 is a cleansing in keeping with this day of salvation. Paul argues that certain things are not fitting for this new time and must, therefore, be removed from the house of God as leaven that does not belong. The reason anyone "in Christ is a new creation" (2 Cor 5:17) is because Christ's death and resurrection have brought about a coexistence in our time and space: a new creation in Christ that is alive and not subject to wrath, and an old creation that is passing away and shall be punished in righteous wrath for its sin. Reconciliation to God is not an abstraction for Paul, as if God waved his hand and suddenly had no problems anymore with sin. Reconciliation has occurred only in Christ, so that the ministry of reconciliation that Paul has is a ministry of preaching Christ, not of telling everyone everything will work out. The proclamation of Christ is the only hope the world has in the face of

¹⁸ Our understanding of the atonement cannot be "kaleidoscopic" (Joel B. Green, "Kaleidoscopic View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, ed. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy [Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2006], 157–185), because unlike in a kaleidoscope, not all parts are of equal value, forming new combinations and perspectives. If divine wrath is fundamental to the atonement, vicarious satisfaction of divine wrath is fundamental to anything else we can say about the work of Christ.

divine wrath. This is Paul's urgency in exhorting the Corinthians, "Be reconciled to God!" (2 Cor 5:20).

The inauguration of this new age was established in the words of greatest importance that Paul passed on to the Corinthians: the words of institution of the Lord's Supper and the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15:3–7. In the words of institution, Jesus indicates that the covenant between God and man shall exist by virtue of his shed blood—necessary as a sacrifice for sin—and what Paul passed on to the Corinthians as of first importance was Christ's death according to the Scriptures, meaning that the Old Testament necessitates the death of the Christ for sin to stay God's wrath. This is Paul's reference to the vicarious suffering of the divine Servant in Isaiah 53—who is stricken for another's sins, not his own, who undergoes the punishment deserved by others, not himself. Without wrath upon sin, there is no sense to be made of Isaiah 53 or 1 Corinthians 15. Knowing that wrath comes upon sin, the gospel of Isaiah 53 and 1 Corinthians 15 is that Christ has received the penalty due for sin, shedding his blood as an atoning sacrifice and propitiation of divine wrath. Eusebius expressed the centrality and simplicity of Christ's sacrificial death to the Christian religion: "Even as children we had this view concerning him—that he suffered all these things because of us in order that he might set us free from all retribution."¹⁹

Using Paul's teaching on the reality and the presence of divine wrath on sin even now, we can help people understand many of the things occurring in their lives better than ascribing no human agency at all—as if everything in our lives were inconsequential and weightless. It is *not* Paul's teaching that everything that happens in a person's life occurs because of that person's sin. People sometimes suffer innocently and inexplicably, as Job suffered after Adam's sin had earned the divine curse. It *is* Paul's teaching that some of one's sufferings are due to divine wrath on sin—as was the case with Sodom and Gomorrah, the towns on which Jesus pronounced woes for their hardness of heart, Paul's own people whose rejection of the gospel grieved the apostle so deeply—and all suffering is finally due to Adam's sin. If we hide this from people or shrink back from discussing divine wrath, they will still intuit it themselves and either blame themselves without recourse to Christ or harden themselves in their pride in sin. The seeming spiritual necessity of wrath as a structural element in understanding one's own life is probably why Simeon Zahl can identify so many people who go on believing that Jesus has taken the divine

¹⁹ Eusebius of Caesarea, *Commentary on Isaiah*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, trans. Jonathan J. Armstrong (Ancient Christian Texts) (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2013), 263. Eusebius, "Commentaria in Isaiam," in *Patrologia cursus completus: Series graeca*, 162 vols., ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Migne, 1857–1886), 24:457.

punishment for *their* particular sins even when their churches have never told them that clear biblical message. Even when the church or her theologians are unable to say clearly *why* Jesus is the Lamb of God, the gospel story in itself with its necessary suffering of an innocent and divine victim reveals Jesus as the sacrificial sin-bearer. The story is stronger, deeper, and greater than the theories about it.

Theory is not therefore needless, and there are other things about the death of Christ that are significant in Scripture apart from his propitiation of the Father's wrath upon sin. Christ's death is an example of how Christians should conduct themselves in humility and self-sacrifice, and his death has put the powers of hell to flight. But no theory should be constructed, or can be constructed, that is *biblically sound* without articulating divine wrath upon sin and the propitiation of divine wrath in the sacrificial, substitutionary death of Jesus. Penal substitutionary atonement is the foundation of any biblical doctrine of the atonement.

In preaching, as in theory, the substitutionary death of Jesus is fundamental. In the stories people tell themselves about themselves, the sense they try to make of their own lives under the influence of the church's preaching and the Bible's revelations about human sin, the necessity for a satisfaction of divine wrath must come up. People cannot help needing a penal substitutionary atonement. Growing acquaintance with one's own particular sins and trespasses does not bring condemnation to the one who knows that Christ has died not only generally to end sin and death, but to be an atoning sacrifice once for all of one's own particular sins—even the besetting and most deeply buried ones. Walther had the following to say regarding people who regard their personal sins but lightly:

People who speak in this way picture God, the Holy and Righteous One as a feeble, old man like Eli, who saw his sons sin and merely said, "No, my sons," thinking that he had already done his full duty. True enough: God is love. But He is also holiness and righteousness. For the people who rise up against Him, God becomes a terrible fire, and His fiery wrath follows these sinners into the depths of hell.²⁰

Recognizing the substructure of Christ's atonement—the biblical frames of divine wrath upon sin and coming divine judgment upon all—helps us see the truth of the Scriptures better and thus not step shyly away from these topics. It affords a better view of why the Bible everywhere insists on the *necessity of Christ's death* as the only means of reconciliation between God and men. Finally, it allows us to magnify

²⁰ C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, John P. Hellwege Jr., and Thomas E. Manteufel, trans. Christian C. Tiews (St. Louis: Concordia, 2010), 366.

Christ for his salvation. The biblical message is that only blood, in which is life (Gen 9:4–6), satisfies divine wrath, and that blood is Christ's.

The Splintering of Missouri: How Our American Context Gave Rise to Micro-Synods as a Solution to Theological Conflict

Todd A. Peperkorn

Introduction

On January 3, 2020, the United Methodist Church (UMC) announced that it had reached an agreement with the more conservative elements in its church body to have an amicable separation, a “no-fault divorce,” as it were, between the progressive wing with the money and the more conservative wing, mostly represented by delegates from Africa. This agreement stipulates that a new church body will be formed out of the ashes of the old, and that this new church body will have \$25 million in startup money to begin anew. The issue for them is not biblical authority, nor is it women’s ordination, the two issues that have defined many splits of the last century. No, this time the presenting issue is same-sex or gay marriage. The conservatives in Africa and a few adherents to a biblical view of marriage will get a new beginning. I wonder if they will have the spirit depicted as a phoenix as a part of their new emblem.

What makes this issue significant for us is that they are not trying to resolve their theological differences. They are irreconcilable, but do not want to go down the treacherous and sad road of calling one another heretics. This way, they can follow a different path, and congregations can each take whichever road they want.

But we do not have to go to other church bodies to find these ideas. In 2019, LCMS Texas District President Mike Newman wrote an article for *Lutheran Mission Matters*. In this article, President Newman proposed, among other things, that the LCMS plant a new church body in the United States that is diverse and nimble, able to keep Augustana XIV but “unencumbered by European educational structures and Western accreditation requirements.”¹ The hope, according to Newman, is that this new church body would reach people in the United States in a way that our old structure simply does not allow and for which it is not designed. This missional

¹ Michael W. Newman, “Next Steps for LCMS Multiplication: Two Actions to Reignite a Gospel Movement,” *Lutheran Mission Matters* XXVII, no. 2 (November 2019): 274.

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church body would focus on new church plants and reaching unbelievers of the next generation, and it would be able to operate in a much more responsive way.

What is interesting for our purposes is not so much Newman's proposal as the response. Some on both the confessional and the moderate wings of the Missouri Synod have taken Newman's paper as a call for an amicable divorce, where each party could go their own way.

In order for us to understand the impulse of American churches to divide, we have to take a step back from the headlines of today and go in to our own history. For most of the history of the LCMS, people have left the Missouri Synod for theological convictions, and there has been little or no talk about an amicable departure.

The Missouri Synod tends to have a strong theological center, thanks in a large part to its two seminaries, but on the edges there are always those who cannot stand the direction the whole synod appears to be taking. Lawrence R. Rast Jr. has demonstrated that the theological landscape was always shifting in Missouri, and that there was no golden era.² What I would like to do is look at those who had enough—those who saw the trends and challenges to Missouri's traditional positions on things and could not bear the change. We are going to look at three snapshots of groups who left Missouri in the fifties, the sixties, and the seventies: the Orthodox Lutheran Conference, the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, and the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. After this, we will examine how these experiences demonstrate our own American desire for autonomy at the expense of everything else, and what this teaches us about our own ecclesiology. Finally, we will try to offer some questions that we need to be asking ourselves as we consider Missouri's own future.

The Religious Scene in 1950

In order to gain a bit of context for our splinter groups from Missouri, we have to take a snapshot of the religious scene in 1950 or so. It is the years after World War II, and America is on top of the world, although the Soviet Union is lurking in the shadows. The language of the age is prosperity, and everyone, everyone has children. The baby boom is in full swing. In many respects, things are looking up for religion in America. The good guys won for God and country, and there is no foreign power that will conquer in the era of Truman and Eisenhower. We are not going to talk about Korea. Nearly everyone who is in charge for the next generation will be veterans. It is just the way things are.

² Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Synod or Sects? The Emergence of Partisanship in the LCMS," Symposia on the Lutheran Confessions, January 22, 2020. Electronic recording.

The Protestant religious scene, however, is divided. A couple world wars had shaken the progressive movement of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but the ecumenical movement is now in full swing. The National Council of Churches was formed in 1950, and it would become the voice of mainline Protestantism to this day. But the battles of modernism were far from over in America.

Out of the early twentieth-century fundamentalist movement, a new force had arisen, calling itself evangelicalism. The National Association of Evangelicals was formed in 1942, Fuller Theological Seminary in 1947, and the Billy Graham crusades were the talk of the airwaves. Unless, of course, you were Lutheran, then we talked about *The Lutheran Hour*. In 1956, Billy Graham founded *Christianity Today* (with Carl Henry as the first editor-in-chief), and it would serve as the voice of the new evangelicalism for generations.

Billy Graham himself is a study in the new age of evangelicalism. As Robert Wuthnow observes in his book *The Restructuring of American Religion*, Graham served as a bridge between the northern and southern evangelicals, and between those who were in mainline denominations and those in newer ones.³ He himself was a Southern Baptist, but with a Presbyterian wife and strong ties to both business and the north, Graham cut across denominational lines and gathered people, it seemed, from everywhere.

These new conservatives were more optimistic than their fundamentalist forebearers. They did not hold with the modernist views on things like evolution, and seemed to cling to a religion that was closer to the nineteenth-century revivals than the social movements like the Salvation Army, the even more liberal impulses of Lyman Beecher, and others. Robert Ellwood, in his book *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life*, observed that the really unique character of evangelicalism was that it was based on free enterprise, was entrepreneurial, and was deeply, deeply subjective.⁴ Its institutions were based on congregationalism and charismatic leaders, rather than long-standing traditions. Evangelicalism was primed for the new, post-WWII world.

There were, however, cracks. Even though evangelicalism was the new thing, the mainline churches were growing by leaps and bounds. But nearly every mainline denomination had splinters in their ranks. Oftentimes these splinter groups would align more closely to the fundamentalists of the early twentieth century than to the evangelicals of the fifties and sixties. Every time there was a merger—whether we are

³ Robert Wuthnow, *The Restructuring of American Religion: Society and Faith since World War II* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 177.

⁴ Robert S. Ellwood, *1950: Crossroads of American Religious Life* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000), 194.

talking Presbyterian or Baptist or Methodist or Lutheran—some groups moved closer together, but some split off. And The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) was no exception to this trend. It was possible fellowship with the old American Lutheran Church (ALC) that led to our first set of splinters.



Theodore Graebner (1876–1950)



Paul E. Kretzmann, 1946

The Fifties and the Orthodox Lutheran Conference

The Lutheran part of our story begins with the formation of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference (OLC) in 1951. In many respects, this group was the first to take the action of leaving the LCMS as a result of their critiques of the direction Missouri was taking. The leading light for them was Dr. Paul E. Kretzmann (1883–1965), of *Popular Commentary* fame.⁵ Kretzmann had been in a protracted fight with Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for many years. His primary antagonist was his onetime friend and colleague Dr. Theodore Graebner. Without going into the entire story of the thirties and forties, Kretzmann had accused Graebner of false doctrine by espousing unionism in a revision of Graebner's book, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong*.⁶ It is frankly a quite confusing story, because Graebner had the habit of rewriting and

⁵ Paul E. Kretzmann, *Popular Commentary of the Bible*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921–1924).

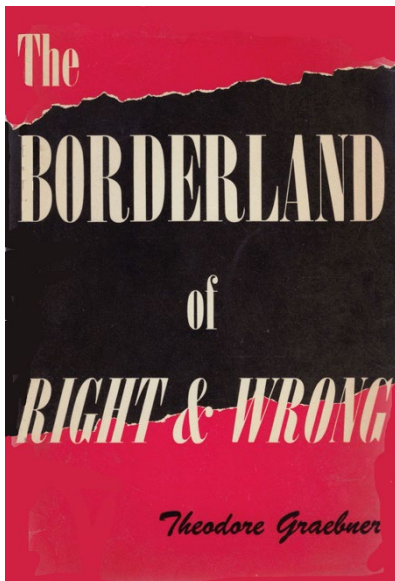
⁶ Theodore Graebner, *The Borderland of Right and Wrong: An Essay on the Adiaphora*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935).

T O W A R D
L U T H E R A N
U N I O N

A Scriptural and Historical Approach by
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Seminary



CONCORDIA PUBLISHING HOUSE
1943



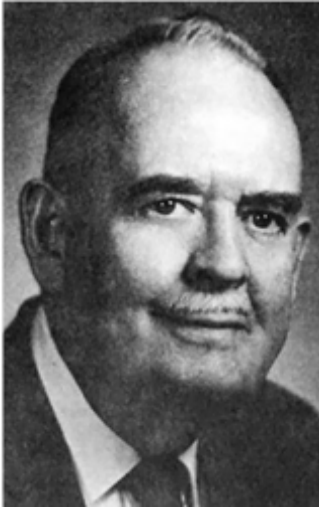
revising his book. It became the *Variata* of its time. The book began as a lecture given to a Texas pastors conference in 1934 as a corrective to what Graebner considered the “traditionalists” in the synod overreaching what he considered to be biblical. The book’s first printing was in 1935, the year Texas District President John Behnken defeated Friedrich Pfotenhauer for the presidency of the Missouri Synod. By the mid-1940s, however, the book seemed to be espousing a much broader view of adiaphora and church union than what was there just a few years before.

And in the middle of all that, Graebner and Kretzmann in 1943 co-wrote a book against unionism titled *Toward Lutheran Union: A Scriptural and Historical Approach*.⁷ Then Graebner became one of the signers of the “Statement of the Forty-Four,” and let us just say their relationship soured very quickly.

In 1946, Kretzmann resigned his call as a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, after it became clear that President Ludwig Fuerbringer was not going to consider Kretzmann’s charges against Graebner. So from 1946 until the formation of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference in 1951, Kretzmann wrote letters, lots and lots of letters. From his home office in Cuba, Missouri, he wrote to pastors, synod officials, and anyone who would listen (and

many who would not) about how things were changing at Concordia Seminary, and that Synod President John Behnken was a part of the problem.

⁷ Theodore Graebner and Paul E. Kretzmann, *Toward Lutheran Union* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943).



Wallace McLaughlin (1902–1976)



Harold W. Romoser (1907–1998) Photo provided by Claire Fickenscher, granddaughter of Harold Romoser.

Kretzmann also had a disciple named Rev. Wallace McLaughlin. He was a convert from Presbyterianism who joined the United Lutheran Church in America (ULCA) and eventually the Missouri Synod. For two years during his colloquy, he studied under Francis Pieper and Kretzmann and Graebner. But Kretzmann found in McLaughlin a kindred spirit against modernism, and someone who seemed to be willing to sacrifice everything for the sake of the truth.

The third pastor who figures prominently in the history of the OLC is Rev. Harold Romoser. Romoser was one of the bright lights of the Missouri Synod in the 1940s. He was the secretary of the Synod's Centennial Committee in 1947, and most importantly for us, he was one of President Behnken's appointees to meet with the signers of the "Statement of the Forty-Four." He was in the middle of nearly everything going on in the LCMS when it came to Missouri's own internal discipline and how it would deal with change. At one point, he was even offered the presidency of the Springfield seminary. Serving as pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in Oak Park, Illinois, Romoser was in a perfect position to see what was going on, especially since President Behnken kept his own office as president in Chicago. He did not join the OLC, but was present for most all of it.

What were some of the issues that caused the formation of the OLC? The first issue was not unionism, the acceptance of the *Common Confession* with the old ALC, or any of the

theological topics we would associate with the liberalism of the pre-Seminex era. All of those were in the laundry list of complaints. The first real complaint listed by the founders, though, had to do with engagement and marriage.

For many years, the practice of getting engaged before being married was in place, obviously. This was hardly a new thing. The question was whether breaking

off an engagement was considered the same thing as getting a divorce. While this is a non-issue for us today for the most part, in the early 1950s this was a protracted disagreement in the LCMS. On May 24, 1949, the Concordia Seminary faculty offered a theological “opinion” that the modern practice of engagement was not the same as the ancient practice of betrothal, and that one could break off an engagement without sin, as this was not the equivalent of divorce. This position was defended by the seminary president, Louis Sieck (1884–1952), and by most of the St. Louis faculty. In 1953, there was a joint seminary statement which, although a bit more cautious, essentially said the same thing.⁸

Shortly after this all came out in the fall of 1949, a group of laymen and a few pastors started what was called the St. Louis Study Club. This club was modeled after a similar, although more clergy-led, group called the Chicago Study Club, which met at Romoser’s church and at Christ Lutheran Church in Oak Park. The St. Louis Study Club met monthly, and added to their list of complaints about the direction of Missouri time after time. Kretzmann would later say this about these meetings and the Chicago Study Club meetings: “One left the meetings glowing with fervor; but, with a hidden dissatisfaction, something ought to be DONE about it!”⁹

While engagement may seem a minor historical oddity today, at the time this was a big, big deal. For some, it was the beginning of the end of the orthodoxy of the LCMS. And it was the spark, along with the adoption of part one of the *Common Confession* with the ALC at the 1950 synodical convention, that really began the Orthodox Lutheran Conference.

The St. Louis Study Club drew up a document entitled the “Confession of Faith Professed and Practiced by All True Lutherans.”¹⁰ It was this document that served as the basis for the Orthodox Lutheran Conference. On September 25, 1951, at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Okabena, Minnesota, the OLC was formed. This conference began with ten pastors (one of whom later withdrew) and six laymen. Kretzmann and McLaughlin were clearly the leading voices of the OLC, although there were several other pastors who would provide leadership for this group, including several pastors with the last name of Schupmann.

It would take about four years before there was a split in the OLC, with some of the members joining the Wisconsin Synod, others remaining independent, and still

⁸ Arthur C. Repp, “Changes in the Missouri Synod,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 38 (1967): 263. It should also be noted that Paul E. Kretzmann wrote an article in *Theological Quarterly* in 1916 holding up the breaking off of engagement as tantamount to divorce. This was an issue that was brewing for some time.

⁹ Paul E. Kretzmann, “A Short History of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference,” accessed January 22, 2020, <http://www.concordialutheranconf.com/2010/02/22/a-short-history-of-the-orthodox-lutheran-conference/>.

¹⁰ Kretzmann, “A Short History of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference.”

others forming the Concordia Lutheran Conference, which is in existence to this day.¹¹

The Sixties and the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation

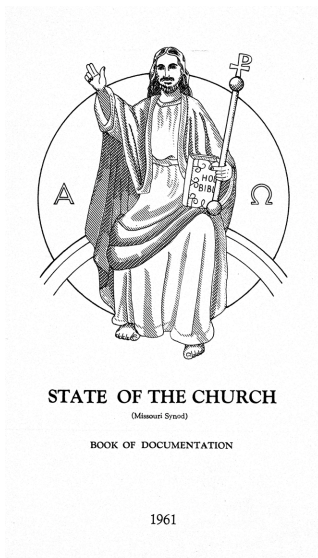


Cameron A. MacKenzie Sr.
Photo provided by Cameron A. MacKenzie Jr.

Our second splinter group is the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, or LCR. The LCR was founded in 1964 as a direct result of what were called the State of the Church Conferences, which began after the 1959 convention in San Francisco. These conferences were essentially a who's who of conservative voices in the LCMS in the early 1960s. They looked at events happening as far back as the *Brief Statement* (1932), but were especially focused on changes happening at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. The first State of the Church Conference included a book of documentation, prepared by Rev. Herman Otten (1933–2019) of *Lutheran News*, and pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church in New Haven, Missouri.

Not surprisingly, some of the men who were instrumental in the OLC from ten years before became involved in the State of the Church, including Harold Romoser, Wallace McLaughlin, and P. E. Kretzmann. But there were new faces on the scene as well, such as Cameron A. MacKenzie Sr.

The documentation book was two hundred pages long and included everything controversial that had happened in the LCMS since 1950 or earlier. There were sections on Martin Scharlemann (1910–1982), Jaroslav Pelikan (1923–2006), Martin Marty (b. 1928), the *Common Confession*, and more and more topics centering around biblical authority and the inspiration of the Scriptures. It was clear by this time that changes were ramping up in the LCMS, and that the issues



¹¹ "Concordia Lutheran Conference (CLC)," accessed January 22, 2020, <http://www.concordialutheranconf.com>.

which brought about the OLC ten years before were all still there, and a lot more had been added.

On May 15 and 16, 1961, more than four hundred pastors and laymen met in Milwaukee for the State of the Church Conference and the issues disturbing Missouri. Special attention was paid to inspiration and inerrancy of the Bible, the doctrine of Scripture, and the *Brief Statement* of 1932. Hopes were high that progress would be made at the 1962 convention of the synod, but it was not to be so. The State of the Church was refused a booth at the convention, and there was no movement at the convention on any of the issues brought up at the 1961 conference.¹² As a direct result of this, MacKenzie's congregation, St. Matthew's in Detroit, terminated fellowship with the Missouri Synod in 1963.

By 1964, it seemed as though things had come to a head. A group of pastors and congregations resolved to leave the LCMS and form what would become known as the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR). The meeting determining this happened at Trinity Lutheran Church in New Haven, Missouri, although Trinity and Otten did not join the LCR.¹³ The formal beginning was April 28 and 29, 1964, at Emmaus Lutheran Church in Chicago. From this point forward, we see a split happening with the conservatives in Missouri: those who left, and those who remained. While there was crossover and conversation between the two groups, the communication and interworkings largely disappeared after the 1969 convention in Denver. At that convention, Dr. J. A. O. Preus II (1920–1994) was elected president of the synod, and the LCMS declared fellowship with the ALC.

But back to 1964. When the LCR formed, Cameron A. MacKenzie Sr. was elected the first administrator, and Harold Romoser the first coadjutor. A year after their beginning, they numbered seven congregations, with three more applying for membership and ten other independent congregations in fellowship. While there were attempts to enter into fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod, this never came to fruition, in large part due to differences on church and ministry, which had been brewing between Missouri and Wisconsin for many years.

The history of the LCR since the early seventies was consistent and plagued by splinters of the splinter. In 1972, St. Matthew's in Detroit withdrew from the LCR over what they considered to be intrusion on the part of the LCR into their internal affairs. The following year four other congregations were removed for siding with St. Matthew's. In 1976, Romoser and two other congregations left over this same issue. Thus in 1979, the Fellowship of Lutheran Congregations (FLC) was formed.

¹² Fred Casmer, "The Trumpet with the Certain Sound: An Analysis of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) Viewed from Its Historical and Doctrinal Roots" (Unpublished paper, April 29, 1980), 9.

¹³ Personal correspondence with Kenneth K. Miller, 1991.

This group of congregations eventually dissolved, but at least one in their midst ended up as an LCMS pastor, of all things. The issue between the LCR and the FLC was whether in a case of excommunication the person being excommunicated had to be present at the voters meeting when they were excommunicated.

The Lutheran Churches of the Reformation exist to this day.¹⁴ There are twelve pastors and fourteen congregations. And in 2017, in honor of the five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, they published a series of essays outlining the differences between the LCR and the LCMS.¹⁵

The Seventies and the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism

While we could see the OLC and the LCR as a continuation of one to the other, the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism (FAL) was really an entity of its own. FAL was formed in 1971 as the merger of two regional conservative groups: the Conference for Authentic Lutheranism in California (CAL) and the Free Association for Authentic Lutheranism in the Midwest. On November 1–2, 1971, a group of more than two hundred people, mostly pastors, gathered in Libertyville, Illinois, to discuss the formation of a new federation to combat the apparent liberalism of the Missouri Synod. At the time of its formation, the belief was that there would be fifty to sixty congregations who would join FAL. Many felt that the political approach to problems that seemed to be J. A. O. Preus's "method of operation" was not satisfactory, and that a bolder and clearer stand must be taken. While that was the talk, this proved not to be the case.¹⁶ In the end, only six congregations joined FAL.

Why were there so few? The interest was high in 1971, the battle lines had been drawn, and the conflict had really been going on since the 1950 synodical convention or before. At the same time, this was before the Internet. What was known by the pastors was not common knowledge to the laity. They did not have Facebook to make sure everyone knew everything all the time. In addition, FAL also suffered from a serious lack of leadership. Probably the leading light in the history of FAL was a layman from Libertyville, Illinois, named Lawrence R. Marquardt (1933–2001).

In 1973, this little group declared fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. That gives us a sense of where the Wisconsin Synod was in our own internal struggles at

¹⁴ "About the LCR," accessed January 22, 2020, <http://lcrusa.org>.

¹⁵ "Here We Stand: A Collection of Essays on the Differences between the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS)," Annual Convention of the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (LCR) (July 14–15, 2017).

¹⁶ Robert Lehrkamp, "What Caused the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism to Break-Up" (Unpublished paper, April 1980), 3.

the time. But even with the support of the Wisconsin Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), they did not last long.

The 1973 synodical convention in New Orleans, from a conservative point of view, was a great convention. While the moderates sang “The Church’s One Foundation,” Concordia Seminary’s Board of Control went to people sympathetic to Dr. Preus’s views on the controversy. Now, from the perspective of FAL, this was difficult, because it gave the conservatives remaining in the LCMS hope. They had hoped for fifty to sixty congregations joining in 1971, but ended up being six. They maxed out with around fourteen congregations. The federation disbanded in 1975, with a number of those congregations joining the Wisconsin Synod.

How Did Our American Context Affect the Creation and Outcome of the Three Splits?

Now that we have a sense of these three splits, we must step back for a moment and try to gain some perspective on them.

At one level, we can see all of them as a part of the larger movement of the Missouri Synod’s ongoing identity crisis and struggle with modernity. They are the conservative corollary to Seminex and the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). One part of this story is asking the question of how we think through theological conflict together and try to resolve it. What I want to highlight for us in these smaller groups that left the LCMS is the one thing that both the moderate wing and the conservative wing had in common: *autonomy*.

With each one of these three groups, there was a desire to uphold the autonomy of the local congregation as the only true expression of the church, and that any person or entity beyond it is advisory at best, and encroaching on the self-governance of the congregation at worst. It is no accident that we had the *Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, the *Lutheran Churches of the Reformation*, and the *Federation for Authentic Lutheranism*. All of these express an individuality that they felt was getting lost as the Missouri Synod became larger and larger. It should not surprise us that in the period when Missouri grew the fastest, there were some who saw that growth as coming at the expense of right doctrine and practice.

However, the “moderate” wing, for its part, held to the same standard. It is the *Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches*. They wanted freedom to confess, or not confess, the Lutheran faith as they saw fit. No entity or office in St. Louis or anywhere else could tell them what to do. Whether you are talking about a “pick yourself up by your own bootstraps and do it yourself” individualism of the forties and fifties, or the hippy freedom of the sixties and seventies, the result is the same. I

do what I want, and if I do not like what you do or you don't like what I do, then I will take my things and go my own way.

While the "conservative" wing deplored the lax theology and moving frontiers of doctrinal standards that seemed apparent in Missouri, at least to them, what they did not want was an individual or synod officer telling them what to do. They wanted things the old way, whatever that old way might be.

This need for autonomy is evident in each of these federations. In the OLC, we see the following in their constituting documents:

The ORTHODOX LUTHERAN CONFERENCE is committed to a strictly congregational polity, so that the organization, in all its meetings and activities, is strictly a service body, having disciplinary jurisdiction only over its officers. With respect to the individual congregation's right of self-government it is only an advisory body. According to Scriptural precept and example every congregation is independent, sovereign, autonomous with respect to all its affairs.¹⁷

The LCR, for its own part, followed closely the same principles as were set forth in the OLC. MacKenzie, McLaughlin, Romoser, and Kretzmann all held to the view that the congregation is the only divinely instituted church, and that any synod or federation or collection of churches is advisory at best. This is certainly why the LCR never made any headway with fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. While their view could be held in Francis Pieper and was quite common in Missouri, because the LCR was a new collection of churches, they had to make the argument for fellowship with Wisconsin anew. They never got very far, and efforts broke off by the mid-1970s.

This insistence upon autonomy gives us the key to understanding the impulse to split into different denominations. In the early twentieth century, right about the time the Missouri Synod was moving into English, the American churches were ramping up for the fight of the century. Mainstream Protestant churches were trying to wrest respectability back from the revivalists, and three movements began that fought against that bureaucratic and intellectual tendency at the time: fundamentalism, the Holiness movement, and Pentecostalism.¹⁸ Each one of these movements, in their own way, highlighted the American impulse of resistance to authority, the desire for local control, and the distrust of institutions.

¹⁷ "Article VI—The Polity of the Conference," *Proceedings of the 2nd Convention of the Orthodox Lutheran Conference*, Minneapolis, Minnesota (August 22–25, 1952): 82–83.

¹⁸ For a thorough examination of this, please see the epilogue in Nathan Hatch's monumental work *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991).

While I would hardly call these micro-synods fundamentalists, their desire for independence, distrust of institutions, and tendency to follow one charismatic leader all bear remarkable similarities to these other populist movements in twentieth-century North America.

But there was also a problem. On the one hand, you had the clarion call to bring discipline to pastors, teachers, schools, and institutions so that they would follow what old Missouri had taught and done. Every issue of *The Faithful Word* (the doctrinal journal of the LCR) would deplore the lack of discipline and integrity on the part of the elected leaders. But at the very same time is the claim that only the local congregation is, properly speaking, church. No hierarchy or institution above the local congregation could discipline or bring about correction. As the Bard would say, therein lies the rub.

Three Approaches

What we saw in the fifties, sixties, and seventies were three approaches to dealing with theological disagreement and controversy. The first approach is acculturation. The world is changing, and we as the church have to learn how to change with it. If we will learn how to adapt and change to the situation at hand better, we will be nimbler and more capable of moving into the future. This approach can be typified by what became the ELCA. There are to this day groups of individuals, pastors, and congregations who continue to struggle to confess the faith and denounce error in the ELCA. It is becoming a lonelier position with each passing year.

The second approach is politicization. The LCMS system of polity is designed, intentionally or unintentionally, to work within a system where you have elections and candidates, winners and losers. It does not matter if you are talking about a doctrinal declaration or passing a resolution thanking the quilters of the Northwest District for making quilts—everything, *everything* comes down to a vote. If I can get enough people to vote the way that I believe is right, then I win. It is that simple. This group is all those pastors and congregations during this period that did not leave the synod. They either learned to ignore the synod or worked to win in this game of politics. The first and most obvious time this happened in LCMS history was the election of John Behnken as president of the LCMS in 1935, but this election-oriented political reality has been a part of our history from the beginning.

The third approach is separation. When the programs and things you disagreed with got too egregious, too far gone, the only choice was to leave and form your own church, or perhaps to join one of the other existing ones. This is what the OLC, LCR, and FAL all attempted to do in their own way. They wanted to start over, build

something new that did not have the problems of the old system, with its hierarchy and desire to control at all costs. If you lose enough elections, and you are unwilling simply to accommodate the “other side,” then there is no choice left but to leave and start anew. With the American fascination for the new, this may no longer be seen as a failure, but as an opportunity to go where no synod has gone before.

Now, what is hard for us to hear is that each one of these three approaches—acculturation, politicization, and separation—all fit only too well in our American context. Each one of us can see those impulses at work at the congregational level all the way up to the synodical level. Is going from German to English acculturation in a bad way or adapting to new opportunities for the gospel? Is serving as a delegate and voting for people whom you believe will be faithful and do good work dirty politics or good stewardship? Can there be such a thing as good politics in the church? Is there any other way to do it? Is leaving to form your own synod faithfulness to the truth, or divisiveness and a lack of charity?

All three of these approaches are right at home in an American context. We have been trying to baptize this reality since *Government in the Missouri Synod* by Carl S. Munding was published in 1947 as a part of the LCMS’s one-hundredth anniversary. Perhaps it is our own desire for repristination back to a golden era of Lutheranism, but our own LCMS history has demonstrated that we are uncomfortable with the notion that the way we do things is somehow influenced by our context.

Conclusion

The history of Lutheranism in America is one where there is one side of the story told in the history books.¹⁹ This is the story of an inevitable movement toward unity around the least common denominators. But in order for us to gain a more complete picture of our own history, we have to question that premise of the inevitable march toward unity. The history of Lutheranism in America does not all fit into the categories that Nelson and others present. Not everything can be agreed upon, and there is no predetermined institutional unity that must come about.²⁰

What we learn from these three small church bodies’ history is that people of conviction can disagree with how to approach problems and solutions. In every era of the church, there are people who endeavor faithfully to confess the truth of the gospel in difficult circumstances. In the cases of the ones we have looked at today, I

¹⁹ This is typified by Clifford E. Nelson and others. See Clifford E. Nelson, *Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975).

²⁰ An excellent attempt at this is the following recent dissertation. See Adam S. Brasich, “A Mighty Fortress: American Religion and the Construction of Confessional Lutheranism” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2017).

am sympathetic to their concerns, perspective, and plight. How would you have confessed the faith given the same circumstances? How would I? It is impossible to answer without sounding like St. Peter speaking to our Lord, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away” (Matt 26:33).²¹

Division and separation are not to be taken lightly. It does not matter if we are talking about the United Methodist Church and their upcoming schism, a separation under the auspices of mission and evangelism, or our own historical divisions in the past. Christ our Lord calls us to be faithful in who and what we confess before him, urging us to be one, just as he is one with the Father (John 17). That does not happen by accident. It requires work, commitment to the truth, and commitment to one another.

Perhaps a part of what we need to do as a church body is simply recognize more clearly the context in which we live. We have a political structure that involves the election of people and passing resolutions. This bears a remarkable similarity to our American system of government. Can the gospel thrive under this form? Yes, but it comes with some significant challenges. It is only too easy to dismiss those with whom we disagree, especially if we have already “won” the vote.

At the same time, the only way we exist as a church is living under the forgiveness of sins and the gospel. Philip Melanchthon expressed it well in the Apology, Article V: “Harmony in the Church cannot last unless pastors and churches mutually overlook and pardon many things.”²²

So my final question is this: How will we live under the gospel together, calling one another to faithfulness in all things, while at the same time learning to overlook and pardon many things? Only time will tell.

²¹ All Scripture quotations are from the ESV[®] Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

²² Ap V 122. *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions*, second edition, copyright © 2006 Concordia Publishing House. All rights reserved.



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Theological Observer

Christ Offers His Life through the Church's Pastors to a Confused World: An Introduction to the Seminary Curriculum

When Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (CTSFW), introduced its new Master of Divinity curriculum in 2005–2006, we had a number of reasons for the revisions that were made in the curriculum. Given the massive changes in our culture in recent decades, we wanted to offer a curriculum for pastors that sprang from the need for pastors who embody the message they proclaim and the sacraments they offer. We were intent on building a curriculum around these pastoral acts, connecting seminary studies more to the primary service in the church for which pastors are formed. In a world that increasingly has never known or has forgotten Christ, we were convinced Christ must be known deeply from the Scriptures, confessed clearly with lips, and also seen vividly in lives of mercy and love. Through the pastoral formation at the seminary, we wanted every future pastor to know what it means to be a baptized Christian who through preaching is led into communion with our Lord at his Table.

The Eternal Word

From the beginning, God speaks and acts for all goodness. All that he has made is good. He continuously bestows good gifts upon his creatures. He promises an eternal kingdom of blessedness and righteousness to those with whom he is reconciled. Yet from the beginning of his existence, man has pursued a false imagination of the good, doubting the goodness of God and setting up for himself alternative “goods,” if that were even possible.

In his persistent goodness, God does not abandon his creation, but continues to draw near with promises and actions of forgiveness and restoration. God's words were spoken first by his prophets, and his actions were recorded by them, in anticipation of the Lord himself coming to dwell among hostile men, to save them from their sins and to restore them to friendship and sonship. So God himself, in the person of his Son, entered into rebellious creation, taking on flesh and shining forth as the light of the salvation of man. By his death on the cross, he atones for the sin of the world; by his resurrection and ascension, he opens the way to eternal life for all men.

Christ's own apostles, his personally chosen ambassadors, proclaimed his work, continued his teaching, and recorded both in their writings. The writings of the prophets and apostles—the Holy Scriptures—remain the pure font of truth for salvation. These Scriptures are the unchanging source of teaching for Christians. To be Lutheran means to receive these Scriptures truthfully and seriously. As such, Lutherans confess the primacy, infallibility, and summary teaching of the Scriptures in the documents of the Book of Concord. For CTSFW, as a Lutheran seminary, the Scriptures remain the sole source and norm for teaching and church life, teaching and life which are confessed also in the Book of Concord. Submitting to this faith in the eternal Word of God, Jesus Christ, CTSFW is a catholic and evangelical seminary—in the best sense of both words—holding forth this Word in the hope of the salvation of the world.

The Cultural Context

Enlivened by the timeless Word, today's pastors face the challenges of a volatile world that has turned away from God's constant promises and love. Many of these challenges would have been unthinkable even a generation ago. The breakdown of the family has coincided with the advent of postmodernism and a radical secularism. Truth is placed in quotation marks. Objective reality is thought to be unobtainable. In a deep sense, our people are at sea, unmoored from history and tradition, from family and community, and from the communal life of the church. In our cyber-age of friending and unfriending, blocking and following, we are becoming physically isolated from one another and, consequently, our own humanity.

Early modern and Enlightenment theories of individual identity have led to contemporary postmodernism's "authentic" self-actualization. Radical individual choice is regarded as the only way to actualize personal identity. Individual—often idiosyncratic and even bizarre—choice has become the axis around which personal identity revolves. Yet in the attempt to be authentic, "choice" becomes the master, an enslaving necessity that must be actualized for the sake of self-fulfillment, rather than serve true, good, and beautiful acts, which are the expression of a free mind.

From this perspective, the body as created by God is no longer definitive of our identity. The body and its parts are the incidental tools by which we seek to accomplish our inner desires and manifest our personality to the world. As such, we consider ourselves as radically autonomous individuals; yet each has become, in a way, his own sideshow. This public display of the self corresponds with personal isolation and fragmentation in the contemporary context. This peculiar dualism separates not only body from mind, but person from family, society, and even those chosen as friends.

We see this radical autonomy in the advent of so-called same-sex marriage and the gender revolution. A person is no longer he or she, but may be xe or zir, or even a plural singularity. This revolt against creation especially endangers the lives of the weak, the vulnerable, and the least among us. The autonomous individual is compelled to use not only his own body, but also the bodies of others for his self-fulfillment. Social interaction, therefore, has become a battle of individual wills, each seeking the power to persuade, manipulate, and control those around him to fulfill his own desires in the world.

Christian Identity in a Hostile World

This cultural landscape confronts the church with profound challenges that reach beyond intellectual pursuits and rational explanations of historic teachings. These challenges extend into the very heart of the human person and his bodily life in the world. In Iraq, Christians have been martyred for bearing the name of the Nazarene. On the Libyan shores, martyrs have been beheaded for saying, "I am a Christian." In our own land, Christians face persecution and slander. More than ever, we must be willing to bear the name of Christ the crucified by confessing, "I am not ashamed of Christ and his words." The church, therefore, must be ready to cultivate a Christian identity that can withstand a worldly hostility that is directed, not merely at the intellect, but at the very body of Christians and the geographical place of the church in this world. Rather than a merely psychological identity, the church must cultivate a genealogical identity that is generated from the Father, constituted through the crucified and risen flesh of Jesus, and bound together in the fellowship of the Spirit. In this baptismal identity, we call God Father and love one another as brothers and sisters in Christ; in this eucharistic identity, we are bound to one another in the body of Christ, not merely by individual choice, but by the Holy Spirit.

Integration of Theological Disciplines

How do we form pastors for this challenging cultural context? Influenced by the academy, seminary curricula have traditionally been divided into the disciplines of Exegetical Theology, Historical Theology, Systematic Theology, and Pastoral or Practical Theology. These disciplines, while helpful, also gave the false impression that these are simply topics that can be divided and segmented into different spheres of knowledge. In order to counteract such thinking, we designed a curriculum in which these disciplines are more integrated, as they are in the life of the church. In order to accomplish this, teaching on Baptism, preaching, and the Lord's Supper is emphasized throughout the curriculum, and some integration of the disciplines is

included in every course. In addition, professors from each of the theological disciplines work together to teach the Theologia course series. In this way, we teach the basic pastoral acts holistically. We hoped to demonstrate and embody the mission of the seminary, which is to form pastors who teach the faithful, reach the lost, and care for all. Such courses help future pastors understand their primary work as one that flows from Christ and his church, as witnessed by the apostolic Scriptures, with real and present life application in the forgiveness of sins and regeneration into life in Christ. This emphasis on integration can also be seen in our Psalms course, which takes into account not only insights of interpreting the text, but also the pastoral and practical use of the Psalter within the church today.

In a world that is fragmented, the church must reclaim her baptismal identity, as those freed from bondage to the devil, whose sins are forgiven, and who have been given a new life and a new family within the household of our true Father. Thus, we seek to form our students in a Christian identity grounded in Holy Baptism as that which incorporates them into the body of Christ and prepares them for Holy Communion. At this table, we are forgiven, drawn into the presence of God, and united to one another in the life of God: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Divine Service and Serving One Another

The curriculum is designed to form leaders who recognize that this Christian identity, generated from the Father through the Son in the Spirit, has been handed over to them through many faithful Christians in the church throughout history. Servants of Christ are formed who love the creeds, theology, liturgy, and hymnody that have come to them as expressions of their familial identity in Christ, a sacred treasure handed down from their fathers in the faith. Accordingly, through classroom instruction, but more importantly through participation in the worship life of Kramer Chapel and local congregations, they will come to see the church's creeds and liturgies not as a chosen song or confession of one congregation, but as the family song of the one holy Christian and apostolic church. Like a shepherd, they will gently guide their flocks into the rich confessional, liturgical, and sacramental life that links them to the church of all times and places, and places upon their lips and in their ears the gospel message, in all its truth, clarity, and depth.

Part of the impetus for our curriculum was the understanding that theology is not simply a cerebral exercise, but that it is to be lived out in the congregation, community, and world. For this reason, we have a renewed focus on the central role that daily worship has in forming faithful pastors. Just as Kramer Chapel is the architectural focal point of this campus, so also daily worship is where the theology taught in the curriculum is fully integrated, delivered, and received. In addition to

this centerpiece of God serving us each day in worship, we also serve one another as students and faculty interact daily during coffee hour, meals in the dining hall, and various social gatherings. Professors serve not only as teachers in the classroom, but also as pastoral mentors for students in these settings. It is no accident that the dining hall and student commons are only a few steps from Kramer Chapel.

The Reading of Primary Sources

The other major building on our campus that is close to the chapel is our library, which underlines the need to be immersed in the great writings of the church. When we designed the curriculum, we also recognized that more than ever there is a need to concentrate on primary sources, so that our pastors are grounded in the things that matter. This means being immersed in the Scriptures as well as the church fathers, and becoming at home with the hymnal and catechism as sources of daily piety and devotion.

Our curriculum leads students back to these sources, especially to the biblical text in its original languages. In an age where the foundations of Christianity are challenged, our pastors must be able to defend and proclaim the faith as it is rooted in the scriptural narrative. The contemporary context demands that we proclaim the Scriptures as more than a quarry from which we mine intellectual truths. Rather, we seek a proclamation of the Scriptures as the genealogical narrative of our Christian identity. This proclamation recognizes that the church is attached to the Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles like branches in the true vine. This means we proclaim the cross as the holy vine, in which we have been grafted, and Christ's body and blood as the healing fruit, from which we are generated and nourished. This also means we regard the apostles, prophets, saints, martyrs, and Lutheran reformers as familial witnesses whose testimony to the gospel of Christ we seek to imitate, whether in life or in death.

This begins with our courses on the four Gospels, where our students are immersed in the life and words of Christ himself. This Christ-centered emphasis carries into the Greek Readings courses, which understand Christ's life and words as the source of our identity, preaching, and teaching. Students take Greek Readings during their first two years in a small group of six students and one professor, studying the gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. These classes are very practical because they integrate careful study of the Greek text of the Gospels with faithful interpretation and preaching. The small size of these classes encourages spiritual mentoring and prepares students to engage in the primary pastoral act of preaching. This focus on primary sources continues in the study of the Lutheran

Confessions as well as in the writings of Luther in order to form a clear Lutheran Christian identity in future pastors.

Public Witnesses Active in Mission

We have also recognized the need for our pastors to be public representatives of the faith, so we have emphasized the need for our students to be engaged, not simply as auditors, but as those who speak, present, and defend Christian teaching. This emphasis on verbal interaction and public speaking has become part of our curriculum design and course pedagogy. We prepare pastors who will speak faithfully from the pulpit, but also in the community and public square. We prepare deaconesses and church leaders who will embody the mercy of Christ, willing to sacrifice their lives for the sake of Christ and the least of his brethren. We intend that our students will engender in their people a willingness to bear the name of Christ in the midst of opposition, and even persecution. A goal of the curriculum, therefore, is to form living witnesses to Christ, who calls us to be both light and salt in a world that has grown dark.

This means that we are preparing pastors and deaconesses to be evangelical in the best sense of the term, namely, focused on the mission of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in every context. This is developed through many contextual ministry experiences: from assisting a pastor in a local Fort Wayne congregation, to hospital and care home experiences, to short-term immersion or summer-long experiences in urban, rural, or international missions, to yearlong internships and vicarages. These contextual learning experiences help form students to be public witnesses active in mission, both nationally and globally.

Conclusion

Learning from Christ the Good Physician as narrated in the four Gospels and considering the theology and practice of those who came before us, servants of Christ are being formed who will be caretakers of the soul. They are ready to contend against “the principalities, the powers, and the rulers of this present darkness” (Eph 6:12),¹ willing to bear the burdens of others, and able to bring balm and healing to those wounded by the world. Servants of Christ are formed who not only know the teachings of the Scriptures intellectually, but also are prepared to live holy lives wholly given to the service of Christ. We intend them to be true branches. At one end, they are branches rooted in the vine of Christ with a Christian identity generated out of the Father through the Son in the Spirit. At the other end, they are

¹ All Scripture quotations are the authors’ translation.

branches increasing, multiplying, and bearing the divine fruit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, and all the other fruits of the Spirit according to his gracious favor.

Adopted by the CTSFW Faculty (October 30, 2017)

Worship at CTSFW

When visitors step foot on our award-winning campus, we like to point out the obvious by saying that Kramer Chapel is the architectural focal point. It cannot be otherwise, with those sharply angled diamond bricks turned vertically, allowing the chapel, sitting there at the edge of the upper plaza, to dominate the skyline no matter where one stands on the campus.

When Concordia Theological Seminary moved from Springfield, Illinois, to Fort Wayne in 1976, the physical prominence of the chapel, coupled with its generous acoustic and magnificent organ, made it plain to Daniel Reuning, the Dean of the Chapel, that the seminary would have to “up” its game, so to speak. During its first year on campus, however, the seminary shared the chapel with the Senior College as its last class of seniors finished their degrees. Leadership of the daily service alternated between the two institutions. Musical forces were also shared; a mixed choir sang under the direction of Dean Reuning, while the men’s choir was led by Herbert Nuechterlein of the Senior College.

After the year of shared duties, the seminary assumed full responsibility of the chapel and of all its programs in the fall of 1977. To meet the burgeoning need, Richard Resch was brought on as a part-time Director of Chapel Music in order to assist Dean Reuning. The mixed choir evolved from presenting sacred music concerts, as had been the custom in Springfield, into several choral Vespers services each year. (Within several years, the seminary formed a second mixed choir.) For the Confessions Symposium in January 1978, a quartet of male voices was formed to sing during a choral Vespers. This group was expanded to eight singers the following fall and given the name Kantorei. Already in January 1979, the Kantorei made its first Epiphany tour. Eventually this choir would expand to twelve, and then sixteen, men.

Perhaps the most significant change that occurred at the time of the move from Springfield to Fort Wayne was the support that President Robert Preus gave to the Dean of Chapel to function as a true dean. Prior to the move, each day’s chapel service was typically chosen by the preacher assigned to that day. More often than not, the service followed a simple pattern of invocation, hymn, reading, sermon, prayer, and benediction. Not only were the traditional morning offices not prayed regularly, but each preacher’s selection of the hymn meant that there was no

consistent means by which future pastors could learn the church's song. With the president's support, the dean developed a regularly recurring pattern that utilized the major prayer offices. Through the intentional choice of hymns, the students were introduced to the great hymns of the Lutheran tradition. Very quickly, the place of daily chapel in the life of the seminary community grew in importance to match the physical presence of Kramer Chapel.

The continued maturation of the centrality of chapel life moved forward when Richard Resch was ordained and called as the seminary's kantor at the end of 1988 and then made a member of the faculty at the beginning of Dean Wenthe's tenure as president. In 2002, another milestone was reached when a second full-time kantor position was filled by Kevin Hildebrand—an unheard-of staffing of church musicians at a Lutheran seminary in North America, both then and now. This strong commitment for excellence was renewed a decade later at the time of Richard Resch's retirement by the calling of Matthew Machemer as the seminary's second kantor.

When the seminary curriculum underwent a significant revision in the early 2000s, the chapel and all that it represents figured prominently in that revision. Focused around the primary pastoral acts of preaching, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, the curriculum recognized that the chief work of a pastor—the one called to deliver the Lord's gifts through his mandated means—is not only taught in the classroom but, just as significantly, modeled day after day in the chapel. In the past few years, the faculty has revisited the curriculum in order to make minor refinements. As part of that work, a conceptual statement concerning the curriculum was developed, which stated: "Just as Kramer Chapel is the architectural focal point of this campus, so also daily worship is where the theology taught in the curriculum is fully integrated, delivered, and received."¹

Since its publication in 2006, *Lutheran Service Book* has figured prominently in the seminary's worship life. A regular schedule of the prayer offices is utilized on a weekly basis, with a total of fifteen weekly services conducted during the regular academic year. Even as the students' life is nurtured and strengthened through the structured ordering of services, so are they given the opportunity to experience the fullness of the church's heritage in services and hymnody that our fathers and mothers in the faith have preserved and bequeathed to us.

Early in his career, J. S. Bach proposed to the city officials in Mühlhausen his plan for "well-regulated church music." Here in Kramer Chapel, that goal has been met, not only in regard to the music of the church, which is rich and varied in the

¹ See above, p. 174.

chapel's generous acoustic, but also in the seminary's liturgical life, as the gifts of God both nurture our students and form and shape them for service in the church.

Paul J. Grime

Paul on Same-Sex Relations in Romans

In a recent essay, William Loader, professor emeritus at Murdoch University in Western Australia, presents a compelling case that Paul was against same-sex relations, and on this account his article is well worth the read.¹ Philo, a Jewish near-contemporary of Paul, thought the same way, so Paul was not going out on a limb in his opposition to same-sex marriage (246). Loader gets to the heart of the matter in writing that same-sex marriage has to do with who God is. One cannot argue with this. He writes, "Assuming God created humans male and female, [Paul] finds the roots of such behavior in distorted minds and passions resulting from distorted understandings of God" (242). "Assuming" is the fly in the ointment. Probably speaking for the majority of mainline Protestants, Loader says people no longer see things the way Paul did, since "most of us no longer share Paul's starting point. We have come to believe something which Paul did not believe, namely that there really are gay people. If we see where Paul is coming from, namely that all people are either male or female, then Paul's arguments surely carry weight" (251). Paul assumes that all people are heterosexual, an assumption Loader says he and others cannot make. In not bending the biblical text to fit his predetermined agenda, Loader's exegetical authenticity is refreshing. Pastors with members struggling with this issue can benefit from Loader's biblical arguments. No reasons are given why we should see things differently from the way Paul did. According to Loader, we just do, and with this the flood gates are opened for all kinds of aberrant beliefs and practices, as he himself says has already been done. "The need to revisit assumptions of biblical writers is not new. We have done it in relation to matters such as divorce and women's leadership" (252). More than half a century ago, Heidelberg professor Peter Brunner, a confessional scholar of some note, said that the ordination of women would eventually lead to different understandings of God and church practices. We have lived to see his prophecy come true.

David P. Scaer

¹ William Loader, "Paul on Same-Sex Relations in Romans 1," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 74, no. 3 (2020): 242–252.



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***Long Live Latin: The Pleasures of a Useless Language.* By Nicola Gardini. Translated from the Italian by Todd Portnowitz. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016; translation copyright, 2019. 246 + viii pages. Hardcover. \$26.00.**

Nicola Gardini is a professor of Italian and Comparative Literature at the University of Oxford and no mean Latinist. He got started in Latin in middle school in 1977 (the very year it was deleted from the required curriculum) and never looked back—excelling in his studies, as he tells us (15), and reading most of the Latin authors on his own. In his opinion, of course, Latin is *not* useless but rather the quintessence of what it means fully to be alive. Latin is beautiful in its own right and concerned with the larger questions: Who am I? What am I doing here? What is history? What’s it all about? (4). Behind the question “What’s the point of Latin?” rests a violent arrogance—indeed, an assault upon the world’s richness and greatness of the human intellect (6). Not everything can be reduced to utility nor the push of a button. And as for the canard that Latin is a dead language, “as dead as dead can be,” well, the facts speak otherwise. Latin is very much *alive* in that it endures and produces other languages (the so-called Romance languages!) and other literatures: Dante could not have composed his *Divine Comedy* without Virgil’s *Aeneid*, nor Milton his *Paradise Lost*; Machiavelli could not have produced *Discourses on the First Ten Books of Livy* without Livy’s history, of course, nor Castiglione his *Book of the Courtier* without Cicero’s *De Oratore* (6–7). And so it goes:

Literature is life, and it lives because it generates more writing, and because readers exist, and because interpretation exists, which is a dialogue between thought and the written word, a dialogue between centuries, which halts time on its ruthless march and continually renews our potential for permanence. . . . [L]iterature preserves our capacity for peaceful and respectful relationships, without which nothing else can survive. The name that Latin gives to this capacity is *humanitas*, and those who possess it *humani*. Both of these terms, which are derived from *homo* (human being), appear with great frequency in Cicero. (11–12)

After a few introductory chapters (“Ode to a Useless Language,” “A Home,” “What Is Latin?,” “Which Latin?,” and “A Divine Alphabet”), the book consists mainly of brief essays on Catullus, Cicero, Ennius, Julius Caesar, Lucretius, Virgil, Tacitus and Sallust, Ovid, Livy, Seneca, Apuleius and Petronius, St. Augustine and the Vulgate, Juvenal, Propertius, and Horace—in that order (see Contents, vii–viii). Several of these authors are old friends of mine, and some I have never read before. Gardini engages each in turn—commenting upon a particular word or turn of phrase here, or upon a more extended theme there for which an author is well-known. Take Catullus, for example, whom Gardini discovered pretty much on his own (the teacher had overlooked his poetry because it is written in the hendecasyllabic meter, which the students had not yet learned). Catullus likes swear words and graphic sex, as Gardini learned early in high school (a rundown of the sexual vocabulary associated with body parts occurs on page 90). And yet Catullan sexual expression is not simply immoral, as persons in our holier-than-thou culture might come to assume. In his poetry, Catullus asserts his sexuality *as a male human being*—that is, as a free-born Roman citizen, affirming his social dignity. In fact, swear words in Catullus are never mere expressions of vulgarity or raw emotion, but—oddly, to our way of thinking—belong to a “strict moral code.” Paradoxically, profanity in Catullus “flows from a pious mouth” (93).

For whom is this book intended? Gardini intends it for young students—perhaps those who need a crash course in the particular styles and themes of a particular author before reading him in the original language (20–21). (Be it noted that only male authors are represented in this volume, though the Greek poetess Sappho is mentioned on page 44.) Nevertheless, the book is intended not just for the young—but maybe, indeed, for former Latin students to “rediscover the pleasure of their longed-for or abandoned studies” (21). In spite of the prurience represented in the preceding paragraph, I think the book would make wonderful reading for Lutheran adults who are considering adding Latin to the curriculum of a “classical” school at their church, or indeed anyone—including pastors—who need to come painlessly to terms with the Latin literature of western civilization. Books like this offer our best hope for staving off the collapse of literacy in modern times, or in schools too given over to STEM learning. Let us allow Gardini to have the final word, who says it best:

Literature, in any language, is rarely ascribed such responsibilities and such dignity today. High school and university programs have withered. Students are reading less and less. As for the good of society, our mental health, the beauty of sentences—as for the *education* of the spirit, in other words—we no longer seem to give them any thought, betting all our happiness on material wealth. And so our taste decays, along with our expectations. Our words turn

anemic, signifying less and less, sounding more and more like white noise, like traffic, or like certain politicians. Words! Our greatest gift, our most fertile ground.

Let's start over again with Latin. (13)

John G. Nordling

***Church as Fullness in All Things: Recasting Lutheran Ecclesiology in an Ecumenical Context.* Edited by Jonathan Mumme, Richard J. Serina Jr., and Mark W. Birkholz. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2019. 250 pages. Hardcover. \$95.00.**

There are really two distinct parts to this collection of essays. The first part considers the church from the standpoint of doctrinal, exegetical, historical, and practical perspectives. The second part, headed "Section IV," offers essays by Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Reformed scholars about how their ecclesiastical traditions understand the "church" in ways similar to, or divergent from, Lutherans.

In the first part, Jeremiah Johnson addresses the problem of modern American notions of individual autonomy that push against commitments to community and church. Paul Elliott addresses how the complaint psalms assume a community context for worship. Alexander Kupsch reviews the ecclesiology of Christian Danz, Christoph Schwöbel, and Wolfhart Pannenberg. Mark Birkholz critiques, on the basis of the Book of Acts, the idea that non-pastors may preach. James Prothro gives a balanced treatment of Ephesians 4:12. Richard Serina supplies the medieval context for the doctrine of the church found in Luther and the Confessions. Roy Coats examines the historic roots of the Augustana's distinction between the powers of order and jurisdiction. Jonathan Mumme reviews the doctrine of the church as found in Ernst Kinder. John Bombaro offers an illuminating exposition on the marks of the church, attached to questions of order and episcopacy. Jari Kekäle considers the practical "first-article" issues involved in parish and synod life today, from his perspective as a confessional Lutheran pastor in Finland.

This book offers a renewed Lutheran understanding of the church, which if widely received, would go a long way toward curing what ails our Lutheran synods today.

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***Apologetics at the Cross: An Introduction for Christian Witness.* By Joshua D. Chatraw and Mark D. Allen. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2018. 336 pages. Hardcover. \$34.99.**

As the subtitle indicates, *Apologetics at the Cross* is intended as an introduction to apologetics. The book integrates a variety of disciplines and seeks to provide “a biblical, historical, philosophical, theological, and practical vision for offering an appeal for Christianity in our contemporary context” (23). This variety is focused on the cross, which the authors take as synonymous with the gospel (29). All apologetic appeals must serve the goal of bringing people to the cross even as cruciform humility and suffering for the good of the other must shape the way apologetics is done. Christ must be in focus at all times (43).

Both authors come to the task from a prior attitude that apologetics is *irrelevant*—either because only the gospel is essential and the typical apologist seemed ill-suited to interact with people, especially non-believers (18–19), or because antiquated apologetics answered questions no one asked in a cerebral, intimidating way (19–20). Subsequently, practical circumstances caused both authors to learn to appreciate apologetics. They now serve in theological education at Liberty University—Chatraw in apologetics. Thus, they are well-suited to address the continued place of Christian apologetics in an era of skepticism about its relevance.

The book consists of three major parts—“The Foundation for Apologetics at the Cross,” “The Theological Structure for Apologetics at the Cross,” and “The Practice of Apologetics at the Cross”—each approximately a third of the book comprised of several chapters. The authors first provide a biblical and then a historical basis for the apologetic tasks. The biblical basis treats more than a few proof texts (like 1 Pet 3:15) or oft-cited counter proof texts (like 1 Cor 2:1–5). It uses an inductive approach to show fifteen apologetic approaches depicted in Scripture—approaches that are both contextual and directed toward Christ’s life, death, and resurrection (61). The historical basis seeks to elucidate apologetics from the early church to the twentieth century, highlighting in summary fashion many apologists and apologetic approaches.

The authors reserve more contemporary apologists for the second part of the book, in which they make sense of methods, emphasize cruciform humility in the apologetic task, argue for a holistic apologetic, and consider a biblical (Pauline) approach to contextualization. There is a good summary of four primary approaches to apologetics — Classical, Presuppositional, Evidential, and Experiential/Narrative — complete with what this reviewer considers the best diagram in the book (106). Discussion of each approach includes potential strengths and weaknesses, as well as

excerpts from the writings of representative authors. The need for proclamation of the cross (gospel) is the ultimate goal of word and deed, and apologetics is a servant. Cruciform humility must characterize the apologist, and *a la* Luther's two types of theologians, "apologetics at the cross" is distinguished from an "apologetic of glory" (146). Contextualization is necessary and inherent in the gospel since it "was revealed in a particular culture" and must be "translated into the language and thought forms" of the target culture (186); however, such contextualization must faithfully proclaim the universal truth of the cross.

Thus, in the final third of the book—on the practice of cruciform apologetics in our *late modern* context as they refer to *postmodernism* (205)—the authors propose an *inside out* approach that places "the gospel and a robust Christian theology . . . at the center of apologetic interactions and woven into the dialogue throughout," focusing "on points where Christianity overlaps with the views of other people" (214). They apply this approach to four cultural "givens" in the West: modern pluralism, the ethics of authenticity, religious lethargy, and the therapeutic turn (222). In a chapter dealing with eight common *defeaters*—skeptical objections and earnest questions about Christianity—the authors provide a middle ground for beginning to exercise the apologetic task. Each defeater comes with a discussion of the issue from a Christian perspective, approaches to a response, and suggestions for further reading on the topic. While these eight defeaters are not exhaustive, they cover several oft-cited obstacles to faith. But the apologist does not merely refute obstacles to faith and then present arguments for Christianity; these should not "be abstracted from the genuine discipleship and worship of the church" since "the church is both a living apologetic appeal and the formative context out of which apologetic arguments are supported as plausible" (291). The concluding chapter addresses making a case for the Christian faith both from observations and experiences that "point to a transcendent reality beyond our universe" (306) and by providing Christian answers to the "deep questions of life" like: "(1) Who are we? (2) What is the problem with the world, and what is its solution? and (3) Where are we going?" (307).

The authors do a decent job of keeping things cross- (gospel-) centered while approaching apologetics from a variety of disciplines. As an introduction, it serves well, covering much ground at a survey level while providing helpful direction for further reading on specific topics. It also includes several tables, diagrams, and insets that summarize and visualize content.

However, the tables and diagrams are not labeled and, therefore, not listed in the table of contents. Such a list would be helpful to the reader (especially if the book were used in an academic setting). More importantly, it is superficial both in its treatment of topics and in its use of the select secondary literature, making this book

less useful to a more serious student of apologetics. Finally, while there is a chapter devoted to a holistic apologetic approach—reaching the whole person as a thinking, believing, desiring being—the book does not convincingly achieve its goal of emphasizing this holistic apologetic throughout.

Nevertheless, this book is a worthy read for beginning apologists as well as those looking to make a renewed start.

Don C. Wiley

***Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom.* By Gerald Bray. Bellingham, Washington: Lexham Press, 2020. 132 pages. Softcover. \$12.99.**

One of the (many) wonderful things about John Chrysostom's preaching is its inherent accessibility. The "mouth of gold" was so named for his preaching ability, and if you find yourself reading Chrysostom chances are you're reading a sermon. He avoids long systematic treatments of theological topics, even as he tackles the christological controversies of late fourth- and early fifth-century Antioch and Constantinople, preferring to allow his hearers to dwell in the mysteries of God, mysteries that are revealed in the person of Jesus Christ and delivered to believers in the words of Scripture and in the Eucharist. In his book *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom*, Gerald Bray presents Chrysostom's preaching to a new generation of Christian preachers, many of whom may be either unfamiliar with his work, uncomfortable with the antiquated translations available, or simply daunted by the sheer amount of his material. On the whole, Bray does an admirable job of making an already accessible preacher even more so, not just in homiletical content, but also in terms of Chrysostom's understanding of God's posture toward his creation as well as the preacher's own pastoral identity.

Throughout his book, Bray is reliant on the works of Chrysostom scholars David Rylaarsdam and Margaret Mitchell, for which he is to be commended. Rylaarsdam's *John Chrysostom on Divine Pedagogy: The Coherence of His Theology and Preaching* serves as a basis for Bray's understanding of Chrysostom's theology of "condescension" (συγκατάβασις), while Mitchell's *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Interpretation* provides an excellent analysis of St. Paul's heavy influence on Chrysostom's understanding of his identity as a preacher of Jesus Christ. In his reading and portrait of the subject, Bray thoroughly quells the modern notion that Chrysostom was simplistic or even, as has been claimed, "anti-intellectual," and instead reveals a depth of thought that more than justifies his position among the great preachers of the Christian faith. Additionally, while the sheer amount and diversity of Chrysostom's writings make any sort of systematic treatment of his work difficult, Bray does an exceptional job of

understanding Chrysostom's thought in terms of the condescension of God, the lens through which he read, interpreted, and preached the Scriptures.

Although he does not give much background to John Chrysostom's early training under Libanius, Bray's portrait of John Chrysostom is one that is steeped in Greek tradition in terms of his understanding of virtue and rhetoric; at several points, he remarks on Chrysostom's fondness for explaining the events of Scripture in terms of balance and necessity, even going so far as to describe his view of Matthew's Gospel as a "golden mean" between Mark and Luke. It is in this tradition that Chrysostom's understanding of condescension takes form, as God communicates with his people in a way that makes an unknowable God knowable, a reality fully experienced in the human person of Jesus. Bray notes that God's condescension serves as the entire basis of Chrysostom's christological understanding, as Jesus is born, suffers, and dies as an act of divine love for the entire human race. Bray gives a similar explanation of John Chrysostom's treatment of the creation account, in which he teaches that God spoke his creation into being in a way that could be understood by what he had created. God's words in Genesis 1, Chrysostom tells us, are simple, and are given to a people not yet ready for the full revelation of God's salvific plan. Even his understanding of virtue, so prevalent in his preaching and the source of many accusations of moralism, is seen not as a source of righteousness, but as a visual representation of the life and image of God. Indeed, Bray does an excellent job of demonstrating the nature of Chrysostom's preoccupation with virtue, which is distinguished from "works" due to its foundation in God's condescension toward humanity.

To be sure, the primary criticism of Bray's work is that it stops short of conveying the full impact of Chrysostom's understanding of condescension. Noticeably absent is any detailed treatment of the Eucharist in Chrysostom's preaching; for a book marketed to preachers, this comes as a bit of an oversight. For John Chrysostom (described in Quasten's *Patrology* as "*Doctor Eucharistae*"), the Eucharist served as the source and object of his homiletic. In his thinking, the sermon was not the high point of the service, but rather the Eucharist, in which the content of the sermon was held, cherished, and internalized into the Christian's very body. For this reason, Chrysostom would often describe the condescension of God as a "mystery," apparently in order to give the term double meaning: the mystery given to us in Scripture is revealed in its fullness by the mystery lying on the altar. Chrysostom's preaching simply cannot be understood apart from his fiercely sacramental understanding of God's condescension, in which he goes so far as to refer to Scripture itself as a type of incarnation, where the words of God become clothed in the skin of human speech. For Chrysostom, a sermon without the body

and blood of Christ on the altar is a blind sermon, a message without form, foundation, or purpose.

All in all, there is much to recommend Gerald Bray's work, the chief reason being that it places the works of a great preacher into the hands of preachers. For those unfamiliar with Chrysostom's preaching and looking to enhance their own, *Preaching the Word with John Chrysostom* is a helpful introduction. Additionally, it allows those who are more interested in Chrysostom's theology to access more detailed treatments of his work, in particular that of Rylaarsdam and Mitchell. (I would also recommend Hans Boersma's *Scripture as Real Presence: Sacramental Exegesis in the Early Church*, which contains an excellent section on Chrysostom's understanding of condescension.) As always, however, the best way to familiarize yourself with any preacher is to read their sermons; fortunately for the church, many of Chrysostom's sermons still exist in English translations, and many of these have been updated to less-antiquated versions. To any preacher new to Chrysostom, I would say this: read Gerald Bray, and then read Chrysostom's *Baptismal Instructions*, and allow your congregation to benefit from one of the greatest preachers in the history of the Christian church.

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***Chrysostom's Devil: Demons, the Will, and Virtue in Patristic Soteriology.* By Samantha L. Miller. Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, 2020. 216 pages. Softcover. \$36.00.**

Samantha Miller's work is a commendable piece of scholarship examining a facet of Christianity often overlooked. In *Chrysostom's Devil*, Miller examines Christian demonology through the lens of St. John Chrysostom, drawing upon an extensive list of his writings to apply his demonology to a modern audience.

Miller's work is intended to address the theological framework of Chrysostom's demonology. As such, it stands out as unique among similar studies whose foci tend toward the "sociohistorical." This framework includes glimpses into Chrysostom's historical context, philosophical background, anthropology, and soteriology as inseparable components of his demonology. While thoroughly academic in nature, Miller's presentation of Chrysostom's demonology remains approachable and even enjoyable to read—an accomplishment that merits praise given the serious nature of the subject material.

The most pervasive theme throughout Miller's work is Chrysostom's highly pastoral approach to the demonic. Unlike other theologians of his era, Chrysostom does not philosophize with curiosity. Instead, his demonology is inherently practical in nature, intended to promote a life of faith and spiritual discipline as well as to provide comfort and encouragement in times of trial. As such, Chrysostom's demonology as presented by Miller is an encouragement to every pastor, and something all should take the time to study.

It gives value and importance to Christian virtue and right living in the understanding that the demonic can and does strive to assault the people of God, but also comfort in the knowledge that no such assault can cause true harm. Additionally, Chrysostom's demonology gives encouragement in the knowledge that the demonic has far less power than popularly ascribed. In the raging battle of the faith, it is a blessed word of gospel to those struggling in the faith to see the true weakness of the foe. However, the weakness of the demonic also eradicates any excuse for man's sin as being anything other than a forfeiture of the will to temptation. Thus, Chrysostom's demonology is never separate from an admonition toward virtue.

Miller concludes helpfully by offering "Implications for the Church Today." Here, she applies Chrysostom's demonology to issues plaguing the modern church and culture, reinforcing the inherently pastoral nature of Chrysostom's approach.

Chrysostom's Devil is highly recommended to all pastors, both for the practical approach to the demonic as well as the rich theology. It is also recommended for those interested in patristic soteriology or early demonology. Easy to read, well researched, and comprehensive, Miller's work is an excellent presentation of Chrysostom's rich theology.

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***The New Testament in Antiquity: A Survey of the New Testament within Its Cultural Contexts* (2nd Edition). By Gary M. Burge and Gene L. Green. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Academic, 2020. 623 pages. Hardcover. \$59.99.**

This reworked and expanded edition of a popular textbook is worth your attention but not your approbation. Any Bible student of any level of expertise can profit from the accumulated geographic, cultural, and historical knowledge between

this book's covers. How is the phrase "city set on a hill" (Matt 5:14)¹ related to the climatic zone in which Jesus grew up? How was an ancient Jewish tomb built into rock, and where in it would Jesus' body have been laid? Do you know what the Gallio Inscription is, and would you like to see a very clear photograph and explanation of it? All these answers, and many more like them, are in this book.

On the other hand, you might be able to find answers to those questions with well-designed maps and illustrations through an Internet search, and you would not have to pay \$59.99. A textbook like this one might be worth its salt if, in addition to the world of the New Testament on its own terms, it introduced the student to the theology of the New Testament on its own terms. One expects a book from an evangelical publisher to be interested in presenting the Bible on its own terms. Although the authors teach at two institutions historically associated with evangelicalism (Calvin Seminary and Wheaton College), evangelicalism isn't what it used to be. The author of Colossians and Ephesians "purports to be Paul," according to their assessment. The Bible is portrayed as historically interesting but also sometimes historically unreliable. This ambivalence about Scripture's claims, not least its claims of authorship, has never been anything except corrosive to the church.

Strange to say, alongside these doubts about Scripture's authorship is an unexplained, presumed respect for "scholars," always referenced as an amorphous group who "question the authorship" or "doubt" some obvious claim of the biblical text. Paul's letter to the Galatians has the "virtually unanimous" scholarly opinion that Paul was the author, but if it was a light thing to Paul that he should be judged by the Corinthians or any human court, how much less interest should we display in the anonymous cultural authority of scholars falsely so-called who doubt the Bible's basic claims about itself? I did not come away from the book with any doubts about the Bible. This volume was by turns enlightening in its historical riches and boring in its oft-rehearsed academic doubts. I came away from the book doubting evangelicalism's future without an authoritative, inerrant Bible.

Adam C. Koontz

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations are from the ESV[®] Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version[®]), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

***Der Theologe Hermann Sasse (1895–1976): Einblicke in seine internationale Wirkung als Exeget, Kirchenhistoriker, Systematiker und Ökumeniker.* Edited by Werner Klän. Edition Ruprecht: Göttingen, 2020. 278 pages. Ebook. 56,00 €.**

This volume, published in celebration of Hermann Sasse's 125th birthday (Sasse was born July 17, 1895), is a collection of essays by scholars from Australia, Germany, Canada, and the United States, some in German, some in English, each followed helpfully by a one-paragraph summary in the alternate language. Werner Klän's introduction and Andrea Grünhagen's closing biographical summary both include the following quote from the preface to Sasse's *In Statu Confessionis*: "Bekennnistreue und echte Ökumenizität gehören zusammen" ("Confessional fidelity and genuine ecumenism go hand in hand," 9, 230). This could be taken as thematic for the volume as a whole. Each of the essays in its own way explores how Sasse maintained confessional fidelity through rigorous engagement with the Scriptures and with the history of the church, sometimes in bold opposition to the specter of totalitarianism. Never being content to hoard the divine riches of the word of God for his own little corner of Christendom, Sasse labored to call all Christians of every stripe throughout the world to embrace the universal truth of the word he confessed. The Lutheran confession is for all Christendom.

The essays by Volker Stolle (11–49), Simon Volkmar (50–71), and John Stephenson (132–146) explore Sasse's exegetical legacy, where he has proven most controversial among Missouri Synod Lutherans. Stephenson takes a number of surprising potshots at the heirs of the Synodical Conference without providing much by way of constructive alternatives to what he sees as failings in their approach to inspiration and ecumenism. Thomas Winger (72–88) delves into the nature of confession itself as Sasse understood it, concluding, in keeping with the theme of the volume, that from this understanding flows "the necessity of confessing firmly the full *Scriptural* truth of the Gospel and Sacraments that make the church one; and the imperative to seek unity (concord), which drove Sasse into a lifetime of ecumenical labour" (88). The essays by Christian Neddens (89–102), Wolfgang Sommer (103–115), and Maurice Schild (121–132) deal with Sasse's response to National Socialism. Of special relevance to the church of our own day, when Romans 13 can serve as a cloak for cowardice in the face of secularism's attempt to stamp out Christianity and even basic morality in the public sphere, is Schild's summary of Sasse's perhaps surprising position on resistance to the state: "A regime which undermines the basic orders of justice, marriage and the family forfeits authority as a government; and . . . any obligatory duty to obey such a power then 'no longer exists.' . . . A church acknowledging a regime of this type as government . . . would make itself 'guilty of a grievous sin.' . . . Insurrection (*Empörung*) against

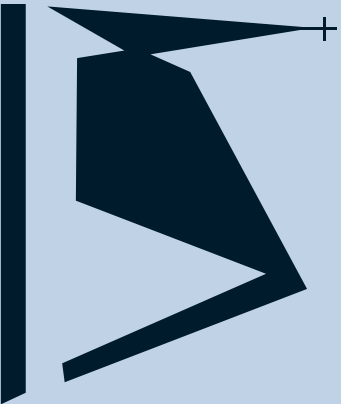
such a power would constitute not revolution but rather a war of defense (*Notwehr*) legitimated by the ‘emergency situation’” (128–129). This is no quietism. Here Sasse’s commitment to bold confession leads to the real possibility of actually having to suffer for that confession, a possibility that is becoming ever more real for us. Matthew Harrison (147–165), Jacob Corzine (166–187), Werner Klän (188–212), and John Pless (213–229) focus on Sasse’s study of the Office of the Ministry, ecclesiology, and the Lord’s Supper in light of his commitment to genuine ecumenism. Pless, summarizing again the theme of the volume, writes in his essay, “Sasse maintains that Lutherans have the obligation to the *una sancta* to test their doctrine by Scripture and then joyfully to confess and proclaim this truth” (225). Finally, Volker Stolle, in a second contribution (116–120), and Andrea Grünhagen (230–246) provide essays of biographical interest.

All in all, this is a useful, enjoyable volume that will lead to deepened interest in perhaps the most significant confessional Lutheran figure of the twentieth century, a figure who has much to teach us still about the genuinely ecumenical thrust of faithful Lutheran confession.

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