

The 25th Annual Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions
January 23, 2002
Concordia Theological Seminary

Missouri's Identity Crisis: Rootless in America

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Nomen Reformandum Est

Some times debated is the correctness of the Latin *ecclesia semper reformanda est*, “the church must always be reformed.” If this means that the church and its members must always examine their doctrines and lives, the phrase is right, but if it refers to the *una sancta*, it is wrong. Christ’s church is already a perfect unity elected by God in eternity, manifested in his Son and established among us by the Spirit and hence it cannot be reformed. That said, in each of us lives a little fanatic disguised as a miniature ‘Luther,’ determined to set the course of the church on the right path. Such zeal attempts either to reprimatinate the past or adjust the future. A futuristic motive may have been at the root of a 1998 synodical resolution calling for a commission to investigate whether the Synod should give up the name ‘Missouri’ for something more trendy. For some the old name smacked of a sectarian triumphalism, an embarrassment impeding the Gospel cause. A new name would have given us a new image and made it easier to put distance between the Synod’s past and a reshaped future. For others removing barnacles from the hull would have weakened the ship.

Missouri as the ELCA

We cannot rule out a future name change. With the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) allied with several Reformed bodies, the conglomerate could appropriately be called the ‘Evangelical Church in America’ to match its counterpart the ‘Evangelical Church in Germany.’ What Lutherans in Prussia were forced to do 1817/1830 to form the *Union* with the Reformed, their American cousins have done without coercion. Then we could copyright ‘Lutheran’ for Missouri, a coup beyond the wildest imagination of an advertising executive! Images apart from substance do matter. When Coca Cola attempted to change the taste of its historic soft drink, a revolution broke out and corporate executives had to reinstate the old formula under the title of Classic Coke. Testing had proved that the taste of the revised standard Coke was better than the old, but nostalgia triumphed over fact. Similarly, ‘Missouri’ is a logo recognized world wide, even if at the prestigious German theological faculties the response may at times be less than positive.¹ ‘Missouri’ ranks with Southern Baptist to signify a theologically conservative church, which in light of other options is not the worst result. We constitute a small fraction of Christendom, but like Rome, ‘Missouri’ is a recognizable name. This is not without irony. If we have a difficulty in defining ourselves as a Synod, others do not. Our history is our baggage. We may not be what others think we are, but neither does Rome live up to its image. What people think Rome teaches is not what its clergy actually do. Unknown is the amount of

money coughed by the fraternal life insurance companies to support a commission to tell the rest of us what we did not even want to consider, but the retention of 'Missouri' hardly guarantees that things in our church have remained the same or will. At least we have our kept our banner, even if wind shifts unfurled it in opposing directions.

The Nine Nations of North America

A 1981 book review called my attention to *The Nine Nations of North America* by Joel Garreau.² At best it may be classified as pop sociology, but books superficially researched with outrageous hypotheses make for a delightful read and often uncover realities overlooked by more scholarly ones. Garreau holds that cultural boundaries better describe us as a people than do artificially drawn up political ones between states and nations. Since the days of the Roman Empire, Europeans know that states and nations do not coincide. A person's country is determined by language and culture. Nationality refers to the government to which he is subject. A Turk can be a citizen of Turkey, Kazakstan, Turkestan or China. For us differences between country and nation are strange. Political correctness holds that we are one people. Americans are Americans and hardly more. We do need only to look north to see that the Québécois consider themselves French and at the same time are Canadians. For them other Canadians are 'the English.' In the United States Garreau separates New England from an area stretching from New York to Chicago. He argues that the attitudes of the people in the nine nations are different. His hypothesis that one organization can provide cover for a variety of cultural communities or nations can help us understand ourselves as a church. Boundaries between nations also change. Migrations constitute the story of humankind. Shifting cultural boundaries is another way of saying that empires come and go. *Roma semper idem*, but Rome is not always the same. Only God is changeless. George Harrison's death in November 2001 was a poignant reminder to the baby boomers that the 1960s culture left its imprint on the national psyche, but that era has gone and no amount of nostalgia will bring it back. Historical continuity does not translate into historical identity. Though the Missouri Synod claimed an extraordinary unity for itself at the end of the 19th century, it cannot do so now. Struggling to keep the name may have been motivated more by an undefined nostalgia for the good old days than by an informed commitment to the Confessions. Churches are not immune to change, as Hermann Sasse noted in his critique of apostolic succession³ and most of us do not desire a raw re-creation, which in any event would be impossible. Luther's reform did not bring the apostolic church back to life - nor did it intend to do so. In our life times the Synod has known a succession of changes and each change has birthed a group or nation to preserve that particular change. One Synod, many nations, each with an identifiable cause. Suggestions to do away with the name 'Missouri' may have been symptomatic that several nations, to use Garreau's term, live under one roof and hence the old name does not have meaning it once did.

Ecclesial Changes

Within one church several schools of thought can and do exist side by side, though we may be loathe to acknowledge this. The classical example of religious diversity under one

umbrella up belonged to the Anglican Communion up to this time, an honor we may soon share. Three worlds live within the Anglican system: one aspiring to a more Catholic liturgy, another with a Reformed worship style, and still another with little use for supernatural religion. This diversity is expressed by the cliché: high and crazy, low and lazy, wide and hazy. A commonwealth of churches under one lackadaisical archbishop may have been successful in the past, but now the Anglican community is groping its way towards extinction.⁴ If churches do not take themselves seriously, few others will. Mainline denominations soon find the way leading to self-destruction. Trumpets giving off contradictory sounds from the same orchestra pit soon send the audience to the exits.⁵ In spite of the Missouri's internal pluralities, we project a unity of doctrine and practice which other churches do not. Still a perceived external monolithic image may belie internal and contradictory diversities. Garreau's *The Nine Nations of North America* provides a skeleton for coming to grips with the diversities which any church can expect to find within its borders.

Missouri Non Semper Idem

To attempt to reestablish old roots is like sewing patches on wineskins. Even wineskins in good condition can tolerate only so many patches and all patches will inevitably leak. Sasse notes that Reformed Fundamentalism was already in the Synod by 1936.⁶ This was twenty years before the Synod began to be divided between liberals and conservatives. Even without the influence of American Protestantism, weak sacramental practice is traditionally endemic to Lutheranism.⁷ Even now locating sacramental references outside of the *sedes doctrinae* is met with gasps of horror. For years our theological immune systems have been weakened. If we were susceptible to Fundamentalism in the beginning of the twentieth century, we are now no less susceptible to Arminian and Neo-Evangelicalism in this one. We are fascinated with the Reformed free style of worship and its apologetic proofs for God's existence and lost is the Lutheran distinctive that God is finally known in Christ's crucifixion which the faithful encounter in the Sacraments. Within more recent years, some patches have come from modern business techniques. Churches are grown like agricultural products. The ground is tested before the Gospel is preached, a new twist on the parable of the soils. Another culture or nation within the Synod pays attention to things liturgical. This movement is closely related to a group with a lively interest in 16th and 17th century Lutheranism and immediate post-apostolic centuries. So the Synod looks like a patched work quilt, an amalgamation of contradicting designs. To use Garreau's terms, we are one church with several nations.⁸ Making matters more complex, we may have doctrinal agreement, but as in the case of opposing ordaining women, we offer different reasons.

Nailing Down the Past

The 1950s and 60s were cataclysmic for Missouri. Methods of interpretation that questioned the historicity of the biblical miracles were discovered in the lecture halls of our colleges and seminaries. Our founding fathers had a first hand knowledge of this Rationalistic method spawned in the eighteenth century and their rejection of it was a reason for establishing

the Synod. To turn the clock back to an idyllic pristine Eden, in 1959 the Synod made the *A Brief Statement* more official than it already was. For some Synod was adding to its confessional basis. Historians will judge whether this action accomplished its intentions.⁹ The group gathering around *A Brief Statement* sees the church in nineteenth century terms and is often called the bronze agers, a term whose frequent usage weakens its meaning and now indicates a lack of verbal creativity. Its influence was evident in a resolutions declaring that the ELCA was no longer an orthodox Lutheran church,¹⁰ a self-evident assumption, and another establishing C.F.W. Walther's understanding of the church as *norma normans et normata*.¹¹ Passing the ELCA resolution put to rest the oft repeated and false belief that our members did not know how they differ from other Lutherans. A theological diploma is not necessary to know that ELCA fellowship with the Reformed and agreement with Rome on justification detached them from historic Lutheranism.¹² Financial support for abortions and soon for homosexuality puts them at variance with the church catholic.¹³ It should be noted that the Walther resolution came out of the Committee on Structure, Planning and Administration and not from the one on Theology and Church Relations, but on the positive side it recognizes the pastoral office as divine. Regretfully it could be used to encourage anti-clericalism and does not resolve the confusion swirling around 'minister' and 'ministry,' words which are incapable of redemptive definition in the present milieu. Resurrecting antiquity, even in well intentioned resolutions, is like pretending we have not aged. Youth can no more be bottled up in a regimen of exercise and diet than the theology of one age can be carried over to the present. In this case we may have hindered resolving an issue which divided confessional minded Lutherans from the mid-nineteenth century, as Sasse noted already in 1961.¹⁴ A theology that lives within the past is reluctant to examine itself, because it assumes that in any controversy it was and therefore is right. Historicism replaces theology. Opponents are wrong not only in the controverted point, but in other parts of their theology. Then comes an irresistible temptation for theologians of the *argumentum ad hominem*: the alleged character aberrations of others disqualify their ideas. Another element of this thinking is that the Synod's position is *ipso facto* identical to that of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. This was hardly Pieper's intention in his *A Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod* written for the Synod's fiftieth anniversary in 1897, though it could be understood this way.

Our doctrine is none other than that which God has revealed in the writings of the apostles and prophets, and which the Lutheran church in her public Confessions professes from, and in accordance with, the Scriptures. This fact is attested by every sermon which is preached on Sunday for the pulpits of our congregations. It can also be observed in our periodicals and in other publications of our Synod.

Certainly no one really believes that there can be a one for one equation between what the Bible, the Confessions, the Synod and its pastors say on any issue. The flaw in this approach may have been uncovered by a request from Brookfield, Illinois pastor who has asked the Synod's Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) whether in the matter of ordination we follow the Apology which grants that it could be a Sacrament¹⁵ or obey the *Brief Statement*, which makes no such allowance.¹⁶ As Sasse points out even the Confessions must

be scrutinized on the basis of the Bible and certainly this is also true of later church declarations.¹⁷ Ironically the 1897 declaration and the edited version of 1932 do not even reference the Confessions once, as Sasse noted.¹⁸

Doing theology solely by referencing historic and officially approved documents can become an obstacle to taking the Scriptures on their own terms and to looking to the Confessions in controverted issues. Later documents become theological playing fields and *sola scriptura* and confessional subscription play a lesser role in doing theology. Another step is taken by a complex cross referencing of CTCR documents. The end product is a midrash requiring knowing the intended sense of the CTCR at the time of their composition and the emotions of the conventions adopting them. We are faced with a historical criticism of another kind. Church documents can never be received as secondary scriptures, so that we assume for the Synod an infallibility which we deny the Bishop of Rome. Just how useful some of these documents are is another issue, as for example in the ministry resolution of July 2001. *A Brief Statement* is valuable as the word 'brief' suggests it did not claim to be exhaustive. Its section on the creation does not discuss the relationship of male and female, a misunderstanding of which has given rise to definition of God as Mother and Father.

Church as Corporation

Another group understands the Synod as an association of congregations held together historically by a commitment to the Lutheran Confessions and in practice as members of ecclesiastical corporation sealed by an oath to uphold the synodical handbook. "Walking together" is the code term for this group. Synod is thought of as also a corporation of congregations and employees bonded together by retirement and health plans. This corporation invests funds and owns properties. Doctrinal differences and disagreements among members are handled as disputes within the corporate structure. District presidents who authorized the ordination of uncertified Seminex graduates were removed for a *Handbook* violation. Though organizational matters are seen as adiaphora, the corporate view affects how ministry is defined. Anyone employed by a member congregation or a Synod entity is put into a common pot called "professional church workers," a phrase or idea unknown by the Bible or the Confessions. This kind of language allows congregations to see pastors as just one kind of minister, pushes the pastors into the category of employee, and makes the congregation the final judge in all matters of doctrine, polity and practice. This can be personally disastrous for the pastors and worse, it denies Christ's establishment of the ministry, which is at the heart of the Walther resolution (7-17a). A corporate view of the Synod also sees it as an educational system of colleges and seminaries that are virtually autonomous in their funding and governance. Pre-ministerial programs are often subsumed into other departments and their students listed in the general category of "church workers." Lutheran enrollment may have increased in the last years, but rare is the school where Missouri Synod students account for more than half of the student body.

Several resolutions of the 2001 convention reenforced the corporate view of Synod.¹⁹ Resolution 7-08, "To Add New Bylaw to Govern Dissolution of Synod wide Corporate Entities,"²⁰ allows the Board of Directors to dissolve institutions like colleges to limit the Synod's liability. Things financial and not theological determine the fate of institutions. Resolution 7-11,

“To Move Property Ownership Bylaw to Constitution,” reaffirms that the Synod is more a corporation than a church by asserting that it has no equity in a congregation’s property. This prevents the Synod from expanding its financial resources at the expense of congregations, but it can also be used to show that the Synod has no responsibilities for its congregations. It allows for a bizarre congregationalism in which any number of people can constitute a legal meeting and can deprive others not in attendance of church property. This follows from seeing the Synod as an free association of congregations and not a church. Fellowship between congregations of the same faith is merely volunary and lacks a confessional center to hold it together.²¹ This has its consequences and may be a cause that more and more congregations give less and less or even nothing to support the Synod, which then is increasingly dependent on direct bequests and grants from foundations. Synod is now really a not for profit organization which resembles other charitable and educational institutions. Not only do its educational institutions have a freer hand in the conduct of their affairs, but congregations are freed up to adopt their own requirements for Baptism, Confirmation, and admission to the Lord’s Supper. Whether or not the terms like ‘sovereign’ and ‘autonomous’ are theologically appropriate for congregations, they do describe the state of affairs. Sadly the downside is that Synod loses its churchly character and we see ourselves as members of a more confederation at best and a free association at worst. How we organize ourselves as a synod does affect on how we understand ourselves.

Driven by Statistics

Losses in the Church of England have been so dramatic that it has become a minority religion in its own homeland. With LCMS statistics, the storm flags are also out. Infant Baptisms decreased more than 25% from 1999 to 2000.²² To turn the numbers around some are proposing that we bring our worship and evangelistic practices and organization in line with churches with expanding statistics. Churches held up as models are Baptist and Pentecostal in worship style and have borrowed heavily from American marketing techniques. Its preachers are recognized by their high-priced, carefully-pressed suits and resemble successful entrepreneurs with their higher than average salaries. One cause of decline is demographics: our members resemble the general population in delaying marriage and having fewer or even no children. Roman Catholics have compensated for the birth deficit by ministering to new immigrants. Our Synod’s founding fathers did this initially by rounding up stray Teutonic tribes afoot in the Midwest and then by meeting the boats as they arrived in New York City. Statistic gazing can be problematic, because it often fails to recognize the incorrigible nature of some unbelief (*cur alii alii non*) and may itself be an act of un-faith because it refuses to believe that Jesus is the Lord of the church who adds those who will believe. Still the belief persists that this or that program or liturgy will produce astonishing results. Enough has been written about this group that nothing more has to be said now.

The Young Turks

Upon their arrival into the Synod in the late 1950s, the young Turks were the Preus brothers. Their knowledge of sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran sources spawned an

interest in things historical and liturgical.²³ The scholarship of J.A.O. Preus and Robert D. Preus, both presidents of this seminary (1962-69 and 1974-1993 respectively), further birthed an interest in early post-apostolic church and biblical studies. The first five centuries are given the attention that fifty years ago was not even given to the classical Lutheran sources. If only for their expertise in Latin and German, these younger men are remarkable. Also in this group are biblical scholars who recognize that the historical-grammatical method undergirds the historical nature of the Scriptures, but a method which is hardly more than a science of grammatical structures does not begin to uncover the theology of the New Testament documents. Interest in the older theology has a liturgical dimension. Faced with the onslaught of Assembly of God/Baptistic styles of worship, its adherents look to the church's historic roots for authentic worship, but this search has hardly produced uniform results. Lack of liturgical consistency which is deplored in contemporary forms surface in multiple proposals. A liturgy in one historically sensitive congregation is unlikely to be found in any other church on the same day and in some cases in the same church on the next Sunday. With the photocopy machines running, each Sunday has its own surprise for worshipers. Liturgy delivers Christian doctrine to the people, but doctrine and not liturgy, especially when it comes in a variety of shades, is the final arbiter of what the church believes. *Lex orandi lex credendi* which is cited to show that liturgy shapes doctrine is more correctly interpreted the other way around: dogma is the standard for the liturgy.²⁴

(Women in the) Ministry: *Articulus Ecclesiae Cadentis*

Many, perhaps most of the leaders and theologians of Missouri's half-sister in Australia and step-mother in Germany no longer find theological or biblical reasons for not ordaining women. When it becomes evident that their churches will not experience a major split over the issue, seminary-trained women are already in the wings waiting to come on stage, but there might be fewer and fewer churches left for either males or females to pastor. As one commentator notes, "But critics point out that the [feminist] movement is not a sign of health; denominations that have approved women's ordination have been steadily shrinking."²⁵ Arguments used once to support women's ordination in Lutheran churches are now used for the ordination of homosexuals. A church taking this route will shrink faster.²⁶ If and when women are ordained pastors in the Missouri Synod, the Dutch boy will have removed his thumb from the dike and we will all be washed away in a torrent of Protestantism which has not been seen since the world began. Not everyone was pleased with the Synod's establishing fellowship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia, because it has yet to rid itself of its remnant female clergy, but it may be the only Lutheran church on this planet ever to have ordained women and reversed its decision. Making a distinction between those who ordain women and those who find no theological reasons against the practice but do not actually carry it out is artificial. Arguments in support of women's ordination inevitably include false theology about God and human beings.

Finding the Roots in God

Using Garreau's model, we propose that one can belong to two nations. By his name the late Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau might be judged to be both French and English. Ironically many proponents and opponents of the ordination of women share a common egalitarian definition of ministry. Thus the views of ministry held by some in held by the Wisconsin Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Missouri Synod, and the ELCA may not be all that different. This definition not only includes pastors, but also professional church workers and finally all Christians. Devaluing the theological currency opens the door for women's ordination. Add to the mix an adiaphoristic definition of ordination and there is little not to ordain women.

This debate begins with biblical references, but the issue can only be finally settled by the prior theological and historical realities that provide the content for these citations. There is 'a something' in, with, under and behind the inscripturated word. According to Paul's own arguments, limiting the pastoral office to males is not a self-contained divine command (this would be Biblicism), but is a projection of the male-female relationship of Genesis one and two into the church where God is reestablishing his Eden. A woman pastor is a contradiction of Genesis 2, but the roots for all doctrine, including the ministry, must go beyond the garden to God himself. Adam and Eve were created not as automatons, but in God's image. In their relationship to each other, they reflected the Trinitarian life in which the divine persons are equal in regard to deity, but ordered in regard to their persons. Without contradiction equality and hierarchy are both true of God and of human beings made in his image. A purely egalitarian definition of God allows for a democratic understanding of society in which the roles of men and women are interchangeable. Even the Fourth Commandment becomes arbitrary law.²⁷ Family units are disposable, men can marry men and women, women. In that world all can be ordained; however, our relationships with one another have their origin in God. "It is this very equality and hierarchy that is reflected in the relation of man and woman; their equality in the image of God does not efface headship of the man any more than the deity of the Son and the Holy Spirit effaces of the patriarchy of the Father."²⁸ Our theology dare never be a composite of disparate truths, though I suspect it often is. It can only be and must be derived from the inner Trinitarian life, extended to us in our creation, through our redemption and, finally, by our sanctification, which reaches its conclusion in our resurrection. Even this will be what God is all about, since he is a God of the living and not the dead. As with any doctrine, our cry must be back to the Bible and beyond the Bible to God himself.

Confessional Lutheranism comes with the price of having constantly to examine, define, and defend its theological positions. Unlike Rome, the Anglicans and the Reformed, we do not have a particular polity on which we insist, as a result we have no organizational model as a unifying principle on which to fall back. Recent ELCA agreements with the Reformed and Rome were not even a possibility half a century ago, when Sasse spoke a confidently Lutheran future in America.²⁹ ELCA accommodations follow a path set by the defection of elector of Brandenburg to Calvinism and the elector of Saxony to Catholicism. In these and the ELCA, the poor Lutheran people are left defenseless. Recent defections from the Missouri Synod to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox communions and conservative Lutheran synods may be attempts to find the Lutheran roots which Missouri lost. If there is no grand exit to the Assemblies of God and Baptist churches, the needs these churches meet may be met in our own.

“Let a man examine himself”

Paul’s admonition first applies to us. Upon examination, we may find that some of our roots may be Lutheran and others not, but it is this self-examination which is so hard for us or anyone who thinks he is by definition right. In this regard the Reverend Todd A. Pepperkorn’s notes in his review of *The Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (Saint Louis: Concordia, 2000), that he did not find one critical sentence in the whole book.

One of the great oddities of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is her view of history. We are proud of our history, and hold it up as one of the crown jewels of our church body. At the same time, there is a certain fear of looking too deeply into the past. We may find skeletons in the closet, or inconsistencies that are difficult or impossible to defend historically or theologically. This is never clearer than in the myriad of perspectives one may find on the theological father and first president of the LCMS.³⁰

We might not be the Lutherans we think we are, at least in the opinion of others. Leonard Klein recalls a conversation had when he was a student at Yale. “I met Jaroslav Pelikan and heard him muse that if the Missouri Synod became Baptist and the rest of Lutheranism [read: ELCA] Methodist, he would die in the bosom of the Orthodox Church. They have and he will.”³¹ The time was the 1960s and the words are amazingly accurate in their predictions, but before we give Pelikan all the credit, Sasse said the same things in 1951.³² After my thoughts were in electronic form, John Pless alerted me to Sasse’s essays. I had to add the appropriate references and commendations, but I did not have to adjust my thoughts. It is humbling to discover that someone a half century ago was saying the things you thought original. Reincarnation of thoughts would dishonor so great a theologian, but it is amazing how consistent the dilemma of remaining Lutheran is. We are learning that, “Faith cannot be bequeathed from one generation to another. It must be born anew in every generation, must be worked by the Holy Spirit.” Before God we must answer the question, “Are we still Lutheran?” Being rootless in America, we must still ask Sasse’s question of ourselves.”³³

1. Already in 1951, Hermann Sasse noted that Karl Holl characterized the Missouri Synod in his university lectures on church history as Calvinist. “Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951),” *Scripture and Church: Selected Essays of Herman Sasse*, ed. R. Feuerhahn & J. Kloha (Saint Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1994),194. Though the Lutherans and the Reformed in Germany form one fellowship, Calvinist has a pejorative sense. Missouri’s image was sullied by the 1974 Seminex walkout at Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis. Matters were not helped by the Synod’s declaring fellowship with churches in Lithuania and Latvia or its work in the countries of the former Soviet Union.

2. Joel Garreau, *The Nine Nations of North America* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1981).

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3. Hermann Sasse, "Apostolic Succession, Letters to Lutheran Pastors, No. 41 April 1956), *We Confess the Church*, Volume 3, " tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 86. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999).
 4. See *National Review* LIII/19 (October 1, 2001), 21. The Roman Catholic Archbishop Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor has declared that Christianity has been vanquished in Britain. His Anglican counterpart, Archbishop of Canterbury claims that, "A tacit atheism prevails." Already in 1992 there were more Roman Catholics actually in church than there were Anglicans. See "Uncultured Men & Women," *Touchstone* 5/4 (Fall 1992):1.
 5. See Louis C. Smith's comments on his own church's (ELCA) dilemma with homosexuality. "The Topsy-turvy ELCA," *Lutheran Forum*, 35/3 (Fall 2001):9.
 6. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 215. Sasse refers to P.E. Kretzmann's *The Foundations Must Stand! The Inspiration of the Bible and Related Questions*.
 7. Hermann Sasse, "The Lord's Supper in the Lutheran Church, Letter to Lutheran Pastors No. 6 May 1949," *We Confess the Sacraments*, *We Confess Series*, Volume 2, tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 101. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999). At the time was written only one out of every hundred persons who went to Communion in Germany were Protestant.
 8. Robert A. Kelly notes that in the search for authenticity some Lutherans have adopted contemporary American Evangelical style and others look for it in Rome. "Successful or Justified? The North American Doctrine of Salvation by Works," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 65/3 (July 2001): 225-27. These categories are not exhaustive of the numerous cultures under any Lutheran tent, but they do show two poles which are operating against one another.
 9. Before the Synod re-adopted *A Brief Statement* in 1959, Hermann Sasse had grave concerns about its being understood as a confession. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 207. At best it reflected what the Synod believed at that time.
 10. "To Address Cooperative Pastoral Working Arrangements with Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Resolution 3-21A," *Convention Proceedings, 61st Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod*, 142.
 11. "To Affirm Synod's Official Position on Church and Ministry Resolution 7-17A," *Convention Proceedings*, 172-73.

12. Rome publicly states that it conceded nothing to the Lutherans and that the Council of Trent still stands. For an appraisal of the negotiations which followed the LWF/ELCA adoption of the *Joint Declaration on Justification*, see Gottfried Martins, “Agreement and Disagreement on Justification by Faith Alone, *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 65/3 (July 2001):195-223.

13. So Richard John Neuhaus commenting *Sexual Fulfillment: For Single and Married, Straight and Gay, Young and Old* the former bishop of the ELCA, Herbert Chilstrom. “While We’re At It,” *First Things* 118 (December 2000): 92.

14. Hermann Sasse offers words of caution in regard to differences on defining church and ministry. “The task which is given our generation cannot be to repeat the formulations of both sides and take up the discussion where it came to a stop a century ago. Rather our task is again to think through what at that time remained unresolved. “Article VII of the Augsburg Confession in the Present Crisis of Lutheranism Letters to Lutheran Pastors, No. 53 April 1961,” 74.

We Confess the Church, We Confess Series, Vol. 3 tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 87. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999). Of course this is what exactly what happened with Resolution 7-17a.

15. Apology XIII, 11. “But if ordination is understood with reference to the ministry of the Word, we have no objection to calling ordination a sacrament.” Melancthon has specific reference to the laying on of hands. “If ordination is understood in this way, we will not object to calling the laying on of hands a sacrament.”

16. Sasse notes that the Lutheran Confessions do not provide a precise definition of the Sacraments and hence Lutherans should have not gotten into a controversy over what is and what is not a Sacrament. “Christ did not institute ‘the sacraments’ but each particular rite.” “The Lutheran Understanding of the Consecration,” *We Confess the Sacraments*, We Confess Series, Volume 2 (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985), 120. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999).

17. Hermann Sasse has an extensive discussion of this matter in “Church and Confession 1941,” in *We Confess Jesus Christ*, Vol. 1, tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 71-87. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999). For example, “Here is not the place to demonstrate the Scripturalness of the Lutheran Confessions. When we assert it, we do not of course mean that they are infallible, unrevisable, or in no need of expansion.”

18. Sasse noted this. “Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951),” *Scripture and Church*, 207. The Statement of the Forty-Four also suffers in making no reference to the Confessions, 213.

19. For example, “To Observe Constitution and bylaw of Synod Resolution 7-03C,” *Convention Proceedings*, 164.

20. *Convention Proceedings*, 168.

21. Sasse took note of what he called Missouri's "narrow concept of the church . . . according to which only the local congregation is really church and can act as church." "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 209

22. See *The Lutheran Witness* 120/12 (December 2001):14. "33,865 children baptized (down 12,000)."

23. Hermann Sasse noted that older conservative theology lacked the joy which inherently belonged to confessional theology. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 208. This failure is not lacking among the newer confessional scholars.

24. Several theologians have questioned the interpretation that the rule of prayer determines what must be believed. Hermann Sasse, "The Lutheran Understanding of Consecration, Letters to Lutheran Pastors No.26 July 1952," *We Confess the Sacraments*, We Confess Series, Volume 2, tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1985): 117. Reprinted in *We Confess Anthology*, (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1999). Also Geoffrey Wainwright as quoted approvingly by Kevin E. Anderson, "*Lex orandi, lex credendi* in John's Gospel," *Lutheran Forum* 35/3 (Fall 2001):19.

25. "Uncultured Men & Women," *Touchstone* 5/4 (Fall 1992):1. See also S. M. Hutchens: "The institution of women's ordination is farthest progressed, as might be expected, in the part of Christendom already most deeply ravaged by modernism, whose faith is the weakest and most deeply compromised, and whose spiritual life is the most secularized and chaotic." "God, Gender, and the Pastoral Office," *Touchstone* 5/4 (Fall 1992):13.

26. This 1992 statement was amazingly predictive of a guest editorial by Louis A. Smith, "The Topsy-turvy ELCA." (*Lutheran Forum* 35/3 [Fall 2001], 9.) It makes specific reference to the ascending homosexual lobby in his church.

27. See Herman Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation, Letters to Lutheran Pastors, No, 8 July 1949," in Herman Sasse, *We Confess Anthology*, tr. Norman Nagel (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1984), 80.

28. S. M. Hutchens, "God, Gender, and the Pastoral Office," *Touchstone* 5/4 (Fall 1992):13.

29. Unless I have misread him, Sasse is convinced that the Lutheran synods in America will retain their identity. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 205. "Today the existence of the Lutheran church is now longer in question - . . ." Sasse was wrong.

30. Todd A. Pepperkorn, review of *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther*, by August R. Suelflow in *Logia* (10/4 [Reformation 2001]: 44-45.

31. Leonard Klein, "The Catholic Option," *Lutheran Forum* 35/1 (Spring 2001):40.

32. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 217-19.

33. "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod (1951)," *Scripture and Church*, 202. Emphasis is Sasse's.