

The **LUTHERAN** **CLARION**



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Theology—the Real Issue of the Preus Era

Mr. Walter Disson gave the following presentation at the January 2012 Lutheran Concerns Conference in Fort Wayne, IN.

Writings in recent years including Professor James C. Burkee's book, *Power, Politics and the Missouri Synod* (Fortress Press, 2011), make it wise to clearly show that theology truly was the focus of the Preus era of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). The Rev. Dr. J.A.O. Preus was a conservative, and saw Bible stories, such as the story of Jonah, as historical. "Many in his church, including most of the faculty of Concordia Seminary in Clayton disagreed with him and said the stories were parables," wrote *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* Religion Editor Patricia Rice in an August 15, 1994, story. There, she also quoted former *Post-Dispatch* Religion Editor James Adams as saying, "Jack was not concerned with himself, but concerned with issues. Some things I wrote about him may not have been all that flattering, but I think he was a great man. I wish I'd had one more time to tell him that."

Unlike Dr. Burkee, I speak from first hand involvement of 36 years of Synod positions including 12 years as a St. Louis Seminary Board member and secretary from 1971 to 1983, which is both before and after the walkout. At Milwaukee in 1971, I served on the Floor Committee on Constitutional Matters and at New Orleans in 1973, I was a resource person backstage for Committee #3 on Seminary Issues when it had the floor. Since 1962, I have missed only the 1965 and 1977 Synodical Conventions and have been both a voting delegate and advisory delegate. I have also been a District Convention voting delegate multiple times. Unlike a revisionist history professor making extrapolations from a host of sources decades after the fact, I was often there as a participant.

In the eyes of many Missourians, *A Statement* of September 7, 1945, signed by 43 Missouri Synod clergymen and one layman was but the forerunner of "theological" actions and views that troubled the Synod for decades until ultimately courageously dealt with first by Synodical President J. A. O. Preus and then Synod itself, especially in 1973 at New Orleans and then Anaheim in 1975. My first pastor after I left home in 1949 was one of the 44.

Exodus from Concordia (by the Board of Control, Concor-

dia Seminary, 1977, p. 6) relates that the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) was formed by the 1962 Synodical Convention and that minutes of the Council of Presidents (COP) in January and December 1963 reflect the COP continued to study the matter of doctrinal difficulties in the Synod involving the Concordia Seminary faculty. Then Synod First Vice President Wiederanders reported a committee that evaluated the first two meetings found "...these problems are not imaginary, a matter of semantics, they are very real." *Exodus* notes that he then elaborated on problems having to do with inspiration, the historicity of Adam and Eve, the fall into sin etc. Speaking of the 1962 Convention, Dad was a clergy voting delegate supportive of presidential candidate Rev. Oliver Harms, a St. Louis 1926 classmate. Dad told me at that Convention pastors would come up to him saying, "Vic, let me mark up your workbook on nominees you should vote for. (My appraisal: Most such names would have been "liberal.") This was seven years before the Preus era commenced.

Synod's 1965 *Convention Workbook* contains multiple memorials on doctrinal matters dealing with issues later dealt with by President J. A. O. Preus.

Doctrinal concerns in Synod led to the March 30, 1965, letter to: "Dear Friend In Christ" from Southern Nebraska District Executive Secretary of Stewardship and Missions, Rev. Waldo Werning, to which was attached a document titled: '*Faith Forward - First Concerns, a Plea of Concern in Christian Love.*' Point #3 stated: "We reject as unfaithful to Scripture the so-called 'new hermeneutic' which wrongfully regards some historical parts of the Old Testament as symbolical, thus destroying the foundation of faith and humanizing God's Word..."

Another "Dear Brother In Christ" letter of *Faith Forward - First Concerns* stated the signers, which included Pastors Karl L. Barth, Ellis Nieting and District Presidents Ottomar Krueger, Carl A. Heckman, Victor L. Behnken, Henry W. Nierman, Fred H. Ilten, Paul M. Freiburger, ...continued...

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Elmer E. Lussenhop, Carl H. Bensene, Gustav Lobeck and Lewis C. Niemoeller, were not alarmist but came to the realistic conclusion that there were some pastors, some teachers, some faculty members at the Synod's colleges and seminaries, and some authors who either by deliberate intent or through unclear and indefinite statements, and sometimes by careless comments and innuendoes, perhaps even unintentionally, were causing confusion in Synod regarding the inspiration, authenticity, and authority of Scripture. They asked for those in Synod who felt as they did to register support. About 140,000 people did so!!

This doctrinal ferment in the Synod which was not effectively dealt with by then Synodical President Harms was a prelude to the 1969 Denver Synodical Convention where altar and pulpit fellowship with the American Lutheran Church (ALC) was the major issue. I was there. The fellowship issue was debated throughout the Synod. Proponents of ALC fellowship sought to portray that there was unity in essential issues in doctrine and practice while the opponents showed otherwise. The then four major Lutheran bodies and others participated in an in-depth analysis of their members, clergy and churches in southeastern Michigan that took four years and was led by Dr. Lawrence L. Kersten of Wayne State University with his study being published in the book, *The Lutheran Ethic* (Wayne State University Press, 1970). Tables therein show beliefs of clergy and laity in the LCA, ALC, Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Synod. Huge divergence!

Table 2.2

		LCA%	ALC%	LCMS%	WS%
The account of Adam & Eve falling into sinfulness is simply a story which did not take place in reality (Disagree)	Lay	48	59	81	83
	Clergy	17	28	80	100
Only those who believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior can go to heaven (Agree)	Lay	56	58	75	84
	Clergy	43	52	84	100
A child is already sinful at birth. (Agree)	Lay	45	58	77	79
	Clergy	67	74	96	100*

* p.36

At the 1968 North Dakota District Convention, Dr. Robert Preus presented a paper titled *To Join or Not to Join*, which starkly laid out the doctrinal gulf between the ALC and Missouri.

Former Synodical President John Behnken in a March 6, 1967, letter to the Synod's COP attached a copy of *Some Questions Concerning Some Statements of God's Holy Word* stating that after attending two meetings of the COP and Theological Faculties he was "...troubled very much," wrote down some questions (actually 28) and, quoting him, "...referred to the many passages of Holy Writ in which God gives His answers. Next I presented these to two good theologians of our Synod (not members of any faculties of our Seminaries or Colleges). These men urged me to proceed. On August 6, 1966, I mailed the questions, as I am presenting them to you, to the President of the Seminary, Dr. A.O. Fuerbringer." Dr. Behnken



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went on to say that he told the President of his intent to distribute copies to the COP, Boards of Control, members of theological faculties, etc. and called attention "...to the fact this is really a 'public matter' which has been discussed rather publicly." On January 1, 1967, Synod President Harms was told of this. I was elected to the St. Louis Seminary Board of Control in 1971, and at one of my first meetings when comment was made about Dr. Behnken's penetrating doctrinal questions in his letter to Seminary President Fuerbringer, Board of Control Chairman Loose said President Fuerbringer spoke to him about the letter asking what he should do and Chairman Loose responded, "Pitch it in the circular file." Think. Was this an early step of the then Seminary administration, Board of Control and faculty to mount massive resistance to doctrinal accountability? Look at Behnken question #3: "Did the devil actually speak through the serpent as recorded in Gen. 3, 1-5? Cf. Rev. 12, 9; 20, 2. Or is this merely a legend? Is this optional and permissible? If so, why? If not, why not? Is there anything to the argument advanced against the serpent's speaking: 'The serpent has no vocal cords?' Did Balaam's ass, which had no human vocal chords (*sic*), speak to Balaam as recorded in Numbers 22, 28-30?" When the Board of Control interviewed Concordia Seminary faculty, I raised like questions. The response to me: "Mr. Dis-sen, does a snake have vocal cords?"

On May 19, 1969, just prior to the July 11-18, 1969, Synodical Convention Dr. John Tietjen was elected president of Concordia Seminary. Dr. A. O. Fuerbringer was not yet 65 and did not need to retire. "The election was indeed unusual because it marked the first time in the Synod that a Seminary president was chosen while his predecessor was still in office." *Exodus from Concordia*, p. 15). This action that started in 1968 is described as a

“pre-emptive” strike by Dr. Fuerbringer to secure that Seminary “...for moderates for fear of the unthinkable, a Harms loss...” at Denver. (James C. Burkee, *Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod*, p. 58). Dr. Martin Scharlemann there is quoted as stating that one day Dr. Repp suddenly announced to the faculty that Concordia Seminary had better get a new president before the term of President Fuerbringer ended and that it take place before Denver “...lest we get a man out of step with what was going on...” (Burkee, p. 88) Was this liberal style power and politics or some divine instruction of God?

It is revealing to read in *Memoirs in Exile* (John H. Tietjen, Fortress Press, 1990) of Concordia Seminary President Tietjen and that Seminary’s preparation for the Milwaukee 1971 Synodical Convention. “Election of board members was for us at Concordia Seminary a key issue of the Milwaukee convention. Who would comprise the Board of Control that would have the responsibility of taking action on the Fact Finding Committee Report? [The Fact Finding Committee is discussed later.] I was eager for the reelection of all four incumbent board members. However, we needed another pastoral nominee to replace John Ott. It chilled me to think of the consequences if one of those proposed by the Convention Nominations Committee were to be elected. I took a few friends into my confidence to reflect on potential candidates whom we could nominate from the floor and whose name recognition would make them electable.” (pps. 69-70) Dr. Tietjen then said they sifted through candidates and chose Rev. William Buege who had served as Dean of the Valparaiso

University Chapel, was a pastor in St. Louis and was leading the evening Convention devotions. Tietjen wrote, “We let it be known through the Frey-Leuking organization that we were hoping all our friends would vote for Buege and the Board of Control incumbents. A hitch developed at the time of the nominations from the floor. In addition to Buege, the name of Peter Mealwitz was placed in nomination. Mealwitz was a pastor from Ohio, a member of the English District, and a good friend of mine. I immediately told him my concern, I informed him that Buege was our candidate, that Mealwitz’s nomination would mean that the votes of those supporting Concordia Seminary would be divided, and that I hoped he would withdraw his name from the ballot. He did. The first election returns did not bode well for us. Walter Dissen, a layman from North Olmsted, Ohio, one of the candidates of the Convention Nominations Committee, was the first board member to be elected....” (p. 70). Later in the chapter Dr. Tietjen wrote about the Convention results and quoted Dr. Caemmerer as saying, “The two views about Lutheranism that are in contention right now are as different as a box is from a platform.” (*Memoirs in Exile*, p. 72.) Doctrine clearly is

“...the non-confessional views of the nature and authority of Holy Scripture are particularly distressing...”

LCMS President J.A.O. Preus in the 1972 *Blue Book*

shown to be the issue but was such Seminary political action reported by Dr. Burkee in his book? [Note: Keep in mind the Fact Finding Commission interviews of faculty members began on December 11, 1970.]

At the 1969 Convention Dr. J. A. O. Preus was elected Synodical president. Without question Missouri had doctrinal division and the St. Louis Seminary was at the center. Already pastors and laity would say to me that someone needed to do something about the doctrinal situation at Concordia Seminary but accurate as they were in their assessment they did not want to file charges under a very fine then Adjudication system. However, a courageous Dr. J. A. O. Preus soon took action. Dr. Kurt Marquart wrote that the quest for Lutheran unity in the United States and the attack on the Biblical Principle with the St. Louis Seminary’s “...obvious and leading role in the doctrinal changes...” resulted in a deep credibility crisis. He went on, “it is true that the ‘Preus forces’ tackled the problem but no one would pretend that they created it. (1 Kings 18:17)...” (Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion*, Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1977, pps. 78-79).

The November 1, 1970, issue of the *Lutheran Witness Reporter* carried the announcement that President Preus decided to appoint a committee of five men [Rev. Dr. Paul A. Zimmerman, Chairman and Pastors Karl L. Barth, Elmer E. Foelber, H. Armin Moellering and Paul W. Streufert] to inquire into doctrine and life at Concordia St. Louis. One objective of the Fact Finding Committee was to share their findings with the Synodical President who would make his report and possible recommendation to the Board of Control. Synod would also get a report. The Fact Finding Committee report to President Preus is dated June 15, 1971. The Fact Finding Committee interviewed 45 professors for 1½ hours each. Transcripts were made and furnished to the professor and to the Board of Control. The Fact Finding Committee Report went to the Board of Control. The Milwaukee Convention (1971) in Resolution 2-28 directed the Board of Control to take appropriate action on the basis of the report, commending or correcting where necessary, directed the Board of Control to report progress directly to the President of the Synod and the Board for Higher education and directed the President of the Synod to report to the Synod on the progress of the Board of Control within one year. On September 1, 1972, President Preus issued his *Report of the Synodical President to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Compliance with Resolution 2-28 of the 49th Regular Convention of the Synod, held at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, July 9-16, 1971.* (Hereafter the *Blue Book.*) President Preus gives a summary at page 25 of the *Blue Book*:

“In Summary, the synodical President is pleased to report that the entire Seminary faculty continues to accept and teach many important articles of our Christian faith. But he notes with dismay that he sees in the evidence presented by the Fact Finding Committee:

- a. A false doctrine of the nature of the Holy Scriptures coupled with methods of interpretation which effectually erode the authority of the Scriptures.
- b. A substantial undermining of the confessional doctrine of original sin by a *de facto* denial of the historical events on which it is based.
- c. A permissiveness toward certain false doctrines.
- d. A tendency to deny that the Law is a normative guide for Christian behavior.
- e. A conditional acceptance of the *Lutheran Confessions*.
- f. A strong claim that the Seminary faculty need not teach in accord with the Synod's doctrinal stance as expressed in the Synod's official doctrinal statements and resolutions.

All of these items are matters of serious concern. However, the non-confessional views of the nature and authority of Holy Scripture are particularly distressing, for the Scriptures alone are the source of all Christian doctrine and the norm for our proclamation of the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ and all of its supporting articles of faith.

The Synod must face the grave issue of fundamental disagreement in the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures with its far-reaching implications for all of Christian faith and theology. It is a matter of utmost urgency, demanding the Synod's most serious study, its clearest judgment and its decisive and swift action under the guidance of the Holy Spirit."

Board of Control members received copies of the transcripts of the Fact Finding Committee interviews of professors as well as responses thereto by professors. I carefully reviewed these transcripts making notes for the later Board of Control interviews of professors which were time limited—typically two hours—so that I at times submitted written questions in advance. [Small talk by majority Board members would eat up precious time.] I participated in every one of the 29 Board interviews. At the October 15-16, 1972, Board of Control meeting President Tietjen and the Board majority opposed tape recording and defeated my motion: "That the Board tape record interviews, keeping one copy for itself and not sharing the tape with anyone else." The very next motion was by Mr. Roschke to recess and attend chapel and it passed, but before recessing Mr. Roschke offered a motion which passed, that motion having President Tietjen in consultation with the interviewees at the October meeting prepare a draft of a summary of the interview and submit a copy only to the Board. Synodical Vice President W. Harry Krieger, substituting for Dr. E. C. Weber, gave Synodical President Preus detailed notations on the October and November 1972 Board of Control meetings and provided me onion skin carbon copies. Quoting from his October 1972 notation: "Shortly after the meeting opened I raised the question of a proper record of the proceedings, especially of the interviews to be held, suggesting that a tape

recording be made of each. This was vociferously opposed by the majority...indeed with table thumping emphasis by President Tietjen and Rev. Buege. It should be added that even the kind suggestion by Mr. Dissen that there be one tape recording, confined to President Tietjen and held under lock and key by him, met with similar opposition. When I reminded the Board that they would stand under the judgment of the Synod for their decision with respect to each Professor who was interviewed and would need some record to which reference might be made, a lengthy discussion took place. Ultimately the Board resolved that Dr. Tietjen, in consultation with the respective professor would prepare a record of each interview. Personal observation: Is this not like letting the fox guard the hen house?" Why would a Professor of History not realize the import of this and highlight it in his book?

The *Blue Book* contains a minority report of Dr. E. C. Weber and myself as well as a letter of Board Member Charles H. Burmeister.

In terms of doctrine, Weber and Dissen said "...that the Synod must determine if it is willing to agree that the following positions apparently held by various professors, for example, represent true fidelity to the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions." These are listed at pps. 141-142:

- "A. (1) It is not necessary to believe there was a personal Adam, the first man, although the Apostle Paul as a man of that era probably believed Adam was a historical character.
- (2) That the Apostle Paul sees Adam as the representative of mankind and does not discuss the historicity of Adam and Eve.
- (3) That the Confessions do not discuss the historicity of Adam."
- "B. (1) An unwillingness to pass an adverse judgment on one who does not accept the virgin birth until for example, it is ascertained whether the person understands the Gospel or unless such a denial of the virgin birth limits, denies or destroys the Gospel process.
- (2) The reluctant concession is made that a seminary student who denies the virgin birth would have grave difficulty taking his ordination vow and signing the constitution (of Synod)."
- "C. The patriarch Abraham lacked the Gospel faith of



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sureness in a forthcoming Messiah. (Note: Compare this with the Formula of Concord, Solid Declaration, Article V, 23.)”

- “D. An evolutionist position would not disqualify one from serving as a faculty member of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.”
- “E. (1) That it might be possible that the miracle of Christ walking on water could be denied on the basis the account is a literary device used for a certain purpose.
(2) That one should not exclude the possibility of miracles at every point on principle but the other principle of the economy of miracles may induce acceptance of an alternate solution in certain cases.”
- “F. That the following are acceptable exegetical treatments of Matt. 12:38-42 and Luke 11:29-32, namely,
(1) that Matthew himself made up the story,
(2) that Jesus held to the swallowing of Jonah by a fish as a child of his times and
(3) Jesus wasn't really attempting to answer the question whether Jonah was history or parable but used the account for purposes of illustration (admonition).”
- “G. That any discussion of the authority of Scripture must be considered in relation to the Gospel and not on the basis of ‘thus saith the Lord.’”
- “H. That it is possible that Abraham, Jacob and Isaac never really lived.”
- “I. That the concept of inspiration may properly be extended beyond the apostles, evangelists and prophets to include interpreters of Scripture and those who speak today.”
- “J. That the Scriptural record of a world flood need not be accepted.”

An illustration: After the walkout in 1974, professors and students covered the country speaking. I attended one such event in metro-Cleveland, Ohio, and sat next to Synod Vice President Streufert and his wife. One of the professors who walked out referred to the Biblical account of Christ walking on water and said if one examined period literature of that time one would find similar accounts in other religions. Ergo, what probably happened was that there were flat stones in shallow water at the shoreline and Christ walking on those stones thus appeared to be walking on water. He noted that enhanced accounts could be used to build up the message. This was presented as the Synod long-accepted historical-grammatical analysis. Dr. Streufert got up, addressed the audience and said his good brother was presenting the historical critical method of interpretation as the historical-grammatical method and this was wrong.

Another illustration: Dr. W. Harry Krieger in his notes on the Board interviews of October 15-16, 1972, wrote with regard to one professor: “He affirmed his personal belief in the Virgin Birth as fact. But I came to the conclusion that he also left room for its denial on the part of others within the church. References to statements in pagan writings, claiming a virgin birth for Caesars to enhance their prestige, was repeated. He suggested that the Evangelists may have as-

cribed a Virgin Birth to Jesus simply to emphasize His lordship. He admitted, moreover that when seminarians came to him and expressed their doubts in this matter, he countered at times by saying that he himself had doubts about this. His testimony at this time brought objections from a number of other Board members....I was not satisfied with any ‘explanation’ he offered. Indeed, it was my strong impression that here was an official teacher of the church who verbalized ‘a theology of doubt.’” As to another professor interviewed that day, Dr. Krieger wrote, “I regret to report that the interview with ___ convinced me that he denies the factuality and historicity of Genesis 1-2, that the names were generic and therefore Adam and Eve were but ‘symbolic’ of the human family.”

In a letter of May 2, 1973, from the five vice presidents of the Synod to the Board of Control, those men commence: “‘Sub-scriptural and un-Lutheran’—this sharp judgment appearing in the document, *Fact Finding or Fault Finding*, published in September 1972, shortly after the appearance of the report of the Synodical President, encapsules the judgment passed upon the personal theological position of the Synod’s President. This charge, so blunt and so serious, brought dismay to the leadership of the Synod and to thousands of its members. The Synodical President, recognizing that he had thus been charged with false teaching, and therefore with failing to meet a specific constitutional requirement which he is under oath to uphold, expressed his willingness to stand trial in the face of that charge.” President Preus expressed this willingness to the Council of Presidents on September 18-21, 1972, and in the presence of President Tietjen. The five vice presidents noted the document, *Fact Finding or Fault Finding*, had not been withdrawn and requested the Board of Control to take appropriate action. By the way, the September 24, 1972, *Lutheran Witness* broadcast to the church the charge against Dr. Preus. Can anyone, especially a historian, not fail to see that **doctrine** indeed was the real issue?

The St. Louis Seminary Board of Control Report to the 1973 Synodical Convention appears as Report 3-01A in the *Convention Workbook*. The Board said, “Since the Fact Finding Committee Report, on the basis of which the board was to take action, specifically disclaims any judgmental function, and since the board therefore did not have before it charges of false doctrine against any faculty member, the board did not consider the interview process to be an investigation of charges of false teaching. Rather it considered the interviews to be fraternal discussions through which the board sought to assure itself by means of questions and answers that individual faculty members did in fact and without reservation accept the Scriptures ‘as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice’ and the Lutheran Confessions ‘as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God.’” Contrast that statement to the voting on whether to “Commend,” “Correct” or “Abstain” where a vote to “Correct” was equivalent to false doctrine. The **only** person receiving all “Commend”

...continued...

votes with not even an abstention was Dr. Lawrence Wunderlich with ten votes. "Five faculty members had squeaked by with a one-vote majority, three more by a two-vote majority." (*Memoirs in Exile*, John H. Tietjen, p.137). Three of us recorded votes to correct Dr. Tietjen. There were five votes to commend Dr. Scharlemann, two to correct and two abstentions. There were seven votes to commend Dr. Robert Preus, one to correct and two abstentions. There were seven votes to commend Dr. Klann, two votes to correct and two abstentions. There were nine votes to commend Dr. Bohlmann and two to abstain.

Report 3-01B is the Report to the New Orleans Convention (1973) of Dr. E. C. Weber and myself. We pointed out multiple concerns citing the *Blue Book* and later referred in 3-01B to the Board's official summaries:

Professor A "...stated that the fall narrative is a symbolic account which affirms that there was a fall without giving precise details about how it happened and which is designed to show that we are so involved in that event that we are born losers."

Professor Y "In response to further questioning as to whether it is permissible for a Lutheran to hold a view of theistic evolution, Professor Y stated that it would be permissible if he believes in God's grace in Christ and affirms that God's Word is responsible for life and man."

Professor F "Asked on what basis the Scriptures are normative, Dr. F stated that they are normative because Christ is normative and the New Testament Scriptures are the normative apostolic testimony to him. They are normative because he is the normative content of their witness."

We also said: "We must conclude that the report of the minority made nine months ago was correct." Read the entire detailed reports. In their Supplemental Report 2-01-C Board Members Eugene Fincke and Charles Burmeister noted at the very beginning: "We are aware that some members of the Board of Control...have submitted a report 'on the basis of the [Fact Finding Committee] report' of their concerns regarding doctrinal matters relating to the St. Louis seminary administration and faculty. We have read the report and concur in the content of it. They are telling you a true story." (Emphasis supplied.) In over two pages they set out their concerns about certain expenditures, administrative actions, etc.

At the Board of Control meeting of May 18-19, 1973, the minutes reflect discussion of the impending Board meeting with Floor Committee #3 on Seminary Issues and the Supplemental Reports of Board members appearing in the Convention Workbook. "Chairman Loose stated that any supplemental report would be out of order. President Tietjen stated a minority had no right to submit reports and their action was unethical and that Committee #3 should be told the Board has no supplementary materials including the various supplemental reports. A request was made on the signatories of the Supplemental Reports that they inform the members of Committee #3 that it should not question the Board on the Supplemental Reports since the

other Board members had not had the opportunity to read them." The Board then passed a resolution that the report of the Board of Control consists of the report as filed per resolution adopted in February 1973. Matters in the Convention Workbook titled, 'Report of Some members...' etc.

"I can't answer the question, 'Do you believe in the historicity of Adam and Eve?' Historicity and facticity are not even in my dictionary. One thing they caught most of us on is, were Adam and Eve historical persons? I don't know. I don't think so. It is not important. ..."

St. Louis Faculty Member, 1972

and 'Supplemental Report' and unprinted material alluded to in the April issue of *Brother to Brother* are not the report of the Board of Control and are officially out of order." The Board of Control then adopted a resolution authorizing Chairman Loose to speak for the Board in response to questions raised in the Board of Control's impending meeting with

Committee #3 with the understanding the Board of Control Secretary could be a resource person to provide additional information on official Board action. I recorded my negative vote. Next, the Board passed a resolution that Dr. Tietjen be asked to join the Board of Control in the meeting with Committee #3 "...since he is the spiritual, academic and administrative head of the Seminary and the executive officer of the Board of Control and further since his presence would be desirable as a resource person..." Dr. Weber and I recorded negative votes. Who would not see these actions as an attempt to muzzle, control and hide the truth? Would not any objective book author seeking to present truth want to highlight these actions in his book? Strange, but the April 20, 1987, *Lutheran Perspective of Evangelical Lutherans in Mission* has the headline on its lead story: "*Marty, Anderson Decline Nomination for Bishop*" of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Could Rev. Marty be an objective adviser to Professor Burkee?

The Board of Control, accompanied by President Tietjen, met with 1973 Convention Floor Committee #3 at 210 N. Broadway in the Board room of the Synod. Before commencement of the meeting I informed Chairman Niemoeller and Committee member Attorney Robert Hirsch of the recent Board actions, protested and said I most assuredly desired to speak as did others in the minority. We soon were ushered into the Board room but Committee #3 Chairman Niemoeller said that Committee would meet several minutes. He returned stating that Committee #3 requested to meet with the Board and President Tietjen was excused as he was not a Board member. An explosion occurred before an anatomy. Chairman Niemoeller also stated he expected Board members (plural) to respond to questions. Again, unhappiness by the Board majority. In my opinion, Committee #3 learned a great deal. When we returned to the Seminary Board room, the first thing the

Board Chairman did after reconvening was wipe his brow with the palm of his hand and say, "Boy, it's not hard to tell Bob Hirsch was a former prosecutor." Perhaps the Board majority should have learned from Shakespeare's Macbeth that truth will get out. Maybe a historian can also learn the same lesson.

In his address to the 1973 Synodical Convention, President J. A. O. Preus said: "Today we face another great Lutheran controversy—this time on the third great principle of the Word Alone. Are we to base our faith and work on Scripture or on man's reason? Are we going to halt between two opinions? Not if I know Missouri in which I learned the faith, with Christ at its center, with the Bible as the base, with love and service as its fruit, with the call to proclaim the Gospel to all the world, with the promise of peace, pardon and eternal life..." (*Convention Proceedings*, p. 56.) These were great words by a hero of the One, True, Christian Faith and the Convention responded with some wonderful Bible-based actions. Orchestrated demonstrations occurred that later would be replicated at Concordia Seminary.

At New Orleans (1973), "A Statement" [Resolution 3-01] was adopted. **Biblical!** Also adopted was Resolution 3-09, "To Declare Faculty Majority Position in Violation of Article II of the Constitution." In this meaningful doctrinal resolution the penultimate "Resolved" reads: "That the Synod recognize that the matters referred in the second resolved are in fact false doctrine running counter to the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the synodical stand and for that reason 'cannot be tolerated in the Church of God, much less be excused and defended' (FC, SD, Preface, 9)" and concluded with a final resolve, "That these matters be turned over to the Board of Directors of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis." A proposed resolution to deal with the St. Louis Board of Control (3-10) was referred to Synod's Board of Control. In 3-12A it was resolved that "...the matter of Dr. John H. Tietjen as president and professor of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, shall be dealt with in such manner as is permitted under applicable substantive and procedural provisions of the *Handbook of the Synod*." (There then was less than a day for the Convention to address that matter.)

Referring to Resolution 3-09 of 1973, that Resolution reflects Scripture teaches the historicity of Adam and Eve as real persons to which original sin and its imputation upon all succeeding generations of man must be traced. Contrast this to the comment made by a St. Louis Faculty member at a Pastoral Conference April 17-20, 1972, quoted in *Exodus from Missouri* at page 56: "I can't answer the question, 'Do you believe in the historicity of Adam and Eve?' Historicity and facticity are not even in my dictionary. One thing they caught most of us on is, were Adam and Eve historical persons? I don't know. I don't think so. It is not important. They caught most of us in some way on most of the points in Preus' Statement'. I believe that many of my Christian brothers have problems with the virgin birth of Christ. Don't ask me, 'Do you believe in a six

day creation?'...I have problems with the virgin birth, real presence, bodily resurrection...I can't bear the burden of Scriptural infallibility." See 1 Cor. 15:17 where Paul said: "if Christ is not raised, your faith is in vain; ye are yet in your sins." Several Louisiana pastors addressed the Seminary on this and it became a Board of Control agenda item. Was this covered by Professor Burkee?

On August 17-18, 1973, the Board of Control of Concordia St. Louis met. Former Synodical President Harms had requested to speak and was present in the morning for 40 minutes. He said no one had asked him to appear. He asked for a moratorium on all actions insofar as the St. Louis Seminary and its faculty was concerned to permit the Seminary president to probe into the position of each professor to see if the position of each professor conforms to the position of President Tietjen which Dr. Harms felt was so well expressed at New Orleans and with which he agrees. In concluding, Dr. Harms asked what doctrine was being denied, misrepresented or mistaught at the St. Louis Seminary. **Astounding!!** Surely he must have read the *Report of the Fact Finding Committee*; *The Report of the Synodical President*; *Fact Finding or Fault Finding*; *Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord I and II* etc. Don't forget that in *Fact Finding or Fault Finding* the theology of the *Blue Book* was described as "Sub-scriptural and un-Lutheran." Surely Dr. Harms knew that the pre-New Orleans Board of Control voted to **commend** 45 professors and that was trumpeted countrywide by Dr. Tietjen. The existence of doctrinal problems was crystal clear! Has Professor Burkee covered this?

Pastors Leonard Buelow and Harlan Harnapp filed formal charges against Dr. John Tietjen which the Board of Control dealt with at its meeting of August 17-18, 1973. While the Board of Control first voted to suspend Dr. Tietjen, at the same meeting it voted to suspend the suspension. At the Board of Control meeting of January 20-21, 1974, the Board of Control voted to suspend Dr. Tietjen. At its meeting of October 11-12, 1974, the Board of Control rendered its decision on the 10 charges of Pastors Buelow and Harnapp. With respect to the first finding, it found:

...continued...

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“Dr. John H. Tietjen is guilty, as charged of holding and defending, and allowing and fostering false doctrine contrary to Article II of the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with respect to: (a) the meaning of the Gospel and its authority; (b) the relationship between the Gospel and the Scripture; (c) inspiration and historicity of Biblical events; (d) inerrancy and the use of the historical-critical method; and (e) the unchanging formulation of the Gospel.” He was also found guilty on the remaining nine charges.

The Synod’s 1975 Convention at Anaheim, California,, in Resolution 3-11 declared its position on the Historical-Critical Method of Biblical interpretation, in one “resolve” stating that the “...Synod reassure its members that the Synod still adheres faithfully to its historic position that the Scriptures are God’s very own inspired, inerrant, and authoritative Word for all matters of doctrine and practice...”

In a letter of May 20, 1977, to Dr. John H. Tietjen, Synodical Vice President Theodore F. Nickel wrote, “In view of your failure to appeal the Board of Control’s decision, that decision stands.”

Well before Synodical President Preus announced in his April 20, 1970, letter to the St. Louis Seminary Board of Control, that he was appointing a Fact Finding Committee, there was ample evidence of theological differences there. One faculty member told the Board of Control that in the administration of Dr. Fuerbringer there was concern about a colleague or two teaching universalism. Dr. Fuerbringer then sent a letter to faculty members asking if they (1) had any difficulties with the Lutheran Confessions and (2) whether they felt any of their colleagues taught contrary to the Lutheran Confessions. The professor said he answered “No” to the first; “Yes” to the second. Five professors (Dr. Ralph Bohlmann, Richard Klann, Robert Preus, Martin Scharlemann and Lorenz Wunderlich) in 1971-72 became participants in a Bylaw 6.75 proceeding before the Board of Control over disagreements among faculty. I was involved. The documentation shows an attempt by the then Seminary administration to mask what was going on.

Turn the clock back to 1970: “The issue facing The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is one of theology and not a dispute over political power. This is the feeling of Dr. Alfred O. Fuerbringer, past president of Concordia Seminary here and one of the organizers of a meeting of some 50 pastors and laymen held in Chicago early last month.” (*Lutheran Layman*, October 1970). The story also said Dr. Fuebringer was asked if the committee would run candidates for office at the Milwaukee Convention and he said, “No.” That group’s coordinating committee included Rev. Dean Leuking, Mrs. Elmer Witt and others and a newsletter being edited by Rev. Richard Koenig would be the official communications link “...between the committee and the grass roots.” Did Dr. Burkee cover this?

The evidence is indeed conclusive that **doctrine** was the focus of the presidency of Dr. J. A. O. Preus. “The conflict is, after all, theological, as both sides have insisted...A re-

sponsible treatment of the dispute must come to grips with the central questions of truth on which it turns. And these questions are not, as some imagine, so complicated that they cannot be made plain to the satisfaction of any interested person. Like all great issues of life and death, they are at bottom simple. And they have a certain context or setting which needs to be seen in order to make sense of them.” (Marquart, *Anatomy of An Explosion*, p. 4.)

In his epic book, *Seminary in Crisis* (Dr. Paul A. Zimmerman, Concordia Publishing House, 2007), **which should be in every church office of every congregation**, the distinguished Dr. Zimmerman offers five lessons for the future:

- (1) The church must have good leadership;
- (2) we must continue to produce educated seminary graduates;
- (3) there is an absolute need of two seminaries to serve the Synod;
- (4) there is a need for the solid backing of the laity of the Synod and
- (5) by far the most important lesson is that the Church can always depend on the guidance and blessings of our gracious God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. (pps. 142-143).

A wise person will read and study them.

Mr. Walter Dissen, Esq.

Served 12 years on the Board of Regents of St. Louis, 12 years on the Board of Regents of Ft. Wayne and 12 years on Synod’s Commission of Appeals. He is a retired corporate attorney.

What Luther Says: 3351 Feeding & Defending the Sheep

A preacher must not only feed the sheep so as to instruct them how they are to be good Christians, but he must also keep the wolves from attacking the sheep and leading them astray with false doctrine and error; for the devil is never idle. Nowadays there are many people who are quite ready to tolerate our preaching of the Gospel as long as we do not cry out against the wolves and preach against the prelates.

But though I preach the truth, feed the sheep well, and give them good instruction, this is still not enough unless the sheep are also guarded and protected so that the wolves do not come and carry them off. For what sort of building is it if I throw away stones and then watch another throw them back in? The wolf can readily tolerate a good pasture for the sheep; he likes them better for their fatness. But what he cannot endure is the hostile bark of the dogs. Therefore it is of vital importance to set our hearts on truly feeding the flock as God has commanded it. (W 12, 389—E 51, 483—SL 9, 1100f) [*What Luther Says*, Ewald Plass]

LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE
Monday, January 21, 2013

“Threats from Within and Threats from Without”

The Lutheran Concerns Association extends a cordial invitation to all LCMS Congregants to attend the LCA Annual Conference. We look forward to meeting you and working together to make the LCMS a faithful and strong voice for Evangelical Lutherans.

LCA CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31b-32

Rev. Dr. Peter Scaer - Bible Study
Rev. Dr. William Weinrich - Opening Devotion
Mr. Walter Dissen, Esq; Indiana District President Rev. Daniel May - Welcome & Greetings
Synod President Emeritus Rev. Robert Kuhn - Issues & Overtures - 2013
Rev. Dr. Timothy Rossow - Hot Button Synod Issues and the Local Parish
Rev. Peter Bender - Pastoral Care & Admission to the Lord's Supper
Mr. Scott Meyer, Esq - Religious Liberty Requires Constant Vigilance
Rev. Dr. Martin Noland - Missionals vs Confessionals & Other Issues at the 2013 LCMS Convention
Rev. Dr. Richard Nuffer - SMP: Aerobatic Acronym
Panel Discussion
LCA Annual Business Meeting (Paid Members Only)

The conference will be held at Don Hall's Guest House. The rates are **\$89** + taxes for a single; **\$99** + taxes for 2-4 per room. When making your reservation, mention that you are attending **THE LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, CODE: GROUP #1013**. To be guaranteed a room, reservations must be made by December 15, 2012. There is free airport shuttle service from the airport to Don Hall's. At the time of check-in, breakfast and dinner coupons (free breakfast and free dinner) will be given for each room (maximum two of each per room). A free lunch will be served in the meeting room. **Registration for the free lunch MUST BE POSTMARKED by December 15, 2012.** You must make your own Guest House reservation.

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Seminary students and personnel will have the registration fee waived, but to receive **lunch for \$5, registration must be post-marked by 12/15/2012.**
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Make check payable to **LUTHERAN CONCERNS ASSOCIATION**. Please detach this registration form & send to Lutheran Concerns Association • 1320 Hartford Avenue • Saint Paul, MN 55116-1623

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Faithful Lutheran individuals who are members of LCMS congregations are invited to submit articles of approximately 500 words for consideration. Inquiries are welcome. Manuscripts will be edited. Please send to: Mr. Walter Dissen
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