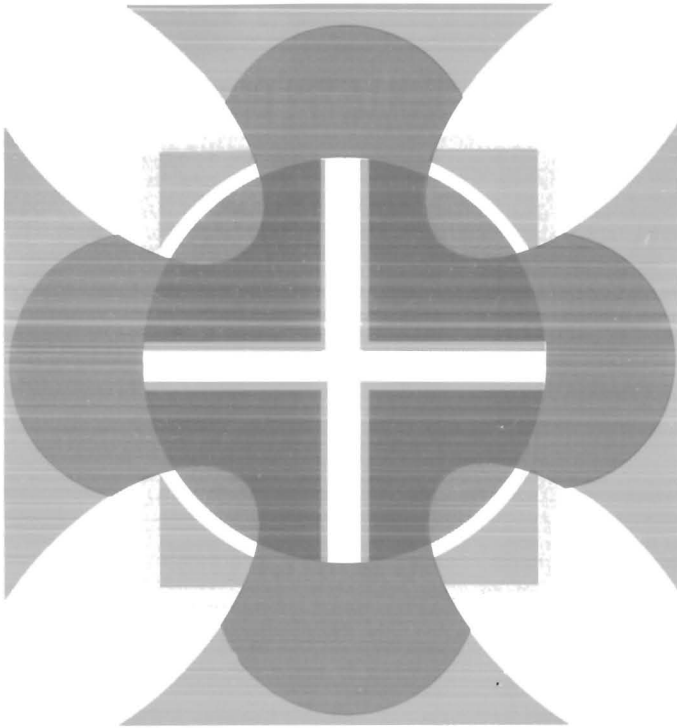


CTM



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Editorial

With this issue this journal begins a new phase in its 42-year history of theological service. Our format is altered slightly, and we launch a new schedule of appearances, for in the future we will appear five times a year. We are retaining for our name the initials that have become synonymous with us. We will always be the “CTM.” Our subscribers will continue to receive the equivalent of a 400-page book of contemporary theological thought each year for their subscription money. The homiletics section will receive a greater proportionate emphasis, but we do not anticipate any serious reduction in the amount of good theological material.

With genuine reluctance we devote the first article to the question of the ordination of women. We are reluctant because the issue has already been exercised beyond its own intrinsic merit. But it will not die, at least within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and perhaps it should not die until it is honestly resolved. Two-thirds of American Lutherans have given serious thought to the question of the ordination of women and have answered that it is not, in their judgment, contrary to the teaching of Scripture. The American Lutheran Church has addressed that question to itself twice and has retained the original answer. The majority of the delegates to the Milwaukee convention of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod voted that the ordination of women was contrary to Scripture. The fact that they voted on this matter states that it is not a doctrinal matter with them, for their constitution prohibits their voting on doctrinal matters. Evidently it is nevertheless a matter of serious concern for some of them.

We believe that Dr. Reumann’s study is the most balanced and exhaustive study that we have seen on this particular problem. There is very little to be added to what he says.

The second article that we carry in this issue will not make bedtime reading for anyone. It is a carefully reasoned exploration of the Lutheran Confessions with respect to the doctrine of man contained therein. Dr. Lohff finds unexpected insights in the confessional materials and brings them to bear on contemporary understandings of man with relationship to the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith.

Indirectly, Dr. Lohff casts light on a question that has agitated some in the LCMS: “Has our doctrinal position changed?” To that question many of our leaders have been consistently replying, “No, the doctrinal position of the Synod has not changed.” They were correct. The doctrinal position of the Synod is that of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, and that foundation has not changed. What has changed is various theological interpretations of both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Dr. Lohff’s article illustrates that the confessions, like Scriptures themselves, need to be interpreted and applied to contemporary situations. If you define doctrine in the sense of theology, then of course Dr. Lohff’s article is an example of a changed doctrinal position. And while that definition is popular in the Synod, the closest that we come to an official defini-

tion of doctrine draws a sharp line between doctrine and theology. We have in mind the paper prepared by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations under the improbable title, "The History of the Meaning of the Question, 'What is a Doctrine?'" But all apart from its indirect contribution to an internal problem, Dr. Lohff's article will repay careful reading and will enrich the preaching and counseling lives of those who take the time to read it carefully.

Herbert T. Mayer

A Prayer for the New Year for Our Church and Synod

O God our Father, good beyond all that is good, fair beyond all that is fair, in whom is calmness and peace: Do Thou make up the dissensions that divide us from one another, and bring us back into a unity of love, which may bear some likeness to Thy sublime nature; grant that we may be spiritually one, as well in ourselves as in one another; through that peace of Thine that maketh all things peaceful, and through the grace, mercy, and compassion of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Prayer of St. Dionysius