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#### **Editor's Note**

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Concordia Publishing House. Since her founding, she has supported the church in a number of ways, most especially through the publication of materials used to proclaim God's word. The Editors now take this opportunity to thank Concordia Publishing House for her work, in general, and for supporting the publication of this issue in particular. May the Lord grant Concordia Publishing House increased blessing in service to him.

The Editors

## Taking the Pulse of Theology in the Missouri Synod: A Look at Publications from Concordia Publishing House

John T. Pless

Publishing houses owned and operated by church bodies reflect theological positions maintained by the body and, in turn, publishing houses are a factor in preserving, shaping, and modifying the doctrinal position of the denomination. Such is the case with Concordia Publishing House (hereafter CPH). Although The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) is often portrayed as having been doctrinally monolithic in the first hundred years of its existence, theological foment was present in the first part of the twentieth century<sup>1</sup>. It would intensify after World War II as theologians of the Synod stepped outside the ghetto to engage other Lutherans in the United States and especially theologians in Germany in the Bad Boll Conferences of 1948 and 1949. The change would accelerate in the next two decades and come to a head in the crisis that led to the formation of Concordia Seminary in Exile (Seminex) in 1974. In the years after Seminex, the Missouri Synod had to reconfigure itself. This reconfiguration might still be said to be in process. How are these changes reflected in the publications of CPH?

This essay makes no claims to comprehensiveness, nor is it a scientific investigation. Some significant authors and books are not included. The essay will not examine curricular material for Sunday schools, catechetical instruction, or vacation Bible school. Instead, the focus will be on theological publications whose primary but not exclusive audience would be clergy or seminary students preparing for the pastoral ministry.

We begin in 1950 with the publication of *From Luther to Kierkegaard* by a young professor, Jaroslav Pelikan (1923–2006) who earned his doctorate with Wilhelm Pauck at the University of Chicago in 1946.<sup>2</sup> Pelikan was critical of Lutheran Orthodoxy, which he judged as a return to Scholasticism with its Aristotelian categories. While he did not directly cite Franz Pieper, it is hard

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Eric W. Gritsch, “The Missouri Way” in *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 194–199.

<sup>2</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *From Luther to Kierkegaard: A Study in the History of Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950). For an overview of Pelikan’s life and work, see Matthew Becker, “Jaroslav Pelikan” in *A Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, ed. Timothy Wengert (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 584–585.

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to imagine that Pelikan did not have him in mind. The reception of this early work of Pelikan would be mixed in the Missouri Synod, but it was clear that a rising generation of young scholars were seeking to orient the Synod in a new direction.<sup>3</sup> Pelikan's influence would continue through CPH, as he was one of the editors of the American Edition of Luther's Works, a project undertaken jointly with Fortress Press, the publishing arm of the Lutheran Church in America.

A contemporary of Pelikan, Martin E. Marty published *The Hidden Discipline: A Commentary on the Christian Life of Forgiveness in the Light of Luther's Large Catechism* (1962). At the time of its writing, Marty, pastor of the Lutheran Church of the Holy Spirit in Elk Grove Village, Illinois, was only 34 years old but had already been marked by *Life* magazine as one of eight clergymen in what the magazine called the "Take over generation."<sup>4</sup> *The Hidden Discipline* enjoyed wide use as a textbook for theology classes at the Concordia Colleges and Valparaiso University in the 1960s and 1970s.

Lutherans would celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Reformation in 1967. Several significant publications were printed by CPH in conjunction with this jubilee. Three in particular are worthy of note: *The Church of the Lutheran Reformation: A Historical Survey of Lutheranism* by Conrad Bergendoff; *Accents in Luther's Theology Essays in Commemoration of the 450th Anniversary of the*

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<sup>3</sup> Both Pauck and Hermann Sasse studied under Karl Holl, a leading figure in the Luther Renaissance. Pelikan admits his reliance on Holl in *From Luther to Kierkegaard*. Here also see Pelikan's "Introduction" in Wilhelm Pauck, *From Luther to Tillich: The Reformers and Their Heirs* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1984), xv–xxiii, as well as 139–151 (the chapter on Karl Holl). In an essay from 1951, "Confession (Confessionalism) and Theology in the Missouri Synod," Sasse praises Pelikan for demonstrating the distinction between Luther's theology and that of Lutheran scholasticism: "Franz Pieper, the great systematician of the Missouri Synod, could have known this if he had taken cognizance of the results of historical research. But he was so completely imprisoned in the systems of Orthodoxy, that he disregarded history. The Missouri Synod of today is beginning to understand Orthodoxy historically. Of this the first publication of the young systematician, Prof. Jaroslav Pelikan in St. Louis, *From Luther to Kierkegaard* (St. Louis, Concordia, 1950) bears a testimony which is surprising as it is gratifying"—*Scripture and the Church: Selected Essays of Hermann Sasse*, ed. Jeffrey Kloha and Ronald Fuerhahn (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Monograph Series, 1995), 217. However, just a few years later, Sasse is highly critical of Pelikan's neglect of Luther's understanding of Scripture's authority from the standpoint of inspiration. In his 1960 review of Pelikan's *Luther the Expositor: Introduction to the Reformer's Exegetical Writings* (a companion volume to the American Edition of Luther's Works), Sasse writes, "Pelikan tries to find the right balance between the Word of God as deed, as oral Word and as written Word, but he does not do justice to the written Word. Inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, the unquestioned basis of Luther's view of the Bible, which he shares with the Catholic church of all ages, are, as far as I can see, not even mentioned"—"Review of Luther's Works, Vols 2, 9" in *The Journal Articles of Hermann Sasse*, ed. Matthew Harrison, Bror Erickson, and Joel Brondos (Irvine: New Reformation Publications, 2016), 571. From that point on, nearly all of Sasse's references to Pelikan are critical of his position.

<sup>4</sup> Cited on the back cover of *The Hidden Discipline*.

*Reformation*, edited by Heino Kadai; and *Luther for an Ecumenical Age*, edited by Carl S. Meyer.

Conrad Bergendoff (1897–1997) was a Lutheran church historian out of the tradition of the Augustana Synod. His ecumenical passions were deeply shaped by the Swedish archbishop Nathan Söderblom (1866–1931).<sup>5</sup> Bergendoff earned a doctorate in church history from the University of Chicago and was a major player in the theological reorientation of Augustana Seminary in Rockland, Illinois, in the years before World War II.<sup>6</sup> By the time of the formation of the Lutheran Church in America in 1962, Bergendoff had emerged as a leading spokesman for an inclusive American Lutheranism with an “evangelical-catholic” orientation. His widely circulated book *The Church of the Lutheran Reformation* is representative of this perspective.<sup>7</sup>

The second publication, *Accents in Luther’s Theology*, edited by Concordia Theological Seminary (Springfield) church history professor Heino Kadai, was planned and executed by the Synod’s Reformation Anniversary Committee, chaired by Lewis Spitz Sr. The volume contains essays by John Tietjen, Hermann Sasse, Ernest Koenker, Jaroslav Pelikan, George Hoyer, and Martin Marty, as well as Kadai himself. Overall, the book expressed the thought that the riches of Reformation theology might serve as a resource for church renewal as “God’s gracious provision for man’s deepest needs, both temporal and eternal” without “merely dwelling” on past blessings nor venerating the man Luther.<sup>8</sup> In keeping with the pan-Lutheran theme of the 1967 celebration in North America, “Life-New Life,” the volume sought to correlate Reformation teachings with contemporary challenges.

The third book, *Luther for an Ecumenical Age*, was made possible by a grant from Lutheran Brotherhood in recognition of both the 125th anniversary of Concordia Seminary and the 450th anniversary of the Reformation. Its editor, Carl S. Meyer, was a senior church historian at the St. Louis seminary. The volume contains essays from both LCMS and non-Lutheran scholars: Lewis Spitz, Gordon Rupp, Carl S. Meyer, Harold Grimm, Ernest Schwiebert, Heinz Bluhm, Norman Nagel, Jaroslav Pelikan, Robert Bertram, Arthur Carl Piepkorn, James Atkinson, and

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<sup>5</sup> For more on Söderblom, see Jonas Jonson, *Nathan Söderblom: Called to Serve*, trans. Norman A Hjelm (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

<sup>6</sup> Here see Maria Erling and Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2008), 304–305, 332–333.

<sup>7</sup> Here see Bergendoff’s chapter on “Lutheran Unity” in Edward C. Fendt, ed., *What Lutherans Are Thinking* (Chicago: Wartburg Press, 1947), 368–390. Published under the auspices of the Conference of Lutheran Professors of Theology, this volume included essays by LCMS professors J. T. Mueller, W. H. T. Dau, William Arndt, and Theodore Graebner.

<sup>8</sup> Editor’s Introduction to *Accents in Luther’s Theology*, ed. Heino O. Kadai (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 8.

Franklin Littel. As the title suggests, the book holds out the challenge and potential of Luther's work for an ecumenical audience.

In the two decades between 1950 and 1970, CPH published several significant Reformation studies, including: Heinrich Bornkamm's *Luther's World of Thought*, translated by Martin Bertram (1958); Kurt Aland's *Martin Luther's 95 Theses: With the Pertinent Documents from the History of the Reformation* (1967); Heinz Bluhm's *Martin Luther, Creative Translator* (1965); and Ernest Schwiebert's *Luther and His Times: The Reformation from a New Perspective* (1950).

After World War II, LCMS theologians had increased contact with Lutheran theologians in Germany. CPH played a significant role in giving many of these theologians a voice to English-speaking audiences. Most significant, perhaps, would be the work of Werner Elert. While Elert's early book *An Outline of Christian Doctrine* was translated by Charles M. Jacobs of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and published by the United Lutheran Publication House already in 1927, and his *Christian Ethos* published by Fortress Press in 1957, Elert's work did not gain much traction in the predecessor bodies of the ELCA. For them, Elert appears to have been overshadowed by his Erlangen colleague Paul Althaus, the Lundensian theologians from Sweden (particularly Gustaf Aulen and Gustaf Wingren), or Karl Barth, Elert's enduring nemesis. Such, however, was not the case in the LCMS. Robert Schultz, a graduate of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis would earn a doctorate with Elert for his dissertation on law and gospel in nineteenth-century German theology. Elert was enthusiastically promoted by Schultz and other younger scholars such as Jaroslav Pelikan, who wrote the foreword for CPH's 1962 translation of his *Morphologie des Luthertums* (vol. 1), which appeared under the title *The Structure of Lutheranism*. It appears that Elert was attractive to this rising generation of LCMS scholars as he sought to maintain a substantial commitment to the Lutheran Confessions without invoking the apparatus of verbal inspiration or inerrancy.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to *The Structure of Lutheranism*, CPH published three other works by Elert. Monographs on *Last Things* (1974) and *The Lord's Supper Today* (1974) were extracted from his dogmatics. Norman Nagel translated Elert's classic work

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<sup>9</sup> For contrasting evaluations of Elert in the Missouri Synod, especially regarding the third use of the Law, compare Scott Murray, *Law, Life, and the Living God: The Third Use of the Law in Modern American Lutheranism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 92–95; and Lowell C. Green, "The 'Third Use of the Law' and Werner Elert's Position," *Logia* (Eastertide 2013), 27–33. For more on Elert's position, see Roland Ziegler, "What Happens When the Third Use of the Law is Rejected?" in *The Necessary Distinction: A Continuing Conversation on Law & Gospel*, ed. Albert Collver, James A. Nestingen, and John T. Pless (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), 312–319.

on closed communion, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (1966).

Many other titles would appear from across the Atlantic, including Edmund Schlink's *The Doctrine of Baptism*, translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman (1972). Schlink's earlier book of Lenten and Easter sermons, *The Victor Speaks*, translated by Paul F. Koehneke, had already been published by CPH in 1958.

The work of Schlink's Heidelberg colleague Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus*, was translated by Martin Bertram and published in 1968. Brunner, who served as doctoral advisor to American Lutheran theologians Robert Jenson and Eugene Brand, had far-reaching effects on liturgical developments embodied in the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (1978). Brunner drew on the work of Odo Casel, a Benedictine scholar known for his "mystery theology."<sup>10</sup>

Other significant German works would be translated and published by CPH in the 1960s and early 1970s. Georg F. Vicedom was a leading Lutheran missiologist from Neuendettelsau. His book *The Mission of God: An introduction to a Theology of Mission* (1965), translated by Gilbert Thiele and Dennis Hilgendorf under the general editorship of William J. Danker, in CPH's "The Witnessing Church Series," advanced the understanding the conceptuality of *missio Dei*. A study of the *damnamus* ("we condemn") by Hans-Werner Gensichen was translated by Herbert J. A. Bouman and published in 1967 under the title *We Condemn: How Luther and 16th Century Lutheranism Condemned False Doctrine*. Edward and Marie Schroeder translated *Evangelical; What Does it Really Mean?* (1968) by the Münster systematician Ernst Kinder. *Justification of the Ungodly* by Wilhelm Dantine was translated by Ruth and Eric Gritsch and published in 1968 with the assistance of the Lutheran World Federation. *The Mystery of God* by Wilhelm Stählin, a German Lutheran bishop associated with the high church *Berneuchener*, was published in 1964.<sup>11</sup> *The Theology of the Resurrection* by Erlangen theologian Walter Künneth and translated by James Leitch was published in 1965. During this period, CPH also published the work of a very conservative Norwegian theologian, Olav Valen-

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<sup>10</sup> Here see the critique of Oliver K. Olson, *Reclaiming the Lutheran Liturgical Heritage* (Minneapolis: Reclaim Resources, 2007), 70: "In plain language Brunner is saying that a unique event can be 'present.' He has accepted Casel's argument that the crucifixion never ends, and that Jesus is always dying . . . Brunner's illogical statement is embarrassing (and Concordia Publishing House should be embarrassed for printing it)."

<sup>11</sup> Stählin (1883–1975) was sympathetic to Andreas Osiander's understanding of justification as the indwelling of Christ and was, therefore, critical of the Formula of Concord's confession of the righteousness of Christ. Hermann Sasse expresses his concern regarding the influence of Stählin on numerous occasions. See, for example, his "Letter to Arthur Carl Piepkorn" (1956) in *The Lonely Way*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison, vol. 2, 1941–1976 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002), 237–245. For more on Sasse's response to Stählin, see John T. Pless, "Hermann Sasse and the Liturgical Movement," *Logia* (Eastertide 1998), 47–51.

Sendstad, *The Word Can Never Die: A Scriptural Critique of Theological Trends*, translated by Norman A. Madson Sr. and Ahlert H. Strand (1966). Valen-Sendstad was critical of neo-Lutheran theology especially in the areas of Scriptural authority and Christology, as well as what he identified as “crypto-Romanism” in the understanding of the sacraments, church, and ministry. *History of Theology* by Bengt Häggglund of the University of Lund, translated by Gene J. Lund, was published in 1968, giving English-speaking readers a concise yet comprehensive overview of the historical path of Christian doctrine from the early church through the early twentieth century.

Meanwhile, closer to home, CPH did not neglect to publish works of its own theologians, particularly those who were on the faculty of the St. Louis Seminary. Two figures especially emerge: Richard Caemmerer and Martin Franzmann.

It would be difficult to overstate the influence of Caemmerer (1904–1984) in the post-war years through 1974. In many ways, Caemmerer would be a transitional link between the earlier theology of the Missouri Synod, as represented by his own seminary teacher, Franz Pieper, and the generation of pastors and professors whose theological orientation he would significantly shape. Only rarely does CPH publish a *festschrift* to honor the accomplishments of a significant teacher. In 1966, under the editorship of Robert Bertram, such a volume was published to honor Caemmerer’s completion of twenty-five years of service on the faculty.<sup>12</sup> The list of contributors is impressive, as it includes former students who would have significant influence in American Lutheranism: Robert Schultz, F. Dean Lueking, Paul W. F. Harms, Kenneth F. Korby, Edward Schroeder, John H. Elliott, Martin Marty, Robert Hoferkamp, David Schuller, and Richard Koenig. These essays, taken individually or collectively, provide a window into the theological foment churning in the Synod at the time.

Caemmerer’s literary influence through CPH reached back to his contribution to *The Abiding Word* volumes of the late 1940s but it reached its apex in his *Preaching for the Church* in 1959. For several decades, *Preaching for the Church* would be the standard textbook in homiletics courses at both seminaries of the LCMS as well as in other theological schools. Caemmerer’s “goal, malady, means” method continues to shape the preaching of many LCMS pastors. Caemmerer published numerous sermons in the *Concordia Pulpit*, and in 1952 he co-authored a book of Lenten sermons with Jaroslav Pelikan under the title *The Cross for Every Day*. In addition to chapters in several books, Caemmerer authored short books on church leadership and mission: *The Church in the World* (1949, revised 1961),

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<sup>12</sup> *The Lively Function of the Gospel*, ed. Robert Bertram (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966).



*God's Great Plan for You* (1961), *Feeding and Leading* (1962), and *Christ Builds His Church* (1962). In 1969, he published a short "biblical theology" under the title *Earth with Heaven: An Essay in Sayings of Jesus*. Along with then-president of Concordia Seminary Alfred O. Fuerbringer, Caemmerer edited *Toward a More Excellent Ministry*, published in 1964 in commemoration of the 125th anniversary of the seminary. This collection of essays, mostly by faculty members, reflects the theological contours of the institution a decade prior to the formation of Seminex.

Martin Franzmann's contributions through CPH were in the areas of exegetical theology and devotional writings. As it is beyond the scope of this article to examine hymnals produced by CPH in this period, we will only mention his hymns in passing, although they are perhaps his most enduring legacy.<sup>13</sup> Franzmann, a product of the Wisconsin Synod, would in many ways represent something of a conservative figure who was moved to engage certain features of the historical-critical method but might be more properly thought as a "forerunner of the literary-critical movements of the 1980s–1990s."<sup>14</sup>

A leading voice in the Synod's discussion of both hermeneutical issues and ecumenical relations, Franzmann's CTCR document "Seven Theses on Reformation Hermeneutics" (1969) became the basis for a set of cassette tapes featuring lectures by Franzmann under the title *The Art of Exegesis*, released by CPH in 1972.<sup>15</sup> Earlier Franzmann had authored *The Word of the Lord Grows: A First Historical Introduction to the New Testament* and *Follow Me: Discipleship According to Saint Matthew*, both published in 1961. In 1968, his *Concordia Commentary: Romans* was published as part of the ill-fated "first" Concordia Commentary Series that collapsed

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<sup>13</sup> For a positive assessment of Franzmann's theological contributions, see Matthew E. Borrasso, *The Art of Exegesis: An Analysis of the Life and Work of Martin Franzmann* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2019). For a helpful biographical treatment of Franzmann and his hymns, see Richard Brinkley, *Thy Strong Word: The Enduring Legacy of Martin Franzmann* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993).

<sup>14</sup> An observation from a personal conversation with Dr. James Voelz on January 10, 2019. Voelz studied under Franzmann, Scharlemann, and Danker. His reaction to this section of the article was very helpful. Franzmann's approach to controversies brewing in the Synod in the 1960s might also be seen from his contribution (an essay of Matthew's use of the Immanuel prophecy of Isaiah 7:14) in the Commission on Theology and Church Relations 1969 *A Project in Biblical Hermeneutics*, edited by Richard Jungkuntz.

<sup>15</sup> The two required textbooks for this course were J. C. K. von Hofmann's *Interpreting the Bible*, trans. Christian Preus (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1959); and A. Berkeley Mickelson's *Interpreting the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963). J. C. K. von Hofmann (1810–1877) was a theologian at Erlangen. For more on his theology, see Matthew Becker, *The Self-Giving God and Salvation History: The Trinitarian Theology of Johannes von Hofmann* (New York: T & T Clark, 2004); and "Johann Christian Konrad von Hofmann" in Lowell C. Green, *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching and Practice* (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2010), 105–132. Mickelson taught at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and later at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He might best be characterized as a "progressive evangelical."

a few years later under the pressures of tensions related to the controversy over biblical interpretation. Although not a full-length commentary, Franzmann's *The Revelation to John: A Commentary* appeared in 1976, the year of Franzmann's death. Franzmann prepared the annotations for the 1971 *Concordia Bible with Notes*.

Although he was not ordained while teaching at Concordia Seminary, Franzmann regularly preached, and his sermons were literary gems, as is evidenced in *Ha! Ha! Among the Trumpets: Sermons* (1966). His devotional writings, *Pray for Joy* (1970) and *Alive with the Spirit* (1973), also achieved popularity. He co-authored a book with a F. Dean Lueking in 1966 entitled *Grace Under Pressure: The Way of Meekness in Ecumenical Relations*.

Other St. Louis faculty members would make notable contributions through CPH. Edgar Krentz was the author of a short book in 1966: *Biblical Studies Today*. It was the aim of this book to keep readers abreast of the most recent developments in biblical scholarship. It was an introduction and mild apologetic for the historical-critical method.<sup>16</sup> Another New Testament scholar from the faculty, Frederick Danker, who was already well known for his work with William Arndt on *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (published by the University of Chicago with funding from the Synod's Centennial Thank-offering through its Committee on Developing Scholarly Research), wrote *Creeds in the Bible* (1966) demonstrating how modern methods of biblical exegesis might assist in identifying creedal material in the New Testament. In 1960, CPH published Danker's *Multipurpose Tools for Bible Study*, a handbook providing students and pastors with a wealth of information regarding concordances, lexicons, grammars, and other resources, including commentaries. Among the recommended commentaries are those by historical-critical scholars such as Claus Westermann, Hermann Gunkel, Gerhard von Rad, Hans W. Wolff, Eduard Schweizer, Rudolf Bultmann, and Hans Conzelmann.

Martin H. Scharlemann came to the St. Louis faculty in 1950 and was among the first to introduce historical criticism to his students. His collection of essays published in 1960, *Toward Tomorrow*, demonstrate that Scharlemann was an engaging and creative theologian in his work with topics as diverse as race relations, the biblical view of sex, and Christian love and public policy, as well as an exegetical study of "the descent into hell." Scharlemann created a storm of controversy when he raised criticisms of the Synod's traditional understanding of biblical inerrancy

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<sup>16</sup> Less than a decade later in 1975, Krentz wrote *The Historical-Critical Method* for the Guides to Biblical Scholarship series published by Fortress Press. This latter monograph gives a more robust defense of the historical-critical method. By the time of its publication, Krentz was a New Testament professor at Concordia Seminary in Exile.

in a pastoral conference paper presented in 1959. He apologized for this disturbance at a 1962 convention in Cleveland and went on to publish *Proclaiming the Parables* (1963) and *Healing and Redemption* in 1965. The content of this book would largely parallel a central theme of the “Mission Affirmations” adopted by the Detroit convention the same year.

Church historian Carl S. Meyer and New Testament professor Herbert T. Mayer would edit *The Caring God: Perspectives on Providence* (1973). Containing essays by Meyer himself as well as Martin Scharlemann, Warren Rubel, Curtis Huber, Ralph Underwager, Richard Baeppler, David Schuller, and John Gienapp, this volume demonstrated an effort at interdisciplinary theology as the doctrine of providence was examined from the perspectives of sociology, psychology, the arts, and evolutionary biology. A few years earlier in 1964, CPH published *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, edited by Meyer. This volume examined the history of the Missouri Synod through 1960.

An enduring publication came from Robert Preus in the form of his two-volume *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism* (vol. 1: *A Study of Theological Prolegomena* in 1970; and vol. 2: *God and His Creation* in 1972). These volumes provided a picture of the theologians of Lutheran Orthodoxy that was both sympathetic and critical. Even those who did not see these theologians as champions to be emulated would recognize the importance of Preus’ work.<sup>17</sup> In many ways, this work would pave the way for a renewed and more appreciative reception of the seventeenth-century Lutheran theologians. It was also during this period that Ralph Bohmann’s *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (1968) was published.

From the 1960s, two books stand out as indicative of what many had hoped would be Missouri’s move into an ecumenically bright future. Former missionary to Japan and pastor at Grace Lutheran Church in River Forest at the time, F. Dean Lueking wrote *Mission in the Making* (1964), offering an interpretation of the Synod’s missionary activity from 1846–1963. Lueking argued that this history may be understood as a conflict between what he called an “evangelical confessionalism” and a “scholastic confessionalism.” Clearly, Lueking favored “evangelical confessionalism” and hoped that under the leadership of Martin L. Kretzmann it would finally win the day. The adoption of the “Mission Affirmations,” of which Kretzmann was the architect at the 1965 convention in Detroit, seemed to vindicate (at least temporarily) Lueking’s hope.

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<sup>17</sup> Wolfhart Pannenberg was certainly no friend of seventeenth-century Lutheran Orthodoxy, but in his own *Systematic Theology*, he consistently uses Preus to check his reading of these theologians.

The second book from this period was *Which Way to Lutheran Unity? A History of Efforts to Unite the Lutherans of America* (1966) by John H. Tietjen.<sup>18</sup> This book was the result of Tietjen's doctoral work at Union Theological Seminary. At the time of the book's publication, he was the executive director of the Division of Public Relations of the Lutheran Council in the United States (LCUSA). He would be elected as president of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis in 1969. After surveying the tangled paths of Lutheran denominations in North America and the formation of LCUSA, Tietjen believed that the time was ripe for pulpit and altar fellowship between the LCMS, the ALC, and the LCA and advocated for it in the concluding chapter of his book.

Just a few months after Tietjen's election as the president of the Concordia Seminary, J. A. O. Preus defeated incumbent Oliver Harms in his bid for the presidency of the Synod at the 1969 Denver convention. Preus' election would be crucial to the investigation of the faculty of the seminary and ultimately to the events that led to the so-called "walkout" in February of 1974 and the formation of Seminex.

This shift would be reflected in the books published by CPH. In 1968, the first volumes of the old Concordia Commentary series appeared. The Romans commentary was by the well-respected Martin Franzmann and the commentary on Jeremiah and Lamentations by the Australian member of the St. Louis faculty, Norman Habel. Habel was already known for a controversial essay on Genesis.<sup>19</sup> Ralph D. Gehrke, who would eventually leave the faculty of Concordia Teachers' College in River Forest under charges that he denied the historicity of certain Old Testament events, was the author of the commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel. Two additional volumes appeared in 1970. The Acts volume was by Robert Smith, a New Testament professor at Concordia Seminary. The volume on 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, and Philemon was co-authored by Victor J. Bartling, a St. Louis professor, and Armin Moellering, a parish pastor with a PhD in classics in New Jersey. The commentaries by Franzmann and Bartling/Moellering reflected traditional, conservative Lutheran readings of the text, while those of Habel and Smith showed signs of appreciation for the newer approaches in biblical exegesis. Additional volumes were projected but never published. One such volume was by Fred Danker.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Tietjen notes that Oliver Harms sought to block the publication of this book. See John H. Tietjen, *Memoirs in Exile: Confessional Hope and Institutional Conflict* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 7.

<sup>19</sup> Habel's *The Form and Meaning of the Fall Narrative: A Detailed Analysis of Genesis 3* was published by the Concordia Seminary Print Shop in 1965.

<sup>20</sup> He would found another CPH (Clayton Publishing House) to publish his commentary on Luke in 1972.

The publication of Milton Rudnick's *Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod* (1966) was significant, as Rudnick demonstrated that the Synod's doctrine of biblical inerrancy was not shaped by American fundamentalism as some had supposed but by the Lutheran theologians of the seventeenth century. Rudnick noted that the Missouri Synod may have cheered for the fundamentalists in the debates of the early twentieth century but that the Synod's conviction regarding biblical authority did not derive from this source.<sup>21</sup>

It was under the presidency of J. A. O. Preus that CPH began to address the historical-critical approach to Scripture directly. This can be seen in three short booklets: *It is Written* (1971) by Preus, *The Apostolic Scriptures* (1971) by David Scaer, and *Form Criticism Reexamined* by Walter A. Maier II. Both Scaer and Maier were members of the faculty at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, where Preus had served as president prior to his election as Synod president. With the publication of these short books, faculty members from Concordia Theological Seminary begin to emerge in the CPH catalog.

In 1977, CPH published an English translation of German scholar Gerhard Maier's *The End of the Historical Critical Method*, translated by Rudolph Norden and Edwin Leverenz with a preface by Eugene Klug from Concordia Theological Seminary, now in Fort Wayne.

Recognizing the need for an introduction to the Old Testament that reflected a conservative approach to questions of dating, authorship, and historical veracity, CPH published Horace Hummel's *The Word Becoming Flesh: An Introduction to the Origin, Purpose, and Meaning of the Old Testament*. Hummel was an Old Testament professor at the St. Louis seminary who had taught, among other places, at Wartburg Seminary and Valparaiso University. An early proponent of the historical-critical method, Hummel came to renounce it, although his typological approach to the Old Testament remained a matter of controversy for some.

In addition to the matter of biblical interpretation, questions of ecumenical relations and the issue of women's ordination loomed large in the controversies of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Two short pamphlets addressed these issues. Noted confessional Lutheran scholar from Australia Henry P. Hamann was the author of *Unity and Fellowship and Ecumenicity* (1973). An older work by Peter Brunner, *The Ministry and the Ministry of Women* from 1959, was translated and published in 1971, just a year after the American Lutheran Church made the decision to ordain

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<sup>21</sup> The review of this book by Richard Caemmerer in "Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod," *Lutheran Forum* 1, no. 6 (June 1967), 26–28, is noteworthy. Caemmerer praises Rudnick for his careful research and scholarship, yet he wonders if there might be more to the story to be investigated, namely whether faith is understood fundamentally as trust in the living God or assent to correct propositions.

women. In the 1960s and early '70s, many within the Synod were urging membership in the Lutheran World Federation. David Scaer's 1971 monograph *The Lutheran World Federation* goes against this current.

In the wake of the synodical controversy, CPH would publish many volumes reflecting the Synod's commitment to the Holy Scriptures. These included both the *Concordia Self-Study Bible* and, more recently, the *Lutheran Study Bible* (2009) and the two-volume *Lutheran Bible Companion* (2014). Demonstrating that confessional Lutheran theology might avoid both liberalism and fundamentalism, *What Does This Mean? Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Post-Modern World* (1995) by James W. Voelz provided the Synod with a sophisticated textbook for hermeneutics. The new Concordia Commentary series would commence in 1996 with the promise that this series "fully affirms the divine inspiration, inerrancy, and authority of Scripture as it emphasizes 'that which promotes Christ' in each pericope."<sup>22</sup>

With a renewed emphasis on scriptural authority came a more vigorous embrace of the Lutheran Confessions. Swedish scholar Holsten Fagerberg's *A New Look at the Lutheran Confessions: 1529–1537* was translated by Gene Lund and was published in 1972. Although Fagerberg does not cover the Formula of Concord, he does affirm the third use of the Law, which was denied by some on the St. Louis faculty at the time. In addition to numerous popular treatments of the Lutheran Confessions, CPH undertook three major scholarly projects for the four-hundredth anniversary of the Formula of Concord (1977). *Formulators of the Formula of Concord: Four Architects of Lutheran Unity* by Valparaiso University professor Theodore Jungkuntz told the stories of Jakob Andreae, Martin Chemnitz, David Chytraeus, and Nikolaus Selnecker. With a back cover description "Six sermons to restore Lutheran unity," Robert Kolb's *Andreae and the Formula of Concord: Six Sermons on the Way to Lutheran Unity* provided historical background to the controversies leading up to the Formula, as well as Kolb's translation of the sermons. Robert Preus and Wilbert Rosin were co-editors of *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*. This volume contains a historical introduction by Robert Kolb and chapters on each article of the Formula by numerous scholars: Eugene Klug, Henry Hamann, Kurt Marquart, Richard Klann, George Fry, Lowell Green, David Scaer, Bjarne Teigen, as well as the editors. Although it was published posthumously, two volumes of Robert Preus' collected essays in *Doctrine is Life* (2006), edited by Klemet Preus, contain a wealth of material on scriptural authority, the nature of doctrine, justification by faith, and confessional subscription reflecting the battles of the theological turbulent 1960s and '70s.

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<sup>22</sup> From the inside panel of the dustcover.

In the 1970s through the early '90s, many in the Missouri Synod appeared to be enamored with the seeming success of American evangelicalism and the Church Growth Movement. This flirtation was reflected in several books. Chief among them was Oscar Feucht's *Everyone a Minister* (1974).<sup>23</sup> David Luecke's provocative, *Evangelical Style and Lutheran Substance: Facing America's Mission Challenge* (1988) created no small amount of controversy.<sup>24</sup> A book that suggested that good works and obedience and not faith and eternal life was the aim of the Gospel, *The Goal of the Gospel: God's Purpose in Saving You* (1992) by Philip Bickel and Robert Nordlie, brought sharp reaction and a challenge to its doctrinal review status, resulting in its withdrawal from publication.<sup>25</sup>

Notable titles indicating an articulate and solidly Lutheran approach to evangelism and mission include *Speaking the Gospel Today: A Theology for Evangelism* (1984) by Robert Kolb; *Mission from the Cross: The Lutheran Theology of Mission* (2009) by Klaus Detlev Schulz; *Lutheran and World Mission: A Historical and Systematic Study* by Ingemar Öberg, translated by Dean Apel; and *The Fire and the Staff: Lutheran Theology in Practice* by Klemet Preus.

Recognizing the need to have classical texts in print for use in the Synod, CPH initiated the Concordia Heritage Series to provide reprints of dozens of theological classics in the 1970s and '80s. An extension to the American Edition of Luther's Works was initiated, as was the ambitious project of publishing the works of C. F. W. Walther, Martin Chemnitz, and Johann Gerhard. J. A. O Preus' biography of Chemnitz, *The Second Martin: The Life and Theology of Martin Chemnitz* (1994) would give English-speaking readers insight into his contributions to emerging Lutheran theology. Likewise, *Lives and Writings of the Great Fathers of the Lutheran Church*, edited by Timothy Schmeling, would provide access to the stories of Philip Nicolai, Leonhard Hutter, Conrad Dietrich, Paul Gerhardt, and many others often overlooked from the seventeenth century.

CPH would take the lead in publishing books by or about Wilhelm Loehe, including Loehe's pastoral theology, *The Pastor* (2015), translated by Wolf Knappe and Charles Schaum; a biography of Loehe by Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe: 1808–1872* (2010), translated by Wolf Knappe; and a study of Loehe's ecclesiology, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Loehe* (2001) by David Ratke.

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<sup>23</sup> See the analysis of the roots of Feucht's book by Brent Kuhlman, "Oscar Feucht's *Everyone a Minister: Pietismus Redivivus*," *Logia* 8, no. 4 (Reformation 1999), 31–36.

<sup>24</sup> See, for example, John T. Pless, "The Evangelization of Missouri," *Lutheran Forum* 23, vol. 2 (May 1989), 30–31.

<sup>25</sup> See the review article by Harold Senkbeil, "A Famine in Lutheranism," *Logia* (Epiphany 1993), 41–42.

A very significant aspect of CPH's publication program in recent years has been making the works of Hermann Sasse available to a new generation. Sasse had deep connections with the Missouri Synod reaching back to the post-war years.<sup>26</sup> In a step to provide more of Sasse's work for the English-speaking world, Norman E. Nagel, dean of the chapel at Valparaiso University, translated numerous essays organized in three short volumes: *We Confess Jesus Christ* (1984), *We Confess the Sacraments* (1985), and *We Confess the Church* (1986). Two additional Sasse translation projects were spearheaded by Matthew C. Harrison: *The Lonely Way* (vol. 1 in 2001 and vol. 2 in 2002) and *Letters to Lutheran Pastors* (vol. 1 in 2013, vol. 2 in 2014, and vol. 3 in 2015). The papers from a 1996 theological symposium marking the hundredth anniversary of Sasse's birth, hosted by Concordia Lutheran Theological Seminary in St. Catharines, Ontario, were published under the editorship of John Stephenson and Thomas Winger as *Hermann Sasse: A Man for our Times?* This volume contained essays by Ronald Feuerhahn, Lowell Green, John Wilch, John Kleinig, Thomas Hardt, Kurt Marquart, Gottfried Martens, Norman Nagel, and Edwin Lehman, as well as the editors.

Long considered the gold standard of works on Luther's catechisms, the five-volume commentary by Albrecht Peters (1924–1987) was translated by Holger Sonntag, Daniel Thies, and Thomas Trapp. Volume 1 on the Ten Commandments appeared in 2009, volume 2 on the Creed in 2011, volume 3 on the Lord's Prayer in 2011, volume 4 on Baptism and the Lord's Supper in 2012, and volume 5 on Confession and the Christian Life in 2013. This set is indispensable for serious scholarly work on Luther's catechisms.

The five-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation was duly observed by CPH. Two books stand out. First, there is the finely crafted volume by Cameron MacKenzie, *The Reformation* (2017), a telling of the Reformation story augmented with artwork from the period. Second, *Defending Luther's Reformation: Its Ongoing Significance in the Face of Contemporary Challenges* (2017), edited by John A. Maxfield, features essays by several scholars on aspects of Luther's teaching that are often deemed as problematic or have come to be challenged in the church and/or academy. For example, Cameron MacKenzie defends Luther's understanding of biblical authority while Jonathan Mumme takes on the challenge posed by the New Perspective on Paul.

In the last two decades, CPH has published dozens of books that seek to explicate, defend, and apply Lutheran doctrine to contemporary issues in both the church and the world. Here we will only mention one project, the two-volume

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<sup>26</sup> For more on Sasse and his relationship to world Lutheranism in general and the LCMS in particular, see John T. Pless, "Hermann Sasse (1895–1976)" in *Twentieth-Century Lutheran Theologians*, ed. Mark C. Mattes (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 155–177.



*Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology* (2017), edited by Samuel Nafzger. Over three decades in the making, these volumes represent the efforts of more than sixty scholars from churches that are part of the International Lutheran Council. *Confessing the Gospel* was not intended as a replacement for Franz Pieper's classic *Christian Dogmatics*. Instead, it was envisioned as building on it and engaging new issues that have emerged more recently.<sup>27</sup>

We have not engaged the myriad of popular theological books for the laity, pastoral and preaching resources, devotional aids, curricular and catechetical offerings, or liturgical materials from CPH. Each of these items would merit a separate article. However, in the publications that we have examined, we have observed both continuity and discontinuity, reflecting the contours of the theological life of the Synod itself. There are periods in this history especially in the 1960s and '70s that reflect a liminal zone where doctrinal cross-currents overlap. Within the last two decades, CPH has strengthened its profile as a publisher of confessional Lutheran theology not only for the Missouri Synod but for others both in world Lutheranism and beyond who seek reliable and responsible presentations of the truth that we believe, teach, and confess.

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<sup>27</sup> For on *Confessing the Gospel*, see the reviews by Mark C. Mattes, "A Review of *Confessing the Gospel in the Context of Contemporary Theology*," *Concordia Journal* 44, no. 2 (Spring 2018), 78-91; and John T. Pless, "Review of *Confessing the Gospel*," last modified March 11, 2018, <https://www.lutheranforum.com/blog/review-of-confessing-the-gospel>.