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Consensus at Twenty Five

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Consensus At Twenty Five

Twenty five years ago – January 1975 – this journal was born.

The twenty five years of its publication fall into two distinct periods, each with its own set of purposes for the journal. During the first period, 1975 to 1985, *Consensus* was inaugurated and published by the Division of Theology of the Lutheran Council in Canada, with the purpose of discovering and reporting theological consensus among the several Lutheran church bodies in Canada existent at that time. The second period, from 1986 to the present, began with the dissolution of the Division of Theology as a result of the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the consequent orphaning of *Consensus*, and its adoption by the two seminaries of that Church, namely, Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, and Waterloo Lutheran Seminary in Waterloo, Ontario. Its purpose now was to be a theological journal with a Lutheran focus but ecumenically aware of the broad consensus achieved in theological disciplines across denominational lines.

In this Number we celebrate the founding of *Consensus*. Norman J. Threinen, Professor of Church History at Concordia Lutheran Seminary, Edmonton, was the founding editor. *Consensus* is his brain-child, and he edited it for the first period of its life, 1975 to 1985. He recalls that founding in the following article.

To appreciate his vision of the purpose of *Consensus*, it is helpful to bring to mind the divided state of Lutheranism in Canada earlier in this century. Until the second half of the twentieth century Canadian Lutheran church bodies were ecclesiastical units of American parent bodies, each bearing the stamp of distinct ethnic, liturgical, and devotional traditions and theological emphases, yet each committed to faithfulness to the historic Lutheran "Confessions". After the Second World War, and encouraged by an ecumenical climate, increasing efforts were made to

realize "Lutheran unity" among these bodies and to make commitments to this unity through merger. (The following chart summarizes these movements.) Deliberate tools for these purposes were the Lutheran Council in Canada and its Division of Theological Studies (later, Division of Theology), and the Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships – cooperative organisms formed by the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC), the Lutheran Church in America–Canada Section (LCA-CS), and the Lutheran Church-Canada (LC-C).

<u>USA-based Church</u>	<u>Canadian Unit</u>	<u>Canadian Autonomous Church</u>	<u>Merged Church</u>
American Luth. Church (ALC)	Canada District (1960)	Ev. Luth.Ch. of Canada (ELCC) 1967	} Evang. Luth. Ch. In Canada (ELCIC) 1986
Luth.Ch. in America (LCA)	LCA-Canada Section (LCA-CS) 1963		
Luth. Church-Missouri Synod (LCMS)	Three Districts formed a Federation 1958	Luth. Ch.-Canada (LC-C) 1988	

The Rev. Norman J. Threinen was called in 1971 to take up the work of Executive Secretary of the Division of Theological Studies of the Lutheran Council in Canada with staff responsibility for the Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relationships. *Consensus* was born of his concern to help Lutherans in Canada discover their theological unity in the midst of their ethnic, cultural, and ecclesiastical diversity. The name, *Consensus*, was apt.

In the next Number we will recall the second period of publication.

Eduard R. Riegert
Managing Editor