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## Living Out Confessional Lutheranism: Past Experiences and Current Questions

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## **Living Out Confessional Lutheranism: Past Experiences and Current Questions**

### **WEBINAR II**

**Gordon A. Jensen and Stephen Larson\***

#### *Introduction by Stephen Larson*

It is a delight to introduce again Gordon Jensen. Gordon was presenting at the first webinar, and he is giving Part Two of his paper now at this webinar.

Gordon is presently the William Hordern Professor of Theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Saskatoon, for a few more weeks. He's been teaching in Saskatoon for 21 years, and his retirement date of January 1 is closer now than when you first began teaching in Saskatoon.

Gordon is a native of Alberta, born in Camrose and raised in the nearby village of Edburg. He's a graduate of the University of Alberta, where I first met him back in my Campus Ministry days there. He also graduated from Lutheran Theological Seminary, and then received his Ph.D. from the University of St. Michael's College in Toronto. Just before we began, I learned that Gordon has the record for the fastest-earned Ph.D. in St. Michael's College history, in four years instead of the usual seven or eight.

He has served congregations in Saskatchewan and Alberta and has taught and given lectures now on five continents. He has published extensive articles in the area of Luther Studies and Canadian Lutheran history. Gordon is a distinguished historian and has been a gift from the Lutheran Church in Canada to the international community. He has served on a committee of the Lutheran World Federation, helping them to craft their mission statement.

Gordon has participated in the United Church of Canada–Anglican Church of Canada dialogues for 17 years. His last book was entitled *The Wittenberg Concord: Creating Space for Dialogue*, published in 2018 by Fortress Press. His forthcoming book is called *Experiencing Gospel: Luther's 1534 Bible Project*, which is coming out next fall. Gordon is married to Brenda. They have two children and one granddaughter.

His presentation for this webinar is entitled "For the Sake of the Gospel: Living Out Confessional Lutheranism: Past Experiences and Current Questions."

Gordon, it is a privilege and honor to welcome you back to the screen for this presentation.

### **Past Experiences and Current Questions**

St. Paul once stated that everything he did was "for the sake of the Gospel, that I might share in its blessings" (1 Cor. 9:23). Martin Luther claimed that his study of Greek and Hebrew and the translation of the Bible was done "for the sake of the gospel."<sup>1</sup> In contemporary Lutheran circles, Allen Jorgenson states that baptism is "the primary means by which God calls and uses all for the sake of the gospel,"<sup>2</sup> while others have declared that "the church exists for the sake of the gospel."<sup>3</sup> Thus, we are baptized into the church, the body of Christ, and this church exists for others, for the sake of the gospel. The gospel is what is experienced when Christ breathes life into a person, a community, and creation, and it is

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\* See the Foreword of this issue of *Consensus* for biographical information.

made possible through the death and resurrection of Christ.<sup>4</sup> This gospel gives the churches their focus for all they do and speak. The Lutheran churches in Canada working together in the middle of the twentieth century reflected this commitment, and the future before us calls us to this same commitment to the gospel, so that, as Paul reminded us, “we might share in its blessings.”

The 1940s to the 1970s was a time of optimism for those hoping to form one Canadian Lutheran Church. Conferences were held to discuss theological foundations and possibilities for increased cooperation. Lutheran mergers were reducing the number of Lutheran church bodies in North America from the fifty-eight that were organized between 1840 and 1875<sup>5</sup> to only three major bodies<sup>6</sup> by the late 1980s. Thus, one Canadian Lutheran church was a very real possibility.

The 1954 *Today—Tomorrow* conference was an important milestone along the way to closer cooperation among Lutherans, and it was quickly followed up by a series of exploratory free conferences in subsequent years. Sixteen years later, the dream got a boost when, in December of 1970, delegates from the Lutheran Church in America–Canada Section (LCA-CS), the recently formed Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada (ELCC), and the Canada Districts of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod overwhelmingly voted to proceed toward an altar and pulpit fellowship agreement.<sup>7</sup> This agreement would allow all communing members of the participating Lutheran bodies to receive communion at each other’s altars, and for their pastors to preach from each other’s pulpits. The dream expressed in 1954 at the *Today—Tomorrow* conference was on the verge of reality with the *Affirmation and Appeal*.

Yet, one unified Canadian Lutheran Church did not come to pass. By the late 1970s, major portions of the dream had died. Rather than doing an autopsy on a failed dream, however, let’s focus on what made this dream a possibility for the participants of the 1954 and 1970 conferences, with their powerful witnesses to “the good news of God’s promises and their fulfillment in Christ.”<sup>8</sup> We will then consider what our dreams might be, for the sake of the gospel, for the rest of the twenty-first century. What might we learn from the *Today—Tomorrow* conference and the *Affirmation and Appeal*? To begin, let’s look again at these conferences and their documents.

### **The 1954 *Today—Tomorrow* Free Conference**

As Canadian Lutherans gathered for the 1954 *Today—Tomorrow* Conference, they were at a fork in the road. It was not clear where each path might lead. But they did know that, just as Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), unpacking their history and pointing to the future as they broke the bread, so too the Christ was accompanying them, unpacking the Scripture and the stories and the hopes of their churches into context.

Welcoming participants to “The Canada Lutheran ‘*Today—Tomorrow*’ (free) conference,” Dr. Mars Dale, President of the Canadian Lutheran Council, optimistically stated that “we have finally come to the place where we have begun to move as one, in Lutheranism, in Canada.”<sup>9</sup> His vision of a Canadian Lutheran Church was shaped by the “boom” that was being experienced in Canadian society—a time when a generation of “baby boomers” were born. The possibilities for both society and the church seemed limitless. Caught up in this spirit, Dale felt that a unique Canadian Lutheran Church was not far away.<sup>10</sup> Even though delegates from the Canadian Districts of the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod were not

*officially* present,<sup>11</sup> there were reasons for this optimism. The churches were already cooperating in the areas of “publicity, statistics, and welfare work,” and they were expressing a desire to work together in the areas of “missions, education, student work, and deaconess work.”<sup>12</sup>

The title, *Today—Tomorrow*, gave a clue to the path the Canadian Lutheran churches were looking to take. The word “yesterday” was missing.<sup>13</sup> Conrad Hoyer, the Executive Director of the Division of American Missions of the National Lutheran Council, explained the omission by stating, “we are not in yesterday, we are in today and facing tomorrow.”<sup>14</sup> Reflecting the developing church in the Book of Acts, the Canadian churches wanted to look ahead and “see visions” and “dream dreams” (Acts 2:17).

The Canadian Lutheran Council hosted the *Today—Tomorrow* conference. This council included most, but not all, Lutheran bodies in Canada, and it provided a “meeting place” for discussing further unity.<sup>15</sup> However, the impetus for the *Today—Tomorrow* conference came from “a conversation aboard a train between Regina and Saskatoon” in May of 1953.<sup>16</sup> Faced with a booming population in Canada, Lutherans needed to work together to capitalize on the opportunities before them.<sup>17</sup> Of course, some cooperative work was already being done. Let me give three examples. First, the Canadian Lutheran Commission for War Service was organized in 1940, during the early days of WWII, to support Lutheran chaplaincy in the military.<sup>18</sup> Second, their cooperative work carried over into refugee settlement, with the formation of Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) in 1946.<sup>19</sup> Third, cooperative work was already happening in campus ministry in Winnipeg.<sup>20</sup> The year before the *Today—Tomorrow* conference, talks were held to extend campus ministry cooperation to other educational centres in Canada.<sup>21</sup> By the late 1960s there were cooperative ministries at the University of British Columbia, the University of Alberta—Calgary campus, and the University of Saskatchewan.<sup>22</sup> In 1977, LC-C was granted permission to work together with the Lutheran Council in Canada in forming a joint Lutheran Campus Ministry,<sup>23</sup> even as the three-way merger talks in Canada were breaking down.

Thus, campus ministry, CLWR, and military chaplaincies led the way in inter-Lutheran cooperation—and they gave the *Today—Tomorrow* conference reason to both hope and expect that the dream of an autonomous Canadian Lutheran Church could be a reality. Efforts at cooperation thus continued for the next few decades.

Yet, there were some things from the conference that reveal how the church was in a different time and space in 1954 as compared to today. First, two speakers commented that there was a persistent sense of inferiority among Canadian Lutheran churches.<sup>24</sup> The reasons for this are manifold. For one, Canadian Lutherans have always been small in number, surrounded by the large Anglican and United Churches in Canada. In practice this meant, for example, that in some areas of Ontario after 1792 and prior to 1859, only Anglican priests could regularly register marriages. Lutheran clergy, when they could register marriages, still had to get special certificates to do so, unlike the Anglican priests.<sup>25</sup> Canadian Lutheranism was also dwarfed by the larger North American Lutheran church milieu—the mouse next to the elephant, so to speak. This sense of inferiority was intensified by the heavy financial dependency of the Canadian Lutheran churches upon their US counterparts. Canadian Lutherans felt that they did not have the financial and human resources to manage on their own. Thus, the Canadians had very little input into the programs and literature that these churches published.<sup>26</sup> They felt they were the “overlooked participants” in many areas of the

Lutheran church scene in North American. And yet, this sense of inferiority did not stop Canadian Lutherans from boldly moving toward a unified church in their own country.

Second, while there was a commitment, as George Evenson stated, to bring “the Gospel to all ... irrespective of ... racial, national, credal or class background,”<sup>27</sup> this envisioned diversity focussed primarily on western and central European refugees of the 1950s,<sup>28</sup> helping “the arriving immigrants in becoming rehabilitated in their new homes and in saving them for the Lutheran Church.”<sup>29</sup> This focus was understandable, following the devastating aftermath of the Second World War. Significantly, at that time there was no mention of working with Indigenous Peoples.

Things have changed. Today, we are engaged in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission calls to action, and the increasing number of refugees are now coming primarily from the Mid-East and Africa.<sup>30</sup> It is a strong reminder that the Canadian Lutheran churches, despite theological differences, are still called to care for the neighbour,<sup>31</sup> “for the sake of the gospel.”

Third, at the 1954 meeting, Earl Treusch proposed that a Canadian Lutheran church could become a “melting pot.” While long the goal for integrating immigrants in the USA,<sup>32</sup> such is not the case in Canada, or among Lutherans. Eric Gritsch, for example, notes that Lutherans were resistant to submitting to either a “cosmopolitan [or] theological melting pot.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, the Canadian policy of “multiculturalism”<sup>34</sup> was a better fit for Lutherans, with its inclusion of many cultures rather than melting them into one.

The *Today—Tomorrow* conference also assumed that a merger would lead to “less bureaucracy”—something that every subsequent merger or structural realignment has also sought to do.<sup>35</sup> Yet the churches recognized that the gospel message was to be central in whatever they did. This gave the churches a head start toward the future.

## The 1970 Affirmation and Appeal Agreement

As conversations about the formation of a Canadian Lutheran church continued into the 1960s, and after mergers had formed the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960 and the Lutheran Church in America (LCA) in 1962, the Lutheran representatives of the various church bodies began to realize that, before an organic merger could happen, it was best to take an intermediate step; namely, a declaration of altar and pulpit fellowship. This was possible because of their mutual commitment to the gospel, and the encouragement of some groups.<sup>36</sup> For example, the National Senate of the Lutheran Student Movement,<sup>37</sup> the campus chaplains and contact pastors, and pastors in the Calgary area were all calling for altar and pulpit fellowship or even merger as quickly as possible.<sup>38</sup> And the churches listened. In 1969, LC-MS, LC-C, the ALC, and the ELCC agreed to altar and pulpit fellowship.<sup>39</sup> The ELCC and the LCA-Canada Section had already reached a similar agreement in 1968.<sup>40</sup> Thus, all that was missing to complete the circle and to bring all Lutherans in Canada under one umbrella was for an altar and pulpit fellowship agreement between LC-C and the LCA-Canada Section. That was the goal and purpose of *Affirmation and Appeal*.<sup>41</sup> The LCA-Canada Section had offered LC-C altar and pulpit fellowship in 1968, but LC-C, and then LC-MS, still had to ratify it. To speed up this process, a special meeting was held in May of 1970, and the three Canadian church bodies appointed a special commission to prepare the documents for a vote later in the year.

*Affirmation and Appeal* included recommendations for LC-C and LC-MS to take the steps necessary to ratify altar and pulpit fellowship with the LCA-CS. It also sought to affirm

the earlier agreements which both church bodies already had with the ELCC. At the December 10<sup>th</sup> meeting, the delegates passed the proposal with a large majority. Among the 27 delegates, there were only two dissenting votes. The ELCC delegates also voted, because even though they already had altar and pulpit fellowship with both the LC-C and LCA-Canada Section, the agreement between the LC-C and LCA-Canada Section would also affect them. As *Affirmation and Appeal* declared, “We are therefore of the conviction that our churches should declare and practice altar and pulpit fellowship, delaying no longer than is required in order to follow orderly procedures in the churches.”<sup>42</sup> LC-C officials were to bring the proposal back to their church and the LC-MS for a vote, so that “fellowship be declared and practiced on the basis of the [already] existing unity.”<sup>43</sup> Fulfillment of a dream seemed just around the corner.

*Affirmation and Appeal* was based on agreements that had already been reached on the significance of the Lutheran Confessions for the churches, the doctrine of the church, the gospel, the sacraments, Holy Scriptures, lodges, and unionism.<sup>44</sup> Some of these areas of agreement reflected the scars the churches had collected in their past. For example, battles over the Lutheran Confessions, the lodges, and unionism had been fought in the 1850s–1870s and had been addressed by the “Four Points of the General Synod,” and by the Galesburg Rule.<sup>45</sup> These agreements also formed the basis for modern definitions of altar and pulpit fellowship. The debates over the word “inerrancy” in describing the Bible, however, were ferocious.<sup>46</sup> Preliminary agreements were reached but did not resolve all the tensions. Yet other matters—such as the doctrine of the church, the gospel, and the sacraments—were not in dispute, but the participating churches wanted to be clear that these were defining “markers” of any Canadian Lutheran church.

Ultimately, the proposed altar and pulpit agreement contained in *Affirmation and Appeal* was never ratified. A year before the LC-MS could vote on the proposal in 1973, the ELCC invited its two altar and pulpit fellowship partners into merger negotiations.<sup>47</sup> The steps taken toward altar and pulpit fellowship had paved the way for these merger talks. The churches had a clear sense of working together for the sake of the gospel. Threinen succinctly noted that a shift had taken place among the church bodies. He hints that the 1950s ALC-LC-MS altar and pulpit fellowship agreement failed because it was based on doctrines (specifically the inerrancy of Scripture), while the 1969 agreement was accepted because it was based on the gospel (as described in the Augsburg Confession, Article VII).<sup>48</sup> The negotiations had shifted from seeking an “agreement on various doctrines to seeing unity first as an agreement in the Gospel and the sacraments.”<sup>49</sup> This focus on the gospel “allowed for some diversity of practice as long as the Gospel was not thereby undermined.”<sup>50</sup> It was an agreement “for the sake of the gospel.” Thus, *Affirmation and Appeal* had done its job. The table was set for a three-way merger between the ELCC, LC-C, and the LCA-CS. Unfortunately, it was the closest that the three churches would get to realizing the dream of one Canadian Lutheran Church.

### What Are We Thinking Now?

Shortly after the three-way merger talks began, winds of discontent began to blow. Despite *Affirmation and Appeal*, the issues that were not completely resolved, especially regarding the literal inerrancy of Scripture, came back to haunt the three-way negotiations. This was also fueled by a more conservative direction taken by LC-MS in the mid 1970s.<sup>51</sup> The proposed Canadian merger statement on Scripture was considered too weak for some

delegates. Moreover, even though the ordination of women had been approved by the LCA, the ALC, and the ELCC, and their decision had not posed an obstacle to the LC-C in endorsing the *Affirmation and Appeal* or to the beginning of merger talks, it became a “case study” on the interpretation of Scripture near the end of the three-way merger talks.<sup>52</sup> Ultimately, LC-C and LC-MS could not accept the ordination of women, and the ELCC and LCA-CS could not accept a literal, inerrant view of Scripture or reject the ordination of women. The merger talks collapsed in 1978.

Since then, the ELCIC, formed by the two-way merger between the ELCC and LCA-CS (formed in 1986), and the LC-C (formed in 1988) have gone their separate ways. The different decisions made by these churches regarding sexuality, gender identity, and ordination, for example, have created an apparent irreparable gulf between them.<sup>53</sup> The ELCIC has entered a full communion agreement with the Anglican Church of Canada and has increasingly engaged in social justice issues for the sake of the gospel, as they see it.<sup>54</sup> LC-C has taken more traditional stances on many issues, also for what they consider “for the sake of the gospel.”

Where are we now? The ELCIC is now in mid-life, at 36 years of age, and LC-C is 34. Both church bodies have seen drastic declines in their membership since the 1980s and are facing challenges to their survival. Mergers with other Lutheran church bodies are currently not in the cards. Structural re-arrangements to make the churches more efficient might help in the short term, but may not address the challenges any more than they did in 1954, when Treusch proposed them.<sup>55</sup> Yet structural changes were made in the late 1990s,<sup>56</sup> and tried in the late 2010s.

But with the challenges we face, we also have opportunities before us. The opportunities are found not in trying to retrench in order to survive but in being a church committed to the proclamation of the gospel, the proclamation of a God whose only begotten goes through death to life, and who can even make a valley of dry bones alive.<sup>57</sup> Our driving question ought always to be, “What do we need to be, and do, as church, for the proclamation of the gospel?” The opportunities for living the gospel for our neighbours are endless. We have opportunities to proclaim gospel in ecumenical circles. We have opportunities to proclaim gospel in social justice ministries and settings. We have opportunities every day to be an inclusive church rather than a church that excludes. We have the opportunity to proclaim gospel in the way we address the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. And, as COP27 in Egypt is reminding us, we in Canada have great opportunities to proclaim gospel through the care of creation and in addressing climate change, not so much from the perspective of fear but from the perspective of caring for a gift given us by God.

Where are we today? As was the case in 1954 at the *Today—Tomorrow* conference, and as was the case in 1970 with the *Affirmation and Appeal*, we are at a crossroads. On the one hand, the church could go down the path of an ever more controlled, narrow, and inflexible dogmatism, which is so appealing to a society seeking security, especially if the leadership of such a church emphasizes *their* agenda. Such a church, however, tends to rely on law and moralism over gospel. On the other hand, the church could embark on a more difficult—but more hopeful—confessional approach. Such an approach involves a willingness to listen to the voices in the wilderness, speaking out of conviction but not oppression while clearly keeping in mind the gospel. Do we dare to go through a death and resurrection experience, for the sake of the gospel?

The key to making our decision is to determine what is important for the sake of the gospel. For me, it means focusing on what God in Christ has done, and continues to do, *for us* and all creation, to breathe life into the world. This is what is of the essence (*esse*) of the church, given to the church through word and sacrament, “for us and for our salvation,” as stated in the Nicene Creed. Confessional Lutherans can all agree on this. Where we may disagree is in trying to decide what is helpful and important for the well-being of the church and of society (its *bene esse*), and what is *adiaphoron*.<sup>58</sup> If the church does embark upon a journey into the future, focussed on the gospel, then it will find its way in clarifying what is helpful for its own well-being, the wellbeing of all society, and the wellbeing of all creation; then the church will still be doing what it was called to do. However, if we confuse what is essential (the *esse*), namely the gospel, with what is for the wellbeing of the church (the *bene esse*), and what is *adiaphora*, then we will stumble and fall, and our witness to the gospel will be tarnished. I believe that one of the main reasons for the fracturing of the ELCIC (and the ELCA) over questions of sexuality, gender identity, and ordination was a result of not keeping these distinctions separate.

## Conclusion

In the 2015 statement *Declaration on the Way*, crafted by the Roman Catholic-Lutheran (ELCA) Dialogues in the United States, it is stated that the church must be involved in “the continued work of reconciliation *for the sake of the gospel* and our witness and work in the world.”<sup>59</sup> We are also called to the continuing work of reconciliation—with God, with others, and with creation, for the sake of the gospel. And the place to start is an “old-fashioned” but time-proven way: by talking with each other—and talking to those with whom we have disagreed or parted ways. A revival of the free conference tradition might be helpful in this respect, so that people can again begin talking with each other freely, without representing church bodies. We have paid a price for not meeting together. How can we expect to experience the gospel for ourselves and in our neighbour when we don’t talk? As my father wisely said, “you can’t steer a parked car. You have to be moving to get anywhere.”

We need Christ, the proclaimer of the gospel, to break through the walls that we’ve hidden behind, to tell us some parables, gather us around a kitchen table, and talk about what gives us life. How can we be a church for our neighbours, for the sake of the gospel? What might happen if we start talking about where we see grace and gospel in Canadian contexts today? These are questions we need to talk about, and hopefully, people will address these questions at our next conference.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Martin Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools (1524),” LW 45:359; WA 15:37,11–14.

<sup>2</sup> Allen G. Jorgenson, “Contours of the Common Priesthood,” *The Global Luther: A Theologian for Modern Times*, Christine Helmer, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009), 256.

<sup>3</sup> Eugene F. Klug and William J. Schmelder, “The Church: Confessional Witness,” *Confessing the Gospel: A Lutheran Approach to Systematic Theology*, Two Volumes, Samuel H. Nafzger et al., eds. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2017), II:924.

<sup>4</sup> This gospel also breathes life (inspires) into us and all creation, not just in the future (eternal life), but also life in the present. Thus, it is nothing short of a resurrection, both “now” and “not yet.” We live, because Christ lives.



<sup>5</sup> E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), Table 2, 175.

Granquist notes that even by 1900, when mergers were already happening, “there were at least a dozen major groups, with many other smaller ones.” Mark A. Granquist, “United States of America,” *Dictionary of Luther and the Lutheran Traditions*, Timothy J. Wengert, gen. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 762.

<sup>6</sup> Namely, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1988), the Lutheran Church–Missouri Synod (1847), and the Wisconsin Synod (1850). The ELCIC (1986) and LC-C (1988) are the two main Lutheran bodies in Canada.

<sup>7</sup> According to Evenson, the decision to work toward altar and pulpit fellowship, given the impending mergers that would form the ALC (1960) and the LCA (1962) was made at the 1959 free conference. George O. Evenson, *Adventuring for Christ: The Story of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canada* (Calgary: Foothills Lutheran Press, 1974), 223.

<sup>8</sup> Exhibit B, point 1, “The Gospel We Preach,” in *Affirmation and Appeal*, 23.

<sup>9</sup> Mars A. Dale, “Welcome,” *Messages Given at the Canada Lutheran ‘Today—Tomorrow’ Conference*, Under the Direction of the Canadian Lutheran Council (Winnipeg: Canadian Lutheran Council, 1955), 1. Hereafter, this document is cited as *Today—Tomorrow*.

<sup>10</sup> Dale, “Welcome,” 2.

<sup>11</sup> Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 83.

<sup>12</sup> Norman J. Threinen, *A Religious-Cultural Mosaic: A History of Lutherans in Canada*. Lutheran Historical Institute Monograph Series, Number 1 (Vulcan: Today’s Reformation Press, 2006), 139.

<sup>13</sup> One would have expected the word “yesterday” to be included, reflecting the verse from Hebrews 18:8, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.”

<sup>14</sup> Conrad Hoyer, “North American Missions Together,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 34. This sentiment is also found in Mehlenbacher’s comment, “there must be a better solution [to the Canadian church challenges] than just carrying on as before.” W. A. Mehlenbacher, “Rungs in the Ladder,” *Messages Given at the Canada Lutheran ‘Today—Tomorrow’ Conference*, Under the Direction of the Canadian Lutheran Council (Winnipeg: Canadian Lutheran Council, 1955), 7.

<sup>15</sup> The Canadian Lutheran Council formed on December 4, 1952, but did not include members of the LC-MS in Canada. The Canadian Lutheran Council was then replaced by the Lutheran Council in Canada on January 1, 1967, and this time LC-C (incorporated in 1958) became participants. Norman J. Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence: The Canadian Case-Study*, Lutheran Historical Conference Publication No. 3 (Dubuque: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1983), 95–98.

<sup>16</sup> Mehlenbacher, “Rungs in the Ladder,” 3.

<sup>17</sup> Mehlenbacher, “Rungs in the Ladder,” 3, point 2.

<sup>18</sup> C. H. Whitteker, “Canadian Co-operation with the Lutheran World Federation,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 9. See also Karl Holfeld, “Following our Boys with Word and Sacrament,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 19. On the <https://canadianlutheranhistory.ca/> website you can find a war-time fundraising brochure for this commission.

<sup>19</sup> Clifton Monk, “Canadian Lutheran World Relief—This is the Record,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 15.

<sup>20</sup> Organized campus ministry in Canada dates to at least 1927. Threinen reports that a group of Lutheran students formed an organization in 1927 in Saskatoon, while Kuhn puts the date at 1939. Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 108; Kenneth C. Kuhn, “The Lutheran Student Movement in Canada—A Brief History and Analysis,” *Consensus*, 5, no 2 (April 1979), 16. <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol5/iss2/3>. After a failed attempt at cooperation in campus ministry in Toronto in the early 1950s, the Canadian Lutheran Council decided to proceed without the involvement of LC-MS in Canada. Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 111. An early inter-Lutheran campus ministry had already been established in Winnipeg “in affiliation with the Missouri Synod related Gamma Delta” fraternity. Norman J. Threinen, “The Churches, the Councils and Campus Ministry,” *Consensus*, 5, no. 2, (April 1979), 23. <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol5/iss2/4>.

<sup>21</sup> Threinen, “Campus Ministry,” 23. See also Minutes, Canadian Lutheran Council, December 3, 1953.

<sup>22</sup> Threinen, “Campus Ministry,” 25.

<sup>23</sup> Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 114.

<sup>24</sup> George O. Evenson, “Canadian Missions in the West,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 29; Conrad Hoyer, “North American Missions Together,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 35.

<sup>25</sup> See here William Renwick Riddell, “The Law of Marriage in Upper Canada,” *The Canadian Historical Review*, Vol. 2 No. 3 (September 1921), 226–48. The partiality to the Anglican clergy was because the politicians wanted a “British” society and were willing to use the Church of England clergy to secure it. Additionally, “clergy reserves,”

gave the Church of England (Anglican Church) one-seventh of every area of land, which amounted to 675,000 acres. The Church of England was the Protestant church of Canada. Terrence Murphy, “The English-Speaking Colonies to 1854,” *A Concise History of Christianity in Canada*, Terrence Murphy and Robert Perin, eds. (Oxford and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996), 126.

<sup>26</sup> “At present, for example, a great deal is handed to us ‘ready-made’ by our parent American Church bodies. Our reference is to our foreign mission work, the preparation of literature for Sunday Schools and church organizations, and the like. We may contribute a bit by occasional membership on boards, agencies, and committees of the Church, but the roles that we play in that which may be called creative capacity in large areas of our Church is little more than a purely nominal one. This is not stated critically but is understandable because of the comparatively small size of our Canadian Church.” Earl J. Treusch, “Implementing the Vision,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 11.

<sup>27</sup> Evenson, “Canadian Missions in the West,” 24.

<sup>28</sup> The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, for example, reported carrying out ministry in “Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Swedish, Finnish, and German.” A. G. Jacobi, “Canadian Missions in the East,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 23.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Whitteker, “Canadian Lutheran Co-operation with the Lutheran World Federation,” 9.

<sup>30</sup> A recent announcement by the Canadian Government (November 2022) says that half a million immigrants per year will be welcomed in Canada in the next two years.

<sup>31</sup> One notes in Luther’s *Small Catechism*, for example, the repeated emphasis on assisting the neighbour. One does not break the commandments, for to do so would be to harm one’s relationship with God, and with the neighbour. Thus, in the first part, dealing with the Ten Commandments, the pattern followed in Luther’s explanations, “we are to fear and love God (thus not damaging our relationship with God) ... so that we do not (destroy our relationship with God or harm our neighbours) ... but so we ... assist the neighbour “in all life’s needs.” *Small Catechism: Ten Commandments, Book of Concord: The Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, Timothy J. Wengert and Robert Kolb, eds. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000), 351–54.

<sup>32</sup> In religious circles, a melting pot was facilitated among evangelicals by revival movements such as the “Great Awakenings” of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in the US. Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada*, Second Edition (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2019), 101. For the use of this term in describing the USA agenda, see Gary Gerstle, *American Crucible: Race and Nation in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton University Press, 2001), 51; and C. Hirschman, “America’s Melting Pot Policy Reconsidered,” *Annual Review of Sociology*, Vol. 9 (1983), 397–423.

<sup>33</sup> Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism*, Second Edition (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), 194. See also Richard Cimino, *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the Twenty-First Century* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), ix.

<sup>34</sup> “Canadian Multiculturalism Act,” R.S.C., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.), An Act for the preservation and enhancement of multiculturalism in Canada [1988, c. 31, assented to 21st July, 1988]. Accessed at <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/c-18.7/page-1.html>, November 1, 2022. This multicultural aspect is also reflected in the title of Threinen’s book, *A Religious-Cultural Mosaic: A History of Lutherans in Canada*.

<sup>35</sup> Treusch, “Implementing the Vision,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 12.

<sup>36</sup> “When the fellowship talks were resumed in the 1960s between the Missouri Synod and the new ALC, agreement in the Gospel became the starting point in the discussions. In fact, this new emphasis eventually led not only to church fellowship but also to the Missouri Synod becoming a partner in the new councils in Canada and in the United States.” Norman J. Threinen, “Approaches to Fellowship,” *Consensus*, 10, no. 1 (1984), 22. <https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol10/iss1/2>.

<sup>37</sup> See here the correspondence between M. Janke of January 11, 1967 and E. Treusch of Jan. 13, 1967, and Karl Holfeld to Ron Boden, Nov. 17, 1967, in “Lutheran Council in Canada. Lutheran Student Movement in Canada Correspondence, 1967.”

<sup>38</sup> The chaplains in 1967 drafted the “Walper Statement,” which insisted that a “trusting fellowship is the only such means (of eliminating the scandal of divided ministries in campus communities.” See note 10, page 6 of *Affirmation and Appeal*. Pastor H. Paul Schmidt (LC-C) chaired this intersynodical committee in the 1960s. Source: Personal communications.

<sup>39</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal: Concerning Lutheran Altar and Pulpit Fellowship in Canada. A Statement of Consensus adopted December 10, 1970* (Winnipeg: Joint Commission on Inter-Lutheran Relations, 1970), 7.

<sup>40</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal*, 6–7.

<sup>41</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal*, 8. The LCA-CS executive committee had extended an invitation to altar and pulpit fellowship in 1968, but LC-C and its parent body, LC-MS, would require approval at various levels, meaning they would not be able to ratify such an agreement until 1973. *Affirmation and Appeal*, 6, 8.

<sup>42</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal*, 1.

<sup>43</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Affirmation and Appeal*, 9–18.

<sup>45</sup> The four points of the General Synod of 1868 covered unionism and participation in secret societies. The Galesburg Rule of 1875 had declared “Lutheran Pulpits for Lutheran ministers only—Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only.” Richard C. Wolf, *Documents of Lutheran Unity in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), 162–65, 171.

<sup>46</sup> One of the first uses of the terms “inerrant” or “infallible” among Lutherans was not found until the 1914 *Articles of Union in the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America*. Their proposed constitution stated that Holy Scripture was “the inerrant Word of God.” This was reflected in the subsequent predecessor bodies of the ALC. The LC-MS’s *Brief Statement* of 1932 laid out the LC-MS commitment to the term “inerrancy” as well. J. A. Bergh, *The Union Documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church with a Historical Survey of the Union Movement* (Minneapolis: Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1948), 58–59.

<sup>47</sup> Threinen, *A Religious-Cultural Mosaic*, 163–64.

<sup>48</sup> Threinen, *A Religious-Cultural Mosaic*, 156–57.

<sup>49</sup> Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 212. This clearly reflects the basis of unity in Article IV of the *Augsburg Confession*: “... it is enough for the true unity of the church that the gospel be preached harmoniously according to a pure understanding and the sacraments are administered in conformity with the divine Word.” AC, Article IV, BC 42.

<sup>50</sup> Threinen, *Fifty Years of Lutheran Convergence*, 212.

<sup>51</sup> The newly elected president of LC-MS, J. Preus, wanted to cancel the pulpit and altar fellowship agreement with the ALC and the ELCC. In addition, the “battle for the Bible” led to a walkout on February 19, 1974, of significant numbers of faculty (45 out of 50) and a majority of students at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, who rejected this move to a more conservative position on Scripture, and the resultant formation of Christ Seminex—a “Seminary in Exile.” See here Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 303. For two distinct perspectives on this “split,” see Frederick D. Danker, *No Room in the Brotherhood: The Preus-Otten Purge of Missouri* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1977), and Kurt E. Marquart, *Anatomy of an Explosion: Missouri in Lutheran Perspective* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1977).

<sup>52</sup> For an excellent study of how the debate over the authority of Scripture impacted the ordination of women, see Mary Todd, *Authority Vested: A Story of Identity and Change in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> For an excellent study of the impact of these decisions, see Karen Kuhnert, “2SLGBTQIA+—Sexuality in Changing Canadian Lutheran Contexts and Identities,” *Consensus*, 43, no. 2 (2022), Article 7, 1–53.

<https://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol43/iss2/7>.

<sup>54</sup> The *Waterloo Declaration* was signed in July, 2001. <https://elcic.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/The-Waterloo-Declaration-Jan-2022.pdf> (Accessed November 15, 2022). 2001 also marked the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ordination of women in both the ELCIC and the ACC.

<sup>55</sup> Treusch, “Implementing the Vision,” *Today—Tomorrow*, 12.

<sup>56</sup> See here, *Minutes*, ELCIC National Convention, Future Directions Task Force on Mission Report, 1997.

<sup>57</sup> See the gospel parallels on the death and resurrection of Jesus (Mt 26–28/Mk 14–16/Lk 22–24 and Jn 18–20); and Ezekiel’s vision of Ezekiel 37:1–14.

<sup>58</sup> This groundwork for this distinction is made in the *Formula of Concord*, Article X, where the adiaphoristic controversy is addressed. This article, in both the *Epitome* and in the *Solid Declaration*, needs to be read alongside of Articles IV (justification) and VII of the *Augsburg Confession* (Concerning the Church), and the *Smalcald Articles*, II.i.1–5 (The First and Chief Article). The Gospel alone is of the essence (*esse*) of salvation. Other things may be useful for the church (its well being: *bene esse*), and ought to be pursued, but not at the expense of the Gospel. As for *adiaphora*—things not required—there is a great deal of latitude in this area. While these distinctions appear simple and clear, the church has always had enormous difficulty discerning to which category the challenging issues belong.

<sup>59</sup> Martin Luther, “To the Councilmen of All Cities in Germany that They Establish and Maintain Christian Schools (1524),” LW 45:359; WA 15:37,11–14.