

CHURCH HISTORY 3031

A New Beginning

The Birth of the Concordia Journal

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In 1975, \$5.00 would have bought you a year's subscription to the *Concordia Journal*. Why would anyone have spent \$5.00 on this? What makes the *Concordia Journal* noteworthy? The *Concordia Journal*, the theological journal produced by the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is notable, at least to a degree, just for the fact that it is a theological journal of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). This theological journal, though, is noteworthy because it was launched as the successor to *Concordia Theological Monthly (CTM)* following a time of doctrinal upheaval on the campus of Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. This paper will analyze the history leading up to the publication of the *Concordia Journal* and evaluate its first issue.

The Origin of the Missouri Synod's Theological Publications

To understand the beginnings of the *Concordia Journal*, one must go back all the way to C.F.W. Walther's *Der Lutheraner*. *Der Lutheraner* began in 1844, led by Walther and supported by several other pastors in Missouri and Illinois. This was the first official synod paper, adopted by the LCMS shortly after the synod was founded. Because *Der Lutheraner* was designed more for laymen's reading than for scholars' reading, the LCMS resolved in 1853 to start a more scholarly theological publication. This new journal, *Lehre und Wehre*, was launched in 1855, with Walther as its editor.¹ 75 years later, *Lehre und Wehre* merged with *Theological Monthly* and *Magazin für Evangelische-Lutheranische Homiletik und Pastoraltheologie* to become *Concordia Theological Monthly*, the official theological journal of the LCMS from 1930 through 1972.²

¹ Arndt, William F. "The Story of Lehre und Wehre." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 12 (1955): 885-887.

² Roeher, Walter R. "L.u.W., C.T.M., C.J." *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 3. The end date of the *Concordia Theological Journal* is a bit more subjective than it probably should be. The *Concordia Theological Monthly* was

The first issue of *Concordia Theological Monthly* introduces itself in this way:

The Concordia Theological Monthly is, in a manner of speaking, a new periodical. It has a new name, selected from a long list of names submitted for consideration, a new cover, a new arrangement of contents...But it intends, under the gracious guidance of God and assisted by the prayerful help of the brethren whom it chiefly intends to serve, to continue the policies of the former tried and proved periodicals. Its name – CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY – not only identifies it with the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod, but proclaims that it intends to adhere with full allegiance to all the Confessions of the Lutheran Church as collected in the Book of Concord of 1580.³

Walther suggested the following as the editorial policy for this new publication:

The journal is not to be a friend of the church, but a servant of the church. It is to take a position not above or alongside, but in and under the church. It will not serve as a sort of arena for those whose aim is to attack the church of the true doctrine and its sacred institutions and who—while they cannot destroy these foundations, for even the gates of hell cannot do this, let alone the bellowing of would-be-wise men—will at least try to damage and to shake them.⁴

In the early years of the synod, Walther admittedly felt some pressure from those outside the LCMS, including some prominent Lutherans back in Germany, to produce a rich theological journal. Certainly, *Concordia Theological Monthly* responded to the charge that Missourians did not produce enough scholarly articles.⁵ Its primary function, though, was to provide a scholarly publication for pastoral growth in the synod.

published through its issue in 1974, but the faculty of Concordia, St. Louis in 1975 refused to regard the publications between 1972 and 1974 as the official synod publication.

³ "By Way of Introduction." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 1 (1930): 1.

⁴ Roeher 3.

⁵ Walther, C.F.W.; Arndt, William F., trans. "The Foreword of Lehre und Wehre for 1862 (Vol. 8)." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 12 (1955): 893.

Problems Arise with Concordia Theological Monthly

If the *Concordia Theological Monthly* adhered to its original principles and purpose, chances are that it would still be around today. The reason for its demise was not a random set of circumstances, but its demise can be traced to two main problems that developed with the *Concordia Theological Monthly* in the decade before its end.

Though it was intended that the *CTM* would provide a clear and concise witness to the truth of God's Word and to stay true to its correct exposition in the Lutheran Confessions, especially the Book of Concord, it began to deviate from this in the years before its end. The contributors to the Concordia Journal felt that the watershed moment of the *CTM*—when the *CTM* openly and brazenly taught apart from the truths of God's Word, with no turning back after that point—was in the issue published in the summer of 1969. This Festschrift issue of *CTM*, put out in honor of President Alfred O. Fuerbringer, decidedly showed the theological deterioration in its content. In Carl Meyer's article, "The Gospel and Its Freedom Today: A Foreward," the first article in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 5 (1965), Meyer puts a positive spin on one of the issues troubling the leadership of the LCMS, ecumenism. Meyer talks about how the formation of modern creeds has an ecumenical dimension, then clarifies,

It [the ecumenical movement] now resides in the problem of the present and the future, of the sacred and the profane, of the life and death of the world itself—and the question is not whether one church or a multiplicity of denominations is a better witness to the gospel but whether civilization can even survive, or, to put it theologically, whether the gospel can break through the law of the future as fate.⁶

Meyer is right in that the Gospel's truth transcends anything human-derived in history, yet his point in this article sells the Gospel short. In this foreword Meyer implies that the Gospel

⁶ Meyer, Carl S. "The Gospel and Its Freedom Today: A Foreward." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 5 (1969): 328.

message is subservient to both ecumenism and historical-critical interpreters—the Gospel message is subjective when looked at through those contexts. Meyer seems to indicate his approval of the LCMS entering into fellowship with the ALC at the Denver convention in 1969, though others in Missouri felt that the LCMS was forsaking biblical truth in favor of ecumenism.

In Arthur Repp's Fuerbringer article, ~~he~~ holds up this as a shining example of Fuerbringer's positive contributions to the LCMS: "Fuerbringer has derived power and courage from its witness to the grace of God and has permitted the perspective of history to give his judgments a proper dimension."⁷ Here again the historical-critical method is held up in a positive light. If Repp's statement here were read in a vacuum, it might be understood correctly as contextualization of the Gospel—the one true Gospel applies to the context of life right now, just as it did to different contexts of life a hundred or a thousand years ago. Yet as the Fuerbringer biography goes on, it becomes clear that Repp is not speaking of a biblically sound contextualization of the Gospel. Repp goes as far as to call this theology⁸ "the church's newest frontier."⁹ He says that Fuerbringer actively encouraged the articles in *CTM* to explore the frontiers of theology and that "judging from the sharp increase in subscriptions, this journal is meeting an important need in the church."¹⁰ Repp also took a thinly veiled shot at those who

⁷ Repp, Arthur C. "A Tribute to an Evangelical Ministry." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 5 (1969): 330.

⁸ When Repp says "theology" here, it is clear he is talking not about theology in general, but an historical-critical method of biblical interpretation.

⁹ Repp 331.

¹⁰ Ibid 333. Repp uses some horrible logic here. He surmises that more people reading *CTM* means that *CTM* is fulfilling a need. I would argue that an equally valid, if not more valid, explanation is that more people reading *CTM* meant that sensationalized articles on radical theology intrigue people for their shock value. A modern example would be Greg Jackson's Ichabod blog. Does Ichabod fill a need? It certainly doesn't fill a theological need. The only need it might fill is the need of people to read sensationalized, tabloid-esque postings of a former WELS man.

opposed Fuerbringer's methodology, saying that he was publicly attacked, questioned with undue sharpness, criticized, and had to deal with dissent because of some of his theological views.¹¹ Repp clearly painted Fuerbringer as "the good guy" for backing historical-critical hermeneutic, while his opponents were clearly "the bad guys."

If those two articles weren't explicit enough to make the majority feeling of the editorial staff¹² clear, John Tietjen's article left no doubt as to where the faculty majority stood. Tietjen said in his article, "The Gospel and the Theological Task," that "the situation in our world should help shape our theology."¹³ Tietjen was bringing home the point that the starting point in theology was not the Gospel, but rather a specific point in time and its historical context, and then the Gospel must always be viewed in reference to that point. Even more simply put, Tietjen was saying that history forms the basis for the Gospel message—subjective historical contexts provide Gospel truths *only viewed in context*. Tietjen continued to say, "The gospel must always be addressed to particular conditions and circumstances. Therefore, it cannot be formulated in terms enduringly valid for every age and condition."¹⁴ It is as if Tietjen sarcastically mutters alongside Pontius Pilate, "What is truth?" He also explained how

¹¹ Ibid 335.

¹² Robert Bertram, John Damm, Alfred Fuerbringer, George Hoyer, Edgar Krentz, Herbert Meyer, Arthur Piepkorn, Gilbert Thiele, Walter Wegner, John Eiwien, and assisted by Arthur Repp and Carl Meyer for this issue.

¹³ Tietjen, John H. "The Gospel and the Theological Task." *Concordia Theological Monthly*, no. 5 (1969): 439.

¹⁴ Ibid 439. It is interesting to note that Tietjen, a student of Paul Tillich's theology, actually cites Tillich's "Systematic Theology" here as support for his point, despite the fact that Tillich's theology was viewed as radical by much of the leadership of the LCMS.

ecumenism affected his theology—one had to look to all denominations and take their theology into account, in order to better work towards a unified church.¹⁵

It quickly became clear that the *Concordia Theological Monthly* would no longer fulfill the purpose for which it had been established. It would not provide a sound basis for positive pastoral growth. The faculty at Concordia-St. Louis had added 18 new members in the five years leading up to the 1969 issue, and the majority opinion on campus had quickly shifted to promote historical-critical hermeneutic. *CTM* for the most part reflected this view. It no longer functioned as a vehicle for biblically sound exposition. Its goal now was to promote a new hermeneutic and support the faculty majority.

If this were truly a publication of all the faculty of Concordia-St. Louis, would it not have to go through an editorial process where it would be subject to approval from the whole faculty? For a time, *CTM* was published in that manner. Yet as the faculty majority continued to promote their hermeneutic, they accepted less and less input from the faculty minority on what articles should be published in *CTM*. After the Denver convention in 1969, the editorial committee of *CTM* refused to accept any faculty oversight from the seminary faculty's minority.¹⁶

The Seminex Walkout Ends the Concordia Theological Monthly

President Tiejten's teachings forced the Seminary Board of Control to act. They could not stand by and let the seminary president promote false doctrine. At their meeting on August 17th-18th in 1973, they received the formal charge of false doctrine against Tiejten and voted to suspend him, though they delayed implementing his suspension pending a ruling from legal

¹⁵ Ibid 442.

¹⁶ Scharlemann, Martin H. "Born of Anguish and Travail." *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 5. Hereafter cited as Scharlemann, Anguish and Travail.

counsel. The Board finally did suspend Tietjen on January 20th, 1974, and named Robert Scharlemann acting president of the seminary. The majority of the faculty voted to strike in support of Tietjen, and the Board of Control responded that the striking professors needed to return to campus by February 19th or they would be in breach of their contract. On February 19th, the faculty and student majority walked off campus to what they deemed “exile.” They established a new seminary—“Seminex” (Seminary in Exile)—and held classes at St. Louis University and Eden Seminary, though the students continued to live in the dorms at Concordia-St. Louis. When Tietjen and the faculty majority left campus, any hope of another issue of *Concordia Theological Monthly* left with them. They had caused too much damage with it, and it had become too charged of a publication to affectively fulfill its purpose.

Planning for a new theological publication

Almost immediately after the Seminex walkout, planning began for a new theological journal. Acting Seminary President Scharlemann recognized the need for a theological journal—especially considering the present circumstances of doctrinal upheaval in the LCMS—and proposed that Concordia Seminary again publish a theological journal. On February 21st, merely two days after the majority of campus professors and students had walked off in exile, the faculty accepted his proposal to ask Dr. Richard Klann to plan this new publication. Dr. Klann submitted his proposal for the feasibility of this project on April 8th, and he was subsequently appointed editor of this new Concordia Journal by the present acting president of the Seminary, Ralph Bohlmann, and with the blessing of the Seminary Board of Control. The first official

meeting of the editorial staff of the *Concordia Journal* was held on October 14th, 1974.¹⁷ The first issue appeared in January of 1975.

Purpose of the Concordia Journal

In the LCMS convention workbook of 1975, this new publication was mentioned under the “Services to the Synod” portion of the report on Concordia-St. Louis. It states that

under the editorship of Dr. Richard Klann, the Journal is expected to be published on a quarterly basis. It is hoped that it will be useful not only to the pastors of our Synod but to laymen who are interested in learning more about our theological heritage.¹⁸

Scharlemann gives a more detailed explanation of the purpose of the Concordia Journal when he states the following ten purposes in its first issue,

1. It must offer its readers the kind of theological orientation which made ‘Missouri’ what it was and is.
2. It must, of course, reflect the doctrine and thought of the new faculty to be created at Concordia Seminary.
3. It must contain exegetical studies in keeping with the guidelines established with great effort and much thought by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations.
4. It must serve as an instrument of warning against all manner of contemporary doctrinal aberrations...
5. It must alert its readers to some of the abuses connected with the way the Lord’s Supper is celebrated, as though it were a means towards unity, rather than the opportunity to manifest such unity and harmony...
6. It must be so written and edited that perceptive lay persons might find the journal useful in developing a sense of discrimination and discernment for what is right doctrine and what is not.
7. It must serve as a medium for our contribution to the thought-life of Christendom by offering the theological accents peculiar to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, by exhibiting its long history of working with the *sola Scriptura* principle and by stating its practiced perception of the distinction made in Scripture and the Confessions between “unity,” which is God’s gift, and “concord,” which is the church’s response in terms of doctrine and life to that *unitas*.
8. It must be the official repository of the important documents which pertain to the life and thought of Concordia Seminary, of Synod, and of the Christian church...

¹⁷ Scharlemann, Anguish and Travail 5.

¹⁸ Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. “Convention Workbook.” St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975. 307.

9. In time the new journal may wish to offer sound homiletical materials in the solid tradition of the old *Homiletisches Magazin*.

10. It must serve as an instrument for developing a more general awareness of the fact that genuine Lutheran theology constitutes something of a "third way."¹⁹

It was clear that the *Concordia Journal* was to be everything that *Concordia Theological Monthly* was not in its last few years of existence.

A Nod to the Past and a Look to the Future

The first issue of the *Concordia Journal* could hardly begin with anything other than an explanation as to how this new journal was created. Klann opens the first issue by, in effect, pushing the reset button. He acknowledges that the *Concordia Journal* is new, yet strives to show that its content will be in line with the historical teaching of the church.

The *Concordia Journal* will follow the tradition of theological literature established for the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod by its predecessors: to teach and defend Christian teaching, so that "the Gospel may have free course." As the publisher of the *Concordia Journal*, the faculty of Concordia Seminary is resolved to dedicate its collective effort to the promotion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.²⁰

Klann wastes no time in drawing his line in the sand. There will be no historical-critical hermeneutic promoted by the *Concordia Journal*. The only thing promoted will be the absolute truth of God's Word.

Most contemporary progressive theologians and readers of theology consider themselves to be at least as sophisticated as Pilate, who was probably representative of his time. His problem continues as the perennial problem of fallen mankind: Pilate could not see or recognize Truth even when confronting Him. We believe truth is of ultimate importance, not theologizing or partisan chatter in defense of erring consciences. Without truth there can be no love, no life, no hope, no faith. Truth does not originate in the emotional recesses of the believer, but from Him who is the Truth and who prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy Word is truth...I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word."²¹

¹⁹ Scharlemann, *Anguish and Travail* 7.

²⁰ Klann, Richard. "We Make a New Beginning." *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 1.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Klann then writes one column of information about the policies of this new journal. First, he notes that the first two issues have been paid for through specific donor funds. About 21,000 copies of the first issue would be made available through these funds. After that, though, the subscription cost to the *Concordia Journal* would be \$5.00 per year. The subscription cost was not set to make the Seminary money; the *Concordia Journal* was not a for-profit venture. Rather, this subscription fee would be simply enough to keep publishing the journal.²² He concludes his policy article with a call for reader responses to be published in the *Concordia Journal*; anyone who wished to speak the truth in love and offer constructive comments on specific published content was welcome to do so.²³

In the next editorial, "Strictly Orthodox," President Bohlmann assures the readers that the theological content of the *Concordia Journal* was truly reflective of the theology taught on the Concordia campus. Bohlmann wasn't going to stick his head in the sand and ignore the theological problems on campus in the last few years. He was keenly aware of the problems and the role the *Concordia Theological Monthly* had in propagating those problems. He had made his choice on campus—he had chosen to fight for doctrinal orthodoxy, no matter the cost. He is not ashamed of his choice.

The tragic events surrounding Concordia Seminary in recent years have brought the entire Synod to the realization that orthodoxy cannot simply be assumed, and that in fact it can sometimes be preserved only at great cost. But that cost is well worth it!...We at Concordia Seminary are not ashamed of being orthodox!²⁴

²² The *Concordia Journal* found sufficient support and is still published today. New and archived volumes available online at <http://concordiatheology.org>.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Bohlmann, Ralph A. "Strictly Orthodox." *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 2.

Having made his choice for orthodoxy, he had another choice. He had to decide whether to recommend that the Seminary stop production of a theological journal or to again produce one. Given how far *Concordia Theological Monthly* had veered off the path of orthodoxy, starting a new theological journal meant undoing the damage of the old one. *CTM* had broken the trust of readers by promoting false doctrine. Bohlmann could have decided that the trust from journal to reader had been irreparably broken. Yet he saw a theological journal as something for which he should fight. Promoting sound theological growth among the members of the LCMS was too important. To build that trust between journal and reader so that the journal could once again fulfill its purpose, Bohlmann made clear that the sound theology being taught on campus again would be the same theology found in the Concordia Journal.

Concordia Seminary today not only adheres to such “strictly orthodox Lutheran views,” but wants to teach them with its students and with the whole church. We consider our new *Concordia Journal* to be an important means to that end. Whether sharing forgotten insights from the fathers or dealing with the peculiar problems of our day, the *Concordia Journal*, we hope, will demonstrate the continuing pertinence and strength of the “strictly orthodox Lutheran views” on which Concordia Seminary was founded and which our faculty, students, and board continue to believe, teach, and confess...We pray that the *Concordia Journal* will be an effective voice of the seminary in helping thousands of others sense the strength and apply the truth of those “strictly orthodox Lutheran views” to the issues of our day.²⁵

What’s the point of the name?

Klann, Bohlmann, and the editorial staff probably had the right idea in changing the name of the publication from *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Even with Bohlmann’s editorial on orthodoxy, it still would be difficult for some to accept this new journal because it would be associated with the *CTM*. To help readers associate this new journal less with the old journal,

²⁵ *Ibid.*

the staff made a smart call and decided to change the name. So why name it the *Concordia Journal*? Horace Hummel lets the reader know.

“Monthly” indeed disappears, but the other two words in the title of the predecessor journal now receive increased accent, as though in compensation. The fact that we hope to communicate also with many laymen does not mean that we propose to accent ‘theological’ less. And, above all, we intend to highlight “Concordia” to the maximum possible extent. What should that mean? That “Concordia” is derived from the confessional Book of Concord is well-known, of course. But the real issue is what we understand by “confessional.” Virtually all of world Lutheranism uses that self-designation, but manifestly not all understand it in the same way. Thus we have the anomaly of what is supposed to be a standard of unity in the Gospel serving as no functional standard at all...We propose to exemplify the proposition that confessional faithfulness implies not only analogy, but also *substantially identical* confession.²⁶

“Born of Anguish and Travail”

If this were a perfect world, the *Concordia Journal* should not exist. Even if this were a somewhat decent world, the *Concordia Journal* should never have come into being. It was only because of false doctrine that the *Concordia Theological Monthly* had stopped being published. This fact was not lost on the staff of the *Concordia Journal*. It must have saddened them to put an end to something that had started out as such a positive thing. Scharlemann writes in his article “Born of Anguish and Travail” that

the *Concordia Journal* need never have come into being; yet here is the first issue. It was born of the anguish and travail of the soul which were induced by the theological disorientation which began to overtake its predecessor, the *Concordia Theological Monthly*, soon after the middle of the last decade. Further distress over what was going on at Concordia Seminary in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, especially the choice of the former faculty majority to walk off its job in February 1974, heightened the necessity to begin the present venture of offering the clergy, teachers, and perceptive laypersons of our church body the kind of magazine which would more faithfully reflect the doctrine and practice of a church body which, from its inception, chose loyalty to the Scriptures as its chief hallmark.²⁷

²⁶ Hummel, Horace D. “Transition to Concordia Journal.” *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 3-4.

²⁷ Scharlemann, Anguish and Travail 4.

“Theology that Transfigures”

The next article in the first volume of the *Concordia Journal* is Scharlemann’s sermon text for the installation of seven new professors on the Concordia campus. This sermon sets forth an accurate representation of the theology of the new faculty members. In his sermon on Mark 9:7²⁸, Scharlemann takes aim at much of the false doctrine that had permeated the campus under a year ago. Even the title “Theology that Transfigures” goes after the false beliefs of Tietjen and the former majority. One of Tietjen’s claims had been that the Gospel needed to be adjusted for the culture of the day; only in this relativistic approach could the Gospel actually work. Scharlemann says the opposite, and he points to the words of the Bible to show just how powerful the truth of God’s Word is. Its content does not need to be adjusted to fit the *zeitgeist*. Scharlemann commits to the new faculty members to “believe, teach, and confess a theology that transfigures as it is offered to us in Scripture alone.”²⁹ He digs right into the responsibility of the new faculty in the third part of his sermon.

Today it is the problem of the authority of Scripture which haunts Christendom; and so our Synod has chosen to address itself to that issue as one of the major items in what we call ‘A Statement on Biblical and Confessional Principles.’ It happens to be the responsibility of a church body to think theologically, to be led by the Spirit into a better understanding of God’s revealed truth. We have been asked to engage in such a theological task at a moment in history when all of Christendom is engaged in a ferocious struggle over the very nature of the Gospel itself. The church everywhere has within it those who would reduce all that is transcendental and eternal to the level of the here and now, turning the Christian religion into a kind of sacred humanism. It is a contest as bloody as the ancient quarrel with Gnosticism, which removed from the New Testament every element of God’s incarnate Son doing miracles, dying and rising again. That is to say, they removed from the Gospel its historical context and dimensions. Today the situation is reversed. Now various theologies of transformation attempt to

²⁸ Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them, and a voice came from the cloud: “This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!” NIV. From the account of Jesus’ transfiguration.

²⁹ Scharlemann, Martin. “Theology that Transfigures.” *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 8-9.

lock up all of God's revelation in the narrow prison of history as the one-dimensional account of life in this world alone.

...Today you are being installed to follow in the footsteps of men who through the centuries believed and taught the theology of transfiguration. You are being asked to train men here with a no-nonsense message for a world that needs to know that salvation comes by grace alone through faith alone since from it alone we derive the theology that transforms.³⁰

Scharlemann might as well have stood on the top of a mountain, shouting, "We believe and teach the objective truths of God's Word!" He was abundantly clear—there would be no historical-critical interpretation of God's Word. There would be a change back to a biblical, confessional view that God's Word is truth.

"Reflections on Disputes Regarding the Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel"

The final essay in the first issue of the *Concordia Journal* is by Klann on the distinction between the Law and Gospel. This distinction is one of the hardest for a theologian to master and put into practice, yet it is absolutely necessary for a biblically sound theology. The end of this essay is especially applicable to the situation in Missouri at that time.

The widespread inclination of much of 'contemporary ethics' to reduce the freedom for which Christ made men free into normative, contextual, humanistic, and existentialistic patterns of conduct is also a demonstration of its weakness. But the proper uses of Law and Gospel result in a right ethos, character, a style of life, a harmony of freedom and order, both for the person and for the community, whenever this is done with due attention to the Biblical revelation. The failure of contemporary ethics must be seen in its rejection of this revelation.³¹

Overall Impression of the *Concordia Journal's* Inception

From the very first issue, the *Concordia Journal* was very clear on its purpose. There would be no doubt as to why it had come into existence. If any charge could be leveled against

³⁰ Ibid. 13-14.

³¹ Klann, Robert. "Reflections on Disputes Regarding the Proper Distinction Between Law and Gospel." *Concordia Journal*, no. 1 (1975): 45.

Klann, it would not be one of opaqueness. The first issue had a very strong “This is what the Concordia Journal is—you can take it or leave it” feel to it.

Everything in the first issue was very calculated. Every author, every topic, and almost down to every paragraph was carefully chosen with a specific purpose in mind. In that respect, this first issue was incredibly successful, because it laid out for everyone to see the doctrinal stance of the journal, the Seminary faculty, and the Synod as a whole.³² Klann and Scharlemann presented their theology as biblically sound³³ and also diametrically opposed to Tietjen and his theology.

Given how personal the problems in the Synod were to the staff of the *Concordia Journal*, it would not have been unexpected for the contributors to the *Concordia Journal* to take some shots at their opponents. There was next to nothing of that nature, though. Though at times emotional, none of the contributors launched into any personal attacks on Tietjen or his supporters. They firmly yet accurately gave an honest description of the problems of the LCMS at the time and were not slanderous in any accusation. The one noticeable point in the first issue which might be a case of sensationalized reporting is an account of Seminex students harassing students who did not walk out on Concordia. Scharlemann reports that “several young men, living in dormitories, lost as much as twenty pounds from the harassment from their peer group.”³⁴ It is within reason that this claim is exaggerated. Scharlemann also details

³² Or at least what the Synod aspired to have as its stance, acknowledging that there were still members of the LCMS at this time who continued to support Tietjen and his philosophy.

³³ From reading Klann and Scharlemann’s articles, I doubt they would have phrased it this way. They most likely would have said of themselves, “We present the theology of the Bible which we believe and teach.” I phrased it as I did to emphasize the distinction between what they taught with what Tietjen taught.

³⁴ Scharlemann, *Anguish and Travail* 6.

the destruction and thievery on campus at that time. While it is reasonable to think that the former students of Concordia had a hand in much or all of this, Scharlemann offered no proof and spoke of no consequences for anyone who did these things. He says that he is not stating it to paint people in a bad light, only to accurately show the chaos on campus, yet he should know that he is most definitely painting former students in a bad light, deserved or not.³⁵

While the Wisconsin Synod was not in fellowship with Missouri at this time and is still not for doctrinal reasons, believers in the WELS and everywhere can rejoice that the Lord used men to uphold the objective truth of his Word in the face of secular humanism.

Soli Deo Gloria

³⁵ Ibid.

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