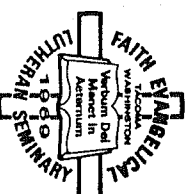


SPECIAL EDITION

THE CONSERVATIVE LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION

Lutherans Alert National



Conservative Group Calls Tri-Lutheran Merger Churches to go Back to Basics

Don't Be Deceived!

It would seem most imperative that the Lutheran congregations involved in the New Church (ALC, LCA, AELC) take a good look at what is down the road in relationship to it. What do we mean by that? Simply this, that each Lutheran congregation which goes along with the New Church and joins it will, for one thing, have to give up the word "inerrancy" from its constitution and its vocabulary. The Confession of the new Lutheran church will not contain any such teaching that the Bible is from cover to cover the Word of God. So, every congregation that joins this new Lutheran church will forfeit the historic, Confessional statement of Biblical inerrancy now found in the present A.L.C. constitution. It will forfeit it for its present generation and for the children of future generations. This New Church will have no theology of Biblical inerrancy. It will vanish from the scene.

Also, the Lutheran churches that belong at present to the A.L.C. will have to be ready to turn their property over to the New Church. The L.C.A. will have no difficulty to do this because the synod already owns the property of the local congregations. However, it will be a different situation for the many churches within the A.L.C. They will have to be prepared to lose their property.

Then, too, there will be the matter of synodical control over the congregation's choice to call a pastor. In a survey conducted by *Lutheran Perspective* of 500 clergy and laity there was a vote of better than two to one of both A.L.C. and L.C.A. thinking the congregation should not be able to call a pastor without the bishop's approval. In other words, if a congregation wanted to call a specific man that did not have the approval of the District President that congregation would not be able to do so. This shows you who is really sovereign in the matter of congregational authority. It is not the congregation that will be the authority but the synod. One who joins this new church will have to be ready to accept that kind of bureaucratic control. Then there is the matter of wide open ecumenical involvements that the local Lutheran church which joins the New Lutheran church will have to accept and to participate in. The L.C.A. already belongs to the National Council of Churches. It will certainly be a foregone conclusion that the New Church will, also, belong.

It is no secret that the matter of broadening the base for altar and pulpit fellowship with denominations that have shown a very liberal spirit and which at the present time have denied doctrines such as the virgin birth of Christ and even the Trinity is now already in vogue. The A.L.C., L.C.A. and A.E.L.C. have already endorsed an "interim-sharing of the Eucharist" with the Episcopal Church. It is one thing to be friendly with other denominations; it is quite another story to be involved with them in pulpit and altar fellowship when the doctrines are suspect as they certainly are in the liberal Episcopal Church. But this opening of an ecumenical spirit with the Episcopal Church is really just a beginning. In his report to the convention in Louisville Bishop Crumley of the L.C.A. made this statement: "The resolution on our relationship with the Episcopal Church should be the first of many similar ones." He went on to mention the Reformed, Methodists and Baptists and then alluded to "the uniqueness of the Roman Catholic Church and the contribution it makes to our own life in the gospel." Dr. Crumley has gone on record already as wanting help from non-Lutherans in structuring the new Lutheran church. Those who decide to belong to this new Lutheran church will have to be prepared to compromise solid biblical doctrine for the watered-down ecumenical spirit that is prevalent in today's society. Beyond the Methodists, the Baptists, Reformed, etc. will, also, possibly be the Buddhists and the Moslems and other religions of the world. This, of course, would be to some a fanatical statement of assumption, but down the road there will be that great possibility of these types of involvements for our children's children growing out of this so-called ecumenical spirit. It is a sobering thought, to contemplate, but these things are in the wind.

We in Lutherans Alert-National feel very strongly that now is the time for congregations to pull out of the contemplated New Church and align themselves with one of the biblical and doctrinally solid Lutheran church bodies. We in Lutherans Alert-National are affiliated with the Conservative Lutheran Association (C.L.A.) which upholds the inerrancy of Holy Scripture and accepts the entire Bible from cover to cover. This is what we want for our children's children. We ask you in all sincerity—what do you want for your children's children? For the sake of the preservation of the Gospel ask this question of yourself now—not later.

Dr. R. H. Redal
President

- Continued from Page 4 . . .

ship planning, estate planning, will clinics, etc. Our Development Director will try to meet with all our churches on a regular basis to discuss the appropriate programs for their specific needs.

D. Liturgy and Music

Alternate "A"—Merged Church GENERAL: The new Lutheran Book of Worship reflects poor judgment on the

part of the committee, especially in the area of liturgy. One of the most common reasons for a person leaving the Lutheran Church is the liturgy. The new book has not helped, but has raised even greater questions as to whether the liturgical services can be retained. Contemporary forms have not lived up to expectation even in liberal circles.

Alternate "B"—Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: We have retained a preferred major synods in the publishing of the new hymns.

Published by
Lutherans Alert-National
THE CONSERVATIVE LUTHERAN ASSOCIATION
P. O. Box 7186
Tacoma, Washington 98407

Sponsors of FAITH EVANGELICAL SEMINARY

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID

Permit No. 1016
Tacoma, WA

The Positive Alternative to Merger

1. History

LUTHERANS ALERT was born out of protest against the early departure from the Scripture within The American Lutheran Church. Immediately after the union of 1960 subtle machinations were set afoot for the purpose of emancipating the new organization from the strictures of the excellent Confession of Faith (Art. 4 originally). The first president, Dr. Fredrick Schlotz, revealed this purpose in his address: "The Church's Confessional Stand Relative to the Scriptures." After quoting the article of faith he added:

"The ALC holds that the inerrancy referred to here does not apply to the text, but to the truths revealed for our faith, doctrine and life."

This was a bold, arbitrary evasion of a clear text and, in effect, an announcement, unauthorized, of a new direction of the church body.

A few pastors and laymen, seeing the danger, formed Lutherans Alert in 1965. Its function from that date to today has been and is to contend against that betrayal and its consequences.

The consequences of that "open-end" action have unfolded in the ensuing years. Doubts of Scriptural integrity gradually emerged; literature flowing out from Augsburg Publishing House more and more took on the liberal, questioning tone; unrest increased in the heretofore stable Missouri Synod resulting in the great rupture in that body—the effects of which spilled into the ALC. More and more the social gospel appeared in official publications and brochures; ties with the Sociological Department of the University of Minnesota drew the church into the area of human sexuality. Absorbed in that field, homosexuality became an issue. By this time the ALC leadership had become so absorbed in the world that it became unable to identify this perversion for what it is.

Rebuked in this enterprise the church looks to politics. It becomes an authority on the insolubles of South Africa—and

2. Pastor's Pension Plan

There seems to be a certain amount of mystery surrounding the subject of clergy pensions and the related synodical major medical program within The American Lutheran Church. We, at Lutherans Alert-National, often stress the belief that the A.L.C. pastors are really intimidated by the veiled threats that perhaps they will somehow lose their rights to draws pensions at retirement age if they are not careful in their relationships with the A.L.C. hierarchy. This will become more predominant when the thoughts of merger begin.

For the most part, these fears are totally unfounded. In fact, if the congregation has been faithfully contributing to the pastor's pension for at least five years, all of the monies submitted for this purpose are vested in the pension program for that particular pastor. In the official A.L.C. publication titled, "Pension and Benefit Plan for Clergymen", released by the Board of Pensions of the A.L.C. in 1975, we read:

"A clergyman, who is no longer carried as such on the clergy roster of a district of the Church can have no further contributions made on his behalf. The accumulations to the credit of the member at the time of the termination of his service shall remain to his credit if contributions have been made on his

now of San Salvador. Still restless and uncertain of direction it now is, also, devoting its talents, prestige and authority in devising counseling services to instruct its youth on how to evade the draft; to undermine our national defense under the guise of a blasphemous use of the word "love". We say nothing of the confusion and frustrations created within the church by the infusion of a new hymn book which subtly conceals numerous heresies; nor the brutal excommunication of a doctrinally faithful congregation, Central Lutheran Church of Tacoma.

All these aberrations—and many more, Lutherans Alert has exposed. Its frustration has been the appalling apathy with which its warnings have been received. But, now, as the proposed mergers are looming larger we sense an awakening concern among that body of believers within the ALC who will soon be faced with the necessity of decision.

During the next six years these members must make major decisions on whether to join in a massive church body which has become manifestly humanistic and secular, or rather to separate themselves and do something else. Herein lies the great problem. At least 95% of the ALC members are unaware of the consequences of such a merger. The vast majority has no knowledge that there are responsible alternatives from which they could choose if they decided that the Lord truly was saying to them, "Come out from amongst them."

We at Lutherans Alert and Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary believe we have been placed at this "hinge-point" of history to provide these alternatives and to make the facts known to those who must soon make the decisions for their own congregations. We have had inquiries from ALC & LCA pastors and laymen during the past year requesting further information on alternatives to merger.

behalf for not less than five years. Such accumulations shall be increased by interest credits and used to provide an annuity under the provisions of Article VI. . . ."

What this means is that any clergyman with more than the five-year minimum limitation, has vested rights to that pension at age sixty-five, or sooner in the case of disability.

With respect to additional pension contributions after termination, there is a wide array of private pension plans now available for clergymen. Most of these pay a greater return on the investments than does the present A.L.C. plan.

Clergy have been considered "self employed" by the I.R.S. for many years and, as such, could participate in either the Keogh or IRA plan, or both. * Many of these plans pay 12 percent or more interest annually on tax-sheltered programs which can be used by either the pastor or his widow without discrimination. The A.L.C. plan has been less than adequate for the pastor, as many can well attest, and even less attractive for his wife should the pastor die before she does. In this case, the amount of funds available for the widow is nothing short of scandalous. Under the individual IRA or Keogh plan, the widow has full use of all remaining accruals after normal distribution of closing fees, etc., are taken care of, and she also receives gen-

erous interest payments on the remaining accruals. It would certainly behoove all A.L.C. pastors, whether they remain in the A.L.C. or not, to consider the merits of a private plan but this is especially true for those who may wish to come out with their congregation and thus avoid some of the pitfalls of the proposed merger.

Major medical provisions in the A.L.C. plan are typical of many group plans and can be duplicated by several national and regional companies. We are currently investigating suitable alternatives and will keep you posted as time goes on. The congregation has been responsible to provide adequate pension and medical contributions for their pastors under the A.L.C. program in the past and they undoubtedly would be willing to do the same through a private company, or group plan, which we will continue to research and inform you.

We would urge each congregation, as well as each pastor, to wrestle with these alternatives on pensions during the next few months. It would be well to appoint someone who is familiar with the IRA program to assist your clergymen and

3. Property Control

The thought of losing control of a local congregation's property immediately raises the hackles on both the pastor and on his flock. They consider, with rightful pride the hundreds of hours of work and personal, as well as corporate, resources they have devoted to the planting, maintenance and on-going operation of their local church facility. To even suggest that the property is not the local congregation's legal property is akin to "heresy" of the highest order. But we are quite sure that those congregations which choose to merge will, perhaps unknowingly, be agreeing to relinquishment of all future control to their local congregational property.

You may well ask, "How would such a change ever be approved by the constituting congregations?" The answer is through careful design on the part of the synodical leadership and by the naive of even some well informed laymen. Here is how we see it at this present time.

The LCA approved congregational constitution, dated 1964 and still in force, specifically has included the following—

ARTICLE III:

Section 7. In case of strife or division, if any part of this congregation rejects the faith set forth in ARTICLE II, or refuses to abide by its obligations as a member of the Lutheran Church in America, that part of the congregation, whether a majority or a minority of its membership, which continues in unity with the Lutheran Church in America and its faith shall be recognized as the lawful congregation and shall continue in possession of all the property of the congregation.

Simply put, forthright and already established, documentation is part of the largest body (LCA) of the three merging bodies' constitution. Usually in a merger, such as the one proposed for the ALC, LCA and AELC, the constitution of the largest body would be adopted as a "control" from which other smaller bodies would adapt or modify their particular constitutions. You will notice that the LCA approved Constitution quoted above specifically states that the part of the congregation, "whether a majority or a minority of its membership, which continues in unity (agreement) with the LCA and its faith shall be recognized as a lawful congregation and continue in possession of all the property of the congregation." This means that even if 99% of the congregation felt that the new synod was getting altogether too liberal, too humanistic, too political or heretical, and they wished to leave the synod, they could be overruled by one single person who might agree to the synod's aberrations. Un-

lay workers on the most suitable plan in your community. We would reiterate that pensions need not be considered a veiled threat by synodical hierarchy that could later cause compromise on your theological stance.

For those clergymen who are soon to retire, or have already retired, there is naturally no ready alternative but to keep the existing major medical plan in force. This you are entitled to do if you remain a member of an A.L.C. congregation. It troubles us that such a condition should be a part of the A.L.C. program and I would urge you who are active on the clergy roster to make this a point of order at your next district meeting. Certainly, you have earned the pension and the medical provisos and should not be held accountable for drawing those out in your golden years. This is your right and I believe it is somewhat less than Christian to deny you of that right.

*IRS has currently reevaluated the "self-employed" status of a pastor of a local congregation and is identifying him as an employee of the congregation.

"But," you say, "we will negotiate a more moderate constitution for the merging bodies' use. This will satisfy all of our fears and make it mandatory that the local congregation retain control of their local property." "Not so," says the U.S. Supreme Court, "Church bodies that are governed hierarchically have control over the property of local churches, even in instances in which congregations secede from their denomination." This quote comes from the "Newfront" of the Lutheran Standard, dated March 20, 1981. It seems that even two years ago, the ALC leadership wanted the people to be informed that property control was not contingent on what the local congregations believed, if that congregation is part of a hierarchy regardless of what the local congregation's constitution might state.

We believe that this is a binding and powerful issue to be considered by each congregation before it votes haphazardly to merge. The one opportunity a local congregation will have to keep control of its real estate is at the time of the merger. They should allow those congregations who wish to leave the synod, instead of becoming a part of the merged body, the opportunity to vote to retain their independence. At this time, and at this time alone, we believe, will be the only possible opportunity the congregation may have in this important matter.

Certainly, the positive alternative to merger would be to become an independent congregation which has full and continuing control of all properties but could itself with an association such as the CLA (Conservative Lutheran Association) which specifically would refrain from any congregational usurpation on the matter of property. This will be written clearly into our Association Articles which will be in line with traditional and historic Lutheran practice. In the book, *Christian Dogmatics*, by Francis Pieper, is an article titled, "Church Government" in which he states:

"Of course, the church is free to take care of some things through representatives chosen by it for this purpose. Thus the elders or the church council can represent a congregation and conferences, synods, councils, etc. But if we ask what authority or power these representatives have, the answer is: With respect to the congregation and the individual Christians they always have only advisory power. This is also stated in the Handbook of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1949. Article VII says of the relation of Synod to the congregation: 'In its relation to its members, Synod is not an ecclesiastical government exercising legislative or coercive

tion of a congregation is concerned."

We hope that each of you reading this particularly important alternative will see the danger of belonging to an ecclesiastical government such as the merged group will undoubtedly become. Again,

4. Church Autonomy and the Pastoral Call Process

We have had a good response to our previous mailing to 6,000 pastors within the ALC clergy roster on "An Alternative to Merger". Of those responding, about one-third have asked for additional information which we are now in the process of providing. Some of the respondents, not wanting further information, have been quite "unpastoral" in both word and attitude, but others have been open to at least study the alternatives available. Some have been very favorable and supportive, even providing us funds to carry on this particular program of enlightenment.

We have pointed out that the Conservative Lutheran Association is certainly one of the most viable alternatives to any congregation which does not desire to become a part of the merger, but still desires to be in fellowship with a church body that will not exert pressure on their local autonomy, especially on issues which are clearly the responsibility of the local congregation. We could also have mentioned several other alternatives for the congregations to consider, such as aligning themselves with other existing church bodies, including the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, the Church of the Lutheran Brethren, the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations, or perhaps one of the other smaller church entities. Each of these has certain theological emphases that may or may not suit a particular congregation and, conversely, in which the individual congregation may or may not be acceptable to these respective church bodies. The CLA has not as yet been fully developed in its final form and we welcome suggestions from those who might be leaving the ALC and LCA to help us in our planning for the CLA. We invite interested clergy and lay-leaders to attend our Convention in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 23-25th, to discuss with us this proposed structure more fully.

As noted in the previous article, the local church's property is not a part of the CLA charter. However, adequate provisions will be our concern and we are currently assessing several alternatives in this critical area. We have recently received acknowledgment from the Yearbook of American Churches that the CLA will be listed as a recognized church body in their 1983 Edition. We also are listed as such by the LCUSA (Lutheran Church in the U.S.A.), although we will not be formally affiliated with this latter group.

In the area of "Pastoral Call", past trends within the ALC and LCA undoubtedly will be continuing, thus local congregations will very probably assume less and less voice in the decision-making process of calling a new pastor. District Presidents (Bishops) will sometimes use arbitrary methods to place a pastor of their choice, rather than of the congregation's choice. Lists of those available for call will be imposed on the congregations with little or no input desired or required by the congregation and its Call Committee. This is not a wild speculation but a definite trend that has been rapidly developing since the mid-60's and can be attested to by scores of congregations who wanted a sound Biblically oriented pastor and ended up with an unsound, moderate/liberal clergyman or clergywoman of the District President's choice. This is not as our Lutheran heritage prescribes. Philip Melancthon, in writing "The Treatise on the Power and the Primacy of the Pope" as stated in the Book of Concord, Tappert edition:

Jerome therefore teaches that the distinction between the grades of bishop and presbyter (or pastor) is by human authority. The fact itself bears witness to this, for the power is the same, as I have

we invite your participation in a free and non-autocratic association of like-minded congregations. We will pass this information to other lay leaders in your neighborhood ALC or LCA churches if you write and inform us of their interest.

pastors, and this was ordination, for it was decided that one bishop should ordain the ministers in a number of churches. But since the distinction between bishop and pastor is not by divine right, it is manifest that ordination administered by a pastor in his own church is valid by divine right. Consequently, when the regular bishops become enemies of the Gospel and are unwilling to administer ordination, the churches retain the right to ordain for themselves. For wherever the church exists, the right to administer the Gospel also exists. Wherefore it is necessary for the church to retain the right of calling, electing, and ordaining ministers.

This right is a gift given exclusively to the church, and no human authority can take it away from the church. It is as Paul testifies to the Ephesians when he says, "When he ascended on high he gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, 11, 12). He enumerates pastors and teachers among the gifts belonging exclusively to the church, and he adds that they are given for the work of ministry and for building up the body of Christ. Where the true church is, therefore, the right of electing and ordaining ministers must of necessity also be.

In this quote, Melancthon clearly emphasizes that the church (meaning local congregations) retains the right to Call, Elect, and Ordain ministers of their own choice. This they must exert whenever their authority is challenged. Therefore the alternative for those churches staying out of the merger is to call men who are soundly trained and certified by evangelical conservative seminaries, such as Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary. (We discuss the clergy availability aspect in the next section. Other sources are available and it is our intent to meet the needs of the requesting congregations through various means as discussed below.) We have developed guidelines that a congregation can now use to be sure they are getting the type of pastor they really want. When these, or similar, guidelines have been offered to certain ALC District Presidents in the past, they have put the congregational representatives down and have insisted that such a guideline is an insult to the pastor's integrity, or not needed since the pastor stated his position originally when he took his ordination vows. (This was often years earlier when he had a different theological view.) The guidelines that we now have available for your use cover all areas of pastoral concern and we have even suggested the responses you might expect to each of these areas of concern based on the man's liberal, moderate or conservative view of Holy Scripture. We will send these guidelines, and the expected responses, to those requesting them. These responses are not mere speculations on our part but fit a definite and predictable pattern from a non-biased point of view.

Certainly, some ALC/LCA clergymen will also want to leave their synod with or without their congregation if the merger becomes a reality. These pastors will help alleviate the need for new pastors for a time until a greater number can be trained in our seminary or other seminaries identified with the church bodies previously noted. We firmly believe that the Lord will always provide enough men to fill the pulpits of those churches who are faithful to the Lord in seeking a sound Biblical scholar. At the present time we have received responses from several ALC clergymen who have indicated their readiness to serve the conservative congregations if they should be called to do so.

We ask you, our readers, to furnish us names of conservative pastors who might be available to handle a new call should the merger become a reality. We will keep you posted on this and other issues

authority to place the man or woman of their choice in the existing district pastoral vacancies.

We noted the obvious alternative is to leave the merging church and affiliate with one of the other church bodies, including the CLA (Conservative Lutheran Association) that would permit full congregational autonomy in selecting the man of their own choice.

The problem, naturally, encountered in such an alternative is the ready availability of trained men when the local congregations need them. We acknowledge the fact that if more than five churches asked the CLA for a pastor right now, we would be hard pressed to provide them. Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary graduating classes (1982, 1983, 1984) will graduate only between three to ten men each year. So what would we offer the congregation leaving the merger? Undoubtedly a number of ALC/LCA clergymen will not want to be a part of an ever-increasing humanistic and liberal merged church body. They will finally agree that their responsibility to the Lord is much greater than their allegiance to a man-made synod. We would certainly look for several hundred of such consecrated men to leave and announce their availability for call to congregations wanting them. Several ALC & LCA pastors have already informed us of their desire to serve another conservative congregation identified with our group. With your continuing

help in locating other men, our list of qualified pastors will grow during the next few years.

We have, also, presently identified a number of retired pastors who believe and preach the Inerrant Word of God and who are willing to come out of retirement for five to ten years if need be, to keep the congregations supplied with qualified pastors.

In many instances, we believe, conservative pastors will see to it that their existing congregations are ready to leave with them at the time when the vote to merge or not to merge is made. Thus, these particular congregations will have their own pastor as before. In cases where the congregation votes to leave but the pastor votes to stay, we are confident that the Lord, not our feeble efforts, will provide men for the vacancies. Once the local congregations separate themselves from the synod, they will raise up sons of the church to train in our seminary and within two or three years we will have graduates equal to the openings available. This is where you can again help us get a head start on the process by sending us names of prospective students within your existing congregation. Many of our young men training for the ministry tell us they did not know our seminary existed until one of our readers brought it to their attention. Please help us find the right men in this critical area of "Clergy Availability".

6. Colleges and Seminaries

As previously noted, the proposed merger of LCA, ALC and AELC could result in a new massive church body of over 10,800 congregations, comprising over five and one half million baptized members. This collective group currently supports 20 colleges and 10 seminaries. Many, if not all, of these institutions are served by a faculty heavily representing the moderate/liberal theological viewpoint. In many instances, this viewpoint is not even Lutheran but, strictly speaking, a universalistic, humanistic world view, wherever the Christian emphasis is rarely, if ever, heard.

We are confident there are still a few conservative Bible-believing professors on most of the ALC/LCA college campuses, but at the seminary level, it is increasingly apparent that those who do hold to such "old fashioned" beliefs are nearly unknown and they don't dare to take a bold stand on their personal beliefs. This means that young people at ALC and LCA colleges and seminaries are being fed an ever-increasing diet of secular philosophy which is certainly no more Christian and many times more deceptive than that received at the State universities.

Do we state this only as a conjecture, or can we back it up with actual proof? Only recently, we were invited to participate in a Creation/Evolution debate at an ALC university. The Faith Seminary representatives presented the Creation Model and carefully compared it with the contrasting Evolutionary Model by using numerous scientific findings which clearly favor the Creation Model. The Lutheran University professors, including one non-Lutheran professor of Religion and one Lutheran professor of Biology, presented the Evolutionary point of view and made statements such as, "The Biblical accounts of Genesis 1 and 2 are not to be taken literally and are completely contradictory to each other." One professor stated, "Apparently God is forgetful and He didn't remember what He said in Chapter 1, when He quoted Chapter 2." Another professor stated that in speaking of God, we should perhaps state it as, "She instead of He", to which he received the applause of the students in attendance.

When the Faith Seminary representatives attempted to counter this type of heresy with quotes from Scripture, or general statements regarding our belief in the validity of Scripture, we were scornfully told to shut up by one student and roundly laughed at by the students, in general. None of the university professors used a single solid piece of scientific evidence in their part of the debate but credited scientists favored the evolutionary view and that was good enough for the Lutheran professors as well. When one student asked his professor how he would answer the scientific data presented by Faith Seminary, the professor stated, "These so-called facts were only presented to confuse you with unsubstantiated claims."

they begin to receive pastors who are products of their liberal seminaries, who know nothing about the spiritual dimensions of the human soul and who consequently cannot lead a dying person to a saving relationship with the Savior? These are the alternatives before each one of us. This is where we must stand up and be counted. No longer should we be willing to entrust our families' eternal welfare to leaders who don't want to even talk about alternatives.

You are responsible. I am responsible.

7. Social Services

Alternate "A" — Merged Church

GENERAL: Social services will probably continue to focus on special social action ministries and/or ecumenical concerns. In the past few years, these special concerns have been approached from a purely secular point of view, without regard for the Biblical injunctions against such an approach. Some of these social concerns should rightfully be handled by secular agencies or community service groups, but certainly not by the church. Just recently the liberal church has devoted time and money to such issues as abortion counseling, gay rights counseling, anti-draft registration counseling, human sexuality clinics, etc. The "Wounded Knee" incident, drop-in ministry for anti-establishment or drug counter-culture groups, and other similar efforts, were obviously intended to make the public react favorably to groups who were deliberately violating the law.

ALC and LCA chaplains serving in both the Military and institutions are predominantly from the liberal theological persuasion. They therefore tend to use secular counseling programs of a non-directive nature rather than pastoral counseling program using Biblical injunctions leading toward confession of sins and repentance.

Traditional social service ministries have been very good in most cases but are being gradually de-emphasized by the newer interests noted above. It remains to be seen if hospitals, retirement homes, etc., will remain a high priority ministry.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: Our stress over the years has been and will continue to be one of ministering to each human soul from a Biblical perspective. Jesus said, "I was

for the future strengths or weaknesses of the colleges and seminaries in our particular church bodies. Consider the alternatives — then choose. In the graduating class of one major ALC University this past month, only one student out of the 700 graduating seniors indicated a desire to enter training at a seminary. In years past, the number choosing the ministry would usually vary between 3 to 5%, now it is 1/700th or .014%. Doesn't this say something to you about the state of the ALC with respect to higher education?

hungry and you fed me... etc." Our goals are to minister in areas of physical, social, mental and financial need as our resources permit, but always with the goal of ministering to the person's spiritual needs first and foremost. Our churches are urged to meet the needs in their own communities if possible. To become involved in other concerns is strictly up to the individual congregations. We will serve as a coordinating body to keep abreast of the wider concerns throughout the world and will inform our constituents of these needs through our monthly publication.

SPECIFIC 1: Our seminary students are urged to participate in a wide variety of social services, including work in hospitals, jails, children's homes, day schools, seamen centers, rest homes, rescue missions, mental institutions, etc. We urge our men to conduct services to these people by preaching the Word of God, personally evangelizing, counseling where needed, and extending their hand of assistance when called to do so. These men will hopefully lead their congregations into similar ministry.

2. The men we train for the Chaplaincy are urged to preach, witness, evangelize and counsel their people in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Chaplains are to be pastoral in all their contacts and never forget they are dealing with eternal souls.

3. The C.L.A. cannot offer many of the traditional services found in the large synods at this time. However, several independent Lutheran entities, such as Good Samaritan Retirement Communities and Hospitals do exist to serve the Lutheran Church without regard to synodical roots. As we continue to grow we will assess the needs of our people and seek to fill the unmet needs.

8. Church Growth

Alternate "A" — Merged Church

Numerous new churches have been planted throughout the U.S. and Canada by both the ALC and the LCA, and also their Canadian counterparts over the past 10 years. However, this effort now seems to be languishing and these major church bodies have been losing members at the rate of 20 to 30 thousand baptized per year, overall. This loss is especially critical in the ever decreasing gap between baptized and confirmed members, indicating that the church is losing its young people to the world or to other denominations.

The major Lutheran synods have a "Comity Agreement" dividing up the nation into areas of synodical priority to establish home mission congregations. If a particular town or part of a larger city has been designated for the ALC, then the other synods will not attempt to start a new work in that area. However, other denominations in both the Reformed and Pentecostal bodies don't hesitate starting new churches there.

"Church Growth" concepts have been generally rejected by the liberal church in all main-line denominations because "church growth" normally does not take place through humanistic agencies or with liberal theology.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. The C.L.A. started only two years ago at the annual Lutherans Alert Conven-

9. World Missions

Since the recent conventions of the ALC/LCA/AELC overwhelmingly voted to join in a new church body, you may wonder why we still continue to publish articles entitled, "Alternatives to Merger". We do so because it is still our hope and prayer that some of the clergy and laity may see more clearly the danger signs in the proposed new super church, and will take remedial action while there is still time. There is some question even now whether or not the individual congregations will be given opportunity to ratify the convention approval or whether they will simply be ushered into the new

body without fanfare or voice. Numerous ALC & LCA congregations are presently in correspondence with us to have us advise them about leaving the synod before it is too late. So we continue to inform you of the alternatives that should be considered in the various areas of concern. The area of World Missions is considered below.

Alternate "A" — Merged Church

The world missions effort by both the ALC and the LCA has been rapidly diminishing over the past thirteen years. The ALC dropped over 50% in 3 years from 645 missionaries in 1967 to 320 missionaries in 1980. The LCA likewise

dropped 60% during this same time. In many cases missionaries were brought home without replacement even planned. The church officials claim that the job is done in their particular assigned areas. The emphasis of ministry is often centered in education and other normally secular activities with less emphasis on evangelism and witnessing. There is a growing belief in the liberal parts of the church that we should not try to evangelize the other religious groups to Christianity, since "all roads lead to God." Millions of dollars were given for "Mission" by dedicated ALC and LCA lady over the past ten years. Most of these donors thought "mission" meant foreign missions and would probably be surprised to learn it is a "catch-all" phrase meaning any and all kinds of church activity, both stateside or overseas.

A very small number of seminary graduates in all ALC & LCA schools are even remotely interested in overseas missions. For several years, openings for pastors on the mission field were not filled in spite of an over-supply of graduates for stateside openings. Liberal theology does not motivate a zeal for winning souls.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. The world missions effort by the C.L.A. is firmly based on Christ's Great Commission, "Go, make disciples of all nations...." The job is far from done with still over 2½ billion people who have never heard a clear exposition of the Gospel, nor if they heard, would they have a church to attend within their own culture and language group. We are training men to be missionaries from our

seminary now. Other students are coming from third world countries to be trained as Lutheran pastors and then go back to open up Lutheran schools and seminaries within their own country where they have free access to their own people and culture. We encourage the C.L.A. congregations to support evangelical mission projects and missionaries sponsored by World Mission Prayer League, All Nations Frontier Missions, Lutheran Bible Translators and other similar Lutheran sending agencies. We will continue to offer in-depth missionary training and theological education by extension whenever resources and students are available.

World missions is the job of the church, and the C.L.A. Faith Seminary trains and equips missionaries in numerous ways. All Seminary students are given training in "Church Growth," church outreach, evangelism, and missions. Electives are available in world religions and specific mission courses such as the indigenous church, world missions today, strategy of missions, etc. In-depth mission courses have been designed on linguistics, teaching English as a second language, etc.

The several mission-sending groups noted above will receive our students as fully qualified for the task to which they are assigned. But there are so many openings still to fill. Thousands of openings in every continent gives the C.L.A. churches an unlimited potential for individual or group mission projects. These will be brought to your attention through our magazine.

10. Evangelism

Alternate "A" — Merged Church True Gospel-centered evangelism has been gradually de-emphasized at synod level for the past ten years. Before that time, an evangelism department was considered a vital part of synod operations and in the ALC, staff evangelists were sent out to those congregations requesting them. These men knew the importance of preaching the Law and Gospel effectively to bring about true repentance in thousands of individual hearts. Local congregations were richly blessed in this worthwhile ministry. This service was gradually de-emphasized by first assigning it to a regional basis and later to a district basis where it ultimately died. The merged church will certainly not revive the evangelistic philosophy since they believe that in the final analysis, all are saved, or you are brought into a relationship with God by "corporate" rather than "personal" salvation. This is directly contrary to Jesus' repeated teaching that "He who believes (has faith personally) will be saved."

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. Students attending Faith Evangelical Lutheran Seminary receive a strong emphasis on personal evangelism. At least

11. Publishing and Literature

Alternate "A" — Merged Church Publications generally reflect the theology of the synod, which undoubtedly will continue to grow more liberal in the future. Solid Gospel-centered books and articles will then gradually disappear from the publishing house bookstores. Reprint rights of those fine Biblically correct books of the past will often be denied to those seeking to do the reprinting. Literature for all of the departments and agencies of the church will reflect the humanistic trends previously identified. Emphasis will probably reflect the merged church's desire for further mergers with other liberal church bodies. Periodicals such as "The Lutheran Standard," "The Lutheran" ALC "Scope" etc., will begin to reflect the thinking of the leaders of the new church body. Review of these publications note a marked change from what was published in the early sixties or before. These trends will surely continue.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. Several Christ-centered publishing

12. Parish Education

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: Materials and methods made available to the new church body will certainly reflect the moderate contemporary patterns noted throughout the previous comparison sheets. It is expected programs indoctrinating Sunday School teachers with the new ecumenical concepts will be introduced in a similar way to "The Bible, Book of Faith", in the

"The Lutheran Teacher" or in the Teacher's Manual of the Sunday School material. Students being educated in our church colleges have already received much of this kind of indoctrination. They will become part of the nucleus of a new generation which will consider this the normal church objective.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: Good material and methods for all aspects of parish education is currently available from Concordia Publishing House, Northwestern Publishing House, Lutheran Brethren Publishing House, and several other independent publishers. The materials from non-Lutheran groups must, of course, be screened and edited to be sure the Lutheran distinctives are maintained.

13. Auxiliaries, Conferences, Conventions

Auxiliaries

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: The new church will continue to provide resources for youth and women's auxiliaries as before. The materials sent to the congregations has historically varied from very good to absolutely worthless. Several years ago the ALCW study on Isaiah repeatedly referred to the multiple authorship of the book, it down-graded Messianic passages, etc. We would expect this kind of liberalism to increase under the merged body. Material for youth programs has also been less than uplifting in the past and in many cases, a conservative youth leader would simply not consider the synodical materials for their youth, but would secure good material from non-Lutheran sources.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: The C.L.A. will encourage member churches to establish local organizations without depending on headquarters to provide necessary resources. Several of the C.L.A. congregations have been operating this way for several years and the resulting program is in every way a sound and friendly organization. We will gradually develop resource material when we notice one of our member churches has a particularly good format that could be shared with others. We will encourage member churches to share this kind of material at the annual conventions of the Association. We would encourage member churches to call youth leaders trained in conservative Lutheran Bible schools, rather than in synodical (ALC/LCA) colleges.

Conferences

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: Pastoral conferences have often been reduced to mostly secular formats. In former years, the pastoral conferences were spiritual and edifying and a source of real encouragement for the parish pastors as they traded ideas for ministry, read Biblically oriented papers and discussed ways in which God

The C.L.A. is not presently in a position to develop and distribute parish education material but we look forward to the day we will do so. This will require capable writers, editors, artists, and publishers, plus the distribution of the finished product. We will endeavor to refer all the congregations associated with the C.L.A. to the right materials for their particular needs.

We see a real need for many new Christian schools in the years ahead. These must include grades K through 12. Bible schools, colleges and seminaries. Most of these are now available within the Missouri and Wisconsin synods, but they are not always strategically located for our member families so new ones will be considered where there is sufficient interest and resources.

was working in their respective congregations. Now even some of the more liberal pastors bemoan the fact that the pastoral conferences have become a drudgery, rather than a blessing. Current theological speculations from secular points of view rarely ever satisfy the soul. This kind of format will unquestionably have to continue if the leadership holds a low view of Scripture.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: We have had both formal and informal "free" pastoral conferences at Faith Seminary over the past years. These can be most beneficial in helping one another through some of the difficult situations every pastor must face from time to time. For a number of years we held these conferences monthly, hearing two pastoral presentations at each conference: One, an exegetical or systematical discussion; the other a practical topic for discussion. This kind of pastoral conference format could be established on a regional basis as we grow or as a prelude to the Annual Convention during the next few years. The member churches will decide what will best meet their pastor's needs.

Conventions

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: National conventions have traditionally been held every two years, preceded by the various district conventions. Parliamentary manipulation by the chairman has been the rule rather than the exception. Thus, crucial issues have often been kept from coming to the floor or conservative voices have been ignored completely.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: Lutherans Alert-National and The Conservative Lutheran Association have an annual convention in a different part of the country each year so all can be a part of the process. If a larger federation is formed, we would expect to coordinate the LAN/CLA convention with joint meetings with the larger fellowship. Open discussion by all participants whenever possible.

14. Inter-Church Fellowship

B. Public Speaking on the

C. Stewardship and Financial Planning

D. Liturgy and Music

A. Inter-Church Fellowship

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: Few, if any, restraints among liberal churchmen to mingle freely with other liberal churchmen of any persuasion. Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and ALC/LCA/AELC leaders have dropped all the normal bars for church fellowship. Doctrinal unity is not considered necessary or worthy of concern. This attitude will surely be propounded in the merged church.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: We are confident the conservative bodies can establish a forum or federation in which no one must compromise their doctrinal distinctives but can still find a wide area of agreement and fellowship with other conservatives. The Lutheran Church desperately needs a clear conservative voice to offset the liberal voice which has little spiritual food to offer its people.

B. Public Speaking on the Issues

Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: It is well known that the N.C.C. and the W.C.C. have penchant for speaking out on the issues for their

member church bodies. So, also, the leaders of the three merging Lutheran bodies. Sometimes such speaking is non-supportive of National goals and is misinterpreted by the world as being the official view of the Church. This can easily lead to embarrassment for both the Church and the Nation.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: We intend to speak in an official capacity only on clear Biblical issues, such as morality, abortion, and homosexuality. These can and must be spoken about since they have clear Biblical injunctions to back up our objections. Issues such as El Salvador, nuclear disarmament, peace marches, etc., do not receive official endorsement from the C.L.A. officials but can be argued as each individual decides. We do not intend to embarrass the Church with our human speculations that may vary from day to day.

C. Stewardship and Financial Planning

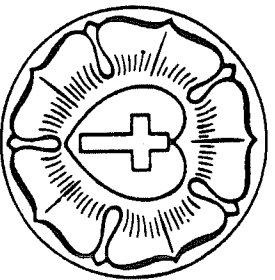
Alternate "A" — Merged Church GENERAL: Both the ALC and LCA had sound stewardship programs in the early years of their existence. Like evangelism, these were gradually relegated to regional or district responsibility and now it is pretty much an individual congregational issue.

Alternate "B" — Independent or C.L.A. GENERAL: We are prepared to offer help to congregations needing stewardship. . . . *continued Page 1, Col. 1*

For more copies write to:
The Conservative Lutheran Association
P.O. Box 7186
Tacoma, Washington 98407

For Canadian Congregations:
The Conservative Lutheran Association
P.O. Box 567
Abbotsford, British Columbia. V2S 4A7

What is going on in the Lutheran Churches?



Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin

What's going on in the Lutheran Churches — A catalog of comparisons

Many pastors and laypeople are aware that a struggle exists between those who hold to the position of the historical Lutheran church and those who support a more moderate view.

However, many members of our church are not clear regarding the nature of the controversy. We have provided a description on this controversy in which we seek to clarify the issues as both sides view them.

A

Historic Lutheranism

I. The Nature of the Controversy

A doctrinal struggle in which the Gospel is endangered because much of the Bible is questioned.

II. Truth and Doctrine

All that is recorded in the Bible is to be accepted and taught as God's Word.

III. Holy Scripture

1. Holy Scripture contains no errors or real contradictions.
2. Miracles recorded in the Bible as historical events actually happened.
3. Christ really said what the New Testament attributes to Him.
4. Only the canonical books of the Bible are regarded as inspired by God and, therefore, the only norm and source of doctrine and practice.

A. The Historical Lutheran view is that of Lutheran's Alert National-The Conservative Lutheran Association.

B. The moderate view is that of The American Lutheran Church (ALC), Lutheran Church of America (LCA), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (AELC). While not all Moderates endorse each moderate position listed, they do ask for tolerance for them all.

B

The Moderate Viewpoint

A political, power struggle in which the Gospel is being down-graded.

The only doctrine that is to be accepted without question is the doctrine of the Gospel.

1. Holy Scripture may err and have contradictions.

2. Some miracles recorded in the Bible may not have happened.

3. Many statements attributed to Christ may be later additions made by the church and pious Christians.

4. Church tradition and Christian preaching may be just as inspired as the Bible.

IV. Creation

1. Genesis 1-3 is understood as speaking of historical fact.
2. Adam and Eve were two real, historical individuals created directly by God.
3. It is contrary to Scripture to hold that the world or man originated according to theories of evolution.

1. A symbolical interpretation of Genesis 1-3 is permissible.
2. Adam and Eve may be symbols of humanity and not real people.
3. The world may have developed by chance processes, and man may have evolved from lower beings chosen by God for that purpose.

V. The Old Testament

1. The Old Testament predicts the person and work of Christ.
2. Whatever the New Testament teaches about the authorship of books of the Old Testament or any part thereof is accepted.
3. Moses is the author of those sections of the Old Testament which are ascribed to him.
4. The books of Isaiah and Daniel were written by these two men.

1. There are few or no direct prophecies referring to Christ in the Old Testament.
2. Matters of authorship of the Old Testament books or sections cannot be determined by New Testament authority.
3. The first five books of the Bible were written centuries after Moses died and came from various sources.
4. Isaiah and Daniel were written, at least in part, by others and our Lord either accommodated himself to error or He did not know better.

VI. The Virgin Birth

The Virgin Birth, as a biological miracle, is believed since it is taught in the Holy Scripture.

The Synod teaches the doctrine of the Virgin Birth, but as the Gospel is not jeopardized by its denial, varying viewpoints should be permitted.

VII. Immortality and Resurrection

Man's soul survives death. At the resurrection the soul and body of the believer will be reunited in a glorified state.

We should not speak of the soul. The nature of the resurrection does not rule out the possibility that the body as such will not rise.

VIII. The Way to Heaven and Missions

1. Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven and no one can be saved without faith in Him.
2. The primary purpose of missions is the preaching of the Gospel of Christ which is always accompanied by a program of social ministry.

1. Sincere followers of non-Christian religions may also get to heaven.
2. Deeds of Christian love may be the only preaching of the Gospel that is necessary.

IX. Morality

1. Extra and premarital sexual relations are sins contrary to God's Word.
2. Overt homosexuality is a sin which is condemned by Holy Scripture.

1. Extra and premarital sexual relations are not always sinful but must be judged by the situation and the precept of love.
2. Homosexuality should be tolerated and accepted in Christian love as a valid life style.

X. Abortion

Except in those cases where the life of the mother or her health is seriously threatened, abortion is a violation of the Fifth Commandment.

Abortion is an individual matter and should be left to the decision of the individuals concerned.

XI. The Position of Women in the Church

It is contrary to Scripture for women to be ordained to the pastoral ministry or to exercise publicly the Office of the Keys.

The question of the ordination of women to the pastoral ministry is one of custom and not applicable today.

XII. The Ecumenical Movement

The Church should not join movements which are involved in unionism or compromise of the Gospel or Biblical doctrine.

Synod should join in Ecumenical endeavors on the basis of agreement on the doctrine of the Gospel. "Jesus Christ is Lord."