

Read before W. Wis. Ministry Conv. at Verona Wis., June 17, 1940
A HISTORICAL AND PRACTICAL STUDY OF SOME MODERN TRENDS CONFRONTING THE LUTHERAN CHURCH
IN AMERICA

History and trends and movements and tendencies present a study which can properly only be given by a person of experience. This study rightly belongs to one who himself has observed the change in times, has felt their forces, contended with the ever-fluctuating array of problems, and, above all, viewed their character, their spirit, in the piercing light of God's Holy Word. To such a study I bring only meager equipment, ill-fitted to present an evaluation of modern trends that is both mature and instructive. By way of explanation, therefore, for my appearance before you, I offer this suggestion. Our former president wanted a study of modern trends, showing the effects such trends have had and are having upon our Church, our way of life, our way of thinking. One way to examine such trends is to observe each succeeding generation as it emerges from the formative period of childhood and adolescence, to scrutinize the imprint which the mold of environment has left on that generation, its line of reasoning, its manner of speech. Some such truth, perhaps, may have been in the mind of our former president when he asked me to deliver the forthcoming essay, offering you a concrete example, exhibit A, so to say, of the effects which modern trends are having upon the younger generations within our Church. So much by way of apology for what would otherwise appear to be a presumptuous undertaking.

One other explanation that is in place at this point has to do with the source of my information. In the course of the essay, figures will be listed, statements will be quoted, dates will be given, and the question may arise: how reliable, how dependable, how accurate are such statements? As an answer thereto, I want to admit forthwith that my quotations do not go back to original source-books, synodical reports, church periodicals, year books, and the like, all of which would be necessary to insure against misquotation, misinterpretation, and misapplication. I have no reason to believe that the secondary source-books which I employed were guilty of deliberate misquotation. Yet, it should be stated here that I cannot personally vouch for the actual authenticity of statistical material offered in the essay.

Regarding the nature of the essay, it is by no means an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Some trends, noticeable today, are barely mentioned; others are omitted entirely. I have merely tried to sketch the general historical background of a few selected trends, hoping to show with these brief sketches at what point of historical development we now stand. As to the term 'trend' itself, the Holy Scriptures teach, and history verifies, that there is really only one trend, be it modern or ancient, which characterizes the human race: that is the trend of unbelief. That trend may assume various guises on a hundred different forms, but essentially it is always the same, without exception leading away from God, opposed to God, and rightfully designated with the single term: unbelief. On the other hand, if there is anything good on this earth, anything clean, anything pure, anything holy, it is not a man-made thing, it is not a human trend, rather, that good thing originates with God, comes from God, and has as its basis the opposite of unbelief: namely, God-given, God-inspired, God-created faith. All so-called movements, tendencies, inclinations, or trends are but a continuation of the never-ceasing struggle between faith and unbelief, grace and sin, Spirit and flesh, New Man and Old Adam. Some phases of the one human trend toward unbelief seem to deal with purely external matters, as far as the soul is concerned. Trends in industry, science, and politics might appear to be of that nature, having little or nothing to do with the forces of faith and unbelief. Yet, in the final analysis, nothing of human design, or human manufacture, long remains indifferent to, or unaffected by, the vast, unseen struggle going on for possession of the human soul. Either the devil employs it to the soul's damnation, or faith turns it to the glory of God. It is the underlying spirit of every human activity that must be watched by the Christian, if he is to profit from a study of history and of so-called trends which move down the halls of history. And it is in the hope of catching some of this spirit that we offer: "A Historical And Practical Study Of Some Modern Trends Confronting The Lutheran Church In America."

When we think of America, we think of democracy, a misused term that has many meanings for many people. And though we live in an age of alleged realism which talks a great deal about corrupt government, political machines, special power-blocs of capital

labor, and the like, all of which tends to lessen the esteem in which our democratic form of government is held, yet, it would be ingratitude of the first order, were we of the Lutheran Church not to appreciate the blessing that God has seen fit to bestow upon us through the American form of government. I refer, ^{primarily} ~~of course~~, to the separation of church and state, the arrangement set forth in our American constitution by which there is a minimum amount of interference between government and church in their respective spheres of activity.

It is a well-known story how the New Testament Church quite rapidly passed through martyrdom and persecution to a position of honor and influence in the Mediterranean world how that honor and influence gradually aroused the desire for power and prestige which would not be satisfied until the bishop of Rome began crowning kings, deposing emperors, setting up states, and controlling governments. It is a tragic story to read how the Church became a government, owner of territories, wielder of armies, brooding spot of intrigue, center of corruption, how cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and priests became governors, magistrates, judges, and tax-collectors while the blood-bought souls of ^{count-} ~~less~~ millions became so many pawns in the rush for power. Many a king and many an army had tried to shake off the shackles of Rome which reached like so many tentacles across the map of Europe, but the power of Rome seemed irresistible, for the power of Rome was the power of conscience, belabored and beset by law and tradition. Only one sword could cut such shackles, and it was to the monk of Wittenberg that God entrusted this sword, the sword of the Spirit, the simple, unused, long-forgotten Word of God. Then it was ^{that} ~~the~~ man once more heard: "My kingdom is not of this world," and ^{Render unto} ~~Give~~ unto Caesar the things ^{that} ~~are~~ are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Then it was that the Church once more heard: "Go ye and preach the Gospel." Then it was that government was once more ^{informed of} given its rightful position, punisher of the evil-doer and protector of the innocent. But sad to say, Church and State were still not separated.

True, the grip of Rome had finally been broken, and one country after another cast off its bonds: the German states, the Scandinavian countries, France, the Lowlands, England and others. But now it was the State which in turn controlled the Church. Luther with his God-given insight into Holy Scriptures had proclaimed the principle of separation clearly enough. More than once he had given the German princes to understand where their duties stopped and the functions of the Church began. The State, Luther well knew, was ordained by God to watch over the bodily welfare of its citizens, whereas the Church's sole function lay in spiritual matters and dealt with man's eternal welfare. Yet, the very fact that the German princes had to protect themselves and their subjects by force of arms from the repeated attacks of Rome-inspired armies led to a gradually increasing supervision over Church by prince and king. Other factors, of course, were also involved, such as the rising spirit of nationalism which caused each ruler to consolidate his position as best he knew how in every phase of his country's life: political, social, as well as religious. The result finally was that state-churches became the accepted order of things in practically every country of northern Europe, state-controlled seminaries, state-appointed ministers, even state-dictated confessions. The French Revolution of 1789 tried to establish a state-church without any creed and with reason as its god. Frederick of Prussia forced his subjects, both Reformed and Lutheran, to enter the state Evangelical Church. Everywhere consciences were violated, Scripture neglected, creeds set down by government decree. Even here in the New World Lutheran settlements, such as the Swedish Lutherans of Delaware remained part of the European State-Church system. Then came the American War of Independence, the cutting of old ties, the final realization of a principle so clearly enunciated by Luther some 250 years before: the separation of Church and State.

At long last the Church was free, free of government interference, free of government intrigue, free of government oppression. The transformation was not an easy one. Lutheran laymen had to learn that they were a royal priesthood, that One was their Master, even Christ. Lutheran clergymen had to learn that ^{they were} servants of the Church by reason of their calling, not rulers of the Church by reason of government appointment. The effects of the old European system still reached across the Atlantic. Each nationality established its own Church. There arose a Finnish Lutheran Church, a Norwegian Lutheran Church, a Swedish Lutheran Church, a Danish Lutheran Church. The Saxons of Missouri founded the Missouri Synod; the Prussians established the Buffalo Synod. Difference in language, of course, was an important factor; confessions too began playing their part. Lutherans, however, have never known anything but a divided Church, divided according to language, divided according to country. And thus the Lutheran Church still suffered to an extent that other churches

in America. never experienced.

In contrast with the Reformed communions, the Lutheran Church employed over eighteen different languages at one time. The Swedes, as we mentioned, first settled in Delaware; the Dutch Lutherans in New York; the early Germans went to Pennsylvania and New York; the Palatine Lutherans settled in New York and elsewhere; the Salzburger went to Georgia. And of all the churches in America the Lutherans seemed to cling most persistently to the use of their foreign languages. Large numbers of young people, entire congregations, entire synods were lost, absorbed into non-Lutheran communions. The Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and particularly the Methodists received large numbers of Lutherans. The Swedish Lutherans of Delaware had disappeared already by the beginning of the last century; absorbed by the Protestant Episcopal Church, ^{partly} because the Swedish crown refused to supply or advise English preaching in the Delaware congregations. The persistent use of a foreign language also had its blessing in disguise, as far as the Lutheran Church in America was concerned; yet it is a fact that in 1921 there were only 3,500,000 Lutherans in America out of 17,000,000 immigrants that had come to the New World from predominantly Lutheran countries. Compare that with 34,500,000 Reformed-constituents on the same date, when only 26,000,000 immigrants had come over from countries that could be called Reformed. True, the all-too-few Lutheran pastors in this country were much too busy gathering in the host of foreign-speaking immigrants coming from various parts of Europe without thinking about establishing English-speaking Lutheran congregations. But the delay of changing over to the English language was often too long, too long for the good of the younger generation for the good of the Church. Only with the advent of World War I did the change take on a rapidly-increasing thrust. Only in the last decade or two has the American public begun looking upon the Lutheran Church as an American Church, not a German Church or a Norwegian Church or a Swedish Church or a Danish Church. Only in the last decade or two have adult confirmations, so very rare in earlier days, become more and more common, a sign that the Lutheran Church has a message for born-and-raised Americans too.

But to come back to the separation of Church and State. What a blessing that Luther parents could send their children to Lutheran schools, that Lutheran congregations could call Lutheran pastors trained in Lutheran seminaries, that Lutheran confessions didn't have to pass the inspection and await the approval of an indifferent or hostile government. Here in America, particularly in the Lutheran Church, and for the first time in New Testament history, was the spiritual priesthood of every believer, layman & clergy alike, allowed to develop and put to practice on a truly wide scale. How Luther would have rejoiced to see the active participation of consecrated laymen in the affairs of the Church, as evidenced in many sections of the American Church today. But Luther well knew that no laity, or clergy either, for that matter, could ever conduct the affairs of the Church in a God-pleasing fashion before the minds of the German people had been freed once and for all of the 1001 abominable traditions and man-made inventions which had been promulgated for centuries already under the guise of Christianity. First man had to be brought back to God's saving Word, to the knowledge that man is a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus, that the Sacraments are gifts of God, not works of man, that the Church is the spotless Bride of Christ, not the shoddy tool of unscrupulous men. First men had to learn the simple Ten Commandments, the Apostle's Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ministry of the Keys, the proper administration of the Sacraments. Then they would be ready, as free children of God, to exercise the liberties and carry out the responsibilities of which all Christians are heirs as Kings and Priests in the Kingdom of God. But even here in America it took some time before this Biblical principle, ^{announced} ~~announced~~ by Luther, gradually found acceptance within the Lutheran Church. It remained for men like Walther of the Missouri Synod and other confessionalists of the Mid-West to remind the laxer synods of the East what the true position of the believer is in relation to the Church. It was Walther in particular who demanded in the early days of the Missouri Synod that lay members be present at synodical conventions, to carry out the full meaning of the passage: "Ye are a royal priesthood." The outcome has been that today we ^{see} the development on a large scale of nation-wide lay organizations. Already in 1888 the Luther League of America was founded, in 1893, the Walther League organization, in 1917 the National Lutheran Education Association, in 1927 the American Federation of Lutheran Brotherhoods, in 1930 the Luther League of the A.L.C.; then followed also the Women's Missionary Society of the U.L.C., the American Lutheran Laymen's League of the Mo. Synod, the Women's Missionary Federation of the A.L.C. Granted that some of these organizations were misused and others founded on purposes not in accord with Scriptures, yet, underlying it all, we have here the full-flowered expres-

of a spiritual priesthood never before realized to such an extent within the Christian Church: Lutheran laymen pushing benevolent organizations within the Church, supporting educational efforts of the Church, giving noticeable help to every phase of the Church's work, an active and aggressive assertion by the Lutheran laity which has been quite different from that of any other Christian communion, whether Roman Catholic or Reformed Protestant.

That this movement should also have its excesses and extremes, was almost to be expected. The devil is a past-master when it comes to gauging the character of a movement and exploiting its weak points. Thus, some sections of the Lutheran Church in America began encouraging lay-preaching, contrary to the Scriptural injunction for decency and order, and, more important, in opposition to the doctrine of the divine call, which prohibits any Christian from undertaking the office of the ministry without the express call of a congregation of believers. This excess, however, has been restricted mainly to the Finnish Apostolic Lutheran Church and to the former Hauge Synod, now part of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America. Another tendency, more widespread and seemingly on the increase, is the establishment of woman's suffrage within the Church, particularly since the federal constitution ~~has been~~ ^{was} amended in August of 1920. In many quarters of Reformed persuasion, woman's suffrage was adopted fairly early in this country. Up until recently however, the Lutheran Church in harmony with the New Testament, ^{has always held,} that women are equal before God in the Communion of Saints, in the one, invisible, holy Christian Church, but not in the external organization and in the functions of the visible church. Nevertheless, women have been granted voting power in the congregations of certain synods, influenced no doubt by Reformed tendencies and also by the general American trend concerning the status of women. In some Lutheran churches women are allowed both to vote and to hold office, even on church councils, and to serve as delegates to synodical conventions. An example of this tendency was experienced by the 1930 convention of the U.L.C., which received a memorial from the Texas Synod with the question: "Is it unscriptural for women to serve as congregational representatives?" The answer of the convention was to the effect that it is not unscriptural, though there ^{were} many dissenting voices, and the matter was reserved for further discussion. Yet the trend is there ^{particularly} in the Danish Lutheran Church and in the Lutheran Free Church.

Of graver consequence and ^{more serious} ~~more serious~~ implication is the gradually increasing confusion on the question of State-Church separation. Lutherans are becoming more and more inclined to forget the suffering and heartache and tragedy experienced by our forefathers in Europe through constant intermingling of State and Church. The Roman Catholic Church has consistently held that the State should serve the Church, as seen in every country where Catholicism has gained control. Many sections of the Reformed Churches have never been able to distinguish ^{clearly} between the proper functions of State and Church. John Calvin, spiritual father of most Reformed denominations, thought it his duty to establish a church-controlled government in Switzerland, modeled after the Old Testament theocracy, a government which enforced the decrees of the church, going so far as to execute heretics that did not repent. The Puritan government of the early New England colonies was but another example of the same idea. The Lutheran Church, too, as mentioned before, has a rather unsavory history in the matter of State-Churches. Yet, it was primarily in the Lutheran Church that the doctrine of separation was clearly set forth, valued, and appreciated as one of the gems of the Reformation. That gem today is being tarnished and sullied in the confusion of State and Church now so prevalent.

Until the last few decades the Lutheran churches in America drew back from intermingling in the affairs of State, but now many sections have followed the Reformed path ^{with} the argument that the Lutheran Church was "antagonizing the public, giving cause for misunderstanding, losing opportunities for witness-bearing." Today it has become the prevailing practice in most quarters of the Lutheran Church to take part in civic affairs, commencement exercises, Memorial Day services, and the like. And the voice of the Lutheran Church once so loud and clear on this point, has become quiet and subdued, hardly a murmur amid the overwhelming roar of approval that greets such practices. Today the government on an ever-increasing scale has become a hirer of chaplains, regulating, restricting, controlling the sacred office of the ministry, arranging divine services, encroaching more and more boldly into a sphere of activity which Christ at one time entrusted to His Church alone. And hardly a voice is heard asking the government where Christ told it to preach the Gospel.

Still more insidious, however, has been the effect which State-Church confusion has had upon the message of the Lutheran Church, upon the preaching of Lutheran pastors. e

denced by an almost imperceptible change from the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the gospel of social salvation, more commonly known as the 'Social Gospel.' With the advent of the industrial revolution, the invention of new machines, the building of factories, the adoption of mass production, the growth of cities, the spread of capitalism, ^{and the} exploitation of the masses, a host of new problems had arisen to plague the industrial countries of western Europe and America. In many cases the governments were either incapable to alleviate the resulting misery of the common people, or, as happened too often, the legal authorities were indifferent to the needs of their people. In any event, the Reformed Churches, ever inclined ^{toward} civic betterment, were soon in the lead with the professed purpose of correcting the abuses that had crept into society, bettering living conditions, instituting reform, and, in general, **laboring** mightily for the establishment of a reign of righteousness here on earth. This entire movement or doctrine, summed up with the term 'Social Gospel', has taken on momentous proportions, particularly since the close of the first World War, and it was inevitable that the Lutheran Church should also be affected thereby.

Among the causes that might be listed for the gradual infiltration of this 'Modern Gospel' into the minds of Lutheran clergy and laity alike, was the fact that Lutheran literature in the English language was definitely scarce for a considerable period of this country's history. As a result, many of the pastors of the English-speaking eastern synods were forced to turn to periodicals and books of Reformed origin, which literature gradually became more and more imbued with the ideals of the Social Gospel and, in turn, affected the minds and the judgment of the Lutheran readers. Then, too, it should not be forgotten that our Lutheran preaching has sometimes tended toward dogmatical lifelessness, lacking the warmth of true Gospel-preaching, causing some to espouse a Gospel whose basic principles are altogether alien to the Lutheran tenets. Finally, of course, every abandonment of Gospel-preaching in any degree goes back to man's innate tendency toward unbelief, materialism, lack of confidence in the promises of God.

Whatever the causes, however, for the spread of Social-Gospel teachings within the Lutheran Church, the signs of its inroads have been quite apparent. We need but look at the courses of study offered by various Lutheran seminaries in America today. In 1870 the courses of study in the different seminaries were almost all alike with minor exceptions. In 1895 some changes had already taken place. Courses were offered in sociology, the philosophy of religion, the history of Christian thought. But by 1922 a radical change had occurred. Social service, Applied Christianity, Urban and Rural Sociology, Christianity and the Problems of Industry, Industrial Hygiene and Sanitation, Unemployment and Related Problems of the Working Class - these were all courses considered necessary for the proper equipment of the Lutheran pastor, mainly in the East, it is true, but indicating the rapid spread of the New Gospel. And if there were any lay members who had as yet not heard of the Social Gospel, they would be hearing it before long from their own pulpits.

Another sign that the Lutheran Church in large part has embraced the teachings and principles of the New Gospel, can be seen in the rash of public pronouncements that more and more Lutheran synods are issuing on economics, politics, and moral questions in general. Thus, the government, within whose jurisdiction 99% of these problems ^{lie}, has been deluged and swamped ^{with} public requests, both Lutheran and Reformed, urging various remedies to bring about political, social, economic reform. Thus, most of the English and Scandinavian Lutheran bodies in America plunged for the prohibition amendment. The General Synod, north part of the U.L.C., was an active member of the National Temperance Bureau. Ten pages of its 1917 'Convention Proceedings' are devoted to a report on the Synod's participation in prohibition movements. Many of its women organizations were connected with the Women's Christian Temperance Union. The Finnish Lutheran Church was said to be responsible for making Upper Michigan dry. The Augustana Synod at its 1930 session passed the resolution "Resolved, that we The Ev. Lutheran Augustana Synod . . . reaffirm our steadfast purpose to oppose any and all measures looking to the repeal of the 18th Amendment." The family prayer books of the U.L.C. contained such ^{prayer} requests as: "Help Thy people to banish all wickedness from every community, the saloon, and everything else that destroys our brother." And again: "Help us to banish the saloon and all other vices." The Augsburg S.S. Lesson Series contained several temperance lessons a year, supporting prohibition legislation. Other pronouncements were also forthcoming. One Lutheran body resolved to ask Congress for a referendum vote before any declaration of war could be made. Another Lutheran body adopted a resolution calling for "mandatory neutrality legislation, removal of munition manufacture from private industry." The U.L.C. forwarded a protest to Hitler concerning

the coercion of Lutheran pastors into political service.

Let me mention at this time, when listing the aberrations of other churches and synods, that I hope to keep in mind Jesus' little discourse on ^{the} notes and ^{the} beams. The failures or errors or mistakes of other church bodies are in themselves no concern of ours, except when they threaten us and our people, which, in fact, they frequently do. But if we can observe the mistakes of others without giving rise to a feeling of self-satisfaction, it will serve to point out the trends of our times and to be forewarned of things to come. The Social Gospel is a case in point. With its far-reaching reverberations within the Lutheran Church, it undoubtedly will also have its effects on us, if it has not already made itself felt in our way of thinking, our way of preaching, our way of living. Nor does the influence of the Social Gospel merely exhibit itself by way of public church pronouncements on matters usually no concern of the Church. Another product of the Social-Gospel movement is the tendency of many churches to use or employ secular agencies to carry out moral reform. One such agency which the Lutheran Church has employed was the W.C.T.U. (Women's Christian Temperance Union) in connection with the agitation for prohibition legislation. Another agency that falls into the same category is the Boy Scout organization, which today has entered our Synodical Conference. The Boy Scouts too have their origin in the movement for social reform, and their avowed purpose has always been the betterment of human society through moralistic methods.

All these outgrowths of the Social Gospel reveal the alarming confusion that exists today on the principle of State-Church separation. In a dozen different ways the Church today is encroaching upon a field of activity strictly belonging to the government alone. The Church nowhere has the command to save human society. The Church's work is to save human individuals through the preaching of Jesus Christ crucified. That such preaching alone brings about true social reform, is a secondary matter, but it reveals another failure on the part of social-gospelites: the mixing of Law and Gospel. The Social Gospel is in reality no Gospel; it never has been. It is Law pure and simple, and at that it is Law being misused and abused. It is Law used, not to bring man to a knowledge of his sin, but to bring man to a heaven on earth. Hence, two of the brightest gems of the Lutheran Reformation are today under American influence ^{once again in} losing their sparkle: the doctrine of separation of Church and State, and the proper distinction between Law and Gospel.

Another pearl of the Reformation, however, has gained its brightest luster under American influence and environment: that is the priceless pearl of Christian education. In Europe, particularly Germany, the constant intermingling of State and Church soon ~~laid coarse hands on this rare jewel~~ ^{once again in} of the Lutheran Church, and Christian education as practised in the state schools, eventually became a curse to the Church, not a blessing. But in America God has given the Lutheran Church an unlimited opportunity to practice what she preaches. During colonial days practically every Lutheran congregation in this country had a parochial school of some type or other, and to Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg goes the credit for encouraging the colonial Lutherans to establish and maintain their own schools. Thus, for over 75 years nearly all the synods of the East and South had ~~flourishing~~ ^{ing} parochial school systems. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania, founded in 1748, had 73 schools in 1844, not quite a hundred years later. The West Pennsylvania Synod had 52 schools in 1825, 79 schools by 1834. The Synod of Maryland & Virginia had 39 schools in 1821, and the New York Ministerium had 9 schools in 1839. Up to about 1830 nearly all of these synods enjoyed a healthy increase in parochial schools, mainly due to German immigration. After 1840, however, the flow of German immigration had shifted to the Mid-West, and it was here in the Mid-West that the Lutheran school system was developed and expanded as never before. Nearly all of the German Synods here in the Mid-West at first gave impetus to this movement, but it was the Missouri Synod with its Saxon Lutherans under the zealous leadership of Dr. Walther that set the pace. Despite adversity and hardship, indifference and opposition, the ^{Missouri} Missouri Synod in an amazingly short time had more parochial schools than all the other Lutheran Synods in America combined. The Swedes and the Danes, the Finns and the Norwegians, also set out with good intentions and with promising schools, but lack of tenacity and weakness of conviction soon proved too much for a continued effort in this direction, so that by 1885 less than half of the Swedish congregations still had their schools. And while confessional laxity and doctrinal indifference were unrelentingly ^{under} casting their withering blight upon the ~~rare~~ ^{rare} flower of Christian education in nearly every other Lutheran synod of America, the parochial schools of the Synodical Conference have

continued to grow and expand right up to the present day, thanks to God for the confessional basis laid by Walther and his co-workers ^{within the Synodical Conference} in both the Missouri and the Wisconsin Synods. And while today the large U.L.C. has not one parochial school left within the boundaries of the United States, while today the large A.L.C. has but 36 schools, tottering in the balance and in danger of extinction, the Synodical Conference has nigh unto 1400 schools, and the cry is for more and more teachers and larger normals. But lest we of the Synodical Conference think it time to relax, we of the Wis. Synod with our 175 177 schools, our brethren of the Mo. Synod with their 1221 schools, it might be well to consider that the Roman Catholic Church ^{in America} today has approximately 8000 schools with an enrollment in excess of 2,000,000 pupils - that compared with our Synodical Conference enrollment, which I would guess to be in the neighborhood of 85 to 90 thousand pupils. Still, no other Lutheran group in America has more reason to thank God in all humility for the unsurpassed blessings which God in His love and mercy has showered upon us in our efforts towards Christian education.

It was mentioned that underlying the decline and fall of the parochial schools in other Lutheran bodies of America were confessional laxity and doctrinal indifference. This fact can hardly be overstressed, for the Christian school is almost always the first and ultimate expression of doctrinal consciousness, and, of necessity, the Christian school is almost always the first and quickest casualty of doctrinal indifference. Another factor, however, was also involved in the disappearance of Christian schools within the other Lutheran synods of America; that was the rise and spread of the American Sunday-School system.

The modern Sunday-School is usually credited to a man named Robert Raikes, who established such a school for the poorer children of Gloucester, England, in 1781. Luther already had originated Sunday-Schools in Germany; John Knox had started one in Scotland in 1560, the Catholic Church had Sunday-Schools at Milan, Italy, at an early date, and even the colonists here in America employed Sunday-Schools before the close of the 17th Century. Yet most of these efforts were of a sporadic nature, and Robert Raikes may quite properly be called the father of the modern Sunday-School. The first American Sunday-School of the modern type opened in Philadelphia in 1790 or 1791, and was intended for poorer children. Among the Reformed churches the Sunday-School spread quite rapidly and was adopted with much zeal and enthusiasm. The Lutheran Church, however, was slow in accepting this new method of Christian instruction. For one thing, the Lutherans had always had a system of instruction far surpassing anything which the Reformed churches were able or willing to maintain. It was natural that many Reformed churches, with their watered-down doctrine of original sin and their innate goodness of the human being, would be less inclined to spend much time with any systematic course of religious instruction. Just as natural was it that the Lutheran Church, impressed with the total depravity of the human being, would consider religious instruction of the young as a vital and essential part of the Church's work. As a result, the Lutheran Church here in America had its parochial schools, its catechetical instruction, and its so-called Kinderlehre or Christenlehre. Nearly all the early synods in America employed all three of these forms of Christian instruction. Moreover, the foreign-speaking Lutherans, Scandinavian & German still had a good background of literature in the field of instruction which other churches lacked. And no other church had anything which was so wide-spread or could compare with Luther's inimitable Small Catechism. Furthermore, the Lutheran Church consistently held that it was not enough to devote one day a week to religious instruction, not correct to separate secular education from religious education, and a tragedy to pull a child five days a week toward earthly matters and then attempt to pull it in the opposite direction toward spiritual, heavenly matters half an hour, or an hour, on Sunday. Thus, while the Reformed churches eagerly embraced the Sunday-School system, the Lutheran churches a long time held aloof, maintaining their old, established, far superior modes of instruction.

It was among the English-speaking Lutheran congregations of the East that the Sunday-School first took hold, and the first Lutheran Sunday-School, organized on a permanent basis, originated at St. John's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, in 1821. From that time on the Sunday-School gradually began to spread to other Lutheran congregations. At first it was usually merely tolerated as a necessary sectarian ^{add}, and it caused considerable confusion and trouble at the start, because the Sunday-School at that time ~~was~~ was a self-governing organization within each congregation, quite independent of any congregational control or supervision. With the course of time, however, the attitude

the Lutheran Church toward the Sunday-School altered, and the congregations soon learned to bring the Sunday-School under their own control. One immediate effect that the Sunday-School had upon the Lutheran Church was, as stated before, the downfall of many parochial schools. This was particularly the case in Lutheran synods that were already confessionally weak. On the other hand, ~~however~~, among confessional strongholds the Sunday-School, when adopted, was used to bolster and support and to increase the enrollment of parochial schools employed not as a substitute for the Christian Day School but as a supplement, reaching out to children and homes that would otherwise have remained untouched. Another effect that the Sunday-School has had goes back to the practice of Lutheran churches to use Interdenominational Sunday-School material, material which was invariably prepared by men of Reformed convictions. Thus, many doctrines of Reformed taint crept into the Lutheran churches by way of the Sunday-School: Lutheran boys and girls were taught that Baptism and Holy Communion are sacred symbols, nothing more, that all boys and girls have to be converted when they reach the age of discretion, that Jesus was, above all, a good example who they ought to follow, that they should pray for the coming of the Millennium. Moreover, they heard a great deal regarding the Second Table of the Law, presented in a moralistic manner, and the first three Commandments were sorely neglected. It didn't take long before conservative Lutherans, of whom there have always been some among most Lutheran bodies, began to speak up and protest in church periodicals, on the floor of conventions. But it was not till 1911, ~~for example~~, that the General Synod, ~~in 1911~~, abandoned its affiliation with the International S.S. Association. Other synods had dropped the use of this poisonous S.S. material earlier, but the effects of such S.S. lessons can still be seen. Today nearly all Lutheran bodies use their own S.S. material or an expurgated edition of the International Series.

Generally speaking, the Sunday-School has had both good and bad effects upon the Lutheran Church of America today. If the Sunday-School is regarded as a competent substitute for the Christian Day School, if, as seems to be happening more and more frequently the Sunday-School is regarded as a substitute for the Church, as far as church-attendance for the young people is concerned, then the Sunday-School is definitely a threat and a danger to the Lutheran Church. But if the Sunday-School is properly employed, neither abused or misused, neither overvaluated or undervaluated, then it is indeed a blessing for the Church, a valuable handmaiden and a profitable mission tool. Nevertheless, it must be admitted by anyone with a fair amount of Christian intelligence that the Sunday-School by itself is a weak, puny, piteable toy to pit against the towering, massive, scornful giant that is striding across our land today in the form of a materialistic, evolutionistic, American public-school system.

It would be impossible to compute or to ~~weigh~~ ^{weigh} the innumerable effects which the American public-school system has had and is having upon the Lutheran Church in America today. There is hardly a doctrine in the Bible which is not being undermined or contradicted or ridiculed by our American public schools, usually not directly or intentionally; it is true, but, which is ~~even~~ more perilous, by indirection, implication, insinuation. And if the conservative Lutheran knows nothing else about our public schools, their very mention should bring to mind one word, at least: the word "evolution." This is the teaching which has taken God out of the universe and raised up in God's stead the idol called "Natural Laws." This is the doctrine which the American children are taught to imbibe from the days when they can barely toddle to Kindergarten to the time when they receive their doctor's degree in the highest, most learned post-graduate schools. This is the doctrine which probably more than any other teaching has split our Lutheran Church in America from top to bottom and has raised an almost insurmountable barrier to a God-pleasing, prayerfully-desired union of the various Lutheran synods in America today.

Evolution is really more than a teaching. It is a way of thinking, a way of believing, a way of living. Plainly speaking, evolution is unbelief, materialistic unbelief, dressed up in modern style. Essentially, therefore, evolution is an old, old story going back to the question: "Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden?" For practical purposes, however, we can be content to trace evolution back two or three centuries when the center of man's thinking had shifted from the theology of the Middle Ages to the study of science, the spread of mechanical inventions, and the application of reason for the solution of all earthly problems. Reascend particularly, was to be the lever by which man was now going to lift himself from the social, political, economic, and moral mire in which man found himself. Sin, of course, was not taken into account, and God was an unnecessary fixture which had no place in

the temple of reason. The reign of reason, it must be admitted, has had its setbacks and disillusion. Sickness and death and war and pestilence have caused no end of trouble in this age of Enlightenment. Yet, reason still reigns supreme, ~~to this day~~ the goddess of the modern world. And one by-product of this variation on unbelief was evolution, ^{inaugurated primarily by two men, Darwin & Huxley, who} taught that this world and everything on it have evolved or developed from some primitive form of matter according to certain immutable laws of nature. Once again the ceaseless struggle between faith and unbelief had burst forth into the open, and almost immediately the life-and-death battle between reason and revelation, between evolution and Genesis I, had entered the arena for possession of man's soul.

It was in 1859 that Darwin had come out with his now-famous book "The Origin of Species." The Christians of Europe felt the brunt of the first attack, but here in America it was after the Civil War during the Period of Reconstruction that the American churches encountered the full impact of Darwinistic evolution. The casualty list of that encounter has still not been completed. Many, many of the liberal Reformed churches fell easy prey to this destroyer of the Christian faith, and the Lutheran Church ~~likewise~~ ^{has also} ~~not remained unaffected.~~ In general, the Lutherans of today are divided into three distinct ranks over against evolution and all that it represents. The first rank, and fortunately the smallest rank, is made up of Lutherans who have whole-heartedly adopted evolution as their religion. Such Lutherans now teach that the Bible is merely a collection of great religious writings, part of the evolutionary development of religion, and certainly not God's Word. For them Christianity stands on the same level as Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Taoism, merely one of the great man-made religions that have evolved down through the ages. The second rank of Lutherans over against evolution is considerably larger than the first rank. Lutherans of this second class have adopted a concessive attitude toward evolution. In other words, they are willing to make certain concessions but attempt at the same time to retain the essentials or fundamentals of the Bible. Thus, a certain Lutheran Dr. Schmauk ~~wrote~~ ^{wrote} in 1912: concerning the creation of light as recorded in the first book of the Bible: "We must not think of that light as being created within an ordinary day, in immediate response to His almighty Word. No, we must think of God as making a long, laborious speech, requiring extended periods of time, corresponding to the geologic ages of Science, and thus gradually, with much patient labor, producing light out of nothing." Thus, a certain Lutheran Dr. Keyser ^{was} ~~is~~ quoted in 1917 as saying, that in Genesis I God accommodated His language to "unscientific simple-minded views" of primitive people, that "the evolutionary process may have continued (for milleniums upon milleniums) until the introduction of life. Whether man's body was evolved or not, surely his soul must have been created." Thus, the "Theological Forum" of 1931 had the quotation: "It is very important that we should avoid the common error of assuming that a miraculous revelation of detailed scientific truth was ever designed by God in His Word. The account of Creation is given in popular language." Thus, another Lutheran ~~wrote~~ ^{wrote}: "The doctrine of the complete inerrancy of the Bible can hardly be maintained in the light of the historical method of understanding the Scriptures." And another Lutheran ~~wrote~~ ^{wrote}: "a literally infallible Bible . . . has passed by the board for good." In such a manner the Lutherans of the second rank have met the onslaught of Evolution, conceding that certain scientific parts, certain geographical allusions, certain historical sections of the Bible are not God's Word, conceding that science, evolution, reason are more reliable, more trustworthy than the Holy Scriptures. That class of Lutherans, we repeat, is quite large. In fact, their views are propagated and disseminated in the seminaries and official publications of the largest Lutheran body in America today, the United Lutheran Church of America.

And there we have one of the great obstacles to Lutheran union today, for there is another rank, a third rank, of Lutherans who hold that the Bible, all of it, was inspired by God. This class of Lutherans, comprising, we believe, an overwhelming majority of the Lutherans in America, still believes that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," still believes that "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," still believes that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God." And Lutherans of this class realize that there is no middle ground, no compromise, between "All scripture" and "part of the Scriptures;" they know that to give up part of the Scriptures is to lose all the Scriptures. Lutherans of this class are not willing to entrust their souls' salvation to the frail hands of arrogant Science, to the meandering guide of presumptuous reason. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that the American Public School which today is sponsoring evolution on a massive scale, has had and is going to have tragic effects upon our Lutheran Church in America.

(with some of this sort - beginning of third part)

As you may have noticed, I have been rather liberal with the word "Reformed Church" when speaking of American influences effecting our Lutheran Church. Now I don't propose to turn the Reformed Churches into a ^{all-around} scapegoat, on which the Lutheran Churches in America can lay all their sins. Our Old Adam is perfectly capable of acting for himself without any outside help, be it Reformed or otherwise. Yet it can be said without much fear of contradiction that the Reformed churches have given our country its tone. American literature, American politics, American culture, American ideals, the entire ^{mixture} ~~blend~~ simmering in the so-called American melting pot has an aroma that is decidedly Reformed. Even our language is the language of the Reformed churches. It was to be expected, therefore, that such an atmosphere could not be breathed long by the Lutheran Church before it became part and parcel of the Lutheran Body in America. ~~And that is something I should like to have you keep in mind as we briefly run through the last 150 years of Lutheran development in this the New World.~~ ^{And that is something I should like to have you keep in mind as we briefly run through some of the history of Lutheranism}

Along about the time that Paul Revere was just learning how to ride a horse and the traffic in tea was becoming a most profitable business at Boston, the countries of western Europe were entering upon that grand experiment which we today call the Age of Enlightenment. It was the age, as we mentioned before, in which faith was replaced by reason, and the almighty, eternal God was restricted to the human mind. Everywhere the champions of reason seemed to be holding the field, and the poor, humble Christians were almost ashamed to say "I believe." Frenchmen could hardly wait for the next edition of Voltaire, whose barbed ridicule was leaving many a mark on the Church. In Germany Lessing was doing his bit, and the English applauded while sitting down to write out new taxation for the colonies. It wasn't long before the English had other thoughts to occupy their minds, but France, which no longer had Lafayette, still worshipped reason, reason which an angry God finally spattered with blood, the red, crimson blood that flowed so freely in the terrible French Revolution of 1789. But even while ~~France~~ ^{Europe} and his frenzied citizens were storming the Bastille of Paris, Satan and his cohorts were assaulting the Lutheran Zion of America, for the waves of rationalism had also washed up on the coasts of the thirteen colonies.

In New England the Congregational Church was being ^{torn} ~~asunder~~ by Unitarianism. And in New York the Lutheran Ministerium was taking guidance from its president Dr. Quitman, who had received his training at the German university of Halle. There were 25 fully-staffed faculties of theology in Germany at this time, and hardly a one of them that had not torn the Bible to shreds. But the university of Halle seemed to have outstripped them all, and even long-dead Pastor Muhlenberg had feared the graduates of Halle more than all the ^{other} graduates that German universities were sending across as Lutheran pastors. But let Dr. Quitman speak for himself, and for the New York Ministerium. In his liturgy the term "Holy Spirit" was changed to "The higher reason of Christianity," the word "regeneration" to "The beginning of nobler impulses." The Communion prayers were offered to the "great Father of the Universe," and as for reason and revelation: "Are not both from heaven, always in agreement and the one supporting the other?" No congregation in the Ministerium dared demand that its pastor pledge himself on the confessions of the Lutheran Church. No doctrinal matter could be discussed on the floor of conventions, unless the rule applied: "That the right of free research, be not infringed upon, and that no endeavor be made to elevate the Ministerium to an inquisitorial tribunal." Luther's Catechism was outmoded; Dr. Quitman's Catechism substituted. The new teachings ran as follows: man did not lose the divine image at the Fall, the image was merely stained; Jesus was called the Son of God, merely because of His "exalted dignity and preeminence above all creatures;" the "forgiveness of sins" of the Third Article was explained as "the sentiments of charity for every one who has erred from the way of truth. You can imagine what happened to Baptism, the Lord's Supper, and all the other teachings we call Lutheran. Here in New York rationalism reached its peak, but other Lutheran bodies also showed its effect. In 1792 the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, once the joy of Muhlenberg's heart, changed its constitution so that no mention of any symbolical book of the Lutheran Church could be found, lest anyone take exception on some doctrinal issue. And when the Synod of North Carolina was organized in 1803, the very name 'Lutheran' was dropped, and the theological candidates for ordination were asked to pledge themselves to "ye Rules, ordinances, and customs of ye Christian Society, called ye Protestant Episcopal Church in America."

It should not be inferred from all this that there weren't any Lutherans left in the Lutheran Church of America. There were. Only the East was no place for them, not if

they feared laughter and ridicule and derision that ruling Rationalists would have heaped upon them. Still there were some Lutherans, even in the Ministerium of New York, whose conscience bothered them more and more. That wonderful seed of faith in their heart had survived the icy blasts of cold reason, and gradually their whispering protests reached the stage of a low murmur. Particularly in Pennsylvania did the reaction set in. Pastors began to gather in small groups, and even the word "Lutheran" was occasionally spoken out loud. Slowly these pastors gained confidence, and at length they reached the conclusion that it was time to organize, to form a closer-knit union over against the exponents of Rationalism. The result was that the Ministerium of Pennsylvania forwarded invitations to several other Lutheran synods, and in 1820 the first ^{Lutheran} general synod to be held in America convened at Hagerstown, Maryland, on Sunday, the 22nd of October, to draw up a constitution. The delegates from the various Lutheran synods dared not mention Lutheran confessions in their constitution. The specter of rationalism still loomed too large. But these men were determined to give some expression to their faith, and so they boldly inserted into their new constitution the words: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and ground of our faith and hope."

The Lutheran Church of America had survived a major crisis. By 1829, nine years later the pastors of the newly-formed General Synod were required to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession. The tide of Rationalism had lost its force. True, large sections of the Lutheran Church had been laid waste. Many a precious soul had been ^{pulled into the deep,} ~~washed away.~~ The Lutheran Church was a piteable sight. It held a ridiculously small lantern in its hand. One could hardly see it in the swirling mists. But there was light there; there was faith. It was a weak faith; it was a faltering faith. But all the forces of hell had not been able to ^{it completely} ~~extinguish~~ it. Nevertheless, Satan already was regrouping his forces. The time had come to attack on the other flank. This was all an old, old story for him, and he knew his business all too well. First rationalism, then emotionalism; first pietism, then liberalism. As long as the Lutheran Church in America hadn't found its footing in the Word of God, it would be an easy matter to push her into the other extreme. And that is exactly what happened.

Barely had the Lutheran churches of the East repulsed the attack of rationalism when they found themselves floundering in the quicksand of revivalism. "Reason," the English-speaking Lutherans of the East now argued, "had proved to be a false guide. Reason had betrayed them. The emotions, the feelings, they were the things that counted. You had to feel religion; you had to feel the Holy Ghost when He worked in your heart; you had to feel your conversion. Then you could be sure that you were saved." Thus the Word of God which alone had seen them through the last storm, was again discounted, and almost the entire portion of the ~~English-speaking Lutheran congregations~~ ^{synods} of the East plunged overboard for revivalism. The Maryland Synod practiced it. The Hartwick Synod practiced it. One synod even, the Franckean Synod, was organized just because its founders believed that others weren't "advanced enough" in revivalistic methods. And the "anxious bench" of the revivalists became a Lutheran pew, as the Franckean Synod declared in one of its reports: "The first anxious seat (or bench) was opened among us in 1831, and has been used more or less ever since as a blessed means of calling out awakened and convicted sinners, and has been approbated of God to the conversion of thousands of souls." Similarly, the synodical reports of the General Synod and of the General Council, ~~to which the various synods of the time belonged,~~ listed for many years the accessions or gains made through congregational awakenings and revival meetings. Lutheran pastors soon became professional revivalists. The anxious seat would be crowded with occupants, all anxious about their conversion. The meetings would stretch on, hour after hour, the exhortations would become more vehement, more urgent. Suddenly an occupant of the anxious seat would leap to his feet, finally converted. There would be moanings and swoonings, holy laughter, holy jumping. To deliver a doctrinal sermon, at such a meeting, say, on the essence of the church, would be worse than playing Chopin's funeral march at a wedding. And to instruct children in Biblical doctrine was a waste of time. Conservative Lutherans that still spoke of instruction were called "head Christians," "catechism Christians," "memory Christians". Humble Lutheran families began abandoning ~~the~~ family devotions. Prayers read from books were an insult to God, and, since many a layman didn't know how to make free prayers, he dropped family prayers altogether.

These were but a few of the effects which revivalism had upon the Lutherans of that period. But again there were conservative Lutherans left whose warning voices gained more

and more attention. Another reaction soon set in. But most of the Eastern synods weren't given much chance to recover their balance. Hardly had they come to a halt, still reeling from the emotional storm through which they had just passed, when the Tempter, that master of strategy, was leading them off on another tour of rationalism. This time, of course, it was of a slightly different form, more refined, more tolerant, harder to detect. Now he was setting the field for the appearance of evolution, and what that brought about, we have already seen.

In the meantime, however, strange voices were starting to arise, particularly from the Mid-West. At the very first sound of these voices the Old Evil Foe seemed to become a bit older. He had heard these voices, these words, before. And every time he had heard them, he had come off second best. "It is written," one voice was saying. Another was asking: "What saith the Scriptures?" A third was whispering: "The just shall live by faith. The just shall live by faith." That last voice, especially, had an old, familiar ring to it. Oh, how he hated that voice! What he wouldn't do to put an end to that voice! Again and again he had thought that the voice was finally dead. And then down through the centuries the same voice would crop up again, maybe in a different land, maybe in a different tongue. But it was always the same voice: "The just shall live by faith." It was almost as though someone stronger, wiser, more powerful than he were protecting that voice. Yes, there it was again: "The just shall live by faith."

* * * * *

A few necessary remarks are herewith appended. The essay above is, at best, a rough sketch. It is scantily attired and loosely put together. It is merely an attempt to touch upon some highlights scattered through a field of sweeping range and vast scope. Regarding the rather abrupt ending of the essay, it could be stated that this was a makeshift arrangement. By the time our convention at Fond du Lac had concluded its Tuesday's session, it already was apparent that we would be urgently pressed for time. As a result, I condensed some portions of the essay and dropped other sections entirely. The bitter struggle that occurred between so-called 'American Lutheranism' and 'Old Lutheranism,' the almost violent doctrinal controversies that flared up in the confession sections of the Mid-West, involving also our own Wisconsin Synod, the final adoption of a decent, orderly, doctrinally-sound liturgy which has meant so much to the Lutheran Church in America, and some mention of outstanding features characterizing the present-day trend toward unionism - these were the matters with which the essay might more fittingly have been concluded, following the ebb of revivalism. In substantially reducing the length of the essay, however, I regarded the above-mentioned matters as a unit and deemed it advisable to break off where I did.

In conclusion, a detailed account of American influences upon the Lutheran Church may be found in Dr. Paul Spaude's "The Lutheran Church Under American Influence." Many of the quotations and other matters of statistical nature in the foregoing essay were taken from this source-book, and corroboration of such material can quite readily be located in Dr. Spaude's work.

Oscar J.
Siegler