

The Roads to Decision (Draft, 8-20-2010)

Issues Facing Congregations and Pastors of the Mainline Protestant, Confessional, and Evangelical Churches, focusing especially on the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), and its emphases on contextual theology and contextual ethics.

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The initial purpose of this presentation is to inform and uphold the convictions of Christians who recognize that they are: 1) called to worship their Lord and Savior in Spirit and in Truth, 2) that somehow they are subject to hostile maneuvers by their ecclesiastical hierarchy; and 3) that their Freedom as Christians and as Americans has been subverted.

So, it is not just about homosexuality, is it!

The decision of the 2009 Church Wide Assembly to approve the ordination of persons in homosexual unions, among other decisions, was merely the catalyst for a schism based on several controversies that had been simmering even before the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in the 1980s. The history of the Churches of the Lutheran Reformation is one of constant and ever present reformations. *Semper Reformanda*, “Always Reforming,” is the sign of a dynamic Church, not of a static ecclesiastical organization. “The Church is the Fellowship of the Forgiven Learning How to Forgive” is a definition that illustrates the dynamic force of God’s Holy Spirit working to renew each of us personally and as corporate members of His Body..

The second purpose of this paper is to provide background, insights, personal experiences, and information to and for those seeking some clarity in the current ecclesiastical, theological, and historical controversies that have emerged in Lutheran, and other churches, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It is hoped that the following subjects will be of help to confirm and/or clarify positions both now held or emerging among pastors and lay persons within the ELCA and the growing number of reforming churches and associations that have existed before and after the 2009 ELCA Church Wide Assembly.

The “events” occurring in Christian Churches at the end of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st Century are only a small part of the much, much larger progression of movements and cultural cataclysms that have erupted now here, now there, and will affect the lives of people nearly everywhere. These “events” affect not only us here and now, but our children, grandchildren, and our families and churches for generations. Because so many ideas, events, and movements are flowing into a major change in civilization, we will only be able to note them in brief. Some will believe that their own major concern is the most important aspect of the coming change that we already are experiencing. For those of us who view our concerns in this manner, perhaps we should recall the statement by Clement of Alexandria (c.150-c 212 A.D.), the second known

head of the first Christian institution of higher learning, the Catechetical School of Alexandria. “The River of Truth is One, and into it flow many tributaries, but, remember, the tributary is not the River.”

Because I have not entered the written debates in the ELCA up till now, except to a few individuals that I know well, I will state briefly my background, so as to inform those who read this on why and how I have come to this position. My wife and I went to Dana College, from which I graduated (B.A.) in 1953, the Chicago Lutheran School of Theology (B.D.) then located in Maywood, IL, in May, 1956, and the University of Iowa from 1956-59-- (Ph.D.) 1965. I served as Synodical Missionary (troubleshooter) under the President of the United Lutheran Synod in Iowa (1956-59), Campus Pastor and Instructor at Minot (ND) State College from 1959-61, Chaplain and Associate Professor at Midland Lutheran College in Fremont, NE, from 1961-66, Director of the School of Religion and Associate Professor in the Lutheran Chair of Religion at the University of Montana from 1966-69, Associate Editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica from 1969-73, and executive manager of several divisions (Program Development, International Meetings, Planning and Research, Rotary Foundation Programs, Executive Assistant to the President, etc.) of Rotary International from 1973-98. One of my responsibilities at Rotary International was the development of the initial plans for the Global Eradication of Polio. Work at The Encyclopaedia Britannica and Rotary International was like studying for a second Ph.D degree in world cultures and civilizations.

God has blessed us with a multitude of experiences—family, ecclesiastical, academic, and international—and of people and of cultures from all over the world. The focus of my graduate study at the University of Iowa, under Dr. George Forell and another professor, was on the social ethics of Clement of Alexandria entitled “A Christian Witness in a non-Christian Culture.”

For more than 57 years, my wife Joanne and I have been immersed in the church and our culture. Discussions have been “interesting,” inasmuch as she proceeds in her thinking with an analytical, deductive process, whereas I lean more to a synthetic, inductive process. I recall that when we were at Midland Lutheran College in the early 1960s, she quoted a line from Albert Camus to a Students’ Mothers meeting in a time that was different from the current state of the Lutheran Church: —“What the world expects of Christians is that Christians should speak out loud and clear; for between the forces of terror and the forces of dialogue, a great unequal battle has begun.”

It was an incisive statement then, and is more so today. Another of her favorite quotes is from Soren Kierkegaard: “*Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forward.*”

Please consider the above two quotes as you proceed in your deliberations.

Again, the purpose of this exercise is to help persons, who are personally and spiritually caught up in trying to figure out what they should consider and *do* in the debates going on in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, in addition to figuring out what is going

on in other churches, and the church groups formed and forming to reform the Lutheran church in North America—Word Alone, LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ), Lutheran CORE, North American Lutheran Church, and other groups providing a home for those who need an answer to the Confessional Schism now in full bloom. It is hard to make a decision to leave a church that has been home to our families for a time, a lifetime, or for many generations.

There is a statement heard in a class and read in a book by Dr. George Forell on the “Ethics of Decision” --*One cannot decide not to decide, because once you have decided not to decide, you have made a decision*—that can not be ignored. One cannot remain in neutral—you have to go in reverse or move ahead, or lie on the floor like a whipped puppy. This is true in our personal, family, churchly, political, or economic decisions.

One other statement is pertinent to the 2009 Lutheran Confessional Schism. In 1980, James Kilpatrick wrote a perceptive observation in a “Chicago Tribune” column that has great meaning to those persons, both pro and con, in the schism. He wrote that *the most important and lasting changes in society are the incremental changes*. Thus, according to this statement, the ELCA Confessional Schism will not see massive immediate departures by individuals and congregations but rather a gradual, steady divorce of one congregation and individual after another from the ELCA. Schisms start quickly, usually followed by a gradual buildup of efforts to help people *decide what to do*. The Schism itself is a decisive event, and the consequences of that event usually take a considerable period of time to evolve and make their mark in history.

Part I—Signs Along the Roads

A. The Confessional Schism of 2009

First, to get to the obvious issues of the Lutheran Confessional Schism of 2009, which have been brought to the attention of persons who are members of ELCA congregations, other Lutheran groups, and the Lutheran World Federation, and through the media to the general public, please consider the two polarities noted below:

- 1) The Authority of Scripture and the Sanctity of the Biblical Traditional Marriage of One Man and One Woman on one side of the divide, and
- 2) The Contextual Interpretation of Scriptural Tradition and the Acceptance of Homosexual Unions and Marriage on the other side of the gradually expanding divide, with much attention to interpretations of the Gospel, the Law, and the “Bound Conscience.”

These two opposing positions, which are just the tip of the iceberg, are, first, the Orthodox position held by the Church Universal for two millennia, and the second, the anti-Orthodox positions held by a variety of Early Church Heresies (i.e., Gnosticism, Marcionism, etc.), other heterodox and heretical groups in the centuries following the Early Church, and so-called Liberal movements and religious thinkers today.

These issues are what we see on the surface. But, what is beneath the surface? On the surface we see theological and religious issues, with a strong dose of social and psychological interpretations. Beneath the surface, however, lurk the political agendas that are found in all bureaucratic institutions. And, the Church, with its bishops and bureaucratic headquarters elite, has two other issues close to its concerns:

- 1) Power and Money, or
- 2) Money and Power.

Those opposing the political and social agenda actions of the August 2009 ELCA Church Wide Assembly also have political agendas close to their own concerns:

- 1) Freedom—the freedom of the Christian to worship God according to his or her own conscience guided by God’s Word; and
- 2) Freedom—the freedom to unite with witnessing fellow believers to proclaim and serve Christ as Lord and Savior to the entire world.

That Freedom of the Christian is being attacked by social agenda elite through a usurpation of power taken from the individual Christians and the congregations of the Church. It started gradually, and is part of a much larger “Event”—the collapse of Western Civilization, which will be considered later in this discussion.

In a separate discussion on the status of Christianity in the political-social milieu today, Joanne asked the question: “Is Christianity being attacked because of its freedom of the Spirit?” Below is a reference to this question.

In 2005, I was asked by a Japanese quasi-diplomat at the UN to help him develop a rationale for Ethical Cultural Counselors to be hired by global businesses, as part of an experiment by the World Business Academy. For the term “cultural,” he used the Asian term “spiritual” counselors. Though not my intention, it was published in the academy’s “Global Reconstruction” series. The title that the editors placed at its head was “When Business, Culture, and Spirit Collide.” Below is a brief section referring to freedom.

“Myth is a literary genre, just as the essay, novel, poetry, and apocalyptic writings and films are genres. It is not something that is false. The function of myth is to express, in imaginative and often dramatic terms, answers to the most significant questions asked by man: Who am I? Where have I come from? Where am I going? In other words, what is my Identity, my Origin, and my Destiny? For the past 200 or more years, ever since the Enlightenment, Western civilization has moved away from its spiritual and cultural underpinnings. Or, has it only thought that it has advanced beyond its origins?

Just take for example the Myth of the America Dream. Every child is told that he or she can become the President of the USA, or a doctor, or a lawyer, or a successful entrepreneur. The basis is the cultural myth undergirding American society. A young boy or girl of humble origins can, through determination, ambition, education, and effort, attain great goals. And, what is the spiritual basis of the American Dream? It is *Freedom*

and *Liberty*. When President J.F. Kennedy was assassinated, he was compared with Abraham Lincoln, both of whom were said to have "sacrificed their lives on the Altar of Freedom." Freedom and Liberty are American spiritual, cultural ideals. Sacrifice for a goal also is a spiritual, cultural concept. We just try to avoid recognizing these terms or ideals as such. Other spiritual values associated with the American Dream are trust, respect, and individual equality. Perhaps two to three hundred years from now as a new civilization develops, people will wonder why and how we in the 20th and 21st centuries so denied our spiritual, cultural roots."

What is the freedom that the ecclesiastical elite are espousing? What is the freedom that the Apostles upheld? What is the freedom that Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior, pronounced in John, Chapter 8, in upholding the Truth against the "father of lies?"

What I would like to do at this point in the discussion is to consider some personal experiences that pertain to the eventual ELCA Confessional Schism.

B. Apostolic Succession

First, while at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (in Maywood), in 1955-56, the students were talking about the eventual merging of seminaries, particularly about Augustana Seminary merging with LSTC--one of the Augustana Seminary professors was soon to teach at Maywood. They talked about how some Augustana graduates were ordained by a Swedish Bishop, who had been consecrated "in the Apostolic Succession" like the Episcopalians and the Roman Catholics. This excited them. Others noted that in class we talked about the Apostolic Succession of the Faith, not the Institution. Lutheran synodical leaders were called "presidents" then, but the seeds were being sown for having "bishops"—with many of the liturgical paraphernalia, drama, and adiaphora attached.

Throughout this consideration of what is going on in the ELCA and what is happening in the Renewal Movements, please consider time and again the statement in the book "the five people you meet in heaven" by Mitch Albom: "That there are no random acts. That we are all connected. That you can no more separate one life from another than you can separate a breeze from the wind" (page 28).

For example, my wife and I belong (now technically) to Trinity Lutheran Church in Durand, IL, a congregation of the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA. One of the two founding pastors was C.L. Clausen, a Danish pastor in a congregation of Norwegian immigrants. The other was J. W. C. Dietrichson, from the State Church of Norway. We will consider these two pioneer pastors later. Both of them were quite influential in the founding of Lutheran Synods in the 19th century. Trinity was founded in 1844, experienced two schisms, and now is being presented with the pros and cons through a form of the discernment process, but appears to be neutral. Pastor Clausen ordained another Dane, Andreas Sixtus Nielsen, at Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Fall, IA, in May, 1878. It is interesting to note the position of Nielsen regarding the position of bishops.

“On May 22, 1878, the Danish Church in America held its annual convocation, where it was proposed to select a bishop for the united church. As Pastor Kjelhede writes in his large work “Danes in America”: “Although Nielsen was the only one considered for the post, the nomination did not meet with his approval. He rejected the nomination in a long, grave speech: *“In Denmark we learned to address Jesus the Lord, and when a call was sounded from America that was heeded by the church in Denmark, was it not unusually a bishop who would arrive here in Christ’s place? No, it was the living church that sent us, for the Spirit had moved us. We children of the Danish mother church should guard against any rigid formalism. We should rely upon Jesus’ words, letting them be our bishop, for no other can bring us peace and amity. For the present I respect no other bishop than God’s sanctity in the Word. Church authority in human shape I do not need. What I seek is to come together in church meetings, speaking freely from the heart and singing with the congregation, for I feel that is what we require – a calling that inspires us both in our own individual lives and in our roles in the community.”* It followed that after Nielsen’s passionate statement, his nomination for the bishopric was withdrawn.”

The pastor emeritus of Nazareth Lutheran Church is Homer Larsen. He and I were baptized and confirmed in Trinity Lutheran Church in Westbrook, ME, a congregation of about 300-400 members, from which came approximately 20 “sons” who became Lutheran pastors. Joanne came from Immanuel Lutheran Church in Harlan, IA, a congregation founded in her grandparents’ home, from which came three Lutheran pastors, one a bishop. Immanuel is an LCMC (Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ) congregation. Nazareth is a Word Alone congregation. Dr. Robert Marshall, former professor at LSTC and former President of the Lutheran Church in America, stated to Joanne and me one time that he had never seen a synod like the UELC that was so connected personally to its’ missionaries. We are all connected.

Another connection to Trinity Lutheran Church of Durand is Dr. David Preus, former president of The American Lutheran Church, and whose father had been a pastor of Trinity in Durand. He was the banquet speaker at the congregation’s 125th anniversary. At the first meeting of the Word Alone Network in March, 2000, Dr. Preus presented an historical rationale against the historic episcopacy insisted upon by the Episcopal Church and promoted by the ELCA hierarchy. One can read his incisive presentation of the website of the Word Alone Network. We are all connected. But, the ELCA hierarchy is stretching the sinews.

C. The Significance and Role of Black Christian Churches in the Lutheran Schism

A second observation is from a class in theology taught by Dr. Joseph Sittler in 1955-56. He had just returned from a lecture tour in the South, and stated that in the future, it would be the black churches that will save Christianity because the preachers are so loyal to the Scriptures. He called them black churches when “Afro-American” was just beginning to be used instead of “Negro.” Dr. Sittler often was ahead of his times. He used the term “ecology” (of the faith) before it entered popular parlance. His analysis of the saving nature of the black churches is borne out now by the statements coming from the

second and third largest of all Lutheran Churches—the Lutheran Churches of Tanzania (5.3 million) and of Ethiopia (5.3 million).

However, the presiding bishop Alex Malasusa of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania, after meeting *behind closed doors* with ELCA presiding bishop Mark Hanson in late May, 2010, is wavering in his unequivocal stance opposing the ELCA Church Wide Assembly's vote to ordain as Lutheran pastors those who are in a lifelong gay monogamous union. About this change of stance, remember the issues of 1) Power and Money or 2) Money and Power? A reference to Chicago-style politics will be noted later

D. The Heresy Trials of the 1950s

A third observation from the mid-fifties at LSTC is that of the Heresy Trials. Dr. G. Armin Weng, president of LSTC, was upset that the Chicago Sun Times had as one of its headlines—"Under These Spreading Shade Trees, These Men Learned Heresy." That may not have been the exact words of the headline, but it gets the message across. Dr. Weng considered suing the newspaper. At issue were three pastors from the Northwest Synod, who had graduated from Northwestern Lutheran Theological Seminary in Minneapolis (later merged into Luther Seminary) and who had taken some graduate courses at LSTC. Two of them were pastors in Wisconsin. In the 1920s, the Northwestern Seminary (now merged with Luther Seminary) was formed by, what we were told, a liberal group of professors who disagreed with the majority of the faculty of LSTC.

The August 5, 1955, issue of Time Magazine states that Rev. George Christ was charged by the Northwest Synod of the United Lutheran Synod in America with: "Holding, teaching, and preaching doctrines in conflict with the Lutheran faith." A five man investigative team, including two of his schoolmates from Northwestern Seminary, ordered him to trial on 14 counts of deviation, centering in his "use and interpretation of the Scriptures, and in his teaching concerning the person and work of Christ." According to the Time report, "Pastor Christ openly denied the virgin birth of Christ, expressed doubt about the Resurrection and Ascension, developed naturalistic explanations for Christ's Biblical miracles..." The synod also charged him with denying the doctrine of original sin, the efficacy of prayer, and Christ's real presence in the Lord's Supper. Pastor Christ used "semantics," such as in the Ascension, which means to go up, "so, where is up?" Pastor Christ was convicted, essentially, of heresy. One of my classmates stated not many years ago, that there will never be a heresy trial again in the Lutheran Churches that now make up the ELCA. Why? Is it because the ELCA has made a 180 degree turn in Lutheran Theology? Pastor John Gerberding, who also was charged with heresy, and was an aide to Pastor Christ at his trial, was later acquitted. He was defended; I was informed, by Dr. George Forell, who was my advisor at the University of Iowa. Though I did not talk with Dr. Forell about the issue, the classmate noted above told me that Dr. Forell defended Gerberding on the basis that "stupidity is not heresy."

E. Tolerance as Strategy

A fourth item of interest, again from Dr. Weng, was his notation that the earlier site of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago is the home now of the Chicago Cubs, Wrigley Field. He stated that the pitcher's mound is the site of the desk from which Dr. Charles Porterfield Krauth delivered, not pitches, but his lectures. We will make note of Dr. Krauth later. Perhaps the following was part of one of his lectures—at least, it is part of one of his books, and bears careful scrutiny.

"When error is admitted..."

"But the practical result of this principle is one on which there is no need of speculating; it works in one unvarying way. When error is admitted into the Church, it will be found that the stages of its progress are always three. It begins by asking toleration. Its friends say to the majority: You need not be afraid of us; we are few and weak; only let us alone; we shall not disturb the faith of others. The Church has her standards of doctrine; of course we shall never interfere with them; we only ask for ourselves to be spared interference with our private opinions. Indulged in this for a time, error goes on to assert equal rights. Truth and error are two balancing forces. The Church shall do nothing which looks like deciding between them; that would be partiality. It is bigotry to assert any superior right for the truth. We are to agree to differ and any favoring of the truth, because it is truth, is partisanship. What the friends of truth and error hold in common is fundamental. Anything on which they differ is "ipso facto" non-essential. Anybody who makes account of such a thing is a disturber of the peace of the church. Truth and error are two co-ordinate powers, and the great secret of church-statesmanship is to preserve the balance between them. From this point error soon goes on to its natural end, which is to assert supremacy. Truth started with tolerating; it comes to be merely tolerated and that only for a time. Error claims a preference for its judgments on all disputed points. It puts men into position, not as at first in spite of their departure from the Church's faith, but in consequence of it. Their recommendation is that they repudiate that faith, and position is given them to teach others to repudiate it, and make them skillful in combating it." (pp. 195-196)

From: "THE CONSERVATIVE REFORMATION AND ITS THEOLOGY as represented in the Augsburg Confession and in the history and literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church" by Charles P. Krauth, D.D. (1871). [Note date]

Dr. Krauth had taught at the Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg at the time of the great battle in July, 1863, and at the battlefield museum there is a complete set of Mrs. Krauth's china, without one piece being shattered, which is most noteworthy because of all the bullet holes that can be found in the building in which the Krauths lived.

F. Defining Issues

There are a couple of other issues that we should look at. In the 1990s, a professor from the University of Chicago stated on the radio that, just as the abolition of slavery was the defining issue of the political-moral debates in the first six decades of the 19th century of

our history, so also abortion would be the defining issue now and as time progresses. The ELCA, as well as other “progressive” Protestant churches, has taken a pro-abortion, “pro-choice” position. The ELCA now teaches a contextual theology and ethics, which we will consider a little later. If one believes that his or her conscience is bound to the context of our times and changing mores, then the stance of Martin Luther at Worms has little or no significance in the “modern world.” This abrogates the statement of “The Preacher” in the Book of Ecclesiastes, “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, “See, this is new? It has been already, in the ages before us.” (Ecclesiastes 1:9-10)

The Early Christian Church faced the issue of abortion in the culture of the Roman Empire and, according to James Meacham, an editor at Newsweek, in a Christmas issue of that magazine about three years ago, it was the Christian stance against abortion that raised the status of women and helped to spread the church throughout the empire. Note below the quotes from Tertullian, the second century North African lawyer-theologian, who gave the Church the language of the Doctrine of the Trinity—Una Substantia (One Substance), Tres Personae (Three Persons). A persona was a mask used by an actor portraying more than one character in a play.

“Although you are forbidden by the laws to kill newborn infants, it so happens that no laws are evaded with more impunity or greater safety. And this is done with the deliberate knowledge of the public.” (Tertullian, c. 197 AD)

“Among the surgeons’ tools there is a certain instrument that is formed with a nicely-adjusted flexible frame for first of all opening the uterus and then keeping it open. It also has a circular blade, by means of which the limbs within the womb are dissected with careful, but unflinching care. Its last appendage is a blunted or covered hook, by which the entire fetus is extracted by a violent delivery. There is also a copper needle or spike, by which the actual death is brought about in this treacherous robbery of life. From its Infanticide function, they give it a name, -- ‘killer of the infant’—which infant, of course, had once been alive.” (Tertullian, c. 210 AD)

Would you say that this sounds like partial birth abortion? There truly is nothing new under the sun.

What about the “new” context of the August 2009 ELCA Church Wide Assembly, basically arguing that today we have a new understanding of homosexual unions and marriages of those in life-long committed relationships. What essentially is the purpose of marriage-- self-centered satisfaction, or something else, like the continuance of the human race? Remember the three orders of creation according to Martin Luther—the Family, the State, and the Church? This also is something to be considered later. The Early Church Fathers also faced the issue of homosexuality in the Roman Empire.

“They do not abstain even from males, males with males committing shocking abominations, outraging all the noblest and comeliest bodies in all sorts of ways.” (Athenagoras, c. 175 AD)

“Men play the part of women, and women that of men, contrary to nature. Women are at once both wives and husbands....Miserable spectacle! Horrible conduct!” (Clement of Alexandria, c. 180-200 AD)

“The whole earth has now become full of fornication and wickedness. I admire the ancient legislators of the Romans. These men detested effeminacy of conduct. The giving of the body to feminine purposes, contrary to the law of nature, they judged worthy of the most extreme penalty.” (Clement of Alexandria, c. 180-200 AD)

Clement of Alexandria even included, in “Stromatias,” Book Three, the addition of one other commandment, which some have called “The Eleventh Commandment”—“Thou shalt not molest young boys.”

Homosexual relationships of men with men, men with boys, or women with women are not a new phenomenon, nor even long-lasting monogamous relationships. Such was known in the Greco-Roman civilization as well as elsewhere in time. The emperors Nero and Elagabelus are reported to have had public homosexual marriage ceremonies, even outside their social classes, which was not usual. In the upper classes such relations were accepted, but not in the lower classes. Homosexual relations between freeborn Roman citizens were considered disgraceful. St. Paul’s statements against homosexual relationships may indicate that his writings reflect that the persons that were the objects of his concerns were from the urban upper classes, or those who would aim to emulate them.

G. Church Politics

Another item that might be of interest with respect to the gradual understanding of where we are now and to help in the decision making process is the following information. One of my uncles, Pastor Cornelius Hansen, told me in the 1950s that Dr. N.C. Carlsen, President of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (“Holy or Sad Danes”), had contacted the presidents of the ALC (German Lutherans), the ELC (Norwegian Lutherans), and the Lutheran Free Church (Norwegian Lutherans) in 1947 about the possibility of a merger. While I was Associate Editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, I had requested E. Clifford Nelson of Luther Seminary to write the article on Pietism, and upon reviewing the article; I included a possible notation on Dr. N. C. Carlsen’s role in the origin of the merger, which notation he deleted. I was informed later, by Pastor Homer Larsen, retired pastor of Nazareth Lutheran Church, Cedar Falls, Iowa, who married one of Dr. Carlsen’s daughters, that in 1960, when the new ALC (comprised of the old ALC, ELC, Lutheran Free Church, and the UELC), was being organized, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of the more liberal ULCA got wind of the meeting, became upset, and sent another invitation to the same group, plus the ULCA, which met a few days before

or after the scheduled ALC merger meeting. After Dr. Fry died, his wish for a merger of the various disparate Lutheran groups was accomplished.

Personalities are a part of politics, including church politics—which we always have known and as we are finding out anew.

There are a couple more items that help us to understand where we are today, and what helped to make the current culture what it is, including all the contextual theology that is popping up in the seminaries. It's nothing new, but it has a more modern dress.

In the 1950s and 60s, there were two persons who had gradually increasing influence, which we really “feel” today. They are Joseph Fletcher and David Reisman.

H. Situational (Contextual) Ethics

Joseph Fletcher was an Episcopal priest who advocated abortion, euthanasia, and Planned Parenthood. He also was involved in bio-ethics, which the ELCA now is considering. He wrote a book entitled “Situational Ethics: the New Morality” in the 1960s, which stated that the end of all decisions is Love. People all make moral decisions, according to one of three categories: 1) *Legalism*, in which a person makes a decision according to secular, cultural, or religious well-defined and absolute laws; 2) *Antinomianism*, in which a person has no laws, principles, or maxims to help him or her in the decision-making process, based upon the view that the right decision will come from an external source, such as an inherited intuited wisdom or the Holy Spirit; and 3) *Situationalism*, in which a person has an innate understanding of the guiding principles of one's culture (either secular or religious), evaluates the situation or context, and selects or rejects the rule so that Love can help one to make the right decision and act accordingly. In his view “God is Love.” That is true. However, one cannot reverse that and say “Love is God.” God's Love is unique, unlike situational love, which can range anywhere from Hollywood to Heaven. The context or situation, thus, will help one define what one should do. Therefore, a kind of relativism invades the situation, resulting in contextual theology and ethics—to keep any absolutes at bay.

I. The Role and Significance of Character Formation

Earlier, in 1950, David Riesman, together with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denny, conducted a study and analysis of American character, and wrote their findings in a book entitled “The Lonely Crowd.” These character types were related to high or low birth and death rates and help us to understand the culture in which we now live, and previous cultures. A reading of this study of American character will help us all to recognize what is happening in the ELCA and the Lutheran churches of Europe, the Episcopal and other mainline churches, the churches of Africa, Latin America, the Islamic world, and the tremendous upheaval that is being experienced in Western Civilization. Decisions have been, are being, and will be made by all of us in the revolutionary events that we are facing, as well as our children and grandchildren. The chaos in the ELCA is only a small part of the conditions and events unfolding, but the decisions we will make are major

ones for us and, whether we believe it or not, they will have an effect on the eventual future of Church and the World. Remember, we are all connected.

The three character types are:

- 1) *tradition-directed*, in which the birth and death rates are more or less very high, and the population does not increase, except quite slowly, and a high proportion of the population is young, life expectancy is low, and the “turnover of generations is extremely rapid,” with conformity defined by the tradition developed in the family or clan (village); change comes slowly in the *tradition-directed* culture, based on learned social and religious rules. However, if something happens to decrease the high birth and death rates-- such as increased production of food, new sanitary measures (in New York City and Birmingham, England, the infant mortality in 1900 was as great as the infant mortality today is in some developing countries: what made the difference, to a great extent, was and is safe water and sanitation), new information regarding the causes and control of diseases, etc.-- there will be a “*population explosion*,” such as happened in Europe and America starting in the 17th century;
- 2) *Inner-directed*, in which there is a declining birth *and* death rate, with an increasing number of middle-aged and elderly persons. There develops in persons an inner set of rules, not determined by tradition, but still inculcated by the family, which is like a *gyroscope*, enabling a person to make individual decisions according to an acquired internalized set of rules. A decline then occurs in the numbers and proportion of the working population involved in production and “extraction”—agriculture, heavy transport, heavy industry—and an increase in bureaucratic business and government workers and the service industries;
- 3) *Other-directed*, in which there is a low birth rate and low death rate, which leads to a declining population, and a dependency on immigrants and others to provide services; the other-directed person has an *antenna* to detect the wants, needs, likes, and dislikes of his or her peers; one must pay attention to the “signals” from a peer group or the mass media; this is why politicians, the media, businesses, etc. are so attentive to polls.

If a tradition-directed person violates the “rule,” he or she feels *shame*.

If an inner-directed person violates the conscience, he or she feels *guilt*.

If an other-directed person violates the “messages,” he or she feels a diffused *anxiety*. The other-directed person does not have an internalized code of behavior, but a set of elaborate “equipment” to receive and attend to such messages from peers or the mass media and to participate in their circulation.

We may think that the other-directed person and society is new and that we are so far advanced; but Reisman notes that that “the problems of Rome during the reign of Augustus suggest that the emergence and ascendancy of the other-directed character type as the population reached the phase of incipient decline.” *Christianity began in an other-directed culture.*

Earlier, the Athenian empire had reached the zenith of its power in the 5th century BC. Greeks then understood the problems of an expanding population, and Plato and Aristotle in the next century advocated population control. In the 3rd century BC the fear of overpopulation was replaced by the fear of depopulation, much like the fear of many European cities today, such as Florence, Italy, with respect to the native, indigenous population. In the 2nd century, Polybius wrote that the population of Greece was dying out because of the practice of infanticide, a practice confined to the upper and upper-middle class families. The trend towards an artificial limitation on the size of the family indicates a period of incipient and actual decline in population and the presence of an other-directed mode of conformity.

The concept of character formation in the formation of tradition-directed, inner-directed, and other-directed individuals and societies and cultures is far more complex than can be considered here, but it does have a bearing on the upheavals in the churches in the developed world (which could be in the process of decline) and the stands of the tradition- and inner-directed churches of Africa and the churches in the developed world that still retain anchors in an inner-directed culture, such as in the Mid-west, the South, and rural and small town areas in various parts of the United States.

And, what was the guiding principle that held Christians together? It was faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, supported by and promulgated by God’s Holy Word. Look at the tremendous battles that orthodox believers in Christ had with the Gnostics, who were answered by the Apostles’ Creed, or with Marcion, a semi-Gnostic, whose rejection of most of the books of the New Testament was answered by a Canon of Scripture. The son of a bishop of Sinope in Asia Minor, Marcion has been called in a Catholic dictionary probably the most dangerous of all heretics. He stated that the inferior God of the Old Testament was the Creator and Judge and not the God to be accepted and worshiped. The God of the New Testament was the God revealed by Jesus and was the God of Pure Love. He believed that Paul was the only true apostle, rejected the Old Testament of the Jews (which was the scripture of the Early Church), wrote a gospel similar to Luke, and accepted 10 of Paul’s epistles, period. An energetic, wealthy, charismatic leader and speaker, Marcion, in the mid- second century, developed churches that lasted for some centuries and later merged with other heretical movements.

So, here we are now, in a new other-directed highly urban culture, though the tradition-directed and inner-directed types are still significant.

Recall earlier, the statement “That there are no random acts. That we are all connected?” The ELCA, by rejecting this truism, or axiom, is in a gradual, long process of discovering the ramifications of this axiom and its ignoring of the obvious. The ELCA is totally

enamored with the other-directed culture, with its listening to polls, conducting sexuality and bio-ethics studies, and conversing with its own and other cultural elites, including portions of academia and the media. According to reports, the ELCA spent \$ 7 million on the sexuality study, to bolster its pre-determined result. In the end, the ELCA will lose far more than the \$7 million plus that it expended to ensure the ‘Chicago’ style vote in August 2009. Revenue (contributions will drop), and membership (the lifeblood of any not-for-profit institution) will decrease. The ELCA would do well to apply the Gompertz Curve to its life-cycle.

Another point, with respect to “That there are no random acts,” is the August 2009 tornado that hit the steeple of Central Lutheran Church in Minneapolis and upended the Cross. Many have noted and others have ridiculed this “act” that was not random. Does God act in history? ... or does He not act in history? Was God acting in history in the tornado event? What would the prophets of The Old Testament or the apostles of the New Testament have to say about the tornado? One can pretty well figure out what the ELCA and its hierarchical contextual theology elite would and did say. After all, in the post-Enlightenment, hardly anyone except believers in the Word considers the possibility that God reveals Himself in “mysterious ways.”

J. The Church Hierarchy as Political

While at LSTC, students constantly referred to the concept that “Church Politics makes Tammany Hall look like a Sunday school picnic.” Not very many people today recognize that Tammany Hall was the corrupt New York City political machine. Today, people refer to the Chicago political machine and frequently see this in political cartoons.

There are two personal experiences that I will note to illustrate the wide-spread reputation of Chicago, remembering that the ELCA Headquarters is in “Chicago.”

In 1981, the president of Rotary International asked me to draft a letter to Mother Theresa to speak at the convention in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She was to be offered a first class ticket plus expenses. The letter was sent via an Indian Rotarian who knew Mother Theresa, and she replied that she would like to go to Sao Paulo. However, she requested that she herself be able to travel at standard airfare, and that she be allowed to receive the money for the first class ticket so that she could take with her two of the sisters of her order. This would provide funds for her to establish a branch in a slum area to bring help and a future to the people living in bottomless poverty. Upon bringing this request to the senior executive, he stated that this would be acceptable, but this was not to establish any precedent.

Brazil at that time had a military government, and because the president of the country was to address the convention, there was a military presence at the large convention site.

Before Mother Theresa spoke, Pele the soccer hero from Brazil spoke, and he addressed the convention from the heart, rather than refer to a prepared speech by someone else. His words moved the audience because of the respect he had for his father. Mother Theresa

followed him and also spoke from the heart, with a simple plea for people to love one another. She then requested all—including not only Christians, but also Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Parsees, Confucians, etc.—to pray the Lord’s Prayer, which they did. After she finished speaking and the session was over, at the entrance doors there suddenly appeared a large crowd of people on crutches, others with canes, and a few on beds with others pushing the beds, all rushing towards the stage where Mother Theresa had been standing. I told one of our tall, muscular technicians to block the ramp leading to the stage with his body, which he did. We managed to get Mother Theresa to the staging area behind the main stage so that she could get in the car assigned for her to leave the building. The crowds surrounded her car, and one of the men forcibly opened the back door to her car where Mother Theresa and two of her sister nuns were sitting, so that another man could take some pictures. All in the car looked frightened.

A very tall and large man threw his body over the front hood of the car so that the driver was not able to move. The sergeants-at-arms were not close, so I walked up to the man lying on the hood of the small red car, and in demanding and gruff language told him to get off the car hood. He was startled enough to back away and the driver of the car saw his opportunity. He very quickly drove the car out of the building. The large man’s accomplice tried to take a picture of my name identification badge, but I blocked his camera with my hand. The large man drew himself to his greatest height, inhaled a lot of breath into his chest, pointed his finger at his chest, and said something like “Es Brazil!” I knew then that I was in deep trouble, so I quickly drew some breath into my chest, pointed to my chest like he did, and said, “Es Chicago!” Startled, he backed away. Joanne and I made a fast exit to a distant door, quickly absorbed by a lot of people going in the same direction.

I am telling of this event because Chicago does have a reputation around the world for gangsters and corruption because of the spread of movies to all countries. It would have been far better for the ELCA headquarters to have been located in Minneapolis, or Indianapolis, if the elite leaders wished to locate in the central part of the United States.

Here is another similar story, for emphasis. When Joanne and I were In Europe for a Rotary International Convention in Birmingham, England, we were later on a train going from Rome to Copenhagen. Our train compartment had two other passengers, a lady and her daughter from Denmark. Soon after leaving Rome, another passenger, a short, rather dark complexioned man, entered the compartment, sat down, and lit a cigarette. I pointed to the “no smoking” sign and said, “Non Fumare.” He ignored me. I again pointed to the sign and repeated “Non Fumare.” He looked me in the eyes, pointed to himself, and said, “Mafia.” I then looked him in the eyes, pointed to myself, and said, “Chicago.” He stopped smoking, looked at me again, put out his cigarette, and left the compartment, never to be seen again.

This again is to emphasize that the Chicago ELCA hierarchy, by using “Chicago” political methods in dealing with pastors and congregations leaving or wanting to leave the ELCA eventually will be widely known by their words and actions. Enough said--but not really. Northern Illinois Lutherans of the ELCA have felt the effects of the proximity

of the ELCA headquarters and hierarchy in a very personal way. Congregations wishing to leave the ELCA after the 2009 Church Wide Assembly have experienced divide and conquer methods, intimidations, and false witness techniques, according to the national and area media, as well as congregational and other websites. One needs only to refer to the information from: 1) the Washington Post, 2) the website of Faith Lutheran Church of Moline, Illinois, 3) information from Hosanna Lutheran Church of St. Charles, Illinois, 4) the exodus of a large number of congregational members from the ELCA congregation in Sterling, IL, to form the New Life Lutheran Church, a mission congregation of the LCMC, 5) St. Mathew Lutheran Church of Galena, IL, and 6) Prince of Peace Lutheran Church of Rockton, Illinois, and, to be fair, 6) the websites of the ELCA and the Northern Illinois Synod of the ELCA. A recent posted item from the Investors' Business Daily (7/30/10) noted that Chicago style of politics is to connect "unpruned power" ...with "to reward, punish, and intimidate."

Having been an observer of church politics, locally, nationally, and internationally for many decades, as well as a student and teacher of church history, I would not be surprised if the movement to promote a successor to the presiding bishop of the ELCA with the current bishop of the Northern Illinois Synod is already in first gear. One needs only to review the ELCA website to note the picture and resume of the NI Synod's newly re-elected bishop.

K. A Road Once (or More Than Once) Traveled

The 19th century was a time of formation of conferences of like-minded Lutherans, disputes, schisms, mergers, more disputes, more schisms, and gradually until late in the 20th century, a series of mergers of many Lutherans differing in background and Christian emphases eventually formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America—a merger that was somewhat forced by an elite hierarchy. It is interesting to note that Dr. David Preus, President of The American Lutheran Church (a merger of fairly conservative Norwegian, German, Danish, and Free Church-Norwegian background synods) and Dr. Robert Marshall and Dr. Robert E. Crumley, Jr., Presidents of the Lutheran Church in America (a merger of somewhat more liberal German, Swedish, Finnish, Danish, and Slovak background synods) have vehemently opposed the direction of the current ELCA. These very capable church leaders are flicked off as has-beens. Where is the honor bestowed to elder prophets and leaders? All that is important to the current ELCA hierarchy is to press for a non-biblical agenda for the church and a re-interpretation of the Authority of Scripture.

The doctrinal battlegrounds were centered, to a great extent, in Pennsylvania and Ohio and the Midwest—Illinois, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota. And so they are today, with the exception that some of the reform leaders are from a wider geographical extension. One of the best reviews of the doctrinal disputes and mergers is found in "Lutheran Higher Education in North America," by Richard W. Solberg. Below is a quote from that book, page 63:

“The ‘crisis in American Lutheran theology’ was to affect the church on a far wider front than Pennsylvania. It would reach into the South as well as the added complication of the Civil War. It would affect the newer areas of the West into which the new waves of German and Scandinavian immigrants were already flooding. Doctrinal division would add to the inevitable ethnic divisions among Lutherans, who brought at least five different European languages with them into the great Midwest. And in every case the desire to prepare pastors to preach the Word with understanding would produce new schools of theology and colleges to supply them with well-prepared candidates. The Gettysburg story is therefore only the beginning.”

The “Gettysburg story” begins with Samuel Simon Schmucker, a leader integral to the founding of the General Synod, Gettysburg Seminary, and Gettysburg College. He wanted to bring about: 1) an ecumenical federation of Protestant churches, a truly “American” Lutheran Church, 2) a revised version of the Augsburg Confession, and 3) a more Calvinist spiritual explanation of the Lord’s Supper, thus denying the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Sacrament of the Altar. Charles Porterfield Krouth, also of Gettysburg Seminary and later of a new seminary in Philadelphia and later also of the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago, termed him “Un-Lutheran.” As a matter of personal interest, in one of the congregations I served in Iowa, there was a large stained glass window dedicated to a member of the family of S. S. Schmucker, thus indicating, perhaps, an influence of Schmucker’s “American” Lutheranism in the Mid-West.

At this point in our review, we return to Trinity Lutheran Church of Durand, IL. and the influence of C. L. Clausen, and J. W. C. Dietrichson. Another early leader, whose influence was just a little further north in Wisconsin, was Hans Elling Eielsen, the founder of the Hauge Synod. The information here is primarily for lay persons, inasmuch as pastors have some information and interest because of their studies in the history of the Lutheran Church in America.

As one considers the impact of the 2009 CWA, and the appeal not to leave the ELCA, as noted in the next section, please think about the appeal of Bishop Jacob Neumann of Bergen, Norway, as recorded by Eugene L. Fevold in the paper, “The Norwegian Immigrant and His Church,” which he presented to the Norwegian American Historical Association in 1962:

“Bishop Jacob Neumann of Bergen issued an episcopal letter to the “emigration-smitten” farmers of his diocese. He appealed to their patriotism in urging them to remain in [6] Norway and strongly emphasized the trials, disasters, and spiritual deprivation that were the lot of the emigrant. Toward the close of his epistle he made this dramatic appeal:

“Here in Norway rest the ashes of your fathers; here you first saw the light of day; here you enjoyed many childhood pleasures; here you received your first impressions of God and His love; here you are still surrounded by relatives and friends who share your joy and your sorrow, while there, when you are far away

from all that has been dear to you, who shall close your eyes in the last hour of life? A stranger's hand! And who shall weep at your grave? Perhaps no one!

"Give heed, then, to the advice David gave to his people: 'Stay in the land and support yourself honestly.'"

Claus Lauritz Clausen was a Dane, born November 33, 1820, studied law, but decided it was not for him, began teaching, but contracted tuberculosis, took a walking trip to Norway for health reasons and to investigate a possible missionary position in South Africa, and then heard from Tollef Bache, a merchant of Drammen, that Bache's son Soren, who had settled in Muskego, Wisconsin, informed him that a teacher was needed for religious and language instruction. Clausen became interested, married Martha F. Rasmuson, and went to Muskego in August 1843. The Norwegians of Muskego recognized that they needed a pastor as much as a teacher, and called Clausen as pastor on September 3, 1843. At the age of 23, he was examined by German Lutheran Pastor, L. F. E. Krause and ordained on October 18. He conducted his first funeral the day after his ordination, and in November conducted 32 funerals because of an outbreak of a "plague"—malaria. On January 1, 1844, he conducted 17 burials.

The congregation met in the barn of Evan Heg, and the members soon saw a need for a church building, which was begun early in 1844. Gunnuf Tollefson, originally from Bygland, Norway, immigrated to Muskego, and he and C. L. Clausen worked together, felling and cutting trees together for the new church building, Tollefson chopping on one side of a large tree and Clausen on the other.

In February and June of 1844, Clausen came to the Durand/Davis area in Illinois and helped lay plans for the start of a congregation. He served Norwegian settlers who had come from the Numendal valley of Norway in 1839, only seven years after the Black Hawk War of 1832. The 100 immigrants divided into four groups; one going to Jefferson Prairie, WI, another to Luther Valley, in Wisconsin, a third to a place near Wiota, WI, and the fourth to the Rock Run area of Illinois, near Durand. Most of these Norwegian immigrants were served by Pastor J. W. C. Dietrichson, who was ordained in Norway on February 26, 1844. He went to Muskego, WI, as pastor, and in November, 1844, he went to the Durand, IL, and area and established the Rock Ground Norwegian Evangelical Church. Dietrichson was a "high-church" pastor, university educated, and a follower of the Danish church leader N. F. S. Grundtvig, and one of the key persons in the establishment of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

On more than one occasion, my cousin Daniel Hansen, a retired ELCA pastor from California, has mentioned to me that the schism in the Danish Lutheran churches was over the authority of scriptures—"Is the Bible the Word of God?" or "Does the Bible contain the Word of God?" The controversy was between the Inner Mission movement and the followers of N. F. S. Grundtvig, known as the "Poet of Pentecost." The deadening spirit of rationalism had dried up the streams of spirituality in the Danish Church. He worked to overcome those who "converted the banner of the Lamb into a blue-striped handkerchief, the Christian religion into a philosophy of happiness, and the temple dome

into a parasol.” Under the influence of the “new theology,” ministers made worship into lectures on science and domestic economy. Christ was called the “founder of Christianity,” sin was “error,” salvation was “happiness,” and the real meaning of the Christian life was “morality.” Grundtvig’s “probation” sermon at a new church in 1810 was “Why has the Word of God departed from His house?” A renewal of the spirit of repentance, forgiveness, and joy re-invigorated the churches of Denmark and the rest of Scandinavia. Many of the congregations with whom we worship and grow in faith came from those renewals

Grundtvig was discouraged about defending one’s faith through the use of the written Word in the Scriptures, because he believed that they had been destroyed by rationalist attacks of theological leaders of the Church of Denmark. In 1825 made a “matchless discovery” that Christ Himself, the “Living Word,” the spoken word, had been passed down through the centuries through the Apostles’ Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the sacraments. The Bible is the sacred source-book of the Christian Faith. Grundtvig wrote, “We shall not stand on the Bible and search for faith, but stand on faith and read the Bible.”

Dietrichson, influenced by Grundtvig, arrived in Muskego, WI, in August, 1844, and in November, 1844, as noted above, came to the Durand area and helped organize the “Rock Ground Norwegian Evangelical Church. Another Norwegian Church leader was Elling Eielsen, a lay evangelist who founded the Hauge Synod, named after the pietist lay evangelist from Norway, but there is no record that he came to Northern Illinois.

The reason for mentioning these leaders is that they were most influential in the formation, disintegration, and re-formation of Lutheran synods and conferences in the Mid-West. There also were other leaders from a variety of immigrant Lutheran groups. All three of the above noted church leaders founded many congregations, and led in the formation of various synods and disintegration of synods and conferences.

Clausen served as a chaplain of the 15th Wisconsin Regiment in the Civil War, and later led several groups of Norwegian settlers further west into Iowa and Minnesota. In 1853 he led a caravan of 75 settlers to Northern Iowa and established the town of “St. Ansgar,” (God’s Sword). He founded 21 congregations, many in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. . In addition, he helped to found the Northern Illinois Synod in 1851, which supported the Illinois State University (a Lutheran institution) in Springfield. Abraham Lincoln was a member of the board for about nine months before he became President, his son Robert Todd was a student there, and John Hay, Lincoln’s secretary and later Secretary of State, also was a student at this Lutheran academic institution.

One element in the history of the Norwegian Lutheran settlers in the 1850s and 1860s that is somewhat forgotten is the number that were killed in the Sioux War of 1862 in Minnesota. By 1858, there were probably about 100 settlers along the Des Moines River, most of who were born in America and came from Iowa and settled areas in Minnesota. Some may possibly have come from Wisconsin and Illinois. After 1860 the larger numbers were Norwegian settlers who probably came only a few years previously from

their home land. They knew little English and very little about the Sioux Indians. In 1857, the Spirit Lake and Springfield Massacres had occurred in northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, perpetrated by a renegade band led by Inkpaduta. In 1862, however, more white settlers perished (approximately 800) in the Sioux War of 1862 in southern Minnesota near Jackson-Belmont than in about any other massacre in the history of the American frontier. A significant number of peaceful Norwegian Lutheran immigrants, with their children, were killed. Many of the farmers probably had never fired a gun. Here are some of the family names—Axe, Furnes, Jornevik, Fohre, Slaabaken, Midstad, and Langeland. Many of the Norwegians had gone to church on Sunday morning, August 24, and the homes were unoccupied, causing the Sioux to think that the settlers had gathered together to resist, so they proceeded up the river. The Norwegians built a fort four miles north of Jackson and stayed within the stockade during the summer for two years in a row. Our forefather settlers had a great deal of fortitude and faith, and we are the beneficiaries of their determination. What will our great grandchildren think of us with respect to the Confessional Schism of 2009?

L. A Road Not On The Map

The ELCA Church Wide Assembly in August 2009 was available for watching and listening on the internet, which I did. On August 22 I watched and listened to the General Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, Rev. Ishmael Noko, speak of the Third LWF Assembly that met in Minneapolis in 1957, and the 1957 theme: “Christ Frees and Unites.” The ELCA news service on August 24, 2009, reported on his address to the CWA –“Lutheran World Leader Says Body of Christ ‘Not Ours to Dismember.’ ” The quotes below are from the ELCA news service item on the address by Rev. Noko.

The article went on to quote him, as follows. “Fifty-two years ago, the relation between and among Lutheran churches was marked by suspicion. We were not even able to share the Lord’s Table with easiness.” There were some problems here, which will be noted later. “Yet, it was in the midst of all these doubts, suspicion, and fears among them that Lutherans rediscovered anew what unity means. That unity is a gift. It is a gift rooted in the proclamation of the gospel and the celebration of the sacraments.”

Wait a minute! That does not sound like the 1957 LWF Assembly. I was there, as a recorder for one of the several discussion groups. Bill Lazerus and Gil Doan were in the same discussion group as interpreters. We all attended the plenary sessions, as well. I neither saw nor heard anything about the strong words “suspicion, doubts, suspicion (again), or fears.” So I searched for and found the notes that I took for the discussion groups and at least one plenary session. This was the first time that I had looked at the notes since 1957. I take very good notes, sometimes verbatim, and I will refer to them later.

First, however, I would like to quote again from the same August 24, 2009, ELCA news item on the Rev. Noko’s address that he gave two days earlier. “This gift is God’s own work. And our hands are to serve that unity. They understood that we, therefore, cannot use our hands to pull apart God’s costly work.” What is he talking about? The

participants did not even refer to pulling apart God's costly work. Unity was found in the Word and the Sacraments. This sounds like editorial interpretation. Remember, the theme for the 2009 CWA was "God's work. Our hands."

"In 1957 our forbears in faith decided to do the most sensible thing to do under the circumstances, and that is to stay together. They did not forsake one another," Noko said. "They understood that the Church is the Body of Christ, a creature of the Gospel, and, therefore not ours to dismember. They have therefore left behind us, from this city of Minneapolis, a legacy to stay together." There was not even a glimmer of dismembering. That --"dismembering"-- is the fear of the ELCA after the 2009 CWA--fear of losing money, power, and prestige. Just refer to the Temptation of Jesus in the wilderness (Matt. 4: 1-11). The temptations are: Power, Prestige, and possessions. They tempt us as individuals, and they tempt the corporate body, the Church (especially its hierarchy).

The day before his address, the CWA on August 21 had voted "to open the ELCA ministry to gay and lesbian pastors and other and other professional church workers living in committed same-gender relationships."

The address was a politically manipulative appeal to contain the flow of individuals, congregations, and funds from the ELCA and its synods.

From the notes that I took, the emphasis was not so much on unity, but rather on *freedom*. One has to remember that 1957 was only a dozen years since the end of World War II, Many of the representatives attending had come from Germany, Japan, countries that had been under the heels of totalitarian governments, and Soviet block countries. The voting delegates were from: Western Europe—115; North America—60; Asia—16; Latin America—7; and Africa—7.

Major speakers were Bishop Hans Lilje (1899-1977) of Hanover, Germany (a leader of the Confessing Church over against the Nazis), Bishop Otto Dibelius (1880-1967), of Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany (a leader in the Confessing Church and also against the East German Communist government) , Bishop Lajos Ordass (1901-1978), of Hungary (who had been under house arrest by the Communist government, but allowed to attend the LWF meeting), and Chitose Kishi of Japan.

In addition to the plenary speeches, by the above noted leaders, including Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of the ULCA, there were about 20 discussion groups, considering the following subjects:

1. The Problem of Freedom
2. The Unity of the Church in Christ
3. The Freedom to Reform the Church
4. Free for Service in the World
5. Free and United in Hope

The reason I list the subjects, is that the topics imply that there was some effort at consideration of the subject of unity. But there was not. Most of the time that unity was

brought up was in reference to the Seventh Article of the Augsburg Confession. Though well known, it might be well to quote the article now.

“Article VII: Of the Church”

“Also they teach that *one holy Church* is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the sacraments rightly administered.

And to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, that is, rites or ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere alike. As St Paul says: *One faith, one Baptism, One God and Father of all*, etc. Eph. 4, 5, 6.”

In the voluminous notes on the first discussion subject, there was only a series of questions and discourses on Christian freedom and political freedom; unity and dismemberment was not even considered.

In the second discussion, “The Unity of the Church in Christ,” there were some references to problems that Ishmael Noko mentioned; “We were not even able to share the Lord’s Table with easiness.” You and I might be uneasy, also.

The discussion leader, Rundbloom from Sweden, listed subjects for consideration; 1) Difference of opinions within Lutheran Churches, especially concerning Holy Communion; 2) Problems of churches of Asia and Africa; 3) Questions of uniformity and unity; and 4) Questions of cooperation in relief work.

Peterson from Germany immediately began the discussion. “The Church of Sweden has Holy Communion with the Anglican Church. Does the question primarily concern Apostolic Succession or are there matters of faith? The Church of Sweden is recognized by the Anglican Church, but the Church of Sweden recognizes every Lutheran confession.”

Meyer from Germany responded: “Am I to understand that the difference between intercommunion between Anglicans and the Church of Sweden concerns Apostolic Succession?”

Rundbloom: “This has to do with the Anglican, not with the Church of Sweden.”

Dahl (I think from the US): “Is there an exchange of pulpits?”

Rundbloom: “Yes. But we have invited Germans from Leipzig to take part in communion at Upsala, but they refused because the Church of Sweden accepts Anglicans. In Sweden, the Table is open to everyone, Roman, Buddhist, and Mohammedan.”

(This really shocked me, as I read my notes; that is why I underlined the quote, which I had not remembered for 53 years. I think it shocked others at the discussion.)

Meyer: “This is a different conception of the doctrine. In Germany, this could not happen. Only he who recognized the presence of the Lord is accepted.”

Boury from France: “Ask others in other countries—Is the Lord’s Table open to all?”

Vaasli from Finland: “In Finland, the Table is open in the churches—intercommunion with the Anglican and the Church of Finland.”

(The discussion continued with the experiences of Lutheran Christians in India and Africa, and consideration of Confession before partaking in the Lord’s Supper.)

At that point, Metropolitan James Coucouzes of the Greek Orthodox Church spoke up. He later became Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Orthodox Church of North and South America. When I was associate editor at The Encyclopaedia Britannica, I requested that he write the article on “Ecumenism,” and met him again in New York while attending an American Society of Church History meeting, to discuss the article.

Coucouzes: “The first contact between Lutherans and Orthodox was Luther. I am sorry that relations have not gone further, as Luther and Melanchthon wished. There have been contacts through the centuries. Orthodox still feel free to participate in ecumenical discussions—of the communion of the saints, as in discussions in Finland. The Orthodox view (of the Lord’s Supper) is that of the real body and blood, actual, of Christ. We practice confession before (Holy Communion), but can not enforce it and refuse those who do not go to confession first. But they are reminded—only the worldly must receive. Orthodox and Lutherans are asking themselves—why is there no intercommunion between each other? The question gives hope and courage, that if we believe as Geisechen said. Neither unity, nor intercommunion solves the problem. Metabole (Greek) is the complete change of the elements.” After a lot of discussion, Knuble from the US stated that “Lutheran doctrine is not consubstantiation and not transubstantiation, but is the Real Presence in, with, and under the Word.”

Coucouzes: “In, with, and under taken seriously shows there is no difference between the Orthodox and Lutherans.”

Because of the volume of my notes, we could go on and on. So, I will conclude with a statement by Young, from the US (I believe).

Young: “My point is this. We need to face these issues with a different viewpoint from those given this afternoon. It is so easy to speak of freedom and unity as that which man by his own reason and strength can attain this unity. But, Christ frees and unites, and unity is a gift to the church. There is one church, a hidden reality, an invisible church. In the Augsburg Confession, Article VII—how can we recognize this unity? It is the Gospel and the Sacraments. Doctrinal discussion is

the only way to approach other churches. The essayist (position paper) showed how younger churches did not go to the (Early Church) Fathers, but to the Scriptures. The greatest progress is made not in explaining the terminology of the Fathers, The point is love. There are other things than love in the discussions of unity.”

Part II—the Roads Become Wider

(The concepts under this subject will be written later, and there probably will be some revisions/additions in the first section above. Because the first section may be of help to congregations and pastors caught up in the problems of the 2009 Confessional Schism, it is being sent to various persons who might have an interest in the considerations noted under Part I—Signs Along the Road).