

ISSUES...

IN CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

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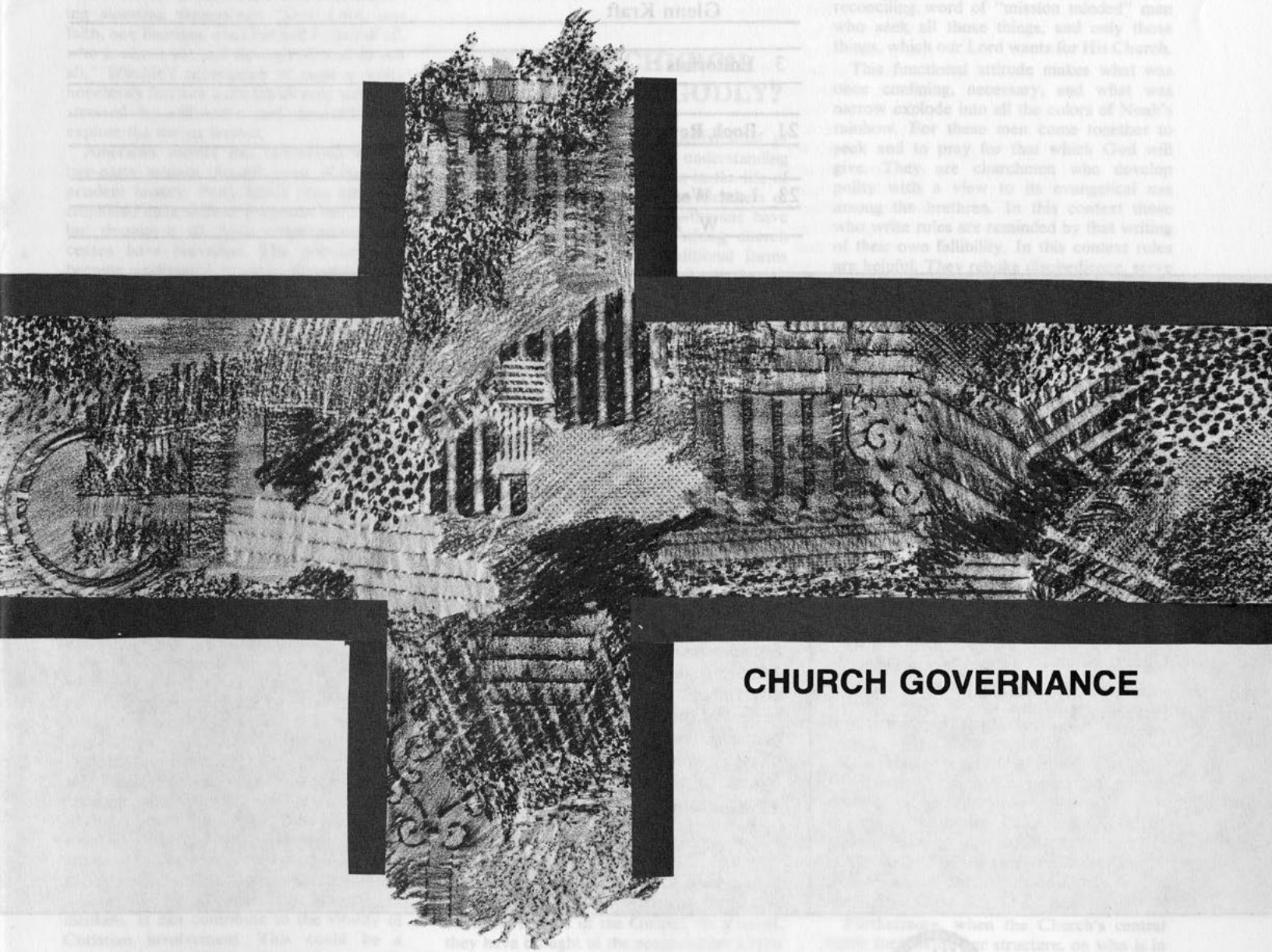
FALL 1974
VOL. 9, NO. 1

editorials

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

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CHURCH GOVERNANCE

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Editor's Notes

The founding fathers of the United States recognized that a democracy could exist only if the populace was educated, informed on the affairs of state, and took an active interest in government. Some of the current problems of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod could not have arisen if the membership had qualified on all three of these prerequisites for a democratic organization. This ISSUES is devoted to presenting analyses of how Missouri has come to its present state of affairs. Some possibilities for moving toward a more democratic model of synodical government are also presented for the benefit of those who upon consideration of the status quo have a desire to make changes which will make it possible for Synod to be more responsive to the wishes of the majority of its members.

THE EDITOR

About the Authors

The Reverend Vernold Aurich is executive secretary of Missions and Stewardship of the Nebraska District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. Jack Ledbetter is professor at California Lutheran College in Thousand Oaks. Joanne Mueller, a Concordia senior and art major, prepared the art and format. Members of the faculty of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, complete the roster of contributors for this number of ISSUES.

A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM FOR LCMS?!

How could a person even entertain thoughts of a two-party system for the church? Isn't this a way of striking at the unity of the people of God in Christ? And then there are Biblical echoes like the following asserting themselves: "One Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Wouldn't acceptance of such a polity hopelessly fracture a church already seriously stressed by difference and dissent? Let's explore the matter further.

American society has functioned with a two-party system through most of its independent history. Party labels have changed, emphases have shifted, programs have failed, but through it all, basic constitutional processes have prevailed. The populace has become acclimated to open discussion and debate of public issues in peace and war. Shouldn't the church be able to design a crucible for dealing similarly with issues relating to the Christian faith and life?

The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod in its early years comprised a membership drawn from an immigrant population used to a hierarchical church organization presided over by an educated ministry. What democratic processes were introduced came more as a result of accommodation to a series of difficult situations than a deep commitment to a philosophy of church governance.

In the 1¼ centuries of LCMS history much in American society has changed and must be taken into account. Today most of the LCMS membership comes from a tradition of several generations of successful experience with a two-party system of local, state, and national government. Higher education is a privilege widely accessible to laity and ministry alike. There is an increase in the number of individuals, both male and female, interested in identifying issues, engaging in discussions, and working through solutions. The constituency appears to be increasingly interested in accountability. People want to know what their representatives stand for and why, and what they are doing and why. Implementation of a two-party system for the church might be a means.

There are some advantages worthy of mention. It can contribute to the vitality of Christian involvement. This could be a means for surveillance over adherence to the Scriptures and the Confessions. Intentional applications of the Christian way can be evaluated constantly. Issues can be

focused and sharpened. Besides there is much in such interaction which can be seminal in helping the Alpha's and Beta's refine their platforms and programs.

In practice we already have the elements for a two-party system. Why not make it official?

G. BLOMBERG

WHEN IS CHURCH GOVERNMENT GODLY?

Any discussion of the administration of church polity is clarified by understanding that form must follow function in the life of the Holy Christian Church. As members of the Holy Christian Church Lutherans have enthusiastically supported a strong church polity. Their respect for traditional forms and their concern for good order in the administration of the church's affairs have been clearly affirmed through the years. Furthermore, Lutherans have had a profound appreciation for the traditions of the past and have had no desire to adopt innovations of a sectarian nature.

At the same time, Lutherans have endeavored to "test everything" and "hold fast what is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). The process of study, revision, and administration of church polity has never been undertaken as an end in itself. As our beloved church has dealt with the question of its polity, the discussion of the nature and use of forms has not taken place apart from the function of the Holy Christian Church. This function includes the task of admonishing one another in love in the midst of a fellowship of forgiveness and mutual burden-bearing to the end that all of us might more fully understand the beauty of resurrection, reconciliation, and oneness of the Spirit. It is time to affirm once again that any discussion of church polity and its proper application in the life of the church must be undertaken in the light of the Church's function. "Thank God, a seven-year-old child knows what the Church is, namely, holy believers and sheep who hear the voice of their Shepherd." (Smalcald Articles, III, XII, 2)

In times past men have used church polity in the service of political concerns instead of in the service of the Gospel. As a result, they have brought to the people either a false sense of optimism and security or the needless agony of terrified conscience. Today, also, men may be tempted to suggest that the Church is protected through consolidation

of power that is brought about by the proper enforcement of polity. However, the word of the Lord against such an attitude has always been a law word. When church leaders wrestle with church regulations and with each other, they must always remember to keep their debate within the context of the function of the Church. That context includes the reconciling word of "mission minded" men who seek all those things, and only those things, which our Lord wants for His Church.

This functional attitude makes what was once confining, necessary, and what was narrow explode into all the colors of Noah's rainbow. For these men come together to seek and to pray for that which God will give. They are churchmen who develop polity with a view to its evangelical use among the brethren. In this context those who write rules are reminded by that writing of their own fallibility. In this context rules are helpful. They rebuke disobedience, serve contrition, and promote good order. Yet, they are not an end in themselves. They are formulated and administered with the view that rebuke awakens contrition and that contrition sets up the proper context for words of reconciliation.

The administration of church polity must of necessity be open to flexibility within the context of the function of the Church. Polity must not be administered for its own sake and in a manner that unnecessarily blocks avenues of reconciliation. Is it more important to do things in order and according to rules than it is to be flexible for the sake of our brothers? Shall we tell our Lord not to heal on the Sabbath? Do church rules simply direct us, or do they teach us that everyone bends rules for his own advantage?

On the other hand, rules must not be manipulated because of political pressure that is put on church leaders by any particular group. Church polity should not be used in the service of superficial reconciliation that asks people whose consciences cannot agree to act as though everything is in agreement. Church polity should not be used to blur doctrine or to support any libertarian approach to life in the Church. Rules of the Church must be administered with flexibility in the context of the function of the Church for the sake of the Gospel and only for the sake of the Gospel.

Furthermore, when the Church's central battle focuses on her structure, on who is in and who is out, her theologizing may pretend to be Gospel-oriented by using Gospel clichés, but its proclamation cannot escape the context of the Law. Even the struggle for



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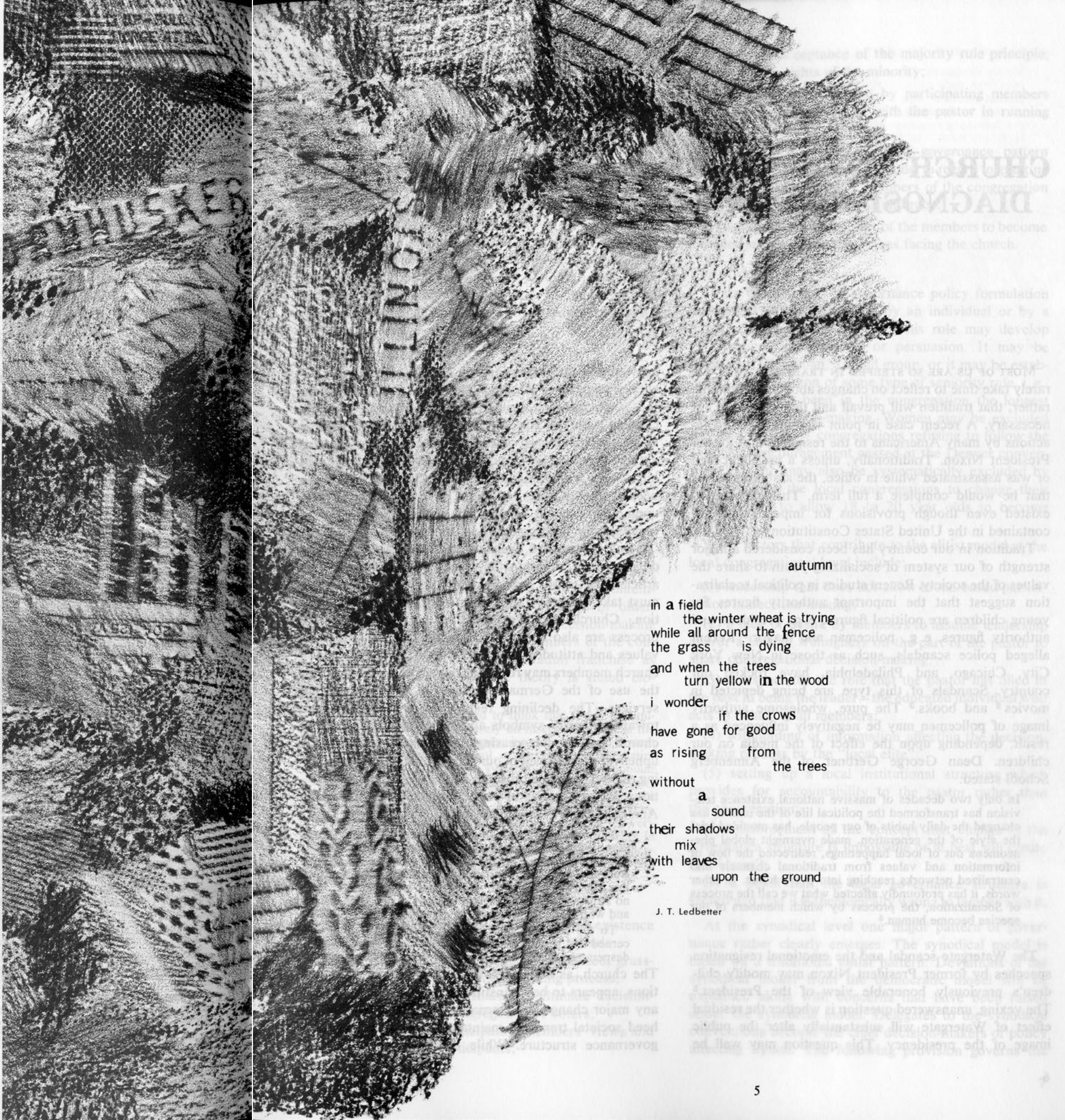
the pure understanding of doctrine must be fought in the context of the function of the Church. If it is not, the Church will be self-centered instead of Christ-centered. It will be more concerned with keeping all impure people out than it will be with reaching the least of our brothers. Are men saved by purity of doctrine? All of us would say, "No." Does God forgive our doctrinal mistakes? All of us would say, "Yes." It is imperative that we do not lead our people to believe otherwise. For if we do, we have pretended to preach the Gospel while in fact we are sharing only the Law.

Some will always be content to worship at Bethel on the thesis that what was good enough for my ancestors is good enough for me. Others will insist that true worship is only found in Jerusalem. However, God pronounces a word of law on all houses that use His sacred covenant to build ziggurats and workable systems that guarantee outward unity instead of living in covenant fidelity, betrothed to the Lord "in righteousness, and justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy" (Hos. 2:19). We are called to do theology, not to fondle it as though it were the work of our hands. We are called to be disciples of Christ, not admiring spectators of Christ. He builds a house for us. We do not build a house for Him. He forms us out of the dust of the ground, makes us living stones, builds us into a spiritual house, makes us a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people—all to the end that we may declare the wonderful deeds of Him who called us out of darkness into light. (1 Peter 2)

As the Church seeks to administer its polity, form must follow function. When the form of the Church is used to limit and box in the function of the Church so that Christians are hindered from "outdoing one another in love," the voice of the Shepherd is silenced. When "decently and in order" informs the "love we share" rather than "the love we share" informing the administration of order in the Church, at that point Law and Gospel are confused. The Gospel cannot be encased by the Law as though the Law were some kind of satchel. Nor can the spirit of our common resurrection love be encased by any system of church polity. Indeed, the Gospel mission of the Church in each of its particular settings must inform and suggest the way in which church government can most effectively lead us to be "able ministers of the New Testament."

We need the Law to drive us to our knees and instruct us about its own use in the Church in order that our hearts may be ready for the "O how happy" of resurrection adventure. We also need to trust that this adventure is directed by the Good Shepherd and to stop wondering if too much Gospel will cause things to be done out of order and in fact against the Law of God. Is the Gospel opposed to the Law? Can the true Gospel lead one to despise the Law of God? Or is the love that is awakened by the Gospel the fulfilling of the Law?

RONALD VAHL



autumn

in a field
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while all around the fence
the grass is dying
and when the trees
turn yellow in the wood
i wonder
if the crows
have gone for good
as rising from
the trees
without
a
sound
their shadows
mix
with leaves
upon the ground

J. T. Ledbetter

CHURCH GOVERNANCE— DIAGNOSIS/PROGNOSIS

by Gary Greinke

MOST OF US ARE SO STEEPED IN TRADITION THAT WE rarely take time to reflect on changes about us, assuming, rather, that tradition will prevail and that change is not necessary. A recent case in point was the shocked reactions by many Americans to the resignation of former President Nixon. Traditionally, unless a president died or was assassinated while in office, the assumption was that he would complete a full term. This expectation existed even though provisions for impeachment are contained in the United States Constitution.

Tradition in our country has been considered a major strength of our system of socializing youth to share the values of the society. Recent studies in political socialization suggest that the important authority figures for young children are political figures, e. g., president, and authority figures, e. g., policeman and mayor.¹ Recent alleged police scandals, such as those in New York City, Chicago, and Philadelphia, have rocked our country. Scandals of this type are being depicted in movies² and books.³ The pure, wholesome authority image of policemen may be negatively influenced as a result, depending upon the effect of the media on our children. Dean George Gerbner of the Annenberg School stated:

In only two decades of massive national existence television has transformed the political life of the nation, has changed the daily habits of our people, has moulded [sic] the style of the generation, made overnight global phenomena out of local happenings, redirected the flow of information and values from traditional channels into centralized networks reaching into every home. In other words, it has profoundly affected what we call the process of Socialization, the process by which members of our species become human.⁴

The Watergate scandal and the emotional resignation speeches by former President Nixon may modify children's previously honorable view of the President.⁵ The vexing, unanswered question is whether the residual effect of Watergate will substantially alter the public image of the presidency. This question may well be

answered in the future through studies of children's reactions to authority figures. The Watergate scandal and the accompanying trials, resignation, and pardon, coupled with the issues raised in the 1960s over civil rights, crime, drugs, violence, dissent, and respect for authority reflect the concern of many over stability in our society.⁶ Additional concerns in the seventies have been women's rights, inflation, economic stability, and unemployment—all of which have caused tension regarding the future stability of our society.

Some readers are likely to question what this has to do with governance in the church—the subject of this article. The trends and concerns of church governance must take societal trends and concerns into consideration. Church members involved in the governance process are also citizens of our country and have their values and attitudes affected by societal change. Many church members may recall the impact of World War I on the use of the German language in Lutheran church services. The declining respect of youth and adults toward authority symbols and structures, including the church, may also increasingly be noted because of the upheaval experienced in our society and the accompanying removal of the sacrosanct nature of cherished institutions. In his analysis of public opinion polls concerning America, Louis Harris reported:

The "status quo at any price" people were no more than 1 in 10. The "overturn the system because it is rotten to the core" people came to no more than 1 in 20. But the worst mistake that could be made was to assume that the remaining 85% were bland and apathetic, with no strong views on where the country ought to be headed and who made up the amorphous center.

To the contrary, the shape of the future deeply concerned and would be shaped mainly by 85% who wanted desperately to find orderly change.⁷

The church, as evidenced by its recent convention actions, appears to be an institution committed to resisting any major change in governance.⁸ Yet, the church must heed societal trends in maintaining an effective church governance structure. While the church is unique in

relating to the spiritual needs of man, it nevertheless remains an institution formed by men with a mission carried out by men within a societal context.

Diagnosis

In examining the church governance structure the author will first examine the present structure and the assumptions underlying such a structure and then review three potential models for church governance. In order to gain a complete view of governance in the church, it will be necessary to examine the operation of the church at both the local and national level. Most congregations usually follow either a democratic or elitist model, though any congregation may vary slightly from the normative model presented.

Democratic Model

In a democratic model the eligible voters of the congregation make the key decisions, elect officers, and delegate those responsibilities they do not want to directly handle through a board of directors. The ultimate authority remains in the hands of the voters. The basic democratic principles of popular sovereignty, majority rule, popular consultation, and political equality are followed.⁹ Majority rule requires that 50% plus one are able to make decisions, with a respect for minority rights. Popular consultation requires elected officials to consult with their constituency to determine their views on an issue. If the congregation were to follow the democratic guidelines established by our contemporary American society, all individuals 18 or older, male or female, would participate in the decision-making process when they became voting members of the congregations. The justification of the adult franchise as a unique element of democratic theory is stated eloquently in the following:

In summary, I am inclined to think that today the universal adult suffrage is merely an inseparable part of the wider argument for democracy, i. e. for a political system marked by popular control of government, as distinguished from alternative systems; that once popular control is assented to, it leads logically to no stopping place short of the adult franchise for all sane adults. In accepting popular control—free election of decision-makers—one may take it as an ultimate, part of the very definition of democracy; yet some of the arguments in favor of the universal suffrage make out a strong independent case for any wide franchise, and hence for popular control itself.¹⁰

Some factors that may contribute to the existence of the democratic model at the local level include:

- (1) leadership which encourages broad-based, grass-roots participation in the decision-making process;
- (2) a pastor's desire to share the ultimate decision-making power with the congregation of voters;
- (3) a respect for all participating members' views and equal treatment of all participants;

(4) mature acceptance of the majority rule principle, respecting the rights of the minority;

(5) a sense of obligation by participating members to share the responsibility with the pastor in running the local church;

(6) a belief that the church's governance pattern should follow our government model in regard to granting the voting franchise to all members of the congregation 18 or older, regardless of sex and race;

(7) a willingness on the part of the members to become knowledgeable concerning issues facing the church.

Elitist Model

In an elitist model of governance policy formulation and elections are controlled by an individual or by a small identifiable power elite. This role may develop by election, appointment, or persuasion. It may be filled by a clergyman, a small group, or it may be established by a tradition of some type of seniority rule, i. e., those that have been in the congregation the longest control the decision-making. Women may be excluded by local option by congregations refusing to follow the synodical encouragement passed at the Denver convention.¹¹ Youth may also be systematically excluded by the failure of the local congregations to change their constitutions to allow 18 to 20 year olds to become voters.

Some factors that contribute to the elitist model at the local congregational level include:

- (1) leadership that does not allow broad-based participation in decision-making;
- (2) a lack of desire by members to assume leadership and/or a lack of willingness on the part of the pastor to share congregational decision-making;
- (3) a respect for the role that the pastor has filled in the past in being the leader—the educated individual who acts in behalf of all members;
- (4) withholding of information affecting the decision-making process by the "local elite";
- (5) setting up a local institutional structure which provides for accountability to the pastor rather than the congregation;
- (6) reinforcement of the concept that change in the governance structure is impossible or at best will create "problems";
- (7) a belief that the local governance structure is sacred and that it is theologically wrong to tamper with it.

At the synodical level one major pattern of governance rather clearly emerges. The synodical model is based on a traditional elitist pattern. Deviations of the synodical model from the democratic model will be explained along with concerns that have been raised about the synodical model. Delegates to the synodical conventions become the chief decision-makers of policy affecting Synod. The following provision governs the

selection of voting delegates:

Voting delegates shall consist of one pastor and one layman from each electoral circuit. An electoral circuit shall consist either of one or two adjacent visitation circuits, as shall be determined by each District, on the basis of the following requirements: each pair of delegates shall represent from 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000. Exceptions to these requirements and limitations can be made only by the President of the Synod upon request of a District Board of Directors. Voting delegates shall serve a 2-year term, beginning with the convention; after the convention they shall function as resource persons in their circuit and assist in the dissemination and implementation of the synodical resolutions in their area.¹²

This formula tends to vary from the democratic model in that:

(1) the basic one-man-one-vote principle is not followed because a substantial numerical disparity may exist between districts;¹³

(2) the congregations selecting the lay nominee may have followed the elitist model discussed earlier in this article;

(3) teachers are categorically disenfranchised by delegate selection process;

(4) pastors tend to be overrepresented and the laity are substantially underrepresented because each circuit is required to select one pastor as one of its two representatives;

(5) a congregation or congregations served by the elected pastoral delegate may not have their lay nominee elected as delegate;¹⁴

(6) pastors and laity in specialized ministries, assistant pastors, deaconesses, DCEs, youth directors, and synodical officers are excluded.

In practice, the major policies being formulated at the synodical level and the officials being selected to govern the church are selected by a small select group of voting delegates. The potential danger of such a structure at any time is that it provides the machinery for a policy-making body to be out of touch with the attitudes of a large number of members of the institution. This model would not cause problems if:

(1) the decision-making body governs in conformity with the majority; or

(2) if the majority of the membership desire elitist control.

Statistics are in for the year 1971, and they provide a clear picture of the practical ramifications of the voting franchise at the synodical convention level. In 1971 The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod had 2,011,348 communicant members.¹⁵ The major policy decisions were made by 1,020 voting delegates. One-half of this number were pastors selected by the electoral circuits. Individuals excluded from consideration as voting delegates include 6,572 elementary teachers, 691 high school teachers, 694 college and seminary teachers, for a total

of 7,957.¹⁶ It is interesting to note that this number exceeds the total number on the clergy roster for North America by 629.¹⁷ Thus more professional church workers were excluded from participation than the total number of eligible pastors.

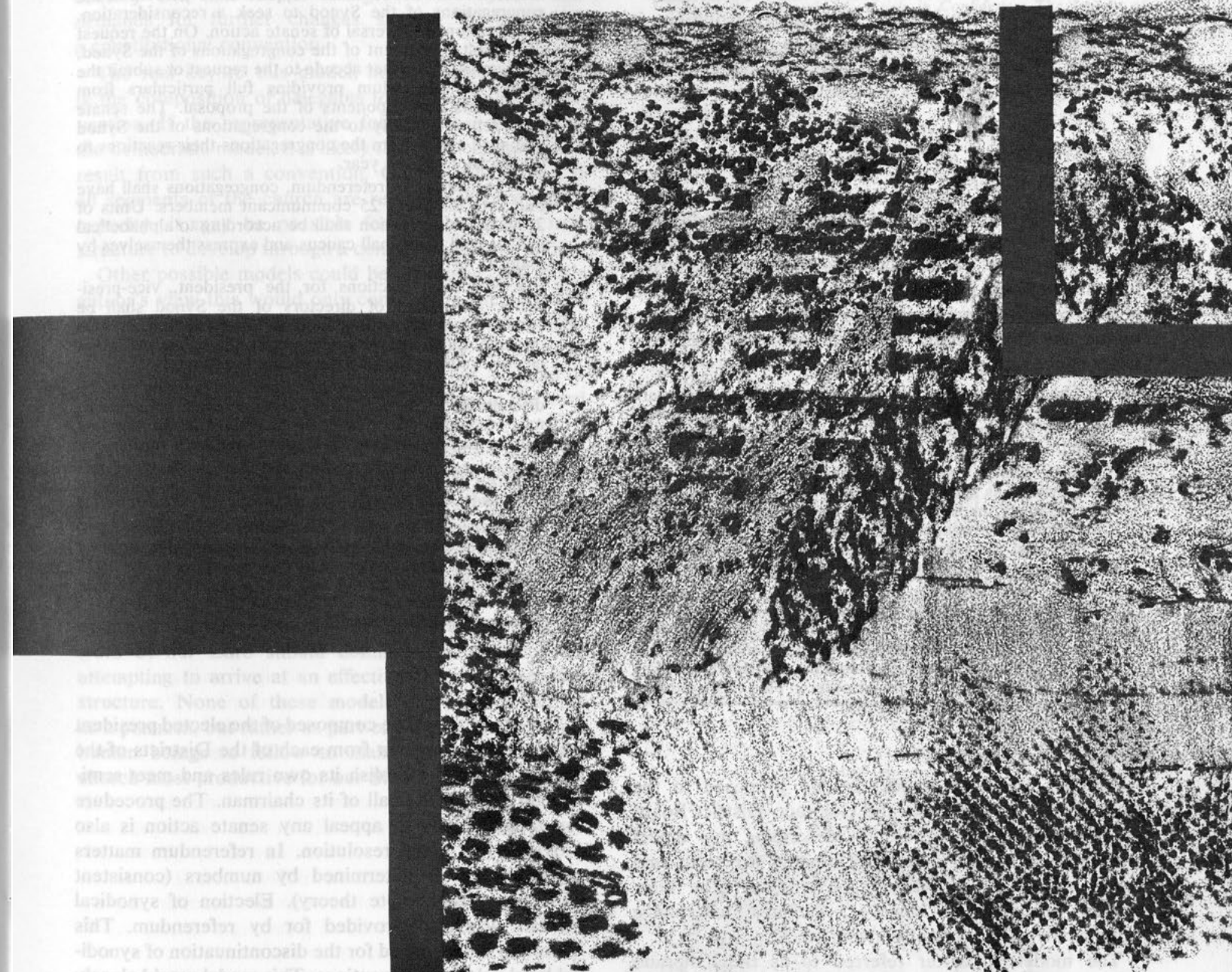
The rationale for categorically excluding an entire group of professional church workers, i. e., teachers, and giving another group of professional church workers, i. e., clergy, one-half of all the voting delegate positions needs reexamination. The church entrusts voting rights to lay delegates and thereby expresses a confidence in the ability of nonclergy to make wise decisions. Teachers who are full-time workers in the church, like the clergy, are competent decision makers. It seems reasonable to include them in the delegate voting franchise if The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is to move to adopting the democratic model prevalent in our society today.

The most recent justification regarding franchise at synodical conventions by the Committee on Organization was presented in the *New Orleans Reports and Overtures*.¹⁸ The theory behind maintaining the historic balance of one pastoral vote and one lay vote is based on the belief that the Synod is primarily an association of congregations and on the synodical Constitution, which provides only for lay and pastoral representation. The rationale seems to be based on precedent established in the constitution rather than on logic.¹⁹

It is interesting to note that in 1971 there were 3,887 (63.8%) urban stations (2,500 or more population) and 2,207 (36.2%) rural stations in the United States and Canada. However, during the same year the baptized members in urban areas numbered 2,260,682 (78.3%) versus 625,525 (21.7%) in rural stations.²⁰ The delegates to the Milwaukee convention were chosen by electoral circuit, with each congregation, regardless of size, having a vote to select one pastoral and one lay delegate. The above figures rather clearly reflect that congregational stations do not accurately reflect numerical concentrations, i. e., the 63.8% of urban stations have 78.3% of the baptized members. The present system encourages minority control by the very nature of the delegate selection process.

The Committee on Organization reporting to the New Orleans convention justified size of congregational disparity by noting that:

The committee believes that the matter of permitting larger congregations to have several lay votes is equitably provided for in Bylaw 1.51 which states that electoral circuits may consist of from 7 to 20 member congregations, involving an aggregate communicant membership ranging from 1,500 to 10,000. The problem of large congregations having no greater voice than small congregations is solved, in part, by the fact that electoral circuits of large congregations can be composed of few congregations while large numbers of smaller congregations are required in order to form an electoral circuit.²¹



Such a provision, it is to be noted, is permissive, not mandatory in nature and in no way guarantees equitable treatment for large congregations. Furthermore, the range in size from 1,500 to 10,000 provided for in Bylaw 1.51 permits a 7-to-1 size disparity to exist.

Further concerns regarding changes in the convention representative formula are contained in the convention workbooks for the Milwaukee²² and New Orleans²³ conventions. On the basis of these past resolutions it is likely that this issue will continue to receive growing attention by many members of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Prognosis

Status Quo Model

The status quo model is a continuation of the present system which provides for official convention action every two years, with slight modifications occurring from time to time. This would provide for a continuation of the present system which was described by the Committee on Organization in their report to the New Orleans convention.

The last major adaptations to contemporary needs were adopted upon the recommendation of the Synodical Survey Commission which was at work from 1956 to 1962.

More than 10 years have elapsed since that time, and the Synod has had an opportunity to test and reflect upon the changes made. It has seen further rapid changes in its social environment, moving through the boom of the 1950s into the activist 1960s, and now finds itself in the realism of the 1970s and with the uncertainties of the 1980s still before us.

One of the major weaknesses, however, in retrospect has been the fact that in many of the previous Constitutional and Bylaw revisions, the convention at times followed a "smorgasbord" approach by selectively adopting some revisions and declining others. This has produced inconsistencies and ambiguities.²⁴

Revised Structure Model

Another significant model is one proposed to the Milwaukee convention by the Colorado District Board of Directors.²⁵ The resolution describing this model was referred to the Board of Directors for study and report to the New Orleans convention.²⁶ The New Orleans convention, however, declined to change significantly the format of conventions.²⁷

The model, hereafter referred to as the Colorado model, provides for a senate to decide policy matters of Synod. The following excerpt from the convention resolution describes in detail the proposed structure:

Resolved, That the Synod consider revising its system of government following these guidelines:

1. The elected president shall be the chief executive officer of the Synod, assisted by elected vice-presidents. The president and first vice-president shall be full-time executives.

2. The elected board of directors shall be responsible for the general management and supervision of all the business affairs of the Synod.

3. There shall be a senate responsible for deciding policy matters of the Synod. The senate shall consist of the elected president and an elected layman from each of the Districts of the Synod. The senate shall organize itself and establish its own rules of order. The senate shall meet semiannually and at the call of its chairman.

4. Any congregation may initiate a request to the senate for consideration of a matter. In the event a congregation disagrees with the action (or inaction) of the senate, it may, on its own, solicit the support of 10 percent of the congregations of the Synod to seek a reconsideration, modification, or reversal of senate action. On the request of at least 10 percent of the congregations of the Synod, the senate shall either accede to the request or submit the matter to referendum providing full particulars from proponents and opponents of the proposal. The senate shall report annually to the congregations of the Synod and shall solicit from the congregations their reactions to the decisions of the year.

5. In matters of referendum, congregations shall have one vote for every 25 communicant members. Units of 25 in the congregation shall be according to alphabetical listing. Said units shall caucus and express themselves by majority vote.

6. Synodical elections for the president, vice-presidents, and board of directors of the Synod shall be conducted in the same manner as a referendum. Profiles on each candidate shall accompany the ballot. All other elective officers shall be elected by the senate.

7. At the synodical level delegate conventions shall be discontinued. At the District level delegate conventions may be continued, or other forms of District government may be developed by each District; and be it further

Resolved, That the Synod stimulate a study of this proposal during the next two years among the congregations of the Synod; and be it finally

Resolved, That the Commission on Constitutional Matters be directed to assist in implementing this proposal by offering appropriate Handbook revisions to the 1973 convention of the Synod and that a decision on reorganizing the government of the Synod be made at the 1973 convention of the Synod.²⁸

The senate would be composed of the elected president and an elected layman from each of the Districts of the Synod. It would establish its own rules and meet semiannually and at the call of its chairman. The procedure for congregations to appeal any senate action is also provided for in the resolution. In referendum matters representation is determined by numbers (consistent with one-man-one-vote theory). Election of synodical officials was also provided for by referendum. This Colorado model called for the discontinuation of synodical level delegate conventions. This model would closely parallel the democratic model. It would require a well-informed laity because the congregation would be empowered to share in the decision-making and election process via the referendum procedures provided for in the plan. Recent divisions in Synod appear to be stimulating a greater laity awareness. This model would provide for greater continuity in synodical action. The senate format might also encourage a less emotionally charged atmosphere for conducting the business of the church.

Open-ended Model

A third model most recently suggested in a resolution to the New Orleans convention²⁹ was the calling of a constitutional convention to review comprehensively the viability of the present Constitution.

The basic assumption of this model is that the present constitution was written by church fathers in the 19th century and that recent changes in the bylaws and demands for further changes suggest the need for a constitutional convention.

The real key to this model, in the author's opinion, is the composition of delegates to a constitutional convention. If the representative formula does not follow the democratic model, it is likely that little change would result from such a convention. On the other hand, if all segments of the church are represented in a voting capacity, it may be possible for a substantially new structure to develop through a constitutional convention.

Other possible models could be presented, but in the author's view this would only confuse the simpler issue of whether the church at large, in the light of societal changes previously discussed, desires to continue to operate in the traditional elitist model or whether it desires to move to a more democratic model at the local and synodical levels.

A basic problem is that trust is necessary within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod for proposed models two or three to succeed. It is hoped that the church at large will in the near future review its governance structure to determine if it is going to meet the needs of the 20th and 21st centuries adequately. The anguish of change makes it comfortable to continue traditional practices. However, the welfare of the church and the work of our Lord should dominate our decisions in attempting to arrive at an effective church governance structure. None of these models has been presented as a panacea, but rather as part of a model for imperfect human beings to follow to make our life within the church most productive for our Savior.

NOTES

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¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

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¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

²⁰ Mo. Synod, *Statistical Yearbook*, 1971, p. 284.

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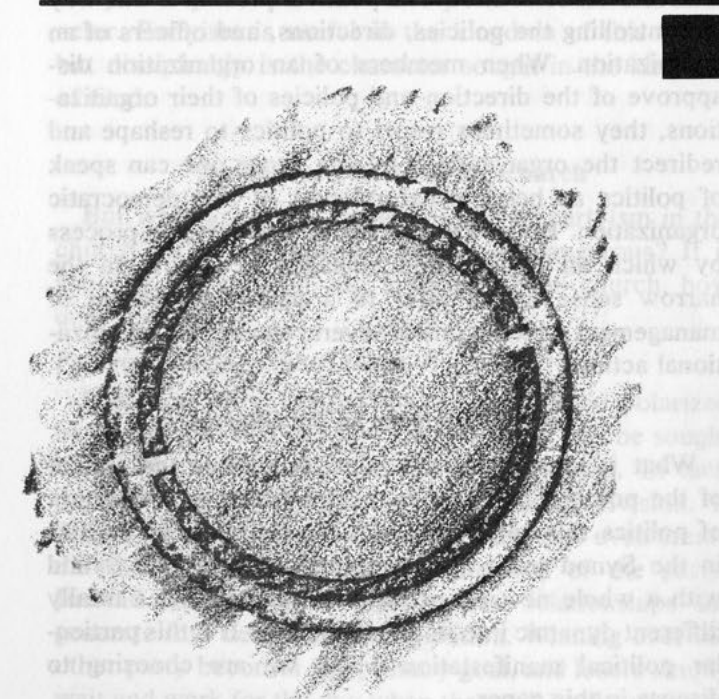
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A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM FOR THE CHURCH?

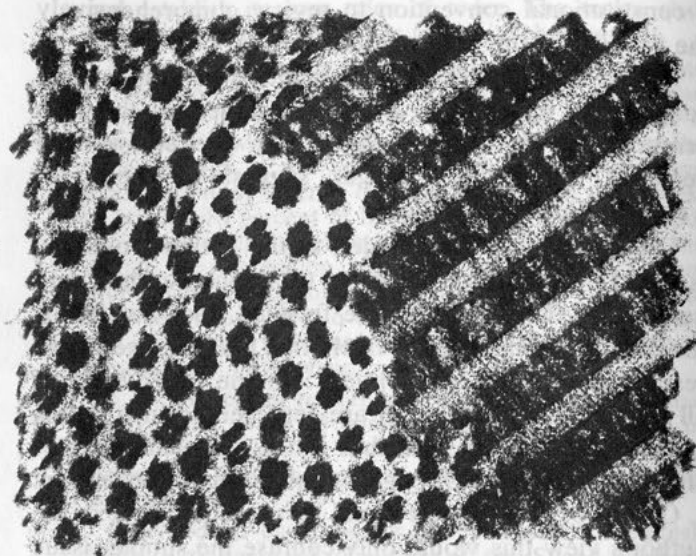
by Vernold Aurich

POLITICS IS PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY SIGNIFICANT role in the life of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod today. Seemingly, a larger number of people are resorting to the political process for solving the problems within the Synod. Political journals, rallies, platforms, and contributions have become commonplace. Those who accept the role of politics in the Synod label as "politically naive" those who do not, while those who do not accept politics as a valid process for dealing with synodical problems see the politicians as themselves being the problem. However one might understand the Synod doctrinally, institutionally, historically, today it is important to also understand it politically.

Actually, the discussion of politics in the church is a discussion of control. The political process is one way of controlling the policies, directions, and officers of an organization. When members of an organization disapprove of the direction and policies of their organizations, they sometimes resort to politics to reshape and redirect the organization. In one sense one can speak of politics as being a natural part of any democratic organization. In the broad sense it is simply the process by which an organization manages its affairs. In the narrow sense it can refer to a particular process of management which is one of several choices for organizational action.

Political Partyism in the Church

What is new about synodical politics is the advent of the political party. It is this particular manifestation of politics that totally changes the character of politics in the Synod today. Its presence confronts the Synod with a whole new set of problems and inserts a totally different dynamic into its governing life. It is this particular political manifestation which we are choosing to discuss in this paper.



It should be noted that the title of this article, "A Two-Party System for the Church?" is not an academic question. It is a reality in the Synod, even if it is unofficial and unrecognized. Members of the Synod know that two political parties (and maybe more) are in existence today within the Synod. Both have become more visible and more vocal. A significant number of synodical members support the party of their choice, if not financially, then surely emotionally. If we are going to condone the "two-party system" either by our support or participation, we need at least to be conscious of the consequences of our action.

It is this writer's opinion that a two-party system is not good for the church. This is based on his belief that the two-party system actually results in a "partyism" that subverts both the message and mission of the church. This in effect means that when a church engages in party politics it finally destroys its own essence and function so that in seeming to solve one set of problems by resorting to politics, it actually creates more problems than it solves. Stated another way, it is this writer's opinion that party politics inevitably becomes the enemy within that erodes not only the mission, but also the message that the church is seemingly attempting to deliver to the world.

What do we mean by a political party? We mean an organization of people within the denomination, organized for the purpose of controlling the policies, programs, direction, and officers of the denomination. *Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary* defines political party as "an organized group of the electorate that attempts to control government through the election of its candidates to office." While it denies no one the right of participation in the democratic process of the organization, it nevertheless manipulates that process by organizing likeminded people into voting blocks in

order to achieve a predetermined end. Its characteristics include:

- (a) its own journal or periodical used to shape favorable public opinion within the organization,
- (b) a platform stating the party's preferred policies and program for the church,
- (c) approved candidates for available offices,
- (d) its own system of rewards and penalties for those who either support or oppose the party's views,
- (e) its own rationale for legitimizing its activities (such as, we will save the flag) which are designed to attract the uninformed into their following.

Politicking and Partyism

Some will argue, however, that there has always been politicking in the church, and indeed, they are correct. Wherever the democratic process is even loosely practiced, influencing votes to produce a desired result is a natural by-product, and The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is no exception. In fact, politicking within the organization can be a constructive way for members to influence the future course of the organization.

However, political partyism is politics of a stripe different from politicking. Instead of influencing the organization, it seeks to control it. Instead of shaping opinion through the discussion of issues, it organizes people into voting blocks in order to establish the party's will. It renders the organization ineffective by making decisions for the organization through party platforms and decisions. Instead of the organization's being the forum where ideas are shared and votes cast, the organization becomes the arena for party confrontation. Whereas politicking takes place within the organization, partyism functions outside of it. Whereas politicking functions with respect for the parent organization, partyism relegates the organization to a secondary position. To the politicking group the organization is very important. To the partyism group, the party is what is important. Consequently, partyism eventually turns the organization into a kind of front behind which parties carry out their operations.

This style of organizational control is very different from the "town meeting" style of church government. In the "town meeting" style, one's membership in the community authorizes him to participate in community decisions. A forum is created which allows for equal expression and equal participation in decision-making. Final decisions are pursued for "the good of the whole" and are drawn from a broad range of interests and desires.

The "town meeting" style has been the traditional style of church government in the Synod. Constitutions of both the Synod and its congregations typically make membership in the congregation the primary test for participation in the decision-making process. Two con-

ditions, namely age, and until recent times, sex, had to be filled. Nevertheless, if one was of legal age and male (at least until 1969), then the chief criterion for participation was congregational (community) membership. Parties within the group were never envisioned. It was assumed that the "voters assembly" would be the forum where members would come together and, under God, effect the best decisions for the good of all.

By contrast, in the party system the party is more important than the organization and, in effect, replaces it. Decisions for the organization are made in the party. Issues are discussed in the party. Candidates for office are picked in the party. The emphases shift from the individual to the party and from the parent organization to the parties that comprise it.

All this is said with appreciation for the contribution the two-party system has made to American society. It has generally served well the purpose of surfacing candidates and issues for consideration by the electorate. However, it is a system for "this world" and is compatible with the realm of law. In this system one party lives on the mistakes of the other. Honesty is prompted more by the fear of being found out than by the love of God. The highest good is to win, whatever the cost.

In the kingdom of God much more is expected. We live in the kingdom of grace as well as in the kingdom of power. Mutual trust instead of suspicion is to be cultivated. Instead of policing others we are called to edify them. In the political party we emphasize judgment, but in the church we emphasize mercy. Partyism emphasizes defeating the brother, whereas in the church we are called to seek his good. The one strives to serve while the other seeks to be served. The one finds fault with his brother while the other is reconciled to his brother. The one divides, while in the church we are called to unity. Partyism and discipleship are of different character. Partyism is useful in the kingdom of this world, but discipleship is the character sought in the kingdom of God.

Dangers of Parties in the Church

But what are some of the dangers of partyism in the church? If it is dangerous, why is it dangerous? If it subverts the mission and message of the church, how does it do this?

Partyism Divides the Church

Under a party system the Synod will be polarized by design into two or more camps. Unity will be sought within the parties but not within the Synod. In fact, partyism fosters division for the sake of division. It finally becomes important to emphasize and even create differences simply for the perpetuation of the party. Instead of fostering a togetherness, relationships degenerate into destructive competition. Winning over the other party becomes the primary goal, and losers simply wait and work for the day when they will be the winners.

Partyism Seeks Enforced Control

The purpose of the political party is to control the policies, direction, and officers of the organization of which it is a part. Finally, it must also seek to control the people of the organization, particularly those who because of different views espouse different directions and policies for the organization. Consequently, partyism requires some means for enforcing its plans and programs among those in the organization who do not totally share its views.

In the United States this enforcement mechanism is built into the system. The party that ascends to power also controls the law enforcement agencies, and therefore has the power both to enact its plans into law and to enforce them. The only reason that political losers continue to support the government and pay taxes after losing an election is because the party in power has the means and the muscle to force conformity. However, one suspects that if there were a choice, many in losing political parties would not support the government of the winning party if it could elect not to.

In voluntary organizations where political partyism exists, there is no law-enforcement agency to force conformity. Consequently, other means are used. The threat of expulsion, emphasis on constitutional laws and by-laws, and stipulations and resolutions of the organization are generally resorted to. Appeals to the organization's tradition or to one's loyalty to the organization are also used to demand conformity.

The church's approach must be different. It does not seek conformity to man-made ordinances but rather to the mind of Christ. To that end it does not seek to control, for it knows that it cannot force people to believe or to live the Christian life. Instead, it uses the Word of God to build people up in the faith so that they might "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." It catches the spirit of Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." While speaking of tongues in the church, Paul lays down a principle to govern all activity, "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). Instead of demanding conformity, evangelical disciples build unity in Christ through the Gospel.

Partyism Undermines Credibility

Credibility is a necessary ingredient of a voluntary organization. Members must find their leaders believable if they are to be followed. Dictatorships achieve conformity through power, but officers of voluntary organizations require credibility for a following.

Partyism undermines credibility within the church. Members cannot be sure why leaders do or say the things they do. They know that, be it in society or the church, as politics ascend, good government declines. They also sense that methodology says a lot about the character of the movement. Is it really for the good of the

organization or is it for the good of the party? Political leaders are readily suspected of having ulterior motives and hidden agendas. With the political party come the dangers of the political payoffs and political bargaining. People who help candidates come to power naturally expect appropriate favors. And if political means are enjoyed, does this mean that the party's philosophy and claim lacks the substance necessary for building a following?

Political partyism also damages the church's credibility with the world, and this results in a severe handicap to its mission. Of course, not all men will believe the Gospel. It will be a stumbling block to some and foolishness to others. But the church must have credibility if its message is to even receive a fair hearing. If the world sees the church manifesting the very qualities which it seems to preach against, the world will remain unconvinced. The church will be a stumbling block to the very people it is trying to reach, and the world will be confirmed in its unbelief.

Partyism Is Surrender to Humanism

Political partyism in the church is too apt to become another surrender to Humanism. Instead of trusting the power of God's Spirit to lead His people from error to truth, from weakness to strength, from darkness to light, from unbelief to faith, etc., the danger is that we begin to trust the political process. What is going to save Synod? "My party!" Who is going to replace key leaders and key policies? "My party!" Soon the party is seen as the almighty savior of the church. But the party is human! It exists by human design and by human purpose. When it replaces the God-ordained method of the Spirit working through the Word to effect change, then we have resorted to an idolatrous Humanism that can only result in chaos.

Partyism Is Diversionary

Human loyalties contain many subtleties. Men too easily develop loyalties to one group while confessing loyalty to another. Since parties require a high degree of loyalty from members for survival, one is always in the danger of indulging in the same kind of misdirected loyalty as was true in the Church in Corinth. Christian associations should direct us to Christ, but political parties so easily become an end unto themselves.

When the Christians at Corinth divided themselves into parties, Paul condemned their actions. Some said they followed Apollos, some Cephas, and some Paul. But Paul said to them, "When there is jealousy among you and you quarrel with one another, doesn't this prove that you are men of this world, living by this world's standards? When one of you says, 'I am with Paul,' and another, 'I am with Apollos,' aren't you acting like worldly men? After all, who is Apollos and who is Paul? We are simply God's servants by whom you were led to believe." (1 Cor. 3:3-5)

Our parties have different names, but the same attraction. When loyalty to Christ is diverted to loyalty to a preferred party, we are being "men of the world" as surely as the people in Corinth. The church is our "party." It serves to draw men to Christ with the power of the Gospel. All groups within it glorify God through Jesus Christ. Of course all party leaders claim that this is also their purpose. But in causing divisions, even in the name of truth, they so easily build false loyalties in human leaders and human institutions.

Why Political Parties?

If political parties in the church are fraught with so many dangers, why have so many in the Synod resorted to political parties in our time? Who really knows? The range of reasons is broad. Some have personal hatreds for someone on the other side and find the party useful for expressing them. Some find a sense of power in the company of like-minded people and have a deep need to win out over others. Others are genuinely concerned for the "truth" or the direction of the church and easily resort to humanistic devices to achieve their end. Still others have a feeling of powerlessness to effect change or to stop change and find the party an available tool for achieving power. Others find security in a party. They feel threatened and look for safety in numbers. And still others have joined a party as a reaction against those who have either begun or are perpetuating parties in the church.

One thing is sure. Political parties beget their own opposition. There can never be just one political party in a voluntary organization. One is sure to bring two, and two to bring three. As soon as one group organizes to install its views, it forces people of differing views to also organize to install theirs. Consequently, those who resort to political means bear a kind of responsibility for all the political actions that result. What is a viable form for one becomes a viable form for all.

Some Alternatives

But are there any alternatives? There seem to be several. Just how viable they are is open to judgment.

1. *Disband all political parties in the Synod.* It is offensive to disband one party while another is granted legitimate existence. This strategy comes off looking like more political maneuvering. But if all parties would disband and return to using synodical channels and forums for discussion, the Synod again could become the primary institution for resolving differences. Energies, funds, and talents now being channeled to party activities could flow back into synodical programs. Divisive actions would cease, and the church's mission could move forward with greater strength and vitality.

2. *Remain on the present course which eventually must lead to division.* Political parties are by their very nature divisive. When they function without the sanction and

regulation of the parent organization, they set the organization on a collision course with itself. This will eventually lead to the destruction or the division of the Synod.

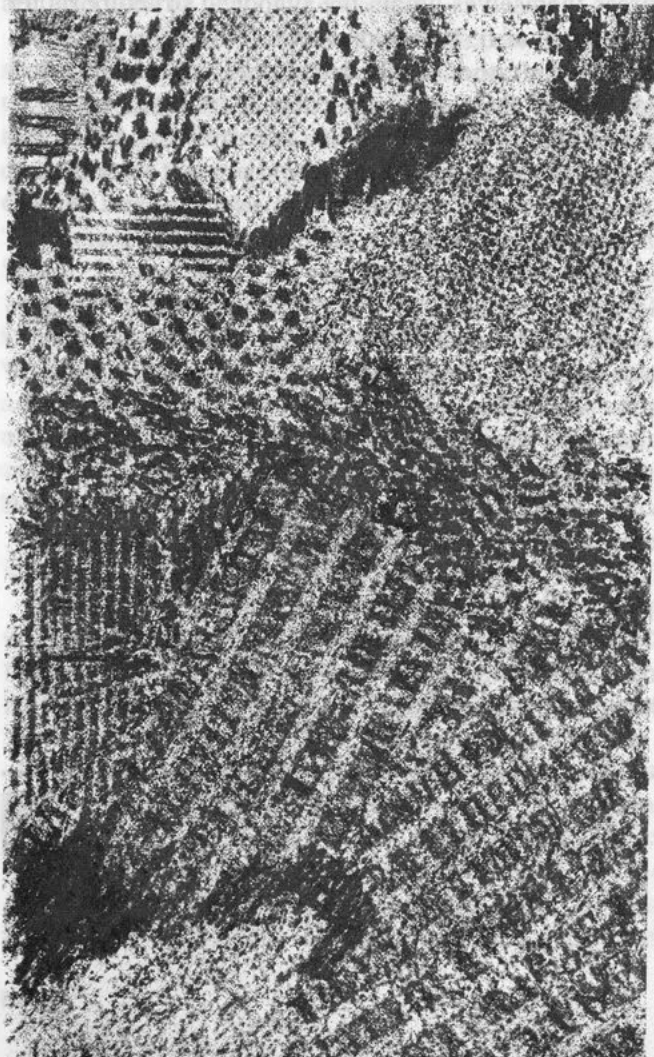
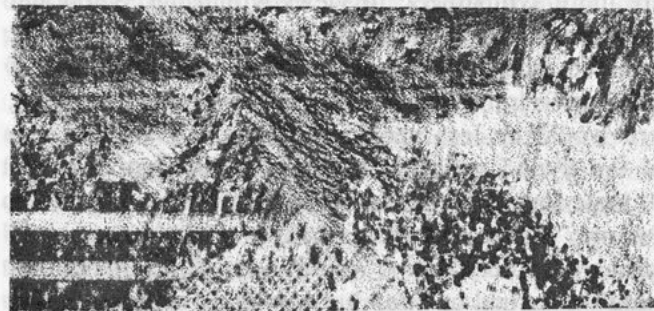
3. *Recognize the existence of parties in the church.* Legitimize them and regulate them. This is not the best alternative, but it may be the most viable. It seems possible that parties could possibly become real servants of the Synod if their roles were carefully defined and if they were regulated so as to allow them legitimate status. This alternative would not only keep the parties within certain prescribed limits but would also force them to function openly and honestly.

4. *Restructure the Synod to eliminate partyism.* Parties develop because some feel that the Synod is not sympathetic to their needs and views. Out of this feeling of estrangement, people band together to change the direction and policies of the Synod. If the Synod, however, were more sympathetic to views within the Synod and structured itself to allow them to be constructively expressed, and if the Synod insured a cross section of participation in its deliberative and governing processes, there would be less need for parties. To achieve this end the Synod might, in addition to alternative three, (a) create forums, related to but outside of the governing structure, where a diversity of views could be expressed and shared. Such forums would in no way threaten the Synod's doctrinal position but would allow the people to express themselves within the synodical structure rather than outside of it. It would also place the Synod in more of a listening rather than a declarative stance. (b) Synod could insure that a cross section of its membership is represented at all deliberative assemblies and on all boards and committees. This would prevent total control or manipulation of the synodical structure and further eliminate the necessity for political parties to form.

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A two-party system for the church? This writer believes that it is fraught with many more liabilities than assets. Partyism itself, by its very nature, is incompatible with the message of the church, because the spirit of division it fosters works against the unifying and forgiving spirit of the Gospel. It is also incompatible with the mission of the church because it dissipates energies, misdirects plans and programs, and widens the credibility gap between the church and the world.

But while it is unacceptable, it is nevertheless a reality. How can we cope with it and still be a church in mission with a credible message? Faithful discipleship calls us to search for that answer.



EDUCATION ABOUT

ONE OF WEBSTER'S DEFINITIONS OF GOVERNANCE IS "to exercise authority; to rule." In Matthew 20:20-29, Matthew recounts how some of the twelve desired to rule over others. Jesus responded by saying, in a sense, that we don't operate in a hierarchical way; however, if one desires to be great, then *serve* even as the Son of Man gave His life as a ransom. What a message on church governance!

In our congregational settings we need to serve each other more. Luther defined church as the communion of saints here on earth. Every Lutheran should read volume 39 of *Luther's Works*, titled *Church and Ministry*, from which the following quotes relating to church governance come:

The living saints are your neighbors—the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, the poor, those who have wives and children, those who live in shame. Direct your help to them. (p. xvii)

The reality of the Christian community rather than the notion of religious individualism determined Luther's conception of ministry. For the existing community is the visible historical sign that God works in the world; it is the place where Christians share the "royal priesthood" with Christ (1 Peter 2:9). (p. xvii)

Luther's doctrine of the common priesthood of all believers, developed particularly in his treatises of 1520, is one of the most revolutionary doctrines in the history of Christianity. (p. xvii)

Luther's understanding of ministry, like his conception of the church, rested on his fundamental discovery of the Word of God. The word begets faith and faith begets the church, which in turn, proclaims the word. Thus Luther rejected the hierarchical interpretation of the church in medieval theology as well as the personalistic conception of the priesthood. . . . (p. xviii)

To sum up: . . . Those who belong to the people of God are called to live in communion with each other, a communion marked by the preaching of the word, the administration of the sacraments, and the "mutual consolation of the brethren." Neither the universal church nor the local congregation is ever perfect so long as they exist in history; instead, they are always in a state of becoming (*Kirche im Werden*), that is, they are incomplete and even sinful until the end of time. (p. xviii)¹

CHURCH GOVERNANCE

by Glenn O. Kraft

Why Educate About Church Governance?

What then are some of the reasons that there should be education about church governance? First of all, the local congregation *is* the communion of saints *now* with all the sinfulness, warts, and difficulties. We are Christ's body *now*. However, whenever a group organizes, the devil, the world, and our own selfish flesh permeate the interaction and "pollute" it with divisive pride and strife.

Second, it is the duty of the body of Christ to move toward the upward call of full functioning in the mission and place to which we have been called.

Third, the individual member of the local body is obliged to know and act in accordance with the Holy Scriptures and his convictions under Christ. To quote Luther:

For no one can deny that every Christian possesses the word of God and is taught and anointed by God to be priest, as Christ says, John 6:45, "They shall all be taught by God," and Psalm 45:7, "God has anointed you with the oil of gladness on account of your fellows." These fellows are the Christians, Christ's brethren, who with him are consecrated priests, as Peter says too, 1 Peter 2:9, "You are a royal priesthood so that you may declare the virtue of him who called you into his marvelous light." (LW 39:309)

Fourth, decisions made to please man and not God are to be questioned on the basis of Scripture. As Luther says:

Human words and teaching instituted and decreed that only bishops, scholars, and councils should be allowed to judge doctrine. Whatever they decided should be regarded as correct and as articles of faith by the whole world. . . . The ordinary Christian is supposed to await their judgment and obey it. . . . Christ institutes the very opposite. He takes both the right and the power to judge teaching from the bishops, scholars, and councils and gives them to everyone and to all Christians equally when he says, John 10:4, "My sheep hear my voice." Again, "My sheep do not follow strangers, but flee from them, for they do not know the voice of strangers" (John 10:5). Again, "No matter how many of them have come, they are thieves and murderers. But the sheep did not listen to them" (John 10:8). (LW 39:306)

All Christians need to be discerning and critically evaluative:

"Test everything but hold fast to that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). . . . There is a radical difference between Christians and the world: In the world the rulers command whatever they please and their subjects accept it. "But among you," says Christ, "it should not be so." Instead, among Christians each person is the judge of the other person; on the other hand, he is also subject to the other person. However, the spiritual tyrants have made a worldly power out of Christendom. (LW 39:307-308)

This sounds like modern heady stuff which is very relevant to church governance in our Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. In a congregational setting, knowledge and understanding of church governance processes are essential to wise decision-making, group cohesiveness, cooperation, and interaction. Programs, needs, and desires of the group can be cooperatively assimilated only if "we" agree on our primary goals and procedures. Both monarchy and oligarchy are resisted. Theocracy in a democratic setting will produce fruits. God is in charge in spite of all human and devilish machinations.

Every Christian is priest in the sense of servant (1 Cor. 4:1). Luther argued that the special class of priesthood in Christianity was produced only by the influence of pagan culture mixed with Jewish cultic ideas [Cf: LW 40:35]. There is only a functional difference between those Christians who hold the office of the word and those who serve each other in mutual consolation. (LW 39:xvii)

Fifth, it would seem that skills in decision-making, discussion, and parliamentary procedure need to be an integral part of church membership. If these skills are not fully acquired, the "super humbled," undereducated person cannot hope to be an equal in a typical assembly of modern well-educated people. In matters of faith and doctrine the informed have a spiritual obligation to teach the uninformed and enable them to express their feelings and convictions in truth and love. (Cf: Phil. 2)

Sixth, because we need each other, criticism is essential. Both sides of an issue need to be aired in a

brotherly manner. Skills in listening and open trust under prayer do much to defeat the wiles of Satan. Divisiveness, "wedgery," and hatefulness are obvious techniques he uses. When we see them in ourselves, let's recognize them, and then repent and forgive one another in love for Christ's sake. On the other hand, once an issue is decided, we need to coordinate ourselves as a body and join forces to complete the tasks while yet retaining the tension of minority viewpoints. (E. g. Abraham, Noah, Paul, Luther, Walther, etc.)

A seventh reason is that we need knowledge and experience in the use of power in church governance. Only then can we be alert to what is happening. Naive acceptance of authority for predetermined programs will perpetuate a blasé and disinterested laity. Then, truly, the church will be only the full-time workers—the pastors and teachers—and not the whole people of God, Christ's body.

It appears that whenever a group of Christians organize, the devil enters to create divisions; wedges are begun through trivial bickering, jealousy, hatred, self-centeredness, and competitiveness. My brethren, these things ought not so to be and do need to be forcefully opposed *now*. We need God's strength to fight the good fight and remain faithful. Our lives and the life of the church is in a perpetual state of becomingness. As Paul says in Philippians 3:12, "Not as though I have attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after the upward call in Christ Jesus."

Some years ago Carl Berner wrote a little book titled *Spiritual Power for Your Congregation*. He concludes this little dynamo with the following paragraph:

Members of the royal priesthood, you are among the few people on earth who are privileged by God in this late hour of time to keep alive the one light which alone leads to the land of eternal day! You can be confident people, for you know that the light on the altar can never be quenched. Only eyes that have seen something of the glory of the great white-robed congregation can see the beauty and meaning of the work we are doing. The world stands against us, a whole empire of spiritual demons opposes us, our own flesh fails us. Only he who through the Savior Jesus Christ has a new heart and a true heart and a steadfast heart can be used for the task. Only the valiant who are willing to bear the scars can win the fight. It will be a hard fight. Some day we shall see that it was eminently worthwhile.²

It is difficult work to enlist people and to empower them to communicate the Good News. But once they have come to church, what then? Can we enlist them in liveliness if we are dead? Leaders need to model love and forgiveness if Christ's body is to radiate His love to itself and the whole world. Merkins, after emphasizing that form follows function, summarizes integration of members as follows:

Needless to say, one of the chief concerns of the leadership in all planning and programming is to involve as many of the members of the parish as possible in the work that is outlined. Each committee conceives of itself as a catalyzer for action. Each chairman looks for ways in which he can "multiply" his thinking and action. For no matter how gifted a chairman, no matter how capable a committee, their real value is not realized until they have involved others in the parish in their area of responsibility.³

An eighth reason is the well-known fact that power, of itself, corrupts; therefore, balancing power provides for checks and encourages growth. Absolute power in the hands of a few is totally dehumanizing to the group. Problem-solving together, whether in a family or in the congregation, can be a welding influence if we move to meet each person's needs and listen to all perspectives. New insights and creative answers can be achieved in this manner. Free exchange of opinions and ideas perpetuate growth, involvement, and innovation. Isn't this what our Lord Christ teaches: "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21)? Problems don't need to kill relationships. Unresolved problems and conflicts of need and values do. We need to face each other in honest confrontation and dispute. Only then can we give a witness to our faith and fight the good fight of faith, laying hold on eternal life. (Cf: 2 Tim. 4.)

A ninth consideration is that it becomes increasingly crucial today in congregational living that all possible members (including voting youth and women) maximize their time and talents and be Christ's body in the community *now*.

Hendrick Kraemer has often likened the laity to the frozen assets of the church. Out where the church must confront the world, it already is represented by its laymen, but almost universally they are inarticulate, self-conscious, or afraid. They must be unfrozen and trained that they might fulfill the opportunity which is already theirs by the position which they hold in the world. . . . Kraemer's own book, *The Theology of the Laity*, is a splendid statement of the role which laymen are called to play as the agents of God's church in the world.⁴

Ideas for Educating About Church Governance

It would seem of paramount importance that we creatively implement educational programs for children, youth, women, and men in church governance. The need is great. How can this be done? The following are a few initial ideas:

1. Time could be reserved in meetings to explain the process and responsibilities of church governance.
2. Brief courses on church governance could be offered during Sunday school or in the evening.
3. Part of the confirmation instructional program could include church governance (e. g., "What happens

after I am a communicant member or voting member?").

4. Home visits or cottage meetings could be used to communicate group process.

5. Retreats for all or any of the following: officers, voters, youth, women, men could emphasize church governance.

6. Simulation of congregation meetings in parish school classes could better prepare developing congregation members at an early age.

7. Have children visit congregation meetings with adults.

8. Use pastoral presentations to various groups to facilitate and encourage growth in church governance.

9. Have each member check the following governance competence list for himself as a means of learning how to become a more effective person in the congregation:

- I have read the synodical *Handbook*.
- I understand our church constitution.
- I know how to initiate a plan or program in our church.
- I am comfortable speaking in meetings.
- I am concerned about the qualifications of people who serve on church boards and committees.
- I am open to other members' ideas.
- I ask pertinent questions about issues and proposals.
- I can disagree without being disagreeable.
- I am able to remain objective.
- I am willing to listen.
- I encourage rather than try to kill ideas and plans.
- I am practical but full of faith and hope.
- I do not plan my thoughts while another is speaking.
- I am honest, open, and above board in congregational matters.
- I share my faith, feelings, needs, interests, and values freely.
- I avoid taking sides or forming cliques. I vote my convictions.
- We discuss church matters openly at home with the children.
- I take younger members to meetings with me.
- I encourage my wife (husband) to participate fully.
- I search God's Word for guidance in all decisions of life.

Give five points for each check. How did you do? What a different church we'd be if we could all have a score of at least 50 points.

Objectives and goals aid us in delineating purpose. Try setting several of the following as personal or congregational objectives:

- I (we) aim to become—
- more courteous
 - more trusting
 - more helpful
 - more open
 - more wise
 - more patient
 - more self-controlled
 - more ready to give than to receive
 - more ready to listen than to speak
 - more ready to share the Good News
 - more . . .

To sum up, church governance is the process by which we rule ourselves in Christian love and brotherhood, with each person caring about the other's welfare now and eternally. In love we serve one another. To develop the individual potential of each Christian is an ongoing task of becoming—never having arrived—always starting anew in Christian hope and joy. Wise in the knowledge of the use and abuse of power, we ought to be gentle as doves in the quiet, pleasant but firm application of power in Jesus' name and to God's glory and praise.⁵

FOOTNOTES

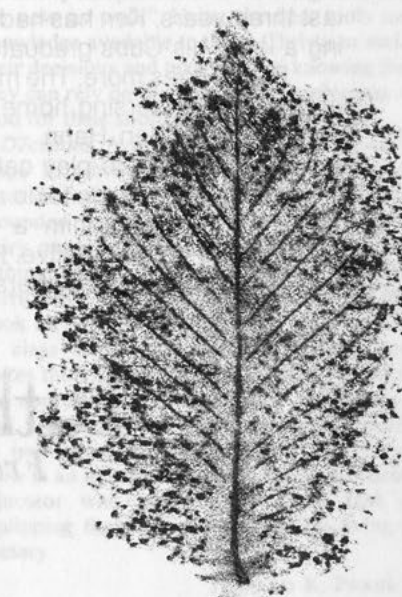
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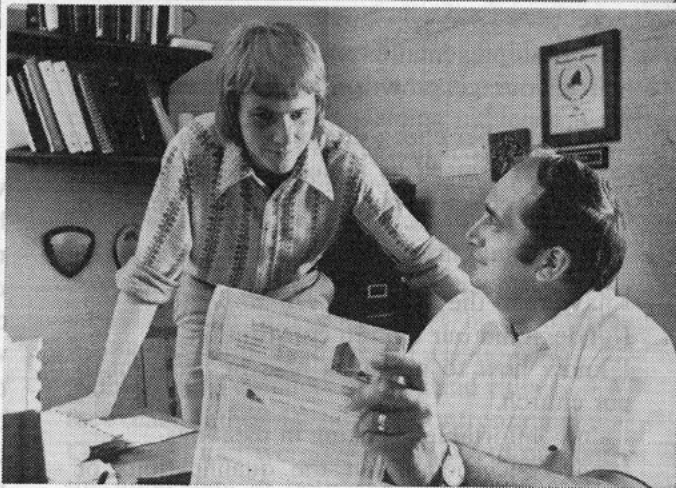
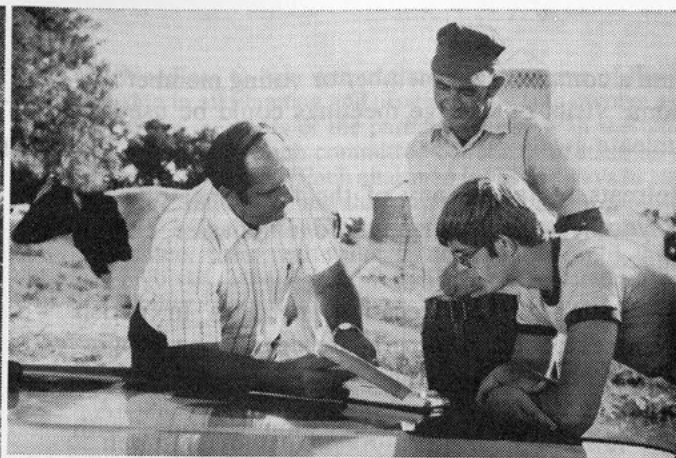
² P. 101. Copyright 1956 by Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission.

³ Guido A. Merkins, *Organized for Action* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), pp. 28–29. Used by permission.

⁴ George W. Webber, *God's Colony in Man's World* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1960), p. 128. Used by permission.

⁵ In addition to the above mentioned books, for further information see Carl S. Munding, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947).





Cub Scout Troop 221 and leader Ken Hahn hiking through Willmar, Minnesota woods. Sunrise counseling at Burt Brandt's dairy farm. New contractholder Jeff Bloom learns the long and short-term benefits of life insurance.

Put a little time into brotherhood.

Ken Hahn, Lutheran Brotherhood representative, believes in young people. "If we try to help them understand us and the community we live in, I think we'll all be better off," he says.

That's why in addition to his full-time job serving Lutherans, he puts time into Scouting. In the last three years, Ken has had the pleasure of seeing a lot of his Cubs graduate into Boy Scouts.

But he does more. The mentally retarded men at the Willmar Nursing home know that they, too, can count on Ken Hahn — for a friend, to take walks with, or just to play catch with.

Ken finds the time to do a lot for other people. That's what makes him a top-notch Lutheran Brotherhood representative. He gives a little extra time to make sure his Lutheran Brotherhood con-

tractholders get the best service possible. Maybe he wouldn't have to, but when you're a pro like Ken, you know that a little extra effort can make all the difference in the world.

The Lutheran Brotherhood representative in your area can give you that same kind of extra help in choosing an insurance program. Whether you need life insurance, health insurance, money for education, disability income protection, or one of many other insurance options — your Lutheran Brotherhood representative is trained to care for your needs. But there's a little more to it.

There's the extra care. Lutheran Brotherhood is made up of people like Ken Hahn. People who care a little more. People who put a little time into brotherhood.

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book reviews

CLASS, BUREAUCRACY, AND SCHOOLS: THE ILLUSION OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE IN AMERICA, by Michael B. Katz. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1971.

Americans have had a long-standing obsession with their public schools. For years they were defended with patriotic pride that inhibited serious reappraisal of their value. Recently, however, schools have been the target of severe criticism. Attacks on the school system arise in part from the schools' failure to provide solutions for our difficult social problems. Worse yet, from Headstart through graduate school, they are having trouble teaching basic skills.

This book by Michael Katz, member of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, offers a radical critique of the public school system in American cities. However, the conclusions to which he comes are surprisingly conservative compared to some of today's reform proposals.

Katz, who is trained in both professional education and history, begins with an exposition of his theory concerning the failure of urban public education. An entrenched middle-class bureaucracy insists on inculcating its own social values to the exclusion of practical skills needed for personal survival in a modern society. The problem of schooling lies not so much in the classroom as in the administrative offices.

To investigate this theory, Katz goes back to the years 1800 to 1880, when American education acquired its fundamental structural characteristics. He finds that at least four models of education organization were proposed in those years. One group advocated local control of semipublic schools which would reflect the cultural and religious composition of communities. Another worked to establish private corporations which would compete for students, a proposal similar to the present-day voucher plan. A third group believed that private charity groups should operate schools that would be free from government interference.

The fourth model, which was finally chosen—compulsory, tax-supported, public education—was only one of several alternatives. It was, nevertheless, adopted throughout the nation. The professionalism and uniformity of this system, originally so appealing, actually contributed to the growth of large administrative bureaucracies which inhibited

good teaching and good learning. Urban schools became places where middle-class values of respectability were forced on children.

Katz claims that by 1900 the middle-class, bureaucratic orientation of public schooling was so firm that John Dewey's famous educational reform movement accepted it without question. When Dewey suggested improvements, he never considered that an entirely new structure might be needed.

Katz's suggestions are quite simple, although their simplicity will make them suspect. Public schools, he says, should not be in the business of making attitudes. "Have them attend to skills," he advocates, "especially, in the beginning, reading, and the question of whose values control the schools becomes largely irrelevant."

Because of the complexity and scale of modern education, Katz claims bureaucracy will remain a fact of life we must accept. But a weakened bureaucracy and increased local control would encourage parents to become actively involved with teachers in deciding what skills are most appropriate for their children.

The proposal that public schools should avoid teaching values—including racism or integration, patriotism or pacifism—is easier to make than to accomplish. But few people will argue that when conflicts over values get in the way of the learning of basic skills, all public school children—rich, poor, black, and white—suffer.

CHARLES PIEHL

DECISIONS NOW: AN APPROACH TO CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP. Thirty-first Yearbook, by James B. Kracht and Stephen A. Schmidt. River Forest, Ill.: Lutheran Education Association, 1974.

In its thirty-first yearbook, the Lutheran Education Association continues its tradition of offering high quality, provocative studies to its members. James Kracht, major author of *Decisions Now*, has two major goals: one, to stimulate thinking about the nature of social studies in Christian education; and two, to facilitate change in the social studies curriculum. Kracht's thesis is, "... if children are aided in the formation of skills in social science inquiry, value clarification, and decision-making, they will develop into more capable, rational, and responsible citizens." Teachers too often become so mired down in day-to-day activities and concerns that they neglect to develop a comprehensive outlook or philosophy for their teaching. *Decisions Now* attempts to correct this deficiency by helping teachers develop a rationale for social studies. Kracht suggests replacing traditional subjects like history and geography with decision-making as the core.

Well-versed in the literature of the "new social studies," Kracht offers in less than 100

pages a distillation of some of the best thinking in this rapidly changing field. But his work is more than a summary of the ideas of others. He offers his own synthesis and approach to social studies, a well-conceived schema for integrating social science concepts and generalizations, inquiry processes, and value clarification into decision-making and social action. Readers will be hard put to find a clearer, more tightly reasoned rationale for teaching social studies.

Educators who are uneasy about emphasizing "process" and "valuing" in contemporary education at the risk of neglecting content will find this book reassuring. While Kracht urges using the scientific method of inquiry and value clarification, he makes clear that these processes must occur in a context of sound, current social-science knowledge. Inquiry must be grounded in the best information available about man, society, and the world. There is no room for indifference to the content of the social sciences.

One flaw in the book is the absence of clear definitions of citizenship and the role of the citizen. Too often citizenship is conceived in unrealistic terms. A student who develops an "inflated" conception of his potential influence on society will be disillusioned if he fails to achieve the impact he believed possible.

In the concluding chapter Stephen Schmidt applies Kracht's rationale, asking if there is a distinctively Lutheran decision-making process. He rejects three approaches to decision-making: (1) the Old Testament ethical code, with its inflexible legal prescriptions; (2) the Roman Catholic approach in which the church sets guidelines for its members; and (3) the ethically absolutist tendencies in American Fundamentalism which emphasize simple answers, personal piety, and "proof-texting." He argues that Lutheran decision-making must be anchored in the central motif of Lutheran theology: Law and Gospel. Schmidt contends: "The Christian ethic begins and ends with identity, not with legalistic guidelines. Those who are in Christ are new persons, and their acts and emotions are new as well." Using the best tools and knowledge available to them, Christians make their decisions and take actions, knowing that they can rely on the mercy and forgiveness of God for their shortcomings and failings.

Decisions Now presents an exciting challenge to Christian educators, but it makes great demands on them. They must be solidly grounded in social science content and inquiry processes and they must be willing to rethink and reorganize their social studies curriculum. Teachers will not find in this book an assortment of clever gimmicks to try in class tomorrow. Instead the book provokes thinking about the "big ideas" in teaching and demands that teachers select topics and problems from the contemporary scene to implement these "big ideas." *Decisions Now* is an indispensable tool for the Christian educator who takes seriously his task of equipping the saints for responsible living in society.

JERRALD K. PFABE

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There was a man once who had all the answers. He knew what was wrong with the government. He knew what was wrong with the economy. He knew what was wrong with society. He knew what was wrong with the church.

So he decided to get up on a stump and share his wisdom with his fellowmen. He made powerful speeches. He wrote explosive articles. His method was to attack the stupidities and immoralities of his leaders.

His government, he claimed, was overrun with communists; his economic leaders had succumbed to socialism; his society leaders had soiled themselves with unethical activities; and his church leadership was a network of false teachers.

His analysis, he argued eloquently, was obviously correct because when things go wrong in the government, in the economy, in society, and in the church, who could possibly be to blame but the leader.

People soon recognized the cogency of his logic. They drew the obvious conclusion that a redress of their grievances required a change in the leadership which was causing all these problems. And as they were casting about for a better occupant of the leader's office, their eyes naturally fell on the one whose eloquence and wisdom had brought all these things to light.

The election came. The culprits were thrown out. The wise new leader was sworn in. A refreshing, welcome calm settled over the entire land. People could refocus their attention on their families, offices, and fields because the larger issues of society and the church were in wise and holy hands.

Some years later another election time came around. The wise and holy leader inquired of his subordinates about the prospects. Most of his subordinates told him that everything was fine. But one of them, with a certain amount of fear and trepidation, said that he had received some disturbing information. "What is it?" asked the leader. "Well," said the subordinate, "there is a man traveling around the country who claims he has all the answers. He knows what is wrong with the government. He knows what is wrong with the economy. He knows what is wrong with society. And he knows what is wrong with the church. He is making powerful speeches and writing explosive articles and his method is to attack the stupidities and immoralities of his leaders."

The leader pondered a moment and then, musing to himself, said: "I wonder. Could it be that there is something in the nature of man as well as in the elective process that makes this a circular phenomenon?"

LAST WORDS

W. TH. JANZOW

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There was a man once who had all the answers. He knew what was wrong with the government. He knew what was wrong with society. He knew what was wrong with the church. He knew what was wrong with the world. He knew what was wrong with the human race. He knew what was wrong with the universe. He knew what was wrong with everything. He knew what was wrong with everyone. He knew what was wrong with every-thing. He knew what was wrong with every-body. He knew what was wrong with every-where. He knew what was wrong with every-when. He knew what was wrong with every-how. He knew what was wrong with every-why. He knew what was wrong with every-where. He knew what was wrong with every-when. He knew what was wrong with every-how. He knew what was wrong with every-why.

