



Lutheran News, Inc.

684 Luther Lane, New Haven, Missouri 63068

Telephone: (573) 237-3110

March 24, 2016

Dear Member of Trinity,

Enclosed is the March 21, 2016 *Christian News*, the 2,500th issue of this weekly publication begun in 1962. Kurt Marquart is the author of the Statement of Policy on page 4 of every issue. Trinity has at times been mentioned in *Christian News*. It began in the basements of Trinity's parsonage and church. Had it not been for the volunteer work of many informed members of Trinity, it may not have survived (see pages 1,2,6,7.). The publication had its beginning when Marquart and Herman Otten, the future *Christian News* editor, were roommates at the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod's Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, during the 1950s. This history is told in the 10 volume *Marquart's Works* completed last year by *Christian News*.

During their student years, Marquart and Otten opposed some liberal faculty members, who denied the inerrancy of the Bible, the historicity of Genesis and Jonah, the immortality of the soul, the vicarious satisfaction of Christ, direct messianic prophecy, and other scriptural doctrines. The liberal professors promoted such destructive notions of higher criticism as the J-E-D-P source hypothesis, Deutero Isaiah, etc. Since the liberals still claimed to be faithful to the Lutheran confessions, Marquart and Otten recognized the need for a 20th Century Formula of Concord, which reaffirms the ancient creeds of Christendom and the Book of Concord of 1580 but also speaks to the issues of the day: evolution, higher criticism, abortion, homosexuality, same-sex marriage, etc. Marquart and Otten noted that no major denomination had taken a stronger stand against evolution and for the inerrancy of the Bible than the LCMS. They insisted that the LCMS was not following American Fundamentalism but the Bible and the Biblical position defended by Luther and the Lutheran Confessions. *Marquart's Works* (Volume X) includes a 21st Century Formula of Concord to lead to a 21st Century Reformation. It was submitted to the LCMS's 2013 convention by Trinity.

LCMS's 1970s Battle For the Bible

Liberal professors, whose views Marquart and Otten challenged, became key leaders of the liberals during the LCMS's Battle for the Bible in the 1970s. 45 out of 50 professors and staff members left Concordia Seminary in 1974 and formed "Seminex." John Tietjen, the president of Concordia Seminary, who became president of Seminex and Herman Otten, referred to by some as "two stubborn New Yorkers from Concordia, Bronxville", were said to be chiefly responsible for the formation of Seminex. Tietjen vicared at Otten's home church, St. Matthew Lutheran Church, New York, the oldest continuing Lutheran church in the U.S. with a charter from 1664. Several hundred congregations eventually left the LCMS and formed a new church body. It later was instrumental in the formation of the pro-abortion and pro-homosexual Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, which accepts evolution and higher criticism of the Bible. The conservatives in the LCMS, at the time, momentarily won the battle for the truth.

Comments of Religion Editor Visiting *Christian News*

James Adams, religion editor of the *St. Louis-Post Dispatch*, wrote in his article "But when historians assess power and influence in Missouri (Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod) in the '60s, no man right to left will be more important than journalist Herman Otten." *Christianity Today* said in a story titled "Man Without a Church": "Tough in print, but likeable enough in person." The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* said, "Feared Firebrand of the Lutheran Church." "Tough in print, Otten is warm and friendly in person." John Hannah, President of the liberal American Lutheran Publicity Bureau, wrote in the Fall, 2012 *Lutheran Forum*, that "in 1962 Herman Otten launched the single most influential medium the LCMS has ever known." Hermann Sasse, one of the leading theologians of the twentieth century, wrote: "Somebody should rise and publicly thank Herman Otten for his brave fight...why was it left up to a young pastor to speak where others should have spoken?" The *National Catholic Register* said: "Otten is largely ecumenical by adhering to an ecumenical thing." The editor of *Guidelines for Today* said: "Of all the religious papers and publications I receive, I rank *Christian News* among the finest. Herman Otten is an apologist of our time the like of which is difficult to find." Wayne Saffen, a liberal Lutheran theologian, wrote in the *Lutheran Campus Pastor*: "*Christian News* is now without doubt the most influential publication in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. It is an impressive record. Concerns which had been generated when the editor was still a student have all been validated by convention resolution: affirming a six day creation, a historical Jonah, an inerrant Scripture,

Adam and Eve are real historic persons, etc.” Trinity submitted hundreds of overtures on these issues to LCMS conventions. Some were signed by more than 300 from all over the LCMS. Most were readers of *Christian News*.

Seminex professor, Frederick Danker, who became the Evangelical Lutheran Church’s leading Greek and New Testament scholar, wrote in his *No Room in the Brotherhood – The Preus-Otten Purge of Missouri*, that Otten was the “unofficial director of the Synod’s decision-making process...”

James Burkee, who has been chairman of the faculty of Concordia University, Wisconsin, and is now at Concordia University, New York, wrote in his award-winning *Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod – A Conflict that Changed American Christianity* (Fortress 2011, Foreword by Martin E. Marty): “Herman Otten, Jr., founded conservative tabloid *Christian News* following his rejection by Concordia Seminary. He shaped Missouri conservatism with an impact magnified by his freedom from church oversight. Otten was the most significant figure in modern LCMS history.” Otten has often said that his former St. Louis roommate, Kurt Marquart, was far more significant. Marquart and a long line of creationists, such as Walter Lang, Walter Lammerts (founder of the Creation Research Society), Alfred Rehwinkel, Erich von Fange of Concordia Ann Arbor, Louis Brighton of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, John Mackay from Australia, David Menton (Washington University, and now Ken Ham’s Creation Museum), Paul Burgdorf (Editor of the *Confessional Lutheran*), and William Beck (Translator of the American Translation of the Bible), preached or lectured at Trinity. The members of Trinity studied the doctrinal issues and strongly opposed the infiltration of evolution and higher criticism of the Bible in the LCMS. Trinity voted over the objection of the top district officials, who visited Trinity several times to get Trinity to remove Otten, to place the LCMS’s Brief Statement into its constitution because the Book of Concord of 1580 does not specifically mention evolution and the critical views of the Bible now again being taught at the St. Louis seminary. The Spanish philosopher, George Santayana observed that those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

The organized conservatives and high church sacerdotalists opposed by the grassroots conservatives sharply disagreed with Burkee’s evaluation of *Christian News*. They do not recommend their members read *Christian News* and maintain that Otten was a virtual nothing in the LCMS, while it was the organized conservatives with their many behind the scenes meetings and election guides formed by secret groups, which restored orthodoxy to the LCMS and defeated Seminex. Burkee spent several days during a two week period researching the files in the research center of *Christian News*.

LCMS Now One More Anything Goes Church

In recent years *Christian News* has often shown that the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod today is on the road to becoming just one more “anything goes” church in the U.S. It has not learned from history. The LCMS’s Concordia University System, praised by the bureaucracy, has many professors who support evolution, universalism, higher criticism of the Bible, and even some who support homosexuality and same-sex marriage. One of these schools now has a pagan priest who rejects Christianity as a professor (*Christian News*, March 28, 2016). Many pastors do not inform their members about what is really going on in the LCMS.

During the last several years, *Christian News* has published articles and reports about Concordia Seminary Provost Jeffrey Kloha, who says Christendom can no longer be certain it has the correct text of the Bible. He insists the text now used is filled with many corruptions and that what the LCMS long taught about the inerrancy of the Bible is wrong. Contrary to Luke 1:46, Kloha insists Elizabeth and not Mary spoke the Magnificat, (*Christian News*, March 14, 2016). According to the new approach toward the Bible promoted at the St. Louis seminary, Christendom cannot be certain just what the text of the Bible says. Doubt and uncertainty prevails.

Among those who testified that Otten told the truth about the liberals at Concordia Seminary was William F. Beck, an editor at the LCMS’s Concordia Publishing House, who also taught textual criticism in the graduate school at the St. Louis seminary (“If Someone Says ‘Otten is Slandering’” on page 3 of the March 21, 2016 *Christian News*). CPH published Beck’s New Testament in the Language of Today in 1963 (AAT). When liberals at the St. Louis seminary and CPH were able to get CPH to ignore an LCMS convention resolution suggested by Trinity asking CPH to publish Beck’s entire AAT, *CN* then published it in 1975. CPH first used the Revised Standard Version of the National Council of Churches and now uses the English Standard Version, which is 91% RSV. Beck documented the fact that almost all of the RSV translators denied the deity of Christ and that their theology was reflected in the RSV.

About 250,000 copies of the AAT were mailed from New Haven, Missouri, thanks to members of Trinity who served as proof readers. In 2013 The Missouriian Publishing Company in Washington, Missouri printed 25,000 copies of **The New Testament with Psalms and Proverbs in the Language of Today** copyrighted by the William F.

Beck Estate. This publication includes a comparison chart (pp. 580-586), which shows that Beck's AAT is both the most doctrinally accurate and understandable English translation in the language of today.

Bureaucratitis

According to Kurt Marquart, the LCMS's disease today is "bureaucratitis" (*Marquart's Works*, Volume IX, pp. 208-217). *CN* has often noted that about the only growth shown in the LCMS today is the rising salaries of bureaucrats and the growth of the bureaucracy. When the *CN* editor began serving as a pastor in the LCMS, it had about 150 pastors not serving congregations as pastors but "Serving Synod, Districts and Others." The LCMS had no full-time district presidents. They were all also pastors of congregations. It had about 2.6 million baptized members, an increase of 41.51% over the previous decade. It was baptizing around 86,000 children a year. According to the LCMS's 2016 Yearbook, 25,551 children were baptized in the LCMS in 2014, it had 2,097,258 baptized members in 2014, a -14.88% from the previous decade. LCMS District President Dan Gilbert informed his district last year that almost all congregations in the district were shrinking; the district was losing three congregations a year and that according to one projection the LCMS in thirty years will go from 6,000 congregations to 1,000.

Fast Shrinking Seminary

Otten's class at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis had some 180 members. This year's first year class is 53 and one report says that the next class will be down to 40. The faculty is larger today than it was when the seminary had several times more students. Many dormitory rooms are empty. The seminary's old Pritzlaff Library was generally crowded until closing time. The chapel was filled morning and evening each weekday. Today the "new" Fuerbringer library generally has few students. The seminary no longer has a bookstore. One dining hall is empty. The LCMS pastor families in 1890 averaged 6.5 children. Today the average is around two.

Birth Control

Otten's *Handbook of Christian Matrimony* shows that the LCMS, along with all major denominations, strongly opposed birth control until the 1930s just as Martin Luther did in his commentary on Genesis. Yet LCMS President Harrison testified in Washington, D.C. that the LCMS never opposed birth control.

Long Line of Pro-evolution, Pro-abortion and Pro-homosexual Speakers

Christian News has reported that during the LCMS's Battle for the Bible in the 1970s, the liberals who left the LCMS when they formed Seminex, never invited the long line of liberals the seminary in recent years has invited to lecture to students and faculty without at the same time giving an articulate conservative opportunity to question the liberal and defend the historic scriptural position of the LCMS. None of the invited and well-paid speakers have opposed the pro-homosexual, pro-abortion, pro-evolution, and pro-higher criticism of the Bible position of their denomination. *CN* wrote to many of them to find out exactly where they stand theologically.

Walter A. Maier and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Otten noted in his book, *Walter Maier Still Speaks – Missouri and the World Should Listen*, that today such orthodox theologians as *Lutheran Hour* speakers, Walter A. Maier and Wallace Schulz, have almost become forgotten figures in the LCMS. Churchmen like Richard John Neuhaus, whom Otten and Marquart opposed during their student days with Neuhaus, have become the heroes and role models. Neuhaus denied the inerrancy of the Bible, justification by faith alone, and was a pro-homosexual universalist, who insisted no one was in Hell. He wanted his letters destroyed at death. Today Dietrich Bonhoeffer is hailed at the St. Louis seminary as the greatest Lutheran theologian since Martin Luther. In former years the St. Louis seminary had no praise for Bonhoeffer. The index of the seminary's *Concordia Theological Monthly* makes no mention of Bonhoeffer from 1930-1959. Otten's book, *Bonhoeffer and King*, shows that Bonhoeffer and King denied the virgin birth, deity, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Congregationalism and Visiting Pastors

Christian News published the first English Translation of LCMS founder C.F.W. Walther's *Pastoral Theology*. *CN* has always defended Walther's defense of congregationalism and the rights of laymen, while opposing the "hyper-euro sacerdotalists," who want the LCMS to return to the hierarchy and episcopacy its founders fled in Europe when they came to America. Otten contends that far too many of today's "computer literate" clergy, who prefer to be CEO's, spend too much time on their computers, Facebook, and twitter, rather than being real pastors (seelsorgers – carers of soul), who visit their members and the unchurched in their community. *CN* has often noted in an age of shrinking church attendance that in former years the LCMS emphasized that "a home-going pastor makes for a church-going people." The kind of mission work *CN* emphasized is pictured on p. 13 of Issue 2,500.

According to *Christian News*, many pastors are keeping their members living in “fairytale land” by not properly instructing them and showing them what is going on theologically in their denomination. When Seminex was formed in 1974, the fieldhouse at Concordia Seminary was packed with laymen who came to the defense of the faithful minority who did not leave the seminary (Photo on p. 5 of the enclosed March 21 *CN*). A story reprinted from the LCMS’s *Lutheran Witness Reporter* (p. 21) noted that some 800 gathered in a Chicago hotel in defense of *Christian News* after the LCMS’s Council of President’s (COP) repudiated *Christian News* in 1969. Members of Trinity attended both of these events. In more recent years when the LCMS’s COP ruled that Otten was an impenitent sinner on the road to Hell, few protested. The *CN* editor now claims that within the LCMS, just like in most major denominations, apathy and ignorance prevail. He quotes Hosea 4:6: “Ignorance destroys My people.”

According to the LCMS bureaucracy, the COP ruling still stands. Otten is not to commune or preach in the LCMS even though he communed others and preached all over the LCMS for some sixty years. According to top LCMS officials, they maintain, contrary to the ruling of the LCMS Commission on Appeals, that Otten did not win the Concordia Seminary vs. Otten case.

The April 4, 2016 *Christian News* includes the thoroughly scriptural sermon Pastor Jacob Ehrhard preached at the Easter Sunrise Service at Camp Trinity, together with some photos. Those who were not able to attend this service may want to read it. *CN* has been publishing Pastor Ehrhard’s fine sermons.

May God grant that long into the future in this age of shrinking and even closing churches, when the LCMS bureaucracy tolerates anti-scriptural approaches toward the Bible, which Trinity at one time vigorously protested, such sermons as Pastor Ehrhard has been preaching may continue to be heard at Trinity and Camp Trinity by you, your children, and grandchildren.

God’s blessings,


Herman Otten
Galatians 6:14