THE POLITICAL VIEWS OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--
MISSOURI SYNOD: 1920--1940

BY

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PREFACE

The Lutheran Church, in strict adherence to Scripture and the Confessions, could not proclaim political views. The official journals of the Lutheran Church reaffirmed this doctrinal position as an editorial policy. Consequently, the Church could not give a party preference, or even state an opinion on the merits of candidates or legislative proposals. However, in the criticism of the various movements and organizations in America during this period, under the rubrics of the doctrine of Church and State, the political views were stated but always as an outgrowth of the tension between the role of the church in

1 During the period 1920--1940, the official name was "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States." Throughout this paper, the terms: Lutheran, Lutheran Church, denote only the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States in 1920, included 23 Districts (administrative units virtually self-governing, subject to the Synodical Handbook, and "official informal pressure") 2570 pastors, 3132 Congregations and preaching stations and 1,009,982 souls. In 1940, the Lutheran Church included 32 Districts, 3515 pastors, 4380 congregations and preaching stations, and 1,392,337 souls. See: Statistical Year--Book of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States for the Year 1920 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 115 and ____ (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1941), 174.

2 All official literature published by Concordia Publishing House was under the censorship of the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri. See: Proceedings of the Thirty-First National Convention of the Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, June 16--25, 1920 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1920), 72, and the Synodical Handbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), 90--98 and 144--146. Galley proofs of all publications were submitted to the faculty.
public life and the role of the state in religious activities. Political views, then were limited to the broad question of the role of government in American life. The application of the doctrine of Church and State to specific issues, though, tended to accentuate Lutheran political views.

The research was directed to the official literature of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which included: the Lutheran Witness, the Theological Monthly, the Concordia Theological Monthly, the Lutheran School Journal, the Proceedings of the Lutheran Church, 1920—1938, selected District Proceedings through 1933, and the Lutheran Layman’s League. The editors of the Lutheran Witness, Theodore Graebner and Martin S. Sommer as well as W. H. T. Dau of the Theological Monthly and W. Arndt, of the Concordia Theological Monthly, being members of the faculty of the Concordia Seminary, not only reflected Missouri Lutheranism, but shaped and influenced the new generation of pastors.

3The most complete collection of Lutheran material is in the Concordia Historical Institute, Department of Archives and History, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, St. Louis, Missouri.

4The Lutheran Layman’s League, originally the Bulletin, although not an official synodical publication, represented Lutheran consensus.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. ORTHODOXY--LUTHERANISM IS AMERICANISM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LUTHERANS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. OPPOSED TO REFORM</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BIBLIOGRAPHY .......................... 115
CHAPTER I

ORTHODOXY--LUTHERANISM IS AMERICANISM

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod emerged from World War I thoroughly shaken. The work of the "super-patriots," during World War I, the rise of the Ku Klux Klan in the early 1920's, and the education programs of the Masons during the same period, led Lutherans to assume that they had been accused of being un-American and of needing "Americanization." One of the predominant themes of Lutheran literature during the period 1920--1940 was the great fear of the Roman Catholic Church. The Lutherans held to the dogmatic assertion that the Catholic Church of the twentieth century was the same Church of the Reformation Era. Thus it was assumed that the Catholic Church would try by whatever means to make the United States a satellite of Rome. It was the duty of Lutheran citizens and Lutheran journals to report and protest movements of the Roman Church, which might be interpreted as offensive tactics against the citadel of American freedom.

The Lutherans viewed the church bodies related to Calvinism with equal alarm. World War I was held to be a monumental testimony to the fact that Calvinism had exerted undue pressure upon the federal government and was one of the contributing factors which had pulled the nation into the war. This reaction against Calvinism did not fade un-
Lutheran reaction to the so-called Social Gospel continued throughout this period, and was attacked primarily for reasons of theology. The Lutheran Church held that the Social Gospel was a perversion of the Gospel contained in the Scriptures. Lutheran literature, however, did not make a distinction between the Social Gospel, the reform movements, and the New Deal. The new concept of the role of the federal government in American life after the depression of 1929, the election of F. D. Roosevelt, and the position taken by the Federal Council of Churches and liberal Protestantism toward the social and economic problems of the 1930's were viewed in the Lutheran literature as a dangerous departure from good Americanism.

The Lutheran Church held that twentieth century American culture and society were leading Americans to their doom. America's departure from the Protestant ethic and its values of the 19th century especially in education, arts, communication and family life were viewed as a turn to modern heathenism. The reaction to the new movements in the United States tended to be defensive and pessimistic. The Church was obviously a part of America, but steadfastly refused to become responsible for the American way of life until the late thirties.

In all this, Lutheranism had one source of hope and strength—her orthodoxy. One of the absolute and unquestion-
able articles of doctrine and faith, in fact the real reason for the existence of the Missouri Synod and its separation from all other church bodies, was that she was the "true and pure Visible Christian Church on Earth."¹ Thus her primary purpose, her unique Christian task, was to preach the truth and to refute error, both, with equal vigor.² This quest for absolute certainty in doctrine and practice and the corollary, the reaffirmation and strict adherence to these doctrines was one of the most all-pervading activities of the Church, in terms of time, scholarship, teaching, preaching and in her relations to other church bodies and to the world. Essay after essay, at District and Synodical Conventions, to laymen, pastors, and teachers, reaffirmed and demonstrated that Missouri Lutheranism was strict Lutheran Confessionalism, the one correct explanation of the pure Word of God. With dogmatic assertion, the Lutheran Church held to the position that as a matter of historical record, she had been and continued to be the True Visible Christian Church on earth. Thus the Reverend Karl Kretzschmar, President of the Western District, reaffirmed the


²J. Hartmeister, "Why can We Lutherans not do as Other Churches do?" Lutheran Witness, XLIV:1 (January 13, 1925), 3.
Lutheran consensus when he addressed the convention in 1925, by stating that Lutheranism is "Christianism," no more, no less. Missourianism is Lutheranism in its purest form.\(^3\) Having affirmed this historical principle, President Kretzschmar stated with equal confidence:

The Mission of Lutheranism, positively considered... is the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ and through it the saving of lost humanity. And negatively stated, the mission of Lutheranism is the exposure of, the protest against, the denunciation and renunciation of, every form of error and heresy within as well as without Christianity, every phase of wickedness, corruption, and godlessness without the Church as well as within it.\(^4\)

In May, 1921, the *Theological Monthly*, in a review declared that it is largely to the Lutheran Church to which American Christianity must look.\(^5\) The Lutheran Church, in the opinion of the author "was beginning to look as the great bulwark of truth against open and more subtle and insidious onslaughts of error."\(^6\) The confidence in this his-

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\(^4\) Ibid., 11-12.


\(^6\) Ibid., 153.
toric position (the exclusive purity of confessional orthodoxy), is exemplified in the admonition of the Lutheran Witness, in 1925, in the words of J. Hartmeister:

The purpose of the Lutheran Church in every community is to bear witness to the truth of Scripture. If we give up this divine commission, . . . we shall have forfeited our right of existence. If we want to do as other churches do, we might as well go to other churches and cease to be Lutherans.

The Lutheran Church looked to one source only for the final authoritative and definitive solutions to all questions. The fact that the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions were her only absolute authority on the basis of which the Church could speak can hardly be over-emphasized in an appraisal of this era.

Throughout this period the Lutheran literature reiterated this dogmatic position. In 1920, the Lutheran Witness, declared:

The Church has the right and the duty to speak wherever the Lord of the Church has commanded her to speak. Moreover, the Church has the right only to speak that which the Lord has commissioned her to speak.

In 1929, the Lutheran Witness reaffirmed this position in reference to the Midwest Institute on International Relations. H. M. Zorn declared, "Whenever the Church speaks

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7J. Hartmeister, "Why can We Lutherans not do as other Churches do?" Lutheran Witness, XLIV: 1 (January 13, 1925), 3.


9H. M. Zorn, "Midwest Institute on International Rela-
she should speak as the oracles of God, standing on the rock foundation of God's Word. Never on debatable ground . . . "10

In 1933, the Concordia Theological Monthly not only censured the Lutheran Standard for its political views, but also criticized the editor of the journal for using the "official organ" of a church body in expressing these views.11 In the criticism W. Arndt stated:

It [the Church] has only one source of wisdom on which it may and must draw—the Holy Scriptures. Where they speak, it also speaks; where they are silent, it must be silent too.12

Missouri Lutheranism, the Church, her official periodicals, her pastors and her teachers, bound by their commission, claimed to proclaim the Words of God and only the Words of God. Consequently, the Church, and the journals, could give no political views outside the authority of Scripture and the Confessions. To deviate from this position of pure orthodoxy would smack of heresy, and would place the Church in confessional jeopardy. Thus the church could speak only from a position which held to the doctrine of the separation of Church and State in matters political, in as much as this was the confessional principle to which the Church adhered, and from

10 Ibid., 185


12 Ibid., 792
which it could speak with absolute certainty.

The official Lutheran literature maintained and adhered to this doctrinal and editorial policy. However the application of this doctrine to specific issues and movements, the criticism aimed at other church bodies under the rubric of the doctrine of church and state, and the political activity of the Church under the same rubric clearly delineate the political views of the Lutheran Church.13

The doctrine of the separation of Church and State is stated in the Formula of Concord.14 This position was declared and adhered to in Christian Dogmatics,15 by Francis Pieper, in the Concordia Cyclopedia,16 in 1927, and

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13 It should be noted that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as a church body (by synodical resolutions or public statements of the president of the synod) did not pronounce political views as such. But this in no way suggests that the church did not express political views through the official journals.


16 Concordia Cyclopedia, ed. by L. Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), passim.

According to Lutheran theology, all government exists by divine institution.¹⁸ In 1927, in the words of A. C. Mueller,

Here God teaches us by the mouth of an inspired writer that He is the Author of civil government. All government is from God; there is no government anywhere that exists without His appointment.¹⁹

In 1933 the Lutheran School Journal reminded Lutheran teachers of one of their functions in civics.

The Lutheran teacher will also not neglect to teach the children that all government has been instituted

¹⁷ Edward W. A. Koehler, A Summary of Christian Doctrine, (First edition, River Forest, Koehler Publishing Company), 246-251. A significant paragraph which not only deviates from the traditional explanation of the doctrine of Church and State, but completely ignores the problems is cited: "The government may also engage in such other activities as will promote and secure the general welfare of the people, such as the education of its citizens, the conservation of natural resources, the amelioration of untoward conditions and suffering, combating social, economic, and physical dangers, improving living conditions in general." P. 250.

¹⁸ Theodore Engelser, "A Lesson in Civics" (a free translation from Luther) Lutheran Witness, XXXIX: 11 (May 25, 1920), 161. Two extracts are submitted to demonstrate one of the problems of 16th century documents in American politics. 1) "Now Moses calls them gods for the reason that all the officers of civil government, from the least to the highest, are God's ordinance, 'The powers that be are ordained of God,'" 2) "Let no man presume to judge the gods, to reproach and reprimand them, but let him be quiet and peaceable, let him obey and suffer."

by God and that it functions in the service of God, even though the officials are chosen by the people. 20

In 1937, E. G. Guebert, reiterated this position. "Government as an institution not only has the approval of God, but has been ordained by Him." 21

Lutheran theology did not incorporate the doctrines of natural rights relative to the origin of government in its doctrine of separation of Church and State. Rather the divine rights of government, even in democracies, were included in Lutheran dogmatics.

Under the doctrine of Church and State, the functions and limits of each were outlined. This itself tended to cast Lutheran political views in a very conservative mold. Accordingly, the readers of the Lutheran Witness were cautioned in 1924, "not to expect that of Government which God does not want us to expect of it." 22 "The business of our government is simply to preserve order among fellow citizens and to protect them against foreign people." 23 "To the State God has

20 "The Teacher as a Leader in the Education of future Builders of Homes, Churches, and Communities," Lutheran School Journal, LXVIII:8 (April, 1933), 356


23 Martin S. J. Sommer, "Courts Exclude Bible from the Public Schools," Lutheran Witness, XLI: 25 (December 5, 1922), 390.
given the authority of the Second Table: Government was to promote peace, to preserve outward law and order. "24 "The officers of the state are entrusted with the power of punishing evildoers."25 Governments as directed by God were to protect law-abiding citizens and were given the specific power to collect taxes. 26

Lutheran political views were an expression of limited government, in fact, of negative government. The government was to tax, to punish, and to maintain law and order. The reform movements, such as the Progressive Era had failed to make an impression on the political views of Lutheranism.

The explanation for the origin of government is equally significant, even though it rested more on theory than on explicit statements of Scripture or the Lutheran Confessions. Government was instituted because of sin. 27 This was God's way of forcing men, at least superficially, to be sociable. 28

25Ibid., 219
28Ibid., 5.
Accordingly, W. H. T. Dau explained to the people of Michigan during the "School Fights":

The Secular authority of the state became a necessity with the incoming of sin. The rights of individuals, the fundamental of communal life, 'Love they neighbor as thyself,' was in danger of being disregarded. To repress this danger, to rebuke encroachments on any person's rights, to aid each in his lawful pursuits, the State power was ordained. 29

And in the words of A. C. Mueller,

When the Creator made man, He invested him with certain privileges inseparably united with his present physical life. These privileges have been called 'personal rights,' 'civil' or 'natural rights'. 30 But sin had so wretchedly obscured the natural law written in the heart that the latter no longer serves as a perfect check against unlawful aggression. To make up this disparity, God has instituted civil government and armed it with authority to secure to each person his natural rights by legislation or by force. 31

Thus the state was secular. "All legislation," stated P. Schumm in 1926, "with a moral aim either emanates from an unscriptural assumption or it oversteps the bounds imposed by Scripture." 32 President Coolidge was given high praise in the Lutheran Witness, in 1924, when he stated, "We cannot depend upon the government to do the work of Religion." 33

29 Ibid., 7.
31 Ibid., 55.
Lutherans held that the State was "not to act on the principle that the world must be governed by the 'law of Christ.'" In 1927, the Lutheran School Journal, declared: "Human reason rules the State, . . . the Church is governed by God's Precepts."35

There were many reasons given for this position. The state had to be secular, because it had no means "of reaching man's heart."36 The State had to remain secular, for it was not to become a "tool of Churches."37 The State is not to make people morally good by force, by the power of the State, "for that is both un-scriptural and has always ended in disaster."38 In fact, the Lutheran Witness declared, "that the argument that politics has morality and thus concerns the Church means nothing. Christ obeyed and paid taxes and absolutely refused to give any political advice."39


39 M. S. Sommer, "Preaching Politicians and Political
The Theological Monthly in 1927 declared:

According to Scriptural, Lutheran, and good American doctrine it is not the province of our legislators to enact laws because of anything that is written in the Decalogue. Legislation must proceed along the lines of reason and Natural law.\(^4\)

W. H. T. Dau stated:

The secularization of the State and all its institutions and activities has been a wise measure, and its early achievement in our country has made the United States an object of envy to countries less favored.\(^4\)

Titus Lang stated in 1923:

The Lutheran Church has always taught that the civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things, against manifest injuries and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace.\(^4\)

Not only were the functions of the State described and limited by the doctrine of the separation of Church and State, but the functions and limits of the Church, over against the State, were also outlined.\(^4\) The antitheses here are overwhelming: the state deals with crime and punishment, the Church with sin and grace. The State


\(^{40} \)Theodore Engel, "Is the Decalogue Part of the Constitution," Theological Monthly, VII: 6 (June, 1927), 176.


\(^{42} \)Titus Lang, "Separation of Church and State," Lutheran Witness, XIV: 13 (June 19, 1923), 198.

\(^{43} \)
deals with things temporal; the Church, with things eternal. The State uses force; the Church uses the means of grace. The State because of the use of fear can force men superficially to conform; the Church, in the administration of the means of grace, gives to mankind the only real power of regeneration.

Thus the functions, the spheres, the motives, and the results of these two divinely orgained institutions, had to remain separate. Since the state was "the force" against crime, it could never be used by the Church; and since the Church was "the grace" to relieve the sinner, it could never be used by the State.

And as the Lutherans felt the pressures of the "un-American forces" who were pressing in on all sides, this doctrine, the doctrine of the Separation of Church and State tended to give them comfort. Even though the Theological Monthly, in 1933 declared that the American concept of the separation of Church and State does not of course, effect our theology,

the Church is guided by the Word of revelation alone. United States Courts and Constitutions cannot establish for the Church the concept summed up under the terms Church and State.44

The Lutherans did not have that problem. The most glorious factor about the American constitution was that it was in harmony with both Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

44 Theodore Graebner, "Separation of Church and State,"
In the words of W. C. Kohn: 45

It is of the utmost importance to us Lutherans, . . . that we come to a clear and full understanding of the great blessings bestowed on our country through the work of Luther. It is of equal importance, however, that we earnestly seek to acquaint our fellow-citizens with the truth of our indebtedness to Luther for it has ever been the vaunt of the Church of Rome that she alone deserves credit for giving America the advantages of religious and political freedom. . . . it is therefore the supreme duty of us Lutherans—a duty we owe to God, to our Church, to our country—to proclaim the falsity of Roman pretensions, and to bring into the clear light of the truth the fact that America owes her freedom to the Reformation wrought through Luther.

America owes her all to Luther, she must thank the Reformation for all the actual, lasting good she has been able to achieve. But the learned men of the world have accepted the testimony of history . . . . That the principles of Martin Luther are the fundamental principles of our American Republic there can be no question. Out of these principles grew the inalienable birthright of every American citizen . . . Liberty, equality, fraternity.

Walter A. Maier presented the Lutheran position as follows: 46

It is therefore not without intense significance to note that the idea of legally establishing unalienable, inherent, and sacred rights of the individual is not of political, but religious origin,—in reality the fruit of the Reformation and its struggle.

"Luther is the author of Civil Liberty. American

Concordia Theological Monthly, IV: 4 (April, 1933), 255.


46Walter A. Maier, The Jeffersonian Ideals of Religious Liberty, address Delivered at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville, Va., August 9, 1930. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1930), 8.
democracy would not have been possible without Luther and his followers."\(^\text{47}\)

According to the author of \textit{Lutheranism and Americanism},

The complete separation of Church and State and the consequent religious liberty and equality of all religions and denominations is not a mere characteristic of Americanism, but its very essence: the innermost soul and life of the American spirit.

\textit{Americanism} is hardly conceivable without \textit{Lutheranism}.

In 1928, Theodore Graebner stated:

\begin{quote}
It is well to be reminded at intervals of the simplicity and clearness of our synodical position on this question. Undue extension of this principle will work harm and confusion. Stick to the simple words of Scripture and the clear statements of our Confessions and the lines of conduct are so evident that any Lutheran Christian can follow them and know that he is walking uprightly before God and Man.\(^\text{49}\)
\end{quote}

In the same year, Paul F. Bente stated:

\begin{quote}
The remarkable agreement of Lutheranism with the Constitution on the separation of Church and State points to an intimate relationship between the work of Martin Luther and the Constitution of America, even though three centuries separated them. In the last analysis American religious liberty is the fruit of Lutheranism.\(^\text{50}\)
\end{quote}

\begin{footnotes}

\textsuperscript{48} Lutheranism and Americanism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1920), 12-13.


\textsuperscript{50} Paul F. Bente "Lutheranism and the Constitution," Lutheran Witness, XLVII: 15 (July 24, 1928), 249-250.
\end{footnotes}
Lutheranism remained firm and steadfast, in spite of the attacks of the Calvinists, the Romans, and the Americanization movements. Thus Paul F. Bente declared,

"Thank God we are living in a land where the Constitution squares exactly with the teaching of Holy Writ concerning the relations of Church and State."

And Theodore Graebner stated that "our people" know the doctrine of Church and State from two sources: The New Testament, and the Constitution in its First Amendment.\(^1\)

\(^{51}\text{Ibid.}, 250.\)

\(^{52}\text{Graebner, "The Separation of Church and State," Lutheran Witness, XLVII: 26 (December 25, 1928), 428.}\)
CHAPTER II

LUTHERANS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

The official journals of the Lutheran Church entered the political arena to uphold Americanism. Chapter II traces nine of these movements. The anti-Bible reading campaign in public schools, the school fights, and the continued emphasis on the strictly secular character of legislation were in harmony with the position of the church on the absolute separation of Church and State. However, the protests against federal legislation in public education, although justified by the church under an extended application of the separation principle, indicates, rather, a fear of governmental involvement in the sacred preserves of 19th century decentralization.

The position of the church relative to the role of the state as the "defender of Christianity and 19th century morality," specifically in the areas of public education and the arts, demonstrates a contradiction of some significance. As American life tended to move away from the 19th century Protestant values, the Lutheran Church, as evidenced in her official literature, because more active in public life. The strong protest against the birth control movement and the vigorous protest against those who would abolish capital punishment tends to substantiate this conclusion.

The new emphasis on positive citizenship and the new
role of the church, which is traced in the last part of this chapter, clearly indicates that the Church felt a need to assert herself in public life. That this was predominately a part of the Americanization of the Lutheran Church is doubtful, especially in view of the church's position on the new movements in the 1930's. Rather, it seems that the church felt a need to become more aggressive in public life as many of the 19th century values were being uprooted and replaced.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod held that the state was secular and could not teach religion. The logic for this position was clear. The State "by its essence and avowed principle" assumes no responsibility for and no jurisdiction over the souls of its citizens. Thus it is neither competent or qualified to teach its citizens religion.

In "Lutheranism and Americanism," this American principle, which was in "perfect agreement with the Lutheran doctrine in the relation of State and Church as stated in the Augsburg Confessions," not only "clearly asserts

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an entire independence and separation of State and Church," but also "rejects the control of the state by the Church."³

In 1932 W. H. Behrens declared in the Lutheran School Journal that "the teaching of religion by the state is both un-Biblical and un-American."⁴ The reason was clear. Since the Bible is "a book of religion and the public school, ... an agency of the state, to introduce the Bible into the public school would be both un-Scriptural and un-American."⁵ W. H. Behrens insisted that the Bible should not be read at all, "even though it might be read without comment."⁶

Lutherans who were in doubt about this position were reminded that for "more than a generation, and up to the present time, the publications of our Synod, have taken the position that Bible-Reading in the public school" is a comingling of Church and State," is "un-Biblical," and is "un-American."⁷ And for these reasons it should be opposed.⁸

⁵Behrens, "Bible Reading in the Public Schools," 97.
⁶Ibid., 97.
⁷Ibid., 104.
⁸Ibid., 104.
Lutheran literature turned to American History as well. The editor of the Lutheran School Journal held that the coincidence of the emergence of the Lutheran Church—Mo. Synod, and the work of Horace Mann was of intense significance. The editor held that Mann's proposals were in complete conformity with the ideals of the founders of our country, "who clearly favored a complete separation of Church and State." In fact, the editor felt that the Lutherans owed Mann a great debt, because his proposals paved the way for the "secularization of our public school system."9

The Lutheran Witness, fearing the effect of Calvinism upon the schools, "was opposed to the sentiment that the State should recognize some kind of ethical or religious teaching" in public schools, embodying the essentials of morality."10

The Lutherans were opposed to the introduction of the Bible in the public schools "even for literary and ethical reasons," because this was a violation of the "constitutional assurance of the separation of Church and State."11 The Lutheran Witness declared in December, 1922, that public schools are "to teach no religion at all," but should "teach


11 W. Preuss, "Why do We oppose Bible-reading in the Public Schools?", Central District Messenger, III: 3 (January-February, 1927), 3
such subjects only as all reasonable men admit to be valuable for civilized and orderly life."\(^{12}\) However, since it was necessary to teach "individual and social ethics" in public schools, W. Arndt suggested in the *Theological Monthly* that individual and social morality be taught "in the environment and the expression" of the schools.\(^{13}\) John Theodore Mueller, declared in the *Theological Monthly* in 1923 that "if the Bible is put into the public school for the sake of inculcating Christian tenets and principles, then the Constitution of the United States of America is reduced to a scrap of paper."\(^{14}\) Thus the Lutheran Witness agreed with the Appellate Court of Fresno County, California, which ruled that the "King James Version of the Bible is a sectarian book and sustained the objection against its use in Public schools."\(^{15}\) The Lutheran Witness, XLI: 25 (December 4, 1922), 390.


\(^{13}\) W. Arndt, "Religious Instruction in Public Schools," *Theological Monthly*, III: 5 (May, 1923), 129-132. (He insisted that this could not be labeled religious instruction.)

\(^{14}\) John Theodore Mueller, "Putting the Bible In and Taking Christianity Out: A Critical Examination of the Dominant Ideas concerning Religious Teaching in Public Schools," *Theological Monthly*, III: 6 (June 1923), 161-174 (quote 168). He held that if vice, immorality, and irreligion have increased under the secular system, it is the fault of the Church, which has failed to do her duty in providing for her children the necessary means of extensive and complete religious training, 174 See also: "Another Mecklenburg Declaration," *Lutheran School Journal*, LVIII: 5 (May, 1923), 153-154. "The American officialdom is quite as hazy in its conceptions of Church and State, of government and religion, as is the American Citizen." 154...

\(^{15}\) Martin S. Sommer, "Courts Exclude Bible from
School Journal in 1927 maintained that since religious instruction in public schools is out of the questions, eleven states which have compulsory Bible-reading laws, are in "clear contravention of the First Amendment of our Constitution." The Lutheran School Journal, in reference to the State Supreme rulings in Colorado and Minnesota, in April, 1927, doubted if they were in agreement with our Constitution.

Lutherans were advised to be on their guard for their own rights as well as for those of others. The Lutheran Witness declared that it would take "watchfulness and hard work to hold the privileges which we have." W. Preuss felt Lutherans should help protect the Catholics and the Jews, since their constitutional rights were in jeopardy as well. Readers in Illinois, California, and Nebraska

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19 W. Preuss, "Why Do We Oppose Bible-Reading in the Public Schools?", Central District Messenger, III: 3 (January-February, 1927), 3.
were given warning that Calvinism was making inroads. 20 It was declared that teachers who were not affiliated with the Bible were being discriminated against. 21 In 1922, the Lutherans of the Central Illinois District by a resolution of the convention were constrained to vote against the adoption of the new state Constitution because of the Bible-reading provision. 22

In the specific issue of Bible-reading in the public schools the Lutheran literature is fairly consistent. Lutherans were fighting for the Constitution to keep a clear division between Church and State, to keep the state secular, to keep Churches from imposing their doctrinal standards on the general public through the medium of the state, to maintain religious freedom for the dissenters, and to keep Churches from controlling the government.

However, in the "School Fights," and in the continuing protests against the establishment of a Department of Education in the Cabinet (which included the Smith--Towner Bill, the Sterling--Reed Bill, and the Reed--Curtis Bill), Lutheran literature indicates much more than a struggle for religious freedom under the rubrics of the doctrine


of Church and State.

That the original struggles especially in Michigan and Oregon were fought primarily for the right to maintain religious schools cannot be questioned. That the struggle was carried on exclusively for religious liberty cannot be validated by the literature of the period. The arguments used in defense of the Lutheran Schools were based on the broad and fundamental principles of "good Americanism," which included a rigorous treatment of the doctrine of the Separation.\footnote{Theodore Graebner, "Oklahoma Petition," Lutheran Witness, XLI: 21 (October 10, 1922), 328; Central District Messenger, VI: 7 (December, 1933), 4; E. F. Pasche, "Paragraphs on Education," Theological Monthly, III: 10-11 (October-November, 1923), 304-306; Theodore Graebner, Un-American Legislation (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing, c. 1920), 4; Proceedings of the Iowa District, 1921 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 75.}

Opposition to the Smith-Towner Bill, the Sterling-Reed Bill and the Reed-Curtis Bill was organized by church officials and under the administrative direction of the church because these bills were a great menace to the State and the Church: because these bills made it difficult for the family, church, and the school to cooperate.\footnote{J. F. Wenchel, "Smith-Towner Bill," Lutheran Witness, XL: 7 (February 29, 1921), 100. See also "The Curtis-Reed Bill Now Before Congress," Theological Monthly, VIII: 5 (May, 1928), 154 and J. T. Mueller, "Child-Labor Amendment and the Schools," Theological Monthly, V: 2 (February 1925), 46 and E. F. Pasche, "Paragraph on Education," Theological Monthly, III: 10-11 (October-November, 1923), 304-306.}

That these bills were opposed exclusively, or even primarily for reason of Church and State can not be documen-
ted by the Lutheran literature of this period. The arguments against the establishment of a Department of Education at the Cabinet level were typically conservative, emphasizing the fears of federal control, the evils of political patronage, and the destruction of inalienable rights. The bills were also opposed because they came from "un-American sources," and because "the question of religious liberty enters in." In the name of religious liberty, Home Rule, freedom in education, (both private and public), decentralization, and fundamental American principles; and in opposition, to socialism, increased taxation, bureaucracy, state control, evil political patronage, "Americanization Fanatics," and un-American legislation, the Lutherans entered the political arena, armed with a mighty sword of righteousness, and schooled in thoroughly American and modern political tactics. Not only were District and


Synodical resolutions passed in defense of Lutheran Schools, but also in opposition to those tendencies which tended to hamper, hinder, or destroy these institutions. 28

Legislative committees were organized at the district level, not only to watch state activities, but to look to Congress as well. 29 State legislative and constitutional committee meetings were attended, to interview, to watch, to testify, and to protest. 30 Candidates were questioned


on the "school issues" and the results were presented
to the people.\textsuperscript{31} Key synodical leaders were notified by
"their men" in Washington if danger was imminent, and if
testimony was necessary.\textsuperscript{32} The names and addresses of
congressmen were given to the people, along with instruc-
tion on how to compose the letters of protest.\textsuperscript{33}

The Lutheran Church stood shoulder to shoulder with
conservative forces in American politics and used her

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Lutheran School Journal,} LXIII: 4 (April, 1928), 150.
\item Henry Frincke, "The Michigan Law for the Super-
\item Proceedings of the Iowa District, 1924 (St. Louis: Con-
cordia Publishing House, 1924), 110. J. C. Baer, "Michi-
gan—the First Battle Won," Lutheran Witness, XLIII: 21
(October 7, 1924), 366. Proceedings of the Lutheran Church--
Mo. Synod, 1929 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House,
1929), 70. Graebner, Th., "President Coolidge and the Ed-
ucation Bill," Lutheran Witness, XLIII: 19 (September 9,
\item A. C. Stellhorn, "The Political Parties and the Education
Bill," Lutheran School Journal, LXIII: 10 (October, 1928),
391-392. A. C. Stellhorn, "Items on our Campaign against
the Sterling-Towner Bill," Lutheran School Journal, LXIX:
1 (January, 1924), 22-25. A. C. Stellhorn, "The Hearing
\item F. J. Wenchel, "The Smith-Towner Bill," Lutheran
School Journal, LVI: 6 (June, 1921), 187-188. Proceedings
of the Lutheran Church--Mo. Synod, 1929 (St. Louis: Con-
cordia Publishing House, 1929), 70. A. C. Stellhorn, "At-
tention now to the Education Bill," Lutheran School
\item F. J. Wenchel, "The Smith-Towner Bill," Lutheran
School Journal, LVI: 6 (June, 1921), 187-188. Proceedings
of the Lutheran Church--Mo. Synod, 1929 (St. Louis, Con-
cordia Publishing House, 1929), 70. A. C. Stellhorn,
leadership, her machinery, her periodicals, her influence, and her membership to oppose those measures which seem to be destructive of good Lutheranism and good Americanism.

It is significant to note that the original thrust was to save Lutheran schools from legislative obliteration, but the Lutherans failed to differentiate these struggles from the Federal Legislation and in fact used the same administrative machinery for both struggles. The Lutheran Church, in the case of Smith-Towner Bill, the Sterling-Reed Bill and the Reed-Curtis Bill, entered the political arena. In this instance the doctrine of Church and State, even by Lutheran standards, had to be applied in its widest sense to justify political action. Under the rubrics of Church and State, secular government could not teach religion or morality; nor could the State legislate on things religious or moral. Thus in line with this principle, Prohibition as a piece of moral legislation was a violation of the spirit of the Constitution and the principles of Church and State as declared in Lutheran literature.34


Even though Lutherans had been admonished to obey the law, the dilemma was not rationalized satisfactorily until the *Theological Monthly* in 1923 offered a solution. Christian citizens could participate and obey the law, in spite of the fact that this "law is an encroachment on religious liberty," and to men as citizens, an encroachment "upon civil liberty, as both these liberties are guaranteed in this country by constitutional documents," because Prohibition was declared to be "purely an economic and financial question" and as such "it could be treated by the State." This same position was taken on the issue of legislation to prohibit the teaching of evolution. Theodore Graebner stated in 1925:

> While evolution indeed strikes at the root of all law and is a most fertile breeder of crime, we cannot approve legislation which would exclude evolutionistic teaching because it contradicts the Bible. We might as well demand that the State schools teach the end of the world, according to the Bible doctrine which we profess, as to teach its creation.

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37 Theodore Graebner, "Bryan," Lutheran Witness,
The Theological Monthly declared the same principle in August. If the motive for this legislation is to protect the Bible, the legislation is wrong. It is not the business of the State to provide protection for it. Concerning "moral legislation" the Lutheran literature was equally vehement, under the rubrics of the Separation of Church and State. The Lutheran Witness, in 1920, condemned the activity of the Witness Committee of Pittsburgh, who memorialized "Congress to change the preamble of the National Constitution, to put Christianity on an undeniable legal basis." The action of the Witness Committee was criticized because it would establish a false principle; because our legislative bodies would begin to tamper with natural and inalienable rights; and would eventually lead to religious coercion and persecution. In the same year the Methodist Tennessee Conference was criticized for submitting to Congress "their national Sabbath legislation."

XLIV: 12 (June 18, 1925), 196.


40 Ibid., 235.

41 Theodore Raebner, "Methodism, having helped put
The *Lutheran Witness* held this to be a violation of the Constitutional guarantee.\(^4^2\) In 1921, the *Lutheran Witness* condemned "the un-christian and un-American propaganda for legislation that would make of our free republic a Calvinistic Church-State."\(^4^3\) In 1922, at the Atlantic District Convention the conclusions of the doctrinal essay held that the state could not enact Sunday Legislation as part of the moral law, "but only in so far as it is necessary and helpful for order and rest, and the general welfare of its citizens."\(^4^4\)

This theme continued through 1925.\(^4^5\) However in 1927 a new position was announced. The *Lutheran Witness* declared in "The Blue Laws" that the Church has "always opposed and denounced political activity," of various church bodies, but that "we must be on our guard not to go to the opposite extreme."\(^4^6\) The writer concluded that "We are not

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\(^{4^2}\) *bid.*, 120.


\(^{4^4}\) *Proceedings of the Atlantic District, 1922* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 11.


opposed to the state’s enacting laws, . . . if the government discovers that it is good for the country.” Therefore, Lutherans were cautioned “not to pay much attention to the accusation that this or that candidate is in favor of blue laws.”

But the state was not to be too secular, or too neutral. The state and its institutions were to be “benevolently neutral.” Theodore Graebner stated,

The principle of separation of Church and State does not forbid the State to recognize the Church as an institution with peculiar rights and privileges. Nor was Scripture or the principles of Separation violated when the State “grants right and favors to religious organizations,” such as tax exemption on property, and chaplains. State schools, even though they were secular,

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47 Ibid., 431.

48 W. H. T. Dau, Can the Secular State Teach Religion? A Question for Parents, Pedagogs and Politicians to Consider (Fort Wayne, Indiana, the American Luther League), 13.


50 Ibid., 428. But the stand on chaplaincy was not clear in the 1920’s. See W. H. T. Dau, “Religious Services controlled and paid for by the non-religious state,” Theological Monthly, III: 4 (April, 1923), 118. He cites the example of J. B. Kader who offered a prayer in the Legislature of Colorado, which espoused liberal political views and “Immediately, . . . the representatives adopted a resolution of censure, rejecting the prayer.” The issue of Chaplaincy was cleared by Synodical resolution in 1938. A resolution, which was adopted, found that the chaplaincy was not a violation of Church and State. Proceedings of the Lutheran Church—Mo. Synod, 1938 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), 158-162.
and could not teach religion or morality, were not to "criticize or ridicule any religious beliefs, . . . ."51

The editor of the Lutheran Witness, in July, 1924 upheld the position of Bryan, who was criticized by the press for injecting "religion into politics."52 The Witness maintained that Mr. Bryan was "clearly within his right" for protesting "against the teaching of a false religion by the persons employed by the Government."53 Governor R. E. Nestos of North Dakota was applauded when he criticized those who undermined the "fundamental doctrine of religion."54 The Lutheran School Journal in 1940 upheld the position of the Supreme Court of New York, which revoked the appointment of Bertrand Russell to a professorship at the college of New York City.55

To say that the Lutherans were consistent in their application of the doctrine of Church and State is not correct, rather by the late 1920's and during the 1930's a new position is advanced by the Lutheran literature. In

52M. S. Sommerv, "Did Mr. Bryan Introduce Religion into Politics?", Lutheran Witness, 43: 15 (July 15, 1924), 265.
53Ibid., 265.
1922, the Lutheran Witness severely criticized and viewed with grave concern the political activities of many clergymen and religious bodies, whose intentions may have been sincere, but underlying whose propaganda was the mistaken idea of the "kingdom of God." Specifically the Witness, criticized the "ministerial unions" who were "mixing church and State in their attempts to legislate reform" in the moving picture art. 56 Again in 1934, the Federal Council of Churches was taken to task because the council recommended that the churches should aid in "the education for decent and worthwhile pictures." 57 "The church has no business to train the public taste for good movies, for honest horse racing or scandal-free baseball." 58 Yet in the same year, as reported by the Lutheran Witness, two Synodical districts and the Convention of Associated Lutheran Charities resolved that very thing. They not only


57 Theodor Graebner, "The Federal Council of Churches and the Movies," Lutheran Witness, 53: 18 (August 18, 1934), 305. "It would be marvelous, if in addition to national and international politics, revision of criminal code and of marriage laws, recognition of revolutionaries in China, prison reform and home sanitation, the church would take upon herself to train the public taste in order to make a box office success of those plays which are lacking the harlot complex to which we have been accustomed on the screen."

58 Ibid., 305.
urged their church people not to patronize the motion picture industry, but they urged their people, clubs and pastors to protest by "every legitimate and effective means" against the exhibitions that offend against the morals and good taste.\(^5^9\)

In fact the Mixed Conference of Lutheran Pastors and Teachers in the St. Louis area in February, 1928, passed resolutions which endorsed the activities of the Civic Union,\(^6^0\) and committed the Clergy and teachers of

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\(^5^9\)"Outlook and Review," Lutheran Witness, LIII: 19 (September 11, 1934), 328.
"Resolutions denouncing Indecent Motion-Pictures," Lutheran Witness, LIII: 15 (July 17, 1934), 263.

\(^6^0\)Resolutions endorsing the activities of the Civic Union adopted by a mixed conference of Lutheran Pastors and Teachers, Lutheran Witness, XLVIII: 1 (January 8, 1929), 10.

1. Resolved: that we endorse the activities of the civic League in St. Louis in behalf of Public Decency.
2. Resolved: that we as pastors and teachers assist the Civic Union in its work by reporting such offenses against public morality as come to our notice.
3. Resolved: that we as pastors and teachers exhibit an unflaking watchfulness over the sources from which the contamination of salacious literature and art spread to the children and young people of our congregations.
4. Resolved: that we use every opportunity to warn our children and young people against the dangers that lurk in the newsstand and movie picture shows.
5. Resolved: that we encourage our teachers to keep a watchful eye upon the drugstores, newsstands and candy shops in the vicinity of our schools and to bring to the attention of our sales people and owners any exhibitions of magazines, books, or pictures that offend against common decency.
the Missouri Synod to a campaign to suppress "salacious" material.61

While Lutherans rejected the proposition that the church could speak on political issues because of the moral issues involved, the position of the church on Birth Control demonstrates quite the opposite. In June, 1923, the Theological Monthly criticized the whole idea, but not "from the deeper ethical questions that enter into this subject," but "from the unsoundness of the movement from the social and sanitary viewpoints."62 In 1924, the Witness alerted its readers to the fact "that the odious movement" now seeks to "obtain freedom through Federal and State legislation"63 which "would destroy morality," by using the "devil's slogan."64 In March, 1931, the Wit-

6. Resolved: that we ask pastors and teachers to make joint effort for the suppression of such traffic. If a first and second admonition has failed to achieve results.

7. Resolved: that incorrigible cases be reported with detailed supporting data to the Civic Union.

61Ibid., 10. See also "Resolutions on Salacious Literature," Lutheran Witness, LIII: 16 (July 31, 1934), 277.


64Ibid., 199.
ness refuted the arguments that "fewer children are better children" and that the earth cannot support more people. In this instance, the Witness did not comment on the "moral aspects," as the author promised to do this later. In May of the same year, the Federal Council was criticized for "virtually approving birth control and contraception." And in February, 1934, the Lutheran Witness goes on record opposed to the Bill, "which would legalize the sending of information." Opposition to the Bill was based on the argument that such legislation would lead to "sexual license."

That the church became involved in civic and eventually legal action in the case of "salacious literature and indecent films" on the basis of the moral issues cannot be denied. That the same journals which forbade other

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66 Ibid., 120.


Using a number of authorities he demonstrates that our population in 1955 will probably decline if we practice birth control. He urges and appeals to us to continue to raise large families. He wonders if we are so weak and feeble that we can no longer propagate ourselves.
church bodies to use the powers of state, and used the same herself cannot be denied. In the case of Birth Control, the Church attacked the movement from economic, sociological, moral, and political points, the very methods she criticized the other church bodies for becoming involved, as a violation of the basic principles of Church and State.

On the issue of capital punishment, the Lutheran Church became equally entangled on the basis of her own principles. Lutheran journals supported capital punishment on the basis of her theology, on the basis of sound judicial policy, as a sound deterrent to crime, and as a safeguard for society. Thus the Hearst chain is taken to task for renouncing capital punishment, and the Anti-Capital Punishment Society is denounced. In November,

Theodore G. Raebner, "Capital Punishment," Lutheran Witness, XLV: 14 (July 13, 1926), 232. "When God said that 'whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed,' He laid down a law which government ignores only at its peril . . . Where judges and juries become lax, or where capital punishment has been abolished, passion and malice take their heavy toll of human lives. There is a peculiar perversion of human sympathy which sends jewelry and flowers to men and women indicted for murder and completely ignores the anguish and loss experienced by those whose father or husband, beloved child or friend have been murdered."

1933, a Methodist Sunday School Teacher "who disqualified himself as a juror when he decided that he could not serve if the state asked for the death penalty" was criticized because he "knows nothing about the divine institution of government in which God's Word insists that government bear this course for battle and execution." Both Governor Smith and Governor Lehman, of New York were praised when they refused to grant a stay of execution for convicted criminals. Theodore Graebner suggested that we "live up to the Canadian Northwest Mounted Police slogan: "Get your man, dead or alive, but get your man"—this would be a deterrent to murder."

The transition of the role of the Lutheran citizen from a dutiful citizen to one who must practice godly stewardship as a sovereign under the Constitution and the corollary, that the Church, as the church, must testify against the sins of government and politicians, was one of the most dramatic changes in Lutheran literature during the period 1920-1940. The Lutherans all agreed that government

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was to be obeyed as a minister of God. To disobey the
government was to disobey God. The Lutheran Church was
to pray for government. Lutherans were to pay taxes.
These things were commanded in Scripture. But aside from
these three commandments Lutheran citizenry faced innumer­
able basic problems as they entered the body politic.

During the twenties while "Lutheranism and American­
isim" stressed the totally secular aspect of government,
Rev. N. P. N. Hvale stated in the Theological Monthly, in
1923, "To the affairs of this world--politics, business, ...
... a Christian may strightly and honestly put only head
and hand, but in his relations to God and in religious
things he must have his heart, and indeed a heart with
faith, for without faith it is impossible to please God.
...",75

As citizens our most important service to the country
is missionary work among the many civilized heathen
citizens. In making Christians we make them also the
best citizens. As members of the State, i.e., as
citizens, we seek the welfare of the State or, ....
'the peace of the city.' But in our country we are
not to have anything to do with affairs of our Gov­
ernment as Christian, but as citizens or, if you
prefer, as Christian citizens.76

In "The General Curriculum: Civics" issued in 1927
in the Lutheran School Journal, this same position was main­

75 Rev. N. P. N. Hvale, "The Eighteenth Amendment Not
Moral," Theological Monthly, III: 7 (July 1923), 201.

76 Ibid., 202.
the study of civics should cultivate in pupils the realization of the fact that although in the world, they 'are not of the world.' Human reason rules the state. The church is governed by God's precepts.

For the Lutheran citizen who held that the State was secular as he had been advised to do by his Church, his reason, unbound by morality or Scripture or the Decalogue, was his guide in political affairs. Secondly, because of his dual citizenship, political affairs were not really important. With this in mind A. C. Dubberstein in the Doctrinal Essay "The Assurance of Success for Lutheran Missions in Oklahoma" stated:

The Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod in Oklahoma does not claim to be a powerful organization, which wields the scepter of earthly influence and power. We are not building an earthly kingdom, in which political power and prestige hold sway. We are not in Oklahoma to overthrow the existing order of things, the form of government, while we ourselves endeavor to become the governing power. We do not seek to speak a mighty word in governmental affairs. We do not want to be considered a big factor in the political situations prevailing in the State.

The best form of government, the most ideal state or kingdom, at best is but an institution made by the hands of man, which can serve its purpose only for the time of this world. The government of men cannot long endure. Our mission purpose is higher.

Thus during the campaign of 1924, in November, the Lutheran Witness suggested:

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78 Proceedings of the Oklahoma District, 1924, 61.
It is of great importance that we remember this just now, when political questions are discussed with so much spirit. Patriotism, love of country, prayer for the President, Congress, and all government officials are pleasing to God and right; but above them all there is this admonition: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." 79

In October 7, 1924, in "Keep God in First Place" the readers were reminded that they "dare not refuse to participate in the business of selecting good men to office," in spite of the fact that it was becoming more difficult "to retain some respect for our politicians." 80 But the readers were equally reminded:

But we must beware of permitting professional politicians to stir our minds and souls to such a pitch of excitement that we forget our chief purpose in life—the building of God's Kingdom of Grace. Whatever may be the political issue of the hour, and


80 M. S. Sommer, "Keep God in First Place," Lutheran Witness, XLIII: 21 (October 7, 1924), 361.
however important it may seem, we are still to seek first the kingdom of God and His Righteousness.

Active Christian Citizenship was usually urged as a "duty of subject," under the rubrics of the doctrine of Church and State. The Lutheran Witness took the position that separation of church and state does not mean that political activity is incompatible with sincere Christianity, or that a Christian should not take a deep interest in the affairs of the government and in politics.

M. S. Sommer stated that rendering unto Caesar does not refer only to prayer and to payment of taxes, but it included interest in, and if possible the control of the economic and proper expenditures of the revenues of the government. The Lutheran Witness urged the readers not to allow the "dishonesties, the corruption, which is practiced by many politicians to deter" them from participating in "elections in the study of political situations," and in giving their "support to that party and to those

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81 Ibid., 361. He continued, "And ought we not to thank God that we may flee from the noise, the tumult and the confusion of a political campaign to the peaceful, joyful, and assuredly victorious affairs of the kingdom of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords? Certainly we are going to give some thought to political affairs, but let us not allow these election contests to distract us overmuch; for, let come what will, if only God's name is glorified by purity of doctrine and holiness of life. . . ."


83 Ibid., 40.
measures which appear to be best for the country and for society. Lutherans were reminded that

God does not wish us to permit even the fragment of the independence of this glorious Republic, the liberty of religion, of conscience, and freedom of speech and press to be wasted, or have us show a careless concern. In 1925, the Theological Monthly, in one of the few remarks on participation in civic life, suggested, under the broad terms of duties, that the Christian "should try to find out the truth about issues and candidates and go to the polls and vote for the better government and the best candidates." A secondary motive for participation was urged, namely to keep the "bootleggers, grafters and the underworld" from taking over.

In 1929, in "Prayers for Government," the editor reminded his readers of the duty to pray for the president and "for all who are in authority, in conformity to the exhortation of I Tim. 2: 1-3." He urged this especially because of the political tricksters, the powerful and selfish combinations of large interests, of the hypocritical

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84 Ibid., 40.
85 Ibid., 40
87 Ibid., 155.
patriots, and of all the other danger involved in government. In the same issue the duties, responsibilities, and privileges of the Christians were reviewed under the rubrics of the Confessional statements.

In April of the same year, in response to President Hoover's comment that "Life and property are relatively more unsafe in this land . . . than in any other civilized country of the world," M. S. Sommer urged "Lutheran Christians" not only to remember their "duties toward the government" but he also suggested attending "political meetings" and having "our influence be felt in favor of righteousness" at the ballot box.

It is not until 1933, that "positive" citizenship is advocated. The Lutheran School Journal stated,

The teacher is finally to train the children to be good members of the community, to be useful citizens of the State; for here the Christians are to be the salt of the earth. It is their duty to work for the best interests of the city and the community to keep politics clean, to help preserve liberties.

89Ibid., 118.


Even though the teacher was admonished to be a good citizen, and to become "acquainted with the problems of the Community" that "does not mean that he must be a politician." However, by the late twenties and throughout the thirties an increased emphasis is placed on positive citizenship. Rather than reiterating the "duties of subjects," Lutheran literature tended to emphasize the Gospel "salt and light" concept.

In fact, the literature during the 1930's tends to reverse the earlier stand on the secularization of the state. In 1936, the Lutheran Witness, declared that the government could not "demand of the church that it limit the church in any way in its labor for the spread of the Gospel." The Lutheran Witness promised to "use its eff-

93 Ibid., 352


Rev. Arthur Brunn, "The Presidential Address," Proceedings of the Atlantic District, 1934 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), 13. "We are to be the salt of the earth, the light of the world. We are here to evangelize mankind. We must do more than maintain our own churches. We must do more than preserve our orthodoxy. We must do more than build a wall around ourselves. We must realize once again our high calling in the world."


orts to resist such demands and keep out of office" those who made such demands. 96 The position of the church, as the church, was made clear in the following excerpt:

When tendencies in political life appear to be hostile to Christianity either openly or in subtle insidious ways, the church has been commissioned to testify against sin, because the sins of politicians or political parties are not exempted. Thus our pastors are within the rights of their calling when they protest against the teaching of Communism, and when they discuss other economic schemes, in whatever point they touch morally. 97

The Lutheran Witness declared, "When politicians or politics join the ranks of un-Christian forces, the church has the right and duty of speaking." 98 And the editor concluded: "This is not mixing church and state." 99

Theodore Graebner presented a comprehensive study of "Christian Citizenship" to the English District in 1937. 100

96Ibid., 402.
97Ibid., 402. Thus A.C. Stellhorn, "Federal Aid to Education Bill," Lutheran Witness, LIX: 3 (February 6, 1940), 40 stated that he opposed the bill, because taxes would go up, and the church would lose revenue. See also Theodore Graebner, "Against the Menace of State-controlled Education," Lutheran Witness, LVIII: 25 (December 12, 1939), 424 and H. E. Wood, "Letters from the Readers." Lutheran Witness, LVIII: 26 (December 16, 1939), 448-449. (He vehemently objected to the whole concept of state planning.)

98Graebner, "Politics and the Church," 403.
99Ibid., 403
The essayist rejected the concept that the church was to "fashion culture," but held this to be the duty of the citizen.\textsuperscript{101} The Christian citizen was to "use his influence as a life-giving light, as a preservative, as a moral antiseptic," to be felt "throughout the political body."\textsuperscript{102} He held that the Christian voter was to consider himself "an agency of God for righteousness," since "according to the Constitution it is the citizen in whom all political power ultimately resides."\textsuperscript{103} The pastor as a citizen was to have "a personal interest in, and feel a personal responsibility for the proper solution of every civic and political problem."\textsuperscript{104} He was to have "an intelligent idea of the whole public situation," and this information was "to be used wisely and judiciously in pulpit, catechetical classes, and general visitation to further the interest of

\begin{footnotes}
\item[101] Ibid., 5-6.
\item[102] Ibid., 6.
\item[103] Ibid., 7. "Righteousness" included: keeping "the wheels of justice moving down the tracks laid down by the Moral law," "conscientiously laboring to keep separate Church and State"; keeping sacred the institution of marriage; protecting the morals of youth especially by the control of the liquor; the enforcement of anti-gambling statutes; the suppression of prostitution; the control of the theater and other forms of art which tend to debase public morals; included supervision of education against the application of evolution to the state, the family, business, private morals.
\item[104] Ibid., 9.
\end{footnotes}
the kingdom of God. 105

There are occasions when our Church as such must assert herself in the civic arena . . . when the rights of our Church under the law and constitution are either directly attacked or are placed in jeopardy. It is immaterial whether our Church as an organization vote certain resolutions or whether its officers or unofficial representatives speak the convictions of the Church. In some way, where civic rights are endangered our Church must assert itself as a body within the State possessing certain Constitutional rights. 106

After citing examples of the Church defending herself in the political arena Theodore Graebner stated:

These cases of political action, it will be noted, were actuated by the compelling necessity of defending certain civic rights. They are not to be interpreted as establishing a political program for the Church nor even establishing certain principles of "political activity," as that term is generally understood. The Church has neither political nor social objectives in its program. 107

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105 Ibid., 9.
106 Ibid., 11.
107 Ibid., 12-13. He continued: "Jesus did not denounce imperialism, the profit system, wage-slavery, the unequal distribution of worldly goods or war. He faced Roman imperialism . . . he incited no armed rebellion, no paralyzing boycott . . . he did not suggest a division of wealth . . . he had no objection to the wage system."

"We still hold that the Church which allows its pulpits, press, conventions, and young people's society to be used for socialistic propaganda makes itself the target of a shell fire which may prove as devastating as that which fell on the cathedral of Reims. ", 14.

"Our church has--let this be repeated--excoriated in the most scathing terms the selfishness of the rich; but it has also condemned all strikes that depended for their success on attendant acts of physical violence and has demanded of its members that they do not make common cause with a program involving acts in defiance of the law."
The essayist severely criticized the Federal Council of Churches for demanding "social planning and control" of the credit and monetary system and the "economic processes for the common good." He concluded:

Until the day has come that the entire United States connects with the name Lutheran, as inseparable from its meaning, the idea of religious education, of citizenship based on a conscience governed by Christian morality; until the word Lutheran, civic righteousness, and the moral training of youth have become very closely associated in the public mind, we have been lacking in the performance of duty. In this sense let the Lutheran Church be the conscience of the nation.

In September 1937 and again in June 1940, P. E. Kretzmann in the *Concordia Theological Monthly* presented the view that the Christian Church in the First century is most remembered by its social acts. He urged that since the Gospel-message is not an abstract philosophy, Christians should assert a "living, active principle," in their social relations.

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108 *Ibid.*, 16-18. The Federal Council was also criticized for organizing the church for political action.


In February, 1940, W. Arndt, realizing that the Church could no longer "ignore the situation which confronts us," and since "our church members are looking to the clergy for guidance and counsel," it because the duty of the pastors to tell "their parishioners what the Word of God says on the social questions that perplex them."\textsuperscript{112}

In October of the same year, A. C. Piepkorn, in "St. Paul on Social Relationships," was highly critical of "class-conscious exegesis," as well as those who use St. Paul to defend the "capitalistic status quo."\textsuperscript{113} He urged "social reconstruction" as a valuable by-product of the Church's ministry, because merely putting Christians in places of authority would not transform society.\textsuperscript{114} He concluded with these words:

Finally, the attitude must be inculcated that every responsibility is an opportunity . . . particularly in the relation of a Christian citizen to his government. The Table of Duties appended to the Small Catechism offers excellent counsel to subjects, but it is no longer exhaustive for us. In a Democracy the duties of citizenship are not discharged merely by obeying, praying and paying . . . the intelligent use of the franchise and of political office is quite as obligatory.

. . . we may not in a republic or a democracy ask for pious and faithful rulers unless we are pre-

\textsuperscript{112} W. Arndt, "The Church and Social Problems," Concordia Theological Monthly, XI: 2 (February, 1940), 115.

\textsuperscript{113} A. C. Piepkorn, "St. Paul on Social Relationships," Concordia Theological Monthly, XI: 10 (October, 1940), 747.

\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 750.
pared to deposit our vote to elect them or for good
government unless we are prepared to do those things
that experience shows are essential to getting it. 115

Six observations seem apparent to this writer: 1) The Luth­
eran Church entered the political arena, and presented a
political program to its membership. The Lutheran Church
spoke to the public and to the government on key political
issues. 2) The official literature of the Lutheran Church
opposed state-enforced morality in the instance of Prohibi­
tion, Sunday Blue laws, anti-evolution legislation and en­
couraged the use of state power to protect Christianity in
the public school and to uphold 19th century morality in
the arts. 3) The official Lutheran literature defended
capital punishment, and opposed the birth control movement
for reasons of morality, church doctrine, and sound
national policy. 4) In the case of the interpretation of
the role of the church in political life of the nation,
Lutheran literature demonstrates a trend in the 1930's in
reverse of the original position as stated in the early
twenties. However, Lutherans still held to their original
position as well. 5) All this was done under the rubrics
of the Doctrine of the Separation of Church and State. Luth­
erans consistently held to the Confessional principle that

115 Ibid., 752. See also A. M. Rehwinkel, The World
Today: A Challenge to the Christian Church (St. Louis:
Concordia Publishing House, 1940), passim. A ringing
challenge to save our world by getting into it.
the church could only speak from the authority of the Word, and that the State, being secular, could not be guided by churches or churchmen, but rather by reason and natural law. 6) The increased emphasis on the role of the church in public life and the implications in the stewardship concept of the sovereign citizen is especially significant in light of the position of the church relative to the New Deal.
CHAPTER III

OPPOSED TO REFORM

In conformity to Scripture and the Confessions, the Lutheran Church and the official journals could not speak on the issues which confronted labor and capital, nor could the church speak to the domestic problems after the depression. Lutheran literature steadfastly refused to speak out on the problems of economics, sociology, labor, capital and reform, because the business of the Church was to preach only the pure word of God. Thus the Church rejected the social gospel as a "perversion of the real gospel" and on the basis of the separation of church and state. But in proclaiming the Gospel and denouncing the enemies, she upheld laissez faire economics, Spencerian sociology, and a limited decentralized government.

The Lutheran Witness established the basic position of the Church toward the social and economic problems of this period in September, 1920, in response to the report of the Industrial Relations Division of the Inter-Church Movement.1 In this article, "The Church and Industrial Disputes," the editor favored the counter-reports of the Iron Age, the Industry, and the Wall Street Journal. He quoted the Presbyterian, which called the whole thing

"Economic Trespassing" and could not conceive that the report "will receive any considerable endorsement by church people, but it will do damage in the other direction; it will encourage the disturbers and invite the new strike which the committee predicts and evidently will approve." Theodor Graeber summarized, "Quite generally, the work of the commission is referred to as an attempt of the Church to secure justice to manual labor and as such, to be commended, even though the report betrays 'socialistic leanings.'"

The Lutheran Witness declared that in no case was the Interchurch movement to be thought of as the Church. Secondly, the Lutheran Witness declared that the function of the Church was purely spiritual. Christ and the early Christians were not involved in destroying an unjust social system and laboring for the abolition of political tyranny.

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2 Ibid., 291.
3 Ibid., 291-292. He also stated: "The charge is made that the Interchurch committee employed in its investigations men of 'extreme social views,' apologists for the I. W. W., radicals, semi-Reds, philosophical anarchists, and parlor-Bolschevists, and that its report is deeply tinctured with radicalism and Socialism. The Evidence presented for this charge is rather impressive." 291.
4 Ibid., "It is simply not in harmony with the facts to say that in and through this report 'The Church has espoused the case of the laboring man,' or 'The Church has meddled in industrial affairs.'", 291-292.
5 Ibid., 292.
6 Ibid., 292.
The role of the Church is to preach, and where the "Word of Christ" dwells there also "men dwell together in peace." The Lutheran Witness declared, "Shall the church . . . publicly testify against social wrongs, economic oppression, unjust industrial conditions? Most assuredly, where she knows them to exist." But the writer cautioned that this preaching should aim at the conversion of men from their evil ways, and not toward the use of the state power.9

In March 1923, in reference to those Church bodies which advocated political involvement by pastors and Church, W. Arndt stated that the Church may urge its members to exercise loyalty, kindness, and to be helpful to the poor; but that its duty is to preach the Word.10 He stated that the Church is helpless in areas of "unemployment, housing difficulties, capital-labor disputes, and is not an organization of financial or sociological experts."11 Since the Church "has no authoritative manual of Political wis-

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7Ibid., 292.
8Ibid., 292.
9Ibid., 292-293.
11Ibid., 38.
dom," the Church should not "be expected to do that work which it is neither commissioned to do nor fitted for." \(^{12}\)

In July, 1933, in an article "The Protestant Anti-Christ," Theodore Graebner attacked the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, because it was "guilty of an effort to organize the churches for political action." \(^{13}\)

The seventeen recommendations, which were in advance of the New Deal at that time, were called "a political platform and as such directly opposed to the teaching of our Lord, who declared that His Kingdom shall not be built by the sword, that is, by political power." \(^{14}\)

The accompanying editorial from the *Chicago Tribune* of February 5 of the same year thoroughly criticized the Council from the conservative point of view and from the point of view of the concept of the separation of church and state. \(^{15}\)

This confessional stance of the Church was restated in the Doctrinal Essay, "What is the business of the Church?" at the Western District Convention in June, 1933. The essayist stated:

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\(^{12}\)Ibid., 38.


\(^{14}\)Ibid., 117.

\(^{15}\)Ibid., 117.
It is not the business of the church to unite in federations and councils to influence legislation, in enacting prohibition laws, or licensing the distribution of restricted birth control information or sponsoring laws pertaining to one-hundred-and one political, civic, and social matters. It is not the business of the church to preach a modernized gospel of philosophy, or culture, or science, or sociology.16

It is significant to note that throughout this period, especially with reform movements, Lutheran publications insisted they could speak only as an organ of the church, and thus they could speak only the Word of God. In 1934, W. Amdt severely criticized the editor of the Lutheran Standard who was "acting in the capacity of the editor of a church-paper and the representative of a large Lutheran church-body," and was not "merely exercising his prerogative as an American citizen of the Lutheran Church."17 The Lutheran Standard was reminded that the Lutheran Church was not to concern itself with political and social matters; was not to preach the present-day social gospel; was not to become the advocate of special "political-social" tendencies; but was simply to continue the old, time-honored work of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ.18

The church is not able to operate in the economic and political sphere. It has one source of wisdom on which it may and must draw—The Holy Scriptures.

18 Ibid., 792.
Where they speak, it also speaks; where they are silent, it must be silent too. Does the Bible say that capitalism is an evil and must be supplanted by some brand of Socialism? Does it say which is the most equitable way of raising the money which the government requires for its work? Does it pronounce in favor of long or short working-hours? It lays down general principles which the church is to teach and which, if followed, will ameliorate harassing conditions in this vale of tears; but the individual questions mentioned it does not decide. 19

In May, 1935, the editor of the Concordia Theological Monthly took issue with Dr. A. D. Mattson in the Lutheran Companion, (Feb. 16, 1935). Dr. A. D. Mattson suggested that today Luther would be pushing the Church into social activities. 20 W. Arndt replied, "It is not the business of the Church to set up programs of social reform, but it is the business of the Church to declare principles." 21

The theological quarrel with the social gospel was revealed in a stinging theological rebuke directed to the Christian Century (October 17, 1934), in which Theodore Engelder stated in an article entitled, "The Social Gospel and 'Milk Sunday': "The material principle of the social gospel religion is, not the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, but the social betterment, 'redemption' of the world.

19Ibid., 794.

20Ibid., 386.

21Ibid., 386.
through social betterment. Again in June, 1935, the Concordia Theological Monthly, in a quote from the Presbyterian Banner, stated:

Christ kept largely aloof from political and sociological affairs that were surging around Him like a boiling sea and fixed his attention and teaching on the inner life of man more than upon his circumstances. Over and over again He taught that His kingdom was not of this world and was not meat and drink, work and wages, but is within us, a state of mind and Church.

This basic attitude toward the social gospel and the responsibility of the Church to the domestic problems of the 1930's was officially declared at the Synodical Convention in 1935. The assembly resolved not to create a new committee "to study our Problems." The resolution stated:


24/ "A Committee to Study Our Church's Problems, Etc." Memorial of the Northern Illinois District, assembled at River Forest, June 25-29, 1934.

"Whereas, We are living in times in which rapid and profound changes are taking place; and Whereas, Our church has also experienced linguistic, cultural, and economic changes; and Whereas, Its constituency, formerly rural, has become increasingly urbanized; and Whereas, There has been a universal breakdown of the materialistic and mechanistic philosophy of the unbelieving world, resulting in terrible disillusionment and general despair; and Whereas, These changes have brought with them both a host of new problems as well as unprecedented opportunities for our Church; therefore be it RESOLVED, That we petition Synod . . . to appoint a committee of five which shall have the power to increase its number as the needs of its tasks may require and whose duty it shall be; a) Carefully to study the problems confronting our Church in its practical work; b) Carefully to study the opportunities afforded by the new day;
Since the ailment of humanity is in this day the same as it always was, namely, sin, and since the cure remains the same, namely, the God-given Gospel of Jesus Christ, and since our pastoral conferences and other agencies of Synod are, as in the past, carefully studying the problems confronting our Church in its practical work, RESOLVED, That we do not create a new committee for this purpose. 25

This position was reiterated in the Concordia Theological Monthly in August, 1935: "Preachers are called to preach the Gospel and not economic and social and political reform. If they do this faithfully, they will not have time to solve the nation's economic problems." 26

In November, 1935, W. Arndt became more specific in the article, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church the True Visible Church on Earth." He stated:

And as for the warfare against injustice and oppression in our social order, whatever the Scripture proclaims we, standing on the Word and the Sacraments, shall in all earnestness place before ourselves and our congregations... What a sad mistake we should make if we should deem ourselves as Lutherans competent to settle knotty questions of statesmanship and sociology, ques-

c) Carefully to study the trends in our Synod together with any over-or-under emphasis in its work; d) to suggest an aggressive, well-defined program of action on the basis of Holy Writ; and e) To submit to our pastors and pastoral conferences the result of their findings together with their program of action by the end of 1936, so that these may be properly and thoroughly studied and discussed before the next meeting of Synod." (171-172) Reports and Memorials (Eingaben) for the Twenty-First Delegate Synod (Thirty-Sixth Regular Convention) (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935), 171-172.


tions upon which the Word of God has not pronounced either directly or indirectly, and if we should make our churches and schools lecture-halls in which to hand out dubious and apocryphal views on the rehabilitation of the NRA, the gold or silver standard, the proper distribution of power generated at the Norris Dam, and similar debated and debatable projects! What a tragedy if we should . . . change our Church into a club for social experimentation! 27

In January, 1937, A. Haentzschel in "The Church and Social Problems" reminded the readers that after Jesus fed the 5,000 and was asked to be their Leader, "looking for help along the lines of social gospel," Jesus did not improve social and economic conditions, sanitation, or social injustice, or oppression, or tyranny. 28 Jesus did not divide up the men into "social service squads" and send them out to correct these evils. 29 Haentzschel concluded: "Individual Christian are to serve fellow men, but the Church as such is to confine itself to the spiritual duties which He has committed to it." 30

In June of 1939, a response was made to Dr. A. D. Mattson, who was quoted from the Christian Century as follows:


29 Ibid., 21.

30 Ibid., 21.
The New Testament provides more material for sociology than for theology.... Jesus performed many of His miracles for social service. The sins of which John the Baptist urged his listeners to repent had a very definite social character. The duty of the Church is to testify against all sin, individual and social. The Church must not identify itself with any political group, but must sit in judgment upon all political movements and theories from the standpoint and spirit of Jesus.

To this the editor of the *Concordia Theological Monthly* replied: "What a sad aberration! The speaker ought to ponder 1 Corinthians 5:12,13, 'For what have I to do to judge them also that are without?.... But they that are without God judgeth.'"32

Lutheran orthodoxy was tenaciously adhered to. The Church, as the Church, could only preach the Word of God. Thus throughout the 1930's Lutheran literature severely criticized the reform programs of liberal Protestantism. According to the Lutheran Church, social and economic reform were beyond the competency of the Church. In spite of these protestations, the church papers attacked the social gospel and liberal Protestantism for reasons other than separation of church and state, and teaching beyond the limits of Scripture.

As early as 1928, a doctrinal essay, "The Danger of Modern Liberal Theology," at the Convention of the Minnesota

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32 Ibid., 472.
District lumped together theological liberalism, social welfare, evolution and higher criticism. As evidence the essayist, V. Schroeder, cited examples from the three states in Australia which were controlled by labor parties.34

In 1933, in a severe criticism of "Political Parsons," the Lutheran Witness described as "diluted Socialism the many resolutions of Protestant conferences."35 The barb was directed specifically to the Methodist meeting in Evanston, Illinois, "on the essential bankruptcy of the present industrial, capitalistic regime."36 In August 1935, Theodore Engelder quoted the Living Church (June 1,) in which Calvin Coolidge summarized his views of the social and political activities of the ministry in these words: "I think most of the clergy today are preach-

33Proceedings of the Minnesota District, 1928, 31. Also see Theodore Graebner, "Book Review," (Pastors, Politicians, Pacifists, by Le Roy F. Smith, (Chicago, 1927), Lutheran Witness, XLVII: 6 (April 20, 1928), 117. Highly recommended to "all who wish to see the inside workings of the Federal Council of Churches. Chiefly an accounting of the Federal Council of Churches and its unchristian propaganda in the social and political fields. Not only the political activity of the Protestant Churches in America, but more damaging still their book up with the radical labor elements in this country and with Communism in China."

34Proceedings of the Minnesota District, 1928. 31.


36Ibid., 423.
The Lutheran Witness, 1933, severely criticized the Presbyterian United Church of Canada, which in June had passed a series of resolutions "condemning capitalism and recommending the socialization of banks, transportation, and industry." Theodore Graebner used excerpts from six editorials, all condemning the radical position of the Presbyterian United Church of Canada.

In 1935, The Concordia Theological Monthly upheld the statement of "a group of Methodists described as wealthy." The document, described by W. Arndt as one "which may become important in the history of the Church," declared:

Therefore it is the sense of this group that, when the pulpit and the religious press substitute economic and social systems for the Christian ideal of individual responsibility and freedom of choice they are losing sight of their fundamental objectives.

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39 Ibid., 246.


41 Ibid., 782
However, W. Arndt, not only upheld the sentiment of this document, but discredited the criticism of the Christian Century, which wrote this off as "rich men trying to save their necks." W. Arndt, "was not surprised," by the statement of the Christian Century, "being advocates of the social gospel."  

On April 6, 1937, the Lutheran Witness reported on the testimony given by Theodore Graebner to the Judiciary Committee relative to the Supreme Court proposal before Congress. He made it clear that he testified not for the Church, but only on his own behalf. Theodore Graebner spoke of the dictatorship tendencies of some Protestant churches in affairs of state "who were championing a social gospel, which is decidedly pink," and "who were defending the reddest kind of political radicalism" and were clamoring for a new economic order capable of providing the abundant life. The Lutheran Witness also reported that Theodore Graebner feared that some future president with a "messiah complex" would unite his support "with sectarian, ministerial alliances, socialists, and a million un-

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42 Ibid., 782.
44 Ibid., 122.
45 Ibid., 122
classified crackpots, pacifists, and some reformers" applying "some arbitrary standard for rebuilding the supreme court to realize some great and moral good."46

In January, 1939, the editor of the Concordia Theological Monthly noted that "the great pillars of our political and economic system which made our nation strong are being pulled down and socialism is on the ascendancy in this revolutionary age."47 However, he insisted that "this religious paper will not deal with these issues."48

It is significant to note that even though the Lutheran journals steadfastly denounced the social gospel and its political programs under the rubrics of the doctrine of the separation of Church and state, the journals also labeled the reform programs as socialistic and radical. In addition the theological stance in itself is significant, especially in view of the new emphasis cited in chapter II of this paper.49

Lutheran literature never denounced the labor movement as such, but tended to view the whole affair as men

46 Ibid., 122.
48 Ibid., 2.
49 Supra, pp. 51-52
"worshipping god mammon." The journals viewed strikes as violations of law and order. Without exception, Lutheran journals expressed 19th century viewpoints relative to labor and capital. Since the Lutheran Church was bound by Scripture and the Confessions she could only teach the Word of God. Thus in March, 1921, Martin S. Sommer, in answer to the question: "Have the Lutherans anything to say about Labor and Capital?" stated: "Servants be obedient to your masters, and you masters practice the golden rule."

In December, 1922, the editor of the Lutheran Witness in reference to the problems of capital and labor stated that Christianity holds the secret for a reconciliation between capital and labor, "but that this secret does not consist in enforcing certain rules of conduct, but in changing over completely the mind and the soul both of employers and employees."

In 1924, the general principles suggested by Lutheranism were left in the background for a blast at "organized labor representatives" who had accused Protestant Churches of being anti-labor and who had employed "base slander" in

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51Martin S. Sommer, "Labor and Capital and the Church," Lutheran Witness, 40:5 (March 1, 1921), 71

their "loud and vociferous campaign."\textsuperscript{53} The editor's parting words returned to the confessional principles, "The Lutheran Church tells organized labor representatives their problem is sin. We can only utter the prayer of our Master: 'Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.'"\textsuperscript{54}

In 1929, in an article "The Blessings of Hard Work," M. S. Sommers states, "We know of no time in the history of the world when conditions for the working man were better than at the present as here in our country."\textsuperscript{55} He stated, wages are high, the working day in most cases had been reduced to eight hours, humane treatment of employees was insisted upon, and he felt the physical safety of the workers in most cases was provided for by law.\textsuperscript{56}

In 1935, in an article "A New Race of Loafers," the editor opined that the "unscientific style of relief that is being applied to the unemployment situation is creating a new race of loafers."\textsuperscript{57} He also quoted C. F. W. Walther

\textsuperscript{53} M. S. Sommer, "The Laboring Man and the Church," Lutheran Witness, XLIII: 8 (April 8, 1924), 148.

\textsuperscript{54} Ibid., 149.


\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 180.

who stated that only eight hours of work on every work
day would breed a race of loafers. 58

In 1939, in "The Church and Social Problems" W. Arndt
takes issue with the American Lutheran Conference of Nov.
12, 1938, specifically on resolution two: "That the Con-
ference stands for the right of employee and employer to
organize for collective bargaining." 59 W. Arndt stated,
"The principle that the Church has no authority to teach
what the Bible does not teach has not been sufficiently
observed." 60 "If asked what Scripture induced them to
write these words, no doubt they would point to the Golden
Rule." But is the right of "organization for collective
bargaining necessarily included in what the Savior says
about the attitudes we should take toward another?" 61

The Lutheran Witness viewed the depression as an act
of God, laying his hand on a people who had not been good
stewards of their resources. 62 "We have in this a divine

58 Ibid. See C. F. W. Walther, "Communism and Social-
ism: Minutes of the first German Evangelical Lutheran Cong-
gregation U.A.C. at St. Louis, Mo." A stenographic report
of four lectures delivered, and by resolution of the Con-
gregation. Tr. by D. Simon (St. Louis: Concordia Publish-
ing House, 1879).

59 W. Arndt, "The Church and Social Problems," Concor-
dia Theological Monthly, X: 2 (February, 1939), 143.

60 Ibid., 143-144.

61 Ibid., 144

Lutheran Witness, XLIX: 16 (August 6, 1930), 261-262.
visitation," was the proclamation of the Witness in 1932. In 1933, the Lutheran School Journal stated, "The depression affects the teacher in two ways: he is to teach the lessons deducible from the depression; he is not to be influenced by the spirit that brought it about." The teacher was advised "not to fail to convey to his pupils the lessons that God is teaching by means of the depression." The editor warned, "The work in the kingdom of God must not be subordinated to any particular social or economic system, to ebb and rise with the value of the dollar or the earnings on stocks and bonds." In the same year, the Lutheran Witness rejected the concept that poverty breeds crime. Professor Fritz in 1930 stated that the depression was due "simply to the laws of supply and demand." It was his opinion that we had been very prosperous, that we

63 Th. Graebner, "The Depression and some Prophecies," Lutheran Witness, LI: 3 (February 2, 1932), 41-42.
64 "Depression and the Christian Teacher," Lutheran School Journal, LXVIII: 8 (April, 1933), 357-361.
65 Ibid., 358.
66 Ibid., 359.
had more money than we needed, that we were spending it on unnecessary needs, and thus we had not been saving as we should.\textsuperscript{69} The poor were poor because "they were wasteful spenders."\textsuperscript{70} In good time, operating under the laws of nature, our economic system would right itself again.\textsuperscript{71}

In 1934, the President of the Atlantic District reported to the members of The District Convention that "these are evil days," and that the government in trying to solve the problems of the needy was "supplying the daily needs of millions of people, and doing it with almost extravagant lavishness."\textsuperscript{72} The report also noted that "all artificial efforts to bring back normal conditions seem but a hollow mockery."\textsuperscript{73} The president of the Atlantic District was convinced that "legislation, government, braintrusts and colleges" would not solve our problems.\textsuperscript{74} Lutheran literature while proclaiming only the word of God,

\textsuperscript{69}Ibid., 261.

\textsuperscript{70}"American Vice and Its Cure," Lutheran Laymen's League Bulletin, I: 7 (March 26, 1930), 78-79.

\textsuperscript{71}Ibid., 78-79. Many of the rich were also held to be wasteful spenders.

\textsuperscript{72}Proceedings of the Atlantic District, 1934, 11. (The president was not opposed to this work as such.)

\textsuperscript{73}Ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{74}Ibid., 11.
at the same time proclaimed a laissez faire economy. "Mammon worship" and foolish spending brought on the depression, and the laws of nature would pull the nation out of the depression cycle.

The official Lutheran literature was less inhibited in its comments on the role of government in American life. Already in the twenties and especially in the middle thirties, the literature and church officials vigorously protested against centralization. The fear of the growth of government and the loss of individualism was one of the dominant political themes throughout the period 1920-1940. In February, 1923, the Theological Monthly noted: "Observing minds in America have long ago pointed to the trend toward collectivism in our country as a distinct danger to the inalienable rights" of our citizens. It was declared that this trend was "beginning to be felt in areas other than religious circles; especially in commerce, the industries, secular education, and the social relations of our citizens all are coming within the throttling grasp of collectivism."75

The same month, the Lutheran Witness warned, "Will Liberty soon be a thing of the Past?" The Lutherans were warned of the dangers of "the enlargement of governmental responsibility," the "encroachment upon liberty," and the

"loss of responsibility of the individual." The Lutheran Witness strongly opposed state aid, supervision, and paternalism which were being directed against both private enterprise and the schools.

In March, 1925, the Theological Monthly was concerned "that the much prized American liberties are being jeopardized." The article not only commented on the school issues, but was also concerned about "the ever-recurrent efforts to centralize power at Washington and the State capitals, which palpably reduced freedom of action in commerce and the industries." The editor was opposed to those "sentiments prevailing in the United States," and to those "ominous political movements," and "sundry legislative acts." In 1930, the Lutheran Witness, in "Federal Control of Education" quoted Judge E. F. Tradue


77 Ibid., 53.

78 W. H. T. Dau, "That much prized American Liberties are being jeopardized," Theological Monthly, V: 3 (March, 1925), 86-87.

79 Ibid., 86. But he also said, "A competent discussion of the political aspects of this subject we must leave to our statesmen and legislators, hoping and praying that they are both wide awake to the seriousness of the situation and able to cope with it."

80 Ibid., 86.
who not only spoke against governmental intervention in schools, but stated that the genius of American Government and institutions was in their free play and individualism. On January 2, 1934, Lutheran literature called the church to action. In the article, "State Control of American Youth," the Lutheran Witness initiated a campaign to defeat the child labor amendment. The editor objected to the bill for two reasons. He was opposed, first because it limited the right of parents and "handed" the children over to the state. Secondly, he stated that the bill had been promoted by agitators who favored the communistic idea that not the parents, but the state had control of the children. He opined that behind "the pleas of saving the children" is the same kind of propaganda "which for years has unsuccessfully tried to establish a Department of Education at Washington: and this would handicap our parochial schools.

Even by Lutheran standards the broadest interpretation of the doctrine of Church and State was necessary in order to justify this political involvement. Lutheranism

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83 Ibid., 5.
84 Ibid., 5.
85 Ibid., 6.
viewed the Child Labor Amendment as a socialistic measure. Lutherans vigorously opposed this measure, the Child Labor Amendment, because it would strike at the very roots of the 19th century liberalism.

But the Church moved into the political arena. The Lutheran Witness reported that President Kretschzmar, Dr. Theodore Graebner, Rev. P. Koenig and Superintendent Bade represented the Synod at the senate committee meeting of the state of Missouri. Copies of these arguments were being sent to District presidents, school boards, and young peoples' committees in order "that they may take proper action and protest, in the interest of our Lutheran youth, against ratification of this amendment." Theodore Graebner concluded that whenever our religious freedom is interfered with, "we have the right and duty of protest;" if the ideas of the originators of the Child Labor Amendment were carried out, "the parental right of control and education--a God given right--has been made secondary to control exercised by a swivel chair in Washington, D. C."

In February, 1934, the Lutheran School Journal warned, "Watch the Child-Labor Amendment!" In his overview of

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86 Ibid., 6.
87 Ibid., 6.
88 Ibid., 6.
the origin of this measure, A. C. Stellhorn reminded his readers that the amendment was drafted in 1923 by a Mrs. Florence Kelley Wischnewetzky, who was married to a Russian, and by three unmarried women, all of them said to be strongly socialistic and communistic. He listed six objections to the Amendment: It was socialistic and communistic in origin and purpose; it was needless and dangerous; it included "spacious wording" and "all inclusive power"; it abrogated the rights of States; it was an invasion of the home and an infringement upon parental rights; it alters the Federal Constitution which is extremely difficult to change before doing untold damage; it means governmental paternalism; it introduces the communistic principle of rearing the children for the State and undoing the home with its rights and its sanctity.

The Lutheran Witness that same month urged the Lutherans to defeat the "Child Labor Amendment in the various states where the issue was still pending." The editor warned that the forces behind this movement were socialistic in sentiment and would exercise control over the home, family, school, and church. He suggested that "the

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90 Ibid., 269.
91 Ibid., 259-270.
93 Ibid., 59.
letters addressed by the Boston Lutheran Pastoral Conference of the Missouri Synod, which were sent to the State senators and representatives urging them to defeat the amendment, might well serve as a model of protest in other localities.\textsuperscript{94} In March, the Lutheran Witness declared that the district presidents of the Atlantic and the Texas Districts "were instrumental in arousing our people" and that President Beyer in Texas was a strong factor in contributing to the defeat of the Amendment in that state.\textsuperscript{95} The writer urged the people to obtain their defensive documents for their campaigns from 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, Missouri.\textsuperscript{96}

The campaign continued. Lutheran journals called the church to action. In January 1, 1935, the Lutheran Witness reported on the resolution of Circuit E of the Southern District.\textsuperscript{97} The circuit resolved to "do all in our power to defeat the proposed Child Labor Amendment, especially by directing the attention of our state Legislators to its harmful features."\textsuperscript{98} According to the Lutheran Witness the

\begin{footnotes}
\item[94] Ibid., 59.
\item[96] Ibid., 106.
\item[98] Ibid., 10.
\end{footnotes}
resolution was passed because the Federal Government would receive "absolute control over all children under 18 years of age"; because the measure would "destroy the sanctity of the home," the "basic foundation of a well ordered state"; because the "Communistic Measure" was aimed at the destruction of the Christian church and our Democratic form of Government"; because "every state in the union is said to have adequate Child Labor Laws, protecting children from exploitation and abuse in industrial labor"; "because child labor is a state right, and should not be surrendered to the Federal Government"; and because "the proposed amendment will interfere with the divine commandment, 'Thou shalt honor thy Father and thy Mother.'"

For the second time the Lutheran Church entered the political arena, strongly opposing the ratification of the Child Labor Amendment. In a defense upholding the home, the schools and the church, the Lutherans were called to action to put down socialism, federal centralization, and the planting of Communism on American soil. When the reform movements and the New Deal entered the one area where the Church could justify political action, the Church through her official literature not only denounced the movement, but organized the leadership and her members for action.

In April, 1935, A. C. Stellhorn demonstrated that only 30,000 are involved in child labor "in the manufacturing

99Ibid., 10.
and mechanical industry," as a result of "the work of the NRA and public opinion." He insisted that the real purpose was to "emancipate childhood from parental control" and that the success of this amendment would mean the "establishment of communism on American soil as part of our Constitution." 101

In May, 1935, A. C. Stellhorn urges the Lutheran leadership to become more active. 102 He felt that had this been the case in Indiana the Child Labor Amendment would never have been ratified in that state. 103 The article was concluded with a stirring appeal urging "our people everywhere" to "be on the alert to oppose this vicious and tyrannical amendment with all the power at their command." 104

In June, 1935, in a reprint from the Boston Traveler (June 7, 1935), the Lutheran Witness proclaimed, "Mrs.


103 Ibid., 168.

104 Ibid., 168.
Roosevelt would invade the family.\textsuperscript{105} Mrs. Roosevelt and Miss Perkins are criticized for taking leadership in a fight to "fasten a vile child control amendment upon the homes of America."\textsuperscript{106} According to the Lutheran Witness, the Boston Traveler reprint described "the mis-called labor amendment" as "the reddest thing that ever came out of Moscow."\textsuperscript{107}

The most scathing denunciation of the New Deal came from the President of the Lutheran Laymen's League at the annual convention. In the presidential address he stated:\textsuperscript{108}

Christianity has always urged the sharing of wealth; so this idea is not a new one. Joseph, as ruler of Egypt, ran the first Triple A. However, he husbanded the grain with which to feed the hungry and did not plow it under. There are still some who think Joseph right.

We are living in an era of confused idealism of New Dealers, of atheists, of agnostics, and of half-baked theorists, who take the good out of one and mix it with the bad of another and try to sell the whole batch on what little virtue the lopsided arrangement holds . . . . Misguided zealots are offering their panaceas. The Sinclairs and Townsends of California, the Coughlins of Michigan, the Longs of Louisiana, the Frankfurters of Harvard,

\begin{flushright}
106\textit{Ibid.}, 221.
107\textit{Ibid.}, 221.
108E. J. Gallmeyer, "President's Message to the Annual convention of the Lutheran Laymen's League," The Lutheran Layman, VI: 4 (August 15, 1935), 29-30. This is not an official publication of the church, as such. The Lutheran Layman is the official journal for the Lutheran Laymen's League.
\end{flushright}
together with the bonus-seekers and the relief leachers (those not genuinely in need), make up the hodgepodge in this kaleidoscopic modern miscarriage.

He then pleaded to a return to true morality, upon which all law, government, business was founded.

We should not have had this revolt in our entire body-politic if this stuffed-shirt, utterly selfish, ruthless, greedy, money-seeking, money-grabbing group had not fastened their tentacles in one way or another upon every tangible piece of real and personal property in the entire United States.

It was this that was at the base of our economic upheaval as much as anything else. It is also this same group that is crying the loudest because they are being taxed in certain measures to pay for some of the havoc which they have wrought.

He concluded with these words:

Wanted—a renaissance of character; not less cotton and fewer hogs, but more outstanding, upstanding MEN. Along with the multitude of "codes" give us a character assurance, a code that will keep men human and willing to render service other than that of selfishness and greed.

Only Christian men can carry the burden of this reconstruction . . . . We do not want a mixture of church and politics, but we do want Christian men who are actuated by a fine idealism of Christian life to exert their influence politically.

Even though the need for the Child Labor Amendment was no longer necessary, the criticism of the dangerous trends in American government were continued through 1937. In 1937, J. F. Wenchel, in "A Free Church in a Free State," cited Dr. Bergendoff of Augustana College, Rock Island, Ill., who stated: "The state is the great menace to freedom. The increasing autocratic powers, and activities of
government are especially a grave danger to education.\textsuperscript{109}

The \textit{Witness} quoted Dr. Bergendoff as being opposed to the modern state which "obeys no law above itself" and the people are the gods which are served.\textsuperscript{110} In July of the same year the Lutheran \textit{Witness} quoted the \textit{Watchmen-Examiner} as follows:

Due to the trend toward a totalitarian state, . . . we now have a theory of public welfare, that the state must become responsible for everything that affects the lives of its citizens. Soon or later, the doctrine of a free church in a free state will be challenged by the totalitarian state . . . . The doctrine of the separation of church and state will be attacked as political heresy if not treason.\textsuperscript{111}

To this J. H. C. Fritz replied:

To those who have carefully observed and analyzed what is going on in the political world today, in our country as well, these words need no comment. The large mass of our citizens needs to be aroused lest they someday experience the sad awakening.\textsuperscript{112}

By January, 1939, the editor of the \textit{Concordia Theological Monthly} in the "Forward" simply announced, "that the great pillars of our political and economic system which made our nation strong are being pulled down and

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{109}J. F. Wenschel, "A Free Church in a Free State," \textit{Lutheran Witness}, LVI: 5 (March 9, 1937), 79.
\item \textsuperscript{110}\textit{Ibid.}, 79.
\item \textsuperscript{111}J. H. C. Fritz, "The Trend toward a Totalitarian State," \textit{Lutheran Witness}, LVI: 14 (July 13, 1937), 227.
\item \textsuperscript{112}\textit{Ibid.}, 227.
\end{itemize}
socialism is on the ascendency in this revolutionary age. But he insisted that this "religious paper will not deal with these issues."

The following observations seem warranted. Lutheran literature could not take part in the New Deal and the reform movements during the thirties, because she could speak only from Scripture. In fact, the Lutheran literature until 1940 steadfastly held to the position that to become involved and preach reform was a mild form of heresy. When the Lutheran journals criticized liberal Protestant reform platforms, they not only reprimanded them for overstepping the role of the church in political life, but also labelled their programs as radical and socialistic. When the Lutheran journals did speak on the problems of labor, and capital, and the depression, they reiterated 19th century liberalism. It was natural then that Lutheran theology tended to uphold conservative political views.

Lutheranism steadfastly opposed the growth of the federal government not only in the area of education, but as a broad principle. Individualism, free play, private enterprise, even states rights were cherished Lutheran values, throughout the period 1920-1940. By mid-1937, Lutheran literature is silent on the issue of the role of government in American life.

114 Ibid., 2.
CHAPTER IV

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

"The Gospel does not announce any laws for national or international affairs," proclaimed the Lutheran Witness in December, 1920, "for to make such laws is the function of the Government alone." The Lutheran Church through her official periodicals refused to speak directly to the international affairs, in as much as the church was bound to speak only the word of God. Thus the journal could not engage in things political, without violating the principles of the separation of Church and State as declared in the Confessions. This position was maintained as an editorial policy as well, throughout the period 1920-1940.

Even as late as 1939, the Lutheran Witness in reference to the issues involved in neutrality stated:

That there are tremendous moral issues involved in the war or wars now in progress who would deny? But unless you want your church to go the way of Reformed sects and the Roman Church which defend their meddling in politics precisely with the plea that there are "moral issues" involved, you will not expect your church to speak in matter for which God has given natural law, the sense of right and wrong . . . but He has not given His church the command to dictate to rulers and governments.  


2 /Theodore G. Raebner/, "The Christian as a Neutral," Lutheran Witness, LVIII: 20 (October 3, 1939), 339. This position toward neutrality is significant, especially in view of the new role of the church and its members as developed in the mid-1930's.
Granted the theological position of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, at least two additional considerations are involved. During the period 1920-1940, Lutherans assumed that the Roman Catholic Church would try to involve the United States in "papal schemes," to further the goals of the Catholic Church. In fact, this position was closely related to Lutheran dogma.

The second great fear revealed in Lutheran literature, especially during the twenties, was that the Reformed church bodies would declare another "righteous cause" in international affairs. Lutheran journals vigorously denounced "international crusades." This position was emphatically declared by Theodore Graebner in 1924. His summary of President Wilson is important.

The Calvinistic trend of President Wilson's religion was partly responsible for his policy during the war. It was a principle of Calvinism, ... that the State shall be governed by the teachings of the Church. And thus we had a war "for righteousness," a phrase immediately appropriated by the Reformed clergy. We were fighting then, not on account of violations of international law, but to "establish righteousness," to build the kingdom of God. Hence our soldiers were called "Crusaders," and the war was specifically called a "religious war." Christianity was at stake. And the League of Nations was held to be a Holy Alliance, which was to safeguard the principles of Jesus Christ in the relations of nations to each other. The outcome of the war was to be a "regenerated humanity."

All this perverted thinking was the result of that Calvinistic cast which overspread President Wilson's

announcements when the war was in progress. But the League was repudiated, by an overwhelming national vote. The Versailles Peace has done nothing to check human greed and hatred, but has left Europe a camp armed to the teeth, and in Germany 20,000,000 are actually starving now, five years after the armistice.

Both have failed in their life's endeavor, Lenin and Wilson. The one hated Christianity and turned loose upon it the Red hordes. The other misunderstood Christianity in what it teaches regarding the functions of the State. The Church of Christ has suffered no lasting harm from the hatred of the one nor from the good, but mistaken intentions of the other.

In general Lutheran journals tended to ignore international problems, outside of the steady anti-Catholic protests.

Lutheran journals tended to take notice only of those issues to which Lutherans were opposed. This in itself would indicate that the Lutherans were in favor of the general policies toward international withdrawal. Thus in 1921, Martin S. Sommer stated the position of the Lutheran Church toward international relations as follows:

The Lutheran attitude is easily stated. The Church has no business to promulgate any opinion on covenants between countries and countries. It advises its membership to vote conscientiously in matters that concern the state, but it does not presume to speak for its membership on the issues involved.

Nevertheless, just two months later, Theodore Graeb-
ner in "Solving the Mexican Problem," stated:

The Lutheran position is that the church has no right to teach states the benefits of any scheme or principle of government: . . . the church has no commission to elevate nations in the scale of civilization. . . . If the church has preached repentance and faith to the individual sinner, her only true function, security of life and property, prosperity, and civilization have always followed as a by-product.

Yet in the same article he called the "Mexican Scheme" "religious and political heresy." 7

In 1920, when the Federal Council of Churches addressed a memorial to Congress requesting the Government to "throw its influence on the side of the final decision that the Turks be excluded from Europe," the Lutheran Witness proclaimed this a violation of Church and State. 8 The editor held this to be an "utter perversion of the Council. . . . The Church has no business meddling in international affairs. The Council is going beyond the command of its Master." 9 But the Lutheran Witness also considered this "an affront to Congress and the Churches alike, a piece of futile, amateurish business." 10

7/ Ibid., 73.
9/ Ibid., 168.
10/ Ibid., 168.
This position was maintained again in 1929 in reference to the Midwest Institute on International Relations. In this instance the church found nothing in the New Testament relative to international relations with which she could speak with authority.

In March, 1922, in "Shall the Church commend or oppose the Treaties now before the Senate?" the Lutheran Witness maintained that the action of the Church Peace Union, which had sent a circular letter to the clergy urging the local congregations "to send strong resolutions to their respective Senators," was an attempt to "employ the religious forces of the country for political purposes." The Lutheran Witness, could not "endorse the entrance of church-bodies into the field of politics, as when they pass on the merits of bills and treaties and urge legislation that is to be enacted or ratified." However in June 1922, the Lutheran Witness responded to the letter Mr. Bryan sent to President Harding "to adhere to the principles of Chris-

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12 Ibid., 185.

13 "Shall the Church commend or oppose the Treaties now before the Senate?" Lutheran Witness, XLI: 7 (March 28, 1922), 104. "The Church was not designed to be a political factor. . . . it cannot speak with authority beyond the Bible, and this excludes forms of government, the debate between the free traders and the protectionists, neither the champions of state rights nor those favoring a strong central government. It has nothing to say for or against the League."
tianity and thus be prompted to have our Government take part in the deliberations at Genoa." W. Arndt insisted that unless the president had received "a special revelation" Mr. Bryan "could not have appealed to the Scriptures in support of such a plea." 14

The attitude toward the League was equally negative. 15 In January 1920, the Lutheran Witness criticized the "seventeen thousand clergymen" who presented a "monster petition" to the United States Senate, which called for the ratification of the League Covenant. 16 In May of the same year, Theodore Graebner compared "the resolutions adopted by the [many churches] conferences demanding that Congress pass the League Covenant and the Peace Treaty without any reservations and interpretations" as "ridiculous" as the action of the "Council of Churches and the Turk." 17 He stated that the work of the Council in this instance was "an utter perversion of the very object for


which the church was established ... " Editor Graebner concluded that "such action merely shows that the Church knows neither its own business nor the business of anyone else." 

W. H. T. Dau, in a direct comment on international affairs, opined in 1925, that "in the event that the Pope should become the official arbitrator of the League, this would be the last requirement to make the Geneva Plunder bund a complete humbug." 20

The limited number of guarded statements against Wilson also reflect a fear of international involvement. In 1921 T. Graebner submitted a reprint from the Lutheran Companion which was a protest against H. R. 14658 "to punish the sending through mails any publication that stirs up racial or religious hatred." The article opposed it not only because it would "destroy criticism," but "suspected a catholic plot." But he also would have expected this sort of thing from "the old régime." 21 In 1923, W. H. T. Dau reminded his readers that during the war it took

18 Ibid., 168.
19 Ibid., 168.
Senator Knute Nelson and "ten prominent Lutherans to march to the Secretary of War's office to get permission to send commissioners to Europe," during World War I.\textsuperscript{22} He asked, "Why was such an earnest effort necessary to obtain from our Government a permission that should have been gladly granted?"\textsuperscript{23} This same theme is renewed in January, 1925, in a comment on the election of Vice-President Dawes.\textsuperscript{24} Professor Dau doubted if the Dawes plan was really helping Germany, and then stated:

Eight years ago we elected a man president because he kept us out of war, and then we were put into it. We would like to get out of the consequences of the international imbroglio, but it seems we are getting into it more deeply. Is it not a pity that a cause that was not at all any concern of America's has thus been settled on her ad infinitum, and that the work of the Lutheran Church, more than that of any other Church, is made to suffer from a political maneuver? Let us remember, too, that the complication began when Lutherans were preparing for the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation. If it was madness, there was method in it.\textsuperscript{25}

In spite of the doctrinal position on "church meddling" in international affairs, the journals expressed Lutheran prejudices toward other nations. The Lutheran


\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid.}, and A. M. Rehwinkel, "War or Peace, What Shall it Be?" \textit{Lutheran Witness}, LVIII: 8 (May 2, 1939), 53.

\textsuperscript{24}W. H. T. Dau, "Will History Repeat Itself?" \textit{Theological Monthly}, V: 1 (January 1925), 13.

\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, 13.
animosity toward the English and the French was expressed throughout the twenties. W. H. T. Dau severely criticized the French on two occasions. In 1923 in response to a pro-French article which viewed with alarm the rising birth rate and increased prosperity of Germany, the editor concluded: "Who are we to quarrel with the laws of nature and equity?" In 1925, in reference to "the Polanzation of the territories out of which the present Republic of Poland is being artificially built up," France received another stinging indictment.

Back of Poland stands France, which looks upon Poland as "her Eastern warrior" and bountifully aids and subsidizes this republic, which demonstrates ad oculos atque ad narces what it means to "make the world safe for democracy." Do you remember for how many billions this enlightened, liberty- and fair-play-loving nation of ours had to "go down into their jeans"--as the Government posters which we patriotically hung in our parlor windows put it--to save "beloved France from the terrible Huns?"

The Lutherans were equally bitter toward the English. Lutheran journals were offended that "the ever-domineering British propaganda seems to be lording it over most of our American School books." In 1923, G. Eifrig in the Lutheran School Journal, reminded his readers that our


28 F. R. Meyer, "Videant Consules, Ne Quid Res Publica Detrementi Capiat!", Lutheran School Journal, LVII: 1 (Jan-
"pro-British citizens are busy now," being aided by many, especially "by the newspapers, who are still consciously or unconsciously, carrying on British propaganda, which wrought such havoc with truth and civilization here and elsewhere during the late war."29 Thus the work of Mr. C. Hale Sipe was given high praise on several occasions because he "intended to demonstrate that the free institutions under which our Church has prospered, . . . are not of British derivation," and thus protested against "the extravagant claims of the New England historians."30

However, in 1923, in "Mr. Page in the Abbey," the Theological Monthly severely criticized the whole affair. Lutheran animosities toward the British were given full scope in a quote from the Chicago Tribune (April 14, 1923): "We think Mr. Page was an outstanding example of . . . ."

29G. Eifrig, "Why Not Put the Extract Given Below in the new United States School Histories?" Lutheran School Journal, LVIII: 2 (February, 1923), 56-57. Eifrig suggested that we include some British atrocities in our High School texts.

this perverted partisanism, and his tablet in Westminster should be a warning to those who select our ambassadors. 31

The statements toward Germany were guarded. Nevertheless the Lutheran journals apologized for her, sympathized with her, and hated her enemies. The journals urged the readers to be cautious about the press reports coming from Germany until 1938. 32 The fact that we strenuously objected to the proposed immigration bill in 1928 is significant. 33 However in 1934 the Lutheran Witness rejected the proposal that Lutherans in America would be pro-Hitler. 34


The Lutheran position toward disarmament conferences, pacifists, and neutrality was in no way vague. In this instance the Lutherans insisted that the secular government obey the voice of God in Scripture and the Confessions. The Lutheran journals were also opposed to the movements because they were "poor national policy" and "lacked common sense." In 1921, Theodore Graebner was very cautious. In answer to the question about war, "What will we do?" he suggested four positions. We will not become activists; we will pray; we will loyally support the government with taxes to supply armaments; and we will lean on God's benevolence by being good Christians.\textsuperscript{35} In November of 1921, in reference to the disarmament conference, Theodore Graebner declared: "It is the divine right of Kings as well as of republics to declare war on those who disturb the peace. This means there must be armaments and that a Nation is not ungodly simply because it prepared for the eventuality."\textsuperscript{36}

In 1924, while admitting that "a church paper should not take any notice of peace plans and pacifists, . . . because provisions for international peace are entirely of a political nature," Theodore Graebner felt constrained to lay down the "divine ordinance" concerning this issue.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{35}Theodore Graebner, "In View of War, What Shall we do?", Lutheran Witness, XL: 1 (January 4, 1921), 8 and 9.


\textsuperscript{37}Theodore Graebner, "Peace Plans and Pacifists," Lutheran Witness, XLIII: 3 (January 29, 1924), 44.
The editor of the *Lutheran Witness* was compelled to take a stand especially since "so many clergymen and religious editors are enthusiastic about it, who were former preachers of hate [who made] the last war a crusade, and are now too, religious radicals, inciting the citizens to active resistance against the powers that, by divine ordinance, have the right to declare war." 38 "The Lutheran Confessions," he maintained, establish "the principles for just wars, and all those who would prohibit this are prohibiting a work commanded of God and are uttering unchristian teachings, condemned by Scripture." 39

In 1927, Theodore Graebner severely criticized the "new Pacifism" expressed by Kirby Page, Sherwood Eddy and Dr. Fosdick. 40 He made three observations. First, this "Post-war psychosis, this disturbed mentality, the clerical type" were reminded that "one of their kind" in early 1918 at a noon-day service in a Cleveland factory concluded the service with a rousing chant, "Now all together, once more: To hell with the Kaiser." 41 Secondly the editor was disturbed because this "new pacifism" was a direct

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38 Ibid., 44.


41 Ibid., 430.
violation of the laws of our land, and would lead many citizens to the brink of treason. Thirdly, this activity was a serious blow to the church and to the ministry. Then he pointed out the error.

There is not a pacifist text in either the Old or New Testament. Nowhere is war condemned as itself sinful. John baptized soldiers ... and sent them on to continue their service with humane restraint. Jesus heals the Centurion's servant, praises his faith, and does not ask him to give up the glittering Roman sword that dangled from his belt.42

The Lutheran Witness maintained that the Federal Council of Churches, the World Alliance for Peace and "the like," were theologically in great error, "Laboring under a complete misunderstanding of what constitutes Christ's kingdom on earth."43

The Lutheran Witness, on January 10, 1928, printed a summary of General George B. Duncan's speech to a national defense convention in Omaha.44 The general was reported as being in opposition to preachers who were "trying to mix in politics" who condemned in "theory and practice compulsory military training in public schools, who were a menace to the Constitutional provision to provide for the common

42 Ibid., 431.
43 Ibid., 431.
44 "Pacifist Preachers Condemned," Lutheran Witness, XLVII: 1 (January 10, 1928), 13 (taken from the Omaha Bee News: December 16, 1927)
defense, who were teaching non-resistance."45

I like to think of a minister as a representative of God revealing truth, not voicing his own passing fancies, setting forth the latest fad or moral undertaking to undermine his country's right to protect itself, but as a human instrument for conveying divine grace and the Sacraments, as the authorized teacher of brotherly love and duty, never a propagandist of untried social and economic theories.46

The Theological Monthly, in August, 1928, endorsed the report of a committee of the Catholic Association for International Peace of February 17, which rejected pacifism and gave the scriptural claim for just wars by government.47

In 1930 M. S. Sommer took issue with a Protestant Episcopal bishop who announced that the display of our flag "is a dangerous fetish worship, which promotes thoughts of war among our school children" and that "it is impossible for a man to worship at both the altar of church and nationalism."48 M. S. Sommer insisted that giving to

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45Ibid., 13. "Too many ministers are trying to mix in politics to control legislation, insidiously trying to work themselves into matters of state, to turn their own ends the force of public opinion, and are becoming a menace to personal and public liberty."

46Ibid., 13.

47Theodore Engelder, "Pacifism, Just Wars, and War Lusts," Theological Monthly, VIII: 8 (August, 1928), 244.

48M. S. Sommer, "May the national flag be displayed in church and School," Lutheran Witness, XLIX: 11 (May 27, 1930), 181.
Caesar what is Caesar's requires good citizenship, and "this includes proper respect to the flag." 49

In the article, "The Lutheran Position on War," M. S. Sommer stated: "The Christian deplores war and the necessity for it, ... but since sin is in the world, and since God has instituted government that it should bear the sword for the defense of the law-abiding and for the punishment of the wicked, we must admit that the Christian may serve God and his neighbor by taking the sword which God bestows 'to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.'" 50 He continued:

There are just wars, in which the government must act as the minister of God, to whom God has given the sword, not merely to make threatening gestures, but to execute wrath upon them that do evil and to defend its citizens. And when that case (just wars) comes, Christians must come to the support of their country. 51

Thus in 1932, the Watchman Examiner was taken to task when it stated that "war and Christianity are incompatible." The Lutheran Witness declared that according to the Bible "God has appointed government to be an

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49 Ibid., and see also "Lutherans and War," Lutheran Witness, XLIX: 6 (March 18, 1930), 105. (reprint from Houston [Tex.] Post-Dispatch).

50 M. S. Sommer, "The Lutheran Position on War," Lutheran Witness, L: 6 (March 17, 1931), 98.

51 Ibid., 98, see also Theodore Engelhardt, "My country Right or Wrong," Lutheran Witness, XLIX: 20 (September 30, 1930), 325.
executioner, who is to strike with the sword." The Lutheran Witness listed four duties of Christian citizenship: a) We are to pray for peace; b) When we are involved in war, we must support our Government; c) It is our duty to fight for our country; d) It is our duty as Christians to fight when our government calls upon me to defend my country against unlawful aggressors. This position was maintained until 1939.

In 1934 in an article "Pacifism Bears Traitorous Fruit," M. S. Sommer condemns H. E. Fosdick in the Christian Century, the Epworth League and came to the conclusion that that kind of pacifism was both ridiculous and traitorous. In 1934, the Kansas District resolved:

We pledge ourselves wholeheartedly to support our country and to defend it, if need be, with our blood and lives in case of any war in a righteous cause in which our country might become involved.

In 1934, Herman Bielenberg stated that,

It is a Christian's duty to engage in war when his


53 M. S. Sommer, "War and the Christian," 72.

54 M. S. Sommer, "Pacifism Bears Traitorous Fruit," Lutheran Witness, LIII: 18 (August 28, 1934), 304.

government requires it. To refuse military service is to disobey God's will. Unqualified submission to the laws of the land, as well as those made for war, is not inconsistent to the will of God, unless such laws or demands be contrary to Scripture.\(^5\)

Thus on August 10, 1937, Theodore Graebner took the Augustana Lutheran Synod to task when it voted to petition Congress to submit an amendment to the Constitution of the United States, by which Congress, except in the event of an invasion of the United States, could not declare war unless approved by a majority of all votes cast in a nation wide referendum.\(^5\) Graebner challenged the Synod on three points. a) He doubted if the "general mass of citizens can cast an intelligent ballot to settle questions that arise between the government of the United States and the government of another country." b) "A vote by a church

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\(^5\)Herman Bielenberg, "May a Christian consciously engage in War?", Lutheran Witness, LIII: 9 (April 24, 1934), 158.

\(^5\)Theodore G. Graebner, "Swedish Synod asks War Amendment," Lutheran Witness, LVI: 16 (August 10, 1937), 263. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was not in fellowship with the Augustana Synod. In fact Missourians were affiliated with only three other synods; the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod, the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. These three together with Missouri Synod were federated under the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, originally formed in 1872. Besides pulpit and altar fellowship, joint efforts in charity work, missions and education were undertaken. By Missouri Synod standards, most other Lutheran bodies, lacked doctrinal purity, or deviated from the confessional norm in church practice.
body demanding the passage of such a bill is surely mixing church and state." c) This kind of activity should be done by individual Swedish Lutherans on their own initiative, and the "prestige of a large church body should not be employed to bring about certain legislation purely in the field of civil law." 58

In February, 1938, the editor of the Lutheran Witness heartily endorsed the action of Congress in rejecting the Ludlow Bill. 59 In answer to Rev. O. W. Linnemeier, who took the editor of the Witness to task for making these statements as a violation of church and state, and for reasons of the editorial stance, Theodore Graebner replied,

Our main grievance was not with the well-intentioned people who think that by a referendum they can defeat the formentors of war, but with the churches which permitted themselves to become intangled in political issues. 60

But the real reason for the editorial stance had been given in January, 1938, in an editorial, "The President is

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58 Ibid., 263.

59 Theodore Graebner, "Propaganda and Pacifism," Lutheran Witness, LVII: 3 (February 8, 1938), 36. The Ludlow Bill, or the War Referendum, was first introduced in 1935, as an Amendment to the Constitution, to provide a national referendum on a declaration of war, except in the instance of an attack. On January 10, 1930 H. Res. 165 failed to be discharged from the Committee on Rules, by a vote of 209-188. See: U. S. Congressional Record, 75th Cong., 3rd Sess., 1938, LXXXIII part 1, 288.

60 Theodore Graebner, "Propaganda and Pacifism", p. 36.
right." Here the editor doubted "the wisdom of the measure," reasserted his position about the inability of the "general mass of citizens" to cast an intelligent ballot on such questions.61 Theodore Graebner felt that "an analysis of this legislation marks it as pacifism gone wild and irresponsible." He agreed with Secretary of State Stimson, who was "terribly opposed" to the bill.62 The editor in this instance justified his statements because "of the nationwide propaganda fostered by pacifist groups."63 He concluded,

It is a pity that the churches cannot show at least some common sense when they yield to the urge of going into secular politics. The support of the churches recorded from this hair brained proposal has not raised the estimate of the church in the eyes of the intelligent unchurched and that is a pity.64 However, in May, 1939, A. M. Rehwinkel in a rather stirring and emotionally based article, urged:

Now is the time to speak, to resolve to make solemn pronouncements, to denounce war and pray for peace, and not when the storm is over and our civilization has been swept away.65

62 Ibid., 5.
63 Ibid., 5.
64 Ibid., 5.
65 A. M. Rehwinkel, "War or Peace, What shall it Be?", Lutheran Witness, LVIII: 9 (May 2, 1939), 153.
Professor Rehwinkel insisted that the Lutheran Witness had not "gone pacifist."

This is not merely a political question. It has nothing to do with pacifism. This is a question which concerns the future of our church; it concerns the life of every Christian in this country. If it is wicked and blasphemous to ask God to give us daily bread while refusing the God-given means to secure it, by what mold of reasoning can we argue that it is right and God-pleasing to pray for peace and yet refuse to employ every lawful means to preserve peace.66

But by October, 1939, the journals returned to their traditional policy. In "The Christian and Government in Time of War," the Lutheran Witness took the position that if the government is maintaining law and order, is able to sustain itself as a power through taxation, then it is the Government according to Romans 13, and "so far as the church is concerned that settles it."67 In the case of individual doubt, "follow Luther's example, give the government the benefit of the doubt, and be assured that he may die a Christian death on the field of battle."68

On the same page, in "The Christian as a Neutral," Theodore Graebner reminded his readers that "to commit unneutral acts... is a damnable sin." "The Church will not define this relation of neutrality. Everyone, you can

66Ibid., 154.


68Ibid., 339.
use every legal means to have Congress define neutrality ... But unless you can show from Scripture that God Himself has defined political neutrality for us, you cannot permit the church as such to guide you in this matter ... ."  

He insisted that this "is a matter which God has left to human reason to define, and when the majority has spoken, that settles it, and until the government has changed its decision, that is God's decision for you to abide by." He agreed that "there are tremendous moral issues involved" but did not want the church to go the "way of Reformed sects and the Roman Church."  

Two weeks later the readers were warned against "war preacher," and the Lutheran Witness urged the readers: "Let us keep our eyes open for this kind of propaganda." The Lutheran journals seemingly were adhering strictly to the policy of the Administration. The two themes were obedience and strict neutrality.  

In November, the Lutheran School Journal reminded its readers of the results of the emotionalism and hatred which

70 Ibid., 340.  
71 Ibid., 340.  
72 Theodor Gaebner, "War Preachers are at it again," Lutheran Witness, L VIII: 21 (October 17, 1939), 357.
affected some of our communities in 1917. To avoid a "repetition of these experiences," teachers were urged to preserve a calm and balanced judgment. They were also urged to "carefully guard against all utterance and actions which betray emotionalism, bias, and lack of open-mindedness and balanced judgment."

However, by 1940, the journals were anticipating the war. In February, M. S. Sommer stated: "We must concede that there may be just wars." And it is for the government to decide when it is to go to war. "It is right and God-pleasing that the government have a good army and a good navy in order to protect its citizens." In April, the same editor noted that certain "Mennonites, Quakers and others, condemn all war, even a defensive war." He re-

74 Ibid., 98.
75 Ibid., 99.
76 M. S. Sommer, "May there be just Wars?" Lutheran Witness, LIX: 3 (February 6, 1940), 39. In spite of vigorous opposition to sentiments of that nature in "Preaching the Gospel of Naval Expansion," by Theodore Engelde in Concordia Theological Monthly, IX: 6 (June, 1938), 163-164. M. S. Sommer, "The Church and Politics," Lutheran Witness, XXXIX: 7 (March 30, 1920), 103. A blast at the Methodist Conference at Grenville which adopted a resolution against the introduction of universal military training. "It is not for the Church to advise the government upon the measure of universal military training." (103)
minded his readers, "A Lutheran does not condemn all war." If an individual is "fully convinced that the cause is wrong, he will suffer persecution and a prison sentence rather than go against his conscience."\(^7\)

By October, 1940, Lutheran patriotism was not to be questioned. In reference to the "Conscription Law," Theodore Graebner stated:

But now that the law has been passed, there is only one attitude which Christians can take. They do not question the right of government to wage war; they cannot question the right to prepare for war and to draft the physical and man-power of the country for national defense. When called upon to serve as officers of registrants and inducting the selected ones into military service. Nor will any Lutheran, if he knows his Church's teaching regarding the authority of Government, plead "religious scruples" when he is called to serve in Army or Navy or in the aviation force.\(^7\)

In November, 1940, under the caption, "What's the News" the Lutheran Witness reported:

Registration for the draft was an all-Lutheran affair during the noon hour in Valley Home, California. Seven of our pastors and two Christian day school teachers registered together. All members of the Registration Board, too, were Lutherans.\(^8\)

The following observations seem warranted. In spite of the doctrine of the Separation of Church and State and the emphasis on the totally secular aspect of the state,

\(^7\)Ibid., 148


\(^8\)"What's the News," Lutheran Witness, LIX: 23 (November 12, 1940), 386.
Lutheran journals preached National defense on the basis of the Confessions and national prudence. Lutherans tended to agree with the general isolation policies of our nations during the period 1920-1940. Lutheran journals discredited the concept of the League of Nations as part of the "crusade". Two of the chief contributing factors to Lutheran isolation sentiments were closely related to the fear of the Reformed groups and the Catholic Church. It is significant to note that the Lutherans found nothing in Scripture about international relations save the right of governments to carry on just wars and the necessary obedience of citizens to that same end. It seems apparent that Lutherans were very much concerned about keeping in line with national policy, especially in the late 1930's. Two factors could be considered: first, the Lutherans did not want the anti-German-Lutheran campaign revived again, and secondly, Lutherans tended to emphasize the obedience concept toward government in just wars.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Throughout the period 1920-1940, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod steadfastly adhered to the doctrine of the separation of Church and state, as declared in the 16th century Confessional Symbols.

The emphasis on the secular State and the spiritual Church, the almost extreme position of separation in the early 1920's was never rejected by Lutheran literature. That this emphasis was in part a measure of defense to protect the privileges and institutions of the Lutheran Church cannot be denied. That the Lutheran Church was trying to keep other church bodies from gaining political power is equally true. That the Lutherans were fighting for the Constitutional principle of freedom in religion in the School Fights is beyond question.

However, the struggle against the extension of the federal government in public education, under the rubrics of the doctrine of Church and State, and religious freedom was a rather extended application of the doctrine. That Lutherans were fighting for decentralization and were opposed to the principle of governmental intervention seems more in harmony with the literature of the period.

The protests against Bible-reading in public schools, in defense of the Constitutional principle of the separation of church and state had its origin in four sources. Aside
from the fact that this position was a natural outgrowth of the secularization emphasis, Lutheran orthodoxy could not tolerate the exposition of Scriptures in public schools, under symbols other than the Lutheran Confessions. The overwhelming passion for pure doctrine had its natural recourse in the anti-Bible-reading protests of the Lutheran Church. Lutheranism was also experiencing an unusual reaction to Calvinism. A fourth factor enters in. Many of the articles relative to the anti-Bible-reading campaign reminded the readers, that "there was just no way out"; Lutherans had to continue their Lutheran Schools.

The secularization emphasis and the extreme position of separation by the late 1920's was an untenable position. To adhere to a position that public institutions were to lead to "civic righteousness" without the influences of the Church was simply a contradiction. This became increasingly evident to the Lutherans during the late 1920's and throughout the 1930's. The gradual drift from the 19th century Protestant ethic, toward the new movements in the arts, the labor movement, the New Deal, and the emphasis away from individualism to the realities of social interaction were condemned by Lutheran literature as an "away-from-God-movement," pagan mammon worship, and a dangerous movement away from sound fundamental American principles.

That Lutheranism condemned the new arts, and urged and committed the Church to protest and take action is indicative of this position. That Lutheran literature
felt constrained to protest against the abolition of capital punishment on the basis of church doctrine and national welfare points to the same conclusion. That the Lutheran church vigorously opposed the legalization of mailing birth-control information and protested against this whole movement, not only for reasons of morality, and in clear contravention of her separation principle, points to the same conclusion. And the fact that Lutherans were advised to ignore the morality issue in legislation, and expected the government to uphold the traditional Christian ideals in public education re-enforces this conclusion.

As the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod reacted to the various movements in American life, she tended to apply the doctrine of the separation of Church and State to the exigencies of the times. However, the strict adherence to the literal statements of the 16th century Confessional Symbols presented serious problems for the Lutheran Church in a 20th century Democracy.

The development of the new emphasis in the 1930's, namely, the role of the church as the conscience of the nation, and the implications in the stewardship of the citizen-sovereign, not only demonstrate the efforts of the church to adapt to her environment, but clearly points to another conclusion.

The coincidence of the development of this new em-
phasis and the emergence of the New Deal cannot be overlooked. In light of this observation, the seemingly erratic pattern of the application of the doctrine of the separation of Church and State takes on new significance. In fact, the application of the doctrine of Church and state tend to accentuate Lutheran political views.

The Lutheran Church tended to become involved in the political life of the nation, and the Lutheran literature called her readers to action, to the degree that Lutheranism sensed danger to her cherished institutions and conservative ideals. This becomes especially evident in the difference between the rather casual call to "do your duty as subjects," in the 1920's under Republican leadership, and the new call to both the church as an institution and to its members as sovereigns under the Democratic leadership after 1932.

The political views of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1920-1940 were conservative. Missouri Lutheranism, politically speaking, was 19th century Americanism. Lutheran literature upheld individualism, limited government, laissez faire, and isolationism.

Lutheran literature protested against social planning, the increased powers of the federal government, welfare planning, and viewed the new role of the federal government in the 1930's as a departure from good Americanism.
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