

Unity and Realignment, Part 2

1917 400th anniversary on 95 theses

Norwegian Lutherans

Norwegian merger of **1890** formed The **United Norwegian Lutheran Church in America**. It consisted of the **Conference, The Norwegian Augustana Synod, and the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood**.

Norwegian Synod(1853) refused over election/conversion. **The United Church** didn't join. **Hauge Synod** declined over the role of laity

Lutheran Free Church split from the **United Church** in 1897, over total congregational autonomy and a certain ministerial education. **Lutheran Brethren** formed in 1900 for the truly "converted"

1905 stalled any mergers due to election and conversion questions

1912 "Settlement" (*Opgjoer*) concerning the two forms of election was approved in 1913

Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, 1917

92% of Norwegian Lutherans joined; Traditional Lutheran stance on inerrancy, church relations, **p.372**. The Haugean synod was assured the constitution didn't forbid laymen's rights.

The tiny **Eilsen Synod** declined; **Lutheran Brethren** refused; **Lutheran Free Church** also said no.

In 1918 a small group of 13 pastors formed the **Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church**. They joined the Synodical Conference in 1920

East Coast Lutherans

In the 1880s the General Synod, General Council, and United Synod, South cooperated in the compilation and publication of the Common Service and in 1917 a common hymnal.

--The split off of the General Council from the liberal General Synod occurred in 1867

--General Synod did not subscribe to the Formula of Concord(1577), but only the Augsburg Confession.

They considered the Formula an exaggerated Lutheranism trying to suppress Melancthon's influence and fostering strife instead of unity.

1907 General Council pastor Henry E. Jacobs pushed that the Bible IS the Word of God, and the Augsburg Confession and an acknowledgement of the other confessional books. The General Synod conceded to put that in the General Synod's constitution.

But differences remained, **See p.375 Nelson**

1918 the United Lutheran Church in America was a merger of General Synod, General Council, and United Synod, South. They all had the same confessional basis, at least on paper.

--**Augustana Synod** (which had belonged to the General Council) pulled out at the last minute

See p.376 Nelson for ULCA Constitution etc.

The choice of Frederick H. Knobel (General Synod) as President, instead of Theodore Schmauk (General Council) led the ULCA down a liberal path.

Midwest Lutherans

Were divided between 1. **Synodical Conference** and 2. **Iowa Synod/Joint Synod of Ohio and others**

Missouri claimed to have the unvarnished truth, **p.377-378 Nelson**

Between 1903-1906 five large intersynodical conferences were held, but with no agreements

The Joint Synod was reorganized between 1917-1919, from a loose federation of four synods

(**Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Nebraska**) with advisory function to eight territorial districts.

Wisconsin's Seminary at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. John P. Koehler thought that dogmatical formulations were making real exegetical and historical research impossible, so they sought to avoid them and were suspicious of any theological tradition. The **Wauwatosa Theology** was condemned, and the professors were suspended.

Modern Liberal Theology

In 1900 most Lutherans held to verbal inspiration and inerrancy. Evolution was rejected.

Modern liberal theologians began to speak of a development in doctrine. Christian self-consciousness or collective Christian experience used as a source of theology. German infidelity to the Christian faith was seen to be the source of higher criticism. **Social Gospel, social awareness** only made inroads in the General Synod. **Ecumenical Endeavors** - General Synod with the Federal Council of Churches

World War I (July 1914 - November 1918)

{Chapter 17} The work of the **Joint Lutheran Committee on Celebration of the Quadricentennial** (formed in 1909) had its first meeting in 1914. It caused a lot of interaction among the East Coast Lutherans. The Reformation was to be a conscious witness against “false Protestants” and an aggressive Catholicism. Between 1914-1917 most Lutherans were predictably pro-German

The Good Friday (April 6, 1917) declaration of war with Germany shook Lutheranism to its roots. It forced Reformation (Oct 31, 1917) celebrations to be focused on spiritual aspects.

“German” Lutherans suffered the most between April 1917 and 1919.

The response to the war effort moved from less critical to prayers for American victory

Formation of YMCA, Federal Council of Churches

The National Lutheran Commission for Soldiers’ and Sailors’ Welfare

National Lutheran Council – in July/Aug 1918 the NLC sought relationships with Lutherans not in fellowship. Desperate physical needs of those in Europe pressed for action. Wartime need had forced Lutherans to cooperate in work which they had previously assumed required office mutual recognition.

The National Lutheran Council held **Conferences between 1919-1920**,

Hans G. Stub (Norwegian Synod) wrote **Chicago Theses-1919** –of which Missouri approved.

Frederick Knubel (ULCA) presented, **“The Essentials of a Catholic Spirit”**

Henry E. Jacobs (Ohio) on **“Constructive Lutheranism.”** The ULCA was ready for uniting, but the Norwegians and Midwesterners were not.

In 1920, Knubel and Jacobs presented a revised paper with eight essential doctrinal points as a “basis for practical cooperation among the Protestant Churches.” (See Nelson p.409)

The ULCA adopted **“Washington Declaration of Principles” (1920)** --which Synodical Conference rejected. Midwesterners severely criticized it and charged it with unionism. They said real Lutherans would be completely separate from non-Lutherans.

Between 1919-1920 the National Lutheran Council endorsed an international conference. It was held in Eisenach, Germany in 1923 to build friendships among Lutherans. It formed the **Lutheran World Convention**. Under the direction of John A. Morehead the two organizations were intertwined.

The Twenties

{Chapter 18} **The dissolution of society** affected the church greatly. The breakdown of religious sanctions, declining authority of the family, new methods/ideas

Economic practices: usuary, Life insurance (Moving Frontiers, p.347), fire insurance (p.348), stockholding in banks, lightning rods, Pensions for workers(Not until 1937), etc.

Women voted, demanded equal rights, used cosmetics, began to smoke, wore shorter dresses, drank in public, and competed in business with men as never before. Women Teachers not in classrooms till the 1930s and 1940s. Synod opposed women’s suffrage on Biblical grounds

Social: Dancing renounced as merely indecent wriggle, Theater going decried. (p.350-351) Automobile was a tool of Satan, high cost and Sunday “spins”

Science became the great judge of all things including religion

WW1 forced a greater use of English language(Seminaries, Home Missions, Preaching) as well as in the home, which made it harder to maintain cultural isolation

--Lutheran were hesitant to speak of ethical rules.

-Extensive parochial/church school system, public schools, laws, state subsidy, etc.

-Labor Issue, Public relations, Political Quietism

-Urban influences (from having been a mostly rural church)

YMCA, Pope as Antichrist, Christian Science

Mixed Marriages (with members of other church bodies)

Youth Work (Missouri Synod was reluctant in 1917)

Sunday Schools (p.367) in disfavor until 19th Century

Absolute separation of church and state were defended

Cooperation in Chaplaincy

Opposition to False churches (Christian Science, Billy Sunday and methods)

Opposition to Lodgery and Masonry

But by 1920 Missouri now permitted many of these practices.