

THE FEDERATION FOR AUTHENTIC LUTHERANISM: A LAYMAN'S VIEWPOINT

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## The Federation for Authentic Lutheranism: A Layman's Viewpoint

The Federation for Authentic Lutheranism is often summarized as a small church body which acted as a type of halfway house for a handful of former Missouri Synod congregations, forming in 1971 and disbanding in 1975. Obviously, what transpired during those four years (and before) cannot be that easily condensed. I do feel that now, five years after dissolving, FAL can be critically examined more objectively and with more perspective. To arrive at a clear understanding of what transpired I felt it necessary to rely on individuals who were "in the midst of the forest" of FAL.

As my title would indicate, I have chosen to concentrate on the unique perspective of a layman, one Lawrence Marquardt of Libertyville, Illinois. Permit me to summarize his qualifications as an authority on FAL. Mr. Marquardt is a member of St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church, Libertyville, Illinois, a former FAL congregation. His occupation is that of owner/president of Marquardt Buick, Inc., Barrington, Illinois. During FAL's existence he served on its Board of Directors as the vice-chairman, the highest position that could be held by a layman. In his position on the Board of Directors he made many personal trips with his pastor, Rev. Robert James Voss, to the home and world missions of FAL. He was formerly a member of the Board of Control of Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Illinois, being elected in 1967 and reelected in 1971. As an active, concerned layman he attended the pertinent biennial conventions of the LCMS. He was a member of the United Planning Council and contributed numerous articles to FAL's official publication, Sola Scriptura.

Moreover, he told this writer that at one time he had accumulated seven full file cabinets worth of material on FAL, having saved everything in the event of possible lawsuits. This material he subsequently pared down

to still a rather sizeable pile on FAL, fully documenting its history with photographs, personal correspondence, board minutes, mission board reports, etc., in addition to the pertinent articles in the Christian News, Sola Scriptura, and the Northwestern Lutheran. Also, by way of interest, at the 1979 WELS convention, Mr. Marquardt's name appeared on the ballot for election to the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Board of Control. However, he was defeated by the incumbent, Mr. Franklin Woldt.

I have chosen to present FAL's history, its difficulties, and its problems, by incorporating Mr. Marquardt's own description. This was done by means of a taped interview. I had intended to use this tape merely as background material, but it proved so interesting and enlightening that I've incorporated much of it. The transcript of his capsulization of FAL serves as the skeleton of my paper. By filling in with further details, illustrations, and observations, I hope to present a faithful portrayal of FAL. You will also notice that I chose to go in depth on the pre-Constituting Convention years - the reasons why FAL came into existence in the first place. Mr. Marquardt's observations will be recognizable by their indentation and closer spacing.

To arrive at a full understanding of why FAL came into existence, it's important to recapture the feelings of the conservative people who remained with Missouri after WELS severed fellowship. Larry Marquardt wrote the following in Sola Scriptura:

In 1965 my family and I came within a hair's breadth of severing our ties with the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod because of its continued drift away from Scripture. Our individual witness against the errors had seemingly fallen on apathetic ears. Friends urged us to stay, at least until the '67 New York Convention, and so we stayed. Hopes were high for turning the course of Missouri back to orthodoxy as the New York Convention closed. Many known conservative, confessional pastors, teachers, and laymen had been elected to positions of influence. I found myself a member of the Board of Control of CTC, River Forest. I prayed that the Lord of the church would use me as an instrument for the good of His kingdom...Much to my surprise, I found that at River Forest there was little or no desire to uphold standards (especially theological) and to deal squarely with the issues. I discovered how, for the sake of harmony, error was politely overlooked. The trend to rationalize inaction in theological matters had almost become a way of life.

With this, I now begin Mr. Marquardt's own verbal recounting.

In the mid '60's, after the WELS break, there were several different movements of conservatives...which produced a position paper holding to a correct Biblical position over against the erring liberalism of Missouri. Then there became several smaller groups in different parts of the country, concerned people - pastors, laymen - operating in different sections. The masterminding group that was literally a kind of cloak and dagger umbrella over this was the United Planning Council. In the U.P.C. you had such people involved as the Preuses, some prominent LCMS pastors and LCMS officials and a host of probably about 20 people. I happened to be one of them. It was this U.P.C., an umbrella group, that controlled and coordinated the efforts of all the various conservative groups attempting - by electing conservative people to office - to regain control over the liberals and ultimately disciplining liberals and correcting the situation.

This was the group in which Sola Scriptura began. For several years there were periodic discussions on the feasibility of starting

<sup>1</sup> Sola Scriptura, Nov. - Dec., 1971, p. 10.

a conservative theological journal that possibly could act as a uniting force and as a source of encouragement for those attempting to uphold a confessional position. Thus, in January, 1970, at the Embassy Motel near O'Hare Field, Chicago, the U.P.C. agreed to publish Sola Scriptura. It went out as a witness to Missouri with this end note:

To Our Readers: This issue of Sola Scriptura is being sent to every pastor of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at the expense of the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. We request that those LCMS pastors who receive two copies of Sola Scriptura because they are subscribers share a copy with someone else.

It became apparent in 1969 that the movement was a failure, at least in some people's eyes. Preus had been handpicked as a candidate, although there was much dissention. Many people favored Weber (Michigan District President) as a more stable individual theologically. Preus was always concerned with the political. The decision was to put Preus up as the nominee because he was better known. At that time he was the President of Springfield Sem. and more widely known in the church circles. With that he became the candidate.

The way it happened was the conservatives from different parts of the country coordinated their efforts under the U.P.C. to gain elective information for the delegates, attempting to depict the difference between the right position and the wrong position. About that time a little paper called "Balance" which has grown into "Affirm" was born in J.A.O. Preus's living room with me being present. Preus has since denied this. It's another one of those inconsistencies. Preus is a very political person.

At the 1969 convention in Denver, Colorado, we had had a large headquarters there of conservatives that coordinated and met with the different delegates at night; briefed them on what the issues were coming up the next day, how they should vote. Some of the wording was very brief - less than forthright. A typical resolution would sound good on the surface, but "what-would-the-end-result-be?" type of thing. What would it allow to happen? It attempted to give an

awareness of this to the different issues; how they'd be brought up and who'd be bringing them up, and from which side; so they had a better understanding.

...The convention broke for noon recess. I met with (J.A.O.) Preus, Glenn Peglau (an attorney), Robert Preus. Looking back we were constantly trying to keep Preus together, "Now this is what you should say." "This is the right thing to say," and I can remember the conversation going...finish your statement, "If elected I cannot live with ALC fellowship." If ALC fellowship went through, that meant that they had thrown away any biblical principles, altar/pulpit fellowship. Preus got up on the podium after lunch and finished, "... If you people vote on ALC fellowship, if you vote that through I can live with it." He reversed himself. And when he came down off the podium I said, "Why did you do that?!" He said, "I wanted the job." So we knew that the Missouri chances of internally correcting itself were finished.

This key moment in the history of FAL and the LCMS was recorded in the following way in a subsequent editorial of Sola Scriptura:

...The chances of putting the theological liberals to flight were very bright. Within the Missouri Synod, Authentic Lutheranism could have had a new day, had not the movement been scuttled by the foolish tactics and puerile political maneuverings of one man - the man whom conservatives had hopefully placed into the office of the Synod's presidency at Denver in 1969.

A few weeks prior to his election as LCMS President in Denver, 1969, St. Paul's church had invited Dr. Jacob A. Preus to address a mass gathering of seriously concerned California Lutherans in its sanctuary on the Synod's proposed fellowship with the ALC. Publicly he declared himself opposed to it as unScriptural. In the sacristy of St. Paul's he affixed his signature to a document solemnly signed by one thousand other troubled ministers of the Synod called "Protest to the President's Proposal Favoring ALC Fellowship" which states that "for conscience and doctrinal reasons" the proposed Fellowship must be rejected.

But when only two weeks later he told the Denver convention that if elected its president "he could live with it," and shortly after proceeded to implement the same, repudiate the Christian News and silence the united voice of conservatives who labored and prayed so intensely for his election - the pastors and people of FAL congregations knew themselves and their holy cause to be betrayed. Their beloved Synod which they had long supported and valued as well as its chief administrator whom they had hopefully elected into office had become heterodox.

Permit me also to quote the following from an unsigned paper entitled, "Faithful to His Word." It, too, presents in forceful language the fervor of the times for those (of FAL) in statu confessionis:

During these past years the leaven has continued to grow also within the Missouri Synod. In declaring fellowship with the ALC in 1969 it has clearly shown the course it has chosen to follow - one of liberalism and unfaithfulness to the Word, one of ecumenism and social action, one which can lead to future erosion of the faith and beliefs of those who are in its midst. The classrooms of its seminaries and teachers' colleges are filled with many instructors who do not believe in the Verbal Inspiration of Scripture - and this does not hold out much hope that things will improve in the future, as what it is taught in the classrooms will be reflected in what is preached from the pulpits. Certainly we know there are many in her midst who are upset and concerned - but who believe it is their God-given duty to stay and fight. We remind all such that the greatest testimony that can be given for the truth is that which God enjoins in Romans 16:17 - separation from error.

With that conservatives held a rally in Chicago, Illinois. I had been made chairman of a steering committee with pastors coming from all over the United States. Just before the convention we had 1000 signatures of pastors or congregations going on record that if ALC fellowship went through they would withdraw from the LCMS. We had 1000! We had all the names... We had file boxes... We had address-o-graph machines... We produced all kinds of material. My wife and I would put out 30,000 pieces of literature on a Sunday afternoon with two address-o-graphs set up in our living room.

But it was all a study in futility... So just before the Labor Day meeting in '69, I met with Preus down at the Conrad-Hilton in Chicago. Preus told us to have Christian News shut down, to close down the conservative movement. (Preus said to the effect) "I've got it all handled. We'll use the LUTHERAN WITNESS-REPORTER to correct anything. And if you don't I will have to go after you people!!" So here is the guy that we put into office now turning on us. He said that if at the Labor Day meeting you pass any resolution criticizing ALC fellowship or my office or anything else,

I will use every means possible to discipline and put you out of business.

Dr. Preus's comments and actions are likewise recorded in an editorial of Sola Scriptura, from which I quoted earlier.

The following picks up this tragic story concerning Dr. J.A.O.

Preus:

History will record - it was his enigmatic snubbing of the distinguished post-Denver 1969 Labor Day assembly of outstanding conservative clergymen in Chicago - it was his adamant refusal to let them organize for the continued struggle against Missouri's mushrooming liberalism - it was his strange insistence that conservatives "cool it," forget the controversy and "get down to business" - it was his perfidious consent to a unanimously conciliatory repudiation of the Christian News - it was his utterly unLutheran advocacy of a no-polarization policy, something authentic Lutherans could not adopt with relation to Christian truth over against obvious error - it was his inexplicable failure to move against the unScriptural fellowship Missouri had entered with the ALC and LCUSA - and last but not least, it was his two or more years of vacillation when according to his own admission he "was speaking out of both sides of my mouth" - yes, it was all this that blasted the momentum Authentic Lutheranism had gained within the Synod.

Certainly these are harsh words of criticism. A Missouri Synod man might argue that I am quoting only the PAL side and slighting the Missouri position. History, however, has shown that the LCMS has no factual, acceptable, Scriptural rebuttal.

The question was before the conservative group, "What to do?" The time is late 1969 immediately after this infamous Labor Day meeting with Pres. Preus.

So with that (here I'd chaired this meeting) all these people from different parts of the country come in - Rev. Alvin Wagner was there from St. Paul's First, North Hollywood, and several people wanted to pass resolutions condemning ALC fellowship and on and on. We held them off on that but I could see it was a step in futility. The synod was gone. There was nothing left. There was no chance

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 15.



of doing anything. So we met afterwards informally, many of us had been in a position of control of the conservative movement. And so, "We have to leave, there is no other way to do it."

So that October we drove up to...it was Rev. A.O. Gebauer, Rev. Robert James Voss, Dick Hannenberg (prof. at U.W.) and myself...the four of us drove up to Mankato, Minn., to meet with the ELS. We had had many contacts over a period of time. To sit down with them and ask, "What should we do? Should we join you or the Wisconsin Synod? Should we attempt to take those 1000 congregations out?" You've got a perspective on this thing,...we're in the middle of the forest. "What should we do?" Well, they encouraged us to try and form another church body with the rationale that if you don't succeed, you can always join us or the WELS. They felt we had a moral obligation to attempt to encourage these others to leave.

About the same time Sola Scriptura was first started in a U.P.C. meeting which was still going on after the Denver Convention. What on earth to do? The strategy...we looked around...we figured out that we would put in Walter Maier as a replacement for Preus. We made some plans, but there wasn't any excitement or momentum left in the organization. Sola Scriptura became more of an independent thing, an end to itself.

There were two main bodies of conservatives at that time that formed into associations. One was the Free Association for Authentic Lutherans. I was at that meeting. It was at St. Paul's, Brookfield, Rev. Walter Otten's church. (I had submitted fifteen other names... true conservatives never agree on anything.) So it's FAAL. On the West Coast the conservatives out there attempted to band together under a similar name, and to find who was with them. They formed CAL, Californians for Authentic Lutherans. So then, of course, we had a joint meeting. The name they came up with was FAL out of the CAL and FAAL.

From there the basic strategy was that it appeared to us Missouri was through. We should put up all the structures together; and we should at least try to see if these 1000 pastors and congregations really wanted to leave and be a biblical church. We had also met with WELS. They encouraged us...they said essentially the same thing. We had had some individual contacts and very informal. I had

tried to get Pres. Naumann to speak at the '69 convention. He said, "I won't do that," and he wouldn't give me any answer. Later on after the convention I said, "Why wouldn't you speak?" He said, "I couldn't have said anything good about Missouri." I said, "That's what I wanted you to say!"...But he encouraged us.

So then we sat down as this FAL group and we went through basic things, constitution...We produced the blue tract, the red tract... We made assignments and had people write on different things where we knew Missouri was in error - chaplaincy, scouting, right-to-life issues, and so on, right down the line - good confessional statements.

Thus FAL was becoming a definite reality. Sola Scriptura articles and editorials continued to blast Missouri's clear errors and liberal mindedness.

These red and blue tracts were a further attempt to get FAL's position to the LCMS clergy and laity. The red tract set forth the "position papers" referred to earlier. With God's Word as the sole authority FAL presented its stand on the church, prayer fellowship, social action, abortion and euthanasia, woman suffrage and ordination, chaplaincy, and scouting. The blue tract was FAL's self-summation of their proposed future. Roughly they set forth FAL in three parts. A HOPE..."the hope of drawing together all those who cherish the historical theological heritage possessed and proclaimed by Confessional Lutheranism." A PLAN..."FAL is serving troubled Lutheran congregations and individuals both those who for conscience sake are withdrawing their membership from synod and declaring themselves independent, and those who are contemplating such a step by declaring themselves in the confessional state (in statu confessionis)."

A FELLOWSHIP..."FAL seeks to share with those of like spirit under God's Word its dedicated purpose to preserve and promote the priceless theological heritage which the LCMS formerly held."

The identical issues presented in these tracts later are cited by the individual LCMS congregations in their formal letters of withdrawal from the Missouri Synod. They are cited on the back side of the tract.

WHY FAIL? Conscience dictates a divorce from the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod because:

- 1 - FELLOWSHIP WITH THE ALC CONTINUES although there never has been, or is there now, agreement in doctrine and practice.
- 2 - LC-MS MEMBERSHIP IN THE LUTHERAN COUNCIL IN THE U.S.A. IS PERPETUATED with accelerated involvement in false doctrinal, social, and ecumenical pronouncements.
- 3 - REFUSAL TO DISCIPLINE those within the Synod who have publicly departed from the Scripture-based doctrinal position of the LC-MS.

We had meetings and hashed them through and reached agreement among ourselves as to the wording of statements. (As cited above.) Then with that we met with the WELS doctrinal commission. In so many words we said, this is where we stand, this is what we believe. The meeting went extremely smooth and fellowship was declared. There was no question. We were in doctrinal agreement. They felt, too, that we had an obligation to attempt to establish a church body.

So now here we hadn't really totally broken from Missouri - we were in a state of confession - we were not practicing communion fellowship or financial support of any kind. For all practical purposes we had broken. The only reason we stayed in a limbo position was an attempt to gather strength. We did the same with the ELS and had the same agreement.

The time sequence now has us in the early '70's after the LCMS Denver convention, but before their 1971 Milwaukee Convention. The key preliminary meeting of this time was held on April 26-27, 1971, in North Hollywood, California. Its purpose was to give those in the LCMS who were concerned about confession Lutheranism a place to go if the Missouri Synod declined to take positive steps at its Milwaukee convention to reverse the liberalism that had taken root.

Many things took place at this meeting. At this time the Name committee gave its report and of the five most wanted names came the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. An organization was incorporated under a constitution, one which they all hoped would never be used. This constitution was arduously and patiently hammered out and then unanimously approved. It was to be ready in case the Milwaukee convention did not have the will or strength to do the three things cited earlier: 1) To rescind ALC fellowship; 2) To withdraw from the LCUSA; and 3) To discipline the erring. The FAL group also elected a Board of Directors with the Rev. E.W. Halverson, Vallejo, California, as chairman and Mr. Lawrence Marquardt as the Vice-Chairman. The Board was directed to attend the convention in Milwaukee and set up a hospitality center. The hospitality activity was to provide a place to give information about the helps available to concerned Lutherans.

In Milwaukee we had Pastor Richard Musser of Our Redeemer, Wauwatosa, who was part of our group, part of the United Planning Council... He was going with us. He'd even planned to have - if it was necessary for us to leave - the service announcing to the world that we were leaving Missouri because of doctrinal reasons. We would have it at his church. This was ten minutes from the convention. Musser's congregation even had a bus down at the convention. We had FAL courtesy cars. I sent some big black cars up there. We had stick on magnetic signs identifying the FAL courtesy cars. We were very visible at the convention. We had girls dressed up with sailor outfits on...

Pastor R.J. McMiller of Okauchee, Wis., provided these page girls who acted as hostesses and had the responsibility of distributing tracts and informational literature about FAL to the conventioners as they entered and left the Convention Arena.

We had a FAL hospitality suite at the Convention, right next to Preus's suite. We engineered that. The other thing...we threw this

FAL hospitality dinner, get-acquainted dinner. We had all the prominent people of the LCMS convention of a conservative stripe speak. We had speakers from distant places such as: Rev. Matti Roininen of Finland, Dr. Oesch of Germany, Pres. Orvick of the ELS, Pres. Naumann of the WELS, Rev. Morris Watkins of Lutheran Bible Translators, Dr. Noak from Australia, and so forth. We had several hundred in attendance and filled the main ballroom in the hotel - which was Preus's hotel, the LCMS headquarters hotel, which was really kind of humerous...

The FAL activities were concluded with a rally that Thursday evening at Our Redeemer, Wauwatosa. This rally was for the purpose of giving some history that necessitated the forming of the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. Another Vice-Chairman, Mr. Donald Walther, San Fernando, California, wrote "In Retrospect," concerning this time:

...After a final meeting of the Board at the airport we departed to our homes. Now Milwaukee is on the shelf as history. The house of FAL that we had hoped might not be necessary to use, is now needed. We are now working to present an interesting and working program for the Constituting Convention to be held in Libertyville, Ill., November 1st and 2nd.

Thus, on All Saints' Day, 1971, a group of seven congregations, after having taken the last step of admonition by declaring themselves to be in a state of confessional protest and having witnessed publicly and conscientiously to the LCMS against its deviating course, organized themselves under the name of the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism. The charter members were St. John's, Libertyville, Ill.; St. Paul's, Round Lake, Ill.; St. John's, Watertown, Wis.; Holy Trinity, Okauchee, Wis.; Grace, Bishop, California; St. Paul, Escondido, California; and St. Paul's First, North Hollywood, California. Three congregations were to become members shortly: St. Andrew's, Chicago, Illinois; First Redeemer, Vallejo, California; and Zion, Fallbrook, California.

We had the Constituting Convention in Libertyville, 1971. We had Pres. Naumann address the convention and so forth. So we became a church body at that time.

Rather interesting, here we had 1007 go out the door. People collapsed for different reasons. One of the chief reasons was the LCMS pension fund. They were afraid they would lose their pension. And Missouri Synod had put down in writing, yes, they would lose their pension if they went with another church body. So they worry about material things...which is a very sad commentary. We saw this time and time again. "O ye of little faith, where is your trust?"

...We left with the great disappointment that all these people that were with us...You know: "I'm with you. Go get 'em. I can't quite come now." Some of the pastors were afraid to tell their congregations. Primarily it was, e.g.: "Where would I live? I'm 56 years old. My health isn't too good. I've got two kids in college. How do I leave?" So it was material things. To watch the deterioration of people over a few dollars, I couldn't believe it! But I saw it happen before my eyes. That, I think, was a great education and one I'll never forget in my life.

So from there FAL started struggling. We had the fiasco with Independent Lutheran Missions (I.L.M.). They joined us at our Constituting Convention.

FAL was concerned from the outset in carrying on foreign mission work. Through Sola Scriptura FAL and ILM got together. The representative FAL dealt with was one Pastor Paul Lehenbauer of Peace Lutheran Church, Toledo, Ohio. The ILM was providing support for the Finnish Free Church and support had been requested from 14 congregations in Nigeria who were leaving the LCMS. Here the story gets very involved. Once Mr. Marquardt wrote a seven page summation regarding FAL/ILM to Pastors Herbert Swanson and Napoleon Artigas of Managua, Nicaragua explaining the turn of events. Everything seemed fine except that Pastor Lehenbauer had different ideas. What resulted were many misunderstandings, much correspondence, and much travel by FAL's mission board - all in vain. To complete the story, later FAL did

support the Rev. Theodore Kuster, ELS missionary to Central America, who was instrumental in getting funds to these 70 souls who were later victims of an earthquake. A Nicaraguan Emergency Fund was set up. Work was also carried on for a time in El Salvador by the son of Pastor Artigas, conducting a vacation bible school, doing canvassing and the like. FAL had made plans to discuss the problems in the development of these missions, but the "fiasco" with ILM caused these plans not to materialize. The point to be emphasized is that FAL was eager for mission work, despite its size.

In brief Pastor Lehenbauer had reached agreement prior to that (at the Constituting Convention). He was serving primarily a few conservatives in the field. Total support for a pastor by the name of Swanson, a former LCMS pastor in Nicaragua. Long story short: He went back on his own. Lehenbauer left our fellowship after two days, joined ELS, and left their fellowship within two days.

The other thing that's kind of a phenomenon was the instability of conservative people, which is a side issue. We had so many people that were with us and then later collapsed. For example: Pastor Don Burch. We were looking for missions to establish. We had contact with a little, black, elderly Lutheran pastor - self taught. He considered himself Lutheran. Through Sola Scriptura he wrote to us and said, "I'm interested. I'm getting up in years. I know that there are Bible believing people on this island. I could turn my small flock over. My health is failing. I'd like to see and I believe a Lutheran church should exist on this island."

So we sent down some of our mission people. Pastor Kauffeld (St. John's, Watertown) went down. He said there are very definite opportunities there. The pastor turned over his flock. He said (that) anything you want to do is fine. So we had a free hand.

With that we needed a man that had mission zeal - the right man - and we looked over the different people that had made inquiries to FAL at different times. One of those was Pastor Don Burch in Iowa. He had contacted me and asked if I would come out and address a group of pastors that were considering leaving Missouri...I was going to go out there and shake and hammer and prick their consciences enough so

that they would leave. So I called my cohort, Pastor R. J. Voss and we flew out and met with a group out there. The result was that Pastor Burch left. He left without his congregation but he left - just couldn't stand Missouri.

So then Pastor Kauffeld interviewed Burch and the Mission Board decided to call Burch to serve in Antigua. Burch accepted and went down there - and that flourished! Burch was very aggressive...built a school. Interesting thing on the school: He came back and said that Christianity will never survive on the island. Adultery is a way of life. There is no concept of marriage - no Christian ethics - stealing is rampant. Unless you train kids from zero up with Christian ethics and the commandments, we will never have any semblance of Christianity on this island. We will have no lasting roots. We need a Christian day school. So with that little PAL, maybe ten congregations...He spoke at St. John's, Libertyville, and St. John's, Watertown, and we had individual pledge cards made out that day of these two churches. We raised enough funds from those two churches to open a Christian day school. We sent two teachers down from WELS (Mr. Henry Meyer and Miss Helen Kuehl). We sent money down; we raised money and wound up with a building.

The Antigua story, obviously, is a heartwarming one. Of course, the WELS now has two pastors and three teachers serving there in the West Indies.

Ultimately, Burch accepted a call to Florida, for what reason I do not know, left WELS and went back to the LCMS.

Anyway, going down the line, we grew. We acquired congregations, a couple in Oregon. On paper we had potentially 1000 going into Libertyville that said I'm with you. When the time came to really stand up and be counted only seven did at that time. Within a year or two about a similar number joined us. It was really a study in human nature - a shock - unbelievable!

The natural question would be: Were there any thoughts that you couldn't do it with so few?

Well, we never thought we'd be so few...again we thought: If only we wind up with two or three hundred. 200-300 is viable, but



seven is ridiculous. So we grew to maybe 14-15 congregations counting some missions and it came to the point where it was not good stewardship to be so spread out and so forth.

With these words Larry Marquardt puts his finger on the beginning of the end of FAL. There were two key reasons: distance and money. These two with their resulting ramifications ultimately were FAL's undoing. From the minutes of FAL's board meetings and from the treasurer's reports it is easy to see how problems could arise. Finances give any church body difficulties, but little FAL really was facing an uphill fight. For the Board of Directors to simply have a meeting, all of the individuals had to fly to a common locale. Meetings of any frequency in North Hollywood or Chicago or Vero Beach or the like ran up huge bills. An exchange of bare minutes between boards and committees of FAL also resulted in difficulties. The following is recorded in a newsletter to the co-workers in FAL:

As we talked more and more with Pastor Kauffeld about specific problems of the past, it seemed there was one common denominator - isolation of the individual boards. Thus we found that an exchange of board minutes was not doing the job we had intended. It was decided to determine if we could mutually find an answer to our interboard procedural problem. We believe that in the past the individual boards have operated in overlapping areas, where a closer relationship would have eliminated misunderstanding.

Misunderstandings cropped up. The Lutheran Publishing House was a financial drain. Sola Scriptura cost money. Accountants, lawyers, and even the every day costs of operating put the squeeze on the budget. But as with Antigua, God blessed FAL. He alone helped these refugees from the Missouri Synod establish a Kingdom Expansion Fund for missions which resulted in missions in Kokomo, Indiana; Bishop, California; Bell Gardens, California; Vallejo, California; Hillsboro, Oregon; Sutherlin, Oregon; and other exploratory areas.

In addition to finances, distances, and being spread so thin,

other problems arose.

Then we wound up with internal dissention within our groups, believe it or not. Part of that was the fact of the distance. Some leaned toward ELS. ELS has a tolerance for some things which I do not - open communion to a degree. We found that a couple of our Florida congregations were practicing open communion. For what reason? They got the northern conservative tourists that would come down for vacations and they would seek out a conservative church rather than go to an LCMS church. They'd been doing that for 15-20 years. The local pastors just didn't have the intestinal fortitude... they'd say, "Well I can't deny it, it's really okay." Also they give good support and on and on. Well, we got after a couple of ours after we found out about it. Very frankly, we probably wound up in a self-destruct situation. We were so spread out and we didn't have the convenience of pastoral conferences on a regular basis and so forth. The conservatives, or I'd say the ones that went WELS, were the hard line congregations. The ones that went ELS were the ones that had problems - Vero Beach, Naples, Bell Gardens, etc. Pastor Marks of North Hollywood went independent. They had a wrong communion practice. Pastor Marks has since joined the Wisconsin Synod.

...Missouri is to the core terminal. Again there I can't fault people because unless you were in the middle of the mire you'd never understand it...I think of the case of Pastor Musser (Our Savior, Wauwatosa). I think he would have liked to gone WELS. His one daughter became a WELS teacher; his other daughter married a WELS pastor. He just didn't have intestinal fortitude. He wondered whether he could get his congregation to go. When it's all said and done it's the Old Adam. Then the other thing is friendships - all their old cronies altogether. If they leave, they're not part of the group. They didn't go to Northwestern. They didn't go to the prep schools. They didn't know everybody for the last 35 years. None of their relatives are there and blah, blah, blah. I say it's just a weakness in human beings. It's very sad. I saw it time and time again. People when they were confronted with the truth and they don't want to hear it...maybe it'll go away. Maybe it'll be better the next time. Or they take the attitude, well, what about the widow's mite? Jesus didn't pick on her. She supported Pharisees, Sadducees, etc. My

heart is in the right place. So I'm sending my money to the Missouri Synod and I'm supporting heretics...so I have to trust in the Lord that He'll use it for some blessing. So you had a lot of that.

Missouri really did chop off some pensions - some really sad cases. I had hired an attorney by the name of Thomas Ruth who used to be a Washington attorney to actually go through and make an analysis of their pension fund. This is about the way it falls. Now this is back in the '60's. In business you have to have fairness in pensions. A not-for-profit organization doesn't follow. They can discriminate and do all kinds of things. Then LCMS was the administrator of the plan. The individual pastor made a contribution and the congregation made a contribution in the later plan. In the early plan the congregation made the total contribution, so the synod was only a recipient of funds, a trustee of funds. Well, in Missouri's plan, in the fine print, it said we own those funds. You don't give them to us. Then we'll decide how they're dispersed and they will be dispensed to those who are in altar and pulpit fellowship with the Missouri Synod upon retirement. And if they're not they don't get a dime. Well, they could have been sued, but a Christian doesn't like to sue a fellow Christian or Christian organization.

Nonetheless, the Missouri Synod sued. This, too, became a complicated mess. The LCMS filed litigation against FAL's West Coast congregations. In 1972, Christ the King Lutheran Church, formerly known as Bell Gardens Lutheran Church, was deprived of its property by a lawsuit filed by the Southern California District of the LCMS, the former pastor, Rev. O.W. Mieger, and one former voting member.

Rather than fight the former pastor and the LCMS, the members left the property to a handful of members who wanted to remain Missouri Synod and began holding services in the Bell Gardens Junior High auditorium. The following is a portion of a telling letter to J.A.O.

Preus by Harry Caldwell, a member who left:

Dear Doctor:

We have now learned just how far the LCMS will go to prevent any congregation from leaving the Synod,

regardless of that congregation's determination to be done with the liberalism, so obvious in the LCMS.

This is a brief account of what took place in our congregation. In the latter part of 1970 the Rev. O.W. Mieger accepted our call to serve our congregation. Since coming to us he has encouraged us to leave the Missouri Synod, which he did by word and deed, even after the visitor for Circuit 9 accused him and us of sinning against the 7th Commandment...

It's rather hard to steal something that you have worked for and helped for. This congregation has been self-supporting for a good many years, yet the LCMS has no qualms about suing us for something for which they have not paid one cent for all of these years...

On April 30th our congregation voted to leave Synod. Pictures were taken of the occasion and of the pastor and officers. Pastor Mieger and Mr. Ray Biemeret are on the photo and both they and their wives signed... Pastor Mieger wrote and read quite an article to the congregation giving reasons why he felt we should leave Synod.

At a special voters meeting on May 10, 1972, Pastor Mieger asked permission to remove his and his wife's name from the official papers. The names are of record in the State Attorney General's Office, although there is a line through them. On the following Sunday Pastor Mieger made some announcements so entirely opposite to what he had been saying that the congregation was divided.

On July 3, officers of the congregation were served subpoenas from the Superior Court demanding that we turn overall property to the plaintiffs. The suit also demanded one million dollars punitive damages, also \$2500 per month rent from April 30.

You may have guessed who signed the complaint. Pastor O.W. Mieger, Mr. Ray Biemeret and no less than the President of the Southern California District - Dr. Arnold Kuntz.

I could further document this story with the advice of FAL attorney's, but the letter speaks for itself and for the way Missouri operates. Furthermore, other lawsuits ensued.

Another example of how they operate was demonstrated at their 1973 New Orleans Convention. Officially, on the surface, it calmed the fears of many who were beginning to feel uneasy in the LCMS. In a very real way it helped to slow/stop FAL's growth. For the real picture, I quote from the New Orleans Convention Report made by FAL's official representatives:

In order to get the total picture of what happened at New Orleans, we must look beyond the news releases to the true state of doctrine and practice in the LCMS today.

Conservative delegates were highly elated over an almost clean sweep by their nominees to synodical offices and boards. "Jack and the conservatives have this convention in their back pockets!" we were assured repeatedly. Had the conservatives finally accomplished that which had eluded them at Denver and Milwaukee? Was Missouri at least turning the corner and repudiating the liberalism in doctrine and practice? In spite of fine intentions and convention resolutions, what was accomplished? Dr. Tietjen continues to hold his office and the liberal majority of his faculty return to their classrooms for the Fall semester to spread their poison in the hearts of future Missouri pastors. Fellowship with the ALC continues. The LCMS is still a member of LCUSA. The 1965 Mission Affirmations were reaffirmed. Not only is women suffrage accepted practice, but women led convention devotions, and several were elected to synodical boards.

After the LCMS whitewash job at New Orleans, FAL became more and more of a question mark. More and more problems cropped up.

We had difficulty getting along. I attribute much of it to the fact that we were so widely dispersed. Then, the second thing I attribute it to is the fact that by the smallness of our size and the need for different functions to happen that we had people who should have been parish pastors...we gave them responsibilities and they were not fit to do it. So that created another problem all by itself. In WELS you can pick from the field and find somebody to do the job and many people agree. When you have a handful, everybody is doing something. That was another problem.

...The weakness of people, the willingness to forsake what they know is true for money, for comfort.

In 1975 the congregations of FAL saw that it was futile to go on. In the summer of 1975 it was decided to disband. It was determined that the individual churches should retain the right to join WELS, ELS, or remain independent. Subsequently, this has been done with the various congregations going their own ways.

Looking back now I ask myself, well what did it really accomplish? Other than getting ulcers...fighting with these people that are impossible. Hopefully, there was some good out of it.

Certainly, the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism did accomplish much good. They had the almighty God on their side. They had the inerrant Scriptures backing their stand. They gave their witness. Little FAL stood up to mighty Missouri just as humble Martin Luther stood up to powerful Rome at the Diet of Worms. FAL was born remembering Luther's stand for his beliefs: "I cannot and I will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen." Four hundred and fifty years later the following words rang out at FAL's Constituting Convention: "Whether we are five, fifty, or five hundred congregations, we are determined to pursue our course, directed and bound by love for our Savior, for His inspired, inerrant Word and for the rich heritage of confessional Lutheranism. This position we will uphold at all costs!"

This FAL did to the glory of God!