

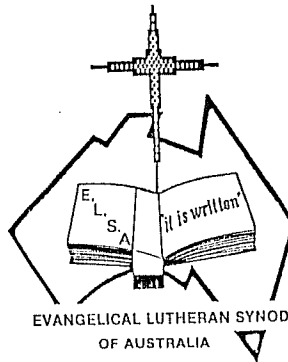
THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE FORSAKEN

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**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD OF
AUSTRALIA**

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1966 - 1993



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May 12, 1993**

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THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE FORSAKEN

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD OF AUSTRALIA

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"I have never seen the righteous forsaken..." ~ Psalm 37:25

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

EARLY LUTHERAN IMMIGRATION AND SETTLEMENT

*"I myself will gather the remnant of my flock ... and will bring them ...
where they will be fruitful and increase ..." ~ Jeremiah 23:3*

Throughout the history of Lutheranism in Australia, two distinct theological streams flowed quite separately from one another. Almost from the very beginning vital doctrinal differences existed between them. It was this situation which led to the negotiations between the traditionally confessional Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (E.L.C.A.) and the liberal United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (U.E.L.C.A.) in the late twentieth century. Each of these streams can be traced back to two of the first Lutheran pastors to arrive in Australia -- Pastor August Kavel and Pastor Gotthard Fritzsche.

Pastor Kavel arrived in Adelaide with a flock of approximately 200 souls in November of 1838. [For map see Addendum 3] With subsequent boatloads his congregation swelled to about 570 people.¹ They settled in the newly founded Colony of South Australia. For reasons of conscience, they had fled the oppression of the Prussian Union under King Frederick Wilhelm III. The voyage was only possible through the generosity of a Baptist businessman named George Fife Angus. He appreciated their piety, and recognized their potential as industrious and hard workers for his land in the new colony.

Later that year, another wave of oppressed Lutherans arrived on October 28 with Pastor Gotthard Fritzsche and a company of 274 people.² With new-found religious

¹ Rev. Gavin Winter, How Are the Mighty Fallen, p. 1

² Th. Hebart, The United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (U.E.L.C.A.) p. 43

freedom they enjoyed a happy time of blessed cooperation. This lasted for a number of years. But on August 18, 1846 at a stormy convention held at Bethany in South Australia their fellowship was shattered. Pastor Fritzsche rejected Pastor Kavel's protest against a number of statements in the Lutheran Confessions, his insistence on teaching the millennium, and his "Apostolic Constitution" which Fritzsche felt placed an undue and unscriptural emphasis on the office of elders.³

Hence, the two distinct streams began to flow separately. Their courses would clash, often turbulently at times, for the next 100 years. Pastor Fritzsche was regarded as the founder of the congregations which became known as the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (E.L.C.A.). Until the 1940s they were named the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Australia (E.L.S.A.). On the other hand, Pastor Kavel was generally credited as the spiritual father of the Immanuel Synod and all the other splinter churches which merged in 1921 to form the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia (U.E.L.C.A.). In many ways this merger was possible because many controversial subjects were labeled "open questions" and then dismissed. This same method of compromise allowed a brief confessional union in 1864 between the forerunner of the U.E.L.C.A. (the Immanuel Synod) and the conservative E.L.S.A.. The union quickly dissolved over the old question of the millennium. In the 1880s, the conservative E.L.S.A. developed stronger fellowship links with the Missouri Synod in America while the liberal U.E.L.C.A. developed ties to Iowa Synod and eventually the American Lutheran Church (A.L.C.). [For chart on Lutheranism in Australia see Addendum 1]

Almost immediately after the U.E.L.C.A. merged it resolved to work toward an amalgamation with the E.L.C.A. Some impetus seems to have come from laity in both synods who formed the "Australian Lutheran Association." Although the account may be facetious, one uninformed layman, when asked what the difference between the two synods in Australia was, said, "That is like two magpies, one is black and white, the other

³ Rev. Gavin Winter, How Are the Mighty Fallen, p. 2

is white and black." ⁴ Clearly, there was a lack of understanding among the laity regarding the differences between the two. The effort toward union began in the 1920s but did not gain real momentum until the 1950s. A keen-observer of those days, Pastor F.G. Kleinig claimed that from the beginning of the "E.L.C.A.-U.E.L.C.A. negotiations in 1940 it was laid down this time they were going to work not merely for a 'Confessional Union' as in 1864, (just a 'fellowship declaration' which could be severed again without difficulty) but for a complete Amalgamation!" ⁵

This drive toward union seemed to be picking up steam despite their doctrinal differences. Many felt that different liberal spirit in the U.E.L.C.A., as evidenced by the word of one life-long E.L.C.A. member. "We appreciated our freedom to serve Christ. They appreciated their freedom to serve the world."⁶ Despite this fact, the compass pointed toward union. If this was to be union with unity, it would force many to choose whom they would serve.

⁴ Rev. F. H. Smith, A Monograph, p. 3

⁵ Rev. F.G. Kleinig, The History of the E.L.S.A., Part III, Lectures 5,6 p.10

⁶ Written Interview with Elva Priebbenow

II. THE CALL TO TAKE A STAND: *THE E.L.C.A. AND U.E.L.C.A. MERGER IN AUSTRALIA* "Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve..." ~ Joshua 24:15

Dark days lay ahead for the E.L.C.A. and for those who once trusted her too implicitly. In 1948, after a series of Intersynodical committee meetings the *Theses of Agreement* were drawn up as a joint statement of doctrinal agreement. They were a masterpiece of ambiguity, compromise and veiled meaning. Much of what separated the two churches was subtly left in the category of an "Open Question." The first thesis contains the essence of the "Open Question" theory: "...Divergent views arising from such differences of interpretation are not divisive of church fellowship."⁷ Certain matters regarded as constituting differences in 1936 were not even given so much as a mention in the *Theses of Agreement*. These included the scriptural attitude toward Sunday and Christ's state of humiliation. Other issues on which there seemed to have been divergent opinions included Genesis 1-3, the word "day" in Genesis 1, and the position of women in the church, among others.⁸

The Theses on Joint Prayer and Worship clearly wandered from the E.L.C.A.'s former teachings and opened the door to a weakening of fellowship. There were many subtle loopholes that provided exceptions. Publicly, the leaders of the E.L.C.A. denied that any change in doctrine had occurred. But privately the opposite was known. Years later just prior to the merger after the *Document of Union* was released, the President of the E.L.C.A., Dr. Cl. Hoopman wrote privately to President Oscar Naumann of the Wisconsin Synod:

The "Document of Union" does not settle all matters in dispute. Dr. Hamann Sen. and I would be happy if these matters could be settled before the actual union takes place, but we were not able to persuade the other committee members.⁹

⁷ *Theses of Agreement*, Part I, Section 4e

⁸ Gavin Winter, *How Are the Mighty Fallen*, p. 104

⁹ Letter from Dr. Hoopmann to Rev. Oscar Naumann

Even in 1965 to most keen observers, it was apparent by the *Theses of Agreement* that the E.L.C.A. has changed its position on Romans 16:17,18. The many loopholes it contained paved the way for future strife.

After debate at pastoral conferences and conventions in 1956, the *Theses of Agreement* were adopted by U.E.L.C.A. at its convention. It was not until March, 1959 that the E.L.C.A. adopted the *Theses of Agreement* at Albury. However, problems still would slow the amalgamation for over a decade.

On January 11, 1965 the *Document of Union* adopted by Joint Committees was released. Everything could now proceed toward amalgamation. The central issues that had slowed amalgamation were the U.E.L.C.A. membership in the Lutheran World Federation, ties to joint mission work in New Guinea, and the fellowship ties overseas of both. For the sake of Australian union, they agreed that all over-seas connections would be severed and reconsidered after the merger. The U.E.L.C.A. would leave the Lutheran World Federation. Many realized that this simply treated symptoms of a more fatal disease--unionism. The *Document of Union* did not condemn such membership, and such a stand would open the door to entering it again.

In fact it declared:

(b) In the uniting Churches there are some who hold that membership in the Lutheran World Federation is not contrary to the Word of God, while other hold that it is.

(c) In view of these facts and because Lutheran union is for scriptural and practical reasons the paramount duty of the Lutheran Churches of Australia, we are agreed not to seek affiliation with the Lutheran World Federation until the implications of such affiliation are resolved to the satisfaction of the united Church.¹⁰

This settled nothing. It simply stated the obvious, declared no basis for true unity and offered no real solution.

In February of 1965 an important publication written by Rev. Kurt Marquart called *Crossroads* was released by the Queensland Parish Education Committee without

¹⁰ Documents of Union, p. 24

Synodical approval. Unfortunately, it received only limited exposure outside the conservatives circles of the E.L.C.A. But its clarity on the central issues rallied many, it seems. It made an impact on the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Congregations of the Reformation (E.L.C.R.) which would not enter the union. Written and compiled in a language for laymen, *Crossroads* detailed the fellowship problems at stake around the world because of the spread of liberalism. The document spoke frankly about the dangers of the *Document of Union*:

THE REAL PROBLEM HAS NEVER BEEN AND IS NOT NOW THE FACT OF U.E.L.C.A. MEMBERSHIP IN THE L.W.F., BUT THE **THEOLOGY** WHICH MAKES SUCH MEMBERSHIP POSSIBLE! ¹¹ [emphasis his]

The document further warned:

The only alternative to this orderly, responsible procedure would seem to be a detour around the real issues, into a union without unity. Now, if agreement is impossible before union, it is certainly foolish to expect such agreement to materialize after the union has been consummated!

...Conscience and confession cannot be held in abeyance!

Beyond this we would raise the question if amalgamation--even on the basis of full agreement--is really a wise goal after all...¹²

Despite arguments from a number of conservative pastors, on March 15, 1965, the E.L.C.A. declared altar and pulpit fellowship with U.E.L.C.A. at its convention at Toowomba. By this point there was little resistance. A letter dated February 24, 1965, from Oscar J. Naumann was ignored. Prepared by the Wisconsin Synod's Commission on Doctrinal Matters, it pleaded:

May we express one other concern? Already in the past we found several of the statements pertaining to the inerrancy of scripture in the "Theses of Agreement" disturbing because they do not assert the factual correctness of every statement of Scripture. Our concerns are heightened because these very statements are being quoted in defense of attempts to narrow the concept of inerrancy....

¹¹ Rev. Kurt Marquart, *Crossroads*, p. 47

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 60

...Brethren, we plead with you not to surrender your "Confessional character" by abandoning your previously held scriptural objections to the union which is now proposed.

Some claim that only the cover letter was read at the convention. When all was said and done, only one pastor, F.G. Kleinig, could not settle for the merger. What was unclear needed to be made certain in the document itself. He would not enter a union which promised to settle doctrinal difference later.

The E.L.C.A. officials claimed that every doctrinal difference was settled or would be settled with out difficulty. Many promises were made. Although many doubted the unity, in the end all of them, but F.G. Kleinig, entered the union. Those who entered with doubts adopted a number of reasons for doing so. Some planned to "stay in and witness" or "wait and see." Others felt that they could win the U.E.L.C.A. over to a more conservative theology. Some contended this to be the view of the district president in Queensland. One old E.L.C.A. member recalls, "Our Queensland district president gave false assurances that if trouble arouse he would lead his people out again. Of course as soon as the merger took place he was no longer district president and had no power." ¹³

Some pastors simply refused to desert their flocks. Still others argued that the increased manpower and financial benefit from the merger would far outweigh any negatives. One elderly woman remembers, "We heard over and over again that it was a God-pleasing union and how much we would be able to achieve including correcting error which the U.E.L.C.A. people had grown up with. What we would be able to achieve financially with greater numbers. The bigger, the better..."¹⁴ Yet one wonders how much issues of pension and property loss played into the decision of many. They were troubling and confusing days indeed. With so much ambiguity it was perhaps difficult to predict what would happen. But the Word of God remained true, "everything that does not come

¹³ Written interview with Elva Priebbenow

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23) and "if you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." (John 8:31) Many would later regret whom they chose to serve.

On November 28, 1965 the official *Declaration of Fellowship* between E.L.C.A. and U.E.L.C.A. was announced. What a dark day for confessional Lutheranism in Australia! From October 29 to November 2, 1966 the Synod at Tanunda, S.A. between E.L.C.A. and the U.E.L.C.A. would produce the new Lutheran Church of Australia (L.C.A.). Now the 45,000 members of the E.L.C.A. joined with 56,000 members of the U.E.L.C.A. to form the L.C.A. [For chart of Lutheranism in Australia see Addendum 1]

THE FORMATION OF THE E.L.C.R.

When all the dust settled, only one Queensland pastor, F.G. Kleinig, with a few scatter pockets of believers in Queensland had refused to enter the union of the L.C.A. He had been in correspondence with President Oscar Naumann of the Wisconsin Synod, who had encouraged him in a letter dated October 29, 1965:

Your decision is not an easy one. Yet if one cannot secure from one's present Synod more than an oral assurance of an intended sense prior to the union, how can one expect to secure the adoption of a fully scriptural and clearly defined position after the union? It is almost tantamount to tempting God to expect this to come about.¹⁵

The decision had not been easy indeed! But Pastor Kleinig could not settle for "agreeing to disagree agreeably." By not joining the merger, he and the scattered flocks who followed him forfeited everything from their past -- the church buildings, the parsonages, close friendships and often family ties. Charles Lederhose remembers how quickly things turned sour in his congregation at Gympie in Queensland when the E.L.C.A. synod officials arranged a meeting to calm discontent about the *Theses of Agreement*. He now writes: "Some of the lay people fell for the rubbish and left us high and dry, and today one was loved. Tomorrow we were hated. Branded trouble makers and rebels." It was to be expected. But today he isn't bitter. "All these things happened over the 26 years up to the

¹⁵ Letter from Rev. Oscar J. Naumann to Rev. F.G. Kleinig

present day have been a path the Lord has chartered for each of us ... But the Lord in his wisdom has blessed us, guided us, until this present day." ¹⁶

On March 20, 1966, the Lord gathered a small group of 50 people at Kilkivan, Queensland who refused to go into the merger. This group would become the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation (E.L.C.R.). On May 29, 1966 they would gather again at Kilkivan for their constituting convention. Pastor Kleinig would serve the scattered flocks. Pastor Kleinig states that the group "at the beginning was made up of ninety-three souls, which later was joined by another fifty odd members. ..." ¹⁷ At the second annual convention, also at Kilkivan, the E.L.C.R. applied for fellowship with the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation (L.C.R) in the U.S. who had recently broken from the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod. Their first convention had been in 1965 in Oak Park, Illinois. They soon extended the hand of fellowship to the small flock and their leader.

This leader of the E.L.C.R. had led an interesting life. Pastor Kleinig was born at Kapunda, South Australia on October 3, 1900. He grew up on a small farm at St. Kitts. He entered Concordia College in 1916 intending to become a day-school teacher. With the Lutheran day schools closed by government order, he entered the theological classes at Concordia College in 1922 and graduated in 1924. He served many different congregations in his career. First he served in Caboolture, Queensland, from 1925, until 1929, when he accepted an urgent call to the Denial Bay Parish in South Australia. After a brief period, he labored in Kumbia, Queensland from 1931 until he resigned in 1941. Later he returned to the public ministry in 1959 and served various places until he resigned (or retired) from the E.L.C.A.'s ministry in 1965. ¹⁸

He was a dedicated minister and very zealous for the truth. It was claimed that his sermons were thorough, Law-Gospel centered and powerfully delivered even though they

¹⁶ Written interview with Charles Lederhose

¹⁷ Rev. F.G. Kleinig, History of the E.L.C.R., p. 12

¹⁸ Rev. Gavin Winter, How Are the Mighty Fallen, p. 149-150

often ran over an hour. But he appears to have grown rather dictatorial and impatient with age. Some have admitted that "Pastor Kleinig had difficulty accepting criticism--he would take it as a personal affront."¹⁹ By this time he was not a young man either. The isolation and the mounting pressures apparently took their toll upon him. Because of the advancing years of Pastor Kleinig and long distances between the many preaching stations in the E.L.C.R., at a council meeting at Charles Lederhose's home in Gympie, Queensland it was suggested that they apply for manpower from the L.C.R. in America. Before the appeal for another minister could be made an offer for one arrived from the president of the L.C.R. A young minister named Keith Hunter had recently joined the L.C.R. The E.L.C.R. soon called him to serve them.

Their offer was accepted. On July 23, 1967, Pastor Keith Hunter was installed at Woombye, Queensland. He served the E.L.C.R. congregations in Queensland at Maryborough, Gympie and Woombye while splitting time with Pastor Kleinig at Biloela. [For map see Addendum 3] Pastor Kleinig served scattered families in Kingaroy, Dalby and Toowoomba, along with a few others. With zeal and dedication, the far-flung flock grew in faith. It should be noted that a hint of controversy did display itself at this time. Soon after he arrived, Keith Hunter asked that he be called by each individual congregation rather than the Federation, which he considered an invalid calling body. This was the tip of an iceberg which would threaten smooth sailing in the future.²⁰

The happy unity in the E.L.C.R. would not last long!

¹⁹ Written interview with Selwyn Winter

²⁰ F.G. Kleinig, The History of the E.L.C.R., p.15

III. THE NEED TO BE SEPARATE:
THE EARLY DAYS OF FAITH PARISH IN QUEENSLAND
"Therefore come out from them and be separate..." ~ 2 Corinthians 6:17

Satan was casting seeds of legalism. They quickly began to spout and to disturb the unity of the E.L.C.R. Pastor Kleinig began to make regulations and demands in areas where scripture offered freedom.

The first sign of trouble was a convention when the issue of head-covering was brought up. It would continue to trouble the fellowship for two years. As Charles Lederhose wrote, "The fire was lit! The heated arguments and a division was starting to show."²¹ Pastor Kleinig insisted that women wear head-covering during divine worship. He wrote several papers concerning the topic, claiming that the custom was scriptural, indisputable and a permanent command. Pastor Hunter knew better. At the request of the members, Pastor Hunter delivered only one paper on the subject which detailed the clear understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 as adiaphoron. He quoted extensively from the original Greek in this section as well as other portions of Scripture. He showed historical evidence and confessional witnesses to demonstrate that head-covering was not a matter of the Moral Law. Elva Priebbenow remembers that Pastor Hunter informed the members:

He did not want us to make our decision on what he said but what God's Word said. As we were studying Ephesians together with related verses, we began to see very clearly that the head covering issue came under the area of Christian liberty while only the relationship between God, man and women came under the Law. God faithfully kept his promise in John 8 verse 31 and 32.²²

Steadily and rapidly, the tensions increased. At the Federation Conference and General Meeting, Pastor Hunter was to preach. Because the tension was so high and the bitterness so acute, he chose to read the First Epistle of St. John instead of preaching a

²¹ Written interview with Charles Lederhose

²² Written interview with Elva Priebbenow

sermon which would certainly be attacked. After the service one man still shook his fist at Pastor Hunter and called him names.²³

The E.L.C.R. was splitting. At a special meeting held at Murgon to make or break the issue, Charles Lederhose recalls it "ended in a near brawl. I have never heard such utterances from the mouths of Christians before or since." The issue was far from settled. The chairman called a special convention for August 1, 1971 at Kingaroy for delegates only. This would be the final vote on the issue. It was all or nothing.

At Kingaroy, Queensland, on August 1, 1971, the split which was already apparent became final. Pastor Kleinig asked one prominent member the question, "It is Christian liberty or is it a moral obligation?" He replied, "Christian Liberty!" Pastor Kleinig threw down his chalk in disgust and said "After all my trouble."²⁴ The vote was taken, and predictably Pastor Hunter lost.

Pastor Hunter and the few that voted with him lost everything. Pastor Hunter had been living at Gympie in a house which belonged to the Gympie congregation of the E.L.C.R. This, along with all of the rest of the church's property, was immediately claimed by the majority who remained in the E.L.C.R. Forty-nine members chose to leave with Pastor Hunter. They would form what is today known as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (E.L.S.A.). Then it was known as Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish. It included about ten families at Gympie, Maryborough and Brisbane separated by hundreds of miles. Most of the division cut within families lines! Half remained in and half left. Much of the heartache revolved around the families which had intermarried. The wounds ran deep. It couldn't be argued that this was a divorce of convenience. For some the treatment was icy for years. For those who left, the reason was clear. They had conscientiously obeyed the Lord's command, "Therefore come out from them and be separate." (2 Corinthians 6:17). The year was 1971.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

A LATER SPLIT FROM THE E.L.C.R.--THE O.E.L.C.

Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish would not be the last group to charge the E.L.C.R. with legalism and leave them. Pastor Audrey Grieger, who had served as a lay-missionary in the L.C.A. until he resigned for conscience's sake, had joined the E.L.C.R. On July 11, 1973, Pastor Audrey Grieger and his family resigned from the E.L.C.R. to form the Orthodox Evangelical Lutheran Church (O.E.L.C.). Although he accepted Pastor Kleinig's insistence on head-covering at the time, he could not abide by his regulations concerning measuring the lengths of women's dresses and men's hair length. Thus another splinter group appeared on the Queensland scene of Lutheranism.

The O.E.L.C. continues to exist until today. Their main congregation remains in Maryborough, Queensland. In 1991 they rescinded from their constitution the regulations concerning head-covering as a Moral Law. This opened the door for fellowship discussions. In early 1992 they sought doctrinal discussions with the E.L.S.A. Later that year, the O.E.L.C. signed a fellowship agreement with St. Mark's Lutheran Church of Hivesville, Queensland. This came as a surprise after having brief doctrinal discussions. The document was signed on September 18, 1992. St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Hivesville broke fellowship from the L.C.A. in July of 1990. St. Mark's is a member of a new federation of congregations which have recently left the L.C.A. These congregations have formed the Australian Evangelical Lutheran Church (A.E.L.C.).

THE LEGALISTIC E.L.C.R. TODAY

The history of the E.L.C.R. is one of isolation. Today they stand completely isolated from every Lutheran church body. It was not long after Pastor Hunter left the legalistic E.L.C.R. that they severed their sole bond of fellowship with the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation. (L.C.R.) in America. Pastor Kleinig had little choice when the L.C.R. backed Pastor Hunter in the dispute over head-covering as God's permanent Moral Law. Even today they still enforce the head-covering rule. Today it is even

reported that the covering practice is "extended to include infants in arms." "Small girls could not even wear shorts." One man with family members still in the E.L.C.R. correctly claims they are "inward looking with no evangelism outreach." ²⁵

THE EARLY DAYS OF FAITH EV. LUTHERAN PARISH

When the legalistic E.L.C.R. forced out Pastor Keith Hunter and those who stood up against legalism, it was back to the drawing board. After losing everything to the merger in 1966, now the E.L.C.R. had taken away everything again in 1971. But they did not give up. They adopted the name Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish. They had two independent congregations, St. John's Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Gympie and St. Paul's Independent Lutheran Church in Maryborough, as well as other preaching stations.

They decided to locate Pastor Hunter in the Gympie, Queensland. There they purchased an old house for \$2,000 and converted the back into a church building. Eventually they sold it for \$17,000. They used the proceeds to build a house in the Brisbane suburb of Redbank Plains. Bernie Hartwig faithfully did the majority of the labor, receiving help from a number of volunteers. For all his hard work, he received a \$1,000. The Hunters briefly lived there. After Pastor Hunter's resignation lay-reading services were conducted in the garage of the home at Redbank Plains until it was sold for \$25,000.

On the day of his installation, someone remembers Pastor Keith Hunter saying "He would rather burn out than rust out." ²⁶ That he did! He was considered a zealous worker for the Savior by his flock. One former member recalls, "He never thought he was better than anyone else and he went on to prove it." ²⁷ His enthusiastic proclamation, his spontaneous prayers and informative Bible studies won the congregation's respect. Many members recall the community prayers they would make while sitting around a table

²⁵ Written interview with Selwyn Winter

²⁶ Written interview with Elva Priebbenow

²⁷ Written interview with Charles Lederhose

together. Each person would add their own petitions as they circled around the table. During his ministry, the congregation grew together-- joyful in spite of the struggles.

But during this time, an unfortunate event occurred. Pastor Hunter taught misleading statements about the Wisconsin Synod and its so called "Doctrine of Church and Ministry" through the distribution of a spurious booklet published by the L.C.R. in 1971 titled "The Difference Between the W.E.L.S. and the L.C.R." The contents of this booklet soured the congregation's opinion of the Wisconsin Synod until Pastor Thomas Dudley of Hillsboro, Oregon (who was in fellowship with the W.E.L.S.) corrected their understanding of the Wisconsin Synod's view on "Church and Ministry" in a visit to Queensland in 1978. The booklet was written by Rev. Kenneth Miller and made improper comparisons, distorted many of the facts and demonstrated no evidence of actual false teaching. But the implications stuck in their minds! It effectively cast doubt upon the Wisconsin Synod. For this reason it is no surprise that the first official correspondence from Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish to President Oscar Naumann of the W.E.L.S. on August 6, 1978, sought a response to the claims of this document.

The year of Pastor Keith Hunter's service were not easy one. A lack of finance limited progress in a parish which covered hundreds of miles. He often made use of his extended travel time for prayer. Then he could commit the burdens and worries of the day to the Lord. However, at least one member felt "he badly needed another pastor to confide in and discuss his problems with." ²⁸ Soon he found it necessary to start a shared-time ministry by going door-to-door selling World Books. In time his wife joined him in this. By necessity his ministry became a "holding operation." There seemed to be constant pressure upon him. Pastor Hunter was isolated, taxed, and began to have recurring bouts with ill-health. Periodically he would spend several days at a time in the hospital. He worked tirelessly from 1971 until March, 1977, when he felt compelled to

²⁸ Written interview with Elva Priebsenow

resign for health and other reasons. Pastor Keith Hunter and his family soon returned to America.

As one person recalls, "We didn't experience much growth in numbers although we did experience growth in faith."²⁹ But now this flock was without a shepherd!

²⁹ *Ibid.*

IV. A CONFESSIONAL BROTHERHOOD GROWS:

THE LONG SEARCH FOR PASTORS BEGINS

"Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel - all whose knees have not bowed down..." 1 Kings 19:18

With the resignation of Pastor Keith Hunter, the little flock of Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish felt "almost total devastation." ³⁰ They must have felt somewhat isolated and alone. But the Lord had not forgotten his promises. "I will place shepherds over them who will tend them, and they will no longer be afraid or terrified, nor will any be missing."

(Jeremiah 23:4) A long search for another pastor lay ahead, but in the meantime God would comfort them with the discovery of other confessional Lutherans whom the Lord had reserved for himself in Australia. Even before Pastor Hunter left for America, the Lord set his plans in motion. A confessional brotherhood was growing!

When he resigned from the ministry, Pastor Hunter first moved his family to South Australia where Norman Pfitzner, a farmer who lived near Keith, S.A., contacted him about fellowship questions. Although Keith Hunter was not interested in establishing any fellowship, eventually, Norman made contact through him with the congregations in Queensland.

It happened this way. One day, a member of the Maryborough congregation, Noel Priebbenow, received a phone call from a complete stranger, Norman Pfitzner. He had heard there were some people in Queensland who had not joined the merger. He wanted to contact them about a special visitor who would be traveling to South Australia - Pastor Thomas E. Dudley of Hillsboro, Oregon. It just so happened that Noel Priebbenow, who owned a coach company in Maryborough, would be driving through the area on the exact day Pastor Dudley planned to arrive. Norman Pfitzner arranged a meeting at Noel's motel with Pastor Dudley. It would start an important link to confessional Lutheranism for the members of Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish.

³⁰ Written interview with Sel Winter

As the Priebbenow's see clearly today -- "Here is a marvelous example of God being faithful to his promises and caring for his church on earth!" ³¹ The meeting, which also involved other Lutherans from South Australia, went quite well, and all parties concerned felt that not a single doctrinal difference existed between them. This was the beginning on lasting and vital contacts with Pastor Dudley.

THE LINK TO PASTOR DUDLEY IN AMERICA

Unbeknownst to the members of Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish, while they were struggling to remain confessional in Queensland, much had also been happening in South Australia. God works in ways that defy human logic. Just how did Norman Pfitzner come into contact with Pastor Thomas Dudley? In the early 1970s, Dr. Al Schoennauer, W.E.L.S. member, moved from Portland, Oregon after receiving an appointment to teach at the University of Adelaide. Several years earlier another W.E.L.S. family by the name of Guelker (friends of Dr. Schoennauer) had traveled to Western Australia from the Portland area to start a restaurant which eventually failed. At the same time, a young man from South Africa named Siegfried Koehne came to the Luther Seminary in Adelaide because he had been informed it was a conservative seminary. Dr. Schoennauer comments, "If my assessment is correct, the players in the scene had now been assembled by the Lord, unbeknownst to any of us." ³²

Soon after the Schoennauers arrival the news spread of a family living in Adelaide from the conservative Wisconsin Lutheran Synod. They soon met concerned families and a few outspoken L.C.A. pastors as well, notably Pastor Noack who had written to L.C.A. officials for years with no avail. In the meantime, Doug Guelker and his family (the W.E.L.S. members and former friend's of Dr. Schoennauer from Portland) returned from their failed business venture in Western Australia. Doug Guelker wanted to start studying for the ministry. He now began his seminary training at Luther Seminary in Adelaide,

³¹ Written interview with Elva and Noel Priebbenow

³² Written interview with Dr. Al Schoennauer

South Australia.. Siegfried Koehne, the seminarian from South Africa, quickly became disenchanted with what was being taught at Luther Seminary. Doug Guelker, whom Dr. Schoennauer knew well, introduced Siegfried to them. After leaving the Missouri Synod because of its shift toward liberalism, Dr. Schoennauer could easily recognize the direction of the L.C.A. Through his conversations with Siegfried Koehne, Dr. Schoennauer became aware first hand of the problems at Luther Seminary. "The Genesis Account was taught as a myth, historical critical method used to understand Scripture through human contacts ..." ³³ Through the urging and financial support of Dr. Schoennauer, Siegfried went to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin the next year.

But while still at Luther Seminary in Adelaide, an L.C.A. pastor asked Siegfried to write down his observations of what was being taught. These notes were submitted to the L.C.A. officials. But Dr. Schoennauer comments, "Nothing came of it." After acquiring permission from Siegfried Koehne, Dr. Schoennauer began to circulate a letter (detailing the liberalism at Luther Seminary which Siegfried had witnessed) to many L.C.A. congregations.

Generally speaking the L.C.A. members attacked the messenger, but ignored the message. "I was criticized on every conceivable level, but thanked by a few pastors from across Australia, and New Guinea after the mailings." The responses warned, ridiculed, threatened and admonished him. He stood his ground. It was about this time that Norm Pfitzner responded to a letter written by Dr. Schoennauer to the *Lutheran*, the official magazine of the Lutheran Church of Australia. This contact would become very important. ³⁴

After these intense meetings, the Guelker's suggested that they begin having taped services in their homes with cassette tapes supplied by Pastor Schewe from their

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

congregation of Bethesda, Portland, Oregon. A few other families also attended.

Meanwhile they placed ads in the Adelaide "Advertiser" promoting the taped services.

The concern for the education of their children finally lead the Schoennauer's to return to the United States. The grossest example involved a newly introduced science book in the equivalent of a Lutheran high school which made a mockery out of Old Testament events. The principal acknowledged that he had not previewed the textbooks, however, he would not withdraw them either.

PASTOR DUDLEY'S TAPE MINISTRY BEGINS IN AUSTRALIA

Before they had ever left for Australia, the Schoennauers had met with Pastor Thomas Dudley in Hillsboro, Oregon at Grace Lutheran Church. It was here that Dr. Schoennauer's mother held membership. After their return they asked Pastor Dudley if he could send cassette tapes of worship services and Bible studies to the people in Australia. The earlier tapes did not contain Bible Studies. He agreed readily to send both. This was and continues to be a vital link to the Word for many people in Australia even to this day. Even after Pastor Dudley's death old tapes still see use and Grace Lutheran in Hillsboro regularly ships new tapes to isolated pockets of Australia.

The tapes started coming to South Australia in 1973. After receiving tapes from Pastor Dudley for some time, Norman Pfitzner and his wife Marie traveled to the United States to meet with Pastor Dudley in 1975. They were very impressed. His congregation was an independent congregation in fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod and E.L.S. which came out of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. The Pfitzners asked to join his congregation. Membership was granted.

What impressed them so much? Pastor Dudley was a consummate conservative Lutheran. He was a very gifted and dedicated preacher. He was a very charismatic and persuasive individual who often impressed people with his memory of Bible passages from his beloved King James Version. He seemed to do much by saying "God's Word says..." He was fiercely conservative and a tenacious debater, especially with liberals.

Doctrinally everything was cut and dried for him. In some ways this led to difficulties especially in the area of marriage and remarriage and his insistence, it seems, on the "absolute necessity" of baptism for salvation.³⁵ Through his struggles with the liberalism of the L.C.-M.S., he became involved in the Federation for Authentic Lutheranism (F.A.L.). Those struggles may have embittered him in some ways and caused him to be somewhat of a loner.³⁶ Although some people could be turned off by his strong controlling desire and rigid approach to certain issues,³⁷ he could be expected to be friendly, very forthright and honest. He was an extremely talented organizer. Everyone considered him "a man dedicated to the Lord's work."³⁸ Many thought he was simply one-of-a-kind. Beyond a doubt, he worked hard for the cause of conservative Lutheranism in Australia.

PASTOR DUDLEY'S VISITS TO AUSTRALIA BEGIN

Members from South Australia began to trickle into Pastor Dudley's congregation as his tape ministry increased. By 1977 there were eight members of Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro in South Australia. Norman Pfitzner dearly wanted Pastor Dudley to visit South Australia. He offered to pay for his expenses and also advertise his arrival in many newspapers. When he did arrive for three weeks on May 7, Pastor Dudley met every night with concerned pastors and laymen of the L.C.A. His first service was conducted in the home of Norman Hansen (a print shop owner long concerned about the creeping liberalism in the L.C.A.) in Naracoorte on May 8, 1977. This was attended by 45 conservative Lutherans from the states of South Australia, Victoria, and New South Wales. After the service a discussion followed on how the conservative movement could be developed. It was then decided to form "*The Federation of Conservative Lutherans*" with Norman Pfitzner as chairman, Norm Hansen as secretary, and Colin Smith as

³⁵ Written interview with Rev. Bill Mack

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ Written interview with Rev. Daniel Schroeder

³⁸ Written interview with Selwyn Winter

treasurer. This would become the core group from which Grace Lutheran Church of Australia (a satellite of Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro) would eventually be formed.

At this meeting, it was decided that the cause of confessionalism could be furthered with the publication of a paper called "*The Reporter*." They intended to print it every other month and distribute it widely among known conservatives, both clergy and laymen, as well as other not-like minded Lutherans. Norman Hansen, the print shop owner, was editor and publisher. The first issue was published in September, 1977 and it continued until October, 1982.

While on this visit, Pastor Dudley also held discussions at Keith, Adelaide, and the Barossa Valley in South Australia along with other places in the western districts of the state of Victoria. [For map see Addendum 3]. Everywhere these were well publicized in local papers. Newspaper articles and write ups followed some of the meetings. The May 8 Adelaide "Advertiser" had the title "Splinter Lutheran Group May Form." The opening sentence could hardly have pleased L.C.A. officials. In bold print it read, " 'A breakaway conservative Lutheran Church may be formed in S.A.', a visiting US minister said yesterday." On May 22, At Hamilton, Victoria, Pastor Dudley's open forum meeting at Hamilton in a dense Lutheran area drew the District President T. Wiebusch and seven district ministers. The atmosphere of that meeting was far from cordial. Among other things, they ^{accused?} assumed Pastor Dudley of blatant sheep-stealing. They claimed that the L.C.A. was doctrinally pure.³⁹

This first visit was crucial to the concerned Lutherans and their cause, but it also ignited what was to be a hostile relationship with the L.C.A. For example, before the Hamilton meeting fliers were distributed to parishioners in the local L.C.A. Lutheran churches warning against Pastor Dudley and asking parishioners to speak to their minister before they attended.

³⁹ Written interview from Norm Hansen

This visit linked many to Grace Lutheran including people in South Australia, Victoria, and Queensland. This confessional brotherhood would last for some time. A spark had been lit. It would take years for the L.C.A. to extinguish the smoldering wick.

From his visit on the night of Pastor Dudley's arrival, Noel Priebbenow would carry a favorable report to the Queensland congregations of Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish. They now came in contact with Dudley and his tape ministry. The Lord had provided a glimmer of hope for the Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish just as Pastor Hunter left Australia. Just when they felt "almost total devastation!" God brought someone who would extend the hand of fellowship and who in time would help them acquire a pastor. In the meantime Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish reorganized and the laymen took over the operation of the public ministry. Laymen performed baptisms, distributed Holy Communion, led worship services, taught confirmation and performed a few weddings. Pastor Dudley's tapes and his almost annual visits from 1977 to 1983 helped sustain and strengthen this little flock.

The blessing of this new-found fellowship started to pay almost immediate dividends. For example, in September of 1977, four of the Pfitzners from South Australia traveled up to Inverell, in New South Wales for a special weekend retreat at the home of the Burkerts. Noel Priebbenow brought eleven--the Winters, the Priebbenows and the Lederhoses--in a bus from Queensland for this special time of fellowship. Erika Burkert remembers, "We definitely had an unforgettable weekend. From that time on our contacts kept growing and from 1978 Pastor Dudley's visits included both centers."⁴⁰

In June 1978, Pastor Dudley and an elder from Hillsboro (Mr. Al Zander) visited Queensland, Victoria and South Australia. During this visit, Grace Lutheran Church of Australia (G.L.C.A.) was formed at Naracoorte. This congregation was an extension of Grace Lutheran in Hillsboro. All of the members of Grace Lutheran Church of Australia held their membership in Oregon. (Later this relationship would become somewhat

⁴⁰ Personal letter from Erika Burkert, dated March 15, 1993

unmanageable from 12,000 miles and a source of conflict when they had their own pastor in South Australia.) Also notable on his 1978 visit was a June 11 meeting in a suburb of Adelaide where Pastor Dudley met with 50 concerned Lutherans.

He also visited Queensland in 1978. That visit encouraged and strengthened the brothers and sisters in Queensland. The congregations of Our Redeemer Ev. Lutheran in Brisbane and St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran in Maryborough looked on Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro as a sister congregation while still maintaining their own identify.

In 1979, Pastor Dudley made another annual visit to Queensland and South Australia. With each passing year more and more tapes (with a worship service on one side and a Bible study on the other) arrived from Hillsboro by mail while the pastoral vacancy in Queensland continued to be filled by the dedicated laymen. External growth was slow, but their faith and hope continued to deepen.

PASTOR DUDLEY SPENDS A YEAR IN AUSTRALIA

Excitement swelled in South Australia in 1981 when Grace Lutheran Church of Australia purchased a church building in Elizabeth, a northern suburb on Adelaide. Seven separate contributors, including individuals from the United States, contributed. It was purchased for \$27,672.07 and opened without any debt. On June 14, 1981 they dedicated the building.

This would be a special time for Grace Lutheran Church of Australia (G.L.C.A.) because Pastor Dudley arrived on October 3, 1981 to serve for 12 months in South Australia. Although based in South Australia, he and his wife Charlene visited Queensland also where he conducted a number of services. What began with such excitement would end in mild disappointment. Many difficulties faced Pastor Dudley during the year. The G.L.C.A. began on a high note, but as it started to grow conflicts developed and personalities clashed. It didn't help to have the pastoral leadership thousands of miles away. His location in America had been too remote from the scene, and uncontrollable situations were bound to arise. Several members wanted to set themselves up as

the controllers and organizers, and the fellowship was getting fragile.⁴¹ Pastor Dudley's primary purpose during the year was to find a conservative minister he could colloquize from the L.C.A. who could serve the G.L.C.A. and Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish in Queensland. Although many were sympathetic, no one was to be found willing to leave the L.C.A. A secondary purpose, it seems, was to iron out grievances which were getting worse. Although she admitted it was her own view, one member frankly put it:

But they wouldn't listen, as they had made up their minds that they were right. Many times he [Pastor Dudley] came down here and plowed Norm's paddock to get away from the whole shermozle (sic). He was getting the flak that was Norm's previously. ... Needless to say Pastor wasn't prepared to do mission work for a church which was divided against itself. Even in those days Frank Schuller could not resign himself toward the Sunday School at Coleraine that Doug and Elma conducted of unchurched children.⁴²

Pastor Dudley kept the situation from exploding. The powder keg may have not been lit during this period but the powder remained quite dry. The explosion could easily occur because the underlying problems were not really solved.

During the year, Pastor Dudley rented a flat on the north side of Adelaide. He and his wife were often on the road around Australia. But regular Sunday services were held at Elizabeth and every second Sunday at Keith (167 miles southeast of Adelaide). [For map see Addendum 3]. One early member comments, "From our observations he did a little but not much outreach door knocking. There was no increase in membership, only consolidation."⁴³

In September, 1983 Pastor Dudley returned to Hillsboro, Oregon after a year in Australia. In many ways, this was a dream year for the congregation which always had wanted a full-time minister. And Pastor Dudley was an excellent one. But the congregation had not grown in size. And unsettled problems simply awaited a spark.

⁴¹ Written interview from Alma Uebergang

⁴² Written interview from Doris Pfitzner

⁴³ Written interview from Norm Laubsch

A confessional brotherhood had been discovered but still the long search for resident pastors continued!

V. EXITING DAYS OF GROWTH AND HOPE:

PASTOR BILL MACK'S MINISTRY AT FAITH PARISH IN QUEENSLAND

"In your good pleasure make Zion prosper; build up the walls of Jerusalem." ~ Psalm 51:18

Upon his return, Pastor Dudley approached the Wisconsin Synod and E.L.S. for manpower to serve in Australia. Finally after a period of eight years without a resident pastor, and after a number of letters had been sent to the E.L.S. and W.E.L.S., the Queensland congregations were able to call Pastor William Mack, who accepted the call in April 1984. For the Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish this was an answer to their prayer and his promise. "Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding." (Jeremiah 3:15)

How did they get the name of Rev. Bill Mack? Pastor Dudley arranged a call list of two or three names. Rev. Bill Mack was on that list. Dudley first met Bill Mack in 1983 while looking for a Minister of Education for Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro. He was a graduate of a small conservative break-away seminary in Tacoma, Washington called Faith Seminary. He had refused a call into the A.L.C. Later Bill Mack had accepted a colloquy into the Missouri Synod and was serving at George, Washington. But he became disillusioned there with the loose fellowship practice of the L.C.-M.S. Overtures were made to the E.L.S. and subsequently he joined the E.L.S. clergy roster. After he accepted the call to Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish, he arrived in May, 1983.

During the eight-year vacancy since 1971 when Keith Hunter resigned much had been happening in Queensland. In November, 1979, Faith Evangelical Parish declared altar and pulpit fellowship with Grace Lutheran Church of Australia and Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro. Eventually, the larger congregation Our Redeemer Evangelical Lutheran Church sold the parsonage at Redbank Plains for \$25,000. During this time services were conducted in the music room of the Graceville Primary School. In 1982, Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Brisbane purchased a church building from Pine Rivers Baptist Church in Kallangur (a northern suburb of Brisbane). (Now that much of the confusion caused by Kenneth Miller's spurious pamphlet "The Differences Between the

W.E.L.S. and L.C.R." had been cleared up.) Also in a letter dated May 29, 1982, Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish wrote to President Carl Mischke of the W.E.L.S. extending the hand of fellowship. One might expect a congregation without a resident pastor for eight years to fade out of existence. But far from dying these congregations continued to battle on. Throughout this period, the small congregation at Maryborough met in homes with the elders carrying on with lay-reading services. There was little growth numerically, but the body of Christ was being built up in unity, in faith and in knowledge.

Pastor Bill Mack arrived in May to find a very appreciative and joyful assembly of believers, exhilarated about having a resident pastor again. He recalls:

How different it was from America (palm trees, houses on stilts, people driving on the 'wrong' side, etc.) but yet how similar (modern cars, McDonalds, K-Mart) We thoroughly, overall, enjoyed it. It was exciting.⁴⁴

On June 10, 1984 Pastor William Mack was installed at Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish. His ministry would last only 2 1/2 years, but would be a time characterized by excitement and hope.

Pastor Mack began some intensive evangelism and outreach efforts. Sel Winter described his ministry as:

Dynamic! Evangelism began almost immediately with great success. Confirmation classes, adult instruction and Sunday School attendance flourished. He volunteered as a counselor on a Christian Radio station and had people knocking on his door day and night. Sunday school attendance peaked at over 40. Youth group attendance was close to 50. Worship Services were often in excess of 50.⁴⁵

During this period of robust activity, many new programs were directed toward reaching out into the community around the church. Some of these included Sunday School picnics, Carols by Candlelight and extensive canvassing.

Much was done for evangelism. This included door-to-door witnessing, pamphlet distribution, newspaper ads, radio spots, teaching, visiting friends and witnessing to

⁴⁴ Written interview with Rev. Bill Mack

⁴⁵ Written interview with Selwyn Winter

strangers. One of those strangers was Mark Tuffin. While Mark Tuffin complained about a persistent Jehovah Witness to a friend, Pastor Mack overheard the conversation. Pastor Mack offered him an invitation to Our Redeemer Lutheran Church in Kallangur with one of his business cards. As somewhat of a joke, Mark and his fiancée Sue decided to show up for a service. The Word soon took hold. Adult instruction followed for Mark and his fiancée. Eventually, in July, 1989 Mark, with his wife Sue traveled to Mankato, Minnesota where Mark would study for the public ministry at Bethany Seminary (E.L.S.). He will graduate in June, 1993, and hopes to return to Australia with his wife and two daughters, Kari and Samantha. There were demonstrations that the mission efforts were producing fruit! The progress was slow but God was giving increase.

All of the new emphasis on raw evangelism marked a departure from the past activity of the congregations. Pastor Mack focused his attention around the work at Kallangur, a northern suburb of Brisbane, Queensland. Three Sundays out of four, Pastor Mack was at Kallangur. One Sunday per month, he drove 163 miles north to Maryborough, Queensland to conduct a preaching service in the home of Noel and Elva Priebbenow. Four times a year, he would drive ten hours north to Mackay, Queensland to hold services with the Ellenden family and to Inverell, New South Wales for services with the Burkerts. Three times a year a trip was made to visit the congregation in South Australia. [For map see Addendum 3]

With little prospect of returning to America even for a visit, homesickness increased. Pastor Mack also suffered from perpetual allergies, irritated by stress. But the homesickness was especially difficult for his wife and children.⁴⁶ Without the knowledge of the congregations, Pastor Mack sought a call to return to America. Eventually, he placed a blind ad in the paper in Klamath Falls, Oregon and an E.L.S. congregation called him. Once the decision was made, much of the pace slowed. He returned to America in

⁴⁶ Written interview with Rev. Bill Mack

1987. The congregation, in one congregational leader's opinion, felt "Devastation! His intentions were a well-kept secret and were discussed with no one." ⁴⁷

Once again the parish shifted into a lay-led ministry. The days of excitement were ending in frustration!

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

VI. THE SAD INCIDENT OF G. L. C. A.:

PASTOR DANIEL SABROWSKY'S MINISTRY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA

"The Lord hates... a man who stirs up dissension among brothers." ~ Proverbs 6:16,19

While Pastor Mack was serving in Queensland, the South Australian congregation also obtained a resident minister. Since the formation of Grace Lutheran Church of Australia in June, 1978, the scattered congregation had been without a resident pastor. Call after call had been returned. They struggled on with weekly tapes from Grace, Hillsboro and were buoyed by annual visits from Pastor Thomas Dudley. Finally, in 1985 Pastor Dudley heard that Pastor Daniel Sabrowsky, who had recently moved to Portland, was without a call. He was a 1962 graduate of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary with whom Pastor Dudley had become acquainted. Pastor Sabrowsky had preached occasionally for Dudley and taught a Bible course on the occult at Hillsboro over the years.

Around January, 1985, Pastor Dan Sabrowsky received the call to serve in Australia as an associate pastor for Grace Lutheran of Hillsboro. It was a unique situation. He was called to serve Grace Lutheran Church of Australia only. He would be Pastor Dudley's associate in Australia, but have no authority in Hillsboro. In many ways the set-up seemed needlessly complicated. For the members of Grace Lutheran Church of Australia were actually still members of Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro. Any new member in Australia was actually joining a congregation 12,000 miles away. The only influence on matters in Hillsboro came from the one elder of the G.L.C.A. in Australia. The G.L.C.A. elder had a vote equal to one of the votes of the three elders in Hillsboro. Eventually, this awkward situation would lead to difficulty. Church history has its sad chapters. Many of the details of what happen to Grace Lutheran Church of Australia are not pleasant to recount.

Pastor Dudley arrived first in South Australia to visit the membership and conducted the annual voter's meeting before Pastor Sabrowsky's arrival in August. Some

inklings of trouble reared up even before his departure. In what seemed like almost dictatorial style, the Hillsboro elders directed Pastor Sabrowsky as to the scheduled date of his installation and the travel plans. Without consultation, they told him he would tour the field and meet the membership with Pastor Dudley so that Pastor Dudley could introduce him. Pastor Sabrowsky requested the right to make his own visits and expressed the desire to travel with his family because it would be their first international flight. Eventually, Pastor Sabrowsky and his family were allowed to travel together.

On August 25, 1985 Pastor Dan Sabrowsky was installed in Adelaide, S.A. by Pastor Thomas Dudley and Pastor Bill Mack, who traveled down from Queensland for the occasion. Naturally, it was a time of high expectations.

People felt that their new minister, Pastor Sabrowsky, was an extremely evangelical, experienced and talented man. He was also perhaps a bit too independent to mesh with the Hillsboro elders desire to keep close control over the congregation and its progress. As a friend of Pastor Sabrowsky said "He seems to be a gifted preacher with a good rapport with his people; however he doesn't hesitate to say what he thinks and he calls things as he sees them."⁴⁸ The elder of the congregation at this time, Norm Laubsch remembers "he had a characteristic of wanting to do things well, and a vision in which he put his energy, such as i.e. to begin a very successful radio broadcast."⁴⁹ His theological knowledge, way with people, innovation of new ideas, good sense of purpose in his ministry and good sense of humor would serve him well.⁵⁰

Almost immediately a number of problems began to develop. Basic to much of the trouble that transpired was the tremendous lack of communication between the leaders in Hillsboro and Pastor Sabrowsky 12,000 miles away. From the time Pastor Sabrowsky arrived in August, he received no word from Hillsboro until May of the following year. The main communication, it seemed, was taking place through the Chairman of the

⁴⁸ Written interview with Rev. Dan Schroeder

⁴⁹ Written interview with Norm Laubsch

⁵⁰ Written interview with Rev. Daniel Schroeder.

congregation, Frank Schuller. It appeared later that this exchange of ideas may not have been free from negative remarks. But Pastor Sabrowsky only heard about the criticisms much later. Perhaps those people who had fought so hard over doctrinal subtleties found it difficult not to be hypercritical of their new minister whose only major weakness was that he was not their beloved Pastor Dudley. As these problems of miscommunication became evident, Pastor Sabrowsky requested copies of official correspondence that he did not know had been crossing the Pacific Ocean. Hillsboro's elders denied the request. They claimed he had no reason to mistrust the members in Australia. Instead, they castigated Pastor Sabrowsky for not writing them or sending monthly reports (something they had never asked him to do).

In May of 1986, another log was added to what was becoming a consuming fire. A guideline adopted by Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro entitled "Biblical Guidelines to Regulate Divorces and Remarriage" arrived. Without so much as consultation, they planned to add this guideline to the by-laws of the constitution. This would help them deal easily with remarriage and divorce in the congregation. What immediately troubled Pastor Sabrowsky was that the document neglected to allow malicious desertion as a scripturally legitimate reason for divorce and remarriage. This document from Hillsboro seemed to restrict remarriage to only those who were divorced because of adultery. When Pastor Sabrowsky rejected the passage of this document, it seems safe to assume that Pastor Dudley felt that his orthodoxy was being called into question. This issue remained red-hot for the rest of Pastor Sabrowsky's ministry with the G.L.C.A. Pastor Dudley claimed that Pastor Sabrowsky was calling him heterodox.

About this time, Mr. Laubsch, the Australian elder, of the G.L.C.A. received a request to start taping Pastor Sabrowsky's sermons to send them back to Hillsboro. Before this Pastor Sabrowsky had freely sent demonstration tapes of his radio broadcast, but now he instructed Norm Laubsch to hold the recorded tapes until a clarification was

received as to the reason for this unusual request. Satan worked hard to destroy the fragile fellowship!

Financially, Pastor Sabrowsky struggled. In the 18 months, he "spent over \$10,000 in his personal savings just in order to live." Although he had been told to wait until his clearance to leave came through before selling anything, when it happened the elders gave him only two weeks before departure to sell everything. After six months of waiting when the clearance arrived, he was given only two weeks to sell three cars, a house, household items and make all arrangement for transport of furnishings by ship. He was unable to sell one car which was leased, meanwhile he was forced to make payments on this car. When he asked if the congregation might assist with this expense incurred as a result of his service, Frank Schuller strongly objected.

The elders in Hillsboro somehow got word about it. After Pastor Sabrowsky wrote to them explaining the circumstances on June 5, he got this scathing retort on June 30:

Throughout all the time we also had every confidence that you were conducting a prudent and careful review of your personal, family and financial circumstances preparatory to concluding that you could manage them all, under the terms of your Call, through the move to Australia and your resettlement there. Pastor Sabrowsky, you accepted the Call and the conditions.

The sharply-worded letter concluded:

Perhaps you made some bad decisions. We lay-people have also had such experiences; and some of us have gone through bankruptcy as a result. But the past is the past, and the future depends on attitude. So long as you continue to imagine someone else is responsible for the results of your own past decisions, your future will be bleak and joyless And, of course, so will be the future of the G.L.C.A.!

Sincerely in the Service of God,

The Board of Elders ⁵¹

⁵¹ Letter from Grace Lutheran Elders to Daniel Sabrowsky dated June 30, 1986.

As with much of the correspondence between the G.L.C.A. and Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro Pastor Dudley did not sign this letter. He may have been unaware of it. To calm matters, Pastor Sabrowsky absorbed the loss, dismissed the issue and apologized for the request.

To understand the situation of Pastor Sabrowsky, consider how his salary of \$30,000 Australian dollars equated to only \$19,000 U.S. dollars. From this he was expected to furnish his own house, pay for his two cars, his own insurance, his health insurance, his own gas and oil for trips to the congregation at Willalooka near Keith, South Australia (150 miles from Adelaide) every other Sunday, as well as the trip to Hamilton once a month (another 150 miles from Willalooka). Frank Schuller remains critical of what he thinks was "the love of 'good things' in life and so his need of a high salary." ⁵²

On August 5, 1986, despite the previous objections of Pastor Sabrowsky, Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro adopted as a standing rule in the congregation the "Statement on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" as prepared by the elders and Pastor Dudley. And on the same day, Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro resolved to cut off their subsidy to Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish in Queensland (effective June, 1987) after Frank Schuller reportedly told Hillsboro's elders that the car allowance for Pastor Mack was excessive because they were helping him replace a dilapidated vehicle. Frank Schuller and Pastor Sabrowsky had recently traveled from South Australia to Queensland for a visit when Frank discovered the Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish car allowance increase while he studied a copy of their budget which happened to be sitting out. Pastor Sabrowsky remembers well how Frank Schuller argued that this was an excessive salary increase. Without contacting the Queensland congregations about this matter prior to their action of August 5, Hillsboro wrote to Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish in Queensland announced the end of the subsidy after

⁵² Written interview with Frank and Ruth Schuller.

June 1987 and declared them to be self-sufficient. They also wrote to the congregation in South Australia and advised them to stop their subsidy to Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish.

Despite all of the pressures placed upon Pastor Sabrowsky, much was being accomplished. He began a radio ministry as an evangelism tool. He taught two Bible classes weekly. He conducted services at Elizabeth every Sunday morning. On alternating Sunday evenings he conducted services at Willalookan, near Keith. Once a month, he traveled to Hamilton, Victoria to hold services. Because relationships often seemed fragile within the fellowship, Pastor Sabrowsky often had to play peace maker within the congregation. He was quite busy.

Because of all the problems that he felt centered about Frank Schuller's leadership of the congregation and his inability to work with Pastor Sabrowsky, Pastor Sabrowsky asked him not to seek another term as chairman. When the meeting was approaching telephone calls came from Hillsboro, Oregon, urging key members to preserve the status quo. Frank Schuller was reelected despite the fact that Pastor Sabrowsky did not know about the telephone calls from Hillsboro, Oregon. But the pressure and strife eventually caused Frank Schuller to resign.

On October 22, 1986 Frank Schuller resigned from the G.L.C.A. with an eight page letter filled with accusations. His departure did much to settle the major problems within the congregation. Blame is often difficult to assign. There were many contributing factors. The eighth commandment was shattered by many. But the vast weight of evidence points clearly in Frank Schuller's direction.

Soon after this Pastor Sabrowsky flew to America because of the news of his mother's imminent death due to terminal cancer. He returned to Oregon to be at his dying mother's bedside. She lived four days after his arrival. During his time in Oregon Pastor Dudley and Pastor Sabrowsky met with Wisconsin Synod officials about Hillsboro's statement on remarriage and divorce. They asked Pastor Dudley to clarify his statement to consider malicious desertion. All seemed to be settle^d about the issue. But just a few

weeks later in a meeting held on November 26, Pastor Dudley and the elders of Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro demanded Pastor Sabrowsky's resignation from the ministry in South Australia. They declared their outreach ministry in Australia ended. Many other factors finally contributed to that meeting on November 26, 1986, held in Hillsboro. But Pastor Sabrowsky's resignation became effective December 15, 1986.

The congregation stood completely shocked when they found out. Those members in South Australia had no input or knowledge of this demand for his resignation. In fact, the matter was never taken to a voter's meeting in Hillsboro. Pastor Sabrowsky flew back to Australia to pack for his return, While in Australia, the elder Norm Laubsch wrote to Hillsboro, Oregon, on behalf of the G.L.C.A. on December 7, 1986,

All in South Australia feel the Hillsboro request for Pastor Sabrowsky's resignation should be reconsidered, and if favorably reconsidered that Pastor Sabrowsky be informed before he leaves for the U.S.A. and be encouraged to remain in his ministry in Australia.⁵³

The resignation was not reconsidered. They also denied a request to allow Pastor Sabrowsky to preach until his departure. A farewell service was held for Pastor Sabrowsky in Adelaide on January 25, 1987. By early February, Pastor Sabrowsky returned to Portland, Oregon. Thankfully, before Pastor Dudley died in 1990, he and Pastor Sabrowsky met for a three hour meeting to resolve all animosity, and everything was resolved.

What became of the South Australian congregation? The G.L.C.A. sold its property in Adelaide and dwindled to a handful of members who retained membership in Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro with Pastor Dudley until January, 1991. At that time their memberships were transferred and the congregation was reorganized as Prince of Peace Lutheran. It then joined the E.L.S.A. A few "new" members have joined since then. Most of them are "old" faces.

⁵³ Letter to Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro from Norm Laubsch, dated Dec. 12, 1986.

The heart-ache and disappointment they felt are understandable, but God may have been purifying gold in the flames. Today, he appears to be raising them from out of the ashes. In 1993, Prince of Peace purchased a church building near Naracoorte, S.A. (formerly Zion Lutheran). They have recently called Pastor Paul Anderson from the E.L.S. to serve them, and he has accepted that call. Matthew Schewe, a Wisconsin Synod seminary student, has accepted a call to serve as a vicar for a year in the Prince of Peace congregation from September 1993 until August 1994.

God continues to reminds us "rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance." (Romans 5:3)

VII: THE LONG DAYS OF STRUGGLE AND WAIT:

CONTINUING THE PUBLIC MINISTRY WITH A PASTOR

"Build yourselves up in your most holy faith ... as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life." ~ Jude 20-21

After Pastor Bill Mack returned to the United States in 1987, the congregations in Queensland returned to a "survival mode." Once again they were forced to wait for a resident pastor. But the Lord did provide some opportunities to rejoice!

One of them was the purchase of a church building in Maryborough. Throughout its history since 1971, St. Paul's had been meeting in the private homes. It was far from satisfactory for purposes of outreach. It certainly hampered visibility and growth. But that was about to end. One of the original members of that congregation gives an account of those events:

Between the years of 1971 and 1986, the St. Paul's congregation was very small in size. The only place we could assemble for worship and Bible study, was in private homes each Sunday. We found it difficult to encourage people to join with us, having services in private homes. It seemed amazing to non-church people..."Having church in a private home?... not for me, but thanks for the invitation."

Indeed, we were badly in need of our own place for worship and fellowship. Frustrations started to tell on us, especially the lay readers and pastor (when we had one). The lack of a permanent place and identity, the outside interruptions, plus the other little and big things altogether made it necessary to do something about the situation we were experiencing. And this is the point to where the Lord had to bring us, before something could be done.

Word began to circulate that some of our members were scouting around for a suitable building for church work. Hours of traveling around, and asking, and looking, and exploring, had come to an end with no results, except being "a little further down in the dumps." But still, we knew that we could be thankful to God that we could at least use private homes for worship and fellowship, even though morale was low.

But the good Lord had a plan for us that we didn't even dream about. We previously had made an offer for a nice shop on Wilson Street in Maryborough; but it was rejected because we didn't offer enough for the building. We were about to negotiate a price, when Rodney and Daph Spies informed Charlie Lederhose that a church building, occupied by the Westleyan Methodist Church, was for sale. That message was like 'high octane fuel' to motivate Charlie around to the Wesleyan office ...

Low and behold the hand of the Lord was really with us, as the first contract fell through ...

The congregation then met, and Charlie gave a report regarding all the particulars. It was agreed upon to offer \$28,000 in an 'as-is' condition....

On January 25, 1987 the big day came. Following the final service of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, at 11:45 a.m., Terry O'Brien and Charlie Lederhose went to the building. The place was packed with people. Terry went before the assembly, received the keys, and made a short speech. The building was then dedicated on February 8, 1987 with Charlie Lederhose conducting the dedication service.⁵⁴

This was indeed a time of great joy for the members of St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran.

The new church home injected new vigor into the congregation. The new visibility offered new opportunities for outreach. Early in 1987 a Sunday School program began at St. Paul's with 6 children. In time it would grow dramatically and become the primary source of outreach into the neighborhood.

During the two-year pastoral vacancy which followed Pastor Mack's departure, Bernie Hartwig (the Parish Secretary) and his wife traveled to America to make personal contacts with the E.L.S. and W.E.L.S. with whom they were in fellowship. Bernie pleaded for a full-time minister!

The last pastoral vacancy had lasted eight years. It had now been two years since Pastor Bill Mack accepted a call back to the U.S. Thankfully for the Queensland congregations, this time the wait was almost over!

⁵⁴ Bulletin of Special Service of Thanksgiving and Debt Reduction. (January 11, 1992) from "Brief History."

VIII: TEMPERED WITH DAYS OF STRUGGLE AND HOPE:

PASTOR DAN SCHROEDER'S MINISTRY IN AUSTRALIA

"Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful" ~ Hebrews 10:23

Finally in 1988, a call was extended to a graduate of the E.L.S.'s Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in Mankato, Minnesota. The graduate's name was Daniel K. Schroeder. He was originally raised in the Lutheran Church of America where his father was a minister. But ^{he} left the L.C.A. in 1978 because of their denial of hell's existence and their general disregard for their members. He joined the Wisconsin Synod and then later decided to study for the public ministry. He began to pursue his seminary studies at Bethany Lutheran College in 1982. After receiving his Master of Divinity from Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary in 1988, he accepted the call to serve Faith Evangelical Lutheran Parish in June of 1988. But because of immigration matters it was not until March 7, 1989 that Pastor Dan Schroeder arrived in Brisbane, Queensland. On March 12, he was installed as the pastor of the parish.

Under Pastor Schroeder's leadership the congregations have now been renamed and incorporated as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (E.L.S.A.). Some from the outside felt a need for better organization and incorporation under the laws of Australia, as well as the need for a separate and totally Australian identity. The involved process began in 1990. On July 2, 1992, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia became officially incorporated under the law of the commonwealth of Australia.

During these years the E.L.S.A.'s fellowship ties have been strengthened. The recent years of the E.L.S.A.'s existence has been marked by a number of special visits from overseas fellowship connections. In April, 1989, President Orvick of the E.L.S. visited the Queensland congregations along with Pastor Dudley. In 1989 and November, 1992 the W.E.L.S. Southeast Asia Mission Exploration Team explored Australia to consider its mission potential.

Also a vicar program has been instituted with students from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon, Wisconsin. In 1989, Curtis Golm, a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary (also a graduate of Bethany Lutheran College and its "Bethany Pre-Seminary Program") and a friend of Pastor Dan Schroeder, wrote him with this offer:

Well I have this proposition for you. I don't know how busy you are or what your obligations are, but I was wondering if you would be interested in getting some help for the months of June, July and August? Whether that would be in canvassing or sick calls or preaching or liturgy; it makes no difference to me.⁵⁵

In essence this letter's proposition began the vicar program. Curtis Golm arrived in Queensland on June 10, 1989, to assist Pastor Dan Schroeder for three months as a summer vicar. The following spring, the E.L.S.A. called Golm to return to serve them for a whole year. Curtis Golm landed again on July 15, 1990. The congregation agreed to provide meals for him and a small weekly stipend while he lived in various member's homes. This arrangement has continued.

The following year found Kenneth Fisher "down under." He flew into Brisbane in September 1991. He was installed for a one-year call as a vicar for the E.L.S.A. on September 22, 1991. During this period a clearly defined procedure was developed between the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and the E.L.S.A. concerning the calling of vicars. Previously the individual candidates had been called directly which resulted in some confusion and tension between the students, the seminary and the synods. Now this new calling process helps avoid the misunderstandings that have taken place in the past. With these guidelines now in place, the E.L.S.A. called Michael Borgwardt from a call list provided by the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in the spring of 1992. In September of 1992, Michael Borgwardt landed in Australia to serve one-year as a vicar for the E.L.S.A.

The vicar program has helped provide regular weekly preaching services to the congregations in Queensland. In the first few years of the program, the pastor and vicar alternated weekly between the two Queensland congregations. And every three months,

⁵⁵ Personal Letter from Curtis Golm to Rev. Dan Schroeder dated Feb. 6, 1989.

either the pastor or the vicar traveled to Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in South Australia. Today the vicar works primarily in just one congregation and travels much less. [For map see Addendum 3].

The vicar program has relieved pressure from Pastor Dan Schroeder who was called to serve the two congregations in Queensland and Prince of Peace in South Australia as a vacancy. Hundreds of miles separate them. On top of this, the E.L.S.A. has families living in Mackay, Queensland and Inverell, New South Wales which appreciate regular pastoral visits. Because of the great distances in the far-flung parish, the vicar program has helped maintain a regular ministry until pastors can be found to serve each of the three congregations. One of the E.L.S.A. members commented about the program, "Much has been achieved. Many good programs have begun although some have suffered during change-over... Some very good work has flowed from the evangelism efforts which are continuing."⁵⁶

What does the future hold for the E.L.S.A.? Only he who holds the future knows! But God's blessing is richly flowing. Pastor Paul Anderson (E.L.S.) has accepted the call to serve Prince of Peace Lutheran, South Australia. Matthew Schewe (a student at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary) has accepted the vicar call for this coming year. He plans to be based in South Australia working with the Prince of Peace congregation. Also Mark Tuffin hopes to return to Australia after his graduation in June of 1993. How God continue to be merciful! Throughout all the controversies, difficulties and traumas, the Lord has preserved this little flock. But within the congregations there is hope for the future, which has been tempered by the struggles of the past!

Finally, our prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless and preserve the E.L.S.A. throughout its future days just as he has not forsaken them in the past! As the Psalmist David could trust, so may we:

⁵⁶ Written interview with Selwyn Winter.

If the Lord delights in a man's ways, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand. I have been young and now am old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, or their children begging bread. (Psalm 37:23-25)

Throughout the years, the LORD has not let the E.L.S.A. fall from his grace. May he continue to supply them richly with the Bread of Life!

THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE FORSAKEN!

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Pfitzner, Doris J.
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Schoennauer, Dr. Al W.
Schuller, Frank E.
Schroeder, Rev. Daniel K.
Uebergang, Alma J.
Winter, Selwyn J.

AUDIO TAPED INTERVIEW

Sabrowsky, Rev. Daniel

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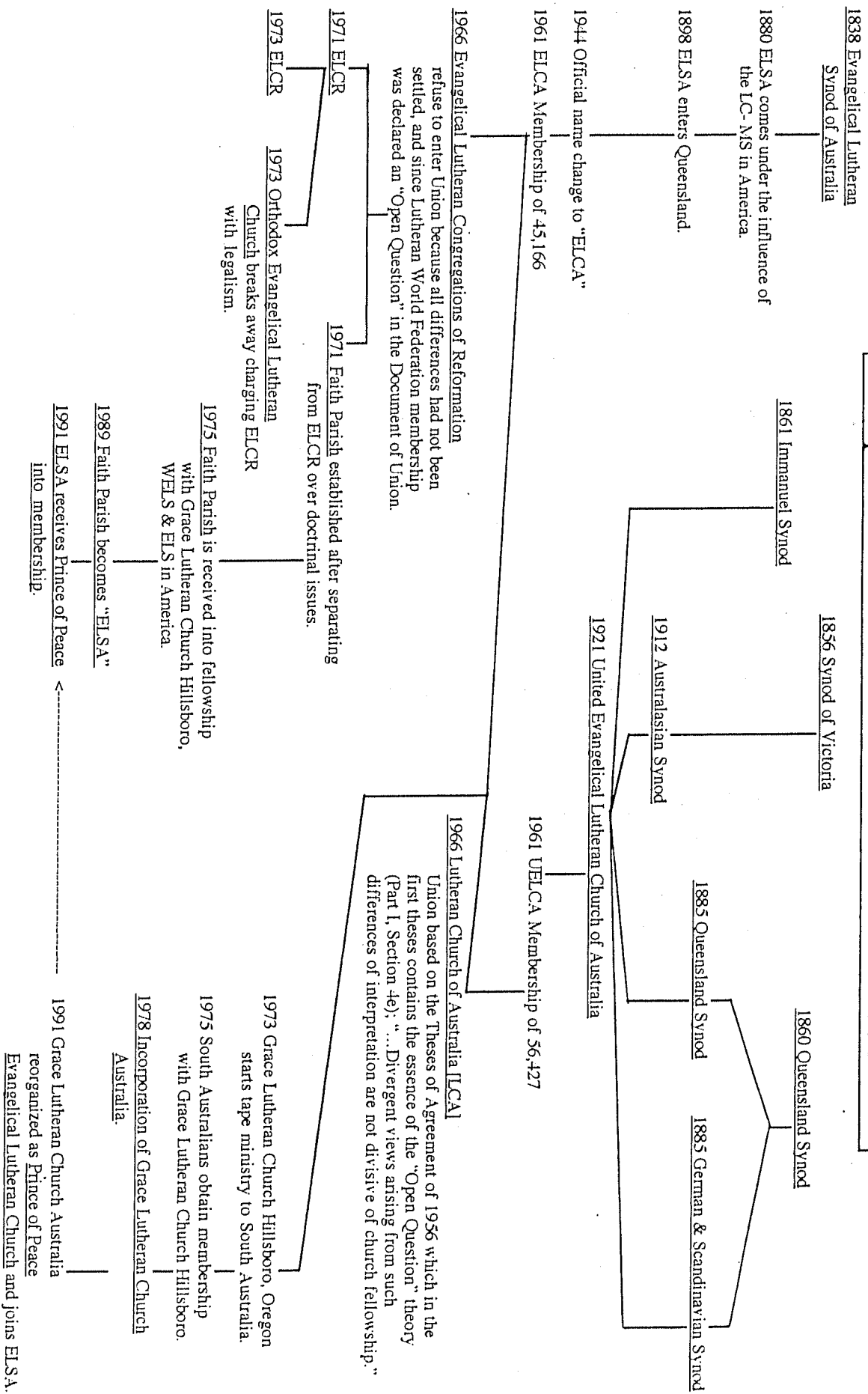
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A Map of Lutheranism in Australia: 1838 - 1993



Addendum 1

prepared by Curtis A. Golm

Addendum 2

IMPORTANT DATES IN E.L.S.A. HISTORY

+ + + +

- 1956 -- *Thesis of Agreement* adopted by U.E.L.C.A.
- 1959 -- March 5-12, E.L.C.A. adopts *Thesis of Agreement* at Albury.
- 1965 -- January 11, *Document of Union* adopted by Joint Committees.
- 1965 -- February, release of *Crossroads* by Queensland Parish Education Committee
- 1965 -- March 15, E.L.C.A. declares altar and pulpit fellowship with U.E.L.C.A. at Toowoomba.
- 1965 -- November 28, *Declaration of Fellowship* between E.L.C.A. and U.E.L.C.A.
- 1966 -- March 20, first gathering at Kilkivan of E.L.C.R. (50 people).
- 1966 -- May 29, Constituting convention of E.L.C.R. at Kilkivan.
- 1966 -- October 29 to November 2, Organic Synod at Tanunda, S.A. between E.L.C.A. and U.E.L.C.A. to form L.C.A. -- only Pastor Kleinig refuses to join.
- 1967 -- July 23, Pastor Keith Hunter installed at Woombye, Queensland.
- 1971 -- August 1, Faith Parish splits from E.L.C.R.
- 1973 -- Dr. Schoennauer writes to *The Lutheran* (an L.C.A. publication)
- 1973 -- Pastor T. E. Dudley's tape ministry begins to South Australia.
- 1973 -- July 11, Pastor Audrey Grieger resigns from E.L.C.R. to form O.E.L.C.
- 1974 -- Dr. Schoennauer places ads in Adelaide "Advertiser" promoting taped services.
- 1976 -- Norm Pfitzner travels to U.S. and meets with Pastor Dudley in Oregon.
- 1976 -- The Pfitzner families resign from L.C.A. to join Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro, Oregon.
- 1977 -- May 5, Pastor Dudley's first visit to Australia sponsored by Norm Pfitzner (8 members of Grace Hillsboro now in South Australia).
- 1977 -- May 8, Pastor Dudley holds meeting in Naracoorte with 45 in attendance -- the formation of "The Federation of Conservative Lutherans."
- 1977 -- May 22, At Hamilton, Victoria, Pastor Dudley open forum draws District President T. Wiebusch and 7 district ministers -- fierce opposition to Dudley.
- 1977 -- March, Pastor Keith Hunter resigns from Faith Parish.

- 1977 -- July 22, Pastor Dudley conducts service in Naracoorte.
- 1977 -- September, first publication of *Reporter* (continues until October 1982).
- 1977 -- September, special meeting of South Australian and Queensland groups for weekend retreat in Inverell.
- 1978 -- June, Pastor Dudley and elder from Hillsboro (Mr. Al Zander) visit Queensland, Victoria and South Australia.
- 1978 -- June, Grace Lutheran Church of Australia (G.L.C.A.) formed at Naracoorte.
- 1978 -- June 11, Pastor Dudley meets with 50 concerned Lutherans in an Adelaide suburb.
- 1978 -- August 6, Faith Parish writes President O. J. Naumann of Wisconsin Synod with inquiry about fellowship.
- 1979 -- August, Pastor Dudley makes annual visit to Queensland and South Australia.
- 1979 -- November, Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish declares altar and pulpit fellowship with Grace Lutheran Church of Australia and Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro.
- 1981 -- June 14, Grace Lutheran Church of Australia dedicate building at Elizabeth (purchased for \$27,672.07).
- 1981 -- October 3, Pastor Dudley arrives in South Australia to serve for 12 months.
- 1982 -- Our Redeemer purchases church building from Pine Rivers Baptist Church in Kallangur (northern suburb of Brisbane).
- 1982 -- May 29, Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish writes to President Carl Mischke extending hand of fellowship.
- 1983 -- September, Pastor Dudley returns to U.S. after year in Australia.
- 1984 -- May, Pastor William Mack and family arrive from U.S. to serve Faith Parish.
- 1984 -- June 10, Pastor William Mack installed at Faith Parish
- 1985 -- August 25, Pastor Dan Sabrowsky installed in Adelaide, S.A. by Pastor Dudley and Mack.
- 1986 -- August 5, Grace Hillsboro resolves to cut off subsidy to Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish (effective June 1987)
- 1986 -- August 5, Grace Hillsboro adopts as standing rule the "Statement on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage" prepared by elders and Pastor Dudley.
- 1986 -- October 22, Frank Schuller resigns from G.L.C.A.

- 1986 -- November 26, Elders of Grace Lutheran, Hillsboro request Pastor Sabrowsky's resignation from ministry in South Australia
- 1986 -- December 15, Pastor Sabrowsky's resignation effective.
- 1987 -- January 25, Farewell service for Pastor Sabrowsky in Adelaide
- 1987 -- January 25, St. Paul's church building purchased in Maryborough from Westleyan Methodists.
- 1987 -- February 8, St. Paul's new church building dedicated in Maryborough.
- 1987 -- February, Pastor Sabrowsky returns to U.S.
- 1987 -- Pastor Mack accepts call back to U.S.
- 1987 -- Sunday School begins at St. Paul's with 6 children.
- 1988 -- June, Pastor Dan Schroeder accepts call to serve Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish
- 1989 -- March 7, Pastor Dan Schroeder arrives in Brisbane, Queensland
- 1989 -- March 12, Pastor Dan Schroeder installed as pastor of Faith Parish.
- 1989 -- Name changed from Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish to Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia.
- 1989 -- April, President Orvick of E.L.S. visits with Pastor Dudley.
- 1989 -- June 10, Curtis Golm arrives in Queensland to serve for three months as vicar.
- 1990 -- July 15, Curtis Golm arrives in Queensland to serve one year as vicar of E.L.S.A.
- 1990 -- Process of incorporation of Faith Ev. Lutheran Parish into Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia begins.
- 1990 -- Pastor Thomas Dudley dies
- 1991 -- January, the members of G.L.C.A. reorganize at Prince of Peace and join E.L.S.A.
- 1991 -- September 22, Kenneth Fisher installed as one-year vicar of E.L.S.A.
- 1991 -- November 8-10, Over 40 children attend a Sunday School Camp held by St. Paul's, Maryborough.
- 1991 -- December 9, E.L.S.A. Secretary, Bernie Hartwig killed on his farm in Gympie
- 1991 -- December 27, Pastor Schroeder moves from Woody Point to parsonage in Maryborough.
- 1992 -- January 11, Special "Service of Thanksgiving" for debt retirement at St. Paul's.

- 1992 -- May, Pastor Schroeder becomes Australian citizen.
- 1992 -- July 2, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia (E.L.S.A.) officially incorporated.
- 1992 -- July 19, First official service of A.E.L.C. at Toowoomba.
- 1992 -- September 18, Fellowship Agreement between O.E.L.C. and St. Mark's, Hivesville.
- 1992 -- September, Michael Borgwardt arrives to serve one year as vicar of E.L.S.A.
- 1992 -- November, W.E.L.S. Southeast Asia Mission Exploration Team visits Australia.
- 1993 -- February 14, Inaugural service and Synodical convention of A.E.L.C. in Toowoomba.
- 1993 -- February, E.L.S. Mission Board visits E.L.S.A.
- 1993 -- April, Selwyn Winter represents E.L.S.A. at the Confessional Ev. Lutheran Conference in Germany.

AUSTRALIA

KEY LOCATIONS IN THE FORMATION
AND HISTORY OF THE U.S.A.



Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 s. Berntson Drive, 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin