

Schism causes English Synod to revert to roots

By MARGARET MILLER

The new English Synod, a Lutheran organization that may eventually include many congregations across the country that have found themselves in conflict with the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, currently is a home in Livonia.

The building housing the denomination is the former parsonage next door to Faith Lutheran Church, 3000 Five Mile. And when the Rev. Harold Hecht and his secretary moved in last month, denoting their former headquarters at 3200 Grand River in Detroit, it marked one more step in the long dispute over doctrine that has rocked the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in recent years.

A final step, said Mr. Hecht, who had just come from a convention at River Forest, Ill., in which the English District of the synod had voted to begin dissolution of its ties with the parent organization and revert to the independent synod status it had enjoyed before 1911.

"I feel the battle is over and we can get on with our work," he said in the vacated parsonage that will house the split-off organization for now.

"Now," he added, "it becomes the great concern of every congregation to come to grips with the issue and decide on its future affiliation."

THE MOVE TO LIVONIA, he said, came at the invitation of the board of trustees of Faith Church, one of three Livonia congregations that had moved earlier this year to leave the Michigan district of the LCMS and affiliate with the more liberal English district.

The parsonage was available because Faith's associate pastor was leaving. The invitation, said Mr. Hecht, "made me feel God really provides."

"I had gone to the convention knowing I would have to resign," explained the clergyman. He had been president and executive officer of the English district but was removed from office April 2 in a dispute over ordinations.

"I really didn't know where the office was going to go. The vote to seek independent status was 296 to 75 and electing to stay with the Missouri Synod were one vote-president and one member of the board of directors, so the district is continuing."

"Others are taking over in our office in Detroit, but we can begin the work of the new synod from here."

THE FIRST STEP, said Mr. Hecht, who

for the present is serving without salary, will be determining which of the 227 Lutheran congregations that had comprised the new English Synod will become part of the new English Synod.

"Some will not," Mr. Hecht said, "either through inertia or because they prefer the more conservative doctrine that has dominated the Missouri Synod since its current president, Dr. J. A. O. Preus."

"But delegates from three congregations indicated at the time [if the convention they had made the decision to separate no matter what happened at that meeting, and we expect many more will do the same]."

The Rev. Roger Schiefel, pastor of Faith in Livonia, said his congregation would meet early in the fall to make a decision on its future affiliation.

"We had a strong majority when we voted to affiliate with the English District, and our board voted unanimously to rent the parsonage to the new English Synod," he said, "so that may well be indicative of the feeling at Faith."

FOLLOWING the convention, Mr. Hecht said, a booklet was prepared by the English Synod, outlining the reasons for the decision to leave the Missouri Synod and the steps for congregations to follow in involving themselves with the new group. This booklet is now being distributed, he said.

It explains reasons for the action of convention, going into the dispute that has involved the firing of a president of Concordia College in St. Louis, Mo., because he was accused of approving the teaching of false doctrine, and the subsequent formation of a Seminary in Exile, or Seminary.

It was the matter of ordaining graduates of Seminary that led to the removal from office of Mr. Hecht and several other district presidents.

Also included in the book is a history of the group of churches that in 1911 was known as the English Synod, different from Missouri and churches in that it used the English language rather than German.

These churches tended to have a somewhat more liberal view from a doctrinal standpoint even after becoming part of the Missouri Synod 75 years ago. It was this difference that made the synod a central part of the doctrinal dispute that began after Preus took office and in the last couple of years it has received a number of congregations formerly in geographical districts, including



REV. HAROLD HECHT

three in Livonia—Faith, Holy Trinity and All Saints.

THE DISPUTE in the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod is a doctrinal one, Mr. Hecht said.

"I've heard the comment that we are Bible-doublers and that the dispute is over such matters as whether one should believe literally that Jonah lived inside that whale," he said.

"I've never known a Bible-doubter. There would not be a split over a small matter like the story of Jonah."

"The point worth splitting over is our belief that the word of God is supreme. The Bible needs interpretation and the individual must find his own understanding of the Holy Spirit."

We cannot accept limiting interpretation and understanding with Dr. Preus' Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles and directives from the Missouri Synod. He pointed to a paragraph in the new

English Synod book listing as one of the reasons for separation the fact that "The theology of 'A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles' continues to dominate the Missouri Synod."

The book states that the Statement "is non-Lutheran and borders on non-Christian because it established criteria other than faith in Christ for salvation—dangerously close to suggesting that faith in the Bible

is essential for salvation."

Mr. HECHT said the new synod probably will stay in the Detroit area, where he owns a home, and will concentrate membership development in the Great Lakes area and Canada, while also welcoming English District congregations from all over the country and congregations from the Michigan and other geographical districts.

In modern society

A place for young, old

Growing up in rural central Illinois in the midst of an extended family where recognition for deeds accomplished and reprimands for misdeeds completed for perhaps even contemplated were prompt and representative involvement in community life was never wanting.

Frequently these recognitions were related to productive activity or the lack thereof, necessary for family survival, and reflected the generally held assumption that offspring were assets and not liabilities.

This assumption has often been modified, though to suggest that rural children were economic assets since they were able to assist in chores at all that would directly affect family finances. The growth of agribusiness has changed the somewhat and there are increasing references to rural children as economic liabilities.

THIS MYTH of rural children as economic assets or liabilities needs to be exposed as a deception. To be sure, instances can be cited where it describes accurately. But from my recollection youth were given recognition and experience because they had intrinsic worth and not for their utilitarian value to economic well-being.

There was a long view of life and the purpose of being reached back into past generations and projected forward to succeeding ones. Young people were very secure in the continuity of life even as older people were very important to family life.

URBAN LIFE has compressed the nature of time and existence into an immediate experience. Survival has been reduced to economic terms. We have lost our sense of history and have little to no confidence in the future.

And in the midst of this seething cauldron of dreams rejected hopes, repressed values confused and purposes muddled our youth are in the way and not a part of

life on the way.

We need to expand our consciousness of time and existence of purpose and vision so that our youth will have their legitimate place, as well as the older members of our human family. And then perhaps there will be in the middle will also recognize that there is more room, purpose and meaning for us as well.

Moral perspectives

Catholic lay group plans convention

A two-day workshop on spiritual growth will be the highlight of the 1976 state convention of Michigan Serra Clubs, a Catholic Layman's organization at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Dearborn, Sept. 24-25.

The Rev. Vincent Dwyer, Trappist monk, theologian and educator, will conduct the workshop under the sponsorship of the Serra Club of Dearborn. Catholic lay and religious leaders throughout Michigan and the Windsor, Ontario area are welcome.

Fr. Dwyer currently is serving as director of the Center for Human Development at the University of Notre Dame. He believes that the current crisis of the church

is one of spirituality, and the first goal of his center is the spiritual renewal of the American priesthood.

Spirituality is not standing in a stained glass window with a life in your hand, but a deep involvement in life and a journey through reality," he has emphasized.

Fr. Dwyer has developed a program (Genesis 2) for spiritual development that combines insights from the saints who lived centuries ago with the best findings of modern psychology. His aim is an authentic Christian spirituality which speaks to the confusions and hungers of modern man.

The two-day meeting will begin at 8:45 a.m. Friday, Sept. 24 and concludes at 4 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 25.

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644-1100 Ext. 224

Your Invitation To Worship

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First Baptist Church
Bates and West 1st
Robert G. McArthur, Minister
David W. Sarna, Pastor
Glenn H. Ayers, Jr., Minister
Howard J. Ayers, Jr., Minister

Church School
9:00 A.M.
Worship Service
10:00 A.M.

ST. JAMES EPISCOPAL CHURCH
335 W. Maple
Birmingham

SUMMER SCHEDULE
SUNDAYS
8:00 A.M. Holy Communion
10:00 A.M. Morning Prayer
(H.C. Lit Sunday of Month)
WEDNESDAYS
7:00 and 10:00 A.M. Holy Communion

FIRST CHURCH OF GOD
Farmington Hills
2535 Powers Road
Farmington Hills 48031
Church School 9:45
Morning Worship 10:00
Evening Service 7:00

FIRST APOSTOLIC LUTHERAN CHURCH
26325 Haines Road Farmington Hills
48031-9709
Raymond H. Tulik, Minister 474-6554

SUMMER SCHEDULE
Morning Worship 10:00 A.M.
Evening Service 7:00 P.M.

St. Andrew Lutheran Church
LCA
6255 Telegraph Road
Birmingham North of May

WORSHIP SERVICE
Sunday Church School
10:00 A.M.
Thursday Church School
4:45 P.M.
Charles William Richter 646-1207

St. John American Lutheran Church
23225 Gill Road Farmington Hills
48031-9709
Worship Service 9:00 A.M.
Nurses Provided

St. Martin's EPISCOPAL CHURCH
24099 Grand River Avenue
St. Martin's Episcopal Church
Services: Sundays—8 and 10 a.m.
Nurses at 10:00 a.m.
Prayer at 10:00 a.m.

ST. MICHAEL'S ORTHODOX CHURCH
2835 W. Chicago Rd.
Birmingham 48031
Rev. Michael E. Barnes, Pastor
Divine Liturgy—Sundays 10:00 A.M.
Saturday—Holidays 10:00 A.M.
Saturday Vespers 6:00 P.M.
Sunday School—Sunday 9:45 A.M.
Come and worship with us!

Bloomfield Hills Christian Church
The Community House
380 South Bates, Birmingham
Sundays 10:00 A.M. Bible School
11:00 A.M. Worship
7:00 P.M. Prayer Service
Wednesday 7:15 P.M. Bible Study
Joseph P. Lukowski, Pastor
851-8516

Christ Church Cranbrook
Cranbrook at Long Pine Road
Cranbrook
7:45 a.m. Holy Communion
(St. Ignace's Chapel)
8:30-9:45 a.m. Sunday Brunch
10:00 a.m. Morning Prayer and Service
(Holy Communion and Sacrament, 1st Sunday)
(Nursery and Church School through 2nd grade)
Wednesday, 7 a.m. Holy Communion
Phone: 644-5319

The Congregational Church of Birmingham, U.C.C.
Woodward at Cranbrook
Bloomfield Hills MI 48031
SUMMER HOURS
Worship Service 9:30 A.M.
Minister: Rev. Charles O. Erickson
Minister of Education: Rev. Verna E. Aron, Jr.

First Baptist Church of Farmington
Richard Duncan, Pastor - Phone 474-0350

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
1669 WEST MAPLE AT CENTERFIELD (611-2010)
BIRMINGHAM
The Reverend F. Morgan Roberts, Pastor
Associate: Charles A. Sommers, Edward E. Craxton,
Gerald S. Crawford
SUMMER SCHEDULE
Worship and Church School
10:00 A.M.

Christian Science Churches
FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST, SCIENTIST
BIRMINGHAM
SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 A.M.
WEDNESDAY TESTIMONY MEETING 8:00 P.M.
CHILD CARE ROOM Sunday 10:15 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
READING ROOM 10:15 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.
Open House & Fellowship 10:15 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.
Phone: 644-5319

First Church of Christ, Scientist
Franklin-Meadowlake
Maple at Inkster
SUNDAY SERVICES 10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY SCHOOL 10:30 A.M.
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READING ROOM 10:15 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.
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Beithlehem Lutheran Church
1500 Eight Mile Road
Farmington Hills 48031
Eno M. Tooti, Pastor 474-2579
Worship and Sunday School
10:00 A.M.

Community Congregational Church
27000 Southfield Road
11 Mile Lathrop Village
Jackson E. Turner, Minister
10:00 A.M. Service
Guest Speaker
Rev. James A. Hood
"The Big Question"

ST. PAUL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
161 E. Square Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills
2400-2400 of Woodward (480-2400)
SUMMER SCHEDULE
Worship Service 10 A.M.

Franklin Community Church
United Methodist
on Franklin's Village Green
SUMMER SCHEDULE
Service of Worship 10 A.M.
Nursery Care
Senior Minister, Frank B. Cowick
Associate Minister, J. Chester Stubbs

Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church
A.L.C.
5631 North Adams Road
1 Mile North of E. Long Lake Rd.
9:00 A.M. Family Worship Service
9:00 A.M. Sunday School
MUNDAY
9:00 P.M. Wakeup Service
Fred W. Maclean, Pastor
Joanne F. Schuler, Pastor
MI-6124

University Hills Church
Christian Reformed
Worship with Us at
11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M.
26711 Farmington Rd. at I-660
627-1240 Dr. J. H. Eiken 627-1241

Northbrook Presbyterian Church
11 Mile and Lahser Roads
SUMMER SCHEDULE
Morning Worship and
Church School 10:00 A.M.
Pastors: L. J. Peterson & W. Dunn
R. W. Brighman
Phone: 612-1280

St. Paul United Methodist Church
161 E. Square Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills
2400-2400 of Woodward (480-2400)
SUMMER SCHEDULE
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161 E. Square Lake Road
Bloomfield Hills
2400-2400 of Woodward (480-2400)
SUMMER SCHEDULE
Worship Service 10 A.M.

Salem United Church of Christ
Oakland at Od River Farmington Hills
Sundays 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.
Worship Service at 9:00 A.M.
Pastor: Rev. James A. Hood
10:00 A.M. Sunday School
MI-6124

St. John's Episcopal Church
24099 Grand River Avenue
St. John's Episcopal Church
Services: Sundays—8 and 10 a.m.
Nurses at 10:00 a.m.
Prayer at 10:00 a.m.

St. Michael's Orthodox Church
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Birmingham 48031
Rev. Michael E. Barnes, Pastor
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All are welcome at our Church Services and the Reading Rooms

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF FARMINGTON
Richard Duncan, Pastor - Phone 474-0350

3300 SHAWASSEE
FARMINGTON ROAD

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:45 a.m.
MORNING WORSHIP 10:00 a.m.
EVENING SERVICE 7:00 p.m.
WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY 7:00 p.m.

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