



ARCHIVIST

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From the English District Archivist:

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the “Walkout” at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, which culminated in the “Seminex era” split within The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). As I noted in *The English District Saga: A Niche in the History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America*, this was a time of both a major change in trajectory in the life of the LCMS and English District, a “Battle of the Bible” over doctrine and faith, and a very painful time for many families and friends who became divided.

Next year marks the 50th year of the Special Convention of the English District. It became the catalyst for the District’s split in 1976-1978 and the birth of the English Synod of the AELC (Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches). If you are not familiar with the events of that extended era, I recommend the Spring 2024 and Summer 2024 issues of *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (CHIQ), as well as *The English District Saga* (specifically Part Three).

But what precipitated my writing this article?

On Saturday evening, June 1st, a member of Grace Lutheran Church, Redford Twp., MI, brought to my house a heavily sealed box that he found while cleaning at Grace. The box had been in the possession of the late Rev. Dr. Victor Halboth, Jr., who preceded me as District Archivist. The box held a trove of English District archival material and had come from Mr. Robert Schapler in Ann Arbor, MI who had served as District Archivist prior to Pastor Halboth. There is a wealth of articles, pictures of English District people and conventions (usually not named), anniversary commemorative service folders, LWML Convention booklets, and more, but dated no later than 1975. Among the materials is the Convention Manual for the Special 1975 Convention.

Yes, I know. We historians get a whole lot more excited about such discoveries than most people. But in addition to all this wealth of historical data, there was a picture of a plaque at old St. Andrew’s, Pittsburgh, honoring the sacred memory of their long-term pastor, the Rev. Dr. Henry P. Eckhardt. Eckhardt was the last president of the old English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States (1905-1911) and the first President of the new English District of the (German) Missouri Synod (1911-1912), while still being a full-time pastor. He was also an LCMS Vice President (1917-1926). Eckhardt’s most famous vicar was the late Rev. Dr. George Washington Bornemann, who was President of the English District immediately after the division in the English District in 1976. President Bornemann served from 1976 to 1984.

But there was still more in the box! The second President of the old English Missouri Synod and later an LCMS Vice President (1926-1932), the Rev. Dr. William Dallmann authored a book called *The Theater*. It was published by the English Missouri Synod’s American Lutheran Publication Board in 1908 in Pittsburg(h). He urged Lutheran Christians of that era to refrain from going to the theater for the sake of Christian morality. He backed up his stance with a list of 24 quoted or paraphrased Scripture passages. I must confess that I did not know of this book’s existence. After I read it, *The Theater* and the archival material will be placed in the English District Museum (Archives Room) in the English District office, Farmington, MI.

If I’ve bored you, I beg your forgiveness.

In Christ Jesus, our Savior and Lord,

The Rev. Dr. David P. Stechholz
Bishop/President Emeritus