

LUTHERAN HISTORICAL CONFERENCE

## NEWSLETTER

### 2008 CONFERENCE, STATEN ISLAND

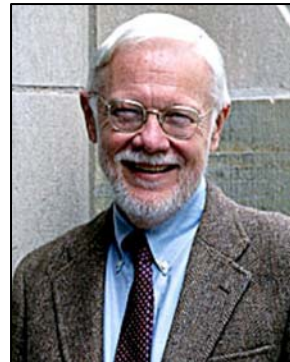
"American Lutherans Engage the World"  
October 11-14, 2008  
Wagner College, Staten Island, New York

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Registration is open for the 2008 meeting of the Lutheran Historical Conference, October 11-14, 2008, at Wagner College, Staten Island, New York, beginning Saturday afternoon and concluding Tuesday morning.

Fifteen papers will address the theme "American Lutherans Engage the World." Papers will describe ways in which American Lutherans have engaged Lutherans in Europe, other religious groups in North America, and through mission and ecumenical contacts outside of this continent. The complete program and registration forms are found inside this newsletter.



*Dr. Jon Butler*

In addition to paper presentations, the conference will feature:

- A presentation by Jon Butler, Dean of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and Howard R. Lamar Professor of American History at Yale University.
- An Oktoberfest celebration at Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island.
- Opportunities for worship in local congregations Sunday morning.
- The traditional LHC Conference bus tour, including visits to:
  - ◊ The Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, originally the Norwegian Hospital, founded by Sister Elizabeth Fedde.
  - ◊ The offices of Lutheran Disaster Response New York, which has been working at the World Trade Center site since September 11th, 2001. The stop will include a tour of the Ground Zero museum and a service commemorating the work of LDRNY.
- A free evening in Manhattan following the bus tour.
- A "poster session" displaying work in progress by LHC participants.

Housing will be at the Staten Island Hotel. **Participants must make their own registrations with the hotel. A \$119 per night rate has been reserved through September 24.** Mention the "Lutheran Historical Conference" rate when making your reservation. Local transportation between the Hotel and the College will be provided. The Newark International Airport is the most convenient one to Staten Island.

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## BOOK REVIEW: *THE STRUGGLE OF HUNGARIAN LUTHERANS UNDER COMMUNISM*

**Baer, H. David.** *The Struggle of Hungarian Lutherans under Communism*. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2006.

Reviewed by David E. Settje, Concordia University — Chicago

H. David Baer's *The Struggle of Hungarian Lutherans under Communism* provides a very interesting account about Lutheranism during the Cold War, though admittedly little to nothing pertains directly to those interested in American Lutheran history. Part history and part moral critique of the various church leaders and their actions under communist regimes, Baer highlights those pastors that he thinks best defended the church and meticulously outlines what he sees as the moral failings of those who sought cooperation with the state or became blinded by ambition and power. As he states in the introduction, this is a moral history of Hungarian Lutheranism, not simply a historical account.

Baer, an assistant professor of theology and philosophy at Texas Lutheran University, nonetheless gives a very solid history of the Hungarian Lutheran Church and its travails and successes under the dictatorial communist regimes in that nation. He explains state attempts to control the church and offers biographical vignettes of the vari-

ous bishops and their approach to leading a church in a nation that espoused atheism. Baer also adeptly details internal church feuds over how and when to cooperate with the government or stand against its attempts to control Lutheran operations. Yet his best work comes in detailing the life of Lajos Ordass, a Lutheran bishop who fought for the church's independence, often at risk to his life and despite being imprisoned. Baer trumpets him as a martyr and witness for all Christians to mimic when faced with those who would destroy the church. To that end, he criticizes those leaders that accommodated communist principles in order for both the church and themselves to survive. At times this rings true, especially when bishops did so to enhance their own power. At other times, Baer sounds too condemnatory of those who did not match Ordass's impassioned resistance. Not everyone who fails to meet the exacting standard of a Dietrich Bonhoeffer failed completely to live out their faith or devote their lives to the church.

As noted, little in this volume pertains to the United States or any other countries outside of Hungary. On the one hand, this makes sense, given the fact that it is an examination of Hungarian Lutheranism and thus one would expect as much. Yet Cold War history seldom exists in such a vacuum, leaving the reader to wonder what pressures and assistance did or did not come from the outside. Baer mentions

the Soviet Union and especially its 1956 crack down on democratic movements, but did the USSR influence church relations? What about the treatment of other church bodies within Hungary? Some sort of comparative analysis would have helped put the Lutheran struggle in context. Baer includes some Lutheran World Federation history, especially because Ordass served as an LWF vice president and another Hungarian bishop became its president. But how else did this international body assist Hungarian Lutherans, if at all? Historians know that American Lutheran churches sent covert assistance to many Lutheran churches under communism, but Baer never mentions if he found evidence of such assistance in Hungary. In other words, the book lacks a larger context, both within Hungary and globally, that would better frame the struggle of Hungarian Lutheranism.

Criticisms aside, even those interested in American Lutheran history need to understand the struggle of global Lutheranism against communist atheism during the Cold War. Baer contributes a solid history not previously known about the Hungarian Lutheran Church and its precarious existence under communism. He also forces readers to think about what lengths anyone could and should go to in protecting faith amidst dictatorial attacks against it.

## NEW MEMBERS

The following are new members who have joined LHC since our last newsletter:

Winston Dwarka Persaud, Ph.D.  
Professor of Systematic Theology  
Wartburg Theological Seminary  
2130 Coates St.  
Dubuque, IA 52003-7106

Elisabeth Unruh  
PO Box 626  
Dundee IL 60118

Elisabeth is a senior at Concordia University — Chicago.

Kathy Graumann  
16020 Lutheran School Rd.

Tomball, TX 77377

Kathy is a member of the CHI Board of Governors as of last year.

Dr. Mark C. Mattes  
Department of Religion  
Grand View College  
1200 Grandview Ave  
Des Moines, Iowa 50316

Richard M. Chapman  
Department of History  
Concordia College  
901 8th St S  
Moorhead MN 56562

## TREXLER PAPERS

In his preparation of a history of the Metropolitan NY Synod from 1930-present, Michael Church is seeking the personal papers of Samuel Geiss Trexler (1877-1949), a New York pastor who served as president of the ULCA's Synod of New York and New England, and its United Synod of New York. Trexler's papers, including diaries, were apparently left to his friend Edmund Devol, who used them as the basis of a 1956 biography. Michael does not know what has happened to them since, and believes that they could offer valuable insight into the synod's history.

If you have any information, please contact: Michael Church, Trinity Lutheran Church, 31-18 37th Street, Long Island City, NY 11103, (718) 278-0036, prchurch@gmail.com

# PRELIMINARY SCHEDULE

LHC meeting- October 11-14, 2008

## **Saturday, October 11**

- 1:00-3:00 Registration for the Conference at Wagner
- 3:00 Welcome to the conference/Announcements/Opening Business, etc.
- 3:30-4:30 Session I — TBD
- 5:00 Presentation: Jon Butler
- 6:30 Bus transportation to Oktoberfest, held 6-10 p.m. at Trinity Lutheran Church, Staten Island

## **Sunday, October 12**

- 1:00 -3:00 Plenary
- Rick Chapman, Concordia College, Moorhead, "Revolutionary Accompaniment: Lutherans in Nicaragua, 1983-1994.
  - Maria Erling, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, "International Lutheran Youth Exchanges in 1960 and 1970: From Devotional Inspiration to Political Theater."
  - David Settje, Concordia University, Chicago, "Lutherans, Watergate, and Morality: Engaging the Political Realm."
  - Elisabeth Unruh, Concordia University, Chicago (student), "Lutheran Responses to the Equal Rights Amendment."
- 3:00-3:30 Break
- 3:30-5:00 Plenary
- Melissa James, Graduate Theological Union (student), "Institutionalizing Engagement: Examining the History of the Lutheran Diaconate in North America."
  - Kathy Graumann, Salem Lutheran Church, Rosehill, Texas, "Answering the Call: The Pioneer Church Engages the World."
  - Marilyn Stauffer, Associate Archivist, Region 9, "Sister Margaret Fry at Willow Run."
- 5:00-6:00 LHC Business meeting

## **Monday, October 13**

- 8:30-10:00 Plenary
- Julieanna Frost, Sienna Heights University, "Images of the Inupiaq: The Photography and Mission Work of Helen C. Frost."
  - L. DeAne Lagerquist, St. Olaf College, "Fellow Workers: Lutheran Public Engagement." (On Cordelia Cox)
  - Rachel Vagts, Luther College, "Hanna and Marie Larsen at the Schreuder Mission in Zululand."
- 10:00-10:30 Break
- 10:30-12:00 Plenary
- David Grafton, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, "An Early American Perspective on Islam: Lewis Eichelberger and his sources."
  - Daniel Grimminger, Mount Union College, "Liturgical Cross-Pollination Among Lutherans and Episcopalians."
  - Ray Kibler III, Claremont, Calif., "Hallesby, Soderblom, and American Lutheran Reactions."

## **Tuesday, October 14**

- 8:30-9:30 Plenary
- Kim-Eric Williams, University of Pennsylvania, "Laughing with the Lenape: Swedes and Native Americans in Colonial Delaware."
  - Andreas Mielke, Independent Scholar, "300 Years Ago: Joshua Kocherthal's Exodus from Europe (October 1708)."
- 9:30-10:00 Break
- 10:00-11:00 Plenary
- Kathryn Galchutt, Concordia College, New York, "Art Simon: From the Manhattan's Lower East Side to Bread for the World."
  - Michael Church, Metro New York Synod, "'Trexler's Travels: Samuel Geiss Trexler and the Emergence of International Lutheranism."



**REGISTRATION FORM**  
OCTOBER 11-14, 2008  
WAGNER COLLEGE, STATEN ISLAND, NEW YORK

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State , Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Participants**

Registration fee **\$165.00**  
(includes conference, bus tour, visit to Ground Zero Museum, dinner Saturday night at Oktoberfest, Sunday lunch and dinner, Monday box lunch)

**Spouse or Guest**

Spouse or guest bus tour \$40.00  
(includes visit to Ground Zero Museum, box lunch on bus)

Meals only (Oktoberfest, Sunday lunch, Sunday dinner) \$68.00

**Total Enclosed:**

*Make checks payable to Lutheran Historical Conference*

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**Send completed form and checks to:**

John R. Daggan– LHC Registration  
281 Oakland Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10310

**\*\*\*\*\* Housing reservations must be made directly with the hotel \*\*\*\*\***

Staten Island Hotel  
1415 Richmond Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10314  
Phone: 1-800-532-3532  
[www.statenislandhotel.com](http://www.statenislandhotel.com)

Reserve before Sept. 24 and ask for the Lutheran Historical Conference block. Rate is \$119 and includes continental breakfast daily.

For additional registration information, please contact:  
John Daggan, Archivist, Metro New York Synod, at [jdaggan@cqsh.com](mailto:jdaggan@cqsh.com)

**Registration deadline: October 1st**

**Additional forms and information available at: [www.luthhist.org](http://www.luthhist.org)**

## LHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS NOMINEES

The following members have been nominated by the outgoing board members as candidates for three open positions on the LHC board. Election for the six-year terms will take place at the October meeting.

**Richard O. Johnson** holds an M. Div. from Yale and a PhD in church history from the Graduate Theologian Union. He is an adjunct professor at Fuller Seminary's Northern California extension program, and is editor of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau's Forum Letter. For 24 years he has been pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Grass Valley, Calif. He has twice presented papers at LHC conferences, and has also published church history articles in *Word and World*, *Lutheran Quarterly*, *Methodist History*, and *Lutheran Forum*.

**Marvin A. Huggins**, a 1970 graduate of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, Mo., has been associate director for archives and library at Concordia Historical Institute since 1989. The Institute is the Department of Archives and History of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. He had previously served as reference and research assistant at the Institute from 1970 to 1978; as pastor of Immanuel Lutheran Church, Norton, Kan., from 1978 to 1982; and as an editor at Concordia Publishing House, Saint Louis, from 1982 to 1989. He has served the LHC as a member of the board of directors (1992–1998, 2000–2006) and is

currently serving as membership secretary, publications coordinator and webmaster. He has been an active member of the Midwest Archives Conference since 1989.

**Julieanna Frost**, Ph.D. is Assistant Professor of History at Siena Heights University in Adrian, Mich. She teaches both survey and seminar courses in U.S. and global history. She has a major research interest in the history of female Lutheran missionaries and attends Gloria Dei Lutheran church.

**Dr. Daniel J. Grimminger**, Obl. O.S.B., teaches at Mount Union College, Alliance, Ohio, in the Music and Religion Departments. He earned the Master of Theological Studies degree at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, and wrote his thesis on German Lutheran hymnals and worship practice in Ohio from 1804-1854 (Dr. Don Huber, advisor). In 2002, he earned the Doctor of Church Music degree at Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, Calif., and in fall 2008 the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Pittsburgh, where he wrote his dissertation on ethnic assimilation among the German Lutherans and Reformed people of eastern Pennsylvania in the early Republic. Dan has also served as a Lutheran parish archivist and he worked under Jeanene Letcher in the Region 6 E.L.C.A. Archives in Columbus. His presentation at Wagner College is his

third consecutive LHC paper.

**Dr. Joel Loren Pless** was born in Elgin, Ill., in 1960. He holds A.A and B.A. degrees from Concordia College, Ann Arbor, Mich., and M. Div. and S.T.M. degrees from Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wis. He graduated in May 2008 with a Ph.D. in historical theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. His dissertation "In the Footsteps of Walther: The Doctrine of the Ministry in the Writings of George Stoeckhardt" was written under the guidance of Dr. Thomas E. Manteufel. Dr. Pless was recently promoted from assistant to associate professor of theology at Wisconsin Lutheran College, Milwaukee, Wis., where he has taught New Testament and church history for eight years. His area of interest and research is nineteenth century American and European Lutheranism. He is currently working on a series of scholarly articles on the nineteenth century Erlangen theologian, Johann W. F. Hoefling. He has published scholarly articles in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* and the *WELS Historical Institute Journal*. He is a former parish pastor and currently serves on the board of directors of the WELS Historical Institute. Dr. Pless and his wife Linda reside in Germantown, Wis., and have three children, Monica, John and James. He also serves as the monthly pulpit assistant at St. John Ev. Lutheran Church, Mukwonago, Wis.

## MEMBER NEWS

**The Rev. John T. Pless**, assistant professor of pastoral ministry and missions at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Ind., was elected co-president of the International Wilhelm Löhe Society meeting on July 26 in Neuendettelsau, Germany. Pless succeeds Dr. Craig Nesson of Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa who served as co-president since 2006. As co-president, Pless will share leadership of the International Wilhelm Löhe Society with Dr. Dietrich Blaufuss of Erlangen, Germany. Prior to his election as co-president, Pless had served as the secretary for the English language section of the organization since 2006.



The International Wilhelm Löhe Society met in Neuendettelsau for its triennial conference from July 22-26 in observance of the bicentennial of the birth of Wilhelm Löhe, a German pastor whose work in liturgics, pastoral care and missions had a deep impact on the Lutheran church throughout the world. Löhe was instrumental in the founding of Concordia Theological Seminary in 1846. Prof. Pless was one of several scholars from Australia, Germany, and the United States who presented papers at the conference. The conference included participants from Germany, Brazil, the United States, Italy, Australia, Indonesia, South Korea, and Hong Kong.

The next meeting of the International Wilhelm Löhe Society is scheduled for July 26-30, 2011 on the campus of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne.

**Kim Efir** was recognized by Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White for his 35 years of services to the Illinois State Archives. Kim works with state records and has become an expert on the records of the General Assembly. Secretary White stated that "[Kim's] commitment to his work, his coworkers and, ultimately, the people of Illinois have earned him immense respect among his peers and the archives community."

Joel Thoreson, Editor  
Newsletter  
Lutheran Historical Conference  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
8765 W. Higgins Rd.  
Chicago, IL 60631



## BOOK REVIEWS

Those interested in contributing book reviews or wishing to suggest a book, please contact David Settje at [David.Settje@CUChicago.edu](mailto:David.Settje@CUChicago.edu).

Each review should be between 500 and 750 words long, be sent as a MS Word document or in a compatible format, and specifically evaluate the book and its Lutheran content/context.

## WHAT WILL THE NEXT LHC NEWSLETTER CONTAIN?

This newsletter is intended as a clearinghouse of information for archivists, historians and librarians. It needs **you** to provide material for it.

Please send material for publication to the editor. Items of interest include notice of research in progress, new appointments, publications, meetings and celebrations planned or

held, bibliographical materials, and anything of general interest to LHC members.

The LHC Newsletter is issued four times a year: February, May, August and November. The November issue includes the annual "Index of Writings in the Field of American Lutheranism." The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the month prior to each

issue. Please send items to:

Joel Thoreson  
ELCA Archives  
8765 W. Higgins Rd.  
Chicago, IL 60631  
[Joel.Thoreson@elca.org](mailto:Joel.Thoreson@elca.org)

FOR THE NEXT NEWSLETTER

Deadline: October 15, 2008