

# The Preus Brothers, Herman Otten Jr., and the Purge of Missouri: A Review of James Burkee's Doctoral Dissertation

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James Burkee's doctoral dissertation, "Pastors and Politics: The Conservative Movement in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1956-1981" (Northwestern University, 2003), tells the story of how a small group of conservatives narrowly seized power in the LCMS in 1969, how they used that power to get rid of ideological enemies within the church body, and then eventually how they succumbed to their own in-fighting after 1974. Focusing more narrowly on this personality-based movement in the LCMS than does Mary Todd's *Authority Vested*, Burkee's study is benefited by the access he was given to previously-sealed documents in the files of key members of this movement and by personal interviews with several of them, including Herman Otten Jr., Waldo Werning, Ralph Bohlmann, and at least one "deep throat" figure whom Burkee calls "anonymous." This access makes his work more objective than Fred Danker's *No Room in the Brotherhood*, Kurt Marquart's *Anatomy of an Explosion*, or John Tietjen's *Memoirs in Exile* and much more substantial than the portrait of J. A. O. "Jack" Preus II that one receives in James Adams's *Preus of Missouri*.

Burkee currently teaches history at Concordia University, Wisconsin. He has been a life-long member of LCMS churches, and nearly his entire pre-graduate education was spent in LCMS schools. He heard the word "Seminex" only once or twice during his childhood, and one gathers that the word was probably not understood by him in any positive sense. So he can hardly be described as "partisan" or "liberal." The committee at Northwestern for which he wrote the dissertation was first-rate: his advisor was Michael Sherry; his readers were Josef Barton and Nancy MacLean; and an outside reader was the dean of American historians of religion, Martin Marty, himself an eye-witness to the figures and events Burkee describes. One should also note that since joining the history department at Mequon, Burkee ran unsuccessfully in 2008 as a Republican candidate for Wisconsin's 5<sup>th</sup> congressional district. A quick examination of his political views reveals that he is a political conservative and an anti-establishment Republican. All of this information is important for assessing the perspective and potential biases that he has on the material he examined in his study.

The narrative of his dissertation moves from Missouri's post-Great Depression *aggiornamento* (happening already prior to World War II), which included the gradual acceptance of mainstream biblical and theological methods at its colleges and flagship seminary in St. Louis and the growing identification of its pastoral elites with liberal social movements and ecumenism, to the conflicted situation in the church body that began with the rise of reactionary Paul Burgdorf and his so-called "Confessional Lutheran" and Herman Otten Jr.'s attacks on the seminary's faculty. Along the way the reader encounters the few wealthy lay people who facilitated the Otten-Preus movement and who accelerated the conservative political organizing in the synod after 1969. Particularly revealing is how Preus used Otten and others to achieve his goals while at the same time publicly distancing himself from these individuals when such distancing was politically expedient. While the movement was able to stay relatively united as long as it had the Concordia Seminary "liberals" as a common enemy, that unity was undone once the faculty majority was fired and many other "undesirables" were removed from synodical offices.

Burkee's persuasive thesis is that this conservative movement was neither lay-led nor grass-roots, that it was driven by ideological concerns that went well beyond theological issues, and that larger societal and political forces contributed to the climate that led to the church body's schism.

Following an introduction that identifies some of the main figures in the story and that summarizes the main research on this period of LCMS history (by both partisans and more neutral scholars), the first chapter describes how the LCMS underwent Americanization, and thereby liberalization, between 1938 (when the synod began the process of establishing altar and pulpit fellowship with the old ALC) and 1965 (when the synod adopted the Mission Affirmations at its Detroit convention). Just as American society had moved in a more liberal direction in the wake of the New Deal, so the LCMS moved towards the ideological left in these same years. (Burkee is on-target when he agrees with Lionel Trilling's argument that America's dominant political tradition has been liberal, not conservative; see his book, *The Liberal Imagination*. Louis Hartz has made a similar case in his study, *The Liberal Tradition in America*.)

This shift to the political left is partly explained by the rapid growth of the synod between 1935 and 1960 when the membership nearly tripled. With this new blood "came new ideas and new relations with the very culture Missouri had strived so long and hard to avoid... No longer could it sidestep the ideological battle brewing in America. Missouri would embrace it and be consumed by it" (47). One piece of evidence that Burkee provides to support this shift to the political left is the astonishing fact that nearly 70% of LCMS laity had voted for Lyndon Johnson in 1964, as had more than 50% of its clergy.

But the synod was moving in a more liberal direction theologically as well: there was the statement of "the 44"; the acceptance of standard, modern scholarly tools for understanding the biblical texts; the introduction of European theological ideas in the synod's colleges and seminaries; the encouragement for clergy to get advanced degrees at secular graduate schools; an open involvement of the synod's elite in causes for social justice; and there was a growing ecumenism among many clergy and synod leaders. By 1964 the LCMS leaders had affected the synod in ways that brought it closer to the center (perhaps even "left-of-center") of mainstream North American Lutheranism. Burkee provides sufficient evidence to support this claim. In addition to the above facts, one notes that in 1965 nearly half of LCMS laity thought women should be allowed to serve as pastors. The synod in the mid-1960s was quite different from what it was in 1920 (and from what it is today).

The first chapter concludes by introducing Herman Otten Senior and Herman Otten Junior. The former was "a jumble of convictions." He hated F.D.R. and doubted the scale of the Nazi holocaust, but he was also interested in issues of social justice. As president of St. Matthew, Manhattan, he enjoyed hosting young vicars, many of whom would become some of the most important synod theologians in later years: Ralph Klein, Walter Bouman, Hans Spalteholz, Art Simon, John Damm, and John Tietjen. For a time Oswald Hoffmann served as an assistant pastor there. Spalteholz (whom Burkee does not mention) once told this reviewer that Herman Sr. was not merely a painter but also a great capitalist (something Burkee also does not mention), who owned a number of apartment buildings, who enjoyed a good debate (and could argue both sides of an issue better than anyone else at the table), and who, in the words of Bouman, was an "expansive, beer-drinking conversationalist and raconteur" (63). Marie Meyer, who also grew up in that home, contributes additional material that Burkee makes use of as well.

Herman Otten Jr. has been a different story. "He took his father's conservatism and discarded the rest" (63). After matriculating at St. Louis he quickly became adversarial with both students and faculty. He was particularly concerned that many at the seminary rejected Franz Pieper's view of biblical authority and that some even questioned the traditional LCMS reading of the first chapters of the Bible. In the spring of 1953, Herman Jr. returned home to preach his first sermon at St. Matthew, based on the text of John 8:31-32. "At the first of three services, [he] climbed into the pulpit and immediately tore into the Concordia Seminary faculty. Al Trinklein, pastor at St. Matthew's, was in shock. After the service he dragged Herman into his office and shouted, 'Herman, you are going to revise that sermon, or you are not going to preach the next two services.' Otten's family had not yet come. Unwilling to risk humiliation in front of his father, he yielded to Trinklein's threat" (65-66; Walter Bouman recounted this incident, which

Herman Jr. does not remember but which he also does not dismiss.) Eventually Herman Jr. received theological and moral support from fellow seminarians Kurt Marquart and David Scaer, who were in turn supported financially by a wealthy layman, Arnie Petterson, who “fancied himself a player in church politics and rewarded the young men handsomely for the information they funneled him from St. Louis” (66). Petterson provided Herman Jr. with an expensive mimeograph and asked him to photocopy any and all evidence he could turn up on the liberalism of the seminary faculty. Then Herman Jr. and Marquart “turned up the heat at the seminary,” complaining frequently to the seminary’s academic dean, Arthur Repp, about the faculty’s theological (and political) liberalism. Soon Otten (who had become a kind of protégé of Pieperian Professor, J. T. Mueller), Marquart, Scaer, and five other like-minded students began to attack “liberal” students and eventually filed formal charges of heresy against eight of them. Seminary president Alfred Fuerbringer appointed eight faculty members to handle the situation and then invited the accused and the accusers separately to his home. The accusers were eventually brought before the faculty. Martin Scharlemann, dean of the Graduate School (and a military chaplain) “opened the meeting by pounding his fists on the table. ‘Otten,’ he screamed, ‘what you need is love!’” (70). Scaer appeared shaken, another accuser collapsed in tears, but none would retract their charges. Scharlemann nevertheless dismissed them, and the controversy ended for the time being. (During this era Scharlemann was considered a chief among “the liberals”; later he would turn on his former colleagues and become allies of those who had earlier attacked him for his views on biblical authority and interpretation. Art Simon, one of the accused, recently told this reviewer that he does not recall Scharlemann “pounding his fists on the table.”)

Herman Jr., of course, did not give up the fight. At the behest of J. T. Mueller, he met with synod vice-president Henry Grueber, who accepted Otten’s testimony about the “liberals” on the seminary faculty. Still later Otten came to the attention of synod president, John Behnken, who had also become suspicious of several of the seminary faculty, but whose intellectual ability (like that of his successor, Oliver Harms) left him at a disadvantage and often confused, and thus he was consistently baffled about the finer points of academic theology. Behnken did allow Otten to give an hour-long report to the seminary’s board about the supposed liberalism at the seminary. In this meeting Otten focused especially on the teaching of Old Testament professor Horace Hummel.

Already in the late 1950s Otten realized that although others encouraged him to lash out against “the liberals,” friends and mentors often left him to stand alone. “Herman Otten ushered in an ugly time at Concordia Seminary. Students met in secret, took sides, and spied on each other. Personal faculty memoranda and letters turned up reproduced in public. Professors’ classroom comments made their way in print to Behnken. Scharlemann’s essay on inerrancy, written only to foment debate among faculty members, somehow found its way into Otten’s hands. When Scharlemann confronted Otten, he accused him of secretly taping conversations outside his office window. Otten claims to have received the essay from a friend who ‘found it in Scharlemann’s trashcan’” (74-75). But Otten’s cousin, Paul Behling, told Burkee that Otten’s Concordia cabal, including Marquart, raided faculty offices at night (with the help of sympathetic students on the janitorial committee) and then typed copies of letters and essays on a typewriter that Behling had loaned Otten. Such clandestine and unethical activities allowed Otten to get evidence that he would later use to accuse professors Hummel, A. C. Piepkorn, and H. C. Waetjen of teaching false doctrine. When the seminary’s board refused to renew Hummel’s contract, the faculty then went after Otten. Although the latter received his master’s degree from the seminary, Scharlemann handed down the faculty’s verdict: Otten could not continue his studies for a Th.D. and he would not be certified by the seminary to be eligible for a pastoral call. Burkee then recounts the years-long appeal process that has done nothing to alter the position in which Otten still finds himself in 2010.

(Ironically, like Scharlemann, Hummel also later turned on his fellow “liberals.” When this reviewer and Hummel once shared a hospital room for several days, Hummel’s wife made sure to bring him copies of “Christian News” to read in bed... The professor who was near the center of the reason for

Otten's non-certification later became one of his most faithful readers! In the interest of full disclosure, the author of this review has also been a frequent target of Herman Jr. in "Christian News.")

Burkee's first chapter ends with a description of how Otten's cause to root out liberalism in the synod (and get himself certified), a process that included the formation of "Lutheran News" in 1962 (called "Christian News" after 1968), was in part funded by Rev. Carl Hoffmeyer, closely allied with Burgdorf's "Confessional Lutheran," and supported by efforts on the part of Otten mentors William Beck and Louis Brighton. A young and opportunistic Jack Preus, who had recently left the Evangelical Lutheran Synod to join the more professionally promising LCMS (and this after helping to convince the ELS to sever its fellowship with the LCMS in 1955!), also had contacts with Otten, especially after conservatives began regular conferences on the "State of the Church" after 1962.

Chapter two discloses most of the essential pieces to the growing backlash against "liberalism" in the LCMS that gradually took shape in the 1960s. Of course there were Otten's regular attacks on such LCMS "liberals" as Martin Marty and Richard John Neuhaus, whose civil rights and antiwar actions were frequent targets in "Lutheran News," and attacks on such outsiders as "communist" Pete Seeger, whose appearance at the 1965 Walther League convention has often been identified as the event that helped to disintegrate that youth organization. Otten's broadside would also contain frequent contributions from wealthy, anti-intellectual laymen who were not only concerned about the supposed liberal theology at the seminary and elsewhere but who were deeply troubled by what they perceived to be the centralization of power in the synod's bureaucracy, especially after the reforms of Walter "Pat" Wolbrecht, then the executive director of the synod. Burkee thus explores the evidence in the synod in the 1950s and 60s for an expanding gulf between these laymen and many LCMS clergy about social and (to a lesser extent) theological issues.

Chapter three examines the purge of "liberals" from the synod between 1969 and 1974, the formation of the Continuation Committee after the election of Preus in 1969 (later organized as a foundation called Balance, Inc.), the growing frustration among conservative reactionaries that the synod was not being purified quickly enough (a few threatened to withhold their large monetary contributions to the synod unless Preus acted more quickly), and the tactical, political errors that John Tietjen and other "liberals" made after 1969. (Tietjen and his supporters repudiated the label "liberal" and preferred the term "moderate.") The final chapter helps to explain how the conservative unity that had remained constant long enough to elect Preus soon began to fragment after the demise of Concordia Seminary. This fragmentation is mostly attributed to the personality and actions of Robert Preus, his estrangement from his brother, Jack, and his conflict with Ralph Bohlmann.

Of course the central personality in the LCMS's reactionary cause was Jack Preus who, together with Nebraska pastor and heresy hunter Waldo Werning, Otten Jr., and Jack's brother, Robert, are the most unpalatable figures in the 329-page dissertation. What Richard Nixon represented to the country in 1968, Jack Preus represented to many "hard hats" (my term, not Burkee's) in the LCMS. As president of the Springfield seminary, he had forced six professors to leave, "men who left 'unwillingly' because of the 'heresy-hunting' atmosphere Preus had created among the faculty" (92) Later, as synodical president, Preus could position himself as a moderate among moderates and a conservative among conservatives. Like Nixon, "[he] was the master of duplicity" (ibid.). He would often denounce Otten and "Christian News" as "divisive" and yet on the next day call him to apologize. ("Otten did not know whom to believe: Convention Jack, or this Jack. He accepted Preus's apology and, hedging his bets, tape recorded the conversation," 173). Preus promised Wolbrecht that he would defend him from those who wanted him out, but then lobbied at the synod's Board of Directors meeting to ask for Wolbrecht's resignation and later corresponded with a private attorney to strategize ways of getting rid of Wolbrecht (179-80). Preus acted the same way with respect to Richard Jungkuntz: privately he told Jungkuntz that he would serve as his advocate and defender, "only to push for his ouster behind closed doors" (198). Bottom line: "...Jack

Preus had no intention of honoring many of his promises” (185). What he did with Wolbrecht and Jungkuntz (and many others), he also did with the ALC: privately to his conservative allies he would say one thing, while publicly to the larger church body he would say something very different or keep silent about his private criticisms.

Just as Richard Nixon had his plumbers so did Jack Preus, literally: Henry Hilst, a part-time farmer and retired plumber from central Illinois, worked tirelessly to call supporters, ask for donations, poll convention delegates, and compile lists to serve the conservative political cause (208ff.). After Werning backed away from Preus, Hilst became Preus’s closest confidant. He would work with Preus to make sure that Otten got the conservative convention election lists. In part that is how Herman Jr.’s newspaper got such a wide readership within the synod.

As a part of his political scheming, Preus would frequently invite conservatives to his home to meet around the ping-pong table in his basement. Meetings of the “Ping Pong Club” included regulars Werning, Peglau, Paul Zimmerman, wealthy layman and loyal Otten friend Chet Swanson, and occasionally Ralph Bohlmann. Otten himself attended at least one of these meetings as well, and was “sworn to secrecy.” An edited transcript of conference calls that Preus had with Herman Jr. and Glen Peglau reveals the lengths to which Preus went in private to appease his most conservative backers:

JP: I think, Glen, we ought [sic] to think of two courses. If we can’t drive the libs out then we may have to propose some kind of equal division or what do you call it—a proportionate division of the Church.

GP: Wiederanders figures we’re going to dump him.

JP: I didn’t realize he was that bright.

GP: He’s a real dangerous guy—he would crucify us for three cents.

JP: Wiederanders would murder you.

JP: I have given up the idea that you can ever heal the wounds. You can’t bridge the Synod. It’s too far apart. About all that we can do is just try to seize the control... that the liberals cannot get the property—then we’ll just have to dump them. We are not going to make over these people. They are committed liberals. If conservatives can win some thunderous victories then we can be like the old Norwegians and give them six months where they want to belong. When it is all over count the hats and divvy up the property proportionately. I believe the only way to bring about a settlement in this thing is to have a division. Do it in as legal and amicable way as you can. Don’t talk about this.

JP: I caved in on Herman. You are what the Russians call a holy man. Herman, you are an innocent soul, the way to succeed in this world is to be bad, not good. Get the goods on them and tell them to beat it.

JP: I’m going to tell Bert Frey: ‘If this is the way you guys are going to play it, buster, you’re going to regret the day you were born.’ It’s suddenly going to dawn on these guys that like it or not a new Pharaoh has arisen in Egypt. ... Herman, give it to the ALC and LCA every day of your life. Review their Sunday School Material. It’s best not to have you as president of my fan club. Don’t say things too nice. Say some bad things. Don’t ever spill some of this stuff that you know. It’s just to be taken to the grave. If you do or if Waldo spills or if you do I’ll have to go to Southern Australia and I probably won’t have the money to get there.

JP: Herman and I have been in contact for years at Springfield—it worked beautifully. We got along just fine. It made my life much easier for me up there. There was no way in the world in which these libs could call attention to what I was doing.

GP: Burn these libs to the ground.

JP: But I was speaking in handbook language, Glen” (181-82).

When the Council of Presidents continued to block the certification of Otten, Preus would call him on the phone and apologize. Jack Preus' files contain numerous letters to and from Herman Jr.

Other personalities figure in Burkee's story as well: Jack Preus' older brother, Robert; John Warwick Montgomery ("brilliant but abrasive"; Werning called him "John 'Warlike' Montgomery"); Chester "Chet" Swanson (Proctor and Gamble executive, whose deep pockets gave the conservative movement much of its financial backing); Larry Marquardt (another financial supporter); Glen Peglau (still another wealthy contributor); and other wealthy conservative laymen such as Carl Steffen and Fred Rutz. All read "Christian News," but most tried not to acknowledge this in public. About CN Alvin Mueller (then a member of synod's Board of Directors) once said: "You can't believe everything you read, but you can repeat it" (156).

Particularly interesting to this reviewer is Burkee's description of how the United Planning Conference (UPC) was formed in 1966 by the Preus brothers, Werning, Otten, Peglau, Zimmerman, Karl Barth, Roy Guess, John Baur, and others. (A howler of an error appears here as well. On p. 158 Burkee includes Omar Stuenkel as one of the founders of UPC!) The UPC met every other month to discuss issues and collaborate. Secrecy was a prime concern. "Otten was invited to attend only after consenting to keep his mouth shut. 'I wasn't even supposed to tell my wife,' he recalled. When he confronted Robert Preus with his discomfort at all the secrecy, Preus responded, 'we're in a war. And in a war, you don't give the enemy your plan.' Otten kept quiet" (159-59). From this point on, UPC worked to get rid of Harms and elect Preus. Meanwhile, they encouraged people not to support the synod financially (especially the "Lutheran Witness," considered at that time to be "a left-wing rag") and were successful in getting members of their group, John Lutze and Larry Marquardt, elected to the Board of Regents of Concordia, River Forest—all this despite the fact that rifts were already then beginning to appear within the UPC membership, some of whom were concerned about liberal issues beyond the synod (e.g., Johnson's social legislation, the threat of communism, antiwar activists, civil rights, the feminist movement). Nevertheless Werning did his best to keep the UPC focused on its chief goal: Control the synod convention delegates and you control the synod (160). (Like Jack Preus, Werning would frequently alternate between repudiating Herman Jr. and ingratiating himself to him, e.g., feeding him information and ghost-writing articles for "Christian News," see 275ff.)

Burkee's exploration of the conflicts between the two Preus brothers is also revealing. When Jack Preus got elected he was not interested in forming a "Continuation Committee," but Preus's right-wing conservatives, including Otten and Jack's own brother, Robert, did not trust the conservative movement to Jack alone. So Werning persisted in forming such a committee, despite Jack's direct order "to call it off," and Balance, Inc. was formed. When Balance elected Robert Preus as its first president, "Jack was 'livid'" (189). (Nevertheless, despite his public disavowal of any involvement in Balance, Jack used the organization to his own benefit.) After the formation of Balance, Inc., Robert Preus became "the key politician [in the synod]," at least according to Bohlmann (204). He and Otten worked very closely together after 1969 (e.g., Otten provided him with donor and distribution lists, they frequently corresponded, and Robert ghost-wrote articles for "Christian News"). "Both [Robert Preus] and Chet Swanson were firm friends with Herman Otten, and worked to keep Balance and Otten conservatives closely linked" (222). The relationship that Robert had with Otten contributed to the alienation between the Preus brothers, but the biggest cause for their fracture, at least according to Werning, was Robert's decision to accept the presidency of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield in 1974.

In view of Burkee's evidence, Robert was just as much a master of duplicity as his brother. He claimed that Balance "was not political, and there was no relationship between it and Jack Preus." He claimed that the newsletter of the organization, "Affirm," had an editorial policy that was independent of Balance, "even though he served as president of Balance and on Affirm's editorial committee" (282). He publicly misrepresented Balance's relationship to the UPC and the Continuation Committee and denied

that Balance was a political organization, “insisting instead that it was merely there to support and publish “Affirm.” This despite Robert’s knowledge that only half of Balance’s 1972 funds had gone to “Affirm”—and half of that went to Henry Hilst, who was organizing for Jack, and to other conservative groups” (ibid.). Despite this cooperation between Jack Preus and Balance, “[t]he brothers’ relationship turned sour after 1974” (283).

In the early 1970s Jack Preus tried to maintain a delicate balancing act, trying to avoid a split in the synod while seeking to purge it of his adversaries. He promised to get rid of “liberals,” “to make heads roll,” but he never seemed to act as quickly as his wealthy supporters expected. “Protests against ‘Chairman Jao’ and his ‘Lutheran Ax’ from the left were hardly sufficient to appease Preus’s allies on the right, who truly wanted more heads to roll. So loud was the noise from the right over Preus’s inaction that he and others had to fight to keep conservative churches from bolting” (201). But bolt many of them did: Larry Marquardt and a handful of conservative churches left the LCMS in 1971; Peglau also left the LCMS, “contending that Preus had ‘double-crossed conservatives’ in ‘welshing’ on a number of promises he had made to conservative leaders in 1969 and beyond,” 225; Fred Rutz sued Preus in 1978 for financial mismanagement and never was a factor after this; Swanson’s friendly relations with Otten severely strained his relations with Preus, so much so that by the middle-1970s he too was estranged from Preus.

If the Preus brothers, Werning, and several of these laymen come across in Burkee’s presentation as primarily scheming political animals, Otten is presented as a truly pathetic figure, one who could almost be pitied for his child-like naivete and his blindness toward those more powerful than he who were merely using him for their own political and ideological ends. I say and stress “almost” because whatever pity one might have for this man is overtaken by the disgust one ought to have for his reckless cruelty that has done untold harm to individuals, families, and institutions, whose injuries still cause pain and suffering today. (I speak as one who knows a little about this.) Since Otten has often compared himself to the Communist hunter Joseph McCarthy, and was able to destroy the careers of many individuals, just as McCarthy did, one would like to ask Herman Junior the famous question that army attorney Joseph Welch put to McCarthy on 9 June 1954: “Have you no sense of decency, sir? At long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” There is no evidence of such in this story.

Burkee concludes, in part, by writing: “Jack Preus gained and lost allies because of his pragmatism. Herman Otten, conversely, gained and lost allies because of his I-am-right-at-all-costs posture. Both entered a new decade in 1981 considerably less influential and more unpopular than they had been in 1969” (307). While Jack Preus’s influence today is negligible, Herman Junior’s seems just as strong as ever (contra Burkee’s claim). But Burkee’s next sentence after the above is indeed accurate: “The church they left behind was divided, dwindling and more cynical than it had been in over a century” (ibid.).

There is no question that this is now the definitive scholarly study of this conservative movement in the LCMS, at least until Mary Todd completes her book. Martin Marty recently told me that a revision of Burkee’s dissertation will be published by Eerdmans “in a season or two” (Marty is writing the foreword.) One hopes that the book will contain some important revisions. As is, the dissertation is largely an exercise in investigative journalism and not an in-depth historical analysis. The work frequently lacks deeper, more critical inquiry into the evidence and its reliability. Too often the dissertation sounds “gossipy.” Too often he accepts testimony without question. He also frequently allows a single source, including his “deep throat”-like “anonymous,” to serve as the only basis for an assertion of fact. More significantly, he underestimates the theological issues that were used by Preus and his comrades to stir up fear among others. While the strength of Burkee’s study is its ability to locate this conflict within the larger social and political currents of the time, its great weakness is its lack of

sufficient attention to the theological and ecclesial issues that were frequently raised by Preus and then addressed and criticized by Preus's opponents.

Minor errors mar the work as well: There is the glaring error about Omar Stuenkel and the UPC (When I recently spoke with Stuenkel and told him about this error, he had a good laugh. "I was on the receiving end of Preus's attack!"); Oswald Hoffmann cannot fairly be described as a "liberal pastor-in-training" at St. Matthew's since he served there as an assistant pastor and not as a vicar (Burkee implies that Hoffmann vicared at St. Matthew's on p. 63); the word "convention" is missing on p. 160; to refer to the events surrounding the expulsion of the seminary faculty majority as "the Walkout" is contested among mainstream historians and should be avoided (in the end the faculty majority were fired because the Board of Control did not agree to faculty's requests in its final letter to the BOC); "Foreward" (201; 203) should be "foreword"; I would hope that Burkee would refer in footnote 12 (p. 266) to the decade-old Daystar organization and the political activities of Jesus First in order to qualify but not totally dispute Bohlmann's dated statement, "...ever since Ozzie [Hoffmann] was defeated in '73, there has been no real moderate political organization of any kind in this church."

Until the book comes out from Eerdmans, one may order a copy by contacting UMI at 800-521-0600.