



# Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod: A Conflict That Changed American Christianity

*James C. Burkee*

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Power, Politics, and the Missouri Synod follows the rise of two Lutheran clergymen - Herman Otten and J. A. O. Preus - who led different wings of a conservative movement that seized control of a theologically conservative but socially and politically moderate church denomination (LCMS) and drove "moderates" from the church in the 1970s. The schism within what was then one of the largest Protestant denominations in the United States ultimately reshaped the landscape of American Lutheranism and fostered the polarization that characterizes today's Lutheran churches.

Burkee's story, supported by personal interviews with key players and church archives sealed for over twenty years, is about more than Lutheranism. The remaking of this one Lutheran denomination reflects a broader movement toward theological and political conservatism in American churches - a movement that began in the 1970s and culminated in the formation of the "Religious Right."

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