

the General Assembly, has resulted in the loss of nearly two million members over the last decade.

(4) Of the many smaller presbyterian bodies we can say nothing of this time. The Presbyterian church is one of the major bodies in the Consultation of Church Union and seems destined to be in that amalgamation (the chief proponent was Eugene Carson Blake, Presbyterian minister and ecumenical advocate) It is hard to foretell when this group will have sufficient size to mount itself as a combined denomination but things are pointed that way.

(5) Due to the immediate history of Biblical Seminary, we are closer to the Presbyterian problem than to any of the other bodies. Due also to our general makeup we are closer to the families we have mentioned than to those we are about to briefly survey in the next few pages.

e. The Lutheran Community

The merger of 1988 has unified the great mass of Lutheran churches...although not ending all other bodies. The total number of Lutheran communions is about 6 today as opposed to 30 at the turn of the century and a good many more than that earlier in the 19th century. The present amalgamation is marked with a strong degree of liberalism and relatively little tolerance for evangelicals in the group...although these still occur and some will be found about us in Hatfield. The Missouri synod is exceptional in the larger rankings of Lutheranism and the Lutheran Brotherhood is strongly conservative on the "lower level" of Lutheran thinking. The most decided conservative voice is that of Herman Otten and the "Christian News."

f. The Anglican Community (Episcopal)

What is said of Lutheranism may also be said of Anglicanism save there have been no mergers. Due to the hierarchial structure one will find a bishop now and then who is very orthodox but the council of bishops has a strongly liberal thrust as seen recently in the election of a feminine bishop. The Episcopal church has also seen a great loss in membership and has had increased difficulty in the recruiting of clergy. Mergers of the seminaries has resulted in fewer places of study and many less theological students. The conservative group based in the Pittsburgh area has conversely seen a growth of interest in evangelism and spiritual growth and has been supplying more men to the parent denomination. Yet with the grip that liberalism has over all it is hard to think that anything more will occur than the development of a few pockets of strong orthodoxy in a liberal sea. Well, we will take any improvements in this regard.