OBSERVATIONS ON THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY

A DISCLAIMER

The original assignment for this paper was "The Relationship and Difference Between the Wauwatosa Theology and Walther", a task for which this writer is immanently unqualified, being what one essayist calls a "run-of-the-mill pastor". Doing justice to this topic would have required extensive study in the writings of the four theologians involved - J. P. Koehler, August Pieper, John Schaller and C. F. W. Walther - most of which remains in the original German, fills volumes, and is not located in the Dakotas.

This presentation, therefore, is not the coherent, conclusive study many attending this conference had hoped for. It has become a humbler effort than the original intent - a simple series of essays on the subject of "The Wauwatosa Theology", based on information gleaned mostly from the research of others. Credit then belongs to the sources and blame to the writer.

Concerning the format and other particulars: References to "the seminary" mean the Evangelical Lutheran Theological Seminary in Wauwatosa or its continuation as Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon. References to "the synod" or "the Wisconsin Synod" mean the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States in the early 1900s and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, its continuation in the late 1900s. Capitalized phrases within the quotations are the emphasis of this writer, not the original sources. The titles "Wauwatosa Theology" and "Wauwatosa Gospel" are basically interchangeable.

THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY'S DEFINITION AND ACTIVE DEPARTURE

John Philipp Koehler came to Wisconsin's Wauwatosa seminary in 1900, after brief service in the parish ministry and a professorship at Northwestern College in Watertown. "He was something of a lone rider (self described)", aloof, "quite formal in his classroom manner", and "possessed of considerable self-assurance". Yet, "of the Wauwatosa men his no doubt was the most original mind" and "he possesed uncommom intellectual gifts". Koehler's teaching career within the Wisconsin Synod ended in 1929, following his dismissal - a sad result of the Protes'tant Controversy - he lived out the years of his exile at his son's home in Neillsville and died in 1951. 1

August Pieper came to the seminary in 1902. "Of the three Seminary men, he had the longest pastoral experience." "Highly articulate, often eloquent", "he had a knack for being dramatic", and possessed "abundant energy and stamina". "He easily established a good rapport with students ... and with his fellow pastors in the ministry." Koehler refers to him as "probably the best gifted of the (Pieper) brothers" (which includes Franz, Walther's hand-picked successor). Prof. Pieper served out the rest of his ministry at the seminary, retiring in 1943 and going to his eternal home shortly before Christmas in 1946. 2

The synod called John Schaller to the seminary in 1908, replacing Dr. Adolf Hoenecke as director and dogmatics professor. "His coming proved to be a gracious act of God, for Schaller became a sort of catalyst that sparked a rare combination, an almost 'awesome threesome' that impacted Lutheranism for over a decade with a unique brand of distinctive Scripture-based scholarship dubbed the 'Wauwatosa Theology.'" "Reserved", "amiable", and "endearing", "Schaller formed the heart and soul of our Seminary" with his "impressive scholarship and quiet strength." He died unexpectedly at the height of his powers in 1920,"a victim of the post-war influenza epidemic". 3

All three Wauwatosa men received their theological training in St. Louis under the dogmatic guidance of C. F. W. Walther. In fact, their backgrounds and

beliefs are strikingly similar. Yet, Koehler notes:

> The three Seminary colleagues, though of about the same age, gifts, schooling, spirit, and aims, were not by any means built on the same last or repititions of any model. ... Each stood on his own feet. ... It was an earnest that under God they would stand so much more firmly shoulder to shoulder. [4]

Together, then, these men would make a valuable, even historic, contribution. Koehler writes:

> Generations were effective at the seminary in the work of three men of the same age who besides had the same training as educators. There is only one Gospel, and no school or synod had a monopoly on it; but THE HISTORICAL EXEGETICAL APPROACH TO IT OF WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY HAS GIVEN THE WISCONSIN SYNOD A DISTINCT EDUCATIONAL CHARACTER AMONG ITS SISTERS. THAT NEEDS TO BE RECORDED AS A MATTER OF ITS HISTORY. [5]

This "historical exegetical approach" has become the most noteworthy and distinctive aspect of the Wauwatosa Theology, to the point of being considered synonymous with it. Koehler again explains:

> In the study of theology, dogmatics and history occupy parallel positions; the former presenting the inner connection of the divine purpose of salvation and its revelation in the Word of God, the latter telling the story of the working out of the divine plan on earth thru the ages. THE CENTER OF STUDY IS THE EXEGESIS OF THE SCRIPTURES, which forms the basis both for doctrinal theology and the teaching of history and itself deals with both. Luther knew what he was saying when he urged that the study of the languages be fostered. THE IMMEDIATE WORD OR WORDS OF THE SCRIPTURES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN DOGMATICAL TERMS. [6]

At first blush a casual observer may not see this as a significant observation for a strictly Scriptural Lutheran. He would be wrong. It proved to be a momentous departure that led the Wauwatosa theologians to reshape their seminaryand synod. Koehler again:

> The Old-Lutheran manner of that day (was) CITING THE FATHERS' WRITINGS AND ARGUING ON THEIR BASIS, INSTEAD OF SIMPLY DIGGING INTO THE SCRIPTURES. This criticism has been countered by the argumant that without special exegetical procedure the way of salvation may be learned, especially from the fathers, as long as the doctrine remains pure. Theoretically and dogmatically the argument seems to stand; it doesn't with the historian. The exclusive study of the fathers has always been accompanied by the dominance of reason, of theory, and of partisanship. That has been the church's experience four times, on a grand scale. VIGOROUS AND FRESHENING THEOLOGY - take the classic examples of the Aposltes' age and of the Reformation, not to mention lesser ones throughout the Christian era - HAS ALWAYS DRAWN DIRECTLY FROM THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF THE SCRIPTURES. [7]

The advantages of using this "vigorous and refreshing theology" for healing the church's wounds and restoring its vitality also are expressed by Koehler:

> It was not very promising for the future that many closed their minds to new insights that might have promoted a more original and independent study of the Scriptures and thus INVIGORATED THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH, even though they were not articles of faith. ... The reader knows by this time that it had always peculiarly been the contention and the example of Wauwatosa to GO BACK DIRECTLY TO THE SCRIPTURES IN ORDER TO RESTORE UNITY. [8]

Even Wauwatosa's method of teaching dogmatics took a definite turn. In the preface to the first (and sadly last) volume of his dogmatics text, Schaller stresses that his teaching and writings set "forth Christian doctrine from the Lutheran point of view", noting, "for Lutherans, nothing is theology but what is written in the revelation of God". He goes on to note:

> This book ... is an attempt to set forth, as briefly as may be

compatible with clearness, precision, and comprehensiveness, WHAT THE SCRIPTURES SAY concerning the redemption of Jesus Christ. . . .

In each paragraph the thesis is immediately FOLLOWED BY THE ASSEMBLED SCRIPTURE TEXTS FROM WHICH IT IS DERIVED. An experience of many years suggested the advisability of PRINTING THE PASSAGES IN FULL. The increase in the bulk of the book is more than offset by the ease with which the reader may determine that "THUS IT IS WRITTEN" AS THE THESIS STATES. . . .

The Lutheran student must not only be brought into intelligent contact with the valuable and extensive Latin literature of our church, but he must also be kept alive to the fact that our ULTIMATE SOURCE OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE LIES IN THE GREEK AND HEBREW ORIGINAL OF THE BIBLE. [9]

The fathers, while still put to use, even lost their dominance over dogmatics.

Furthermore, the Wauwatosa Theology possessed a different spirit and attitude toward applying Scriptural truths to our practice and life. Loren Schaller observed, "What was best in his theology, IT WAS THOROUGHLY SCRIPTURAL EVANGELICAL TO THE CORE, avoiding the vagaries to which the human mind is prone." This evangelical spirit of the Wauwatosa Theology freed the church from the restraints of dogmatism, pietism and, most disturbing, the interference of the old German state church. Explaining this in their preface to *The Shepherd Under Christ*, Armin Schuetze and Irwin Habeck hold up Schaller's *Pastoral Praxis* as the paramount example.

When Professor John Schaller in 1913 published his *Pastoral Praxis*, he realized that his presentation DEPARTED IN CERTAIN RESPECTS FROM THAT OF THE REVERED TEACHERS OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY. Because these teachers were properly recognized as reliable in the study of dogmatics, they were almost uncritically followed also in their presentations of pastoral ethics. It was at first not noticed that the RELATIONSHIP OF THE CHURCH TO THE STATE in seventeenth-century Europe necessarily affected their presentation of the duties and rights of a pastor, so that as a result a certain LEGALISTIC TONE permeated their pastoral ethics.

Professor Schaller, recognizing this, set about to APPLY THE BASIC SCRIPTURAL TRUTHS AND PRINCIPLES to the new circumstances in America. Free from any pressures on the part of the state, the ministry could now be carried out in an EVANGELICAL MANNER that was difficult for the fathers of the seventeenth century to attain. In his *Pastorale Praxis* a handbook that BREATHED AN EVANGELICAL SPIRIT became available for instructing the Wisconsin Synod clergy at its seminary. . . .

Like Schaller every member of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary faculty is COMMITTED TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES as the inspired Word of God and thus the ONLY SOURCE OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND THE ONLY INFALLIBLE GUIDE FOR THE CHURCH'S PRACTICE. We make no apologies for letting this commitment become evident on every page of this book. The faculty was also concerned that the BIBLICALLY EVANGELICAL SPIRIT SO EVIDENT IN SCHALLER'S VOLUME might not be lost. [10]

While less prominent than its hard Scriptural exegesis, then, the spiritual and evangelical aspects of the Wauwatosa Theology became just as vital to it, its continued influence and, more importantly, to faith and life. On this subject both Pieper and Koehler ring in loudly.

(Pieper:) All purely professional Bible study, even if it is as exacting, thorough and exhaustive as that of the Bible critics, is a curse. It hardens the soul so that it becomes indifferent and eventually resists and loathes the gospel and all biblical truth. No, it is not a matter of simply knowing the Scripture. ALL KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE MUST BE FAITH, SPIRIT AND LIFE GIVEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. Otherwise it leads to nothing but damnation. [11]

(Koehler:) But above all ranks the supreme and supernatural gift of the Spirit, FAITH, WHICH THRU LOVE LEADS US TO UNDERSTAND GOD'S THOUGHTS to us-ward and to understand each other. [12]

Essentially, this is the Wauwatosa Theology. But really it is not a theology at all, more of a method and spirit woven around the only true theology - God's Gospel. On that most basic of levels Wauwatosa Theology agrees fully with Old Lutheranism. And in itself, Old Lutheranism maintains rigid standards of biblical integrity for doctrine and practice. But in time its endless stream of citations from the fathers may become stiffling. Desperately in need of a little fresh air, three professors at the theological seminary in Wauwatosa, Wisconsin turned - or rather, returned - to the objective study of Scripture. Others sadly may have gone into textual criticism and other questionable pursuits for the same reason.

Also, on rare occasions, even the fathers for all their orthodoxy and clarity could mislead their disciples. Two of these occasions became the Wauwatosa Theology's first practical tests. Koehler writes:

> So the present writer, in bringing to a conclusion his history of the Wisconsin Synod, is reminded of the two theological issues for which the Wisconsin faculty stood over against others. They were not the heart and core of the Gospel, on which we had no monopoly, but they concerned the problem of exegetical exactness in theological work to the very last detail.13

The first incident began innocently enough. "At the first intersynodical conference, toward the close, it happened that Pastor Doermann of the Ohio Synod questioned a statement of the essayist's by injecting 'the analogy of faith'." Irwin Habeck summarizes Koehler's explanation of the particulars and problems of this doctrine:

> Of this term, which is a rendering into English of the Greek in Romans 12:6, Koehler says: "The expression had been used for over fifteen hundred years in the church as a technical principle of interpretation. ... The general idea remained that EVERY TEACHING, and hence,the interpretation of the respective Scriptures, MUST BE 'ANALOGOUS', THAT IS, CONFORM, TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE BIBLE otherwise. The indiscriminate use of this principle in the attempt to explain the mysteries of Bible truth had served to EMASCULATE SOME OF ITS MOST VITAL TEACHINGS, e.g. the doctrine of election". Any interpretation of a passage, no matter how inept it might be, was allowed to stand if it conformed to the "analogy of faith." On the other hand, no matter how clear a passage might be, if it seemed to conflict with the "analogy of faith" its meaning was twisted to fit into a preconceived system of doctrine. 14

Koehler further comments:

> Clinging to the ill-advised term, wrongly derived from Romans 12:6, has been a BALL-AND-CHAIN TO OUR LUTHERAN THEOLOGY here in America since 1840 and hindered the emancipation from the type of dogmatics that kept the synods called to the building of the Lutheran church here embroiled in constant mutual strife and opposition; and FROM A RETURN TO LUTHER'S SIMPLICITY. Dr. Walther had the latter in mind, but unhappily his sponsoring of them here served to give undue prestige to the old dogmaticians, who had not disembarrassed themselves of the false slant. . . .
>
> The PROPER INTERPRETATION of the misapplied Scripture text became imperative, and Koehler, who had not taken part in the discussions, applied himself to the task, with the result of the article in the first number of the *Quartalschrift* under the head of "The Analogy of Faith." His finding was that THE APOSTLE IS NOT STATING A TECHNICAL PRINCIPLE OF HERMENEUTICS IN TO ROM. 12:6 BUT SAYING THAT IN THE MATTER OF THE GIFT OF 'PROPHECY' such prophesying should be according to the proportion of faith (as it is translated quite aptly in the English Bible); in other words, THOSE IN THE EARLY CHURCH ENDOWED WITH THIS PARTICULAR GIFT SHOULD CONFINE THEMSELVES IN THEIR PROPHESYING,its content, scope, and exercize, TO THE MEASURE OR DEGREE OF FAITH with which they were endowed, by virtue of which they could exercize such gift thru the Spirit; they should not try to go into higher flights of their own (cf. v3). 15

Given time, Koehler and the other Wauwatosa men put this issue to rest permanently, at least as permanently as any false teaching can be put down. They could not say that about their second struggle. It would return time after time to plague their synod - the misunderstanding of Scripture's doctrine of Church and Ministry.

This issue also began on a small scale, with a local problem in Cincinnati. Basically, the Cincinnati Case raised "the question of suspension from synodical membership and its bearing on the fellowship of faith". As it grew, however, this monster engulfed the entire doctrine of Church and Ministry and weakened the Wisconsin Synod's relationship with the Missouri Synod. The explanation of this issue begins with a quotation from Koehler. But for the most part, the groundwork and conclusions are Pieper's.

> WHAT THE HISTORICAL-EXEGETICAL APPROACH FOUND IN SCRIPTURE CONCERNING THE CHURCH IS THUS SUMMARIZED: "CHRIST HAS ONLY ONE CONCEPT OF THE CHURCH, but at Matthew 18, He, of course, speaks of the (in time and space) localized church as a part of the whole, the congregation of those Christians directly concerned in the matter of the brother's sinning. That may mean a synod as well as a so-called 'Ortsgemeinde' (local congregation). Matthew 18:17 refers to all the believers affected by the sin that is under consideration. They are affected in two respects: the sin is an offense to them, and they want to help the erring brother. As a matter of Christian course, the larger body will consider the smaller group that is involved by further ties with the erring brother. But that CANNOT MEAN THAT A RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT PRONOUNCED BY THE LARGER BODY, SAY A SYNOD, IS NOT HONORED IN HEAVEN UNTIL THE SMALLER HAS HAD ITS SAY. And it is the effectiveness in heaven around which Matthew 18 revolves, not outward organization membership here on earth. EXCOMMUNICATION, finally, rightly understood is not an enforcement of damnation, but SHOULD SERVE THE SINNER'S ULTIMATE SALVATION, by bringing him around, and, failing that, serve the sanctification of the church. It is a part of the PREACHING OF THE LAW and as such as much a part of the individual Christian's function, as a witness of Christ, as of the individual congregation; and again: AS MUCH A PART OF A SYNOD'S FUNCTION AS OF THE INDIVIDUAL LOCAL CONGREGATION. [16]

Many have seen this understanding as the Wauwatosa men parting ways with their sainted teacher, C. F. W. Walther. That isn't how Pieper saw it. He explains:

> In the DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH AND ITS MINISTRY AND OF THE PROPER FORM OF A LUTHERAN CONGREGATION, Walther's two books have become basic and normative for the view held in the entire Synodical Conference and beyond it. This has, however, not been universally true as far as his definition of Lutheran local congregation is concerned. THERE HAVE BEEN DEVIATIONS BECAUSE, IN SPITE OF WHAT WALTHER SAID, the condition of being under a pastor has a always been immediately included. Walther, of course, clearly enough tied the ministry of the Keys to the communion of saints alone and tied its discernability to the administration of the Word and sacraments alone. This misunderstanding was occasioned in part by the fact that in his book *Church and Ministry* Walther uses terms commonly used in Germany. He uses 'public ministry' (Predigtamt, literally, preaching office) and 'pastoral ministry' (Pfarramt, literally, parish office) synonymously. In doing that, HE SEEMS TO CLAIM THAT ONLY THE PASTORAL MINISTRY WAS DIVINELY INSTITUTED. That he did not want to deny the divine institution of all other forms of the public ministry, that he considered a PROFESSORSHIP at a Christian college also to be a species of the general PUBLIC MINISTRY INSTITUTED BY GOD, HE CLEARLY ATTESTED in his sermon at the installation of a Fort Wayne professor. Nevertheless, his presentation in *Church and Ministry* and elsewhere GAVE

> PEOPLE WHO DID NOT EXAMINE THE MATTER MORE CAREFULLY THE IMPRESSION THAT ONLY THE LOCAL CONGREGATION OR PAROCHIAL PUBLIC MINISTRY, THE PARISH MINISTRY FORM, HAS BEEN INSTITUTED BY GOD, whereas all other forms of the public ministry, even the office of a theological professor, are a human arrangement. That Luther considered not only the pastoral office form of the PUBLIC MINISTRY AS DIVINELY INSTITUTED BUT ALL POSSIBLE FORMS such as "pastoral office, teacher, preacher, reader, priest (as chaplains are called), sexton, schoolmaster and whatever else belongs to such offices and persons," the entire "spiritual estate," "which has the ministry and the service of the word and sacraments," is clearly seen from his own words in the sermon of 1530 on the education of children, which Walther himself cites in his book under the second thesis on "the public ministry or pastoral ministry (Predigtamt oder Pfarramt)." In the *Quartalschrift* we have previously established this in detail also from his other writings. 17

Commenting on Pieper's observations, Koehler concludes:

> Concerning Walther's presentation (on the doctrine of church and ministry), it is indicated that owing to WALTHER'S STYLE OF MAINLY SUBMITTING QUOTATIONS FROM THE FATHERS THERE IS MUCH ROOM FOR MISUNDERSTANDING the fathers or Walther himself, and that even Walther himself misunderstands at times. 18

On this issue at least, and quite probably all others, the Wauwatosa Theology agrees fully with that of Walther. Only his faulty methods and lack of clarity are questioned.

MEASURING THE HERITAGE OF THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY has proven a rather difficult task. Despite the contention of Prof. Edward Fredrich, among others, that "the essence of that theology, the historical-exegetical methodology, is alive and well at Mequon," prevailing opinion has declared that it died with Koehler's dismissal from the seminary (see the final essay). The proponents of this observation paint the Wauwatosa Theology as a kind of Camelot -"a place, time or circumstance characterized by ideal beauty, peacefulness and enlightenment" (Webster's II); in other words, a glorious moment, now lost. But that cannot be. The beauty, peace and light of Wauwatosa Theology came not from its style or the uniqueness of its expression or the brilliance of its framers . . . the beauty, peace and light of Wauwatosa Theology came from its message, the Gospel, which "stands forever" (Isaiah 40:8). Jesus said: "I am the light of the World. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" (John 8:12 & Isaiah 52:7) That is the light, beauty and peace of Wauwatosa Theology.

And that is the point. As a unique, independent creation, the Wauwatosa Theology just does not exist; it never did. Together, the three Wauwatosa men weren't half as original as Bultmann, Wellhausen or even Zwingli. Their "school of thought" relied entirely on one source. They proclaimed true and total agreement with that source and denied even the slightest departure from its teachings. Anything less - or, rather, more - and our "little hide-bound denomination" wouldn't hold these men or their theology in such high regard.

As for the particulars of the Wauwatosa Theology's methods, what exactly is missing in Wisconsin? At its seminary, historical-grammatical exegesis dominates. The curriculum revolves around it. Few of the courses at the school don't involve using it, pastoral theology, homiletics, isagogics, even dogmatics Before his graduation, a seminary student will have translated in class virtually every word of the Greek New Testament, as well as large sections of the Hebrew Old. The synod handles doctrinal issues, as with the roles of man and woman, by turning to Scripture, not following popular opinion or quoting the fathers. Each pastor struggles regularly and prayerfully never to say too little or to demand too much, but to back up every sermon, every paper, every class with chapter and verse and "thus saith the Lord". He may not fully grasp the difference between the

teachings of Gerhard and Selnecker, or even recognize the names. But even a "run-of-the-mill" minister can comfortably pull apart, analyze and digest any Greek sentence in the New Testament and discuss it intelligently, even scholarly. Now this state of affairs may have raised a few "Old Lutheran"eyebrows, but is pure Wauwatosa Theology - and not a little God pleasing, either. "Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true" (Acts 17:11).

C. F. W. WALTHER'S INFLUENCE ON THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY

Introducing a series of articles on the heritage of C. F. W. Walther, Wilbert Gawrisch writes:

> The Wisconsin Synod's first generation theological leader, Adolf Hoenecke, was educated in Germany under Tholuck at Halle. Its second generation theologians were American-trained at Northwestern College in Watertown and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. For six years after Hoenecke's death in 1908, three of Walther's students constituted the entire faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, then located in Wauwatosa. They were J. P. Koehler, who taught at the seminary from 1900 to 1929, August Pieper, who served on the faculty from 1902 to 1941, and John Schaller, who succeeded Hoenecke in the chair of dogmatics and occupied it until his death in 1920. ALL THREE OF THESE MEN, who had been schoolmates in St. Louis, became presidents of the seminary and during their tenure PERPETUATED WALTHER'S THEOLOGY IN THE WISCONSIN SYNOD. When Schaller died, the highest compliment Pieper could pay his colleague and friend was that he was "A FAITHFUL STUDENT OF WALTHER." At the same time Pieper, who was no mean theologian himself, indicated the high esteem in which Walther was held when he said, "We are all dwarfs and cripples in comparison with Paul, Luther, Walther." Now that's high praise! 1

Put simply, then, Gawrisch credits Walther with awakening the spirit of the Wauwatosa Theology.

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther came to America in 1839, a part of Martin Stephan's Saxon immigration. He settled in Missouri's Perry County, intending to continue his fledgling ministry among the settlers there and to teach at their log cabin seminary. Events, however, changed his plans dramatically. Stephan's suspicous behavior led to his downfall as leader and bishop and immediate banishment for adultery, leaving his virtually theocratic group in complete disarray. The responsibility for picking up the pieces fell on Walther's shoulders. In time, he would serve as pastor of Trinity Church in St. Louis, president and professor of dogmatics and pastoral theology at Concordia Seminary also in St. Louis, president of the Missouri Synod, founder and editor of *Der Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre* and president of the Synodical Conference. He became the Luther of American Lutheran Confessionalism. C. F. W. Walther's 75 year earthly sojourn ended on May 7, 1887 after a long illness.

The debate at Altenburg in April of 1841 became the defining moment at which Walther established himself, reaffirmed the Saxons' commitment to orthodoxy and calmed the maelstrom created by Stephan's treachery.

August Pieper, in his definitive essay series on the heritage of C. F. W. Walther, observes:

> Here Walther laid the broad and solid foundation for the future Missouri Synod and for all that it and its affiliated Lutheran bodies developed into, as well as for much that later transpired in other synods. Here SCRIPTURE AS THE INFALLIBLE WORD OF GOD written by the Holy Ghost was the ground where Walther STOOD FIRMLY ROOTED. In the Saxons' confusion, when everything else reeled beneath their feet, SCRIPTURE AND THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS continued to be their solid foundation. 2

Walther's four decades at Missouri's helm progressed as they began, through storm after storm of practical disagreements and doctrinal controversies. Not only did he and his "ship" survive, they prospered; ever supported by God's Word. Pieper writes:

> Every page that Walther wrote, every oral testimony that he gave, every battle that he fought, testifies to HIS UNSHAKABLE STAND ON EVERY WORD OF THE PROPHETIC AND APOSTOLIC SCRIPTURES. to his unconditional trust in them, to his deep reverence and love for them, a love which set everything else aside. Scripture was not for him a dead book of divine truths revealed at some time in the past and of divinely attested events, but GOD'S LIVING, PERSONAL AND DIRECT WORDS TO HIM FOR HIS AND ALL SINNERS' RESCUE FOR ETERNAL LIFE. . . .
>
> THIS SPIRIT OF CHILDLIKE, UNSHAKABLE FAITH AND OBEDIENCE TOWARD EVERY WORD OF THE HOLY SPIRIT COURSED THROUGH AND COMPLETELY DOMINATED WALTHER. 3

And while the divisive issues which paraded through his life did color Walther's presentation of the Gospel, he never allowed them to overshadow it. Concerning the struggle that began at Altenburg and recurred throughout his ministry, Pieper continues:

> And so the DOCTRINE OF CHURCH AND MINISTRY becomes also the chief touchstone for the purity of the DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION. It became this for Walther, too, in his battle with his opponenets. It continually seperated false from true Lutheranism, and it does that still today. BUT IT NEVER WAS THE MAIN SUBJECT OF WALTHER'S TESTIMONY. That was and remained the justification of the sinner before God through faith in Christ alone. That requires no proof, even if one has only a superficial acquaintance with Walther's writings. 4

In fact, these battles forced Walther to struggle for and achieve an almost legendary understanding of Christianity's chief doctrine, second to that of Justification only. Pieper explains:

> Replacing the truth of God with human wisdom, with FALSE DOCTRINE, would becloud the way to salvation for sinners and would ROB GOD'S WORD OF ITS DIVINE POWER to justify, convert, comfort and sanctify sinners. This was the reason for his (Walther's) scrupulous adherence to the Confessions, his emphasis on "pure doctrine," his intensive pursuit of scholastic Lutheran dogmatics, his HATRED OF ALL FALSE DOCTRINE AND ALL UNIONISM, his frequent rough treatment of opponents and his anger at the theory of open questions and its defenders. For that reason HE EMPHACIZED, TAUGHT AND DEALT WITH THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN LAW AND GOSPEL as no one has since Luther. The mixing of the two was for him the complete destruction of the Word and its power, a thousand times worse that erring in an individual point of doctrine. There can be no more careful and thorough work than Walther's *Law and Gospel*. 5

Even Walther's final confrontation, which "grieved (him) to the depths of his heart" and led a great many Lutherans to rise up "as one man against him", produced greater unity and docrinal clarity. It also offered him one final chance to make a lasting contribution. This issue of course was the Election Controversy. Again, Pieper explains:

> He (Walther) emerged victorious FROM THIS CONFLICT and led the church to make the joyful confession: GOD'S WORD is also then most certainly true and a most precious Word, that is, DESERVING FULL ACCEPTANCE, WHEN EVEN the soundest natural human reason finds an undeniable SELF-CONTRADICTION IN IT - that is unique in the history of the church since the days of the apostles. 6

August Pieper, J. P. Koehler and John Schaller each sat at Walther's feet. They heard and studied his explanations of these doctrines - and every other Scriptural teaching - from the man himself. And what is more, they received his encouragement, his guidance and his direction. Pieper relates this personal account of Walther's influence on him; the emphasis is his:

It is, therefore his strong EMPHASIS ON THE OBJECTIVE CHARACTER OF GOD'S ACT OF JUSTIFICATION which is the distinctive feature of Walther's way of teaching. It permeates everything he said and wrote in his teaching, yes, gives it its specific stamp. For this writer, a Luther hour in which Walther explained the announcement of the Christmas angel in this sense remains unforgettable. He told about a spiritually troubled old woman who came to joyful faith when he explained this to her. In conclusion he added that the entire gospel can be summed up in the one word the Savior spoke to the paralyzed man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven" (Mt 9:2). This, he said, is the JOYFUL MESSAGE with which the risen Lord sent his disciples into the world when he gave them the commission, "Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation." The gospel is God's absolution presented without conditions to every sinner who hears it. When Walther said this, it seemed as though the Spirit of God was moving through the large hall, and the eyes of many lighted up with joy.

Make no mistake. THE SECRET OF WALTHER'S POWER LAY IN HIS CLEAR, POPULAR, JOYFUL AND CONVINCING PRESENTATION OF OBJECTIVE JUSTIFICATION. . . . With his testimony about grace he changed hearts and produced preachers of grace. 7

Clearly, Walther had a strong positive influence on Pieper and his colleagues. The conclusion follows, then, that many of the strengths and spirit of the Wauwatosa Theology had their beginning in him.

That evaluation, however, does not mean that the Wauwatosa men did not have their differences with Walther. In fact, they were highly critical of his methods at times. Pieper observes:

DID NOT WALTHER PROMOTE SOME UNTENABLE DOCTRINES? What about his teaching in regard to usury, dancing and going to the theater, life insurance, running a tavern, in-law marriage, geographical parish boundaries, the local congregation and the pastoral office? Does not everyone know that in the doctrine of election Walther went too far in certain expressions? . . .

WALTHER'S WAY OF PRESENTING THESE MATTERS WAS A MISTAKE which finally had the opposite effect from what it should have had. In Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8 Paul speaks differently about the use of moral adiaphora. First he puts the emphasis on Christian liberty. Then he talks about refraining from the use of it. "Everything is permissible for me - but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible for me - but I will not be mastered by anything" (1Cor 6:12; cf also 10:23). WALTHER'S MANNER AND METHOD OF PRESENTING THESE THINGS WENT TOO STRICTLY BY THEIR OUTWARD FORM AND DID NOT LEAD CHRISTIANS OUT OF THEIR SPIRITUAL IMMATURITY. This is true mutatis mutandis also in regard to life insurance and going to a tavern. . . .

WALTHER HAD A CONSCIENCE THAT WAS THOROUGHLY STEEPED IN GOD'S WORD AND UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE AND STRICT. He had only one fear - that of doing and teaching something contrary to God's Word. BUT HIS SPIRITUAL AWAKENING IN HIS STUDENT DAYS HAD BEEN STRONGLY PIETISTIC. . . . To the end of his life he did not entirely free himself of this. All Pietism, having a legalistic character, strongly overemphacizes externals, forms and what is mechanical. . . .PIETISM RECOGNIZES NO MORAL ADIAPHORA. 8

In this, as in every other aspect of Walther's public ministry, he did influence the Wauwatosa theologians. But this time, in a rather negative way. It made them, especially Schaller, quite sensitive about carrying out the ministry in "an evangelical manner". 9

Furthermore, Walther's educational background, his inherent humility, his concern for establishing and maintaining Missouri's Lutheran identity and his awe with the Lutheran church fathers led him into a "citation theology" which taught Scriptural truth primarily by citing Luther and the fathers. Pieper comments:

THE OTHER SOURCE OF HIS (Walther's) FAULTS WAS HIS DEPENDENCE ON THE SECONDARY SOURCES OF THEOLOGY - LUTHER AND LESSER FATHERS. THIS CANNOT BE DENIED IN SPITE OF ALL HIS EMPHASIS ON SCRIPTURE. Not to admit this is

either blindness or untruthfulness. As brilliant a dogmatician a Walther was, HE WAS ALSO AN INFERIOR EXEGETE. His knowledge of the original biblical languages was good, but not outstanding. He took over dozens of proof passages from Luther and the dogmaticians which do not prove what they were supposed to prove. He failed to recognize that he was basing his position on translations and not on the original text. Thus, for example, he believed in the semper virge, as he confessed at the Milwaukee colloquy with the Iowans, but without a firm scriptural basis. On the whole, HIS KNOWLEDGE OF SCRIPTURE WAS MORE AN INTIMATE ACQUAINTANCE WITH LUTHER'S BIBLE AND A KNOWLEDGE OF PASSAGES THAT A KNOWLEDGE OF THE WHOLE LINE OF THOUGHT OF A BIBLICAL BOOK AND OF THE ORIGINAL TEXT. 10

In fact:

WALTHER HAD NOT COME TO KNOWLEDGE OF THE TRUTH, TO A CLEAR AND FIRM POSITION, THROUGH A DIRECT AND INDEPENDENT STUDY OF SCRIPTURE, BUT ABOVE ALL THROUGH A STUDY OF LUTHER. 11

Walther's method of theology, which also was that of Adolf Hoenecke and most other "Old Lutherans", eventually brought a stinging indictment from the Wauwatosa men, who actually used it extensively early in their ministries. Pieper again writes:

Our DOCTRINAL BATTLES WERE FOUGHT TO A LARGE EXTENT WITH THE 17TH CENTURY FATHERS AS OUR AUTHORITIES. What was the result of this method? This, that although we emphacized the sola scriptura strongly in principle again and again, WE WERE BOUND INWARDLY MORE AND MORE TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE FATHERS AND TAKEN CAPTIVE BY THEM. We grew up with citations from the fathers; with the same citations that our teachers gave us, and we copied out of their writings. We in turn operated when we had to give an essay at conferences, at synods, in controversies, obviously without having come to know the fathers thoroughly ourselves by our study. We were familiar with the Scriptures, but didn't master them. Indeed to establish the correctness of our scriptural proofs we again quoted the fathers: "This is how Luther, or Lucas Osiander, or Johann Gerhard interpreted this passage." That usually settled the matter. And so THE FATHERS GREW INTO AUTHORITIES for us more and more, and captured our heart and head and THE SCRIPTURE TO A GREAT EXTENT REMAINED A CLOSED BOOK FOR US, AND A MERELY THEORETICAL AUTHORITY. 12

Matters grew terribly worse when the Election Controversy raised its ugly head, because Gerhard and other fathers have the intuitu fidei. Pieper shakes his head:

We harvested what we had sown unwillingly and unsuspectingly. WE MADE A CULT OF THE FATHERS. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHERS THEY PROTESTED AGAINST OUR DOCTRINE; they made life bitter for us with the fathers, most of whom, at least those from the 17th century, they had on their side. 13

Incidents like this made Koehler, Pieper and Schaller increasingly cautious about using secondary sources to fight their battles or even to make a minor doctrinal point. Again here Walther turned the Wauwatosa men in a different direction, by having them learn from his mistakes. Notably, the Election Controversy even taught Walther. Pieper observes:

He (Walther) gave his theology the outward stamp of an ecclesiastical-Lutheran, a "Vaetertheologie." But at the bottom of his heart he stood on the Scriptures alone, and was bound by them alone. Until far into the last doctrinal battle he, to be sure, sought to save the great theologians of the 17th century even where they could not be saved any more; but he now was serious about scriptural theology. 14

The issue of Dogmatic's superiority over other theological studies also reached into the seminary classroom, where Pieper and the others frankly saw dangerous neglect. He writes:

Walther, naturally, was the teacher of DOGMATICS, WHICH WAS REGARDED AS

THE QUEEN OF THEOLOGICAL DISCIPLINES. He also taught PASTORAL THEOLOGY. The special emphasis put on pure doctrine, which had now become a synodical emphasis, and the towering personality of Walther together with the impractical arrangement of the other subjects inevitably led to the result that ONLY DOGMATICS AND PASTORAL THEOLOGY WERE ACTUALLY STUDIED AND LITTLE OR NOTHING WAS LEARNED IN THE OTHER SUBJECTS. . . .

NEW TESTAMENT EXEGESIS CONSISTED MAINLY OF DICTATED QUOTATIONS FROM THE LUTHERAN EXEGETES OF THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES. OLD TESTAMENT EXEGESIS involved translation and quotations. When the writer of this article was in the seminary from 1876 to 1879, HERMENEUTICS was taught by Walther himself in the first (!) year according to the Latin texbook of 1754 by the old Dr. C. G. Hofmann! Beyond that, the course included cursory reading of a Gospel in German. . . .

IN ISAGOGICS THE BIBLE ITSELF WAS SELDOM USED IN CLASS. ACTUALLY, THEN, THE STUDENTS CAME OUT OF THE SEMINARY WITHOUT HAVING THE SLIGHTEST ABILITY IN EXEGESIS. IN FACT, THEY HAD NOT EVEN STUDIED A SINGLE BOOK OF HOLY SCRIPTURE SOMEWHAT THOROUGHLY. . . .

The extremely lifeless reading of the SYMBOLICAL BOOKS was auxiliary to the instruction in dogmatics. It was dogmatics, with five to seven periods a week, that in the second and third years of study claimed all the energy even of the diligent students. The pedantry of USING A LATIN TEXTBOOK AND LATIN AS THE LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION together with Latin dictation from the Lutheran church fathers made the study of dogmatics so difficult for most students that they had to spend four, five or even six hours on it every day in order to be able TO ANSWER IN LATIN WALTHER'S LATIN QUESTIONS and later the questions of the tutor, which were also in Latin. 15

Of the three characteristics that created the most criticism of Walther by the Wauwatosa theologians, the issue of seminary curriculum stands apart. The trail that leads to rigidness in practical matters and reliance on the fathers in doctrinal ones begins with the most rigid and father-oriented theological discipline - Dogmatics. Overthrow dogmatics in favor of biblical exegesis, start a theologian's journeys there and the road will lead him to a very different destination. Ironically, America's greatest Lutheran dogmatician led the men of Wauwatosa to this conclusion.

Having said that, this essay concludes with a quotation from one of the finest examples of Wauwatosa Theology, a book based directly on the Bible - having over 300 passages and less than 50 citations from other sources - and written with a comforting evangelical spirit.

The Holy Scriptures are not only as perspicuous as the plainest writing of men, but they are much clearer, because they have been set down by the Holy Spirit, the Creator of the languages. It is therefore absolutely impossible to prove an error or even a contradiction in Scripture if you stick to its words. It is truth, then, what we express in our beautiful Communion hymn "Lord Jesus, Thou Art Truly Good," when we sing: "Firm as a rock Thy Word still stands, Unshaken by the en'mies' hands, Though they be e'er so cunning."

However, while the historico-grammatical meaning of Scripture can readily be opened by any one who understands its language, it is impossible without the Holy Spirit for any one to understand the Holy Scriptures unto his salvation, no matter how great a linguist, how famous a philologist, how keen a logician he may be. The Apostle Paul declares, 1Cor. 2,14: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Again, the same apostle says, 1 Cor. 1,23: "We preach Christ Crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness."

Now, the primary requisite for a salutary knowledge of the Holy Scriptures is the correct understanding of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel. The Bible is full of light to every one who has this knowledge. (page 60 of *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* by Dr. C. F. W. Walther)

THE HAZARDS OF "THE WAUWATOSA THEOLOGY"

Professor Martin Westerhaus, in his lecture series "The Wauwatosa Theology: The Men and Their Message", states, "The terms 'Wauwatosa Gospel' or 'Wauwatosa Theology' are of Protes'tant coinage." Whether they created the phrase or simply popularized it, the Protes'tants have used "Wauwatosa Theology" as the designation for their cause. In fact, they laid claim to it at least as early as 1928 (see the pamphlet "The Wauwatosa Gospel: Which Is It?"), a full year before Koehler broke with the faculty's position paper "Gutachten", and offered his own "Beleuchtung". [1]

The Protes'tants' original arguments against the Wisconsin Synod and its seminary included J. P. Koehler. After joining them, almost by default, he became their martyr not their apologist. They continued to define "Wauwatosa Theology" in their own way, the Beitz way, turning to Paul Hensel and others of his opinion to lead their polemics. This situation has resulted in some very peculiar definitions for the Wauwatosa Theology within not only the Protes'tant Conference but also the church history community at large.

That, of course, is not to say Prof. Koehler did not have several "peculiarities" of his own. His "insistence on the hermeneutical principle that a man's words must be understood as he intends them to be understood" caused tremendous grief in his life, especially when he applied it to the Beitz paper. The Protes'tants and their defenders, however, have taken these minor points and made them the focus of his teaching and ministry; and, therefore, also the focus of the Wauwatosa Theology. [2]

Leigh D. Jordahl, editor of Koehler's *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* and a vocal supporter of the Protes'tant cause, announces in his introduction to Koehler's book, "When John Philipp Koehler joined the faculty of the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary at Wauwatosa in the fall of 1900 he was to inaugurate a new period in the history of the Wisconsin Synod and was, furthermore, destined to become the father of a theology which was dedicated to thoroughgoing reform and renewal (read, The Wauwatosa Thelogy)." Jordahl, later in his "Preface to the Second Edition", makes Koehler's two page pooh-poohing of the Wisconsin Synod's "heathen missions" a viewpoint "central to the Wauwatosa Theology" and, therefore, a part of its definition. [3]

Koehler writes:

> In outward matters the church, is subject to natural developments like the rest of the world, under God. Not all groups or organizations have the same tasks. There are organizations, like peoples, that remain small in number and in that have a token of their mission to do intensive rather then extensive work, by which the world may even profit more. The Wisonsin Synod had a college that was off to a good start along fundamental educational lines. To maintain and develop that was mission enough for a while. The same applies to the preacher and teacher seminaries and the whole educational system. Then, THE NUMERICAL GROWTH OF THE ORGANIZATION OUGHT TO HAVE COME FROM WITHIN, to assure the compactness of the body and inward strength that grew from close identity and singleness of purpose; instead of having various heterogeneous elements thrown together and scattered units annexed that always required support which ought to have gone to the institutions, and besides did not receive the proper supervision. THE RESULT WAS THAT, IN THE FIELD, THE WORK OF PREACHERS AND MISSIONARIES GOT TO BE MORE OR LESS LEGWORK INSTEAD OF A CONTINUED INTENSIVE STUDY OF THE GOSPEL, and the promising work of the institutions and their training was wasted. Where these principles, that govern all life on earth, are flouted in the church, it will lose that which it has as a special divine endowment even more quickly than the world otherwise. ...
>
> THERE WAS SOMETHING NOT ENTIRELY SOUND ABOUT SYNOD'S HEATHEN-MISSION ENDEAVOR, THE IDEA THAT A CHURCH IS NOT LIVING UP TO ITS MISSION UNLESS IT ENGAGES IN HEATHEN-MSSION WORK, ACCORDING TO THE LORD'S GREAT COMMISSION: GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE. THAT IDEA

> IS DOGMATISM, WITH A STREAK OF PIETISM, AND IT PROVOKED THE CRITICISM OF PROF. HOENECKE. And in distinction from the mission houses abroad, the tackling of the work here was UNINTELLIGENT IN THAT THE PROSPECTIVE MISSIONARIES WERE NOT GIVEN ADEQUATE TRAINING at the college or the seminary. The only distinction made was that they were given complete maintenance, on the strength of the argument that heathen-mission work required special sacrifice and consecration. A further misstep was to train young men who were still unknown quantities in this inadequate way and then put them on their own in strange surroundings, which were equally strange to the authorities. [4]

Professor Irwin J. Habeck, in his review of Koehler's history, observes that these "two remarks reveal a way of thinking from which the Synod has only in recent decades freed itself by the grace of the Lord." That cannot be said about the Protes'tant Conference or the wide-spread view of the Wauwatosa Theology. [5]

The Protes'tants further extend their misunderstanding of Koehler and the Wauwatosa Theology by dwelling on his occasional preoccupation with "partisanship" and "unity" and several comments inconsistent with his otherwise firm stand on fellowship. For example, Koehler comments:

> However, one who cannot see things this way is not necessarily a heretic; A THEOLOGIAN WHO OPERATES WITH THE INTUITU FIDEI IS NOT FOR THAT REASON A FALSE PROPHET. But John and Luke knew nothing about it, as little as Paul, and THE USE OF THE DEVICE (WHICH IT IS) BESPEAKS A FAULTY APPROACH TO THE INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE AND A MISGUIDED THEOLOGY. Such a theology, when coupled with traditionalism and dogmatism, is not readily open to conviction, BUT THAT IS NOT SAYING IT HAS NO APPRECIATION OF THE GOSPEL. [6]

The Protes'tants have built extensively on this opinion, producing a rather peculiar understanding of fellowship for a confessional church body. Mark Jeske, in his paper on the Protes'tant Conference, observes:

> The principle of "selective fellowship" crops up throughout Protes'tant history: the LCA professor Jordahl has preached for Marcus Albrecht, Theophil Uetzmann used to preach at an ALC church in Marinette, and they contend that nothing is wrong. "Are you saying that these men are not Christians? Who do you think you are?" would be a Protes'tant reply. The proper use of confessional statements is not understood. [7]

Many within the Protes'tant orbit also have misinterpreted Koehler's (as well as, Schaller and Pieper's) opposition to dogmatism and concerns over the misuse of dogmatic works as an attack against catechisms, including Luther's. The result has become a perception of Wauwatosa Theology which demands that its students abandon all use of the Catechism, or at least to distrust its use. Charles E. Werth, a writer from outside the Wisconsin Synod and the Protes'tant Conference, makes this conclusion:

> Wauwatosa Theology speaks of "study of life" for the Christian, and for the preacher, "life is study." The implication is that both preacher and laity MAKE FREQUENT AND REGULAR TRIPS TO SCRIPTURE. Living Christianity should involve a testing of one's perceptions and teachings against the norm of the Word of God, NOT AGAINST ORTHODOX CONCEPTS AS OUTLINED IN THE CATECHISM or other dogmatic texts. [8]

The reader may understand this particular comment properly, but it reflects a definite drift away from the Wauwatosa professors' original intent. Within the Protes'tant camp this drift has reached its inevitable conclusion. Mark Jeske again observes:

> The PROTES'TANT HEIRS OF THE WAUWATOSA GOSPEL sometimes garbled Koehler's emphases; the result was a caricature of Koehler's original point. He, for example, would inveigh against dogmatism, but his Protes'tant disciples somehow construed that as a condemnation of the Catechism. Oswald Hensel, Hans Koch and Otto Gruendemann were some of the Protes'tants who DISCARDED THE CATECHISM OUTRIGHT. Paul Lutzke wrote: "Had Luther lived in

> our day of university schooling, it is questionable whether he would have written his Catechism." And thus one of the Lutheran Confessions was dispensed with. 9

Every observer who sees these points as all or part of the Wauwatosa Theology must conclude with Jordahl, "It is clear that the style and content of the old Wauwatosa Theology no longer lives in the place of its birth." In fact, Werth came to believe that the Wisconsin Synod never accepted the Wauwatosa Theology, and throughout this "movement's" history reacted to it only with "apathy, antipathy, or anger". 10

Mainstream historians have chosen to follow this track. One of them, E. Clifford Nelson, with his collaborators, in his *The Lutherans in North America*, writes:

> Unique in Synodical Conference history prior to World War II was the controversy of the 1920s centering around the Wisconsin Synod's seminary at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. Concerned that overemphasis on dogmatical formulations was making REAL EXEGETICAL AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH IMPOSSIBLE, John P. Koehler tried in his teaching to break THE STRANGLEHOLD OF DOGMATICS on theological study. In place of the doctrinal self-confidence of much of orthodox Lutheranism, he and like-minded pastors under his influence stressed the NEED FOR A CAUTIOUSLY CRITICAL STANCE EVEN OVER AGAINST THEIR OWN SYNOD'S THEOLOGICAL TRADITION. In spite of the fact that these "Wauwatosans" directed their criticism more against the prevalent dogmatic and polemic spirit than against the actual doctrine of their synod, THEY WERE SUSPENDED ON CHARGES OF FALSE DOCTRINE AND/OR INSUBORDINATION. 11

The Wauwatosa Theology . . . some consider it a battle cry, others a call to abandon the catechism or mission expansion or strict confessionalism or even the Wisconsin Synod, and still others a gaping wound best forgotten. Those who understand Wauwatosa Theology basically as a method of theological teaching which continues at Mequon and throughout the Wisconsin Synod may find themselves in a distinct minority, especially outside synod circles. All this is to say, the term "Wauwatosa Theology" carries more extra baggage than it has substance. In fact, that substance itself remains in question. Every person who investigates the Wauwatosa Theology seems to come away with a different twist to its definition, some radically different. Use of it, therefore, is more likely to cloud an issue than clarify it.

As for the alternate - and original - wording, "The Wauwatosa Gospel", that is a misnomer. Speaking for the Protes'tants, Leigh Jordahl defends its use. He writes:

> WE DELIBERATELY CALL IT THE "WAUWATOSA GOSPEL." THAT IS PRECISELY IN KEEPING WITH J. P. KOEHLER'S CONCEPTION OF THE TASK OF THE ENTIRE THEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE. Theology for Koehler is not one interesting and stimulating intellectual discipline among other disciplines. It is not religious speculation and as such the task of academic theologians who by virtue of their profession enjoy the leisure to cultivate their interest in religion. Neither, however, is the primary task of theology the construction of an impressive and compelling system of pure doctrine. THEOLOGY, RATHER, EXISTS SOLELY TO ASSIST THE CHURCH IN ITS PROCLAMATION AND PASTORAL MINISTRY. IT IS FAITHFUL TO THIS TASK ONLY WHEN IT IS LISTENING TO THAT MESSAGE WHICH IS ALWAYS GOD'S MESSAGE RATHER THAN MAN'S MESSAGE. 12

Still, the wording of this title - The Wauwatosa Gospel - may suggest to the casual observer that the Wauwatosa professors created something unique and different. Koehler, however, comments on that very subject. He writes at the conclusion of his history:

> So the present writer, in bringing to a conclusion his history of the Wisconsin Synod, is reminded of the two theological issues for which the Wisconsin faculty stood over against others. THEY WERE NOT THE HEART AND CORE OF THE GOSPEL, ON WHICH WE HAD NO MONOPOLY, but they concerned the problem of exegetical exactness in theological work to the very last detail.13

Whatever was unique and different about things at the Wauwatosa seminary, it was not the Gospel taught there, which simply repeated verbatim the Gospel taught by Christ nearly 1900 years earlier. Attaching such a name as "The Wauwatosa Gospel" to their work can be somewhat misleading.

Lastly, consider the men regarded as the framers of "The Wauwatosa Theology/Gospel". John Schaller, who died in 1919, may never have heard the phrase in his life and certainly not as the formal designation for the body of his teachings. J. P. Koehler uses it sparingly in *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, which Jordahl proclaims to be "the best source for one seeking to understand the Wauwatosa Theology", and even then seems uncomfortable with it. As for August Pieper, he is conspicuous by his apparent silence. [14]

SUGGESTED READING

Professor Martin Westerhaus produced a series of five lectures for a pastor's institute in 1988, titled "The Wauwatosa Theology: The Men and Their Message". The seminary currently offers it as a part of the traveling institutes. The seminary library tentatively plans to make it a part of the essay file.

Professor August Pieper published a four part article in Volume 20 (1923) of the *Theologische Quartalschrift* to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Missouri Synod and the 50th of the Synodical Conference. He titled this appraisal of Dr. C. F. W. Walther "Jubilaeumsnachgedanken". The *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* printed an English translation of Pieper's article in the four issues of Volume 84 (1987) on the occasion of the 175th anniversary of Dr. Walther's birth and the 100th anniversary of his death.

Pastor Mark A. Jeske, as a Senior at the seminary in 1978, wrote his history thesis on the Protes'tant controvery. The paper is titled "A Half Century of *Faith-Life*: An Analysis of the Circumstances Surrounding the Formation of the Protes'tant Conference". The seminary has made it available through the library's essay file.

Professor John Philipp Koehler wrote an account of the Wisconsin Synod's history from its inception to the early 1900s. It is an exhaustive and somewhat exhausting 255 pages; but still a rewarding read,recommended by Professor Irwin Habeck. Koehler titled it simply, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, a publication of *Faith-Life* and the Protes'tant Conference, available from the seminary bookstore.

STEVEN D. NOWICKI
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BOZEMAN, MONTANA

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