WELS Historical Institute

Journal

FALL 1983

Professor August Otto Wilhelm Pieper
1857-1946

WELS Historical Institute
Journal
VOLUME 1, NUMBER 2 • FALL 1983

In This Issue

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The *WELS Historical Institute Journal* is the official publication of the WELS Historical Institute, 2929 N. Mayfair Road, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53222. The *Journal* is published semi-annually in spring and fall, and is distributed to members upon receipt of the annual dues or by an annual subscription of $10.00 (see enclosed membership application). Printed by Northwestern Publishing House, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

The President's Report

THIS FALL we've been hearing a lot about Martin Luther. It is only fitting that in this five-hundredth anniversary year we thank God for all he accomplished through the Reformer. One of the best ways to show appreciation for our Lutheran heritage is to support our WELS Historical Institute.

The Institute's charter membership stands at almost 600. This represents numerous lay people as well as pastors and teachers.

I hope many more will return the application form in this journal. Like the first issue, this journal is being sent to all WELS pastors, teachers and congregations, in addition to institute members. This is made possible by a generous grant from the Aid Associations for Lutherans. *Only* members will receive future issues. It is imperative that pastors inform their congregations of the Institute and its membership.

At its meeting on April 20, 1983 the Institute gave lifetime memberships to Prof. Carl Lawrenz and Rev. William Schink in recognition of their role in

preserving WELS history. Prof. Lawrenz was instrumental in organizing the Synod archives. Until resigning his post at the end of last year, Rev. Schink had been Synod Archivist for fourteen years.

The Institute's 1983 fall meeting was held on November 1 at Northwestern College, Watertown, Wisconsin. Prof. Martin Westerhaus and Mr. Mark Brunner spoke on "Developing Congregational Archives." Dr. Arnold Lehmann gave the other presentation, "Early Lutheranism in the Watertown Area." Attendance was 140.

A spring meeting is being planned for Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Prof. Ernst Wendland will talk on missions in history. Watch for further notices.

At the November 1 meeting the Institute members gave the board of directors permission to pursue a lease arrangement on historic Salem Lutheran Landmark Church, Milwaukee. If the Institute is able to find sufficient funds, it will use the building, dating back to 1863, as the WELS museum. Restoration costs on the building could run from $50,000 to $100,000. This includes such items as new roofing, storm windows, sewer and water hook-up to the city system. Annual upkeep on the building comes to about $3000 for insurance, utilities, etc. The board will look into a grant for restoration costs. As for the ongoing expenses, $500 a year from six interested individuals would cover this.

When the Synod offices relocate next month, the archives will not be moved to the new location. Instead, the Synod archives will have to find temporary housing until they can be transferred to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.

If you have materials of historical significance you wish to submit to the Institute, please contact the Synod Archivist, Prof. Martin Westerhaus, 6604 W. Wartburg Circle, Mequon, Wisconsin 53092.

Two Institute members are available for slide lectures on the history of architecture in the Wisconsin Synod. If your church or school organization would like such a presentation, contact Rev. Mark Jeske, 3931 North 67th St., Milwaukee, WI 53216, (414) 527-3090, or architect Martin Sell, 143½ Front St., Beaver Dam, WI 53916, (414) 887-1251.

Permit me to close this report on a personal note. I have been involved in the Institute from its planning, through its organization, and now during its early growth. It is a privilege to be a part of this worthwhile agency. Especially rewarding is the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of our WELS history. The presentations at the meetings and the journal articles have all been informative and enlightening.

Certain themes come up time and again. Rather than a glorification of our past as "the good old days," we see the story of frail, sinful people like ourselves. Our forebears struggled. They made mistakes. Yet they shared a common blessing — the Word of God. The Word brought those men and women forgiveness and the strength to carry on the work of the church. It also brought them motivation — namely, Christ's love which "compels us" (2 Corinthians 5:14). They shared that love with others.

Some things don't change. We still struggle. The Word is still our strength, our motivation. May God bless our Synod's future as he has the past — with his Word. Without it we are lost.

Roland Cap Ehlke

A WELS Historical Profile

Chronological Sketches of Our Synod's Past: 1800-1850

Arnold J. Koelpin

AT THE TURN of the 19th century, people in central Europe witnessed a series of events that, under God's providence, led to the founding of three German Lutheran Synods in the Northwest Territory of the United States. The three synods eventually merged into one, the present Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS).

The following chronological sketch traces three lines of development that affected the formation of the Wisconsin Synod:

1. The *political upheavals* during which the early German migrations to America took place (dates below: **bold**);
2. The formation of the *German mission societies* from whose institutions the founding fathers of our Wisconsin Synod came (dates below: *italics*);
3. The *settlement of the Germans* in the territories of Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota among whom the first congregations were established (dates below: roman).

Much of the parallel history of Lutheranism in America in the East and Old West prior to the Civil War is not included in this initial survey.

The chronological lists are neither complete nor exhaustive. Their accuracy is mostly dependent on secondary sources. But they represent a beginning, a primary chronological ladder for others to scale for a glimpse into our Synod's past. The list may also serve those who wish to trace their roots across the waters to the "old country." Or they can serve just for the enjoyment of the casual reader of lists.

A.D. 1800-1850

1780 *German Society* [of Honorable and Active Supporters of Pure Doctrine and True Piety] founded in Basle on the upper Rhine; generator of a network of similar societies throughout Germany. Background in the English S.P.C.K. (Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, London, 1698; helped the Lutheran Salzburgers on their freedom trek to British America, 1731).

1788 The German Society, headquartered in Basle, changes its name to the German Society [for the Promotion of Christian Truth and Piety], later simply known as the *German Society for Christendom.* The name change signaled a more general Protestant character based on the "pure Bible word" instead of "pure teaching."

1799 *Elberfeld Mission Society* founded in the lower Rhineland (Wuppertal), as an offshoot of the London Mission Society.

1800 *Barmen Mission Society* in the industrial lower Rhineland; connections with the English textile regions.

1803 *John Muehlhaeuser,* founder and first president of the Wisconsin Synod, born in Notzingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany.

1805 *Michigan* becomes a territory in the Northwest Territory of the United States.

1806 Napoleon dissolves the *Holy Roman Empire* and replaces it by the Confederation of the Rhine; Prussia and Austria being sovereign German states.

1806 *Berlin Mission School* founded by the Moravian, Father Jaenicke, at the urging of the German Society for Christendom.

1806 *Basel Bible Society* formed with support from the British and Foreign Bible Society.

1812-13 *Wars of Liberation* in Germany against Napoleon Bonaparte.

1815 *Basle Mission Society*, officially, the Protestant [Evangelical] Mission Society, founded by Christian Fredrick Spittler, secretary of the German Society for Christendom. The society's *Basle Mission House*, at first intended for heathen mission work, later answered the call to work among the Swabian Germans in Michigan. In 1840 Spittler also founded the *Pilgrim Mission of Chrischona* (the Tradesmen's Mission in the German Church), in whose early efforts John Muehlhaeuser, a baker by trade, WELS first president, was enrolled.

1815 The *Congress of Vienna* remakes the map of Europe.

1817 *Prussian Union* proclaimed by King Fredrick William III on the 300th anniversary of the Reformation. The *Union Agenda* (liturgy) was devised to help shape a general Protestant [Evangelical] church in Prussia at the expense of the Lutheran and Reformed confessions. The unification attempt came at the hightide of German cultural nationalism for the renewal of the Fatherland.

1817 Father *C. F. Heyer,* associated with the beginnings of the Minnesota Synod, was sent by the Pennsylvania Synod into Kentucky and Indiana.

1817 *Claus Harms* fosters the *Lutheran Confessional Awakening* by publishing 95 Theses against the state of Lutheranism in Germany.

1818 Barmen Mission Society in the lower Rhineland becomes an arm of the Basle Mission Society in the upper Rhineland. In 1828 the Basle/Barmen connection was dissolved and led to an independent *Barmen Mission House* for training tradesmen in mission work.

1824 *Berlin Mission Society* formed as the Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Mission among the Heathen. In 1829 the society, founded by Lutherans of the Prussian Union, began its own seminary.

1825 The *Erie Canal* opens to provide a thoroughfare for settlers in the Upper Northwest Territory.

1826 The *United Rhenish Mission Society* formed: a union of the Elberfeld and Barmen Mission Societies with similar societies in Cologne and Wesel.

1826 The *Barmen Mission House* founded.

1826 The *Langenberg Mission Society* in the lower Rhineland formed as an adjunct to the newly formed United Rhenish Mission Society. Its special purpose: The Protestant Society for North America. Missionaries to Wisconsin were channeled through this society.

1830 Prussian King Fredrick William III authorizes legal enforcement of the Prussian Union Agenda at the Tricentennial of the Augsburg Confession. Its intent: to force all opposition into the Prussion Protestant Union, the Evangelical Church. Persecution of Lutheran opponents continued until 1840 when Fredrick William IV came to the throne. At that time Lutherans opposed to "unionism" were given rights for an independent church.

1830 Swabian Lutherans settle in southeastern Michigan, west and north of Detroit. They appeal to the Basle Mission Society to send pastors.

1830 *John Gottfried Scheibel* of the University of Breslau in Silesia defrocked for opposing the Prussian Union. His efforts led to the formation of the so-called Old Lutherans in Prussia and elsewhere, a movement to create a genuine Lutheran church independent of the state.

1832 The settlement of the Black Hawk War leads the way to Wisconsin becoming a territory four years later.

1833 *Fredrick Schmid*, a Basle graduate, comes to Michigan to serve thirty Wuerttemberg families near *Ann Arbor;* also served in *Detroit* and *Monroe.*

1834 The *Breslau Synod* of Old Lutherans in Prussia formed as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia in defiance of the Prussian Union church. Lutherans throughout Germany aroused by the action.

1836 The *North German Missionary Society* founded as a union of six unionistic city societies. The *Leipzig Mission* in Saxony started as a distinctively Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society.

1836 *Wisconsin* becomes a territory in the Northwest Territory of the United States with a capitol at Belmont.

1836 The Pennsylvania Mission Society sends *C. F. Heyer* to do mission work in India; he later returned to help start the Minnesota Synod.

1837 *Michigan* becomes a state.

1837 First plans for a Michigan Synod discussed.

1837 The Langenburg Mission Society sends Candidates *Muehlhaeuser* and Oertel to North America. They serve in the New York Ministerium.

1837-39 *Old Lutherans* emigrate to America: Pomeranians under Baganz; Silesians under L. F. E. Krause, Captain Henry von Rohr, and Pastor J. A. A. Grabau. Von Rohr and Krause settle in Wisconsin; founding of *Freistadt.*

1838 A planned migration of Saxons led by *Martin Stephan* begin the Missouri Synod.

1840 Fredrick William IV, Prussian King, stops the persecution of the Old Lutherans.

1841 *Fredrick Wyneken* issues an appeal to Lutherans in Germany in a pamphlet: "The Need of the German Lutherans in North America." It stirs the conscience of many Lutherans in Germany.

1841 The Langenburg Society given a special royal charter to act as the *Evangelical Society for Protestant Germans in North America.*

1843 Old Lutherans from Stettin in Pomerania, led by Pastor Adolph Kindermann, settle in Wisconsin at *Kirchhayn*, Town *Lebanon*, and *Cedarburg.*

1843 *John Weinmann* from Wuerttemberg, cofounder of the Wisconsin Synod, enters the Barmen Mission House.

1844 Church at *Ixonia*, Wisconsin, founded because of disagreements in Town Lebanon.

1844 The first *Michigan Synod* organized under Pastor F. Schmid; an early date of founding (1840) lists the Synod as the "Missionary Synod," since Indian mission work seemed to be its primary objective.

1845 The *Buffalo Synod* organized by J. A. A. Grabau as the Synod of Lutheran Immigrants from Prussia.

1845 Candidate *W. Wrede* from Magdeburg, cofounder of the Wisconsin Synod, ordained and commissioned by the Langenburg Mission Society.

1846 *Ehrenfried Seebach* from Town Oakwood near Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sends a letter to the Langenburg Mission requesting that a pastor be sent to serve the Germans there.

1846 *Weinmann* and *Wrede* leave for America; placed under Muehlhaeuser's care. Wrede stayed in New York City; Weinmann went with Muehlhaeuser to Rochester and then to Wisconsin.

1847 *Kirchhayn*, Wisconsin, congregation splits because of the controversy in the Buffalo Synod.

1848 The Barmen Mission Society comes under the influence and direction of *John Christian Wallmann*, a confessional Lutheran.

1848 *Wisconsin* becomes a state.

1848 John Muehlhaeuser arrives in *Milwaukee* on June 27. He makes a living as colporteur and provisionally starts an "evangelical" church.

1849 *Hermannsburg Ev. Lutheran Mission Society* founded by Pastor G. Louis Harms in north Germany, near the Lueneburg Heath.

1849 Muehlhaeuser organizes the German Ev. Lutheran Trinity Church, later to be called *Grace Church* in Milwaukee because of another Old Lutheran Trinity Church in the area.

1849 Pastor Weinmann, ordained by Pastor Schmid in Ann Arbor, Michigan, begins work at *Kilbourn Road*, south of Milwaukee; also at *Caledonia, Greenfield,* and *New Berlin.*

1849 Pastor Wrede from New York called to serve a United (Lutheran and Reformed) Church at *Granville*, Wisconsin.

1849 *Minnesota* becomes a territory in the Northwest Territory of the United States.

1849 The First Evangelical Lutheran *Synod of Wisconsin* began organization at Grace Church in Milwaukee. President: Muehlhaeuser; Secretary: Weinmann; Treasurer: Wrede.

1850 *The German Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Wisconsin* constituted on May 26, 1850, at Granville, Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Synod was not the result of a planned migration. It was primarily a product of German mission societies. Its early history was marked by the conflict of confessions that was going on in the German homeland. It was a time of German national consciousness which stirred a similar confessional consciousness. This reawakening of faith came after a century of rationalism in the German church and the scourge of the French Revolution and Napoleon.

Professor Koelpin teaches religion and history at Dr. Martin Luther College, New Ulm, Minnesota and has completed his course work for a doctorate at Erlangen.

Ernst August Gottlieb Fachtmann

WELS First Traveling Missionary

Armin Engel

ALREADY AT ITS 1851 Synod meeting at Grace Church, Milwaukee, President Johannes Muehlhaeuser's proposal for a missionary-at-large for Wisconsin was unanimously approved. The five pastors present, representing congregations in Milwaukee, Granville, Sheboygan and Manitowoc, were in complete agreement that the man should be called and sent out as soon as possible.

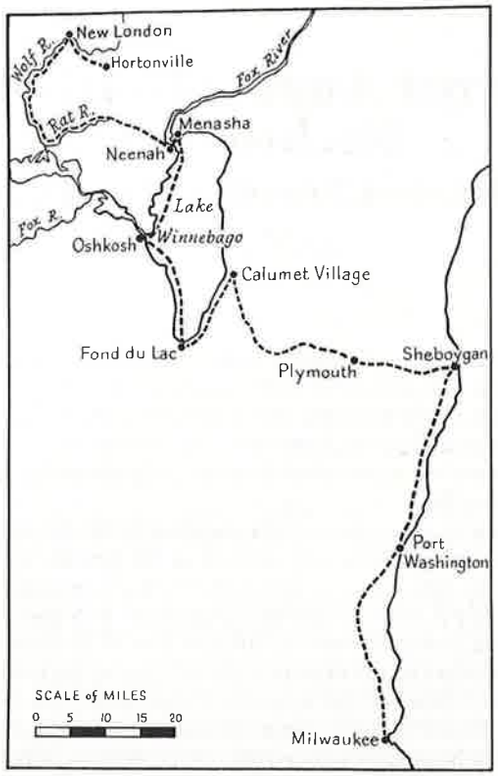
It took six years of expansion in the existing fields before the Wisconsin Synod's first itinerant missionary arrived in the person of Gottlieb Fachtmann. Fachtmann, who came to America in 1857, was a native of Hanover, Germany, born July 3, 1813 in Baerstel, Osnabrueck. A university graduate, he had been doing pastoral work in the province of Brandenburg, Prussia. He came to Milwaukee in the summer of 1858 intending to do mission work among Wisconsin's pioneer Germans. Since he came with excellent credentials, President Muehlhaeuser assigned him to begin work northwest of Milwaukee in Washington County with two congregations, Richfield and Town Polk.

Seeing the need for mission work further inland, he received permission that same fall from his congregations to undertake an extensive mission tour. There was not enough money to buy a horse and it was impossible to borrow one. So he walked.

The First Mission Circuit

With a pack on his back, a few religious books and communion ware, he set out on foot one morning in October 1857. He headed northwest through wild and unsettled country. By way of Port Washington he came to a settlement along Lake Michigan — Sheboygan — which was a booming center of lake traffic. There Pastor F. Steinbach served a congregation and a large school with two teachers and 150 children. Pastor Fachtmann was welcomed and shown around Sheboygan and also an affiliated parish in Plymouth.

From Sheboygan Fachtmann journeyed 40 miles inland to Calumet Village on Lake Winnebago, near the site of an Indian encampment which may once have been the old Pipe village of the Menominees. The people there were called "Latin farmers" because they retained their hold on the Latin classics. Because of their humanistic tendencies they were a source of trouble to the missionaries. Most of them had little interest in religion. Earlier attempts had been made to establish a confessional Lutheran congregation there. The first of the Wisconsin Synod men to go to Calumet Village was



Fachtmann's early journeys

Pastor J. E. Sauer. He was successful for a time, but after he accepted another call, the congregation soon fell into the hands of hirelings. The members wished to become affiliated with the Wisconsin Synod, but were refused by Pastor Fachtmann because they could not accept the Augsburg Confession without reservation.

Fachtmann went on to preach at nearby Chilton and also at New Holstein, at that time a community of 150 German Lutheran families. From there he went to Fond du Lac and then took a boat up Lake Winnebago to Oshkosh, Neenah and Menasha, where churches and preachers were lacking.

At Menasha he found some 20 families of so-called "Old Lutherans" who had left Germany for reasons of faith, and founded Trinity Congregation on October 4, 1857. Pastor Fachtmann in his report adds the observation that the Old Lutherans after all are the salt of the society in which they are to be found, but he deplores that so often they are unreasonably gruff.

In Neenah he found some 51 families that were about to build a church on the island between the Twin Cities. The first church site was a tract of wooded land donated to the early Lutherans by the first governor of Wisconsin, James Duane Doty. However, he was not a member of the group. Construction was actually begun. Then the plan was abandoned as impractical to the furtherance of conservative Lutheranism. The site was sold. After five years the early Lutherans split. One part went to Neenah, the

other to Menasha, both groups retaining the name Trinity. Both congregations remained in close fellowship and for some 33 years functioned as one parish served by one pastor from the Wisconsin Synod.

Fachtmann continued up the Rat and Wolf Rivers. His journey took him as far as New London and what is now known as Hortonville. Everywhere he found a lack of churches, children unbaptized, and people hungry for the Word and Sacraments. These findings he noted in several reports to the president of the Synod. He included places where missionaries had already preached and concluded that the beginnings of fine future congregations were in process.

Being a bachelor, he could adapt to the primitive living conditions on the frontier. Sometimes he rode the oxcart, with wheels cut of the nearly-round trunks of trees. On the almost impassible roads of those early days the homemade wheels did not stay round very long. The only smooth rides he had were on the slow-moving sidewheelers of the lakes and the Fox and Wolf Rivers. Here Fachtmann was in his glory. He loved the rivers and the forest and the wild life of our state.

But more than anything else he was deeply concerned for the souls of the early widely-scattered settlers. That is why President Muehlhaeuser appointed him: driven by his passion for souls he had the talent to become all things to all men that he might save some. What is more he had the knack of living off the land. That's right — no salary was stated in his call to do this work.

A Report to the President

How did he fare without a horse and how could he exist without a coin in his pocket? Of this he gives us an inkling in his report of September 1, 1858 to President Muehlhaeuser.

> A general must always know where his troops are, and so the president of the Synod should be informed about the movements of his soldiers. With yearning heart I desire to tell you about my last week in this mission field. Starting from Oshkosh I journeyed up the Rat and Wolf Rivers. Twice I preached near Hortonville, once in Menasha and last Monday in Neenah. Wherever I came, I was received royally and found a great desire for the water of life. Here is a large mission field for at least two men. New London I reached by boat up the Wolf River. The trip took a whole day. I found 30 Lutheran families there. The heart of this settlement is an old Lutheran family by the name of Zueldorff. The family is surely the salt of the earth.
>
> Not quite two German miles away is Hortonville, and one mile from Hortonville is a congregation of 60 German families. Here I labored last Sunday from nine in the morning till five in the afternoon. There were about one hundred and twenty to thirty in the audience. Not room enough for all in the little school-house. I baptized eleven children that Sunday, made one sick call and communed one privately. Then they called me from Menasha, where I preached in the evening at 8 o'clock. At 10 o'clock I baptized the last two children for that day.

Monday I preached at Neenah on the other side of the Fox River. Here I had Lutherans, Methodists and Yankees in the service. On this day I baptized six children. You see, wherever you take a hold of the net of the gospel there is much weight, much more than I can pull in. On the island between Neenah and Menasha I found 51 Lutheran families building a church . . . . With tears in their eyes they begged me to stay and become their pastor. . . .

My pocketbook is like the barrel of meal of the widow of Sarepta, always low, but it never gives out. It's the baptismal fees which keep me on my feet, although one-third of the parents of these baptized children are too poor to pay. I have always just enough to keep going.

He closed his report with these prophetic remarks: "By God's grace a large territory is being opened for our Synod. The importance of the traveling missionary will become even greater in the next few years than it is now, for then the door will be open, and the traveling missionary of the Wisconsin Synod will be a well-known person. . . . It will be the duty of Synod to cast about for additional able workers to supply these localities."

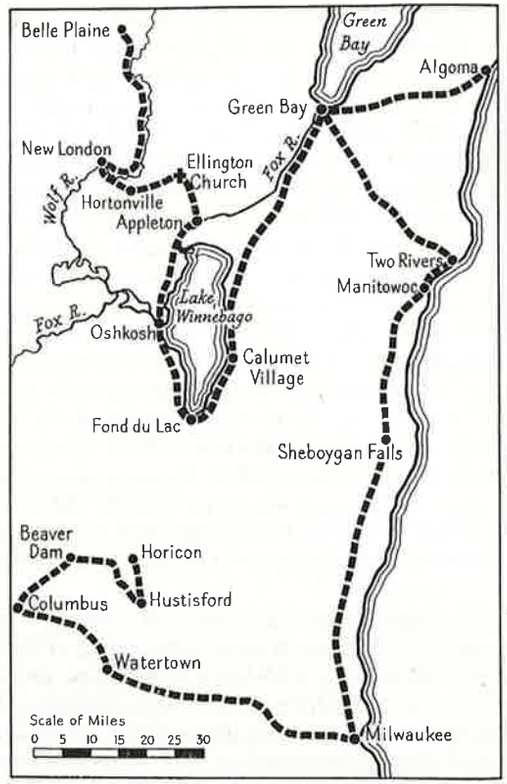
Early in 1858 Fachtmann explored the territory around Columbus and Watertown, including Beaver Dam. This territory was settled by Germans in great numbers, many of them confessional Lutherans. In this area a non-Lutheran circuit rider supplied 19 congregations. Since he didn't shepherd them well, they were in danger of becoming spiritual paupers. Missionary Fachtmann also included Hustisford in his visits, where he found approximately 100 families that were in the process of organizing and building Bethany Church. He advised them to found a confessionally sound Lutheran congregation.

Horicon, situated on the lower end of the famous marsh, was at that time a struggling little village. The name "Horicon" is an Indian word and means "clear or sparkling water." The present site was formerly occupied by the only Indian village in Dodge County. It was known as Elk Village and was still in existence 13 years prior to Fachtmann's arrival. To the Indians this great marsh was known as Cranberry Lake.

In Horicon Fachtmann held the first service for a number of Lutheran settlers in a Presbyterian church. After four such services, Pastor E. Sauer of Town Hermann took charge of this congregation of seven members and served them once every four weeks. Today this congregation is called St. Stephen's Lutheran Church.

The Second Mission Circuit

In June 1858 the Synod convention met at St. John's Church (8th and Vliet), Milwaukee. Fachtmann's work was officially endorsed and he was authorized to continue as missionary-at-large of the Wisconsin Synod. After having been admitted to the Synod he again set out on his travels, this time to Green Bay. In Green Bay he found a Lutheran minister at work with an assistant and a flourishing school. The congregation already owned a church, school and parsonage. He was surprised to find the people so prosperous and well organized. So he continued on to Algoma, then called Ahnapee, and as a result of his work there St. Paul's Lutheran Church was



Further travels of Fachtmann

founded December 10, 1862. Algoma is the Indian name for "sandy place."

During the next year Fachtmann made Fond du Lac his headquarters. First of all, he returned to Calumet. He discovered that in this area even the modest achievements of his former visit were lost. A drunkard pastor by the name of Binder (not to be confused with Binner, who was an honorable member of the Reformed Church and who collaborated with our missionary for a time) had served as pastor. Soon, what had been built up there was torn down, for Binder actually made a mockery of the holy ministry. He afforded the skeptics a chance to ridicule the church. One Sunday, for example, they painted a cross on the inebriate's back and let him mount the pulpit thus adorned. Fachtmann, in his report to the Synod's president urged that an able man be sent into this field as the congregation requested.

Our traveling missionary now investigated the possibilities for a congregation among the Germans living in Fond du Lac. He found a number of Lutherans in town and without difficulty gathered them together for worship. He was welcomed by parents who brought ten children to be baptized, the oldest being more than seven. He was also cordially received in the homes of two prominent families — the Findeisens and Grommes. Both of them promised their liberal support to the organizing of a new congregation. C. D. Gromme was enthusiastically in favor of founding a Lutheran congregation and under his leadership 47 men were ready to sign the articles of organization. On August 15, 1858 these people met with Fachtmann in the

local Presbyterian church at Main and First Streets and founded St. Peter's Lutheran Church. When Fachtmann suggested that they might join hands with Calumet in calling a pastor, Gromme offered to house the preacher in return for several hours' daily instruction of his children. In the same meeting a resolution was adopted to join the Wisconsin Synod.

Toward the end of August, Fachtmann set out from Fond du Lac to explore for the second time the territory farther north along the west shore of Lake Winnebago. He proceeded by way of Oshkosh, which had 2300 German inhabitants but only two small churches. At Appleton he learned that six to ten miles farther there were many more German Lutherans. This was the section where the Ellington congregation is now centered. Next he came to the village of Hortonville. The vast pine regions of the Wolf River made Hortonville an important trading center. Some 60 German families living in the area near the village extended a warm welcome to him. A good road connected with New London, the steamboat port on the Wolf River. Two steamers arrived there daily from Oshkosh, taking a day to get there. There Fachtmann preached and administered the sacraments to 30 Lutheran families living in the settlement whom he had served the previous year. They came mostly from Prussia, Pomerania and Mecklenburg, Germany. Most of them wished that some way could be found for the Wisconsin Synod to serve them.

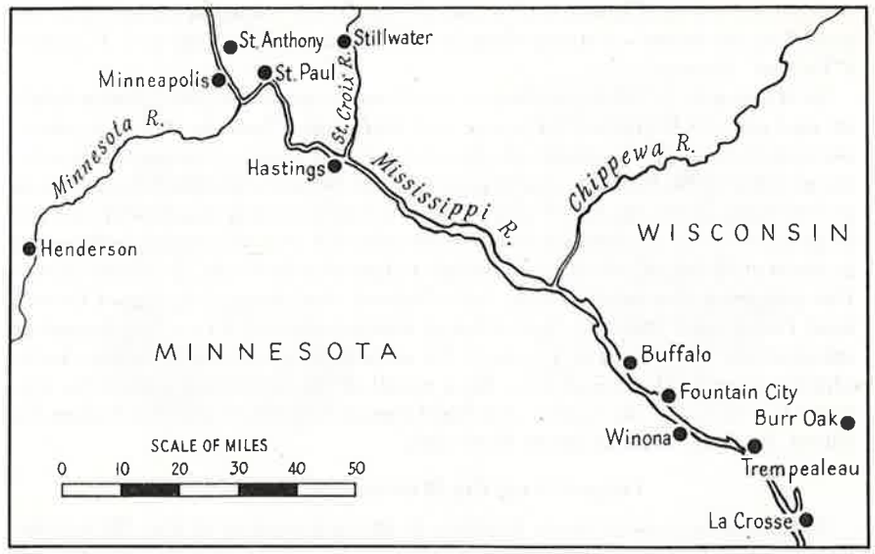
In a settlement 30 miles further north on the Wolf River, located near Belle Plaine in Shawano County, there was another group of 20 Lutheran families. A Lutheran from that area, with tears in his eyes, pleaded with Fachtmann that he might also visit them. In a letter to President Muehlhaeuser, Fachtmann called attention to the various fields he had visited, "white already to harvest." During the month of August he had preached 18 times and baptized 30 children, twice having administered the Lord's Supper to the sick.

His next missionary venture was to preach to the German prisoners of the evangelical faith in the penitentiary at Waupun. Then he hoped to undertake a journey to the Mississippi River country to follow up the German settlers in the fertile valleys and coulees of western Wisconsin near La Crosse.

The Move to La Crosse

In the meantime the newly organized congregation of Fond du Lac extended its first call for a pastor on October 18, 1858. The congregation called Fachtmann. He accepted the call to St. Peter's with the understanding that he would be permitted to continue his travels in the interests of the Synod. He served the congregation faithfully, and it began to prosper. But less than a year after taking up his pastorate in St. Peter's he received a call to La Crosse. He departed for his new western field on July 10, 1858.

The La Crosse River, tributary to the Mississippi at the site of the city, had attracted a number of Lutheran families from Hanover, Germany as early as 1853. A wave of them had followed in later years to settle in the valleys and coulees of that region. Among them there were many outspoken skeptics. Their freethinker congregations, organized in opposition to the confessionalism of the Lutherans, had dotted that section of La Crosse for many years. They tried to make life miserable for all who held to their Christian



Later travels of Fachtmann

convictions. At the same time, the German Lutherans in La Crosse and vicinity were also in danger of being led astray by the German Methodists who vigorously promoted their cause. The founding of congregations in this field would be no easy matter for Fachtmann.

He came to La Crosse to further Lutheran preaching in the city, said to be 50 per cent German, originally Lutheran. A campaign for the acquisition of a church property had already begun. Fachtmann immediately arranged the purchase of a Methodist church building, which was moved to the corner of Fifth and Jay Streets. There the church, which also served as a school, remained for four years.

Nearby in Bostwick's Valley the settlers of Burr Oak also were in need of a Lutheran pastor. They had joined hands with the people in La Crosse and decided to found a confessional Lutheran congregation. Fachtmann became the first pastor of this La Crosse-Burr Oak parish on August 1, 1859. Fachtmann taught the children from La Crosse and the opening of the parochial school in La Crosse coincided with the founding of First Ev. Lutheran Church. He gathered large numbers of Germans for the church and many children enrolled in the school.

He went out to preach at Burr Oak every three weeks and remained for three or four days to instruct the children. The Burr Oak people had no stove in their church. When winter came, the cold in the church became unbearable. They decided that one member should collect some oats, wheat or potatoes from each member and drive the load to La Crosse in order to sell or barter the commodities for a stove. This plan was carried out, and a stove was purchased with the proceeds.

Pushing onward Fachtmann journeyed up the Mississippi to look after the needs of the new settlers in the most westerly section of Wisconsin in the interest of the Wisconsin Synod.

Fachtmann remained in the La Crosse area until May 1862, when he

accepted a call to Minnesota and took charge of the oldest German Lutheran parish in the state — Trinity Church in St. Paul, as successor to C. F. Heyer ("Father" Heyer).

In Minnesota he often pointed out the fine prospects for new mission fields in and around Winona, Stillwater and Hastings. There in the mideastern section of the state he explored almost the entire territory along the Mississippi as far as St. Paul. In visiting early settlements he left preaching places in his wake. More than any other man Fachtmann was responsible for the expansion of the Minnesota Synod in this period. His missionary efforts led to the stationing of pastors at strategic points of settlement. He soon became the real promoter and moving force behind the Minnesota Synod for the next five years (1862-67). His untiring manner made him an indefatigable missionary who realized the need for preachers and helped secure them, chiefly from mission societies. As a result of his activities preaching stations began to dot the banks of several important rivers at Belle Plaine, Le Sueur, St. Peter and as far as New Ulm.

Organizing the Minnesota Synod

The first successful work leading to the organizing of the Minnesota Synod was done by pastors coming from the Pennsylvania and Pittsburgh Synods in the East. The first German Lutherans settled in Minnesota about 1850. Lutheran Synods in the East sent men to supply their spiritual needs. Among the pioneer pastors and missionaries was F. W. Wier of the Buffalo Synod. He conducted the first German Lutheran service in St. Paul in 1855. He soon dropped out of sight. But synodical history in Minnesota did not begin until two years later, when a remarkable man of the General Synod, Carl Frederich Heyer, commissioned as missionary by the Pennsylvania Ministerium, was sent to organize the German Lutherans in that state. Behind this veteran lay 20 years of labor as home missionary for the Pennsylvania Ministerium and 14 years as missionary in India. Before him lay a task as arduous as any he had known.

In St. Paul Methodist preachers had been the first on the scene and gathered an early harvest among unchurched Lutherans. But Father Heyer was not dismayed. He reorganized Wier's former flock as Trinity Lutheran Church, canvassed St. Paul, preaching in German and English as people desired, and often traveled 40 to 60 miles on foot to minister to isolated Lutherans who had requested his services. As far as we know, Heyer was the first pastor of the Minnesota Synod to hold bilingual services. In the early summer of 1860 he and five other ministers organized the German Evangelical Synod of Minnesota.

After Trinity had been organized and the building of a church was in progress, Heyer resigned as pastor of Trinity in May 1862 because of advancing age. He arranged for Fachtmann in La Crosse to be his successor. At the installation on Sunday, July 13, 1862 Heyer preached the sermon.

Fachtmann guided the fortunes of the new Synod for the next five years (1862-1867) serving as secretary and also acting president when Heyer later returned to the East. The missionary societies of the General Synod extended what aid they could in money and men. But the sorely needed men came mostly from the Pilgrim Missionary Institute of St. Crischona, near Basel. Twenty came in the earlier years of the Synod's existence. The small

Ernst Fachtmann

Carl Heyer

Synod strove to free itself from the unionizing tendencies which flourished in spite of the Lutheran confessional declaration it had made. Fachtmann did nothing, however, to hinder the unionizing tendencies.

When Fachtmann first came to St. Paul to serve Trinity, he found his members still engaged in the church building program. The spiritual life of the congregation was improved by the adoption of a constitution covering all points of congregational affairs. A lot had been purchased on the corner of Wabasha and Tenth Streets where construction started on a two-story stone building. The upper floor was to serve as the church auditorium and the lower floor was to house the pastor's residence, school and confirmation classroom. The congregation succeeded in finishing only a part of the lower story before the first service was held in the new building. Before the entire structure could be finished the Civil War broke out and put an end to further building.

Shortly after the end of the war the congregation undertook to complete the building according to the original plans. The building was finished and on December 26, 1866 was dedicated in a special service in which Pastors F. W. Hoffmann, president of the Minnesota Synod, A. Kuhn and Fachtmann officiated. Fachtmann had been pastor of the congregation since 1862. During those four years he saw the congregation constantly grow with immigrants from Germany, even though some families left because Fachtmann was too lax for them in doctrine and practice.

At the beginning of 1867 Fachtmann resigned from his St. Paul parish and began to serve the Minnesota Synod as traveling missionary. The following report is about his travels in Minnesota during the summer of 1867. It illustrates the hardships he constantly endured and his supreme confidence in the providence of God.

> On one of my last tours from the Iowa boundary to Winona, I was in danger of losing my life between Rochester and Greenwood Prairie. My horses hitched to my buggy had to swim through a small lake which had a depth of 10 to 12 feet because of heavy rains. On the day before, all wagons had gone through without

> trouble. Horses, buggy, clothing swam in the water a few moments, and although I was not afraid for my person, I feared for the horses. But although the Lord let us sink, he did not let us drown. My soaked clothing soon dried in the warm sun, and I had all of my possessions together again with the exception of one boot. My books showed the effects of the bath for the longest time, and some of them have still not wholly recovered. Toward evening I reached the hospitable parsonage of Brother Vomhof of Greenwood Prairie. The following morning at four o'clock I was on my way back to Rochester.

Under Father Heyer and the leadership of Fachtmann, the Minnesota Synod enjoyed a remarkable growth and, at Fachtmann's urging, joined the liberal General Synod in the East. Confessional "Old Lutherans" of the Minnesota Synod resented this move toward a lax confessionalism. Charges and countercharges between Fachtmann and these people — whom he had once defined as "the salt of society" but "unreasonably gruff" — became bitter, so bitter in fact, that his critics charged he left St. Paul only to follow his own plans. These plans included the formation of another Synod more to his liking.

This is hard to believe when we study the record he left behind. Minnesota had always had friendly and intimate relations with the Wisconsin Synod. These pleasant relations were enhanced when Fachtmann was permitted by the Wisconsin Synod to serve the missionary needs of Minnesota. Fachtmann kept up his contact with the Wisconsin Synod and attended its conventions. Delegates continued to be exchanged at conventions. As early as 1864 there was an official request to share in the benefits of Northwestern College and the seminary. The request was granted with the understanding that Father Heyer take up a collection for the institution in the East. After five years of leadership under Fachtmann, who worked with great zeal to get more workers into the field, the Minnesota Synod could report having 22 pastors, 35 parishes, 20 preaching stations and 3000 communicants, numerically nearly twice as strong in the state at that time as the Missouri Synod. Organizing another Synod was far from the mind of Fachtmann.

As successor to Fachtmann at Trinity in St. Paul, J. H. Sieker was called. The old Lutherans rallied under his leadership. Sieker, soon to be president of the Minnesota Synod, had received his theological training at the Gettysburg Seminary of the General Synod but remained untainted by its unionistic spirit. His aim now was to bring about a closer relationship between the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods. The latter severed its ties with the unionistic General Synod and after lengthy discussions and much prodding by Sieker, affiliated in 1872 with the Wisconsin Synod.

Ousted from the Minnesota Synod

Meanwhile Fachtmann had moved to St. Anthony and Minneapolis for the winter of 1867. St. John's Congregation in St. Anthony, which he served, was accepted into the Minnesota Synod the following year. After serving as secretary for the 1868 sessions, he ceased being the Synod secretary. Thereafter he moved to Henderson where he served preaching stations in the area with a membership of 400.

The Lord used this early itinerant for his purpose in bringing the gospel to

the early settlers of Wisconsin and Minnesota — in great spiritual need — like a passing shower of refreshing rain to preserve God's people in a great mission field for the Lutheran Church in America. The Synod records at this point, however, describe Fachtmann as a "confused and bewildered person" ("als hoechst verworren und ungesund in der Lehre"), endeavoring to hinder sound Lutheran doctrine and practice in the various congregations. After causing much unpleasantness in the Minnesota Synod, he was officially ousted from the Synod in 1870 for his unionistic tendencies.

Instead of a well-earned rest at the sunset of his life, severing the ties with the Minnesota Synod meant a new beginning for this tireless missionary. Fachtmann was undaunted. He reorganized his priorities and, urged on by his ouster, preached in German to the needs of scattered settlers, using Henderson as a base of operation.

St. Paul's Congregation in Henderson called him in 1868 as their first minister. This congregation belonged to no Synod. One of the requirements it placed on its pastor was that he should not condemn other faiths. Continuing his unionistic ways, Fachtmann was instrumental in 1868 in the formation of Trinity Lutheran Church in Sibley Township south of Gaylord; St. John's Church in New Rome (since disbanded — its records moved to St. Paul's Lutheran Church of Arlington); the German Evangelical Salem Church in Tyrone Township east of the Minnesota River; and St. Paul's Evangelical Church of Dresselville in Sharon Township — the latter two in Le Sueur County. Zion Evangelical and Reformed Congregation in Le Sueur was established by him in 1868 (later called the Zion United Church of Christ — it merged with the other two Le Sueur congregations, Salem and St. Paul's). The records at St. John's Lutheran Church in Belle Plaine also indicate that Fachtmann served as supply pastor there in 1870-71, but not as their first resident pastor.

Fachtmann continued to serve these other communities as preaching stations during their early years. He lived in his own home just above the residence of the Franklin Kroehlers, 707 Cedar Street. This old house once served as the first land office of Sibley County and was once the post office for the area. It is considered a historical landmark.

Walter Fischer, who wrote the centennial history of St. Paul's Church, writes: "Pastor Fachtmann lived a busy life, but was called to his eternal reward unexpectedly in 1877 after baptizing during his nine years here 577 children, confirming 298, marrying 58 couples and officiating at 124 funerals in addition to preaching and communion services."

He was happily married for the first time in 1876 at the age of 63, but the marriage was short-lived. Suffering from tuberculosis, he was called to his eternal reward unexpectedly January 17, 1877.

Prof. E. E. Kowalke (president of Northwestern College, Watertown, Wis. from 1919 to 1959) evaluated the ministry of Fachtmann in one of his editorials for *The Northwestern Lutheran*:

> As one reads the history of the founding of congregations along the shore of Lake Michigan north from Milwaukee to Green Bay and across the state of Wisconsin to the Mississippi, one constantly comes across the name of Pastor Fachtmann. He was a traveling missionary of the Wisconsin Synod and he cov-

Mrs. Fachtmann with Pastor Fachtmann, who is obviously suffering from the ravages of tuberculosis

ered the territory from Milwaukee and across the state to La Crosse, Winona, Rochester and St. Paul. Much of this ground he covered on foot. He was a man of courage, strong of body, with a keen eye for the beauty of scenery, a theologian with German university training, and wholeheartedly devoted to the work of spreading the gospel among the settlers in the raw territory that he traveled. . . . It is on the foundation laid by men like Pastor Fachtmann that many of our congregations are built. Such men should not be forgotten. They had few conveniences, almost no money, hardly any means of transportation but their own feet or a borrowed horse. But they did wonders with what little they had (January 1, 1961, p. 4).

Fachtmann lies buried outside the village of Henderson, off the beaten path, high on a hill in a picturesque cemetery, overlooking the rich Minnesota River Valley. His grave is located on a portion of the Poehler plot, old friends of Fachtmann. The small tombstone on his grave bears this inscription:

Hier ruhet in Gott
Ernest August Gottlieb
Fachtmann
Luth. Pastor zu Henderson
gest.
Am 17. Jan. 1877, im alter von 64 Jahren

(Here rests in God
Ernst August Gottlieb
Fachtmann
Lutheran pastor at Henderson
died
on January 17, 1877 at the age of 64)

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The Michigan Synod and its "School of the Prophets" in 1889*

Thomas I. Ziebell

IN THE SPRING of 1889 the March and April issues of the old Michigan Synod's periodical, the *Ev. Luth. Synodal-Freund*, carried the brief, two-part report dealing with its fledgling seminary at Saginaw which appears toward the end of this article. The school actually had first been opened at Manchester, Michigan in the late summer of 1885, but two years later it was transferred to its permanent location in Saginaw.

Beginning their own training institution for pastors was something which the leaders of the Synod had recognized was long overdue. By 1884 they had come to view the step as an absolute necessity if their church body was to survive and prosper. The Synod convention of that year adopted the following resolution, "We must rely on ourselves for such training (of pastors) instead of on others, and . . . the time is at hand for the practical realization of this desire."

The Michigan Synod Organized

The reasons behind such strong feelings become fairly obvious when one considers the history of the Michigan Synod up to that point. It officially was organized as the *Evang. Luth. Synode von Michigan und anderen Staaten* (Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Michigan and other states) in December 1860 by a group of nine pastors and two laymen meeting at Detroit. The guiding spirit behind this move was the Rev. Friedrich Schmid who had been sent to the United States in 1833 when he was 26 by the *Baseler Missionsgesellschaft* (Basel Mission Society) to serve a congregation at Ann Arbor. Schmid, the son of a blacksmith from Waldorf, Wuerttemberg, had been taught his father's trade. However, because of an interest in studying for the ministry, expressed during his teenage years, Schmid was eventually accepted by the Basel Mission Society's preparatory school and readied for the group's work in North America which was then just beginning. Schmid was the Society's first emissary in Michigan.

Roughly a decade later, in 1844, Schmid already had attempted to organize a synod in that state. Besides being supported in this venture by the other

*The German term *Prophetenschule* or "School of the Prophets" was a frequent designation used by the Michigan Synod's officials at this time to refer to their theological seminary. (Cf. Synod president Eberhardt's remarks, *Michigan Synod Proceedings*, 1890, p. 18.) The expression was also commonly employed by other German Lutheran bodies in this country (e.g., the Wisconsin and Missouri Synods) in reference to their ministerial training institutions.

Friedrich Schmid, first president of the Michigan district

Basel missionaries in the area, his early association initially also included a number of men, like Friedrich Lochner and August Craemer, who had been sent to the Michigan mission field by Pastor Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria. Loehe's men though soon became dissatisfied with the new synod's weak confessional position and withdrew from it. They then went on to become involved in the formation of the Missouri Synod, formally organized in 1847. After their departure, the Basel group simply could not keep this first Michigan Synod going and it withered away. In the mid to late 1850s Schmid and his remaining colleagues joined the Joint Synod of Ohio for a brief period, but by 1860 they were ready to try again to establish their own group. Its potential membership had been bolstered that year by the addition of several new recruits from the Basel Mission Society and so things looked more promising.

At the December organizational meeting Schmid was elected the new Synod's first president and he continued in that office until 1867. Under his leadership most of the body's increased manpower continued to be supplied by the Basel Mission Society. By 1866 though, ties with that European base were loosened considerably because of its enduring support for both Lutheran and Reformed church groups in this country — particularly the United *Kirchenverein des Westens* (Synod of the West) which had come to be a major competitor in the area with the Michigan Synod. The latter body lost many of its congregations to the *Kirchenverein* during this time. It has been estimated that in the first 10 or 12 years of its existence (i.e., 1860 and following), roughly one-third of the Michigan Synod's pastors went over to the *Kirchenverein des Westens* ranks.

These defections were partially compensated for after 1866 by the Synod's association with the new General Council. At this period the Michigan Synod could not yet exactly be described as a bastion of confessional Lutheran orthodoxy. Yet it was committed to a definite Lutheran stance when it came to most areas of faith and practice, and so it looked with favor on the formation of the Council as a significant improvement over the tepid brand of Lutheranism being practiced by the only other Lutheran association at that time, the General Synod.

A Growing Confessional Consciousness

The Michigan Synod's growing confessional consciousness can be seen from the position which it took in the various doctrinal discussions of the General Council. These discussions largely centered around the so-called Four Points (differences of opinion on the questions of chiliasm, lodge membership, and altar and pulpit fellowship with non-Lutherans). While willing to accept the General Council's approach to settling these disputed matters between its associated churches as expressed by the Akron Resolutions of 1872 and the Galesburg Rule of 1875, the Synod itself clearly had come out against a toleration of the issues involved in the Four Points as early as 1868. By the late 1870s the Michigan Synod believed that the Council had made substantial progress toward adopting a more confessional position on the disputed areas.

Such belief was shattered in 1884 when the Synod played host to that year's meeting of the General Council which was held at Monroe, Michigan. Several of the visiting Lutheran pastors at the convention openly practiced pulpit fellowship with local Presbyterians, and the Michigan Synod's formal protest of their actions fell on deaf ears as far as a number of other member bodies in the Council were concerned. While the Synod did not officially end its association with the Council until 1888, the events of the 1884 meeting augured that Michigan's withdrawal was now only a matter of time. They also indicated more than merely a coincidental relationship with the Synod's resolution of that same year (referred to previously) involving its desire to establish its own training school for future ministers as soon as possible.

As already mentioned, the Michigan Synod's membership in the General Council from the late 1860s to the mid 1880s did have the result that its own clerical ranks continued to increase — albeit not at a phenomenal rate. The various constituent synods of the Council helped to furnish some of these new men directly, taking up the slack which otherwise naturally would have occurred when friendly relations between the Michigan Synod and the Basel Mission Society went by the board. Moreover the Synod's General Council ties also enabled it to acquire a fair number of those recruits which were being sent over to America by the Hermannsburg and the Kropp seminaries in Germany around this time. Even so, the Michigan Synod continued to be plagued by a shortage of pastors to fill its pulpits and thus, as noted, it finally decided to train its own men.

Adopting synodical resolutions about beginning educational programs is one thing; actually carrying them out oftentimes proves to be another. When the Michigan Synod expressed its desire for such a project in 1884 — as laudable as this objective may have appeared to its convention delegates — the body doesn't seem to have had any specific ideas about how the goal ultimately might be reached. A year later at its regular meeting in 1885 all of this uncertainty had been allayed. The individual most responsible for this change of affairs and for actually getting the project underway was a synodical newcomer, the Rev. August Alexander Lange. He had joined the organization only a year before when he had accepted a call to a congregation at Remus, Michigan. In July 1885 Lange moved to a church at Manchester and it was there that the seminary was formally begun that fall under his direction.

Lange Called to Head Seminary

Already in the spring of 1885, at a pastoral conference of the Michigan Synod's northern circuit, Lange had announced that several young men had requested him to help them prepare for the ministry and that he stood ready to do so. The other clergy gathered at the meeting favored the idea and suggested that it be studied by a special committee which would bring the matter up at the Synod's general pastoral conference to be held in May. This later gathering also approved of the project and so it was then taken before the regular synodical convention that summer. During its proceedings Lange was called as the school's sole professor and a board of control was elected.

Despite his comparatively brief membership in the Michigan Synod, its choice of Lange to head the new institution is fairly easy to understand. The church body itself at this period had only 29 pastors on its roster and they were spread out among some 62 congregations. Moreover the vast majority of these men, coming as they did out of German Mission Society backgrounds, had little in the way of formal scholarly academic training. August Alexander Lange was a somewhat different case — and a quite interesting one at that. Just prior to his coming to the Remus congregation in 1884, he had served for a number of years as professor at the Buffalo Synod's Martin Luther Seminary in Buffalo, New York. Lange had worked there for about half a decade. He had left the Buffalo institution and moved to Michigan that year because it had been closed due to a lack of students. Hence he was viewed — at least by the Michigan Synod's standards of the day — as eminently qualified for his new post as its seminary director.

Lange's own educational background though remains rather clouded. He had been born in 1824 in the Kingdom of Poland, his parents being of German extraction. Little August Alexander was left orphaned by them by the time he was seven, but yet somehow he is said to have managed to study both theology and medicine before coming to America in 1854. The records of the *Kirchenverein des Westens* — the group with which he first associated himself upon his arrival in this country — refer to him as being a former pupil of the Barmen Mission House. Yet that society's official listing of its missionaries does not mention his name.

In any event, Lange was accepted to the clergy roster of the *Kirchenverein*, although he did not stay on its rolls for long. By 1858 he had been suspended by that body for his "Lutheran views," and had then applied for membership in the Missouri Synod where he was accepted and given a charge at Cookstore, Lafayette County, Missouri. Lange's problems with the *Kirchenverein* seemed to have stemmed from his persistent use of certain unwelcome liturgical materials — a practice for which he was eventually charged with unchristian conduct.

The future seminary professor's association with the Missourians proved to be no more enduring than it had been with the Synod of the West. Within a few years he got into difficulty with his colleagues because he'd received a new member into his congregation who had been excommunicated from a neighboring parish. Eventually Lange was placed under church discipline by the synodical officials. He then packed his bags and promptly moved his family north to Wisconsin. This occurred in the fall of 1862. The family

settled for a brief time at Watertown where Lange joined the Wisconsin Synod and was given a call to St. Matthew's Congregation at Lebanon, Wisconsin. This particular parish itself had just bolted from the Missouri Synod and had gone over to the Wisconsin Synod's ranks.

Lange's membership in the latter group lasted somewhat longer than his previous alliances — for some eight years, up to 1870. By that date Missouri and Wisconsin had ended their theological differences and were rapidly moving toward the warm, cooperative spirit which both church bodies enjoyed for almost a century after the founding of the Synodical Conference in 1872. Lange however expressed his strong opposition to this growing synodical rapprochement, as well as to the Wisconsin Synod's doctrinal position on the office of the ministry. When he threatened to resign from the Synod in 1870 unless it changed its position on these matters, the resignation was rather cheerfully accepted. He then began serving a splinter group in the state which was associated with the Buffalo Synod. By 1872 Lange had formally joined the latter church body and in 1877 he was called to one of its congregations in Detroit. Not long after that he received a position at the Synod's seminary in Buffalo, New York and, as noted, remained there until shortly before beginning his membership in the Michigan Synod in 1884.

The Seminary Opens at Manchester

Following the Michigan Synod's convention decisions of 1885, the seminary opened at Manchester that August under Lange's direction. The student body, which numbered six at the start, was housed in a two-story brick building belonging to one of the new director's parishioners who placed his structure at the Synod's disposal for a period of two years. Several more young men entered the institution later that fall, and two others did likewise after the turn of the year. Thus during 1885-86 the school had a total enrollment of some 10 students — at least at one time or another. It was reported at the next Synod convention though that one of them had soon tired of his studies and had dropped out. Another fellow, who happened to be the oldest in the group, also had left at the end of the first year — to take a call as a teacher at a congregation in Toledo, Ohio.

Exactly what subjects were covered in the curriculum by Lange during the time the seminary was located at Manchester is somewhat vague. No complete listing of course work seems to have been printed until after the institution's transfer to Saginaw in 1887. Yet a fairly accurate picture of what was going on may be inferred from the board of control's report about the school in 1886. Here it was noted that final examinations held for the students in June had covered the following areas: an exegesis of Galatians, the history of ancient Greece together with its geography, church history involving the 1st and 2nd centuries A.D., Latin, arithmetic, and an essay on John 10:13. As is evident from the board's report, the school's curriculum then was really a combination of secondary, college, and seminary courses. This mixed program would continue as a characteristic of the institution so long as it remained in existence as a primary training ground for the parish ministry (i.e., until 1907).

The 1886 Synod convention also took up the issue of where to relocate the seminary once the temporary quarters in Manchester were no longer avail-

Christoph Eberhardt

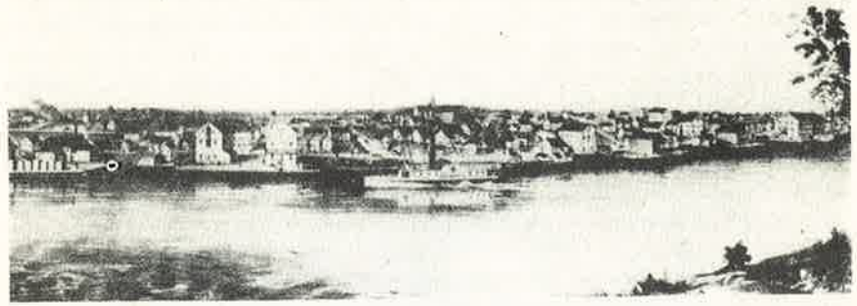
able. Two cities emerged during these discussions as the favorite contenders: Adrian and Saginaw. When the vote was finally taken at the meeting that summer the Adrian location won out 24 to 18. Yet the matter was not left to rest there. Largely through the efforts of the Michigan Synod's president, Christoph Ludwig Eberhardt, who had been serving the congregation at Saginaw since 1861, a special synodical session was called in January of 1887 to reconsider the issue.

At this meeting Eberhardt pointed out the considerable financial savings which the church body would incur if it opted for his city. Some $4,150 for the school had been promised by various groups in the area — $1,375 from Eberhardt's own parish and another $2,775 from the local Board of Trade. Moreover the Synod's president promised to secure a suitable plot of land for the new building. With such inducements the Adrian decision was rescinded by the convention and Eberhardt's plans adopted instead. He then proceeded to make good on his pledge, donating some two and three-fourths acres for the site himself, to which he later also added another acre in 1892.

The Move to Saginaw

After this no time was wasted in the actual construction of the building. Its cornerstone was laid on May 31 and the structure was dedicated on August 28, 1887 during the time when the Michigan Synod was holding its annual convention that year. A short time later Director Lange moved into the new facilities at Saginaw with his family and the student body. The school year officially opened on September 20 with some 14 young men enrolled.

Lange remained the only regularly called and salaried staff member. That year he was listed as teaching courses in Biblical interpretation, Catechism, symbolics, homiletics, church history, world history, German, Latin and Greek. The seminary's relocation though did mean that now the Director's classroom load could be lightened somewhat by the assistance of certain area pastors and day-school teachers who volunteered their services at the institution free of charge. President Eberhardt began teaching the courses in dogmatics, pastoral theology, and arithmetic that fall. Pastor Ferdinand



Saginaw in 1850

Huber, who was serving a parish at Zilwaukee, also came in each week to offer some instruction in English. And Mr. John Ernst Sperling, a teacher at the Saginaw congregation's parochial school, provided lessons in music and penmanship.

That year the 14 students were divided into two groups. Four of them were in the "first" or upper-level class and the remaining ten pupils made up the "second" or lower division. Some of the textbooks which they used were C. F. W. Walther's *Pastoraltheologie*, Chr. Loeber's *Evang. Luth. Dogmatik*, Robinson's *Arithmetic*, and Ahn's *Praktischer Lehrgang* (for the English instruction in the lower division). As is evident, the majority of the materials employed at the school were in German, and this continued as another characteristic of the seminary's program so long as it was in existence.

The actual length of time which a student might put in studying at the school during these early years was highly flexible. As one will observe from the description of seminary life in 1889 which follows later, the curriculum at that date is spoken of as covering a six-year course. Ideally, however, it seems that the program had been conceived as one which normally would take seven years — four years in a preparatory or "proseminary" division and another three in the seminary department proper. At any rate, this latter arrangement was the one typically pictured by 1891 and thereafter.

Staying that entire length of time was really the exception rather than the rule for most students during this early period. The school's first two candidates of theology were graduated already in the summer of 1888, the year after the institution's move to Saginaw. Thus, at best, they would have received only three years of formal training. Because of the Michigan Synod's great need for men at this time, such shortened stays became quite normal. Many of the seminary's alumni attended for only between two and four years before they were sent out into the field as pastors. Thus one can assume that the actual academic attainment of most of these young graduates was rather meager — to say the least.

Such an appraisal is reinforced by the fact that many of them had not come to the school with very good educational backgrounds to begin with. The seminary's entrance requirements during this period were not very demanding. When it had opened in 1885, the only condition set up for

admission had been a character reference from the student's home pastor attesting to the young man's morals and general ability. Over the next five years the kind of preparation which the seminary ideally came to expect from its applicants did become a bit more detailed — but not that much more intellectually rigorous. In 1888 it was noted that all potential students should be sure to forward a "personally written" request for admission together with a brief autobiography, besides the usual pastoral recommendation. Such applicants should also be at least 16 years old. By 1890 this age level had been reduced to 15. At that date it was pointed out that entering students were expected to possess a good parish elementary school background from which they were to have acquired: 1) a correct reading and writing knowledge of German, 2) a complete mastery (i.e., rote memorization) of Luther's *Small Catechism* plus various Bible passages and hymns, and 3) an understanding of fractions together with the customary four "fundamental processes" of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division.

A Staff Shake-up

After its first year of operation at Saginaw, the staff experienced something of a shake-up. Director Lange was removed from his position at the school by the Synod's 1888 convention and then left the church body entirely. The cause for this change of affairs was a difference of opinion which had developed between Lange and the rest of the Synod over the precise nature of the doctrine of the call into the ministry. This particular doctrine had been one of the topics of discussion at various pastoral conferences over the previous year. In these discussions it became quite clear that Lange's views stood opposed to the position taken by the rest of his clerical colleagues on this issue. Undoubtedly some of the director's old Buffalo Synod "high church" orientation toward the matter had begun to show through. In any event, his administrative position and teaching responsibilities at the seminary were abruptly terminated by the 1888 convention. After his dismissal Lange apparently went back into the parish ministry for a short time, but he soon became chronically ill and had to retire, finally passing away some ten years later at Saginaw on July 2, 1901.

Lange's place as director was ultimately filled later that fall by Ferdinand Huber who had been serving a church in Zilwaukee and who also, as noted, had been giving the English instruction at the seminary during the previous school year. He was the third person to be called for the post and took over its functions in November. Born at Emmingen, Germany on November 28, 1859, Huber had come to this country with his parents in 1873. Shortly thereafter he entered Concordia College at Fort Wayne, Indiana, the Missouri Synod's preparatory institution for its theoretical seminary in St. Louis. The college's first real catalog, issued for the 1874-75 school year, listed him at that time as a Quintaner (the second lowest level in its six-year program). Huber remained at Fort Wayne until 1879, going as far as Secunda (the second last year). He apparently had to repeat the Secunda class though since he was shown as a member of it for both 1877-78 and also 1878-79. Huber then transferred to the Joint Synod of Ohio's seminary, Capital University, at Columbus where he took his formal theological training and finished out in 1881.

The first seminary building in Saginaw

That same year he applied for membership in the Michigan Synod. Huber was examined in November by several of its officials, found acceptable, and then installed and ordained at a congregation in Tittabawassee. As previously indicated, he later moved to a parish at Zilwaukee. It was from here, in 1888, that he was called as the seminary's new director. Huber was only 29 at the time. He remained in his administrative post until 1893 when he took over President Eberhardt's old congregation (St. Paul's) in Saginaw after the latter had died that spring. Huber still continued to teach some of the classes at the seminary during the next few years. This arrangement lasted until late 1897 when he resigned from his parish call at Saginaw and also left the Synod. By the next year Huber had joined the Joint Synod of Ohio and had gone to serve one of its churches (also named St. Paul's) at Racine, Wisconsin. He remained there until retiring in 1936. He died 11 years later in the same city on December 21, 1947.

Huber's stint as director of the Saginaw seminary did not bring about any major changes in its basic program and philosophy. The length of the course did become prescribed as officially encompassing seven years during the period he was in office. This particular development seems to have been more in the nature of a normal progression for the school — due to the immature ages of many of its students — rather than from any great desire on Huber's part to strengthen the overall curriculum. Many of the Synod's budding theologians continued to get by with much less than the full course.

Moreover the new director's attitude about what one really needed for the pastoral ministry remained at a rather low level — undoubtedly stemming in part from his own less than sterling record as an undergraduate at Fort Wayne. Huber was of the opinion that a study of the Latin and Greek classics was of no great benefit to future pastors.

Eberhardt's Tenure

The other staff members at the seminary during Huber's first year as director, and who are mentioned in the 1889 article about the institution, were much the same as they had been in 1887-88. President Eberhardt continued to offer his courses in dogmatics, pastoral theology, and arithmetic. In addition to these three subjects he now also taught symbolics and homiletics as well. At the same time Eberhardt remained as the regular pastor of the Saginaw congregation and was finishing up his last years in office as leader of the Michigan Synod — a position which he held from 1881-1890. The president himself had not had a particularly strong academic training. Yet by 1889 he had been a stalwart member of the Synod for almost 30 years, and in the course of that time had risen to important positions of trust.

Born on January 3, 1831 at Lauffen am Neckar, Wuerttemberg, Germany, Eberhardt had originally learned his father's trade of weaving. In his early 20s he became involved with a local young men's Christian association whose leader encouraged him to apply to the Basel Mission Society. Eberhardt was accepted and entered its mission school in 1856, at first intending to prepare for work in Africa or India. When he finished the course some four years later, it was decided that he should be sent to America instead — to a field "between Lake Michigan and Lake Huron." He was commissioned at Basel in July 1860 and arrived at Ann Arbor, Michigan in late September.

At first Eberhardt served as a traveling missionary (*Reiseprediger*) in Allegan, Ottowa, and Muskegan counties, covering some 16 different preaching stations. After the Michigan Synod had been organized later that year — an event in which Eberhardt participated — he became the new organization's official traveling missionary, making his headquarters at Owosso. In late 1861 he accepted a call to the congregation at Saginaw, although still continuing to do some mission work in that area. Besides serving as the sole pastor of the church he also taught its parochial school for some 14 years — until 1876. Eberhardt continued to shepherd the congregation in Saginaw until his death on April 27, 1893. His role in getting the seminary transferred to that city in 1887 has already been detailed. For that reason, as well as for his role as instructor at the school from 1887 to 1893 (always in an informal, unpaid capacity), Eberhardt has justly been called the "father" of the institution.

The other unofficial faculty carry-over in 1889 from the previous school year was Teacher John Ernst Sperling. As can be seen from the *Synodal-Freund's* report about the seminary that spring, he came in periodically to give the students instruction in singing, violin, and penmanship. Sperling had been born in Gustin, Breslau, Silesia on August 7, 1842. After his confirmation in 1856 he studied privately for about a year with a "Kantor" (Choirmaster) Kathain in his hometown in order to prepare for admission to the teachers' seminary at Bunzlau. The next summer, however, Sperling enrolled at the preparatory school of the teachers' seminary at Schreiberhau. After five years of work, he graduated from there in 1862 and then became a teacher serving parishes at Kraschnitz and Gross-Perschnitz.

In 1869 Sperling emigrated to America. About six months after he had arrived, he received a call as teacher of the Lutheran school at Monroe,

Michigan, where he remained for some 11 years. Then in 1880 he went to St. Paul's parish in Saginaw. After the seminary had been moved to the same locality in 1887, his association with that institution as one of its assistant instructors began. This arrangement continued until 1895 when Sperling became principal of a parochial school in Appleton, Wisconsin. Later, in 1901, he was called by the Wisconsin Synod as instructor of pedagogy at its teachers' college at New Ulm, Minnesota. He remained there until his retirement in 1916 and passed away some 17 years later at the age of 90 in 1933.

Merz Joins the Staff

The only really "new face" at the seminary in 1888 was the Rev. Baltasar Merz. Merz had joined the Michigan Synod in 1882 shortly after he had come to the United States. Born at Tailsingen, Germany in 1858, he received all his theological training in the Fatherland before coming to this country at the age of 24. Following his examination as a candidate for the ministry which was administered by several Synod officials in November of 1882, Merz was given charge of a congregation at South Haven. Later he accepted a call to Huber's old parish in Zilwaukee, and it was from there that he journeyed to Saginaw to help at the seminary.

At first Merz' role at the school was a relatively minor one, primarily involving the German language instruction but also including some classes in the Cathechism, rhetoric, and "literature." In time, however, he began to assume more of the work being offered at the seminary in the area of classical languages. This was particularly the case after 1892 when Merz was called full time as a professor at the institution. His teaching abilities, especially when it came to Latin and Greek, have seriously been challenged by the Wisconsin Synod historian, John Philipp Koehler, who went so far as to label them as totally incompetent.

In any event Merz remained on the staff of the seminary until the spring of 1900 when he submitted his resignation, effective at the end of that school year. Later the same summer he also withdrew from the Synod. Toward the end of his association with the seminary, Merz' relationship with its board of control, according to that body, had become "more and more unpleasant," and thus his decision to leave was not resisted.

The former professor then moved to the west coast where he became active in helping to organize the Pacific Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1901. He served a congregation at Macksburg, Oregon until 1911 when he took a call to Canada and became a member of the Manitoba Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Merz occupied various parishes belonging to this latter body in Manitoba and Saskatchewan until his retirement in 1924, at which time he moved back to Oregon. From 1925 to 1929 he served as supply pastor for his old church in Macksburg, but finally gave up his post, passing away a few years later, on September 21, 1934, at the age of 76.

During the 1888-89 school year, Merz, Eberhardt, and Sperling were all only classified as assistants at the Saginaw seminary. They volunteered their services completely free of charge and received no formal compensation.

The Seminary Curriculum

The type of atmosphere which these three men along with Director Huber helped to create at the institution during that year is clearly — if somewhat idealistically and bucolically — presented in the Michigan Synod's periodical article appearing in the early spring of 1889. The synodical convention report for the same year provides a bit more information about the seminary at this time — especially with regard to its curriculum — and thus enables one to gain some additional insights as to what was going on in the classroom.

This report speaks about Eberhardt's symbolics course as covering selections from the *Book of Concord* (particularly the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord) and using Guenther's *Populaere Symbolik* for the text. In his homiletics class the synod president employed a work by Palmer and required that a number of student sermons be given. The materials which he went through in dogmatics and pastoral theology were the ones (as noted in the *Synodal-Freund's* description) by Walther and Loeber. Robinson's text was still in use for Eberhardt's section of arithmetic, but the convention report observed that this course only involved the "first class" students.

Director Huber naturally had the bulk of the work load at the school though. That year his exegesis course centered on 1 and 2 Peter while his sacred history class dealth with the Old Testament. In church history he covered the period from the time of the Reformation to the present. Huber's "first class" Latin section had translations from Caesar and grammatical exercises, and his "second class" was beginning their study of the language based on Kuehner's *Lateinische Grammatik*, levels I and II. In Greek the "first class" had selections from the New Testament along with appropriate grammar assignments. The "second class," which was once more just starting out in the same subject, used Kuehner's basic grammar materials again for their introduction. In geography the director went through a study of the western hemisphere, and in his English course, Huber taught the grammar and syntax of the language as well as various pieces from Shakespeare, Bacon, Milton, and Butler. Finally he also had the arithmetic class for the beginning students (i.e., the "second class").

Any textbooks used by Merz and Sperling for their courses, however, were not mentioned in the convention report about the school. It did make the observation though that several of the students had been assisting with some of the music instruction that year. One of them, K. A. Harrer, who is also referred to in the *Synodal-Freund* article, already had been at the seminary the year before. He was described as an older student from Wuerttemberg who at first only attended the dogmatics classes in 1887-88, but who had given organ lessons together with some work in choral singing for part of that year. Harrer continued with at least the organ instruction again during 1888-89 and was joined in this endeavor by another student named Gangnuss.

This was the faculty situation as it existed at the seminary during the time the Synod's periodical article appeared. Other features of the institution's life in that period the reader can now judge for himself from the article's translation.

"From Our Seminary"

After the period of a fine Christmas vacation, the instruction at the seminary was once more resumed for sixteen pupils on the third of January. In order to permit the kind reader a glimpse into our seminary life, the gates shall hereby be opened to him, and from what follows a picture of the daily life of our house will be sketched —

Early in the morning, at 5:30 a.m., the bell sounds from the tower of the institution. "Ora et labora!" (pray and work) reads its inscription. Our neighbors already know what this clanging signifies and our students know it just as well — if not even better. They rub open their eyes and quickly get into their clothes because it is cool in the bedroom. The just-abandoned beds are aired and immediately once more brought into order, whereupon the students proceed to the washroom in order to cleanse and to refresh their heads and hands at the cool source of the waterworks. The housebell sounds at seven o'clock. This summons to breakfast — that everyone appears promptly does not need to be mentioned. All eat their fill of coffee, bread, and butter. A devotion is held after the meal. It is begun with the singing of a song from the hymnal, during which time one of the students accompanies the chorale on the organ, whereupon the director reads a brief meditation on a portion of Scripture. Thereafter, a morning prayer with the Lord's Prayer — spoken in unison — and the blessing conclude the service.

Now the students go to their rooms and once more look over their assignments for the day. The lessons begin at eight o'clock. The first hour is devoted to the contemplation of the Holy Scriptures. After the respective portion of Scripture has been translated word for word from the original text and discussed, the students write down the teacher's explanation. This beautiful, refreshing morning-hour serves not only for the purpose of leading the students into the rich treasures of God's beloved Word and of steadily reminding them of their high goal — that of becoming teachers and shepherds of his people, but it also gives the entire curriculum the proper seasoning.

At nine o'clock Pastor Eberhardt arrives. Now the classes are divided. He instructs the theological division in pastoral theology (Walther's text) in one room, while in another room the Sexta class works on Latin. It is not necessary to write about the necessity and great importance of instruction in pastoral theology. All who hold the pastoral office and already have had experience bear witness to it unanimously, and no one will want to doubt that Walther's textbook alone is suitable for American circumstances.

From 10 to 11 the theological division has dogmatics (Loeber's text), while instruction in the Greek language is being given in the other room. In the foreword to his Greek grammar Kuehner says, "The acquisition of the classical languages has been recognized for hundreds of years as the best gymnastic for exercising and training the juvenile spirit; as the simplest and surest means to rouse the intellectual powers of youth in the most varied directions." We agree with that. But when he goes further and says, "The appreciation of the ancients — the Greeks and Romans — must be regarded, obviously, as the proper goal," then we take the liberty to correct this view and say that the appreciation of the Holy Scriptures and the Church Fathers must be viewed as "the proper goal."

But the clock strikes and the students again come together — this time for world history. Who is not interested in this subject! Great men individually and entire peoples step forth and perform great deeds. Great wars are waged, victories celebrated, lost battles lamented, and oftentimes half the world is up in arms — the distress and the misery is seen as unending. But look! God sits in authority and manages everything well.

Now we wish to lead the kind reader into the dining room. The last lesson of the morning is over (at 12 o'clock), and in the next room our industrious maid has already placed the noon meal on the table. Many a millionaire who suffers from indigestion would envy our robust young people on account of their good appetites, but we rejoice over them — so long as we are able to meet their demands. The chief

foodstuffs naturally consist of flour, meat, and potatoes. Our farmers — both near and far — could do us a great service if they would send us flour, which indeed could be done without difficulty.

After the noon meal the pupils take a walk in order to refresh themselves for the hours in the afternoon which begin at two o'clock and last until four. These hours are devoted to the languages: Greek, Latin, English, German. Pastor B. Merz, who arrives at the seminary from Zilwaukee every Friday noon, has taken over the instruction in the German language — to the delight of the director and the students.

According to this year's hourly schedule, the subjects of instruction are assigned to the following teachers:

Pastor C. Eberhardt: 1. Symbolics 2. Dogmatics 3. Pastoral Theology 4. Homiletics 5. Arithmetic

Pastor F. Huber: 1. Exegesis 2. Latin 3. Greek 4. English 5. Church History 6. Sacred History 7. Geography

Pastor B. Merz: 1. Cathechism 2. German Grammar 3. Literature 4. Rhetoric

Teacher Sperling: 1. Singing 2. Violin Playing 3. Writing

The students Harrer and Gangnuss give instruction in organ playing free of charge. In recognition of their services, the other students have decided to relieve them of splitting wood. When the aforementioned afternoon hours are over, then three or four students fetch the wood for the kitchen and the study room of the director. At the same time this work is bodily, gymnastic exercise. The free time between four and six o'clock is also utilized for practice in music. Two organs — which are not idle during this time — are at the student's disposal.

In the evenings from seven to nine o'clock everything is quiet again in the seminary. Each student sits at his desk and by lamplight learns his assignments for the next day — The entire six-year course of study is a period of preparation for the time to come in their lives, a time full of earnestness and labor. Hence the more faithfully this present time is employed, the more cheerfully one can then go into the work when the Lord says, "You, also, go forth into my vineyard."

The day is ended with a devotion. Solemnly the evening song resounds throughout the institution. And so, many an individual reflects on his own dear parents' home — near or far — as he sings:

My loved ones, rest securely,
For God this night will surely
From peril guard your heads.
Sweet slumbers may He send you
And bid His hosts attend you
And through the night
watch o'er your beds.

Postscript

Michigan Lutheran Seminary continued to exist as a combination high school, college, and seminary program until 1907 when it was closed by the Synod due to a lack of students. Its curriculum had been briefly altered for the 1892-93 school year when the institution was transformed into the lower half of a standard German *Gymnasium* program (i.e., Sexta through Quinta levels). This was part of the agreement which had been worked out that same year between the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan Synods when these three Lutheran bodies joined to form a federation called the *Allgemeine Evang. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan und anderen Staaten* (otherwise known as the Joint Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other states).

The majority of clergy in the Michigan Synod soon came to resent this alteration in their school's training function and the next year the entire program of instruction began to be restored. The other two members of the Joint Synod protested this action, but the Michigan Synod remained adamant in its desire to have a total ministerial curriculum at Saginaw. The majority of the Synod at its annual convention in 1896 voted to sever relations with the Joint Synod and to continue to operate the seminary independently. A minority of the members sided with the Joint Synod on this issue and subsequently withdrew to form the Ev. Lutheran District Synod of Michigan which remained in alliance with the Wisconsin and Minnesota Synods.

By 1909, the two factions which had split in 1896 had resolved their differences and agreed to reunite. The Michigan Synod also voted at this time to return to its membership in the Joint Synod, and this move was fully accomplished the next year. As part of the reunion arrangements with the Joint Synod, the federation promised to reopen the school at Saginaw in the fall of 1910. While the institution retained its old name — Michigan Lutheran Seminary, the school now became only a *Progymnasium* offering in time (i.e., by 1914) the first four years of a ministerial preparatory course — that is, the Sexta through Tertia levels. Students desiring to ready themselves for the Joint Synod's teachers' college at New Ulm, Minnesota or those who wished merely to acquire a general secondary education could also attend. Over the years the class names were changed to conform to the American high-school pattern (freshman, sophomore, etc.).

The institution continues to be in operation at present, maintaining essentially the same purposes which it had when it was reopened in 1910 — namely a preparatory secondary school for the Joint Synod (now the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod) with a curriculum which feeds into its pastor- and teacher- training colleges.

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The Parting of Professor J. P. Koehler and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary

Edward C. Fredrich

THIS AUGUST it will be exactly 50 years since the break between Prof. J. P. Koehler and the Wisconsin Synod became final. This came about when the Synod convention meeting in August 1933, received this report of Southeastern Wisconsin District officials:

> 1. That in accordance with resolutions of our District of June 1932 we made another earnest attempt to deal with Prof. Koehler concerning his position toward the Synod, since he is openly practising brotherly fellowship with those who have severed relations with us, but that the officers did not succeed in getting together with Prof. Koehler.
> 2. Nevertheless it remains a fact, that Prof. Koehler is still in church fellowship with those who have severed relations with us. This we must consider a severance of church fellowship with us.[1]

Three years earlier Koehler's tenure at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary had been terminated after 30 years of teaching, the last third of which saw him serving also as school head. It is this "Parting of Professor J. P. Koehler and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary" your program committee wants discussed at this evening's Institute meeting.

At the outset it should be noted that such a controversial separation of the Seminary and its head is not unique in the school's history. Of the eight former presidents of the Seminary three have departed amid controversy and conflict.

The very first Seminary head, Doctor Edward Moldehnke set the pattern. After serving three years from 1863 to 1866 he resigned abruptly. In 1866 the Synod *Proceedings* report that "as a result of this resolution Prof. E. Moldehnke declared that he was resigning his post (as professor and editor of the *GemeindeBlatt*)."[2] The Synod tried to dissuade him but Moldenhnke was insistent. It seems that he had no objections to Adolph Hoenecke, an old schoolmate at Halle University, but he sincerely felt that the school in its infant years and with its limited enrollment simply did not need and could not usefully employ a second faculty member.

Moldehnke must have been the workaholic of workaholics. In 1866 he rejected any relief and help in his arduous and far-reaching assignments as theological professor, editor and *Reiseprediger*. At the time of his resignation he was filling posts now held by Schuetze, Schaefer, Berg and Zwieg.

To round off the story, after a brief tour of duty in Germany Moldehnke returned to this country, joined the New York Ministerium and became one of its outstanding pastors, writers and administrators. He also served two terms as president of the General Council. One can only regret that his considerable talents were lost to the Wisconsin Synod through a disagreement over Seminary policy.

In 1957 disagreement also ended the presidency of Reim at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In this instance the issue was the continuing fellowship of the Wisconsin Synod with the erring Missouri Synod. In 1957 it was Reim's conviction that the time for a dissolution of that fellowship had definitely come. When the Synod resolved otherwise, Reim found it impossible to continue any longer working at his Seminary post as theological professor and school president. When his considerable talents as a teacher of theology would again be put to use, it would be at the worker-training school of the Church of the Lutheran Confession.

Your concern, however, centers on the other instance of a controversial termination of a Seminary presidency. That is "The Parting of Professor Koehler and the Seminary." The concern is understandable. The Moldehnke affair lies so far back in history that it has been almost completely forgotton and it never was all that complicated to start with. Many seem to have been displeased at the prospect of losing Moldehnke and sought to call him as permanent full-time *Reiseprediger*. But the only serious question raised was by the floor committee that wondered, as the minutes tell us, "how it was possible for Professor Moldehnke to exchange for extended periods his teaching post at the Seminary for the post of *Reiseprediger*."[3]

The departure of Reim from the Seminary occurred so recently that many can still view it as a contemporary happening instead of clouded history. They and even others that are younger, can quite easily see and agree on what was cause and what was effect. Given the situation that then existed, even members of the Church of the Lutheran Confession would share with us the view that what happened had to happen.

When Koehler and the Seminary parted company, however, the issue was hotly contested. It is still on occasion hotly contested. While only a few in our ranks were old enough to be aware of what was happening, many of us have to grapple with the issues. The lapse of time and the complexity of the event make difficult a clear grasp of the situation. It is, however, understandable that the WELS Historical Institute should seek some insight into this key event in the history of the Wisconsin Synod and its Seminary and in the life and career of one of the Synod's two great historians. The other is of course August Graebner.

In the search for an understanding of "The Parting of Professor Koehler and the Seminary" these five steps will be taken:

I. The Assessment by Koehler of the Main Issue
II. The Participation of Koehler in the *Gutachten* Preparation
III. The Opposition of Koehler to the Faculty *Gutachten*
IV. The Removal of Koehler from His Seminary Post
V. The Departure of Koehler as a High Tragedy

John Koehler

I. The Assessment by Koehler of the Issue

J. P. Koehler does not give us his assessment of the situation in his *History of the Wisconsin Synod.*[4] He was too good a historian not to be aware of the pitfall of oversubjectivity and exercised great restraint in avoiding the painful and personal subject in his synodical history. He did, however, express himself clearly and forcefully on the issue in other places which do not put such a premium and priority on objectivity.

In his farewell to the Synod he had served for 50 years, a three-part writing with the translated title of "Witness, Analysis and Reply," Koehler declares flatly and unmistakably, "The *Gutachten* was and is and had to be the issue alone that had to be considered."[5] This was in 1930 on June 7.

Three months later he interrupted his packing at Thiensville to reflect. In a letter to a student and friend on another continent he put down these thoughts:

> For me the episode of the past five years since my return from Germany is concluded. I still do not have a conclusive judgment on the whole matter. However, I am inclined to agree with Karl's (his son's) judgment that officialdom lies at the bottom of the entire controversy. The respective officials of the Synod believe that they must uphold the forms of Synod's organizational constitution and therefore they ride these external forms in a way so insensible that I would not have believed it possible. Pieper and Meyer, who in this respect well know where the truth lies, are making use of the situation, instead of directing it into proper channels, so that they don't have to retract the *Gutachten.*"[6]

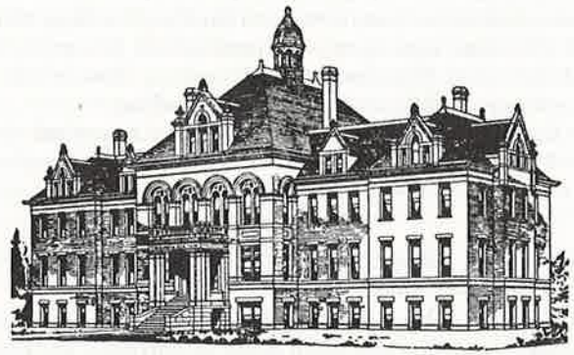
Koehler in this September 1, 1930 letter seems to be toying with the idea of agreeing with his son, Karl, and other Protes'tants that the root problem is officialdom, *Beamtentum.* Even then, however, the officialdom is denounced as a cover-up agent for the *Gutachten.* The *Gutachten* was for Koehler the key issue in his conflict with his Synod. It will be so treated in this description of "The Parting of Professor Koehler and the Seminary."

Some preliminary explanations are in order. Just what is this *Gutachten* that brought about Koehler's departure from this Seminary? The *Gutachten* looks like this. This original printing, in German of course, dated June 7, 1927, has 31 pages under the title, *An Evaluation by the Wauwatosa Theological Faculty of the Conference Paper Entitled "God's Message to Us in Galatians: The Just Shall Live by Faith."*

In the fall of 1926 at Schofield near Wausau in the Western Wisconsin District Pastor William Beitz read to one conference a paper assigned to him by another conference. This was the paper mentioned in the *Gutachten* title. The paper of Beitz, with its lusty criticism of spiritual life in the Wisconsin Synod and with it earnest call to repentance and a life of faith, was controversial in the extreme. A second and a third reading provoked more controversy. In the supercharged synodical atmosphere of that time, with two camps warring over Watertown thieves and Fort Atkinson teachers, both towns in the Western Wisconsin District, the Beitz paper easily fell into the role of catalyst, that speeded and heated up reaction and of shibboleth that separated the men from the boys.

When conflict over the Beitz paper would not die down, President G. Thurow of the embattled Western Wisconsin District arranged with the Seminary head, Professor Koehler, that the theological faculty at Wauwatosa should provide an evaluation of the disputed paper. The result was the *Gutachten* that Koehler regarded as the *numero uno* cause of his conflict with his Synod.

Not all will agree with Koehler's assessment of the key issue in the controversy. Many like to think and say that the real problem was a J. P. Koehler — August Pieper personality clash. This is an easy out but also in the essayist's view a cop-out. Sparks can fly when two outstanding men



The Wauwatosa Seminary (1893-1929)

teach side by side. Shades of Doctor Ernst and Doctor Notz, of Hegel and Schliermacher, even of Luther and Melanchthon! But men like that, men like Pieper and Koehler, are more concerned about the *re* than the *persona*, the substance rather than the human element.

This is not to deny that there can be deep-seated clashes between two theological teachers over methodology or personality or teaching discipline. This is not to deny that historical explanations can never rest entirely on a single-cause theory. Other factors can and do play subordinated roles.

In this instance, however, we serve the cause of history, and Pieper and Koehler, best when we yield to the latter's insistence that the real issue in his departure from the Seminary is the *Gutachten* and not something else.

That is why we should try to understand clearly the participation of Koehler in the preparation of the *Gutachten.*

II. The Participation of Koehler in the *Gutachten* Preparation

When a third conference reading of the Beitz paper still found its fans and its foes at loggerheads, the Western Wisconsin District's President, G. Thurow, sent to the Seminary an SOS, a *Notschrei*, as a Pieper writing would have it, seeking an evaluation, a *Gutachten.*[7]

Koehler was not unwilling to have the Seminary faculty issue such an evaluation. He was actually already acquainted with the contents of the Beitz paper through a preview that had been granted him.[8]

The *Gutachten* was produced in the spring of 1927. This was the procedure, as August Pieper describes it:

> In order to be as correct and careful as possible, it was determined in this important matter affecting the peace and unity of the Synod that each of the four of us should make a written appraisal without prior consultation with the others, that then the four appraisals should be jointly evaluated and then brought together by one of us. The amalgamation should then be again reviewed and after that put into final form.[9]

When the time came to compare the four individual appraisals, only three were at hand. Koehler had not written his, choosing to devote the time to drafting blueprints for the proposed Mequon Seminary plant. One who lives on this hill and works in this building cannot but be grateful for any thought and effort that went into the planning of these beautiful buildings and grounds. One could at the same time wish that back in May 1927 a little less thought and effort had been devoted to preliminary blueprints by Professor Koehler and more to a first draft of a *Gutachten.* This whole story might then have had a much different and happier ending.

Professor Koehler was insistent that Pieper's appraisal should be the basis for the final form of the *Gutachten.* When Pieper brought in a revised draft after two weeks of work, Koehler's comments and suggestions involved:

> 1. a footnote on Beitz' frequent use of *we* that was changed by Meyer to Koehler's satisfaction;
>
> 2. the viewpoint of Koehler that what Beitz said about separating justification and sanctification could be correctly understood.[10]

Architect's sketch of the Mequon (Thiensville) Seminary

In the second matter, however, Koehler requested no changes in the Pieper text, assuming he could discuss and clarify the matter in a face-to-face discussion with Beitz. When the time for signing the *Gutachten* came, Koehler put his name at the top of the list of signatures.

In fairness to him, it must be remembered that he planned a meeting with Beitz to discuss the two documents with him and wanted the *Gutachten* held back until then. His colleagues had no objections to such an effort on Koehler's part but they pointed out that dealings with Beitz were officially a matter for Western Wisconsin District officials.

By the time Koehler got to see Beitz in the latter half of June the *Gutachten* was already in circulation. It had been sent to President Thurow and he, perhaps not aware of Koehler's intentions, distributed the printed pamphlet. Koehler's meeting with Beitz was unavailing and he put the blame for that on the early release of the *Gutachten.*

III. The Opposition of Koehler to the Faculty *Gutachten*

Upon returning from the fruitless meeting with Beitz, Koehler withdrew his signature from the *Gutachten.* Then he prepared an explanatory communication for Synod's pastors but was prevailed upon at the last minute not to send it. Somewhat later he did get to talk to Beitz but it was not on the basis of the *Gutachten.* Instead, Koehler developed his own writing, referred to as *Ertrag* which later became the basis for his explanation to the Synod in 1929 known as the *Beleuchtung.*

It is obvious that there would be heated discussions, first inside the faculty and then including also Board members and Synod officials. In faculty discussions Henkel, Meyer and Pieper stood by the *Gutachten's* charges that Beitz in his paper confused justification and sanctification, taught erroneously about repentance and judged and slandered. Koehler maintained that there were other ways of understanding what Beitz had written.

John Meyer

August Pieper

Soon the divisive issue within the faculty boiled down to interpretation principles. Should a conference paper be judged on the basis of what its words actually say or should there be an allowance for the author's intent and the prevailing situation being addressed?

It is easy to write the whole issue off as a tempest in a teapot, differing interpretations of a somewhat imprecise and overdrawn conference paper. That would be a mistake. These were men who were professionals in the interpretation business. Their differences counted. These were men interpreting documents that had become rallying points in a divided and dividing Synod. One could wish that the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten* had not been elevated to that status. One could argue that neither is without its exaggerations. It is a fact, however, that a fellowship was forming around the Beitz paper and suspensions were being enacted for adherence to it. A division over the issue at the Seminary was hardly tolerable, given the situation that existed.

Even Koehler saw this clearly. At one point in the lenghty discussions, the date is late October 1927, Koehler was ready to "drop" Beitz because of the latter's unwillingness to offer any corrections or clarifications for his writings. In his explanation to those with whom he had been disputing Koehler declares:

> None the less I declare that I regret that I have in the fashion indicated played a part in the confusion of the Synod which I tried to clarify in both directions. If as a result it becomes clear that there is an unbridegable gap between my view of the interpretation of a writing and that of my colleagues then it is clear to me that I can no longer work at the Seminary and place at your disposal my resignation.[11]

That was in the fall of 1927. The conflict would continue for three more years. It is understandable that new issues would arise in the prolonged controversy. There were dealings with different committees and on different

levels. The telling of all of them would extend this meeting beyond all expectations. But one basic problem remained: Koehler's opposition to the *Gutachten.*

Finally in the summer of 1929 Koehler tried to bring the dealings to a conclusion. He stated his unwillingness to continue meetings with those who wouldn't or couldn't understand him. He prepared a writing for Synod's pastors prior to the 1929 Synod convention. This was his own *Gutachten* of the Beitz paper and a rejection of the faculty *Gutachten.* It is known as the *Beleuchtung.* That publication led directly, if not immediately, to the removal of Koehler from his Seminary post.

IV. The Removal of Koehler from His Seminary Post

The *Beleuchtung* is dated August 1, 1929. The Pieper-Meyer *Antwort* to it is dated August 9, 1929. On August 13, 1929, the Seminary Board supplied Koehler with this communication:

> Worthy Professor:
>
> It is my grievous duty to communicate to you the following dismissal, arrived at by the Board on August 13, after they had read your document and the answer of Professors Pieper and Meyer.
>
> We are unreservedly in agreement on all points with the reply written . . . in answer to Professor Koehler's *'Die Beitzsche Schrift and das Gutachten Beleuchtet'* and therefore declare that Professor Koehler cannot continue in office at our Seminary and expect God to bless his efforts.
>
> On behalf of the Board
> W. Hoenecke, Secretary[12]

Koehler responded directly to the assembled synodical convention which gave the tragic development its attention. The convention called into being a new committee of five men to help the old and new Seminary Board in their difficult dealings. The Board's termination resolution did not immediately go into effect. Instead, Koehler was relieved of Seminary teaching and administrative assignments and allowed to devote his time to the ordering of synodical archives and the writing of the synodical history. While these decisions were being made, the new Seminary was dedicated. The school year opened with only two teachers for the three classrooms. Professor Henkel had died. Professors Pieper and Meyer had to do double duty until Frederic Brenner and Max Lehninger accepted their calls.

Nothing was accomplished by the five-man committee appointed to deal with Koehler. Professor Koehler himself insisted that there could be no useful dealings unless there would be a review of the acceptance of the *Antwort,* of the resolution that he could no longer teach and of the subscription to the *Gutachten.* It is obvious that there could be no meeting of minds.

On May 21, 1930, Professor Koehler's Seminary call was definitely and finally terminated. The stipulation was that on August 1 salary and housing would cease. Koehler made and gained the point that he had been granted a full year. In September he moved to Neillsville where his son Karl lived and worked. Several years later he finished work on his *History of the Wisconsin Synod.*

As has been related, formal ties between Koehler and the Wisconsin Synod were officially declared broken by resolution of the 1933 convention of the Synod.

What remains to be supplied in this writing on "The Parting of Professor Koehler and the Seminary" is a summary evaluation of the happenings and issues. This will be supplied in a closing section.

V. The Departure of Koehler as a High Tragedy

Let me quote here verbatim from a Koehler letter written in that last sad school year, 1929-1930. It expresses exactly what this essayist is thinking:

> My historical labors cause me much trouble. If one could finish the matter off with a few dogmatic judgments, that would be simple. But to present historical events and circumstances and be just in one's judgment to the matters in hand, that is difficult in events of the past, and strangely enough, the more intimate the material at hand the more difficult to do justice to it. And this is my situation here. To simply record official statements is not historical presentation. This is one of my peculiar conceptions. But I am thankful to God that I have it.[13]

Faith-Life reported the final May 1930 Board resolution that terminated Koehler's call under a heading "La Commedia E Finita."[14] The quotation should not be taken literally. It originates in *II Pagliacci*. The story of "The Parting of Professor Koehler and the Seminary" is tragedy, high tragedy.

There is a form of tragedy where the characters are simply thrown into a tragic situation and without much action or intention move on to the fateful end. They are caught up in a situation. For example, Romeo loves Juliet and Juliet loves Romeo but they are members of feuding families. You can't blame them for falling in love but when a Montague and Capulet are in love accidents will happen. Plague conditions delay a messenger. Tragedy results. The stage is littered with corpses.

There is something of this kind of tragedy to be seen in Koehler's departure from the Seminary. Feuding factions got into a conflict at Watertown while Koehler was 4000 miles away. He could not remain aloof from the feuding. Efforts at peace-making at Fort Atkinson fizzled. Resorting to a *Gutachten* approach only served to fan the flames. The tragedy simply moves on to its end.

Koehler was more onlooker than participant in the first acts and he saw clearly what was happening. Here are some illustrative excerpts from the Koehler-Zorn correspondence previously cited. Already on Sept. 21, 1927 he was writing:

> I fear that here things are developing and heading for a break. That is something that can bring joy to no hearts. But it must come to clean out much soot that has accumulated in the course of a man's lifetime.[15]

Three months later Koehler wrote this to Kurt Zorn after his offer to resign was not accepted:

> And so the storm passed. But the peace in the faculty has not yet matured to a heartfelt confidence. It is hard to say what will yet develop in the controversy.
>
> It's still quite probable that I shall have to step aside if the work here at the Seminary is to prosper in peace. The controversy is a crisis in the life of our Synod which I have long anticipated, but had not expected that it would come so soon and would zero in on us here.[16]

In December 1928 Koehler mentioned that E. Sauer's tenure at Northwestern had ended and then declared:

> I expect the same in the near future. The dealings concerning this are already underway since the 8th of May. The proceedings have already come so far that a decision re me is already in the hands of the Board.[17]

The sense of the inevitable that Koehler felt and displayed makes the viewing of the happenings all that much more tragic. But there is another, a higher form of tragedy, beyond the mere tragedy of the inevitable. It deals with a character, who because of his own character flaw brings tragedy on himself. Macbeth falls because in the pursuit of his ambition he is willing to see his "eternal jewel given to the common enemy of man."

The suggestion is not that Koehler was ruthless or ambitious. Quite the contrary! The suggestion is rather that what he did and what he left undone played a part in the regrettable end of his Seminary career.

Koehler's problem was not an overcommitment to history. This point deserves emphasis at this gathering. In his *Antwort*, a reply to Koehler's *Beleuchtung*, August Pieper traces his colleague's swing from vacillation to stand-patism back to "his historical viewpoint."[18] Professor Pieper could on occasion exaggerate. This is one of the occasions.

At the same time one must acknowledge that in this crucial matter of the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten* Koehler did not always hew to one line. He was an agent in the *Gutachten's* production but did not carry out his assignment. He signed the *Gutachten*. Subsequently he denounced it. How can the same person declare of a major section of a document which he signed that "What the *Gutachten*, along with the *Antwort*, says about this section of the Beitz paper is incorrect in every sentence?"

The Protes'tants point in this connection to the doublecross that forced Koehler to change tracks. He signed the *Gutachten* only with the stipulation that it would not be published before he could consult with Beitz personally. When a violation occurred Koehler had to renounce the Gutachten he had signed. One could wish even then that no signing would have taken place. And if "doublecross" is the point at issue, should not the position of cosigners of the *Gutachten* be taken into consideration also when dealings with Beitz proceeded on the basis of a new and different *Gutachten* or *Ertrag* without prior consultation?

Few would agree with August Pieper that Koehler's approach to interpreting Beitz amounted to a denial of the great interpretation principle of the Reformation.[19] There is and remains a difference in interpreting Scripture and a human writing. Koehler, however, and the Protes'tants cause trouble when they overstress what a conference paper might be assumed to mean over against what it actually says or could be interpreted to say.

Conference papers ought to be clear. If they are unclear, they ought to be clarified. Clarity is the name of the game. Anyone here who has written a conference paper, I'm sure, would agree. One is hard put to go along with the proposition that a conference paper that has engendered its share of confusion must be granted the benefit of every doubt.

One will be ready to sympathize with Koehler in his efforts to espouse the cause of beleaguered women teachers at Fort Atkinson, the cause of an essayist under attack at Schofield and elsewhere and the cause of followers under threat of suspension. He went out on a limb, far out on a limb, for underdogs. That, however, may have been the real flaw, an unwillingness to repudiate followers and friends, disciples and devotees when repudiation was in order. Shades of Melanchthon and similar problems long ago!

Again, one can have a heart for Koehler's efforts at peace-making. He came back from Germany to find a controversy raging in the Synod and his son, Karl, a storm center. He tried to keep the peace when Fort Atkinson had its troubles, when his protege, Ruediger, was dismissed from his Seminary post, when Beitz and his paper were under attack and when enemy camps had been established. His concluding advice in his *Beleuchtung* states:

> "I am of the mind that we should make an end of all strife and celebration (feiern); that we quietly in humility do the positive work we are called to do and trust the goodness of God that it will bring us in a quieter mood to knowledge and will bring the separated together again. If we were to agree in this viewpoint then the first step to healing would already have been taken.[20]

Peace and healing — yes; peace and healing at any price — no. To posture in the fall of 1929 that turning one's back and closing one's eyes to an adversary fellowship, the Protes'tant Conference, and to its aggresive publication, *Faith-Life*, already in its second volume, does not make sense from either an unsanctified or a sanctified viewpoint.

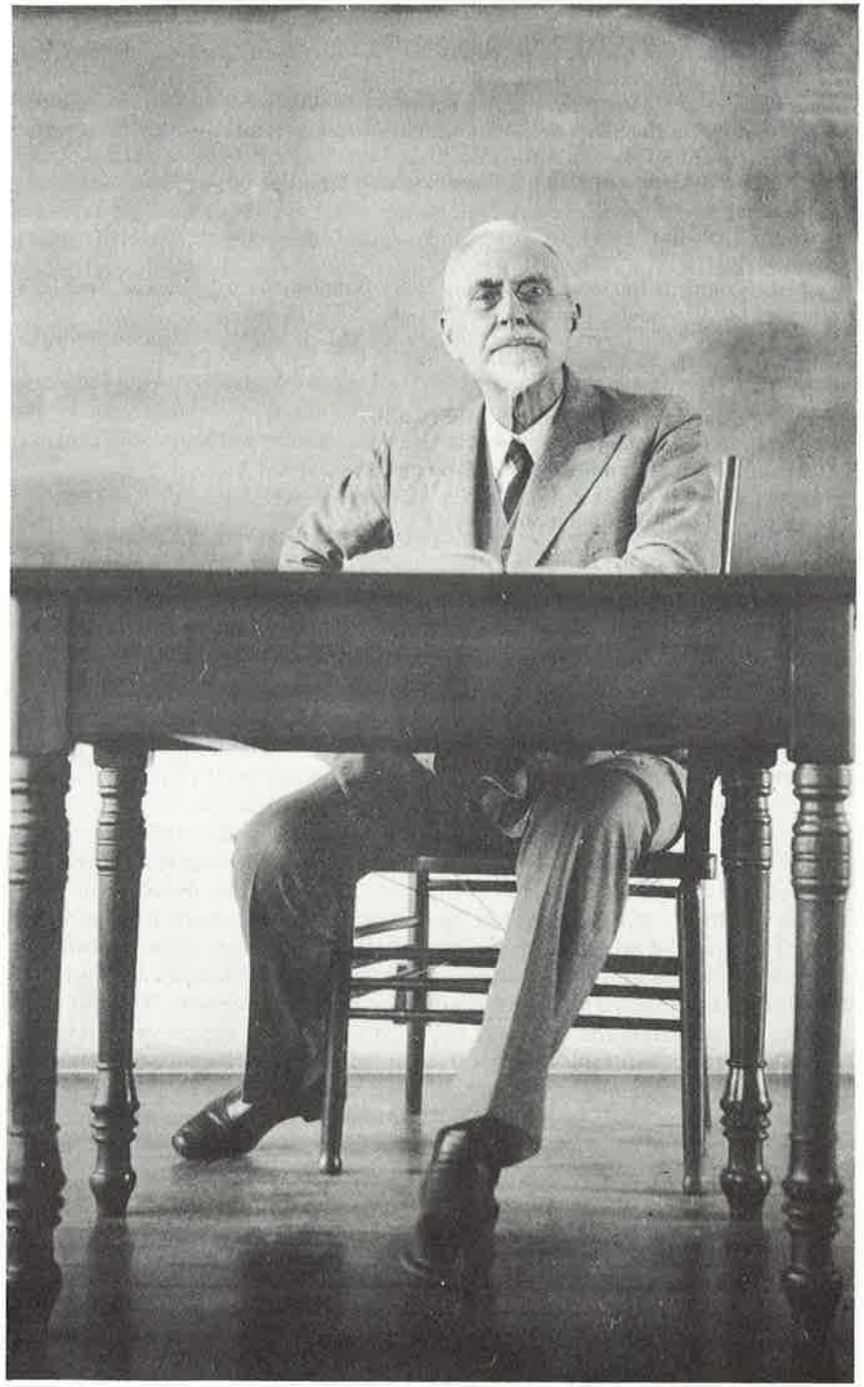
All this is reluctantly said. There is no joy in belaboring errors or misjudgments Koehler may have made. He remains the Wisconsin Synod's foremost historian. The point, however, needs to be made that our Synod was not necessarily selling its birthright, repudiating its heritage or forfeiting the "Wauwatosa Theology" when it had to terminate Koehler's Seminary post. Whether we like it or not, whether he wanted it or not, he had put himself in an untenable position by his stand in the burning Protes'tant controversy. He put himself there according to the dictates of his conscience and according to the viewpoints he held. The Synod reacted, also conscience and conviction bound.

ENDNOTES

[1] *Wisconsin Proceedings*, 1933, pp 38-39.
[2] *Wisconsin Proceedings*, 1866, p 30.
[3] *Wisconsin Proceedings*, 1866, p 34.
[4] John Philip Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod* (St. Cloud, Minnesota: Sentinel Publishing Company for the Protes'tant Conference, 1970). A second edition, necessitated when senior church history classes at the Seminary bought out the first edition, appeared in 1981,

[5] J. P. Koehler, "Witness, Analysis, and Reply," *Faith-Life*, III (July 1930), Supplement, p 6.
[6] The excerpt is from the recently published "Koehler-Zorn Correspondence." See *Faith-Life*, LV (July-August 1982), p 22.
[7] August Pieper and John Meyer in August 1929 put out a pamphlet, *Antwort* in the interest of refuting Koehler's *Beleuchtung*. The *Notschrei* remark is on p 8. Hereafter the citation is abbreviated to *Antwort*.
[8] The *Antwort* describes this on p 5. See also *Faith-Life*, II, 13.
[9] *Antwort*, p 8.
[10] *Antwort*, pp 9-10.
[11] *Antwort*, p 11.
[12] *Faith-Life* reprints the letter in IV (July 1931), Supplement, p 6. See also Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, "Introduction," XXVIII.
[13] *Faith-Life*, LV (January-February 1982), p 23. This is another selection from the Koehler-Zorn correspondence.
[14] *Faith-Life*, III (June 1930), p 11.
[15] *Faith-Life*, LIV (September-October 1981), p 13.
[16] *Faith-Life*, LIV (September-October 1981), p 16.
[17] *Faith-Life*, LIV (September-October 1981), p 20.
[18] *Antwort*, p 74.
[19] *Faith-Life* III (July 1930) Supplement, p 6.
[20] *Beleuchtung*, p 13.

This essay was prepared for the meeting of the WELS Historical Institute on April 20, 1983. *Professor Fredrich is head of the department of church history at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin.*



August Pieper at the Mequon (Thiensville) Seminary

Reminiscences from Professor August Pieper

THE GREAT "BATTLE OF THE NATIONS" took place at Leipzig, in the year 1813. Ten years prior to that important event my father, August Bernhard Pieper, was born in the town of Carwitz, in Pomerania. He was a blond, healthy man, five feet eleven inches tall. He served in the Prussian army and in the course of time became a corporal. After he had served in this capacity for over a year, he had to decide whether to make a career of military life (as so many others of his relatives had done) or to ask for a discharge from the army and return to civilian life. Since he was a peace-loving man and was fed up with the whole Prussian war system, he asked for and received an honorable discharge. Not long after, he became mayor of the town, and he carried on his new duties with great exactness and conscientiousness. He was held in respect by all. His peaceful nature made him oppose all private quarrels; this also influenced his religious thinking. He was a Christian, indeed, but he was a Unionist like his king, Frederick William III. This attitude later on showed itself in our family life and also in his administration of his official duties as town mayor.

My mother, Bertha, nee Lohff, was ten years younger than my father. She was born in Petershagen, Pomerania in 1813. Her father, Ernst Lohff, died when mother was only three years old. She and her sister, Mathilde, a year older, were taken to the home of their uncle, Frederick Lohff, who lived in Pennekow, a town quite a distance away. He reared them together with his own three daughters. The congregations in the area around Pennekow had separated themselves from the Prussian State Union Church and had joined a strictly Lutheran group (the Pomeranian Separation). These congregations received help from a Lutheran pastor in Berlin named Gustav Knack. Frederick Lohff was a fervent supporter of the congregation at Pennekow and raised his three daughters, Antonia, Marie and Louise, and the two orphans, Bertha and Mathilde, in the historic Lutheran faith. Thus Bertha Lohff, who was to become my mother, became a confessional Lutheran.

Gustav Knack was a powerful preacher. He did all in his power to serve the congregations near Pennekow and Wuesterwitz, also by preaching to them personally. When the people of the area heard that Pastor Knack would be preaching on a particular Sunday, they would come already on Saturday to be sure to hear him.

From Carwitz, too, several families came to Pennekow to hear Pastor Knack. The preacher in our town was a State Church Union man, an old

man named Mueller, who came from Malchow to serve us. He performed routine official pastoral duties and conducted services once every two weeks, but otherwise he did not bother us. The high church authorities finally gave the aged pastor a younger man to assist him in the large Malchow parish.

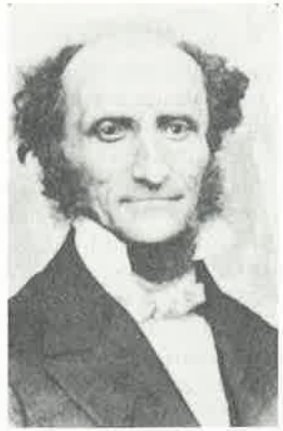
I DO NOT remember hearing when and where my unionistic father married my strictly Lutheran mother. There is evidence, however, that my oldest sister, Wilhelmine (we called her Minna for short) was confirmed in Malchow by Pastor Mueller when she was 15. Minna was physically and mentally a fine person. She was a big help to mother in the house and had as special assignment keeping us growing boys in tow. It seems that about every two years a new son made his appearance in our family until there were six of us: Julius, Reinhold, Franz, Carl, August and Anton. Besides Minna, the oldest, there was another sister, Bertha. As youngsters, we didn't always appreciate the strong rule our sister exerted on us. It happened more than once that when we were at a safe distance from her we teased her by yelling: "Minna, Schinna."

Our unionistic father attended quite meticulously to his mayoral duties. It therefore fell to the lot of our Lutheran mother to take charge of the religion instructions and discipline in our home. It was usually the oldest boy who read to us a sermon of Ludwig Hofacker, while we younger sons had to listen attentively. Self-evidently all of the mayor's children had to attend the village school, to acquire the necessary mental and religious education. Both father and mother saw to it that we learned the best there was thoroughly. Our sexton, who at one time had been a private tutor and knew Latin fairly well (his name was Blum) was asked by our parents to teach us children Latin. This did not exactly appeal to us; only Franz applied himself to the study of Latin. Mother, however, insisted that, as the mayor's children, we should be leaders in knowledge and in good behavior.

The village of Carwitz became a post office when I was about six years old. This brought to our town a postmaster, an interesting person, with his colorful soldier's uniform. He lived near our house in the mayor's courtyard. This proximity to our house resulted in the marriage of our oldest sister to the postmaster. A short time after this happened, our older brothers also left home. Julius became an apprentice to the miller in the new windmill at New Malchow, at the millpond where we younger brothers loved to fish. Reinhold studied to become a horticulturist, first in the local area, later in Berlin, where he also studied French. Franz gave himself over to the study of foreign languages, which he had learned to love through the teaching of old sexton Blum. As a result, Franz was enrolled in the higher school at Coeslin (the *Progymnasium*).

MOTHER HAD high hopes for her children. She hoped that at least one of her sons would become a learned scholar. Father did not resist her. So Franz was sent to the classical school (*Vollgymnasium*) at Colberg at the Sea, about 40 miles northwest of Coeslin. In diligence and in moral conduct Franz was perfection itself. He received the highest report ever given a student of that institution. The director of the school had high praise

Franz Pieper



C. W. F. Walther

for him, a fact which did not make him more modest than he was at home. As I recall, when he came home for vacation there was constant squabbling between him and his older brother Reinhold, who had made his mark in horticulture and in the study of French. We younger brothers often made belittling remarks about both of them. There is no question about the learning and erudition of Franz Pieper, which eventually led to his being called as professor to the seminary at St. Louis. Dr. Walther praised him very highly. His students honored the greatness of his knowledge, and especially the fact that he was a staunch Lutheran. He stood four-square on the Word of God in the doctrinal controversies which arose in the church at this time, stood his ground, and fought down all opposition.

Before my father died in 1869, my two oldest brothers had come to America: Julius to Dubuque, Iowa, where he joined a Missouri Synod church and Reinhold to Watertown, Wisconsin, where a relative of my mother, Julius Voss, was a teacher at St. Mark's, the Wisconsin Synod congregation. Voss had chosen Watertown as his home because it had a Lutheran school of higher learning where he could prepare for the ministry. He was a highly gifted and very diligent young man. In a very short time he had finished the first three classes.

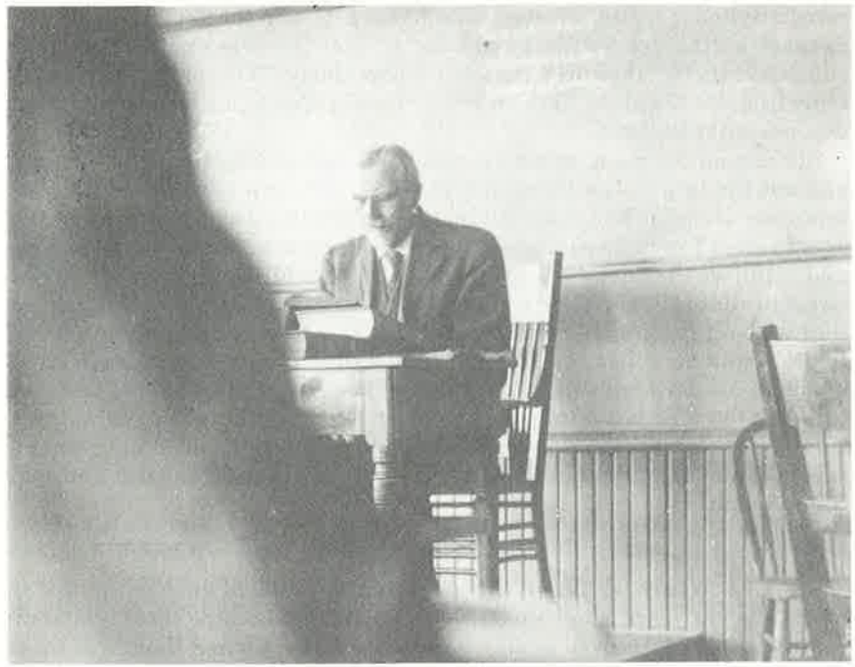
In 1870 my mother decided to emigrate to America with her four younger sons: Franz, Carl, August and Anton. We secured passage on an ocean liner, the *Ocean Queen*, a side-wheeler, very large, carrying 800 passengers. Built in America, the Ocean Queen at first sailed inland waters. To make more money, the owners equipped it for ocean travel. We boarded this liner at Stettin; at Wollin and Usedom we took on board about 400 Danes, mostly steerage passengers. Daily bickerings and fights took place between the Danish and the German steerage passengers. These were frequently so serious that the ship's officers came with loaded revolvers and drawn swords to prevent bloodshed and to restore order. On the ocean we ran into a storm so severe that one of the side-wheels was put out of commission, causing the big ship to spin around continually. It took us four whole weeks before we finally arrived in New York harbor.

NOW WHAT? Fortunately for us, the Missouri Synod at this time had an immigration mission at Castle Garden, managed by a Pastor Keyl. He took us under his wing, saw to it that we had something to eat and got us on our way via the Pennsylvania and Milwaukee-St. Paul railroads. In a few days we arrived in Watertown, Wisconsin, where we had the good fortune to meet the depot agent, August Gamm. He was kind enough to bring us to the teacher at St. Mark's, Julius Voss, who two years previous had received our brother Reinhold. Mother soon found a house for us near the bridge on the Rock River; we could walk to school (Northwestern). Franz entered Oberprima, Reinhold was in Tertia, I was put into Quinta and Anton went into Sexta. Our brother Carl did not care for book learning. He went first to Ogden, Iowa (near Des Moines) where he made his living by selling house organs. With some of the profits he rented about 40 acres of government prairie land in Brown County, Iowa. When I was in Secunda, he asked me to spend my summer vacation at his place and to help him with his 20 head of cattle. He promised me summer's wages of $100. Later on he formed a partnership with a neighbor named Hans Larch, sort of a raw customer, and married his daughter Minna. With her he moved to Menomonie, Wisconsin when I was pastor there. He edited and published a German newspaper which was called the *Northern Star* (*Der Nordstern*). This brought him into politics, and he became an assemblyman from Dunn County. Anton, our youngest brother, was called to a congregation at Newton, Wisconsin after his graduation from St. Louis. Upon the advice of his mother, he married Ida Schuette of Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

Mother became the stewardess of Northwestern College at Watertown. Naturally she followed the careers of her sons with a good degree of satisfaction. When they were married, she occasionally visited them in their homes. When, in 1881, I was married to Miss Emma Koenig, the sister of the wife of Professor George Stoeckhardt, she also stayed in our home in Kewaunee for a time. But when the youngest son, Anton, married Ida Schuette of Manitowoc, mother felt she should remain in their home at Newton, Wisconsin where Anton had become pastor. During a visit to Franz in St. Louis she died in 1893 and was buried in the cemetery at Newton. She had reached the age of 80. Hers had been an eventful life, a life full of joys and sorrows, the life of a strict Lutheran who had given her best years and efforts to the furtherance of the Lord's kingdom.

AT THIS TIME (1877-1878), several students from the Wisconsin Synod (I among them) had come to St. Louis to study theology under Dr. Walther and my brother Franz. The Wisconsin Synod was also Lutheran, but it was more liberal than the Missouri Synod. Her chief theologian and teacher was Adolph Hoenecke, who as a student had sat at the feet of Tholuck and had absorbed from him his mild Lutheranism. In the Wisconsin Synod there were a number of former members of the Buffalo Synod. It might be mentioned that at that time there was a noticeable dread of the strict Lutheranism represented by Missouri.

This situation was changed to some extent when Franz was called to St. Louis. Many meetings and joint discussions were held with other Lutheran



August Pieper at the Wauwatosa Seminary

church bodies, also with the Wisconsin Synod, with the result that both groups acknowledged each other as orthodox. A stipulation was made that Wisconsin abstain from erecting its own theological seminary and send its graduates from Northwestern College to the St. Louis Seminary. At this time there were at least three graduates who together with me entered the St. Louis Seminary. Meanwhile, the leading spirits of the Wisconsin Synod met in session in Watertown and rejected amalgamation with the Missouri Synod. I happened to be home on vacation and attended this meeting. I recall hearing someone say, "We have a history of our own behind us, and we do not intend to deny that." A committee of four was appointed to inform St. Louis of this. A meeting was held in Trinity School in St. Louis, presided over by Dr. Walther, to hear the report of our four delegates concerning the hoped-for agreement with Missouri.

The point at issue was not the amalgamation of the two Synods, but rather the establishment of complete confessional unity of the two Synods, and Wisconsin's decision to forego founding her own theological seminary in favor of using the Missouri Synod seminary for training ministerial candidates. An alternative was the establishment of a joint seminary with the express proviso that any and every non-Lutheran synod and organization be excluded, especially the anti-Christian lodges. What was our committee's answer? Our one learned theologian Hoenecke, who abhorred traveling, was not at hand. President John Bading was the leader of our delegation. When called upon by Dr. Walther to state his reaction, President Bading said: "I solemnly declare before the whole Lutheran Church that the Wis-

consin Synod is ready to forego establishing its own theological seminary, as soon as the possibility is eliminated that the Wisconsin Synod will subsequently be asked to merge with a larger body." This brought an angry reply from Dr. Walther: "Sirs, that is dishonest. You know full well that that was not what I meant!"

Our committee made its way through a crowd of 300 Missouri delegates, and left the large room through a side door, where a few of us Wisconsin seminary students had squeezed in. Bading took hold of my coatsleeve and said to me: "You have witnessed how we were treated. Come home with me and in fall we shall establish our own seminary at Milwaukee with Notz and Graebner as professors, and you as our first students." I replied: "I cannot do that without ruining my whole career. For two yeras I have studied under Walther and his colleagues, Schaller, Guenther, Lange, Brohm, each one a model in his paritcular field, and now my brother Franz. I should trade all this for a few teachers and leaders of whom I know nothing? You cannot ask this of me." The old gentleman did not hold this against me. Later, when I was pastor of St. Marcus in Milwaukee, he showed himself as a true and dear friend to me.

I WISH TO TAKE this opportunity to tell of an event in my St. Louis student years which under God's providence became very significant for my whole life. I loved to play baseball. I was a pitcher, though in those days we pitched underhand. At the seminary in St. Louis we played too. After a game on a hot day we drank rainwater to quench our thirst. The result was that five or six of us, including my special friend Pfotenhauer, became very ill with typhoid fever. Pfotenhauer and the other Missouri students were put in the institutional hospital. I was placed in a little room near the one occupied by my brother Franz during the first years of his professorship and which later was used as a classroom, "the Baier classroom." It seems that my case caused the professors quite some concern. They were constantly in attendance. They tell me I raved like a wild man and that in my delirium I was no longer I but someone else. I imagined that I was no longer worthy of becoming a minister of the Gospel but was condemned forever. Several professors, Dr. Schade, and another physician were gathered to observe me. "Will he live or die" was the question. The door to the consultation room was open and I heard what was said. Brother Franz said: "Oh, if he is not to regain his health, I wish that he would die now." Just then someone knelt by my bed, placed his arm about my neck and said to me: "Be of good cheer. You shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened you sore, but he hath not given you over unto death (Psalm 118:17-18). It was Professor Johann Gottlieb Schaller, a model *Seelsorger*, who had spoken.

From this moment on my condition began to mend. I did lose all my hair, and my memory was no longer perfect. But as my health was restored to me, I received a new shock of hair, and soon also my reasoning power came back to me. Walther was the teacher who held first place in my heart. I worked hard to understand and grasp him. He was lecturing on his favorite subject "The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and the Ministry." This I was intent on learning clearly, and I was happy to learn that my

St. Marcus during the pastorate of August Pieper. The church was located one block east of the present church.

reasoning strength had been restored to me and was as sharp as before my sickness. When the final examination came, Walther had chosen for his theme: *Evangelische Kirchenzucht und Bann* (Evangelical Church Discipline and Excommunication). When the examination papers were returned, two were marked "I" — Pfotenhauer's and Pieper's. Those who had lesser marks were ignored.

WALTHER HAD NOT been present at that bedside scene which was so decisive for my future life. Since Professor Schaller had been of such comfort to me on that occasion, he had become exeedingly dear to me. It was with pleasure, therefore, that I stood up for him over against a number of students from Ft. Wayne who thoroughly despised this modest gentleman and treated him shamefully. It was Professor Schaller's duty to conduct the morning devotions with us students. Because of their resentment of this man, they stayed away from these devotions more and more. Of the 60 students enrolled, only about a dozen put in their appearance. One morning the old professor came into the devotion room with tears in his eyes and addressed the students in these words: "Gentlemen, I know that I am nothing and I am not worthy that you come to me for devotions, but I am here in the name of our whole faculty. For your own sakes and the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ you should be present." An investigation conducted by Walther and the faculty resulted in the expulsion of seven of the chief culprits. In consequence of my taking the professor's part, I grew in the estimation of Dr. Walther and especially also of Pastor Brohm, who at this time was teaching us Hebrew.

Soon after this episode, Dr. Walther asked my brother Franz about my knowledge of foreign languages — Latin, Greek and Hebrew. What he learned must have been favorable to me, because he asked me and another student to proofread his *Dogmatics* which had just come from the printer. The other student was to check the correctness of the print and I was responsible for the correctness of the Latin, Greek and Hebrew quotations in

the text. This was exacting work, but very gratifying. I owed my knowledge of Hebrew to Dr. Notz in Watertown; he had spared no effort to give me a thorough understanding of this language. (The Missourians therefore can pride themselves with the fact that they have Walther's *Dogmatics* proofread by a Wisconsin Synod man!).

ONE MORE THING. Toward the end of the school year in 1879, Dr. Walther accepted a doctor title from the Ohio Synod. He told us that he had not turned down this honor because the Ohio Synod at this time showed a definite inclination to amalgamate with the Missouri Synod. Since he did not want to offend them, he decided to accept the title offered him. But he warned us not to seek honors such as a title from men. It was common practice among Lutherans in the East to pass out such titles to professors and outstanding preachers to impress other synods and the public in general. The effect this warning had on the students became apparent later on. Not too long ago when I visited a very fine and faithful neighboring pastor of the Missouri Synod, a group of seven or eight young Missouri preachers arrived. The local pastor introduced me as Professor August Pieper of the Wisconsin Synod Seminary at Thiensville. Their answer was: "And we are all docs!" True, *exempla docent*. A "professor" is a confessor. A "doctor" is a master of all sorts of human knowledge. Walther was a master of much learning, but he desired nothing more than to be a confessor of the pure gospel of Christ. When Dr. Wagner became the English instructor at the seminary in St. Louis, Walther said to him, "I want to tell you something. I feel like a crowned donkey in your presence!"

Soon after this Walther asked me through my brother Franz whether I would not also accept a call into the Missouri Synod. I let him know that in the past God through my mother had led me into the Wisconsin Synod. I therefore felt an obligation to show my gratitude to this Synod to serve it. I did get a call to become the pastor of the Wisconsin Synod congregation in Kewaunee, Wisconsin where I remained for five years, from 1879 until January 1885. Then a call came to me from Menomonie, Wisconsin, which I accepted and labored under great strain for five years. Upon the advice of my physician, I went to Texas to seek relief from a throat ailment which resulted in almost a complete loss of voice. The warm, dry climate helped me, and I was able to return to my parish. In February of 1891 I accepted a call extended to me by St. Marcus Congregation in Milwaukee, where I served as pastor for eleven years. When Professor Eugene Notz had a fatal accident in 1902, I was called to the seminary. Dr. Hoenecke and other synodical officials prevailed upon me to accept that call. When the seminary moved to Thiensville in 1929, I moved, too, and worked at the seminary and for the Wisconsin Synod until my services were terminated in 1943 after 64 years in the service of the Lord.

August Otto Wilhelm Pieper was born in 1857. After graduating from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., he served congregations at Kewaunee, Wis., 1879-85; Menomonie, Wis., 1885-90; Milwaukee, Wis., 1891-1902. In 1902 he was called to Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary and served until his retirement in 1943. He died in 1946.

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