

The Wauwatosa Gospel

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I have a fool-proof method of determining whether the telemarketer on the other end of the telephone comes from our area or not. When she gets to the name of the city in which I live, either she comes to *Wauwatosa* and asks me how to say it, or I tell her *Wauwatosa* and she asks me how to spell it.

It is one of those unheralded place names— like Altenburg, Galesburg, and Freistadt— that carries significance for historians of Lutherans and Lutheranism in America. From 1893 to 1929, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin (in 1917 amalgamated with the Michigan and Minnesota Synods to form the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States), maintained its seminary in Wauwatosa, on the southwest corner of 60th and Lloyd Streets. Across 60th Street is St. James Lutheran Church, formed in 1926 as the “seminary church” but soon to lose that designation when the seminary moved to a village a dozen miles or so straight north, Thiensville.

Wauwatosa also has come to identify and be identified with a movement and a way of thinking about being Lutheran. Fred Meuser has described it thus:

Concerned that overemphasis on dogmatical formulations was making real exegetical and historical research impossible, John P. Koehler tried in his teaching to break the stranglehold of dogmatics on theological study. In place of the doctrinal self-confidence of much orthodox Lutheranism, he and like-minded pastors under his influence stressed the need for a cautiously critical stance even over against their own synod's theological tradition. . . . These “Wauwatosans” directed their criticism more against the prevalent dogmatic and polemical spirit than against the actual doctrine of their synod.¹

Though giving it only brief notice, Meuser's words suggest something important was attempted by these “Wauwatosans.” The Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod goes farther. It speaks of Koehler (preferring *J. P.* or *Joh. P.* or the full *John Philipp*) in respectful tones, as it does of Koehler's partners August Pieper and John Schaller. Wisconsin's Northwestern Publishing House recently issued a three-volume collection of Koehler-Pieper-Schaller articles from Wisconsin's *Theologische Quartalschrift* during the first three decades of the 20th century, under the title *The Wauwatosa Gospel*.² In particular, Koehler and Pieper are quoted, cited, and revered even by WELS pastors who cannot read them at all in German or have not cared to read them much in English.³

Is *Wauwatosia* worthy of a paragraph from Meuser, no less three volumes from a synodical publisher? Meuser's paragraph contains enough necessary points to form a useful outline to discuss the Wauwatosia Gospel.

Overemphasis on dogmatical formulations

Few observers would characterize the Wisconsin Synod as some have labeled the Missouri Synod to be "triumphalist."⁴ In its early history Wisconsin seldom made the sweeping claims, common in Missouri literature, of being the last great hope for confessional Lutheran orthodoxy.⁵ Nor did the Wisconsin Synod ever develop a sense of *esprit de corps* such as Missouri possessed or for which it was known.⁶ Wisconsin editorialist Hans Moussa lamented in 1925 that "synodical consciousness was never strong" in his synod, and its pastors were still "not yet of one unified, active synodical mold."⁷

Wisconsin's individualistic spirit, which revealed itself in a high regard for big sister Missouri even as the synod struggled doggedly to maintain its own identity, can be traced as far back as Wisconsin founder Johannes Muehlhaeuser and his antipathy to "Old Lutheranism" as he saw it practiced in the nascent Missouri and Buffalo Synods.⁸ This independent spirit was also fostered by Adolph Hoenecke, Wisconsin's first outstanding theologian, who as pastor, editor of the synod's *Gemeinde Blatt*, and seminary professor, exerted a quiet but determined influence on the Wisconsin Synod for more than half a century.⁹ Respectful of Walther and Missourian orthodoxy, Hoenecke nonetheless remarked that "there was something sectarian about the Missouri Synod."¹⁰

At the beginning of the 20th century two highly gifted if idiosyncratic theologians, John Philipp Koehler and August Pieper, came to teach in Wauwatosia. Hoenecke was replaced at his death in 1908 by John Schaller, and when Schaller died suddenly in 1920 he was succeeded by Joh. P. Meyer. Though almost two dozen other men have served on the seminary's faculty during and after that time, these five men, by their distinctive theology, original insights, forceful personalities, and sheer longevity of service, shaped the clergy of the Wisconsin Synod ever since.

Leigh Jordahl has defined the Wauwatosia Gospel as a protest against "a methodology, pervasive in Lutheran orthodoxy, in which the dominance of dogmatics actually put the historical and connected study of Scripture out of business." At its worst, this methodology "led to an unprincipled rummaging through the Bible to find proof passages for positions already determined ahead of time." Thus the Wauwatosia Gospel was not an attempt to resolve liberal-conservative or Fundamentalist-Modernist debates prevalent among many Protestants and some Lutherans early in the century. It was instead an effort to free Lutheran theology from the "ball and chain" of dogmatism that, in Koehler's view, had infected most of the Midwestern Lutheran groups— Ohio, Buffalo, Iowa, Missouri, but also Wisconsin.¹¹

Koehler defined the problem as "a degree of mental inflexibility" (*Geistessarre*) combined with "a hyperconservative attitude" that had begun to assert itself in the Lutheran synods of the Midwest. This "inertia" showed "in a lack of readiness again and again to treat theological-scholarly matters or practical matters theoretically and fundamentally without preconceived notions." As Koehler saw it,

it was necessary “again and again [to] rethink in detail the most important theological matters and our way of presenting them,” lest their doctrinal formulations become “mere empty form without spirit or life.”¹²

American Lutheranism too easily contented itself with simply accepting the theological rulings of Lutheran fathers *a priori*. Even within the Synodical Conference, Koehler charged that “a pragmatic dogmatism had set in, which aimed primarily at keeping the peace.”¹³ The Wauwatosians did not reject Missouri’s theology, yet Koehler and colleagues criticized and sought to counterbalance Missourian attitudes. And if not a declaration of independence from her big sister, the Wauwatosia Gospel was certainly an expression of the synod’s distinct identity.

A key figure, ironically, in the development of the Wauwatosia Gospel was Walther himself. Because Wisconsin closed its seminary from 1870 to 1878 during the effort to amalgamate Synodical Conference educational enterprises in the ill-fated state synod plan, Koehler and Pieper were Walther’s students at St. Louis and schoolmates of Schaller. Pieper called Walther “the teacher who held first place in my heart,”¹⁴ and Koehler maintained for Walther “a deep affection combined with an informed appreciation for [his] intentions.”¹⁵ For six years after Hoenecke’s death, Wauwatosia’s entire faculty— Koehler, Pieper, Schaller— had been trained by Walther.¹⁶

Writing in 1923, Pieper’s praise for Walther was unabashed. The prevailing disposition of both synods, the strong confessional stances they championed, their inner spirit and outward growth, all were to be attributed largely to Walther’s influence. “As a Spirit-filled witness of grace to poor sinners, as an immovable confessor of God’s pure truth and as an indefatigable, self-denying worker, Walther created what we have today in the Synodical Conference, and all that has come of it.”¹⁷

Yet Pieper also noted that Missouri’s “confessional stringency and exclusiveness” as well as “its great weaknesses” were also largely to be ascribed to Walther’s influence.¹⁸ Something for which Walther was most known drew biting criticism from his two chief Wisconsin students: his penchant for dogmatics and his alleged “citation theology.”

[Walther was dependent] on the secondary sources of theology— Luther and lesser fathers. This cannot be denied in spite of all his emphasis on Scripture. Not to admit this is either blindness or untruthfulness. As brilliant a dogmatist as Walther was, he was also an inferior exegete. His knowledge of the original biblical languages was good, but not outstanding. He took over dozens of proof passages from Luther and the dogmatists which do not prove what they are supposed to prove. . . . On the whole, his knowledge of Scripture was more an intimate acquaintance with Luther’s Bible and a knowledge of passages than a knowledge of the whole line of thought of a biblical book and of the original text. . . .

Walther’s method, however justified it may have been in the beginning, was in principle and in practice wrong. It did not rest *directly* on Scripture and did not lead one directly into it— something which Luther and all his writing wanted to bring about. This method did no harm to the correct doctrine of Walther and his students, since Luther’s doctrine is nothing but God’s Word. But it stressed too strongly the importance of

Luther and the Lutheran Confessions and the Lutheran fathers in comparison with Scripture. This caused people to think that the point that was presented or discussed was sufficiently established by the quotations from Luther and the fathers without a study of Scripture itself. It even led to this that later one did not stop with quoting Luther and the old fathers, but now one also quoted Walther and other celebrities for proof of the correct doctrine.¹⁹ The subject of study for new essays became not so much Scripture as the essays in the old synodical reports, and quotations from them were frequently used instead of proof from Scripture.²⁰

And so, Pieper wrote, “many a student outdid the master,” producing a “theology of the fathers with a vengeance.”²¹ Yet the average student at Walther’s time “made out rather poorly” in subjects other than dogmatics and pastoral theology. “New Testament exegesis consisted mainly of dictated quotations from the Lutheran exegetes of the 16th and 17th centuries.” Old Testament exegesis “involved translation and quotations.” In isagogics “the Bible itself was seldom used in class.” The result was that “students came out of the seminary without having the slightest ability in exegesis” and “had not ever studied a single book of Holy Scripture somewhat thoroughly.” But “the drill in dogmatics in the seminary was so thorough that only a few left the institution without knowing the smallest detail of pure Lutheran doctrine.”²²

When one considers that Pieper made these observations after Missouri had just celebrated and Wisconsin would soon observe their 75th anniversaries, and as each synod was busy congratulating the other on their long history of shared orthodoxy,²³ Pieper’s conclusions are remarkably blunt:

Just these circumstances . . . led to the evil which outside the Missouri Synod has been called the “Missouri Spirit.” As a result of the extreme narrowness of the almost exclusively dogmatic-practical education and the exclusively practical training of a large proportion of the pastors and as a result of the consciousness of Lutheran orthodoxy and ecclesiastical proficiency which was implanted in all, it was psychologically inevitable that a bad attitude became entrenched in many in the synod. The boast is made that Missourians are the only ones who are completely orthodox and competent. Everything that does not come from Missouri is *eo ipso* more or less false or worthless. This attitude is taken not only toward the synods which have remained hostile, but also toward those which in the course of time were recognized as sufficiently Lutheran.

Although especially evident among the least talented and most inbred, Pieper charged that this outlook existed “from top to bottom” and had ranged beyond Missouri’s pastors to infect its membership as well.

In hundreds of concrete cases, in raising suspicions about doctrine, in dead silence about the boycotting of non-synodical literature, in competition in the area of foreign mission work, in a smug tone of criticism of non-synodical church institutions and theological accomplishments and in all kinds of scornful talk and remarks, this attitude confronts even the friends of the Missouri Synod again and again to the present day.²⁴

Admittedly, Pieper was writing more than four decades after his classroom experiences with Walther, and his observations exhibit two well-attested personality traits attributed to him by friend and foe alike: a flair for the dramatic and an inclination to exaggeration.²⁵ The reason American Lutheran theological education developed as it did, he acknowledged, “lay in the needs of the time.” Walther came to know Lutheran doctrine through Luther, the Confessions and the Lutheran dogmaticians. The insistent cry of Lutheran immigrants to America necessitated quick training “that could be achieved only through forced dogmatic and practical training.” The demanding workload of Missouri’s pastors during the flood of German immigration into the Midwest afforded little time for “an independent, thorough, and comprehensive study of Scripture.”²⁶

Koehler in his teaching

The desire for a theological journal in the Wisconsin Synod was voiced already during the synod’s “pioneer years” and had been one of the original goals when the Federation of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan was formed in 1892.²⁷ Yet Wisconsin’s *Theologische Quartalschrift* did not appear in print until 1904. The journal “came into life without particular design,” Pieper wrote in 1913, and “was supposed to serve doctrinal understanding among us, stimulate and encourage it, and help to maintain correct doctrinal practice.” In fact, it also became a vehicle “to speak in favor of direct scriptural study and to encourage the study of Scripture among us.”²⁸

Offering what amounts to a position statement of the Wauwatosa Gospel, Pieper concluded his 1913 retrospective:

We intend in the future to pursue scriptural study even more faithfully than before. . . . We submit in advance to the least word of Scripture that opposes us, no matter from whom it may come. But we submit to no man, be his name Luther or Walther, Chemnitz or Hoenecke, Gerhard or Stoeckhardt, so long as we have clear Scripture on our side. . . . We esteem the fathers highly, far higher than ourselves as far more learned and more devout than we are. Therefore, we want to use them, particularly Luther, as guides to Scripture, and to test their doctrines a hundred times before we reject them. But authorities equal to Scripture or opposed to Scripture they may never become for us, or we shall be practicing idolatry. . . .

We renounce this authority-theology anew. It causes so much damage to the church. It is unfaithfulness to the Lord; slavery to men; it brings errors with it. But it also makes the mind narrow and the heart small. . . . Dogmatic training perhaps makes one orthodox, but it also easily makes one orthodoxist, intolerant, quarrelsome, hateful, and easily causes division in the church. . . . Scripture is at once narrow and broad. The study of it makes the heart narrow to actual false doctrine and heresies, but broad toward various human expressions and presentations. It does not accuse of false doctrine unnecessarily; it teaches us to bear and suffer in love the mistakes of the weak. It keeps the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Therefore we want to entirely do away with this dogmatic authority-theology, and to sink ourselves ever deeper into Scripture and to promote it above all else. We know that in doing so we will best serve the church.²⁹

Pieper and Koehler readily acknowledged their debt to Hoenecke.³⁰ Though Hoenecke did not wish to create a following for himself, early Wisconsin pastors “acquired something of Hoenecke’s evangelical and charitable spirit which did not immediately brand as heresy everything that was not expressed by others in the same dogmatical formulas.” By training and inclination, however, Hoenecke remained a dogmatician. Pieper regarded him as “in principle and in practice a more scriptural theologian than Walther” yet felt Hoenecke “restricted himself all too much to a study of individual passages in dogmatics and for preaching.” His method bore telltale fruits in his students, who after graduating “studied [Scripture] all too little, did not live in it sufficiently and seldom penetrated to a deeper and richer grasp of the gospel.”³¹ The work students did under Hoenecke was “much the same situation as in St. Louis during the years before the coming of Stoeckhardt.”³²

Pieper and Koehler also acknowledged their debt to Georg Stoeckhardt, whose interests and tastes ran in many ways counter to those of Walther. “Nothing was further removed from Stoeckhardt than ecclesiastical politics,” Pieper observed. “He had no taste for it,” nor did he “at all trouble himself about the external organization of the church.” Pieper considered Stoeckhardt “not properly a dogmatician, even though he possessed an uncommon knowledge of the entire Lutheran dogmatics.” Instead, Stoeckhardt “lived completely in the Scriptures and drew his theology directly from them,” particularly the New Testament, “of course in the original.” The Scriptures were for Stoeckhardt not chiefly “the storehouse and arsenal for the professional practice of theology, but the book for the building up of his own soul.” Finally, in praise of Stoeckhardt but easily descriptive also of the Wauwatosans’ outlook: “Walther’s influence came down to chiefly making us orthodox and then biblical, while Stoeckhardt’s method was suitable for making us directly scriptural and thus at the same time Lutheran.”³³

Even with such positive influences from Walther, Hoenecke, and Stoeckhardt, Wauwatosa’s two premier theologians were Koehler and Pieper. The inaugural volume of Wauwatosa’s *Quartalschrift* in 1904 contained the three installments of Koehler’s article concerning the analogy of faith.³⁴ At the conclusion of the first of five intersynodical conferences in Watertown, April 29-30, 1903, Franz Pieper had defined “the analogy of faith” as “the doctrine of justification with which every teaching must be in harmony.” Many attending the conference disagreed with that definition, and an ensuing discussion of the term at a second intersynodical conference brought no resolution. “No one had thought of carefully examining Romans 12:6,” Koehler recalled, “where the phrase is used by St. Paul, and presented his findings.” Since the term had served as a “technical principle of interpretation” for more than fifteen hundred years, “all the answers given at the meeting as to ‘the analogy of faith’ were based on the various statements of the dogmaticians.” With that, Koehler produced an independent exegesis of the passage, concluding that St. Paul was “not stating a technical principle of hermeneutics” but saying only that the gift of prophecy was to be exercised in the early church “in accordance with the proportion of faith, that is, the degree of faith with which they have been endowed.”³⁵

Though repeatedly contrasting his understanding of the passage with the view held in the Synodical Conference, Koehler’s initial disagreement was with Franz Pieper. “The exegete simply has no other duty than to say, ‘Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening,’” Koehler insisted, charging the Ohio and Iowa Synods with “reading something into the text.” Koehler added, “They take Scripture as

the material which God has given us in order to build of it an edifice of thought, whose *construction* has been entrusted to us. ”³⁶

Like-minded pastors

Meuser summarized the Wauwatosa Gospel by saying that “in place of the doctrinal self-confidence of much orthodox Lutheranism,” Koehler and like-minded pastors “stressed the need for a cautiously critical stance even over against their own synod’s theological tradition.”³⁷ It is to be questioned, however, to what degree many members of the Wisconsin Synod benefited from Koehler’s observations or appreciated his spirit of self-criticism.

The refinement of the Wisconsin Synod’s admittedly distinctive doctrine of church and ministry is cited by Edward Fredrich as the prime example of how Wauwatosa theologians “simply looked beyond the current viewpoint and the ready dogmatical explanation and the deposit of an ecclesiastical situation of the past to what Scripture actually said about church and ministry.”³⁸ It has also been charged, however, that the church and ministry question actually provides “the most striking example of how the Wauwatosa Gospel directly contributed to the tension” within the Wisconsin Synod itself. Applying Wisconsin’s church and ministry teaching to actual cases was “always sticky and somewhat unresolved,” forcing the Wauwatosa Gospel to come “into conflict with itself.” By throwing “the traditional thinking on church and ministry into disarray,” it allowed legalism to intrude, the very thing the Wauwatosa Gospel fought against.”³⁹

Wisconsin’s church and ministry doctrine can be traced to Pieper’s series of *Quartalschrift* articles in 1911⁴⁰ in which he reviewed the actions of the two synods in the Cincinnati case, beginning in 1899. A Missouri member had been excommunicated by his congregation, apparently for withdrawing his son from the congregation’s parochial school. District officials rejected the congregation’s excommunication, and for a time the congregation and its two pastors were suspended from synodical membership. Wisconsin was drawn into the dispute when congregation and pastors applied for membership in that synod in 1903. Wisconsin refrained from taking sides, and the case lingered for another eight years until one pastor died and the other, together with the church council, was deposed by the congregation.⁴¹

But Cincinnati and similar cases forced Wisconsin not only to consider doctrinal positions connected to church discipline but to ask more basic questions. It had generally been assumed that *church* meant the local gathering of believers and *ministry* referred to the office of pastor in that local gathering. With Koehler doing the exegetical pioneering and Pieper most of the writing, they together with Schaller “set aside traditional thinking and dogmatical formulations” to “take a fresh look at what the Scriptures say about church and ministry.” They concluded that there was not as much written about local congregations or the pastoral office as had been assumed, and what was said “never specified a single form or type of either.”⁴² In 1912, Pieper insisted that through Walther’s method of quoting the Confessions and church fathers, much room was left for misunderstanding both. Pieper further suggested that Walther himself may not always have understood the Confessions or the fathers correctly. Pieper then presented his view that any gathering of believers, whether congregation or synod, constituted church and thus possessed the

authority of the church. The office of preaching in a local congregation represented one form but not the exclusive form of the public ministry.⁴³

Luther's doctrine of church and ministry was summarized by Pieper under six points in 1917:

1. There is one office in the Church, the office of the spiritual priesthood. The public ministry is only another phase of this same priesthood.
2. This office, the command and authority to preach the Gospel, is not an official rank which from the very beginning has been established by Christ of public dispensation, but rather it is the common possession of all Christians, who are reborn and ordained priests by God, yes, even so far as the use of practice is concerned.
3. The rights of the entire communion and the command to good order demand that within the congregation such functions of the ministry cannot be carried out by all at the same time without disorder and also such functions for which all Christians are not equally capable be relinquished and turned over to capable persons so that they may carry them out in the name of the congregation.
4. The Lord gives the Church special gifts for the public administration of the ministry, that is, capable people, and it is only to such that this office should be entrusted.
5. Whoever is called to the public ministry by a congregation of spiritual priests in a Christian way is called by God, and the faithful administrator of the office of the ministry should be granted the honor prescribed by God.
6. Not only one species, the local pastorate, but the public ministry of the Word in general is a divine institution. It takes its specific forms according to circumstances.⁴⁴

Koehler maintained that the New Testament did not know the pastoral office in the form in which it later developed historically. "Walther identified the pastoral office (*Pfarramt*) with the preaching office (*Predigtamt*) and gives greater authority to the local congregation than to other ecclesiastical forms." By contrast, Koehler and colleagues concluded that "the pastorate is simply a species of the general preaching ministry and that it originated as we know it in Germany in the Middle Ages." The congregation was also "a species of the concept of the church." The Holy Spirit works in Christendom so that Christians by faith in freedom under the Gospel "organize these things as suited to the external conditions and the needs of their circumstances. No external forms as such have special divine command."⁴⁵

The Wauwatosa presentation was never easily embraced even within the Wisconsin Synod itself. Some, notably August Ernst, professor at Northwestern College in Watertown, never accepted it. And "the strongest and longest opposition came from the Synodical Conference brethren in the Missouri Synod," chiefly Franz Pieper. Despite determined efforts at reaching agreement, differences remained. Fredrich has called the 1932 *Thiensville Theses* "an outstanding instance" of trying to come to an agreeable statement;⁴⁶ Koehler was less enthusiastic, calling the *Theses* "a

compromise, whether intended or not, that leaves matters unclear and both sides free to put their own construction on them and to pursue the even tenor of their ways.”⁴⁷

How many pastors even within the Wisconsin Synod were “like-minded” with Koehler and the Wauwatosa faculty regarding church and ministry? “The Wauwatosa Gospel was looked upon by many with great suspicion.”⁴⁸ The church and ministry disagreement persisted well beyond the years of Pieper and Koehler, and the differences appear not to have been regarded by either synod as divisive of church fellowship.⁴⁹ “The dividing lines were by no means along strict synodical lines,” but “Missouri practiced what Wisconsin preached and Wisconsin practiced what Missouri preached.”⁵⁰ Leading theologians in both synods perpetuated and promulgated what came to be regarded as “Missouri” and “Wisconsin” positions on church and ministry.

A cautiously critical stance

Koehler wrote “*Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns*” (“Legalistic practices among us,”) in response to a comment at a Synodical Conference convention that “much legalism is present among us.” Some understood “legalism” to mean “that one wants to be saved through works” while others thought it involved “a striving for sanctification.” Because the intended sense of the term, to refer to “*one* aspect of all our conduct in thinking, speaking, and acting,” was little understood, Koehler was assigned an essay on the topic. Significantly, to understand Koehler’s concern that the study of Scripture and history should be employed in self-criticism rather than in triumphal condemnation of others, he wrote:

In order not to introduce unnecessary things, yes, in order not to weaken the intended impression of the above remark as a call to repentance, the theme of this work is conceived more narrowly as “legalism, as it occurs among us.”⁵¹

Koehler organized his essay under four theses, the first of which offered the definition:

Legalism among Christians consists in that they take the motives and forms of their actions from the law instead of letting them flow from the gospel. This comes from the flesh, which blends this inclination into every expression of the Christian’s life and thereby makes it superficial.

Though calling legalism a phenomenon that occurred “among Christians,” and though entitling the essay “Legalism *among us*,” Koehler’s second thesis must have hit hard in light of comments he and Pieper made regarding Missouri’s dogmatic preconceptions.:

This behavior manifests itself in the Lutheran church chiefly and principally in bravado of orthodoxy. Connected to it is a bravado of *sanctification*, which asserts itself particularly by measures of church government. In opposition to this there arises then a bravado over *sanctification*, which in the style of *Pietism* opposes external doctrinal discipline in conduct, but by its claim to a higher piety asserts itself just as vigorously as legalism.⁵²

Koehler asserted that Lutheranism had no monopoly on this conception of law and gospel and their outgrowth in Christian living, but “it is the correct evangelical basic position of all in life who believe in the Lord Jesus.” Even within church bodies that “in theory are legalistically oriented,” one finds that “in their hearts they are truly evangelical Christians.” Surprisingly, in view the importance of doctrinal agreement was in the founding and maintenance of the Synodical Conference, Koehler recognized not only that “there is not a single truly united external religious communion” in any congregation or synod,” but even that “*there has never really been an external unity of the church.*” Yet for all true believers— regardless of denominational label— “the inner unity of the spirit in faith continues.”⁵³

While we may justly affirm that “the Lutheran church has the correct doctrine,” Koehler charged that “legalism thwarts and obstructs the operation of the gospel” among Lutherans as well as among Protestants, but in different ways.

Owing to the Lutheran emphasis on justification and faith, it is natural that among us *doctrinal presentation* receives emphasis for the purpose of preaching the gospel. . . . Under this emphasis, legalism infiltrates among us in the form of *bragging about orthodoxy*. By this term I understand such adhering to orthodoxy where the stress is shifted from *faith to correct faith*. . . . Such adherence to orthodoxy is primarily of an intellectual kind and functions by demanding and with an admixture of consciousness of one’s own being in the right or having everything right.

This bravado of orthodoxy feeds on the *factions spirit* which opposes the *ecumenical spirit*. For that reason it gets caught up in *words* instead of living in the *facts*. The result is *traditionalism* which has lost the spirit of the words, the spirit of the gospel. All of this is of a legalistic nature and opposes the gospel, and shows that in the course of doctrinal controversy the adherence to orthodoxy has deserted the basis of the gospel.⁵⁴

Rather than reproaching an “opponent in doctrinal controversy” for incorrect terminology, one should proceed “from the assumption that the other person probably means the right thing, but either expresses himself incorrectly, or even expresses himself *differently* than I.” Thus the ensuing disagreement may lie in my misunderstanding rather than in the other’s terminology. Too often, “insulting, scornful words” are added, making the misunderstanding more grievous.⁵⁵

Regarding Walther’s proposition that “the Evangelical Lutheran Church was the true visible church on earth,”⁵⁶ Koehler continued:

The distorted term, *the true visible church*, which to be sure can be correctly understood, has much to do with this unecumenical attitude. The ecumenical spirit follows directly from the gospel. If it is true that there is a holy Christian church, the communion of saints, and that the unity of the spirit, that is, the same mind in faith in the Lord Jesus, exists among them, then it cannot be otherwise than that the faith of the one feels drawn to the faith of the other. This ecumenical spirit accordingly does not consist in our having a *doctrine* of the invisible church. This is a great gift of God. But we make it into something external, if pondering stops there.”

True ecumenicity recognizes and fosters the “sensibility of the one true invisible church,” composed of all who believe in Jesus, “as opposed to the partisanship of the various concrete church bodies in the world who claim for themselves that they are the true visible church.” In practice, the ecumenical spirit

consists in this, that I find *joy* in the fact that someone else believes in the Lord Jesus, no matter in which fellowship I meet him, and that I can do nothing else than acknowledge him and also in that way my Savior and, as there is opportunity, foster this partnership in salvation *in the truth*. When I met anywhere someone who believes in the Lord Jesus, then what interests me above all else is that he so believes, and that through faith he is a child of God and a member of the body of Jesus. I will express as much in emphasizing the things that unite us in faith and not, by finding fault and criticizing, mainly emphasize the things that separate us.

By contrast, intellectualism and the absence of the ecumenical spirit is evident in “an air of superiority” that judges and condemns others. Walther himself inherently understood that, Koehler contended, recalling Walther’s kind words about evangelist Dwight Moody. “Walther in his lectures couldn’t forebear paying tribute to the man in the friendliest terms, nor did he immediately dilute his praise with reservations regarding Moody’s errors.”⁵⁷

The blame for such intellectualism and the lack of ecumenicity was not to be placed on the Lutheran confessional writings. Presenting Christian doctrine in opposition to error was “a historical necessity,” and “the way these writings appear gives evidence of the right mind,” that they are proclamations of the gospel. With the passage of time, however, legalism infected the use of the confessional writings as well, in the form of “*partisanship*, which stresses one external group of confessors as opposed to others.” Doctrinal controversy becomes an exercise of each side proving it is right and the other wrong, while “the emphasis on *what unites us in faith* recedes to the *background*.” At its worst “the bravado of orthodoxy” causes doctrinal discussion to “degenerate into an external partisan squabbling, which neglects the interests of faith, of the ecumenical church, but nurtures the interests of the external body.” Under such circumstances Scripture itself is removed from its place as *norma normans* and the confessions or even the church fathers become the real norm for judging all doctrine. Scripture is then reduced to “a collection of disconnected proof passages” cited as if from “a codex of laws.” That occurs especially when the dogmatist “has not gained the interpretation of the citation from Scripture” through his own exegetical work and experience “but has copied it from one book to another from generations back.”⁵⁸

The spirit of Koehler’s approach

Not all of Meuser’s paragraph about the Wauwatosa theology was quoted before. Here are the sentences that were omitted.

Unique in Synodical Conference history prior to World War II was the controversy of the 1920s centering around the Wisconsin Synod’s seminary at Wauwatosa, Wisconsin. . . . [These “Wauwatosans”] were suspended on charges of false doctrine and/or

insubordination. The Protes'tant Conference, organized in 1927 by the suspended group, has tried to preserve the spirit of Koehler's approach without actually becoming a new church body.⁵⁹

That the Protes'tant Controversy "centered" around the Wauwatosa seminary is at best half accurate. The series of unrelated yet similar events that precipitated the controversy occurred neither in that city nor at its seminary, but farther west, at the synod's college and in rural and small town parishes in western and north central parts of the state. The controversy touched the seminary when a beleaguered district president requested a ruling from Wauwatosa's faculty, a practice that frequently occurred in the Missouri Synod but was all but unheard of in Wisconsin⁶⁰— a practice, indeed, which in many ways contradicted the Wauwatosa Gospel itself. Faculty response to a conference essay by Rice Lake Pastor William Beitz was split. Growing personal antagonism between Koehler and Pieper created the occasion, if not the cause, for bitter disagreement. Though he initiated private interviews with Beitz and sought the most charitable interpretation of Beitz's essay, Koehler remained "unenthusiastic" about its contents. When informed that Beitz would neither withdraw nor modify his essay, Koehler found it impossible to defend Beitz and held him half responsible for the strife it engendered.⁶¹ In later years he was at best a reluctant Protes'tant, finding almost as much to criticize in that protesting conference as in the synod from which he was ousted.⁶²

The entire Protes'tant Controversy deserves and has received more careful review than this short article dares to advance.⁶³ A vigorous and perhaps highly partisan debate continues whether the Wisconsin Synod repudiated or continues to embrace the Wauwatosa Gospel.⁶⁴ Asked whether the Wauwatosa Gospel is "still alive and well at Mequon today," Wisconsin's Martin Westerhaus replied that most WELS pastors "would without much hesitation or reflection answer in the affirmative."⁶⁵ Expanding, he added, "Today I would venture to guess that all members of our faculty and student body and all our synod pastors would agree that exegesis should be most important among the theological disciplines."⁶⁶ Former seminary Professor Wayne Mueller asserts that the devotion to Scripture displayed by Koehler, Pieper, and Schaller "continues to define Wisconsin's approach to change," and that the Wauwatosans "refreshed the church with a direct appeal to the Bible."⁶⁷ Numerous graduates of the Mequon seminary have concurred.⁶⁸ Wisconsin reviewers have particularly bristled at Leigh Jordahl's contention that the Wisconsin Synod "repudiated" Koehler. "We believe that those characteristics into which the Synod grew by God's grace are still very much part of [the Wauwatosa] genius. For the use which the Lord made of Koehler's remarkable gifts in developing this genius we are thank ful."⁶⁹

But in a more recent review, thoroughly researched and thoughtfully rendered, Peter Prange concludes that the Wauwatosa Gospel cannot be confined to an emphasis on exegesis and direct study of Scripture. Closely connected is that it "invites an *originality of thought*," calling on those who wish to practice it "to throw off the shackles of preconceived notions and to do original work regardless of whether one is working with Scripture or not." Such effort contrasts sharply with leaning "often mindlessly" on the work of previous generations.⁷⁰

The results of direct and original study of Scripture are to be employed, not primarily to buttress one's one viewpoint or to condemn others, but to be exercised in *self-criticism*. "The Wauwatosa

Gospel at its best was always interested in applying the fruits of the historical-exegetical method also to the contemporary task of self-analysis, criticism, and reorientation.”⁷¹ Nowhere is that more evident than in “*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*.”

Another feature of the Wauwatosa Gospel— surprising, in view of the reputation with which the Wisconsin Synod has often been saddled— is its *ecumenicity*. Less significant than maintaining an orthodox doctrine of the invisible church is “fostering the sensibility of the one true invisible church.”⁷² Remarking on Koehler’s insights in his *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, Jaroslav Pelikan wrote, “The corruptions that have infected the Church, past and present, [Koehler] saw as the narrowing of the Gospel, and he pointed them out wherever they occurred.” Koehler “knew well and demonstrated well that in its history the Church has to be ecumenical, never sacrificing confessional loyalty and yet never permitting it to become a legalistic denominationalism.”⁷³

Finally, a characteristic of the Wauwatosa Gospel that must stand out is its demand for *evangelical application of law and gospel*. “Koehler so insisted that the evangelical pastor be ‘fair’ when it comes to applying law and gospel (not wanting to fall into legalism) that some might confuse his logic with antinomianism, relativism, or other doctrinal circumvention.”⁷⁴ This trait surely played a significant role in Koehler’s own effort to defend Beitz and his subsequent removal from the synod’s ministry. Fairness, he said, demands “that we seek to understand our opponent, not as his words *can* or even *must* be understood, but as he wants them to be understood.”⁷⁵

At the apex stands the proposition of the forgiveness of sins. . . . Faith in the forgiveness of sins is the main point. . . . This faith is produced by the Holy Spirit through the Word about the forgiveness of sins. Faith is created by wooing, not by logical stringency. . . . Now, from this common vantage point of faith one may proceed to all areas of Scripture, and every point would be illuminated and made acceptable by the light of this evangelical truth and reality in the whole context of the gospel. The gospel, because it is the gospel, is a reliable word and therefore worthy of all acceptance, a word one loves instinctively and which therefore offers him confidence.⁷⁶

Jordahl, for one, has called the very idea of a clearly definable movement as *the Wauwatosa Gospel*— with distinct theological program, particular school of thought, at a specific point in time— “something of a myth. . . .

It would appear that the most that can be said without overstating the case is that during a certain period of time (1900–1925) while the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary was located in Wauwatosa, there existed a situation that allowed John Philipp Koehler the freedom to set forth and develop an approach to theology and church life that was quite different from what otherwise dominated the Midwestern Lutheran environment. During that time Koehler happily found himself in association with colleagues who could appreciate and help to express at least something of what he had in mind. During that same period, too, and for whatever reasons, the Wisconsin Synod at least managed to tolerate Koehler within its midst.⁷⁷

Gerhard Ruediger, professor briefly at the end of the Wauwatosia era, commented gloomily that those who practiced the Wauwatosia Gospel could expect to be ostracized. “It is not to the liking of the ‘busy pastor.’ He hasn’t time for it, can’t sit still that long; must flit hither and thither.”⁷⁸

Yet at its best, the Wauwatosia Gospel was

an attempt to emphasize self-analysis and self-criticism, to scrutinize and evaluate the content of a thing under its form, to view things historically and organically, to protest against that combination of improvisation and copywork that Koehler believed characterized the form of Lutheranism that triumphed here in America, to provide resources to transcend methodology that had involved American Lutheranism in one controversy after another, and to open up a way for unity by providing a different way of doing theology, a way which although less simple than what prevailed at the time, was also more profound and might have been more productive of elasticity and theological vitality.⁷⁹

Such a definition may contain more than either its proponents or its detractors would wish to claim. A more modest but also more useful claim might be that the Wauwatosia Gospel really is and espouses “*the evangelical application of historical-grammatical methodology not only to Scripture but to all situations, especially as they relate to the tender care of the soul.*” To promote an ecumenical spirit and to avoid legalism, one must exercise the self-criticism that arises from a life of daily repentance and faith. To apply law and gospel rightly among God’s people, one must discard preconceived notions to get at the “why” that lies behind what has been said or done.⁸⁰

1. Fred W. Meuser, “Business as Usual— Almost, 1900–1917,” in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 380–81.

2. Curtis A. Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosia Theology*, 3 vols. (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1997).

3. The most thorough and thought-provoking treatment of the Wauwatosia Gospel, as well as the Protestant Controversy, and the effect of both on the Wisconsin Synod, is by Peter M. Prange, “Pastor E. Arnold Sitz and the Protestants: Witnessing to the Wauwatosia Gospel,” unpublished paper, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Essay File, 1998.

4. Leigh Jordahl, reviewing Carl S. Meyer’s anthology *Moving Frontiers*, suggested that “a sharp motif of triumphalism” pervaded Missouri Synod history. *Una Sancta* 22 (Pentecost 1965): 56. Jack Treon Robinson, “The Spirit of Triumphalism in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod” (Ph. D. diss., Vanderbilt University, Nashville, 1972), 18, defined triumphalism as “that deep and motivating force, unarticulated,” coloring the life of the Missouri Synod, that “looked for the final conquest of all [its] opponents and “required perfect harmony among those who would conquer.”

5. At C. F. W. Walther’s funeral in 1887, Georg Stoeckhardt insisted that Missouri was “in possession of the truth— the entire, undiminished truth,” W. H. T. Dau, trans., “Dr. George Stoeckhardt,” *Theological Quarterly* 17 (April 1913): 68. A decade later, at Missouri’s golden anniversary, Friedrich Bente wrote that Missouri occupied “the very same doctrinal position as the Christians of the first century” — maybe better: what “the

congregation in Rome or Corinth knew in the year of our Lord 97, or should have known, just that and not one whit more Trinity Church in St. Louis knows.” *Proceedings, Western District, 1897*, 31–32; quoted by Quentin F. Wesselschmidt, “Repristination Theology and the Doctrinal Position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod,” in John W. Klotz, ed., *Light for Our World: Essays Commemorating the 150th Anniversary of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 94.

6. The sense of *esprit de corps* in the Missouri Synod was “unsurpassed by any American denomination at any time in its history.” Thomas A. Kuster, “The Fellowship Dispute in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: A Rhetorical Study of Ecumenical Change” (Ph. D. diss., University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1969), 80. Pieper characterized Missouri’s spirit as “remarkably intense,” a “strongly pronounced synodical patriotism, a strong tendency to stick together, not only against all enemies, but also over against friendly synods.” Though “essentially a Christian, spiritual thing,” Pieper also detected “quote a human element in all of this.” August Pieper, “Anniversary Reflections: Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther, 1811–1887,” trans. R. E. Wehrwein; in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 2:245.

7. H[ans] K. M[oussa], “Seventy-Five Years of the Wisconsin Synod in Brief Review,” *The Northwestern Lutheran* 12 (November 1, 1925): 350.

8. Muehlhaeuser once dismissed the Lutheran Confessions as “paper fences.” In the synod’s initial constitution Muehlhaeuser apparently crossed out the phrase “based on the Scriptures, Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran symbols” and replaced them with “*reines Bibel christentum*” (true Bible Christianity) or “*reines Bibelwort*” (true Bible word). Because he “was not strictly or Old Lutheran,” Muehlhaeuser considered himself free “to offer every child of God and servant of Christ the hand of fellowship over the ecclesiastical fence.” John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod* (St. Cloud, Minn.: Faith–Life, 1970), 41–45.

9. “Hoenecke produced few great orators, but he did turn out a relatively large number of independent thinkers, preachers who were faithful to the Scriptures, and wise and faithful pastors. What he himself did not possess, he could not, of course, impart to his students. He was always concerned about an inner effect, and so he produced neither frenzied workers nor workmen overly concerned about outward forms. The strong synodical push which Walther instilled in most of his students was lacking in Hoenecke’s students, if they did not acquire it elsewhere. He had as little interest in [page 196] outwardly imposing projects, new buildings and missions as in new ecclesiastical formations. Pieper, “Anniversary Reflections,” 3:281–82.

10. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 251–52.

11. Leigh D. Jordahl, introduction to *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, vi, x–xi.

12. Joh. P. Koehler, “The Importance of the Historical Disciplines for the American Lutheran Church of the Present,” trans. Irwin J. Habeck; in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology* 3:434–35.

13. John Philipp Koehler, Reminiscences, under the title, “Beginnings of the opposition in the Wisconsin Synod underlying the Controversies in the Years from 1924 to 1930,” recorded 1930 (unpublished manuscript, Koehler file, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis), 7.

14. Edward C. Fredrich, “Reminiscences from Professor August Pieper,” *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 1 (Fall 1983): 54.

15. Jordahl, introduction to *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, xi.

16. Wilbert R. Gawrisch, "The WELS' Walther Legacy," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 84 (Winter 1987): 3.

17. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 3:240.

18. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 3:240.

19. Pieper once remarked, probably with a bit of tongue-in-cheek: "*Wir konnten die Missourier nicht mit der Bibel überzeugen; da wir ihnen aber Walther vorlasen, da glauben sie uns.*" ["We could not persuade Missourians with the Bible, but when we quoted Walther to them, then they believed us."] August Pieper, *Tischreden* (Erste Auflage, ungesaeubert, 1937), 1; cited by Mark Jeske, "A Half Century of *Faith-Life*: An analysis of the circumstances surrounding the formation of the Protes'tant Conference" (senior church history paper, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, April 22, 1978), 16.

20. While the context and, to a lesser extent, the tone of Pieper's comments differed from those Theodore Graebner made about Missouri in the 1940s, the similarity between Pieper and Graebner statements is unmistakable: "No discussion of any doctrinal subject [in the Missouri Synod] has taken place within the last thirty years which has not operated with quotations from Luther, Walther, [Franz] Pieper and the first thirty volumes of *Lehre und Wehre* and our body of synodical essays. I challenge anyone to look into the literature of any church but our own to find anything parallel to this situation. . . . We are hardly aware of the fact that in all the wide world no one proceeds in such a manner to make good a claim of soundness or correctness." Theodore Graebner, "The Burden of Infallibility: a Study in the History of Dogma," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 38 (July 1965): 88.

21. Indeed, in Jordahl's view, the student who most outdid Walther was August's brother Franz Pieper. It is in his *Christian Dogmatics* that this "fatal flaw" in Missouri theology most clearly shows. Jordahl wrote: "The lack of historical consciousness, the atomistic and wooden Biblicism, the dependence on the fathers, the pervasive simplitism, and the naive unawareness of presuppositions, as well as the air of infallibility that tended to accompany orthodoxy of this sort all are apparent in Pieper." Leigh Donald Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology, John Philipp Koehler, and the theological tradition of mid-western American Lutheranism, 1900–1930," (Ph. D. diss., University of Iowa, 1964), 165.

22. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 3:266.

23. Wisconsin's John Jenny wrote in 1922 that "seldom has the Christian Church witnessed such wonderful growth and great spiritual blessings within such a space of time" as had the Missouri Synod. "For a Synod to have remained true to the teachings of Holy Writ both in faith and practice in defiance of the encroachments on the part of the world and the whole of modern liberalism during all these perilous years— is due only to the grace of God. And this our sister synod has experienced to a wonderful extent." J[ohn] J[enny], "Diamond Anniversary of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," *The Northwestern Lutheran* 9 (May 28, 1922): 174.

24. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 3:267.

25. Martin Westerhaus, "The Wauwatosa Theology," 29. Joh. P. Meyer, "The Historical Background which lead to the Formation of the Protes'tant Conference," (essay written for the Florida Pastoral Conference, South Atlantic District, 1976), 8, wrote that Pieper was purported to have told his seminary classes: "*Meine Mutter hat es gewollt. Glauben sie nur nicht dasz ich aus lauter Froemmigkeit bin Pastor worden. Ich wollte nach Hollywood.*" ["My mother had wanted it. Don't think I became a pastor out of piety. I wanted to go to Hollywood."]

26. Aug. Pieper, "Vorwort zum zehnten Jahrgang," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 10 (January 1913): 1–10; trans. Philemon Hensel; in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 1:111.
27. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 211. *Wisconsin Proceedings, 1892*, 69–70; cited by Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992). 96.
28. Pieper, "Vorwort," 1:109; emphasis in the original.
29. Pieper, "Vorwort," 1:117–18.
30. Jordahl praised Hoenecke for demonstrating in early *Quartalschrift* articles that he was "an exact worker with a desire to be loyal, not to a particular tradition, but to Scripture itself, and in this desire to try to avoid any premature conclusions before all the detail work has been done." Jordahl cited Hoenecke studies "Zum Wesen und Begriff der Theologie," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 1 (January 1904): 3–17; (April 1904): 49–66; "Inkonsequenzen," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 2 (April 1905): 65–88. Jordahl also commended Hoenecke for possessing "a certain flexibility that has not always characterized the orthodoxist, with the result that he was able to tolerate and even defend positions contrary to his own." Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology," 63, 65.
31. Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," 3:281, 283.
32. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 207.
33. [August Pieper], "Zur Bedeutung Stoeckhardts in der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 11 (July 1914): 179–86; trans. James Langebartel, in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 3:419–23.
34. [J. P.] K[oehler], "Die Analogie des Glaubens," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 1 (January 1904): 18–36; (April 1904): 83–90; (July 1904): 131–67; trans. E. E. Sauer, in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 1:221–68.
35. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 212; see also 241–44. The *New International Version* translates the verse: "If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith."
36. Koehler, "Die Analogie des Glaubens," 242–43.
37. Meuser, "Business as Usual," 380–81.
38. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 110–17.
39. Prange, "E. Arnold Sitz and the Protes'tants," 19–20.
40. August Pieper, "Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 8 (January 1911): 30–44; (April 1911): 98–123.
41. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 107–08.
42. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 109–10.

43. August Pieper, "Zur Verstaendigung in der gegenwaertigen Diskussion ueber Kirch und Amt," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 9 (July 1912): 182–208. John Wohlrabe, *Ministry in Missouri Until 1962. An Historical Analysis of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the Lutheran Church– Missouri Synod*, (Th .D. diss., 1987, privately published by the author), 21–22, though disagreeing with Pieper and Wauwatosa's understanding of church and ministry, nonetheless gives a helpful evaluation.
44. August Pieper, "Luthers Lehre von Kirche und Amt," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 14 (July 1917): 211–41; 15 (January 1918): 65–80; (April 1918): 101–26; trans. Harold R. Johne, "Luther's Doctrine of the Church and Ministry," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 60 (January 1963): 13–47; (April 1963): 81–110; (October 1963): 247–65.
45. John Philipp Koehler, *Lehrbuch der Kirchengeschichte* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1917), 247; trans. Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology," 246–47.
46. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*, 110.
47. Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 239.
48. Peter M. Prange, "The Wauwatosa Gospel and the Synodical Conference: A Generation of Pelting Rain," (unpublished paper, 2002), 1.
49. Wisconsin Professor Edmund Reim granted in 1947 that there were "marked differences of opinion" expressed by the two synods regarding church and ministry but maintained they were "due solely to a failure [of Missouri] to understand the position of Wisconsin." Reim believed there was "no difference in the doctrine" of church and ministry, but disagreement only on application. E[dmund] Reim. "The Debate on Union: Doctrinal Differences in the Synodical Conference?" *The Northwestern Lutheran* 34 (August 3, 1947): 245.
50. Edward C. Fredrich, "Wisconsin's Theological-Confessional History— Viewed Especially in the Light of its Fellowship Principles and Practices," *Lutheran Historical Conference Essays VI* (1977): 98.
51. [J. P.] K[oehler], "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns," *Theologische Quartalschrift* 11 (October 1914): 231–41; 12 (January 1915): 24–42; (April 1915): 97–108; (July 1915): 147–69; trans. Philemon Hensel, rev. Hensel and James Langebartels, in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 2:229–82.
52. Koehler, "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns," 229–30; emphases in the original.
53. Koehler, "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns," 238; emphases in the original.
54. Koehler, "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns," 238–39; emphases in the original.
55. Koehler, "Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns," 243–44; emphases in the original.
56. *Was ist ein Lutheran? oder warum nennst du dich "lutherisch?"* (published by the Deutsche-amerikanischen evangelisch-lutherischen Tractat Verein, St. Louis, n. d.), 11; cited by F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise Among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846–1963* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964.), 65.

57. Koehler, “*Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns*,” 247–48; emphases in the original.
58. Koehler, “*Gesetzlich Wesen unter uns*,” 249–50; emphases in the original.
59. Meuser, “Business as Usual,” 380–81.
60. According to James Albers, these faculty opinions, *Gutachten*, “were usually solicited by pastors of the faculty and occasionally congregations and laymen. These were requested when there was uncertainty concerning the proper Lutheran attitude toward specific problems. Similar matters were often contemplated by conferences of pastors, but even these conferences often referred matters to the faculty for its opinion.” There were, at the time Albers write in the 1960s, several boxes of such faculty opinion in the synod’s archives at Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis. James W. Albers, “The History of Attitudes Within the Missouri Synod Toward Life Insurance” (Th. D. diss., Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1972), 95.
61. Jordahl, introduction to *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, xxviii.
62. See Philemon Hensel, “Letter of October 4, 1951, to Jaroslav Pelikan,” reprinted *Faith-Life* 26 (November 1953): 9. Marcus Albrecht, “Conference Report,” *Faith-Life* 32 (November 1959): 14–15.
63. See Jeske, “A Half Century of *Faith-Life*.” Prange, “E. Arnold Sitz and the Protes’tants.” Edward C. Fredrich, “The Parting of Professor J. P. Koehler and the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary,” *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 1 (Fall 1983): 36–47. Edward C. Fredrich, “The Protes’tant Controversy,” *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 2 (Fall 1984): 19–32. Elmer C. Kiessling, *History of the Western Wisconsin District* (Watertown, Wis.: Northwestern College, 1970).
64. See, for example, Victor H. Prange, “Review of J. P. Koehler’s *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*,” *WELS Historical Institute Journal* 1 (Spring 1983): esp. 39–40.
65. Martin Westerhaus, “The Wauwatosa Theology: The Men and Their Message,” in Jahn, ed., *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 1:82.
66. Westerhaus, “The Wauwatosa Theology,” 1:93.
67. Wayne Mueller, “Dedicatory Preface,” in Jahn, *The Wauwatosa Theology*, 1:9–10.
68. “Unless I have drastically misunderstood, the ‘Wauwatosa Theology’ is alive and well in Mequon. It is what I learned or was unintentionally taught. . . . At Mequon we are being taught in Scripture study and dogmatics to apply all of Scripture, to read passages in context, to understand the words in the sense that the holy writer intended them to be understood, rather than to use the passages in a disconnected way as proof texts. This is a very brief summary of what I understand the ‘Wauwatosa Theology’ to have been, which now continues to be taught in Mequon with no particular label.” Lloyd H. Lemke, “J. P. Koehler’s ‘*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*,’” *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 49 (Winter 1976): 175. “This writer, as far as he can determine, received a steady diet of studies determined and governed by Scripture alone in his three years at Mequon.” Jeske, “A Half Century of *Faith-Life*,” 14–15. “The Wauwatosa Theology hasn’t lived on among us as fully as it might have, but there is no doubt that it is still here. The historical-grammatical method is taught explicitly.” Robert Johannes, “J. P. Koehler: His Hermeneutic and the Wauwatosa Theology,” (senior church history paper, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, April 30, 1980), 14.

69. Irwin J. Habeck, , "J. P. Koehler's *History of the Wisconsin Synod*," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly* 68 (October 1971): 226–27.
70. Prange, "E. Arnold Sitz and the Protes'tants," 5–6.
71. Jordahl, introduction to *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, xxiii.
72. Koehler, "*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*," 247.
73. Jaroslav Pelikan, "John Philipp Koehler," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 23 (January 1952): 50–51.
74. Prange, "E. Arnold Sitz and the Protes'tants," 7.
75. Koehler, "The Analogy of Faith," 1:263.
76. Koehler, "*Gesetzlich Wesen Unter Uns*," 2:244–45.
77. Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology," 268–70.
78. Gerhard Ruediger, "*Die Vorgeschichte geht uns nicht an*," *Faith-Life* 24 (December 1951): 12–13.
79. Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology," 323–24.
80. Prange, "E. Arnold Sitz and the Protes'tants," 9.