

# The Pieper Lectures Volume 10

## Call and Ordination in the Lutheran Church

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*John A. Maxfield*  
*Editor*

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## Call and Ordination in the Thought and Practice of C. F. W. Walther and in the Early Missouri Synod

Cameron A. MacKenzie

At one time in our synod's history, to be a Missouri Synod Lutheran meant holding a particular position on church and ministry. It was not a question of personal opinion—not even C. F. W. Walther's personal opinion—but of clear teaching in the Scriptures and Lutheran Confessions. The synod maintained that its position was the position of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as exhibited in her confessions and in the writings of her theologians, preeminently Martin Luther.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, it was also a position that synod insisted on in her dealings with other church bodies. For example, when synod adopted the Brief Statement of 1932 as a platform for fellowship discussions with other American Lutheran church bodies, it included sections on church and ministry.<sup>2</sup> But this was nothing new. The synodical position professed in the 1930s was deeply rooted in synod's history, indeed, we might even say in synod's pre-history; and right from the beginning, its position regarding church and ministry had distinguished the Missouri Synod from other forms of Lutheranism in the United States.<sup>3</sup>

But this is no longer the case as evidenced by what happened as recently as the 2001 synodical convention, when a motion to reaffirm Walther's *Church and Ministry* as the position of the Missouri Synod was opposed by 27% of the vote. True, a sizable majority approved (791 to 291), but it was not unanimous; and subsequently David Scaer, among others, castigated the convention for taking the action that it did. Clearly, what had been a consensus position among Missouri Synod Lutherans for at least a century was no longer so.<sup>4</sup>

But where had the consensus broken down? What points were now at issue that previously had been agreed to? Clearly, the theme of this year's Pieper Lectures points to one important facet of the breakdown: "call and ordination." The official position of the synod is that God appoints pastors by means of the congregation's call and that ordination is a rite by which the church publicly confirms the call. Thesis Six regarding the ministry in Walther's *Church and Ministry* puts it this way:

- A. The ministry of the Word [*Predigtamt*] is conferred by God through the congregation as the possessor of all ecclesiastical power or the power of the keys, by means of its call, which God Himself has prescribed.
- B. The ordination of the called [persons] with the laying on of hands is not a divine institution but merely an ecclesiastical rite [*Ordnung*] established by the apostles; it is no more than a solemn public confirmation of the call.<sup>5</sup>

Similarly, the Brief Statement of 1932 defined the public ministry as “the office by which the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered *by order and in the name* of a Christian congregation.” Regarding ordination, the Brief Statement said merely, “It is not a divine but a commendable ecclesiastical ordinance.”<sup>6</sup>

Nonetheless, in spite of such clarity in synod’s official documents, by the 1970s new opinions regarding call and ordination were appearing, particularly in response to what was then a new phenomenon in American Lutheranism, viz., the ordination of women.<sup>7</sup> And then in the 1980s, when the synod began authorizing men to serve in ministries of Word and sacrament without ordination (and maybe without a call as well), reassessments of the synodical position multiplied and intensified.<sup>8</sup>

In a certain sense, what is going on today is what happened in synod’s formative years. Theological reflection on church and ministry, call, and ordination followed episodes of controversial practice that forced participants and observers back into the Bible and the Confessions for responses to a new situation. Without the controversies there would have been no investigation and no statements. If then we are going to understand why the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod took the stand that it once did on call and ordination, we need to examine the historical context that gave rise to its position. In other words, we need to know the questions before we can understand the answers that synod gave.

In this paper, therefore, I intend to explore the historical context out of which came the Missouri Synod’s teaching regarding congregational rights, the nature of the call, and the significance of ordination. I hasten to add, of course, that the validity of synod’s position depends on its congruity with the Scriptures and the Confessions. History may offer explanations for positions taken, but God’s Word alone stands in judgment over what is taught and practiced.

As is well known, there were at least two separate streams of Lutheranism in America that came together to form the Lutheran

Church—Missouri Synod: the Saxon immigrants originally located in Missouri and another group active primarily in the upper Midwest (Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana), many of them originally sponsored by Wilhelm Loehe.<sup>9</sup> But it was the first of these groups, the Saxons, who were most concerned about issues of church and ministry. At the very first meeting of these two groups (St. Louis, May 1846), one of the Loehe participants, Friedrich Lochner, reported that in their discussions the Saxons raised concerns about the “instructions” with which Loehe had sent them off to America and admitted that he and the other Loehe men “were very unclear in points of doctrine, especially regarding the Church and the ministry.” Unfortunately, Lochner gives no details regarding the problems.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly, at the July 1846 meeting held in Fort Wayne to agree upon a constitution, church and ministry again came to the fore. This time the sources do provide some indication of what were the points at issue. Writing to Wilhelm Loehe, Wilhelm Hattstaedt, one of Loehe’s *Sendlinge*, reported that the proposed constitution did not reflect Loehe’s thinking. Instead, wrote Hattstaedt,

The congregations were given all rights in settling their own affairs. They may call their preachers, and they may dismiss them, namely, when the preacher proves to be a wolf and preaches false doctrine and leads an ungodly life. If they dismiss their pastors for other reasons, they cannot be members of synod. They must be regarded as non-Christian and unorthodox.<sup>11</sup>

Hattstaedt’s comments undoubtedly reflect the discussions of the Ft. Wayne meeting,<sup>12</sup> but the text of the constitution that was adopted does not explicitly affirm the congregation’s right to choose its pastor. The constitution does, however, provide for lay representation at synodical meetings,<sup>13</sup> about which Loehe expressed some serious concerns in a letter to Wilhelm Sihler, host pastor of the Ft. Wayne meeting. Loehe believed that the provision for lay delegates (one per member congregation) was the result of an American democratic spirit making inroads into the Lutheran Church. Pastors were the divinely appointed representatives of the congregations, but under the proposed arrangements, pastors could be outvoted by the lay representatives since there were more congregations than pastors in the American church. Furthermore, reports from America had convinced Loehe that too many congregations were being wrecked by that same democratic spirit. Instead of giving lay delegates the right to speak and vote against their pastors, the Lutherans in America, Loehe believed, would have been better off establishing a presbyterian-type church body that might have

discouraged congregational debates among “a stubborn people, addicted to a perverted liberty.”<sup>14</sup>

In spite of such reservations, however, Loehe urged his men in America to join the new synod and wrote that if he were there, he too would have joined. Clearly, there were many things in the new constitution that pleased Loehe—confessional subscription, biblical authority, and exclusive use of the German language among them. Moreover, Loehe recognized that a synodical constitution was a matter of Christian liberty (though not license), and he valued confessional unity more than his own ideas on church government. Besides, he was confident that experience would lead to an improved constitution.<sup>15</sup>

What Loehe did not realize, however, was the depth of conviction that the Saxons especially already possessed regarding congregational privileges and how antagonistic they had become to anything that smacked of clericalism. So, for example, by the time of synod’s founding, they were heavily engaged in a battle with J. A. A. Grabau and his newly established Buffalo Synod over the relationship between congregations and pastors. In a letter to Sihler from the previous year, Walther had included among Grabau’s errors his “restrict[ing] contrary to God’s Word the right of congregations to call pastors and decide matters” and his “elevat[ing] the ministry in several respects to a higher position than the Word of God, our Confessions and Luther’s writings do.”<sup>16</sup>

But the controversy with Grabau was itself a consequence of the Saxons’ even earlier experiences with Martin Stephan and of the time of uncertainty after Stephan’s fall from power. Prior to Stephan’s exile from the Saxon congregations in Missouri, Walther and his fellow clergy had embraced an extreme form of clericalism. Already in Germany, when they organized an emigration society, they had included among their traveling regulations the following provision: “The chief management of all affairs of the entire *Gesellschaft* shall be exercised by its primate, who accordingly will combine in his person the supreme authority in spiritual and civil matters”; and then, upon arriving in the New World, they had invested Stephan with the office of bishop and had pledged their obedience to him.<sup>17</sup> Clearly, no thought was being given to congregational rights.

But with the unmasking of Stephan as a sexual predator, the certainty with which the Saxons had accepted episcopacy began to dissipate. For almost two years, the clergy and lay leaders of the former Stephanite migration wrestled with issues of ecclesiastical authority and governance until C. F. W. Walther charted a new path at the Altenburg

Debate in the spring of 1841. What one needs to realize about the intervening period, however, is how intensely emotional it was for many of the participants. Their adoption of new views regarding church and ministry was not the result of an uninvolved and objective quest for the truth but was fueled by terrible feelings of guilt and remorse. And chief among the penitents was Walther himself.

In a remarkable letter, written almost a year after Stephan's exile, Walther pours out his heart to his older brother, O. H. Walther, also one of the immigrant pastors. Confessions of guilt permeate the correspondence, but one of the bright spots is a description of the younger man's relationship to his Perry County congregation. Although Walther begins his letter with an affirmation of faith, seeking his "rest and reconciliation" in Jesus Christ alone, he quickly proceeds to an extended description of his spiritual miseries, rooted in his involvement with Stephan. Walther accuses himself of many sins in connection with the emigration, e.g., encouraging cases of adultery (probably referring not only to Stephan's philandering but also to the marriages that were broken up) and of children forsaking their aged and sick parents, sectarianism, condemnation of honest people who refused to go along, and the "disgraceful idolizing of Stephan." Walther even calls himself a "murderer of those buried at sea" (a reference to those lost when the *Amalia* disappeared without a trace).<sup>18</sup>

So acutely does Walther feel his sin that he wonders whether he can continue in the ministry. By this time, he was serving as pastor to one of the congregations in Perry County, but he expresses severe doubts about whether he should continue. In fact, he tells his brother, he has discussed this with his congregation and explained the extent of his sin, as a result of which, he informed them, they would be right in deposing him. If they did not do so, he was very concerned that they might harbor doubts about his ministry which could become a stumbling block to their faith. So, Walther reports, "I told them I was quite certain that I would have to regard it as praiseworthy if they chose another pastor who has not soiled himself with the Stephanite cause."

At the conclusion of his conversation with the congregation, they asked for time to think it over. The next Sunday, they met again; and, at this point in his letter, Walther offers a beautiful example of a congregation's ministering to its pastor, "They assured me to a man that they forgave me everything from the bottom of their hearts and with joy of conscience, and they said unanimously that they wanted to retain me as their pastor as long as I would preach God's Word to them pure and unalloyed." "Thereupon," adds Walther, "I accepted the con-

firmation of my call as from God's hand and in his name."<sup>19</sup> This happened several months before the Altenburg Debate and before Walther had completely worked out a theological solution to the problems posed by the emigration, now viewed as sinful. However, well before he could successfully debate it, Walther already had experienced a solution in the actions of a forgiving congregation.

In addition to his personal anxieties, Walther's letter shows that doubts about the whole enterprise were widespread. Many were asking if the Saxon congregations were really Lutheran congregations and whether they had the right to call pastors. Although Walther was now willing to say yes, there were others, including prominent laymen, who were saying no and were refusing to attend services. Some of the candidates (would-be pastors) were refusing to conduct services, and some of the pastors were resigning or contemplating it.<sup>20</sup>

Although in the letter to his brother Walther indicated his conviction that his people were a Lutheran congregation and had the right to call, his personal trials were not over. He still suffered terrible feelings of guilt, and in the fall of 1840 his health deteriorated to the point that he had to give up his ministry. While convalescing, however, he had the opportunity to study and develop his thinking on the issues to such an extent that in April of 1841, he was able generally to persuade the Saxon colony of the correctness of his answers. This was in the Altenburg Debate (named after the place where it occurred, one of the new Perry County settlements, Altenburg), in which Walther was opposed by one of the lay leaders, Adolph Marbach.<sup>21</sup> Once again, emotions ran high, especially when one pastor was accused of calling the Lord's Supper a "comedy act."<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, at length there was a resolution, and Marbach acknowledged a basic agreement with Walther.<sup>23</sup>

As indicated by one of the witnesses, J. F. F. Winter, Walther summarized the issues this way:

You have doubts as to whether the Christian church, a work wrought of God, God's Word, the sacraments, and the ministerial office are present here. I maintain, yes I shall prove, that these not only can be but must be present and other things besides.<sup>24</sup>

Walther's argument as expressed in the theses prepared for this debate comes down to two points: 1) a Christian church is present when people gather about the means of grace even if they err in one respect or another, and 2) to such a local congregation—even an erring one—God has entrusted *all* church power.<sup>25</sup> The application of this argu-

ment to the Saxon situation was simple: they were a church and could call pastors. Thus, the pastors could be confident of their ministries because of the call of the congregation. They did not need a state church, a bishop, or any other clergy to confer upon them what God had first of all given to every congregation and then through their congregations to them.

Given the intensity of experience with which the Saxons had come to their new understanding of church and ministry, in particular their new appreciation for the rights of the congregation as the church in a particular place, one can understand why they brought the matter up in the meetings that led to the founding of the Missouri Synod and why they had no use for Loehe's preferences for a system of synodical government dominated by the clergy.

However, it is also important to realize that the synodical founders never lost their appreciation for the office of the ministry in spite of their adherence to the "transference" theory confessed by Walther at Altenburg. In fact, in Walther's 1840 letter to his brother he identified the worst of the sins he and the other pastors had committed as their "faithlessness" to their former congregations in Germany which, says Walther, "we abandoned contrary to God and his Word and his will, and toward whom we have become guilty of breaking an oath."<sup>26</sup> They had sinned against God because God was the one who had placed them into the office. This was a doctrine that Walther never surrendered even after coming to new convictions about how God did this through the congregation. Not surprisingly, then, the first synodical constitution included provisions regarding the ministry that demonstrated commitment to the pastoral office as divinely instituted.

For one thing, as a condition of membership, the new synod required the "proper (*not temporary*) calling [*(nicht zeitweiliger) Beruf*] of the pastors."<sup>27</sup> This provision for calling pastors with unlimited tenure not only resulted from theological considerations but, once again, also reflected the experiences of the synodical founders. F. C. D. Wyneken, for example, in his famous *Notruf* that encouraged so many to support the American mission of the Lutheran Church,<sup>28</sup> bemoaned the ubiquitous presence of "hirelings" in America who intruded themselves into congregations in the absence of real pastors. Concerned especially about their immoral conduct and ignorance of God's truth, Wyneken also complained about the way in which the congregations obtained them: "Nothing gives a sadder testimony of the awful conditions of the congregations than to see these 'preachers' and the manner in which the congregations burden themselves with them. They are hired just like

herdsmen, or clever imposters." Wyneken goes on then to describe three of these "hirelings," a former student (and child molester), a cooper (and wife-beater), and a former cannoner who, because he did not "have the audacity to administer the sacraments, trie[d] to make them suspect as unnecessary customs."<sup>29</sup>

To remedy such ills, the synodical constitution required not only regular calls but also that the "life" of its pastors "be beyond reproof." It further went on to specify that "strangers" could not become members of synod unless they could "prove themselves to be thoroughly orthodox in respect to doctrine and life." Indeed, one of the principal purposes of the synod was the provision of capable pastors for the church. Out of the fourteen items listed in the constitution as the "business of synod," five had to do with preparing and placing pastors (nos. 5, 6, 7, 8, 12) and three more were concerned with pastors carrying out their duties correctly (nos. 1, 2, and 11).<sup>30</sup> Although Walther and the Saxons were insistent that congregations had the right to call their pastors, the synodical founders were also insistent that only the right kind of men be called and placed into the office of the public ministry. They wanted to correct the conditions sketched by Wyneken, not perpetuate them.

In the face of frontier conditions, some church bodies had adopted provisions for licensing would-be pastors, in effect putting them on probation in the ministry in order to test their character and capabilities. But the founders of the Missouri Synod rejected such "licenses" as inconsistent with the office of the holy ministry, into which God was placing a man. Loehe, for example, had instructed his missionary pastors this way, "If you connect yourself with a congregation, then you will not let yourself be hired for a year, as one may hire a servant, *but for as long as it shall please God.*"<sup>31</sup>

Wilhelm Sihler had actually begun his ministry in America with a dispute over licensing. An emissary of the Dresden Missionary Society, Sihler received and accepted a call to serve a large settlement of Germans in Pomeroy, Ohio. He began his ministry in January of 1844 and later that same year presented himself to the Ohio Synod for examination and ordination. Sihler was already acquainted with some of its clergy, and one of them, Wilhelm Lehmann, had recommended Sihler to the Pomeroy churches. Although the synod accepted a testimonial to Sihler's qualifications from the highly respected Lutheran leader in Germany, A. G. Rudelbach, that Sihler had brought with him when he emigrated, they nonetheless wanted only to license him for ministry, not ordain him. But Sihler refused. A synod had no right, he

argued, to refuse ordination to one whom they recognized as “orthodox, capable, and of irreproachable conduct” and one who already had a proper call from a congregation. Interestingly, Sihler’s argument won the day. The Ohio Synod ordained him and accepted him into membership.<sup>32</sup>

Besides Sihler and the Loehe men, the Saxons too opposed temporary calls and licenses. In his *Pastoral Theology*, C. F. W. Walther would later explain his opposition to temporary calls this way:

[Calling preachers temporarily] fights against the divinity of a correct call to a preaching office in the church. . . . For if God is really the One Who calls preachers, the congregations are only the instruments for separating the persons for the work to which God has called them (Acts 13:1). The preacher stands in God’s service and office, and no creature can dismiss God’s servant from God’s office unless it can be proven that God Himself has dismissed him from office.<sup>33</sup>

The argument is really straightforward. The ministry is God’s, not ours, so He will determine when a ministry is over, not men, not even the congregation through which God called a man in the first place.

Although Walther’s *Pastoral Theology* was written long after the formation of the Missouri Synod (first edition 1872),<sup>34</sup> one of Walther’s Saxon colleagues, Theodore Brohm, had published an article in *Der Lutheraner* already in April of 1845 on the “regular call” into the ministry (*Von ordentlicher Berufung zum Predigtamt*) in which he dealt with the issue of temporary calls. While acknowledging that the history of Lutheranism in Germany offered some early examples of temporary calls, by his time, Brohm maintained, they had disappeared in Germany but were prevalent in America. However, Brohm rejected temporary calls on three grounds: (1) they were directly opposed to the divinity of the call; (2) they violated the law of love that a congregation is to follow in its relationship with its pastor; and (3) they undermined the obedience that hearers are to have for those who care for their souls.

Like Walther, Brohm argued that however much a call comes *through* a congregation, it is really God who is doing the calling. The congregation is only His “servant” or “tool” and not the master of the call. The congregation must keep a faithful pastor until God decides otherwise, either by calling him away into another place of service or else by taking him into heaven. If, however, a congregation deprives a pastor of his livelihood and subjects him and his family to hardship and want, it demonstrates a wanton spirit [*Mutwille*] and delusion [*Verblendung*] instead of the care and consideration that the Scriptures

enjoin. Brohm also suggested that a temporary call can inhibit a pastor from preaching the severity of the Law when needed since keeping his position would depend on pleasing the people. But a faithful pastor has to rebuke sin, and his people need to obey. For Brohm, therefore, "no orthodox congregation can issue such a temporary, hireling's call without serious sin, and no preacher may put up with such a call, or else he becomes a participant in another's sin."<sup>35</sup>

Significantly, Brohm also warned pastors that they too must not undermine the divinity of the call by selfishly leaving it. Pastors cannot treat it as temporary any more than congregations can:

Just as little as congregations may dismiss a faithful pastor so may the preacher without serious damage to pastoral faithfulness abandon his congregation—over which the Holy Spirit has appointed him bishop (Acts 20)—out of mere caprice or desire for change, laziness, greed, ambition, or any other fleshly motivation.

For both congregations and pastors, therefore, the call is a permanent arrangement unless God Himself arranges differently. This is why, therefore, in his *Pastoral Theology*, Walther insisted that when a pastor received a call from another congregation, he should make his decision in consultation with "learned theologians" as well as the *two* congregations involved. Moreover, "he should not leave his congregation without its explicit agreement" unless all could see that the congregation was acting out of pure stubbornness and against the best interests of the church.<sup>36</sup>

Clearly, calls are sacred and one must not treat them selfishly or even privately. God gives them through the church and for the church.

But if the call was divine, ordination was not. It was only an "apostolic, ecclesiastical institution [*allein eine apostolisch kirchliche Ordnung*]."<sup>37</sup> Like their conclusions regarding the congregation's right to call, the synodical founders articulated their position on ordination in connection with controversy, this time with J. A. A. Grabau and the Buffalo Synod that Grabau and other immigrant pastors from Prussia founded in 1845. As was the case regarding the call, so too the theological questions regarding ordination were intertwined with very emotional episodes that personally engaged those who were debating the issues. Once again, real people with real interests were developing their theology in connection with real events.

Although the Saxons and the Prussians had known of each other in the old country and had actually set out for the new about the same time, they had kept their distance from each other in spite of some tentative efforts to join forces. The role of Stephan was clearly one

reason they had remained separate. But once the Saxons had repudiated Stephan, each side made overtures to the other about joining forces. After all, both groups were strongly committed to confessional Lutheranism. Moreover, while the Prussians were short of pastors, the Saxons had an abundance of qualified men.<sup>38</sup>

However, it was precisely the shortage of clergy among the Prussians that elicited positions regarding the ministry that the Saxons could not accept and that would provoke controversy for decades. It began simply enough with the two sides corresponding and exchanging documents, the most important of which was Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* or "Pastoral Letter." Grabau had not written this originally for the Saxons but for members of his own immigration movement who, on account of not having pastors, were being tempted to employ *ad hoc* arrangements for pastoral care.

In particular, in Wisconsin, where a part of Grabau's migration movement had settled in expectation that Grabau would soon follow, the congregation decided to ask one of their laymen, a teacher, to conduct services, including the administration of communion, when it became clear that Grabau was going to stay in Buffalo and that their prospects for obtaining an ordained clergyman were uncertain and limited. At the same time, however, they did write to Grabau for his approval; but Grabau was hardly inclined to give it. Quite the contrary, he was alarmed that such actions might destroy the unity of the church that had now made its way to America, by eroding faithfulness to the Augsburg Confession, in particular to Article XIV, by which the Lutheran Church committed itself to the principle that "no one should publicly teach in the Church, or administer the Sacraments, without a rightly ordered call." As a result, Grabau composed his "pastoral letter" and sent it to the various congregations of Prussian immigrants in December of 1840. At some point—presumably around the same time—he also sent a copy to the Saxons. Unfortunately, the Saxons could not give the *Hirtenbrief* the kind of acceptance that Grabau might have wished or maybe even expected.<sup>39</sup>

Since we are not sure precisely when the Saxons received Grabau's letter or how widely it was read, we do not know for certain what their initial reaction was. However, one of the Buffalo Synod historians has quoted Walther from this period in a way that certainly rings true:

As we read the *Hirtenbrief*, we became not a little afraid. For we found in it the same incorrect tenets whose destructive consequences we had but recently experienced, and from which only the overwhelming grace and patience of God had saved us. . . . We were at that time so helpless and

without counsel and so despised that the temptation was great to be quiet . . . and to go in on the union Grabau had proposed. But previously we had embraced his errors, and they had led to the rim of destruction, for which reason we could not now again agree to these errors intentionally.<sup>40</sup>

This reaction is certainly understandable, given the intensity of their experiences in the Stephanite debacle. And in their answer to the *Hirtenbrief*, the Saxons refer specifically to that history:

You know how we just a short time ago lay sick under Stephan and his hierarchical tendencies, which we have now recognized and done away with more and more through God's mercy, so that—admittedly like children who have been burned—we now can warn others. . . . [O]ur eyes have now been opened about so much which we previously considered true and right, although it was not.<sup>41</sup>

But what was it in Grabau's letter that concerned them? There were a number of points, but of central importance to the Saxons was Grabau's failure to strike the proper balance between the rights of the congregation and the privileges of the clergy. "It seems," they say, "you attribute more to the office of the ministry than is due, and that thereby the spiritual priesthood of the congregations is diminished." Specifically, they charge Grabau with demanding of the congregation that they obey their pastor in adiaphora while denying to the congregation responsibility for the doctrine of their teachers and pastors. Furthermore, they accuse Grabau of rejecting the congregation's right to call its pastor and of making more out of ordination than he should.<sup>42</sup>

Regarding the call specifically, Grabau believed that a regular call included participation by the clergy as well as the congregation. Clergy were necessary for testing a candidate before a congregation called him and then for ordaining him after the congregation had acted: "If the congregation now elects such a tested man to administer the holy sacraments, or to carry out other holy ministries in the church, then he can be admitted *by those who are already ministers of the church* according to 1 Tim. 5:22, 'Lay hands . . . on no one hastily.'<sup>43</sup>

But the Saxons disagreed. They charged Grabau with emphasizing the old Lutheran church orders so much that "what is essential gets confused with what is nonessential, divine with human, so that Christian freedom is restricted." Thus, they reject the idea that ordination is a divine mandate by which one is admitted to the ministry, insisting instead that it is "only the public, churchly confirmation of the call to the ministry."<sup>44</sup>

As the debate continued—and it did for many years—there was *perhaps* a narrowing of some issues. For example, in his answer to the Saxon reply, Grabau acknowledged the right of the congregation to call a pastor although continuing to insist also on the divine necessity of ordination by fellow clergy. But in a letter to Theodore Brohm, Grabau also recognized that in an emergency situation like the Napoleonic Wars both call and ordination might be lacking and yet a man could carry out pastoral functions. He even admitted that in such a situation it would be better for an emergency pastor to be called by his congregation with ordination to follow after the emergency had passed.<sup>45</sup>

For their part, the Saxons wrote more positively of ordination in their next response to Grabau. Although the Saxons continued to reject ordination as a divine command, they held that it was rooted in apostolic custom and should not ordinarily be omitted. In their first response to Grabau, they had perhaps given the impression that ordination was not very important. Even though they described it “as a praiseworthy and beneficial ceremony received from the earliest Christian times” that should be retained “for the sake of unity and good order,” they had also written that since “[ordination] is merely *publica testificatio* for the fact that the call, as the *essential* part in the appointment of a preacher is correct, the *confirmatio* and the *introductio pastoris* are really a *nonessential* part that can occur or not.”<sup>46</sup>

However, in their second response, the Saxons struck a different tone and elaborated on the value of the ordination. Even though they continued to insist that ordination did not give any part of the office that the call had not already given, nevertheless ordination was important for the strengthening and confirmation of the new pastor in his ministry, for the opportunity for all to hear about the importance of the ministry, and as an occasion for congregational prayer on behalf of the new pastor. Clearly, the Saxons believed there was a point and purpose to ordination that they were not eager to omit.<sup>47</sup>

Both sides, therefore, had made important clarifications that reduced the distance between their respective positions on ordination—Grabau being willing to consider its omission in emergencies and the Saxons affirming its use and blessings. Nevertheless, the rhetorical distance widened and each side began to think the worst of the other. A good example of this development in connection with ordination is how the two sides interpreted the case of Ottomar Fuerbringer. Fuerbringer was a candidate of theology who had emigrated with Martin Stephan, and in the spring of 1840 he received a call from a small group of Germans in Elkhorn Prairie (Venedy), Illinois. He accepted the call and

began his ministry, but without ordination. Not until three years later was Fuerbringer ordained.<sup>48</sup>

For Grabau, the Fuerbringer case was a perfect example of how little regard the Saxons had for ordination. But for the Saxons it proved the exact opposite, since Fuerbringer had delayed ordination on account of his *scruples* about whether he should be ordained by his fellow Saxon clergy in the wake of the Stephan debacle. This was at the same time that Walther and others were questioning the validity of their own calls and whether they could continue in the ministry.<sup>49</sup> It is not surprising then that a candidate would wonder about the value of ordination from such clergy as these, so Fuerbringer wanted an opinion from one of the confessional leaders in the old country. Nevertheless, he decided to begin his ministry in Illinois with call but without ordination, since he believed that the circumstances of the congregation required his services. While trying to satisfy his own conscience regarding his own ordination, Fuerbringer would not abandon the people who had called him as their pastor.

In their explanation to Grabau, the Saxons said that they had been willing to treat Fuerbringer with consideration on account of his conscience but had rejoiced when he was finally ordained by Walther in St. Louis.<sup>50</sup> But this was not good enough for Grabau. Instead of likewise rejoicing that whatever had been defective had now been corrected in Fuerbringer, he condemned the Saxons' conduct in this matter as "sinful" and Fuerbringer's behavior as "very sinful" if he really held ordination so highly and still did not receive it prior to beginning his ministry. In Grabau's view, however, it was more likely that Fuerbringer was guilty of "Enthusiasm" by making ordination depend on the character of those performing it. To this, the Saxons then responded with their own highly charged rhetoric by accusing Grabau of false teaching and of lovelessness "which does not know how to show consideration for weak, oppressed consciences." Such language shows that the Saxons did not endorse Fuerbringer's decision to postpone ordination even if they did not call into question his ministry without it.<sup>51</sup>

Although Grabau did not have a personal investment in the Fuerbringer case the way the Saxons did, there were several situations about which he and his Prussian colleagues *felt* strongly in their relations to the Saxons. This made it increasingly difficult for the two sides to treat each other with charity. In several places, Saxon pastors, and subsequently Missouri Synod pastors, served dissident or excommunicated members from the Prussian pastors' churches. This had begun already in 1841, just after the Altenburg Debate, when one of Walther's

fellow immigrant pastors, Ernst Moritz Bürger, had accepted a call from excommunicated members of Grabau's own church in Buffalo. A few years later, similar developments occurred in Wisconsin (Freistadt and Milwaukee).

To Grabau and his colleagues, congregations formed from dissidents were not churches at all but "mobs" and their pastors "mob preachers [*Rottenprediger*]"; and therefore they made the withdrawal of such pastors a condition of their meeting face to face with their opponents. But the opponents—Walther and his colleagues—believed that the opposition churches were the results of Grabau's false teachings regarding church and ministry. Therefore, when the Missouri Synod began, Bürger and his congregation became charter members, and at synod's first convention it rendered a decision in favor of the dissidents in Wisconsin. Subsequently, the founding of Missouri Synod opposition congregations continued. Wilhelm Iwan describes eight such situations in the late 1840s and 1850s.<sup>52</sup>

Once again, theologizing about church and ministry occurred in connection with real-life problems, in this case congregational controversies and divisions. It is no wonder that the rhetoric of each side became so heated that, in Iwan's judgment, it included "words used in the heat of the fight for which no righteous man, let alone a clergyman, could ever have an excuse." Among other examples cited by Iwan, the Buffalo Synod described the Missouri Synod's first meeting as the "Ahab Synod," and the Missouri Synod accused their opponents of being in league with the devil: "they summon the help of the father of lies, and cook up a ragout about them in their magic pot, using all sorts of evil ingredients which are bound to make any man sick."<sup>53</sup>

Because of the heated rhetoric and especially the aggravation of opposition congregations, it probably did not matter to Grabau that the Fuerbringer case showed that the Saxons did not really treat ordination as a matter of indifference. As William Cwirla has pointed out, if the Saxons had viewed ordination strictly as an adiaphoron, the debate with Grabau should have led to their refusing to employ ordination at all in accordance with the Formula of Concord, Article X.<sup>54</sup> But that was not the case. However much Grabau may have exaggerated the importance of ordination, the Missouri Synod continued to treat it with the highest respect.<sup>55</sup>

Years later, in his *Pastoral Theology*, Walther wrote that anyone who unnecessarily omitted ordination was "acting schismatically,"<sup>56</sup> and right from the beginning the synodical constitution demonstrated the importance of ordination for the founders. For one thing, the constitu-

tion made it the business of synod “to provide for ecclesiastical ordination and induction into office.” The president himself was supposed to ordain new pastors with the assistance of at least one neighboring pastor, and if possible in the presence of the calling congregation. Furthermore, reflecting both the beliefs and experiences of the founders, the constitution restricted ordination to those who had received “a legitimate call from and to a particular congregation” and also had been found to be “sound in faith, fit to teach, and beyond reproof in life.” Also as part of his duties, the president was to serve as chairman of the examining committee. Far from being something unimportant, therefore, the founders treated ordination with the highest respect; and the first synodical convention included two such ordinations.<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, the entire constitution shows that Walther and his colleagues meant what they said to Grabau and the Buffalo Synod. Although they insisted that the Word of God can work outside of the office of the ministry, they never advocated anything but the ordained ministry as the regular way through which the means of grace ought to be administered publicly:

If the question is asked in general: how does God deal with us? The answer must be: through *His Word*—whether He proclaims it Himself or records it for Moses or provides for us to hear or read it through an angel or through men or otherwise in many sorts of ways or through His Spirit who writes it in our hearts. . . . But if now the question is: how does God distribute the means of grace to us now and therefore deal with us *ordinarily* [*ordentlich*er Weise], the answer is: through the preaching office that He has established.<sup>58</sup>

Of course, history can only tell us so much. It really offers no criteria for separating true doctrine from false. Nevertheless, when we examine *how* our synodical forefathers arrived at their theological positions, we can better understand *why* those positions have meant so much in the history of synod. In the case of call and ordination, the Saxon founders of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod expressed beliefs to which they had come only in connection with soul-searing personal experiences. As their discussions with the Loehe men demonstrated, these issues were of fundamental importance to them in founding the synod; and as their debate with Grabau and the Prussians demonstrated, they were willing to fight for their convictions rather than yield for the sake of peace. That meant that from the beginning the Missouri Synod would hold to very specific teachings regarding church and ministry. Today, we are writing yet another chapter in synod’s history to see if it still does.

## Notes

1. This is already indicated in the title of Walther's famous work on this subject that was first endorsed by the Missouri Synod in 1851, *The Voice of Our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry* (emphasis mine), subtitled *A Collection of Witnesses about This Question from the Confessional Writings of the Ev. Lutheran Church and from the Private Writings of Orthodox Teachers of the Same*. See C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt: Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnisschriften der evang.-luth. Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechthgläubiger Lehrer derselben* (Erlangen: Verlag von C. A. Ph. Th. Bläsing, 1852).

2. "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States," in Walther A. Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod, 1847-1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 377-79. For continuity in the synodical position, see also the following essays, published for the synod's centennial, in Theodore Laetsch, ed., *The Abiding Word: An Anthology of Doctrinal Essays*, 3 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946-60) in vol. 1 (1946): "The Universal Priesthood of Believers," 321-41; "The Office of the Keys," 342-65; and "The Call into the Holy Ministry," 366-88; and in vol. 2 (1947): "The Office of the Public Ministry," 474-92.

3. E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 227-28.

4. *Proceedings of the 2001 Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, Res. 7-17A, 172-73; David Scaer, "Missouri's Identity Crisis: Rootless in America," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 12/1 (Epiphany 2003): 36-37. David Lau, "The Relation of the Public Ministry and the Priesthood of All Believers in Regard to Current Lutheran Debates," *CLC Journal of Theology*, Online ed. 35 (1995), surveys several different positions being promoted in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Further evidence of the breakdown of consensus is the fact that to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of synod there was a theological convocation, consisting of seminary faculties, the Council of Presidents, and representatives of partner churches, devoted to "Church and Ministry." In sending a published collection of the essays from that convocation to the members of synod, the Council of Presidents referred to "significant tensions" that had developed regarding church and ministry and listed eight examples of such tensions. See Council of Presidents to "fellow redeemed" [synodical members], June 1998. See also the collection of essays, *Church and Ministry: The Collected Papers of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Theological Convocation of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, ed. Jerald C. Joerz and Paul T. McCain (St. Louis: Office of the President, LCMS, 1998), especially the keynote address by President A. L. Barry, "Challenges in Church and Ministry in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," 1-24.

5. C. F. W. Walther, *Church and Ministry (Kirche und Amt): Witnesses of the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the Question of the Church and the Ministry*, trans. J. T. Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1987), 22. The German original (p. xv of the 1911 ed.) of these theses is: "Das Predigtamt wird von Gott durch die Gemeinde, als Inhaberin aller Kirchengewalt oder der Schlüssel, and durch deren von Gott vorgeschriebenen Beruf übertragen. Die Ordination der Berufenen mit Handauflegung ist nicht göttlicher Einsetzung, sondern eine apostolische kirchliche Ordnung, und nur eine öffentliche feierliche Bestätigung jenes Berufes."

6. "Brief Statement," 379 (emphasis original).

7. "C. F. W. Walther's doctrine of the ministry, which gives every baptized Christian the office of the ministry, carried to its logical conclusion does regretfully allow for the ordination of women pastors." David P. Scaer, "May Women Be Ordained as Pastors?" *The Springfielder* 36 (1972): 105, n. 45. See also Scaer's 1978 essay "Ordination: Human Rite or Divine Ordinance?" unpublished manuscript delivered by the author at the Faculty Orientation of Concordia Theological Seminary (Ft.

Wayne), Sept. 5, 1978.

8. *Proceedings of the 1989 Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, Res. 3-05B, 111-14. *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* (founded 1992) regularly publishes articles on the ministry, frequently devoting entire issues to the topic. See vol. 2/1 (Epiphany 1993); vol. 3/4 (Reformation 1994); vol. 6/3 (Holy Trinity 1997); vol. 10/2 (Eastertide 2001); and vol. 10/3 (Holy Trinity 2001). At least some of these articles are hostile to Walther's position, e.g., Lowell C. Green, "Grabau and Walther: Theocentric versus Anthropocentric Understanding of Church and Ministry," *Logia* 5/2 (Eastertide 1996): 25-40.

9. Nelson, *Lutherans in North America*, 178-81.

10. "Rev. F. Lochner's Report on His First Contacts with the Saxons," *CHIQ* 7 (1934-35): 80. Lochner also commented on how surprised—and impressed—he was by the fact that Walther's congregation took an interest in the proposed constitution and discussed it freely with their pastor. When Loehe sent his men to America, he gave them written "instructions" on how they were to conduct themselves. One such set has been translated and printed in Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 98-101, but it is difficult to see what may have concerned the Saxons except for what the instructions do not say. Loehe affirms the Confessions, eschews unionism, insists on a permanent call, and requires ordination after a congregation has called a man. None of this would have been alarming to the Saxons, but he does not explicitly affirm the congregation's *right* to call a pastor. For the German original, see *Kirchliche Mitteilungen* 2 (1844), #6: cols. 1-5.

11. Wilhelm Hattstaedt to Wilhelm Loehe, as quoted in Otto F. Hattstaedt, "Pastor William Hattstaedt," *CHIQ* 9 (1936): 17.

12. Erich H. Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod, 1841-1853" (PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1963), 146-51, also cites August Crämer and Wilhelm Sihler as initially opposed to these congregational principles at the Ft. Wayne meeting but to no avail. Loehe mentions the "weighty authority" of Walther and Löber especially in the formation of the constitution. See Wilhelm Loehe to Wilhelm Sihler, October 12, 1846, in Klaus Ganzert, ed., *Wilhelm Löbe Gesammelte Werke*, 8 vols. (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1986), 1:760.

13. Each member congregation had the right to send one lay delegate as well as its pastor to the synodical convention. See W. G. Pollack, trans., "Our First Synodical Constitution," *CHIQ* 16 (1943): 4. For German original, see *Die Verfassung der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten* (St. Louis: Weber & Olshausen, 1846).

14. Loehe to Sihler, October 12, 1846, in Ganzert, *Wilhelm Löbe*, 1:761. A few years later, Loehe offered specific suggestions for a synod. They included the right of laymen to speak but not to vote. He wrote, "The core of the Synod is the Presbytery, i.e., all the assembled presbyters or elders. It is to them that all questions are addressed. It is they . . . who gather together and make decisions." Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 266. For the original, see Wilhelm Loehe, *Aphorismen über die neutestamentlichen Ämter*, in Ganzert, *Wilhelm Löbe Gesammelte Werke* 5:319-20.

15. Loehe to Sihler, October 12, 1846, in Ganzert, *Wilhelm Löbe*, 1:760.

16. C. F. W. Walther to Wm. Sihler, January 2, 1845, in Roy A. Suelflow, trans., *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther: Selected Letters* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 90. For the original German, see L. Fürbringer, ed., *Briefe von C. F. W. Walther*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 1: 6-15. For the story of the Saxons and the Prussians, the Missouri Synod and the Buffalo Synod, see Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," *CHIQ* 27 (1954): 1-19, 57-73, 97-132; and Wilhelm Iwan, *Old Lutheran Emigration of the Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century from Eastern Germany (Mainly Pomerania and Lower Silesia) to Australia, Canada, and the United States*, trans. Brian Lutz, Elaine R. Kraft, and Ronald

R. Kraft, 3 vols. (Mequon, WI: Freistadt Historical Society, Trinity Lutheran Church, 2002), 2:120–52. William M. Cwirla, “Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry, 1840–1845,” *CHIQ* 68 (1995): 84–99, provides an excellent analysis of the theological issues dividing the two sides. James H. Pragman, *Traditions of Ministry: A History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in Lutheran Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1983) is excellent in putting Walther and Grabau into historical context. Their debate is sketched on pp. 141–50.

17. For the various steps and documents by which this took place, see Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 278–304. For the “Traveling Regulations,” see *ibid.*, 572–76. A copy of Stephan’s “investiture” is in Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 134–35. For the entire story of how the emigration and Stephan’s fall influenced the development of the Missouri Synod’s doctrine of church and ministry, see Carl S. Munding, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947).

18. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 362–63, 554–55.

19. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther to Otto Herman Walther, May 4, 1840, in Carl S. Meyer, trans., *Letters of C. F. W. Walther: A Selection* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 32–52. For excerpts from the German original, see also Martin Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), 36–40. See *ibid.*, 41–43, for excerpts from a letter by Walther to Ottomar Fuerbringer from April, 1840, and another from O. H. Walther to his brother in November of the same year, both of which indicate the same kind of inner turmoil in C. F. W. Walther.

20. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 461–72, 507–20, and Munding, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 85–108.

21. Marbach, a former lawyer from Dresden, had served as Stephan’s secretary and was one of the most important lay leaders in the emigration movement. After the Altenburg Debate, he returned to Germany. For Marbach’s role in the emigration and the events that followed Stephan’s fall, see Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi, passim*. For the Altenburg Debate, Munding, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 113–25, has an excellent summary of the two sides.

22. The pastor involved, E. M. Buerger, denied the charge but in rather ambiguous terms in his memoirs, but Forster (*Zion on the Mississippi*, 523) suggests that it was true. See *Memoirs of Ernst Moritz Buerger*, trans. Edgar Joachim Buerger (Lincoln, MA: Martin Julian Buerger, 1953), 50–53.

23. Although Forster claims Marbach was only “silenced” by Walther, not convinced, one eyewitness quotes Marbach as agreeing with Walther that the Christian Church was present and that the Lord’s Supper was valid. See Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 523–25, and J. Frederick Ferdinand Winter, “Controversy in the Church,” in Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 141.

24. Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 140.

25. “[Thesis] III. The name Church, and, in a certain sense, the name true Church, belongs also to those visible companies of men who have united under the confession of a falsified faith . . . provided they possess so much of God’s Word and the holy Sacraments in purity that children of God may thereby be born. . . . [Thesis] VI . . . Even heterodox companies have church power; even among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, the ministry [*Predigtamt*] and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised.” Edwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, rev. ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), s. v. “Altenburg Theses.” For German original, see J. F. Köstering, *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1838* (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1866), 51–52.

26. Walther to O. H. Walther, in Meyer, *Letters of C. F. W. Walther*, May 4, 1840, 32, 34–35, 41.

27. “First Synodical Constitution,” 3 (emphasis added).

28. *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, s. v. “Wyneken, Friedrich Conrad Dietrich.”

29. Fr. Wynken, *The Distress of the Germans in North America*, trans. S. Edgar Schmidt and ed. R. F. Rehmer (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1982), 20–21. The original appeared in *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche*, new series 5 (1843): 124–70.

30. "First Synodical Constitution," 3.

31. Wilhelm Loehe, "General Instructions for Our Friends in America," in Meyer, *Moving Frontiers*, 99 (emphasis added).

32. Wilhelm Sibler, *Lebenslauf von W. Sibler*, 2 vols. (vol. 1, St. Louis: Lutherischen Concordia-Verlags, 1879; vol. 2, New York: Lutherischen Verlags-Verein, 1880), 2:28–29. See also Lewis W. Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds: Biography of William Sibler* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 33–34.

33. C. F. W. Walther, *Walther's Pastorale, that is, American Lutheran Pastoral Theology*, trans. and abridged by John M. Drickamer (New Haven, MO: Lutheran News, Inc., 1995), 26. For the German original, see C. F. W. Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Pastoraltheologie*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1906), 41.

34. Walther's Preface (*Pastoral Theology*, 5) points out that it is essentially a reprint of articles that appeared in *Lehre und Wehre* between 1865 and 1871.

35. Theodore Brohm, "Von ordentlicher Berufung zum Predigtamt," *Der Lutheraner* 1 (1845): 65.

36. *Ibid.* See also Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, 274; *Pastoraltheologie*, 401.

37. Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, 47; *Pastoraltheologie*, 65. See also Brohm, "Von ordentlicher Berufung," 65–66: "Ordination . . . is the public, solemn confirmation of the call. . . . Ordination was not expressly commanded or instituted by Christ." Brohm also calls it a "custom of the apostolic church [*der Gebrauch der apostolischen Kirche*]."

38. Suelflow, "Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod," 1–3; Iwan, *Old Lutheran Emigration*, 1:137–38; and Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 191–92.

39. Iwan, *Old Lutheran Emigration*, 1:185; Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors," 86–87; and Suelflow, "Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod," 3–4. See also the opening sections of the *Hirtenbrief* itself, which has been translated by William Schumacher along with a reply by the Saxons and printed in Thomas Manteufel and Robert Kolb, eds., *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C. F. W. Walther in Memory of August R. Suelflow* (n.p., n.d.), 133–76. For the German of these and other related documents, see *Der Hirtenbrief des Herrn Pastors Grabau zu Buffalo vom Jahre 1840 nebst den zwischen ihm and mehreren lutherischen Pastoren von Missouri gewechselten Schriften* (New York: H. Ludwig & Co., 1849). Quotation from the Book of Concord is from *Concordia: The Lutheran Confessions, a Reader's Edition of the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).

40. Quoted in Suelflow, "Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod," 10. Suelflow cites E. Denef, whose history of the Buffalo Synod appeared in their synodical paper, *Wachende Kirche*, vols. 54 and 55. The Walther citation is from 55:4.

41. "Evaluation of Grabau's *Hirtenbrief*" in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 175; *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 35.

42. "Evaluation," in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 156–57, 165, 170, 172–74; *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 22, 28, 31–32, 33–35. For the basis of these charges, see Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 144–45, 149, 151; *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 13, 16–17, 18–19.

43. *Hirtenbrief*, in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 144 (emphasis original); *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 13.

44. "Evaluation," *Soli Deo Gloria*, 156, 164; *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 22, 27.

45. *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 58.

46. "Evaluation," in *Soli Deo Gloria*, 159–60, emphasis added; *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 23–24.

47. *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 75.

48. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 512–13; Suelflow, “Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod,” 13.

49. In April, 1840, just shortly before Fuerbringer received his call from Venedy, Walther had written to him about whether he could continue in the ministry given his doubts and sins. He signed the letter as one “bearing the merited wrath of God.” Günther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther*, 42.

50. *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 76.

51. *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 90, 93–94.

52. *Proceedings of the 1847 Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod*, 5, 7, 11–13; and Iwan, *Old Lutheran Emigration*, 2:139–42. Suelflow, “Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod,” is very thorough in providing the details of the relations between the two groups and what happened to create opposition churches in Buffalo and Wisconsin.

53. Iwan, *Old Lutheran Emigration*, 2:134–35.

54. “When the enemies of God’s Word want to suppress the pure doctrine of the Holy Gospel, God’s entire church . . . is bound by God’s Word to confess the doctrine freely and openly. . . . They are bound to confess . . . not only in words, but also in works and actions. In this case, even in adiaphora, they must not yield to the adversaries or permit these adiaphora to be forced on them by their enemies.” SD X.10.

55. Cwirla, “Grabau and the Saxon Pastors,” 97. Walther, *Pastoraltheologie*, 65, calls ordination an “Adiaphoron, ein Mittelding,” to emphasize the fact that God has not mandated it. But as it is an apostolic custom that confirms a proper call, Walther also stresses the benefit and relative necessity [*die Heilsamkeit und relative Nothwendigkeit*] of ordination.

56. Walther, *Pastoral Theology*, 44; *Pastoraltheologie*, 62.

57. “First Synodical Constitution,” 9, 10; and *1847 Proceedings*, 9. Interestingly, the ordinations took place in spite of the constitutional provision that ordinations occur in front of the calling congregation if possible. Loehe’s “instructions” (*Meyer, Moving Frontiers*, 99) had included a similar requirement, but apparently that was not possible in the case of these two men.

58. *Der Hirtenbrief . . . nebst . . . Schriften*, 83 (emphasis original). In his *Pastoral Theology*, 134–39, Walther acknowledges the validity of lay administration of the Lord’s Supper but denies that it should be done except in an emergency. In his *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), 62, Walther says that the congregation exercises its duty of seeing to it that the Word of God dwells richly and prevails in its midst “especially [*vor allem*] by establishing and maintaining the public ministry in its midst.” For the original, see C. F. W. Walther, *Die rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Ortsgemeinde* (St. Louis: Aug. Wiesbusch u. Sohn, 1864). Norman E. Nagel, “The Divine Call in *Die Rechte Gestalt* of C. F. W. Walther,” *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 59 (1995): 161–90, shows how call and ordination go together in Walther’s thinking. In 1874, the synod published a set of theses and comments by E. W. Kähler to answer the question, “Hat die Gemeinde das Recht, ordentlicher Weise einen wesentlichen Theil des heiligen Predigtamtes irgend einem Laien temporär zu übertragen?” *Lehre und Wehre* 20 (1874): 257–68, 331–39, 363–69. This is especially interesting in view of the circumstances that had occasioned Grabau’s *Hirtenbrief*. Kähler’s answer to the question is “no”: “The congregation may transfer an essential part of the holy preaching office in a regular way only to the one whom it has properly called and selected for the office of the Word for as long as it pleases God as the One who has established the office” (p. 369).