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Observing Two Anniversaries

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther was born on October 25, 1811, in Langenchursdorf, Saxony, Germany. It is appropriate that this issue honor C.F.W. Walther on this 200th anniversary of his birth because of his significant influence as the first and third president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (1847–1850 and 1864–1878) and also president and professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1850–1887). Most of the articles below, which were first presented at the 2011 Symposium on the Lutheran Confessions in Fort Wayne, reflect his influence in many areas of biblical teaching, confessional subscription, and the life of the church in mission. These historical and theological studies are offered here so that Walther may be understood in his context and continue to be a blessed voice in our synod as we face the future.

This issue also recognizes one other anniversary. The venerated King James Version of the Bible, first printed in 1611, is now 400 years old. The article below on the King James Version was originally given as a paper at the 2011 Symposium on Exegetical Theology in honor of this anniversary. The importance of this translation for the English-speaking world is widely acknowledged. Although many may think that its day has passed, this article demonstrates the ongoing influence of the King James Version through other translations.

The Editors

Wilhelm Löhe: His Voice Still Heard in Walther's Church

John T. Pless

Writing on the bicentennial of Wilhelm Löhe's birth, Craig Nesson suggested two trajectories of the Neuendettelsau pastor's influence in contemporary American Lutheranism: one through the Iowa Synod and into the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and the other through The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS). Given the fact that the Iowa Synod merged in 1930 with the Ohio and Buffalo Synods to form the "old" American Lutheran Church, which would join with other bodies to form the American Lutheran Church (ALC) in 1960 and finally the ELCA in 1988, Nesson observes that Löhe's influence in the ELCA is mainly discerned in two institutions initially connected with his work: Wartburg Seminary in Dubuque, Iowa, and Wartburg College in Waverly, Iowa. Apart from these institutions there was little, if any, recognition of the Löhe anniversary within the ELCA. By way of contrast, Nesson notes, "As the two-hundredth anniversary of Löhe's birth is celebrated in 2008, Löhe is being reclaimed as an important ancestor in the history and life of the LCMS."¹

Why is Löhe "being reclaimed as an important ancestor"? Hermann Sasse points to a parting of the ways between Löhe and Walther that impacted the role Löhe played in the young Missouri Synod.

One of the most grievous events in the history of the Lutheran Church in the 19th century was the fact that the two great churchmen Wilhelm Löhe and Ferdinand Walther went separate ways after the great theological leader of the Missouri Synod had in 1851 a most promising meeting with Löhe in Neuendettelsau.²

Sasse echoes the deep pathos that surrounds these two men who seemingly shared so much in common within the context of the confessional revival of their day. This paper will rehearse in part the history of how

¹ Craig Nesson, "Löhe in America: Two Historical Trajectories in the Missouri and Iowa Synods," *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17:3 (Holy Trinity 2008), 21.

² Hermann Sasse, "Ministry and Congregation" in *We Confess the Church*, tr. Norman E. Nagel (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1986), 69.

Walther and Löhe would make common cause in their tireless efforts for confessional Lutheranism in mid-19th-century North America and chronicle the details of the fracture.³ In the main it will examine how it is that Löhe's voice continues to be heard in the church body that received its theological and ecclesial shape from his contemporary, C.F.W. Walther (1811–1887).

The primary link between Löhe and Walther is found in F.C.D. Wyneken (1810–1876), whose impassioned literary plea, *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America*, captured Löhe's attention in 1840 and spurred him to action on behalf of scattered German immigrants on the American frontier. Conversely, it is through Löhe that Wyneken was then led to embrace authentic Lutheranism. By the time Wyneken wrote his *Distress of the German Lutherans in North America*, his Lutheran convictions and consciousness were becoming more solidly formed, even though the congregation that he served in Fort Wayne was one of mixed confession, both Lutheran and Reformed. Before his visit to Germany in 1841, Wyneken remained open to pastors who were either Lutheran or Reformed. His visit to Germany in late 1841 and early 1842 provided him with an opportunity to meet Löhe. The contact with Löhe deepened Wyneken's Lutheran instincts. When he returned to Fort Wayne, Wyneken began to preach on the differences between the Lutheran and Reformed confessions, leading the Reformed component of his congregation to withdraw and organize a congregation of its own.

Löhe's literary activities served as a robust echo of Wyneken's appeal. In response to Löhe's publicity of the dire needs in America, Adam Ernst and Georg Burger presented themselves as candidates for service on the frontier. Löhe provided training for these two men in a variety of theological and secular subjects. In the summer of 1842, Ernst and Burger were sent to the United States after agreeing to a set of stipulations that would govern their work and affiliations. Initially, Ernst and Burger made their way to Columbus to study at the seminary of the Ohio Synod. After the Ohio Synod affirmed the use of the unionistic distribution formula in the communion liturgy in 1845, Löhe ended his support of the Columbus seminary.

Eleven of the men sent by Löhe were among the 22 who met in Cleveland on September 13–18, 1845, to draw up a declaration of separation from the Ohio Synod. The document adopted by the assembly listed

³ For a more complete telling of this story, see John T. Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," in *Wilhelm Löhe (1808–1872): Seine Bedeutung für Kirche und Diakonie*, ed. Hermann Schoenauer (Stuttgart: Verlag Kohlhammer, 2008), 119–134.

several reasons for their departure from the Synod: Ohio's favorable disposition toward unionism, the retention of the problematic distribution formula, the refusal to require a vow to the Book of Concord in ordination, the practice of licensing candidates for a specific period of time rather than issuing a call, and the toleration of some Reformed congregations in the membership of the Synod. The conference in Cleveland opened the way for a new synodical body that was marked by complete loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions and a renunciation of unionism.

Löhe knew of both the Saxons in Missouri and the Prussians in New York and Wisconsin who formed the Buffalo Synod. In a letter to Ernst in October 1843, Löhe expressed his mistrust of J.A.A. Grabau's hierarchical approach to the governance of the church.⁴ Likewise, Löhe deplored the absolutistic claims made by Martin Stephan. In another letter, Löhe wrote to Ernst: "One recognizes that the scattered Saxons in Missouri have been purified and strengthened through the fire of tribulation, and certainly our hope is not in vain that other friends over there may be able to unite completely with them in *one* holy communion. In this the work of the church there will flourish more and more"⁵

Ernst's positive impression of the Saxons was gained by his reading of *Der Lutheraner*, a church paper edited by Walther. When Ernst first saw the paper during a visit to Wyneken in Fort Wayne, he remarked: "Thank God, there are still real Lutherans in America."⁶ Löhe likewise was impressed by the sturdy confessional and churchly nature of the paper. Ernst was encouraged to go to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. This trip had to be delayed due to the upcoming gathering in Cleveland.

Walther was invited to attend the Cleveland conference but was unable to attend due to illness. Instead Walther drafted a letter to Ernst expressing his support for a new synod and the desire of the Saxons to enter into a body of genuinely Lutheran character. In this letter, Walther noted that such a body should be marked by six characteristics: (1) it should be based on the Lutheran Symbols as contained in the Book of Concord and, if possible, the Saxon Visitation Articles; (2) it should eschew

⁴ James Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Mission" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1961), 105. See also Benjamin Mayes, "Grabau Versus Walther: The Use of the *Book of Concord* in the American Lutheran Debate on Church and Ministry in the Nineteenth Century," *CTQ* 75 (2011): 217-252.

⁵ James Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (May 1972), 58.

⁶ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 107-108.

all syncretistic activity; (3) it should guard and promote the unity and purity of Lutheran doctrine; (4) it should be a consultative, not a judicial body; (5) it should give the laity rights as well as the clergy; and (6) it should allow each congregation to pass judgment on the synod's decisions.

Those meeting in Cleveland authorized Ernst, Frederick Lochner, and Wilhelm Sihler to undertake a trip to St. Louis for a meeting with Walther. The meeting, which took place in May of 1846, resulted in a draft of a constitutional proposal drawn up chiefly by Walther but signed by Ernst, Lochner, Sihler, Walther, and six of the Saxon pastors. This document became the basis for a more formal constitution that was presented in Fort Wayne in July. Some potential synod members could not be present at this meeting so it was decided that the constitution would not go into effect for a year in order that it might be studied by those who were absent. The next meeting would be held in Chicago in April, 1847. It was at this meeting that the Missouri Synod was actually established with all but one of Löhe's men joining the new synod.⁷ Over half of the ministerium of the newly-organized Missouri Synod was composed of Löhe's men. Schaaf mistakenly asserts that of the Löhe contingent only Craemer was elected to a leadership.⁸ In fact, the constituting convention elected Shiler to serve as vice president. While Walther clearly emerged as the theological and organizational leader of the Missouri Synod, Löhe's men exerted considerable influence in the formation of the Synod.

At the organizing convention a resolution was passed requesting Löhe to transfer the Fort Wayne seminary to the Synod while at the same time continuing to support the institution with funds and books. After consulting with Wucherer, Löhe replied affirmatively to the request with three provisions: (1) that the seminary would serve only the Lutheran Church that accepts the entire Book of Concord; (2) only German would be used in instruction; (3) the seminary would not alter its mission of speedy preparation of pastors for German-speaking congregations.⁹ The seminary, now out of his hands, was perhaps his greatest gift to the Missouri Synod.

Löhe had reservations about the constitutional foundation of the Synod from the beginning. He was especially uneasy regarding the notion of equal representation of clergy and laity in church governance. This

⁷ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 109.

⁸ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 110.

⁹ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 114. On the issue of the German language, it is important to remember the paucity of confessionally sound Lutheran literature in English at this time. The first English translation of the *Book of Concord* would not appear until 1851.

seemed to him to reflect a democratic form of church life more reflective of American principles than the ecclesiology of the New Testament. Such a democratic approach, Löhe feared, would subordinate the pastor to the will of the congregation. But at this early stage, Löhe chose not to protest too strongly, believing that over time the weaknesses of this approach would be realized and appropriate adjustments made in the constitution. Schaaf observes that for Löhe, "The desire for unity with confessionally minded Lutherans was stronger than the fear of congregationalism."¹⁰

In the months after the constituting convention, Löhe expressed his reservations in a number of letters. In a letter to Walther, written in September of 1847, Löhe wrote:

With heartfelt sorrow we have noted that your synodical constitution, as it now stands, could not completely meet the model of the first congregations and we fear, certainly with complete justification, that the fundamental strong mixing of democratic, independent, congregational principles in your constitution will cause greater damage than the mixing of princes and secular authorities in our homeland. Careful attention to many teachings of the holy apostle about the organization of the church and the *Seelsorge* in general would have taught the dear lay brethren something different. A constitution is a dogmatic adiaphoron, but not a practical one.¹¹

A few months later, in December of 1847, Löhe wrote to his German pastoral colleague, Ludwig Adolph Petri:

One thing is regrettable. When our good people arrive over there and breathe the American air they become imbued with democracy and one hears with amazement how independent and congregational they think about church organization. They are in danger of forgetting the high, divine honor of their office and becoming slaves to their congregations.¹²

These letters point to a conflict that would emerge in the coming years and ultimately contribute to a rift between Löhe and the Synod that he helped to establish.

Casting shadows over the Synod's organizing convention in 1847 were two factors. First, there was the fresh and painful memory of the Stephan debacle and the spiritual anguish that it had inflicted among the Perry County colonists, even to the point of creating doubt as to whether they

¹⁰ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 118.

¹¹ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 60.

¹² Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 60.

were still members of the *una sancta*.¹³ Then there was Grabau and his authoritarian defense of the pastoral office. Walther had come into conflict with Grabau as early as 1840 at the time the Prussian pastor had published his *Hirtenbrief*.¹⁴

The two groups had experienced opposite threats. For Walther and the Saxons, it was the threat of abused episcopal authority in the hierarchical attitude of Stephan, whereas for Grabau and the Buffalo Synod, it was the threat of conventicles that would circumvent the ministerial office. There was heated literary exchange between the two groups, complicated by the unwillingness of the Missouri party to recognize excommunications enacted by Buffalo pastors that were often deemed unjust actions from the Missourian's point of view.

Löhe's attempt to mediate this dispute earned him the disfavor of both groups. Pointing out what he believed to be errors in both the approaches of Grabau and Walther, Löhe urged each of the parties to something of a truce, leaving the disputed issues as "open questions" until they could resolve them in an amicable manner and, in this way, achieve reconciliation.

The debate continued to simmer. At its 1850 convention, the Missouri Synod requested Walther to prepare a document clearly stating the Synod's position on church and ministry. That same convention invited Löhe to visit the United States in order to inspect the field cultivated by his labor and, most importantly, to meet with Walther and his associates to discuss the questions of church and ministry. Due to circumstances in Bavaria, Löhe declined this invitation in a letter to Wyneken dated February 13, 1851.¹⁵ The synod, meeting in convention later that year, deputized Walther and Wyneken to travel to Neudendettelsau to meet with Löhe in order to address what appeared to be a growing rift.

In September 1851, Walther and Wyneken arrived in Germany where Löhe was embedded in controversy with the Upper Consistory of the Bavarian Church. Löhe and others were threatened with suspension for their insistence that the territorial church cease in admitting the Reformed

¹³ See Walter Foster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 411-534.

¹⁴ For an account of the early relationship of Grabau and the Saxons, see William Cwirla, "Grabau and the Saxon Pastors: The Doctrine of the Holy Ministry 1840-1845," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (Summer 1995), 84-99. Also see Benjamin T. G. Mayes, "Reconsidering Grabau on Ministry and Sacraments," *Lutheran Quarterly* 28 (Summer 2006), 190-212, and Mayes, "Grabau Versus Walther," 217-252.

¹⁵ The text of the letter is found in *Gesammelte Werke*, Vol. 2 "Briefe 1848-1871," ed. Klaus Ganzert (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1985), 121.

to the sacrament. The Missourians stood with Löhé's insistence on the closure of Lutheran altars to the Reformed, even though this stance would come at the price of forgoing potential financial support from Bavaria.¹⁶

Walther's reports on his meetings with Löhé were strikingly positive. Just prior to departing Germany, Walther wrote a letter of thanks to Löhé, stating:

I can and must confess to you that the unhappy prejudices with which I entered your house have completely dissipated; that I am taking with me a heartfelt trust in your fidelity to our dear Lutheran Church, and the strongest conviction of the unity of the spirit in which we Lutherans in North America stand with you. . . . I have seen how precious the welfare of our Church, which is largely a plant of your faithful care, lies to your heart, therefore, I do not have to beg you to do all your conscience will permit, that our orphan church in America may ever be able to extol her closest unity with you before the whole world.¹⁷

Upon his return to the United States, Walther praised Löhé in the May 25, 1852, issue of *Der Lutheraner*: "We may assure our dear readers that a reconciliation in the truth and in love has by the grace of God been attained which is of far greater value than one which gets its guarantee from a subscription to certain strictly formulated theses, attained through insistent demands."¹⁸

Löhé likewise evaluated the meetings positively. He lauded the fraternal love and goodwill expressed by his Missouri visitors: "Such a spirit requires no haste to become one in formulas and theses. Hand in hand they go to the school of the Holy Spirit, where they see over the doorway the inscription: 'the longer, the more love; the longer, the greater unity and faithfulness.'"¹⁹ Löhé extolled the progress made:

We do have a common fundamental concept of the Church; we are one in the acknowledgement of a divinely-instituted pastoral office; the practice of our American brethren . . . is known to us and recognized by us as altogether good and proper; so that we joyfully desire

¹⁶ See "Addendum to the Trip Report: Löhé Correspondence on Unionistic Practice" translated by Roland Ziegler with Matthew C. Harrison in *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2009), 107–112.

¹⁷ Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhé and the Missouri Synod, 1841–1853" (Ph.D. Diss. University of Illinois, Urbana, 1964), 201.

¹⁸ Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhé and the Missouri Synod," 204.

¹⁹ Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhé and the Missouri Synod," 204.

to, and shall send our students to them and none other. We repeatedly found ourselves acknowledging to each other that we are fundamentally one.²⁰

Löhe also included a reproof of Grabau's reckless handling of excommunication and rebuked him for his harsh words against the Missourians. Löhe added that he rendered this judgment against Grabau on his own accord and not at the prompting of his guests.

Neither Walther nor Löhe thought that all disputed points had been resolved. Löhe listed four points he thought his American counterparts needed to address: (1) the relation of the invisible church to the visible, the necessity of a living expression and form of the invisible church to the visible; (2) the God-pleasing connection of the individual congregation with the whole church, the presentation of the doctrine of the body and its members in the pilgrim church; (3) the difference between Law and apostolic institution, and the full recognition of the latter for guidance of the visible church; (4) the proper recognition of the progress and victory of the Lutheran church in the Pietistic and related controversies of the previous centuries.²¹ In this same article, Löhe declared his intention with the Missouri Synod but reserved for himself certain independence for future activity in the States.

Coupled with the disputed theological issues of church and office, it was the friction that had developed in Saginaw that ultimately led to the break between Löhe and Walther. In addition to the four colonies Löhe had established in Michigan, he founded a teacher's seminary in Saginaw in 1852. The Michigan seminary, unlike the Fort Wayne institution, was not handed over to the Missouri Synod. The director of the seminary, Georg Grossmann (1823–1897) chose not to affiliate with the Missouri Synod, even though he was a member of Holy Cross congregation. Grossmann was involved in a dispute with Ottomar Cloeter (1825–1897), another Löhe man who was the pastor at Holy Cross, on the doctrine of church and ministry.²² There were also tensions surrounding the last of the Löhe colonies established in Michigan. This colony was under the

²⁰ Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 207.

²¹ Erich Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 207–208.

²² For perspectives on this dispute, see Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 168ff; Craig Nesson, "Wilhelm Löhe's Iowa Missionary Correspondence 1852–1872," *Lutheran Quarterly* 24 (Summer 2010), 137–141; and Albert L. Hoek, *The Pilgrim Colony: The History of Saint Sebald Congregation, the Two Wartburgs, and the Synods of Iowa and Missouri* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2004), 64–115.

leadership of Pastor Johannes Deindoerfer (1828–1907), who remained sympathetic to Löhe's position on church and ministry. James Schaaf observes:

The actual incidents in the Michigan colonies which led to the break with Missouri are shrouded in silence; the participants were loath to discuss the painful details and contented themselves with presenting generalities. Apparently no one single item led to the decision to leave Michigan; the final break was a result of hard feelings and dissatisfaction which had been building for years.²³

The break came in the summer of 1853. Grossmann and Deindoerfer decided to relocate in Iowa. Löhe sent a letter to Ferdinand Sievers, symbolically bordered in black, bidding farewell but also rebuking the Missourians for what Löhe identified as their "papistical territorialism."²⁴

The controversy in Saginaw was between three young men—all in their twenties—sent by Löhe. Cloeter had arrived in 1849. Deindoerfer came in 1851 and was followed by Grossmann the next year. One might ask, how is it that Löhe's emissaries came to find themselves in conflict with one another? Siegfried Hebart suggests that Löhe's doctrine of the ministry evolved in four distinct periods. The first period embraced the early years of Löhe's work, up until 1841. In this period, Löhe's views on the office reflected the Lutheran dogmatists of the 17th century. A second period, stretching from 1841 to 1848, included the publication of *Three Books About the Church* in 1844. In this period, Löhe sought to demonstrate how the invisible church is made visible. The Revolution of 1848 also accentuated the conservative, anti-democratic themes in Löhe. The third period ran from 1848 to 1860. This period is marked by the *Aphorismen* of 1849 and 1851 where Löhe became more innovative and used the language of spiritual aristocracy to describe the clergy. In the final stage, 1861–1872, Löhe does not contribute anything new or different to his discussion of the office.²⁵ Hebart's characterization of Löhe's theological development led James Schaaf to conclude that Löhe's early emissaries were steeped in his earlier teaching and did not find his later position congenial, while Grossmann and Deindoerfer would have been trained with the newly-developed insights of their teacher.²⁶

²³ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 165.

²⁴ Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 233.

²⁵ See Siegfried Hebart, *Wilhelm Löhe's Lehre von der Kirche, ihrem Amt und Regiment; Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert* (Neuendettelsau: Freimund Verlag, 1939), 39–292.

²⁶ Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," 147.

There was occasional contact between the Missourians and their former mentor. For example, Johann Streckfuss wrote Löhe, saying that he did not wish to be counted among his ungrateful pupils.²⁷ Sievers and Ernst were among those who remained on amicable terms with Löhe. Friedrich Wyneken's son, H.C. Wyneken, took an extended trip to Germany in 1869–1870. In his diary of June 23, 1869, he described his visit with the aging Pastor Löhe:

I will not forget how he greeted me with a warm handshake and a sweet-melancholy smile, after having read my name on Mr. Volck's card. And my heart ached when he said: 'Yes, there is friendship between me and your father, which seems to have been forgotten, though.' My silly heart's emotion only allowed me to say 'No, not at all.' I have retained my immense love and respect for this man from the very first moment I saw him.²⁸

The reception of Löhe in the Missouri Synod in the latter part of the 19th century cannot be fully understood apart from the emergence of the Iowa Synod, established in 1854 by those who departed Saginaw. Led by Deindoerfer and Grossmann, a band of about 20 settlers established a congregation and colony, Saint Sebald, in Clayton County, Iowa. This group became the nucleus of the Iowa Synod, dedicated to maintaining Löhe's teaching and to fulfill his vision of a missionary post on the American frontier.

Even though the Iowa Synod had its genesis in the controversy over the ministerial office, the new synod did not practice Löhe's doctrine. In fact, Todd Nichol has demonstrated that the Iowa Synod embodied much of Löhe's legacy but not his doctrine of the ministry:

The Iowa Synod, its history makes clear, learned much at the knee of Wilhelm Löhe, but not its doctrine of the ministry. Like its synodical counterparts in the nineteenth century, Iowa drew its understanding of the ordained ministry from a fresh reading of the Scripture, of the Lutheran Confessions, and of the history of the wider Lutheran tradition. The synod's leading theologians, indeed, developed their views on the ministry on the basis of a new consideration of the sources of Christian and Lutheran traditions and in light of considerable practical experience of church life in the United States. On the basis of this theological study and experience, they self-consciously entered

²⁷ Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 237.

²⁸ Heinrich Christian Wyneken, *A Journal of Travels in Germany 1869–1870*, tr. Erika Bullman Flores (privately printed, 1999), 57.

into what they regarded not only as an American Lutheran consensus but as a consensus representing the Lutheran tradition as a whole.²⁹

In the remaining years of the 19th century, free conferences and literary exchanges between the Iowa and Missouri Synods gravitated toward other issues, including the scope of confessional subscription, eschatology, and especially the place of "open questions."

Löhe had maintained that the doctrine of church and ministry was left unsettled by the Confessions and therefore open to fuller development and clarification. Walther and the Missourians were ultimately unwilling to concede this point. The Iowans never understood differences on this doctrine as church divisive. Hence, they developed a polity for their new context that was at variance with Löhe's own preference. It is interesting to note that years after the break in Saginaw, Deindorfer would write in the setting of another controversy—this time predestination—that while the ministry was an open question, election is not: "Although in former years the difference between us and the Missouri Synod did not stand in the way of church fellowship, the difference now existing in the doctrine [of predestination] is of such a nature that there can no longer be any church fellowship."³⁰

The older Löhe was able to recognize shifts and changes in his own thinking that put him at odds with not only with the Missourians but also other confessionally-minded Lutherans in Germany. At a pastoral conference in 1865 he stated:

Formerly for me to be a Lutheran meant to confess the Symbols from A to Z. Now all of Lutheranism is wrapped up for me in the Sacrament of the Altar. . . . It is not so much the Lutheran doctrine about the Holy Supper, but the sacramental living and the experience of the blessing of the sacrament which is made possible only through frequent participation. This is now the main thing for me. My progress is summed up in the words "sacramental Lutheranism."³¹

During the final twenty years of his life, Löhe especially focused on the deaconess house. It is in this context that he wrote,

²⁹ Todd Nichol, "Wilhelm Löhe, the Iowa Synod and the Ordained Ministry," *Lutheran Quarterly* 4 (Spring 1990): 24–25.

³⁰ Martin J. Lohrmann, "A Monument to American Intolerance: The Iowa Synod's 'Open Questions' in Their American Context," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision*, ed. Dietrich Blaumuß (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2009), 305.

³¹ Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Löhe 1808–1872*, tr. Wolf Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), 209.

If you want to know what we really desired, you have only to look at the Deaconess Institution. But you should not think only of the sisters. We wanted an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers. Lutheranism is not a part matter for us. What makes us Lutheran with all our soul is the Sacrament of the Altar and the doctrine of justification. We are not Lutherans in the sense of the Missourians, nor in the sense of the *Altlutheraner* (an orthodox Lutheran group). We are very old and very modern. What we really wanted in the final instance was for a Lutheranism to progress to an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers.³²

Löhe's vision of "an apostolic-episcopal Church of Brothers" was never realized in Germany or in the Missouri and Iowa Synods. Löhe's dream of such a church, along with his eschatological speculations, made him increasingly suspect in the Missouri Synod³³

Even as Missouri's understanding of doctrine and confessional subscription came under fire in the Iowa Synod, so Löhe and his American heirs would come under criticism by the Missourians in the last two decades of his life. When Löhe died in 1872, the February 15th issue of *Der Lutheraner* announced his death with little comment: "From *Lutherische Zeitung* we learned the shocking news that Pastor Loehe of Neuen-dettelsau, 'after a brief illness' died at five forty-five o'clock on the evening of January second."³⁴

The significance of Löhe's work was often overlooked in the first one hundred years of the Missouri Synod's history. Writing in 1944, Theodore Graebner included a chapter on Löhe in his book *Church Bells in the Forest: A Story of Lutheran Pioneer Work on the Michigan Frontier 1840-1850*, describing him as "a man with a good heart."³⁵ Walther Baepler's *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947* gives a positive but scant treatment of Löhe's role in the formative stage of the Missouri Synod's life.³⁶ The few references to Löhe in Franz Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* are

³² Geiger, 211. Here also see Wolfhart Schlichting, "Kirche-Bekenntnis-Pluralität bei Wilhelm Löhe," in *Wilhelm Löhe: Erbe und Vision*. Schlichting points out significant shifts in the later Löhe, noting that the Sacrament of the Altar becomes his "material principle," 143-145.

³³ See Geiger, 206, for a description of this controversy.

³⁴ Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," Preface.

³⁵ Theodore Graebner, *Church Bells in the Forest: A Story of Lutheran Pioneer Work on the Michigan Frontier 1840-1850* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), 15-16.

³⁶ Walter Baepler, *A Century of Grace: A History of the Missouri Synod 1847-1947* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 65-74.

all negative, identifying him as one given to "Romanizing tendencies,"³⁷ thus echoing commentary often made in *Lehre und Wehre* in the second half of the 19th century.

Only in the 1950s and 1960s did a more appreciative picture of Löhe begin to emerge in the LCMS. This may, in part, come from the influence of Hermann Sasse, who himself came to a Lutheran confessional position through his reading of Löhe's *Three Books About the Church* while doing graduate studies at Hartford Seminary in 1925-1926. A number of Sasse's essays made positive use of Löhe.³⁸ In 1949, Sasse wrote an article entitled "Walther and Löhe: On the Church,"³⁹ in which he argued that Walther and Löhe shared much more in common than is often realized, and that each failed to apply his own principles in relation to the other. It was also during this post-war period that a number of Missouri Synod students pursued doctoral work at Erlangen, where the memory and to some extent the influence of Löhe was discernible.⁴⁰

While there seem to be some parallels drawn between Arthur Carl Piepkorn and Löhe, especially in relationship to ecclesiology and the Lord's Supper, as far as I can tell, Piepkorn never produced any published essays dealing with Löhe in depth. In his *Profiles in Belief*, Piepkorn refers to Löhe as one who "argued that the confessional position of the Church of the Augsburg Confession is identical with that of the New Testament. He could, therefore, also affirm the catholicity and ecumenicity of the Lutheran Confessions."⁴¹ A number of Piepkorn's students, however,

³⁷ Franz Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, 3 vols., tr. Walter W.F. Albrecht (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 3: 447-449. Also see Geiger, 204-205. Löhe defends himself against the charge: "I am opposed to Rome as much as anyone. But the way I feel, this opposition does not prevent me from seeing much that is laudable in less important things on the other side and much that is perverted and wrong on our side. Precisely because I find myself completely separated from the Roman Church, as also from other Church parties, I dare to notice the good things, and I do not shy away from saying it" (cited in Geiger, 205, from GW 5/2, 865).

³⁸ See Hermann Sasse, *The Lonely Way*, 2 vols., tr. Matthew C. Harrison (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2002-2003).

³⁹ Hermann Sasse, "Walther and Löhe: On the Church," *Springfielder* (December 1971), 176-182, written as a "Letter to Lutheran Pastors" in July 1949. A fresh translation by Norman E. Nagel appeared in *We Confess the Church*, 69-83.

⁴⁰ For the influence of Löhe at Erlangen, see Karl Beyschlag, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (Erlangen: Martin Luther-Verlag, 1993), 51-53, and Lowell Green, *The Erlangen School of Theology: Its History, Teaching, and Practice* (Fort Wayne: Lutheran Legacy Press, 2010), 27-32.

⁴¹ Arthur Carl Piepkorn, *Profiles in Belief*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 2: 28.

wrote on Löhe. In 1954, John Tietjen submitted an S.T.M. thesis to Union Seminary on "The Ecclesiology of Wilhelm Loehe." Walter Bouman (1929–2005) wrote his doctoral dissertation in 1962 on "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" for Edmund Schlink at Heidelberg and devoted a significant portion of this project to Löhe.

Bouman examined the ecclesiological thinking of 14 German-Lutheran theologians of the 19th century, probing their articulation of the nature and unity of the church. Among them was Löhe. Bouman observed that Löhe sought the church's perfection, that is, the invisible church being made visible, the church militant becoming more and more like the church triumphant.⁴² He identified Löhe as being a representative of an irenic, ecumenical Lutheranism and credited Löhe for speaking of the catholicity of the Lutheran church as it takes its middle place among the denominations.⁴³ The category of "open questions" provided space for growth and development. Bouman noted Löhe's preference for the imagery of Romanticism in describing the periods of the church as blossoms on a flower.⁴⁴ While not attempting to equate his own view with that of Löhe, he saw some aspects in Löhe's ecclesiology that provide a reserve for ecumenical efforts. Bouman concluded, "But perhaps the discussion of the 19th century—still unresolved today—indicates that this is in need of further dogmatic definition. Perhaps the C.A. has only made a beginning. Perhaps the dogmatic definition of the Church is still before us—before the whole of Christendom."⁴⁵

This is not to say that Bouman finds Löhe without difficulty. For example, he sees in Löhe's thinking an identification of the apostolic word with Scripture rather than preaching.⁴⁶ Nor did he think that Löhe was sufficiently able to work out the "ecclesiological significance" of an already existing unity.⁴⁷

Beyond his dissertation Bouman did not do any additional work on Löhe. Before he left the Missouri Synod in 1977 for a teaching position at the Columbus seminary of the ALC, Bouman was a vocal participant in efforts to increase ecumenical participation and liturgical renewal. The remainder of his career, spent in the ALC and the ELCA, was marked by

⁴² Walter Richard Bouman, "The Unity of the Church in Nineteenth Century Lutheranism" (Th.D. diss., University of Heidelberg, 1962), 46.

⁴³ Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 47.

⁴⁴ Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 351.

⁴⁵ Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 365.

⁴⁶ Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 49.

⁴⁷ Bouman, "Unity of the Church," 341.

his aggressive advocacy of *Called to Common Mission*, which finally established full communion between the ELCA and the Episcopal Church in 1999. Bouman identified himself as an "evangelical catholic." Although this term is elusive and elastic, David Ratke suggests that Löhe's theology "reveals a marked similarity" to this movement.⁴⁸

Most significantly, Kenneth F. Korby (1924–2006) authored his dissertation on "Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and the Laity" at Concordia Seminary in Exile in 1976.⁴⁹ Korby, a professor for many years at Valparaiso University and then a parish pastor and adjunct professor for Concordia Theological Seminary, stimulated a renewed interest in Löhe. His instruction of future deaconesses at Valparaiso connected them with the diaconal tradition of Neuendettelsau. As an adjunct professor at Fort Wayne and frequent conference lecturer in the 1980s and 1990s, Korby challenged stereotypical renderings of Löhe, presenting him as a model for pastoral theology and mission in contrast to the therapeutic approaches of pastoral counseling and "church growth" paradigms for mission that were becoming increasingly popular in the LCMS. Among other things, Korby urged a recovery of the practice of private confession and absolution as the basis of pastoral care.⁵⁰ One can also detect the imprint of images drawn from Löhe in Korby's own writing and preaching.

In 1964, Erich Heintzen authored a doctoral dissertation entitled "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod 1841–1853." Heintzen concluded his dissertation with Walther's tribute to Löhe in 1852:

Next to God, it is only Pastor Loehe to whom our Synod is indebted for its happy beginning and rapid growth in which it rejoices; it may well honor him as its spiritual father. It would fill the pages of an entire book to recount even briefly what for many years this man, with tireless zeal and in the noblest unselfish spirit, has done for our Lutheran Church and our Synod in particular.⁵¹

⁴⁸ David C. Ratke, *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2001), 207.

⁴⁹ Kenneth F. Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and Pastoral Care* (Th.D. diss. Concordia Seminary in Exile, 1976). Also see John T. Pless, "The Contribution of Kenneth Korby to a Renewed Interest in Pastoral Theology," *CTQ* 73 (April 2009): 99–114.

⁵⁰ Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Loehe with Special Attention to the Function of Liturgy and Pastoral Care*, 236–272. For Löhe's influence in the young Missouri Synod in regard to private confession and absolution, see Fred Precht, *Lutheran Worship: History and Practice* (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1993), 347–351.

⁵¹ Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 249.

Then Heintzen includes his own reflection on this tribute:

These words, it is true, were written when the romance between Loehe and the Synod, though threatened, was still in bloom. After it faded, such acknowledgements became noticeably restrained, and Loehe gradually forgotten. The tribute, however, still remains what it was. Like any monument, though largely ignored, it stands for all to see if they will but look.⁵²

A condensed and popular version of Heintzen's dissertation appeared in 1973 as *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod*.⁵³ When Concordia Theological Seminary celebrated its 125th anniversary in 1971, an anniversary issue of its theological journal, *The Springfielder*, prominently featured the legacy of Löhe.⁵⁴ Other popular works, such as Herman Zehnder's *"Teach My People the Truth!" The Story of Frankenmuth, Michigan* published in 1970,⁵⁵ Richard Stuckwisch's *Johannes Konrad Wilhelm Loehe: Portrait of a Confessional Lutheran Missiologist* published in 1993,⁵⁶ and A.M. Bickel's *Our Forgotten Founding Father* in 1997⁵⁷ served to accent Löhe's contributions to the LCMS.

For much of the Missouri Synod's history, the significance of the pastor from Neuendettelsau has been only partially appreciated. At worst, Löhe was characterized as guilty of "Romanizing tendencies" as noted above. More generous assessments recognize his early assistance in providing human and financial resources that would be crucial for the development of what would become the Missouri Synod.⁵⁸ The bicentennial of Löhe's birth in 2008 saw significant and positive appreciation of Löhe in the church body that he had a hand in establishing as a "father from afar." Evidence of this is seen in the fact that Concordia Theological Seminary hosted a conference on Löhe on October 10–11, 2008. The February 2008 issue of the Synod's official magazine, *The Lutheran Witness*,

⁵² Heintzen, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 249.

⁵³ Erich Heintzen, *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973).

⁵⁴ This issue contained the previously cited essay of Sasse on Walther and Löhe, as well as articles by F.W. Kantzenbach of Neuendettelsau and Max Löhe of the Lutheran Church in Australia.

⁵⁵ Herman F. Zehnder, *"Teach My People the Truth!" The Story of Frankenmuth, Michigan* (Frankenmuth, Michigan: Privately printed, 1970).

⁵⁶ Richard Stuckwisch, *Johannes Konrad Wilhelm Loehe: Portrait of a Confessional Lutheran Missiologist* (Fort Wayne: Concordia Theological Seminary Printshop, 1993).

⁵⁷ A.M. Bickel, *Our Forgotten Father* (Napoleon, Ohio: Privately printed, 1997).

⁵⁸ See John T. Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod: Forgotten Paternity or Living Legacy?" *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (April 2006), 122–137.

carried an article on Löhe.⁵⁹ The Holy Trinity 2008 issue of *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology*, an independent journal with heavy influences from LCMS pastors, was published as "the Loehe bicentennial issue," featuring essays by North American and European scholars.⁶⁰ *Concordia Pulpit Resources*, a homiletical journal for LCMS pastors, noted Löhe's contributions to preaching and included the translation of one of his sermons on the Lord's Supper at the occasion of the Löhe bicentennial.⁶¹ Concordia Publishing House published David C. Ratke's *Confession and Mission, Word and Sacrament: The Ecclesial Theology of Wilhelm Löhe* in 2001. In 2006, LCMS World Relief and Human Care commissioned a translation of *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters for Everyone, the Seventh for the Servants of Mercy* and has widely distributed this booklet throughout the congregations of the synod.⁶² John Stephenson, a professor of the Missouri Synod's sister church in Canada (Lutheran Church—Canada), has translated Löhe's 1849 *Aphorisms*.⁶³ Concordia Publishing House recently released a translation of *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Löhe*, a full length biography by Erika Geiger, a former Neuendettelsau deaconess.⁶⁴

Löhe's liturgical influence was felt in the early years of the Missouri Synod through his 1844 *Agenda* dedicated to Wyneken; it shaped the worship life of congregations until the adoption of the Saxon *Agenda* of 1856.⁶⁵ Friedrich Lochner (1822–1902) transmitted something of the liturgical legacy he received from Löhe to students at the Springfield seminary. Lochner's book on liturgy was used at both LCMS seminaries well into the 20th century.⁶⁶

⁵⁹ John T. Pless, "The Missionary Who Never Left Home," *Lutheran Witness* 127 (February 2008): 11–13.

⁶⁰ Included in this issue are articles by Dietrich Blaufuß, Craig Nesson, and Walter Conser, as well as Frank Senn's introduction to the Preface of the 1844 *Agenda* and a translation of one of Löhe's Trinity Sunday sermons.

⁶¹ Wilhelm Löhe, "Historical Sermon: A Sermon on the Lord's Supper," tr. Jason D. Lane, *Concordia Pulpit Resources* 18 (August 24–November 23, 2008), 3–6.

⁶² Wilhelm Löhe, *Löhe on Mercy: Six Chapters For Everyone, the Seventh for Servants of Mercy*, tr. Holger Sonntag with a Preface by Matthew C. Harrison (Saint Louis: LCMS Board for World Relief and Human Care, 2007).

⁶³ Wilhelm Löhe, *Aphorisms on the New Testament Offices and Their Relationship to the Congregation*, tr. John Stephenson (Malone, TX: Repristination Press, 2008).

⁶⁴ Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe 1808–1872*, tr. Wolf Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010).

⁶⁵ See Wilhelm Löhe, "Prefaces to the Agende für christliche Gemeinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses" with an introduction by Frank C. Senn, *Logia: A Journal of Lutheran Theology* 17 (Holy Trinity 2008), 31–38.

⁶⁶ Pless, "Wilhelm Löhe and the Missouri Synod," 133.

Löhe's liturgical influence is still visible in the LCMS. The LCMS hymnal, *Lutheran Service Book* (LSB) contains one of Löhe's hymns, "Wide Open Stand the Gates" (LSB 639). LSB lists January 2, the date of Löhe's death, to commemorate his vocation as a pastor. The *LSB Agenda* and the *Pastoral Care Companion* bear some marks of Löhe's influence. This may be seen in the distinction made between "ordinary" and "extraordinary" means of pastoral care in the Introduction.⁶⁷ Ironically, Löhe's rite for the anointing of the sick, which occasioned controversy in Germany and criticism from the 19th-century Missourians, is incorporated into the order for "Visiting the Sick and the Distressed" in the *LSB Agenda*.⁶⁸

Löhe's voice has never been absent in Walther's church. Sometimes it has been muted and barely heard. Yet Löhe played an important role as he sent men and resources across the Atlantic, helping to shape the identity of the fledgling synod. In more recent years, various aspects of Löhe's legacy have been retrieved in LCMS efforts to broaden ecumenical perspective, deepen pastoral theology, enrich liturgical life, give shape to an authentically Lutheran missiology, enhance the place of the female diaconate, sustain the church's corporate life of mercy, or to provide what is seen as a corrective to Walther's understanding of the office.

Reviewing the reception of Löhe in Germany, Dietrich Blaufuss has noted attempts to render the Bavarian churchman either a "saint" or a "heretic," often without serious engagement with Löhe's own literary work.⁶⁹ Fresh, unbiased engagement of Löhe's work is to be welcomed as an appropriate way to appreciate his legacy, alongside that of Walther, in order that his voice may contribute to the life and mission of the Lutheran church in our day.

⁶⁷ See *Lutheran Service Book Agenda* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), ix. Compare this with Korby, *Theology of Pastoral Care in Wilhelm Löhe*, 245–246; also Kenneth Korby, "Löhe's *Seelsorge* for His Fellow Lutherans in North America" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* (November, 1972), 227–246 and John T. Pless, "Löhe as Pastoral Theologian: The Discipline of the Shepherd" *Lutheran Theological Journal* 43 (August 2009), 110–117.

⁶⁸ *LSB Agenda*, 45. See Geiger, 158–159 for a description of the controversy.

⁶⁹ Dietrich Blaufuß, "Saint and Heretic: Wilhelm Löhe in German Historiography since 1872," *Currents in Theology and Mission* 33 (April 2006): 103–112.