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Editor's Note

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Concordia Publishing House. Since her founding, she has supported the church in a number of ways, most especially through the publication of materials used to proclaim God's word. The Editors now take this opportunity to thank Concordia Publishing House for her work, in general, and for supporting the publication of this issue in particular. May the Lord grant Concordia Publishing House increased blessing in service to him.

The Editors

The Highest and Ultimate Gift of God: A Brief History of Concordia Publishing House in the German-Era LCMS

Charles P. Schaum

I. Introduction

In 1869, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS), then *Die deutsche evangelisch-lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten*, wanted to form a synodical press to stabilize its core mission of publishing modern Lutheran classics designed to aid the teaching and defense of doctrine. Concordia Seminary professor Georg Mezger put it best in the *Denkstein* published in 1922 for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the LCMS:

The fact that God permitted His revealed word **to be written down**, that He commanded research in **Scripture**, and that in many Bible passages He commissioned us to proclaim His word to all people surely vouches for the certainty that, according to God’s will, the art of publication or the press also may serve Him and His Church. Thus Luther also called publication “the highest and ultimate gift of God, through which He promotes the matter [of the Gospel]” (St. Louis Edition XXII:1658).¹

Here we seek to show the events that shaped the course of Christian publication in the early LCMS, both for good and ill.²

II. Turbulent Early Years

C. Ferdinand W. Walther began publishing *Der Lutheraner* (“The Lutheran”) in September 1844. His unifying, supportive goals for this newspaper, which extended throughout the LCMS German era, included the following:

¹ Georg Mezger, *Denkstein zum fünfundsiebzigjährigen Jubiläum der Missourisynode* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 292. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from German sources are by the present author and use boldface to indicate *Sperrdruck* in the original.

² One should consult the collections at Concordia Historical Institute. The present author organized handwritten sources of the German-era conventions. See Martin R. Noland and Mark Loest, eds., *The Doctrinal Resolutions of the National Conventions of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod 1847–2004* (St. Louis: Concordia Historical Institute, 2006).

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1. Concerning doctrine: To make known the treasures and history of the Lutheran Church and 2. to offer proof that this Church does not stand among the category of Christian sects, rather, that it is not a new church but the old, true Church on earth. . . . 3. To show the true, Lutheran manner in which a person can have faith, live a Christian life, and die a blessed death. Finally, 4. [to show] how to discover and refute the false, misleading doctrine that is on the upswing, how to warn others about it, and especially how to unmask those who falsely call themselves Lutheran.³

Der Lutheraner was a key element in bringing the early LCMS together, putting doctrine at the center, and helping the young synod deal with trust issues regarding clergy in the wake of the alleged sexual sins of ousted Saxon “bishop” Martin Stephan Sr. and the related issue of private Absolution.⁴ *Der Lutheraner* was published by the firm Weber und Olshausen from September 1844 onward. Wilhelm Weber, a prominent abolitionist, had published the St. Louis newspaper *Anzeiger des Westens* (*The Western Gazette*) since 1836.⁵ His partner, Arthur Olshausen, became sole owner of the firm in May 1847.⁶ Both Weber and Olshausen were among a wave of immigrants who some called young “radicals.” They embraced municipal socialism, abolitionism, and Union causes. They opposed positions that they perceived to be like the oppressive tendencies in German-speaking lands after the Napoleonic Era.⁷ In St. Louis these “radicals” clashed

³ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 293, quoting C. F. W. Walther, “Vorbemerkungen über Ursache, Zweck und Inhalt des Blattes,” *Der Lutheraner* 1, no. 1 (1844): 1.

⁴ For example, C. J. Hermann Fick, “Gespräch zweier Lutheraner über kirchliche Verfassung,” *Der Lutheraner* 3, no. 22–25 (1847): 119–21, 125–26, 129–30, 135–36; Charles P. Schaum and Albert B. Collver III, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man: Scripture, Philosophy, Dialogue, and Conflict* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2019), 129–43. For more on Stephan, see Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953). Regarding pagination of articles in volume 3 of *Der Lutheraner*, see note 6 below.

⁵ Indicated in the colophon of May 4, 1847. The best information is in the article on *Anzeiger des Westens* in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 932–35. See also Henry Boernstein, *Memoirs of a Nobody: The Missouri Years of an Austrian Radical 1849–1866*, trans. and ed. Steven Rowan (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997). One sees inaccuracies on this point in Edmund Seuel, “Publication Activity of the Missouri Synod,” in *Ebenezer: Reviews of the Work of the Missouri Synod during Three Quarters of a Century*, ed. William H. T. Dau (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), 293–94.

⁶ The original third volume of *Der Lutheraner* (September 1846–August 1847) was set solid (little or no white space) on four pages of stock trimmed to 9.5 by 14.25 inches. Before and after that volume, the standard was six pages trimmed to 9.5 by 13 inches. August Wiebusch und Sohn set the 1860 reprint of volume 3 using the series standard. They kept the same articles in each issue but changed the layout and pagination of the articles within each issue.

⁷ After the Congress of Vienna in 1815 that promoted an outcome favorable to Great Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria-Hungary, Europe was rocked by a series of radical revolts. All major world powers were engaging in expansionism and colonialism, deciding winners and losers amid

with the Saxon immigrants. The latter's desire for religious freedom and fear of a powerful central government led them to support pro-Southern, states' rights positions.⁸ The "Forty-Eighters" brought a new wave of progressive immigrants after the failed socialist revolutions of 1848, fearing authoritarian figures like Prussian crown prince Wilhelm, later Kaiser Wilhelm I of Germany.⁹ Olshausen's socialist activism estranged him from the Saxons. He promoted the *Anzeiger in Der Lutheraner* from July 27, 1847, onward, leading in part to the 1850 termination of his firm's relationship with the LCMS.¹⁰

The LCMS established a publication society (*Verlagsgesellschaft*) in 1849 that engaged outside printers on behalf of the Synod.¹¹ In the first convention session of that year, Messrs. J.H. Tesch and F.H. Eilers of Milwaukee, along with pastors Ernst G.W. Keyl and Christian A.T. Selle, submitted a memorial to explore the establishment of a synodical press. Pastor Theodor Brohm of New York submitted a similar memorial directly to President Walther, which was later shared.

After careful examination of the matter and consideration of all sides of the issue in view of conditions in the near future and the relationships pertinent thereto, whereby among other things it became clear that the publication and printing of *Der Lutheraner* could not be joined with such an undertaking according to the plan as it stood in the first memorial [of Tesch, et al.], — the synod resolved to hand the entire matter over to a publication society established by the synod. The drafting of a separate constitution for [this society] was assigned to a committee, whose draft the synod later reviewed, improved, and adopted.¹²

The constitution of the publication society was printed in the convention minutes. It mandated that the society provide "the most inexpensive and most general distribution of orthodox evangelical Lutheran books for education and edification, with special consideration given to the works of the blessed Doctor Martin

an industrial explosion. See also Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996), 759–896.

⁸ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 234–35; 281. See also C. F. William Dallmann, *My Life* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1945), 40, 44–45.

⁹ Wilhelm was known as the "Grape Shot Prince" [*der Kartätschenprinz*]; Otto von Bismarck gave the "Blood and Iron" speech in 1862. For more on the Forty-Eighters, see Jakob Mueller, *Aus den Erinnerungen eines Achtundvierzigers: Skizzen aus der deutsch-amerikanischen Sturm- und Drang-Periode der 50er Jahre* (Cleveland: Schmidt, 1896).

¹⁰ See *Der Lutheraner* 3, no. 24 (1847): 134 and the colophons thereafter until the issue of May 14, 1850.

¹¹ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 293–94. One sees that immediately in the colophon of the 1849 convention proceedings.

¹² LCMS, *Dritter Synodalbericht der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1849* (Chicago: Höffgen, 1849), 16.

Luther.”¹³ The criterion of orthodoxy was determined by complete agreement with Scripture and *The Book of Concord*. That confessional basis remains intrinsic to both Concordia Publishing House (CPH) and the LCMS.

Members of the society could include LCMS pastors, school teachers, and voting lay members of LCMS congregations. The society was to sell bond certificates [*Actien*] to its members, the value of which would be redeemed in the form of goods upon delivery. Few wanted to pay in advance for goods that might never arrive; thus, the plan failed by 1850.¹⁴ The Synod’s publication society continued to work as well as it could with limited resources.¹⁵ On April 24, 1853, Walther and his congregation started a separate Bible society, the *Evangelisch-lutherische Bibelgesellschaft* (“Evangelical Lutheran Bible Society”), which began by importing German Bibles, then printing its own editions later.¹⁶

The last issue of *Der Lutheraner* printed by Olshausen was published May 14, 1850. The printer Moritz Niedner served from 1850 to late 1857. Like Olshausen, Niedner used *Der Lutheraner* to advertise for his own business. Niedner and his firm never really stabilized; he would undertake something for a few years, then he would jump to something new.¹⁷ One of the few books that his firm produced for the LCMS was a two-volume book of martyrs: *Die Märtyrer der evangelisch-lutherischen*

¹³ LCMS, *Dritter Synodalbericht*, 16; the society’s constitution spans pages 16–17.

¹⁴ LCMS, *Vierter Synodalbericht der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1850* (St. Louis: Niedner, 1850), 37–38. The publication society sold only 37 certificates, about a quarter of the 140 that were needed. The total of \$378.75, about a year’s wages for little better than unskilled labor at the time, was set up as a publication fund [*Verlags-Casse*] that would provide resources on loan to the Synod for needed publications. The Synod promised to repay the bond holders [*Actieninhaber*] either in cash [*Baar*] or in books as the course of publication continued.

¹⁵ Mezger has the best account of the 1850 convention. Seuel is vague. Bruce Cameron bases his analysis on a 1951 letter by Otto Dorn, whose unsupported speculation about Walther’s motives, along with sparse facts, undermines Cameron’s analysis of the situation before 1869. Compare Mezger, *Denkstein*, 293–94; Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 293–94; and Bruce Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1994), 3.

¹⁶ Martin Günther, *Dr. Carl F. W. Walther: Lebensbild* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1890), 94; compare Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 293–94; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 6.

¹⁷ Moritz Niedner (1817–95) later became a publisher of judicial sales and other legal notices in St. Louis County. He then acquired *The St. Louis Bulletin* in February of 1861, renamed it to *The State Journal*, and continued its course as a pro-Southern paper. Later he edited the *St. Louiser Abendzeitung* (1867–68). He seems to have worked as a foreman at CPH under Louis Lange from about 1869 until 1878. See *Laws of the State of Missouri Specially Applicable to Saint Louis County*, comp. Horatio McLean Jones and Alexander Martin (St. Louis: The Missouri Democrat Office, 1861), 252–54; Joseph A. Mudd, *With Porter in Northern Missouri: A Chapter in the History of the War Between the States* (Washington, DC: National Publishing Company, 1909), 17–18; Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 299.

Kirche (“*The Martyrs of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*”).¹⁸ In 1851, the LCMS rejected a proposal to create a Christian political newspaper amid fears of rising tensions. These tensions later exploded into a “maelstrom of resentment and hate” on all sides at the outset of the American Civil War and thereafter.¹⁹

In 1854, August Wiebusch, who in 1849 had emigrated from Osnabrück in the Kingdom of Hanover (part of present-day Germany), donated \$1,000 for a synodical press. Starting on December 19, 1854, the colophons of *Der Lutheraner* show the publisher as *Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St.* The LCMS saw itself as the publisher and retailer; it did not want to co-brand its publications with wholesale partners. Relations with Niedner’s firm ended in late 1857.

Memorials at the 1853 convention showed that the LCMS needed a theological journal for clergy and a general paper for laity. As a result, the scholarly journal *Lehre und Wehre* (“*Doctrine and Polemics*”) was launched in 1855, distinguishing itself from *Der Lutheraner*. In the 1857 convention, Walther suggested the printing of the *Altenburger Bibel* (“*Altenburg Bible*”). That triggered the change from Niedner to August Wiebusch und Sohn as the Synod’s printer from late 1857 to late 1869.²⁰ Wiebusch was a capable, assertive businessman.²¹ For the first time, the LCMS could implement an organized publication plan. The Synod required Wiebusch to do business as the synodical press [*Synodaldruckerei*]. The Synod appointed a

¹⁸ Likely based on John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments of the Church*, one finds Anabaptists among the Lutheran martyrs. See C. J. Hermann Fick, *Die Märtyrer der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche*, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Niedner, 1854–56).

¹⁹ Mudd, *With Porter in Northern Missouri*, 23; see also Mezger, *Denkstein*, 294. On Walther’s handling of the slavery issue, see Ludwig E. Fürbringer, *Eighty Eventful Years* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1944), 220, 222–29. See also Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Oxford History of the American People* (New York: Oxford UP, 1965), 612; James M. McPherson, “Civil War,” *The Reader’s Companion to American History*, ed. Eric Foner and John A. Garraty (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1991), 182–90.

²⁰ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 294–95. One must remember that the early LCMS publishers and related committee members also were members of Walther’s congregation; many of them served on the congregation’s boards and committees. When the Synod changed publishers, ripples spread in the congregation. The situation was complex and sometimes murky.

²¹ Both Mezger, *Denkstein*, 295 and Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 294 report that the 1854 offer was actualized in 1857. Wiebusch built a house and established a business on South Fourth Street during 1859–1860. Some sources suggest that he worked out of the basement of Trinity Church, located at Third and Lombard Streets in St. Louis until 1864, when it relocated to Eighth and Lafayette. Sources within the LCMS do not present the story in that manner. Compare Don Heinrich Tolzmann and Ernst D. Kargau, *The German Element in St. Louis: A translation of Ernst D. Kargau’s St. Louis in Former Years: A Commemorative History of the German Element*, trans. William G. Bek (Baltimore: Clearfield, 2000), 44–45. For more on Trinity, see C. F. W. Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ed. Charles P. Schaum, John P. Hellwege Jr., and Thomas E. Manteufel, trans. by Christian C. Tiewes (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010), xlvi–xlvi; as well as Dennis R. Rathert, *A History of Trinity Lutheran Church and School* (St. Louis: Trinity Lutheran Church, 1989).

publishing committee (E. W. Leonhardt, C. Römer, and T. Schuricht) to negotiate prices and supervise the selection and scope of goods to be sold.²² Starting in 1858, one sees the Wiebusch colophon broadly in LCMS publications.

These stipulations proved to be unworkable. For example, the education journal *Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt* (“*Evangelical Lutheran School Newspaper*”), organized by Johann C. W. Lindemann of the teacher seminary in Addison, Illinois, was not an official LCMS publication until 1869, yet Wiebusch printed it perhaps as early as late 1866.²³ Yet he was forbidden to print other outside jobs. The publishing committee wanted Wiebusch to abide strictly by the agreed stipulations, but Wiebusch did not want to lose money with idle presses. In 1867, the publishing committee, along with E. F. W. Meier and Louis Lange, formulated a new business plan. With startup funds of \$3,000, they installed a small press at Concordia Seminary on South Jefferson Avenue in late 1867 or sometime in 1868 before the Synod approved the plan in 1869.²⁴

Not only did business relations sour between the Synod and the Wiebusch firm, but in 1870 the Wiebusch family also suffered anonymous personal attacks on its reputation that harmed its business. Both the LCMS and Trinity Church vouched for the integrity of the Wiebusch family, but to no avail as the situation deteriorated. Henry Wiebusch, son of August, pulled his children from Trinity’s parish school, and later that year the Wiebusch family joined the Evangelical Synod of the West²⁵ and successfully aided that synod’s publishing efforts with many works, including *Erklärung des kleinen evangelischen Katechismus der deutsch-evangelischen Synode des Westens* (1870). August died in 1881.²⁶

The Wiebusch firm printed historically important publications, some of which still shape the LCMS. Illustration 1 shows the title page of the first hymnal used synod-wide by the LCMS. In 1847, the Ludwig company of New York printed the first edition for Trinity Church in St. Louis, on the condition that it be a stereotype edition. In 1861, August Wiebusch und Sohn reprinted the hymnal that Trinity

²² Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 294.

²³ Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 295. The Addison facility moved to River Forest, a Chicago suburb, and became Concordia Teachers College, later Concordia University.

²⁴ Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 294; Rathert, *History*, 14. Louis Lange (1829–93) ran the Lange Publishing Company and printed *Die Abendschule*. The ultimate fate of this first press is not related in published materials.

²⁵ The Evangelical Synod of the West was a synod with a mixed Lutheran-Reformed confession, now part of the United Church of Christ.

²⁶ Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 4; Tolzmann and Kargau, *The German Element in St. Louis*, 44–45. Seuel identifies Niedner (likely the former publisher) working under Lange (“Publication Activity,” 299). Yet all published reports of Lange give specific details about his efforts to avoid conflicts of interest. Without more data, one ought not engage in idle speculation.

offered to the LCMS on December 2, 1861, which the Synod officially accepted in 1863.²⁷ Wiebusch printed early editions of the *Großer Gebets-Schatz* (“Large Treasury of Prayer”) starting in 1864; it was reprinted through 1908.²⁸ This book guided LCMS laity to pray in the same manner as their Lutheran forebears had done since the Reformation. Other notable books produced by Wiebusch include the following: Wilhelm Sihler memorialized Synod in his *Denkschrift* (“Memorial,” 1860), which justified moving the practical seminary from Fort Wayne to St. Louis and mitigated conflict between the Saxons and Franconians.²⁹ Books that established the basis for LCMS polity even today include Walther, *Die Rechte Gestalt einer vom Staate unabhängigen evangelisch-lutherischen Ortsgemeinde* (1863; *The Form of a Christian Congregation*, 1963); with *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1852–75; CPH 1894; *The Church and the Office of the Ministry*, 2012). Köstering and Walther, *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner im Jahre 1838* (“Emigration of the Saxon Lutherans in the Year 1838,” 1866) serves as an LCMS history to that date. Walther, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* (1867; *The True Visible Church*, 1961) was pivotal to hermeneutics and dogmatics in the LCMS. Hermann M. Baumstark’s *Geschichte der Christlichen Kirche* (“History of the Christian Church,” 1867) was one of the first scholarly history books in the LCMS. Lindemann, *Deutsche Grammatik* (“German Grammar,” 1868) was used in LCMS schools until 1893. Wiebusch printed nine books of *Luthers Volksbibliothek* (“Popular Library of Luther,” 1859–76, fifteen books of two volumes each).

²⁷ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 302–303. A hymnal commission met in the 1908–1911 triennium, after which a revised, expanded edition of the hymnal was printed by CPH after final synodical approval in 1917. Image by Charles P. Schaum, taken of the original volume donated to him by John M. Fields of Muscle Shoals, Alabama. See also Rathert, *History*, 14; and Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 294.

²⁸ *Evangelisch-Lutherischer Gebets-Schatz: Vollständige Sammlung von Gebeten Dr. Martin Luthers und anderer rechtgläubiger, gesalbter Beter der ev.-luth. Kirche in unverändertem Abdruck. Nebst einem Hausgesangbüchlein* (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1864). See the translation by Matthew Carver, *Lutheran Prayer Companion* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2018).

²⁹ The Saxons and Franconians had clashed over private Absolution since 1847. See Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 142–143.

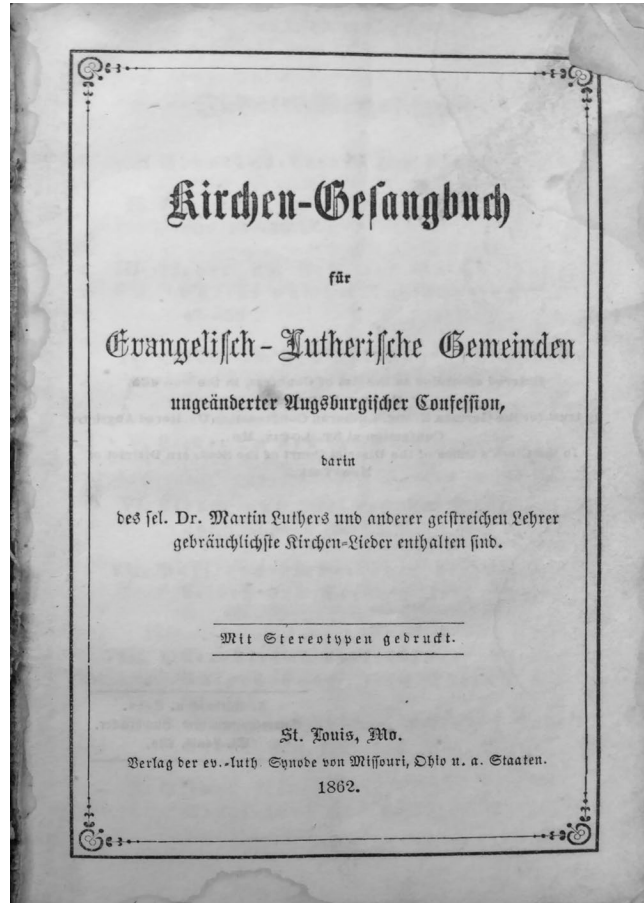


Illustration 1: First General LCMS Hymnal

To handle projects that the LCMS could not undertake, the Synod contracted with the St. Louis-based firm Volkening to reprint the *Trostreden* of Lassenius ("Discourses of Consolation," 1861), Spener's *Catechismus-Predigten* ("Catechism Sermons," 1867), and the first edition of Martin Günther's *Populäre Symbolik* ("Popular Symbolics," 1872), later reprinted and expanded by CPH and Ludwig E. Fürbringer. The Leipzig-based firm Fr. Dette co-published *Das Weimarische Bibelwerk* ("The Weimar Study Bible"), Christian Löber's *Dogmatik* ("Dogmatics") for the laity, and other Lutheran classics with the LCMS throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century.³⁰

³⁰ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 246.

III. Early Retail Arrangements

Retail sales were handled through at least three book shops. In 1850, J. H. Bergmann of New York offered to address the failure of the bond plan. His bookstore offered to import and sell books from Germany, in addition to those printed in the US, for use in the LCMS without needing advance money. In exchange for sales on demand, whether wholesale or retail, his conditions were as follows:

1. Bergmann would carry only those books that agreed fully with Scripture and *The Book of Concord*, be they scholarly or popular.
2. He would obtain German works from publishers either locally or from Germany as long as this were possible and if the price did not exceed the cost of reprinting. He also would print English translations of German works.
3. The net profit of this business should be split thus: Fifty percent would be set aside to build a publication fund. The other fifty percent would be administered by a committee representing Lutheran synods holding strictly to the Formula of Concord to support either properly educated pastors serving poor congregations or missionaries.³¹

The plan would be underwritten by notes of credit issued by business owners within LCMS congregations, who would then be repaid or debited when annual balances were tallied. Pastor Theodor Brohm was the contact for general inquiries and correspondence, while Bergmann was the contact for placing orders. The Synod accepted this offer but left participation up to individuals and congregations.³²

The other two retail stores were owned by members of Walther's congregation. Louis Volkening (1826–1920) and his family had a shop on Franklin Street in northern St. Louis. It was re-branded as an official U.S. store of the Leipzig-based Fr. Dette Company until at least the First World War.³³ Martin C. Barthel (1838–99) ran a book shop near Trinity Church, southeast of the corner of 10th and Carroll Streets, where Interstate 44 cuts through today. Martin was the son of Saxon immigrant Friedrich Wilhelm Barthel, the first LCMS treasurer. In 1860, Martin Barthel became the first general retail agent for the LCMS. After the founding of the LCMS press in 1869, he became general manager of the wholesale press at the seminary in addition to being the general retail agent. Combined wholesale and retail operations were authorized in 1872 and completed in 1874, just in time

³¹ LCMS, *Vierter Synodalbericht*, 37–38.

³² LCMS, *Vierter Synodalbericht*, 38.

³³ *The Lutheran Church Guide* (St. Louis: Lutheran Church Guide Association, 1916), 143.

to move into the new, second building of CPH at the corner of Indiana Avenue and Miami Street.³⁴

IV. Stabilization: *Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag*

The LCMS established a synodical press on September 11, 1869, in its general convention:

1. Resolved: to approve the action of the Publication Committee whereby they set up a synodical **typesetting facility**;
2. Resolved: to accept with heartfelt thanks the suggestion of Mr. L. Lange and four other members of the St. Louis congregation, whereby they should issue bond certificates [*Actien*] to be paid back within five years in order to set up an account for a synodical **publishing facility** . . . and in this manner to make this publishing facility to become and remain the free and clear property of the synod inside of at least five years, for the latter of which the undersigned members shall take responsibility for any loss.³⁵

The bonds mentioned above were twenty-five dollars each for five years at 0 percent interest, slightly less than a month's salary for an unskilled laborer. The return on investment was spiritual, not financial. Response was swift and massively successful because, unlike the 1849 plan, people knew exactly where their money was going. The Church wanted its Bibles and catechisms! Gross profit was at 50 percent in 1872, compared to 12 percent in 1922. This growth accelerated the process of building the physical plant, located between Jefferson and Indiana Avenues along Miami Street, that stands yet today. The Synod decided against forgiving outstanding accounts from the Wiebusch era except in a few exceptional cases, lest that become the norm.³⁶ After two stormy decades, the Synod's publication program finally was on track. A tabular overview of early LCMS periodicals and convention proceedings shows this event as pivotal to the robustness of publication in the LCMS.³⁷

³⁴ Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, xlvi; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 8.

³⁵ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 295, quoting the convention proceedings. Text originally in *Sperrdruck* appears here in boldface. The undersigned were Louis Lange, Henry Kalbfleisch, H. Steinmeyer, E. F. W. Meier, and F. Lange as "colporteur." See Seuel, "Publication Activity," 294.

³⁶ Seuel, "Publication Activity," 297.

³⁷ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 386–90. This English-language resource corrects and explains predecessor German publications whose roles as guides otherwise had been lost to the ages. CTSFW librarian Robert Smith provided helpful assistance. The tables are based mainly on Ernst Eckhardt, *Homiletisches Reallexikon nebst Index Rerum*, 8 vols. (St. Louis: Success, 1907–1917) 6:[d54].

Edmund Seuel relates that the founding date for Concordia Publishing House should precede its incorporation because the Board of Directors [*Direktorium*] authorized by the 1869 convention had been operating continuously as such since then.³⁸ Georg Mezger reports that the original plan was to make Walther the president of the Board of Directors. Walther declined, but he maintained an active, supervisory role in the young firm. The cornerstone was laid on October 21, 1869, and the “Printing Office” was complete on December 27, 1869. The \$3,800 “Adams Press” from Hoe of Boston was installed on February 6, 1870. The first publications included Lindemann’s *Schulblatt*, an edition of Johann Conrad Dietrich’s *Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus* (“*Dr. Martin Luther’s Small Catechism*”), and an intermediate reader, *Lesebuch für Mittelklassen* (“*Reading Book for Intermediate Classes*”).

Walther dedicated the new building on Monday, February 28, 1870. The dedication began with a 2:15 p.m. service at Holy Cross Church, a block west of the seminary, with the brass choirs of both Immanuel, St. Louis and St. Trinity, Carondelet. Pastor G. Schaller wrote a seven-stanza hymn about Christian publishing set to the tune “*Nun freut’ euch, liebe Christen, g’mein*” (“Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice”). Walther gave a dedication speech. The public was invited to see the press in action. Sumptuous food and drink (beer and wine) were served.³⁹ The festivities included community singing that lasted until 11 p.m. in the winter cold with “*Nun ruhet alle Wälder*.”⁴⁰ The early LCMS was serious but not uptight.

Concordia Seminary had been incorporated as “Concordia College” since February 23, 1853, three years after the “German Theological Seminary” in Fort Wayne. As such, it had the legal right to hold real estate and bequests in trust for the LCMS, which was not incorporated until 1894. The 1870s brought the so-called “Blaine Amendments” and attacks on church rights and parish schools that lasted until about 1930.⁴¹ The young synodical press took shelter under the seminary’s corporate wing until 1891, even though it ran independently. Thus, Walther referred

³⁸ Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 294–95. We capitalize Board of Directors throughout the article because it was the legal entity, backed by Concordia Seminary, that construed Concordia Publishing House before and at its incorporation.

³⁹ The potable water in the Dutchtown section of St. Louis had a high sulfur content. On the fact that beer as well as water were the common daily beverage for all, CPH holds a manuscript by George Buettner. Children could drink “small beer,” which included root beer, that was brewed to have a low alcohol content.

⁴⁰ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 298–302; Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 295–97. The “Printing Office,” now at the corner of Texas (formerly Clara) and Miami Streets (number 5) is shown in Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, xlvii. Published accounts appear to speak of the “Adams Press” as the second letterpress used on campus.

⁴¹ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 23.

to “our Concordia Press” [*unsere Concordia Druckerei*] at its dedication in 1870.⁴² Concordia Seminary continued to produce course notes, outlines, and similar works *als Manuskript gedruckt* via CPH and, later, its own print shop. The student association printed and bound handwritten lecture notes using a mimeograph duplicator, styling itself “Concordia Seminary Mimeograph Printing Company” (MIMPERCO).⁴³

In 1878, the synodical convention officially established the name “Lutheran Concordia Publishing House” (*Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag*).⁴⁴ Thereafter, the press began to grow as an independent, self-sustaining institution. Amid the turbulence of the Election Controversy, CPH thrived as a mainstay of the “Missouri fortress,” supporting one of the most productive times for publications in the LCMS.⁴⁵ The 1880s also were important as a time of organization. From 1881 through 1887, the general presidency, presidencies of educational institutions, and boards of directors all received new sets of instructions, powers, responsibilities, and regulations.⁴⁶

Starting in 1881, professors were entitled to request editorial assistance and have their research costs reimbursed if approved by CPH. Otherwise, they could request that the synodical treasury purchase their needed materials, which would revert to being the property of the respective seminary libraries. Previously, if a professor wrote a book or article, he absorbed all the up-front costs as a selfless labor of love with no reimbursement. The faculty were not rich; the fruit of their long-suffering labor enriched seminary libraries, not their families. Professors still received no honoraria for the books and articles that they wrote. Martin C. Barthel began to be paid by CPH instead of the LCMS treasury. The Board of Directors became the holder of the bond certificates that had been circulating instead of the LCMS. Projects included a reorganized *Amerikanischer Kalender für deutsche Lutheraner* (“American Calendar for German Lutherans,” started 1870, the

⁴² Compare Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 4–7.

⁴³ Here German *Concordia Seminar* is used, even though the rest of the name is in English. See Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 144–45. See also Franz Pieper, *Vorträge über die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden, im Anschluss an das Referat, „Die ev.-luth. Kirche“, u.s.w.*, parts I and II (St. Louis: MIMPERCO, 1890–91); *Festrede gehalten bei der Feier des Geburtstags Dr. M. Luthers im ev.-luth. Concordia Seminar zu St. Louis, Mo. den 10. November 1891* (St. Louis: MIMPERCO, 1891).

⁴⁴ Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 295; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 8.

⁴⁵ That is true for hermeneutics, yet also in general. See Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 246. On the Election Controversy or Predestinarian Controversy see also Carl S. Meyer, “The Missouri Synod and Other Lutherans Before 1918,” in *Moving Frontiers*, ed. Carl S. Meyer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 267–278; E. Clifford Nelson, *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 313–325.

⁴⁶ See the convention proceedings from 1881, 1884, 1887, and 1890.

forerunner of *The Lutheran Annual*), an atlas, and a series of three English readers. A host of committees were established to see what future projects could be done.⁴⁷

In 1884, Barthel got a raise from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per annum in order to be on par with similar secular positions. CPH was directed to sell books also in Germany via cooperation with the Saxon Free Church, part of which is in today's LCMS sister church, the *Selbständige Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche* (SELK). The LCMS resolved that the faculty of Concordia Seminary, together with the CPH Board of Directors, set the prices of books to be as inexpensive as possible, in order to be competitive with similar resources in Germany. That faculty also performed doctrinal review for the LCMS until 1974. At least two directors had to serve as delegates for the LCMS General Delegate-Synod. The directors had to meet monthly, and the general agent (later, general manager) was required to attend. The chairman of the Board of Directors was designated president of CPH; the position had to be filled by an ordained minister of the church. (That stipulation changed in 1971 when Mr. Ralph Reinke became president of CPH.) The directors were governed by Chapter VI of the 1854 LCMS constitution in the same manner as all other synodical officers.

Also in 1884, the Board of Directors gained the sole authorization to decide what should be printed, except when the General Delegate-Synod voted to publish a work. The board was prohibited to do business with anyone save the general agent. Should the latter choose to let works go out of print or make other business changes, he was required to inform either the general LCMS president or the General Delegate-Synod. A host of regulations applied separately to the general agent regarding wholesale production, retail sales, and ordering from other publishers.

Perhaps most important for the Synod, the delegates resolved to develop a unified study text for Luther's Small Catechism. It later was known as the Schwan Catechism after LCMS President Heinrich C. Schwan (who served 1887–99).⁴⁸ Current English explanations of the Small Catechism used in the LCMS are descended from this catechism via the English translation and bilingual editions of 1912, used commonly among members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America.

The year 1887 saw the death of Walther. Still, the LCMS publishing project begun by Walther continued to live on, adding strength to strength. The Bible society that Walther had started in 1853 offered its assets of \$17,407.73 to be

⁴⁷ LCMS, *Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten versammelt als Dritte Delegaten-Synode zu Fort Wayne, Indiana im Jahre 1881* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881), 64–67.

⁴⁸ LCMS, *Neunzehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten versammelt als Vierte Delegaten-Synode zu St. Louis, Mo., im Jahre 1884* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1884), 57–62.

absorbed by CPH, which the Synod approved.⁴⁹ The report in 1887 showed the CPH board in compliance with its official regulations. Its status was equivalent to the boards of control (originally *Directorat*, later *Aufsichtsbehörden*) of the educational institutions. The board noted that CPH had been supplementing the general LCMS treasury since 1881, and that even though the total in the 1884–87 triennium had decreased to \$97,700.80, still, CPH was committed to supporting the efforts that created its success.⁵⁰

Between 1870 and 1922, CPH experienced substantial growth. A second building was authorized in 1872 and completed in 1874, facing Indiana Avenue. That second building was annexed twice by 1888. Another building was added in 1893, facing Jefferson Avenue at the corner of Miami at the current 3558 South Jefferson location, with additions in 1911, 1925, and 1941.⁵¹ Both power facilities and press capabilities were expanded several times.

Logotypes are reflections of an institution. Illustration 2 shows the most common CPH logos seen from around 1883 to the 1941–44 transition period, reflecting the management of M.C. Barthel, Martin S. Tirmenstein, and Edmund Seuel. No logos appear before 1880, apart from printer’s ornaments like the Bible and sword associated with Walther’s *Evangelien-Postille* (“Gospel Postil,” first printed in 1870).⁵²



Illustration 2: German-Era CPH Logos

⁴⁹ LCMS, *Zwanzigster Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten versammelt als Fünfte Delegaten-Synode zu Fort Wayne, Indiana im Jahre 1887* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1887), 57.

⁵⁰ LCMS, *Zwanzigster Synodal-Bericht*, 45–46.

⁵¹ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 296–97, 302; Seuel, “Publication Activity,” 289–93; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 8–11; Christian Cyclopedia, s.v. “Lutheran Publication Houses,” ed. Erwin Lueker, Luther Poellot, and Paul Jackson, <http://cyclopedia.lcms.org/display.asp?t1=p&word=PUBLICATIONHOUSES.LUTHERAN>. The 1874 “Lutheran Printing House” (no. 7), is shown in Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, xlvi.

⁵² During the 1870s, colophons in LCMS publications referred to *Druckerei der ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten* or *M.C. Barthel, General-Agent der deutschen ev.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten*.

The leftmost logo appeared circa 1883 and was used on new works through at least 1895.⁵³ It appeared on reprinted works through at least 1898.⁵⁴ Its style stands at the very end of Romanticism. It slightly rewords 1 Peter 1:25, “*Verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum*,” also recalling Isaiah 40:8. In English, it reads, “Yet the word of the Lord endures forever.” The words that come off the press must agree with Scripture, a central tenet of CPH. The fleurs-de-lis signify Trinitarian motifs and perhaps also the symbolism of the city of St. Louis, while the “wings” at the top signify power.⁵⁵ Round logos of the era suggest global importance, opulence, quality, and a guarantee of trust. Luther’s 1532 Galatians commentary refers to doctrine as an unbroken ring.⁵⁶ The intertwined CSV stands for *Concordia Synodal-Verlag* (“*Synodical Concordia Publishing House*”).

One of the first works in which the middle logo appears is Walther’s 1893 *Gesetz und Evangelium* (“*Law and Gospel*”), the printing of the shorter 1878 lecture series that has not been translated into English.⁵⁷ The right-hand logo appeared around 1908 as a designation for practical works.⁵⁸ By 1913, it was used on shorter academic works.⁵⁹ The middle and right-hand logos were used interchangeably, with a preference for the middle. For example, Franz Pieper’s *Christliche Dogmatik* (“*Christian Dogmatics*”) used the middle logo, while its index volume by Ernst Eckhardt used the logo at right. Both the middle and right-hand logos have a noticeable Art Nouveau influence. Both have CPH for *Concordia Publishing House*. The middle logo adds “Trade Mark.”⁶⁰

V. Incorporation and Change: CPH Comes of Age

In the 1887 *Proceedings* a major part of LCMS business proceedings included the work of CPH (pages 45–57). In 1890, that work expanded. The Synod had

⁵³ See the title pages in Wilhelm Sihler, *Zeit- und Gelegenheits-Predigten* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1883); Henry Sieck, *Adventspredigten über ausgewählte Texte* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895).

⁵⁴ For example, Luther, *Kleiner Katechismus* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1898). During this period, many CPH colophons indicate the printing year, not the copyright year.

⁵⁵ Possibilities include the Holy Spirit, an imperial eagle on a crown, or a military decoration.

⁵⁶ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 224, 462.

⁵⁷ See Walther, *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible*, ix–xii.

⁵⁸ *Concordia Chöre: Eine Sammlung von Liedern in vierstimmigen Satz für unsere Schulen und Sonntagsschulen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1908).

⁵⁹ Franz Pieper, *Zur Einigung der amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche in der Lehre von der Bekehrung und Gnadenwahl* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913).

⁶⁰ Northwestern Publishing House also used a logotype influenced by Art Nouveau in 1915. See Carl Manthey Zorn, *Christenfragen aus Gottes Wort* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1915).

to make debt-collecting resolutions involving specific members, a burden they had not foreseen!

It was time that CPH incorporate, and the Board of Directors asked for that action. The synodical publication committee concurred, citing the Bennett legislation of the day that put the legal situation of CPH into question. After approval by the Synod in 1890, CPH was incorporated on May 27, 1891, as a stock company with 196 shares at \$1,000 each, held in good faith by the seven members of the Board of Directors, each of whom held 28 shares.⁶¹ At this time, Pastor Carl Ludwig Janzow (known also as Charles) was the president of CPH, chairman of the board, and chairman of the committee tasked with publishing Ferdinand Walther's literary remains. He had worked closely with Walther as director of the Board for English Mission.⁶²

Lightning struck out of the blue. On August 14, 1891, Assistant General Manager Martin S. Tirmenstein detected an unauthorized \$50 check to M. C. Barthel. An audit showed irregularities with the elder Barthel and M. R. Barthel Jr.; President Janzow interviewed the junior Barthel, who fled and went into hiding. M. C. Barthel initially was declared mentally unfit for trial on December 26, 1891. That declaration apparently was voided. Thereafter, a grand jury indicted M. C. Barthel on May 23, 1892, ordering his arrest. He was judged competent for trial. Thereafter, Barthel confessed to the Synod on July 23, 1892, and in criminal court on August 1, 1892, that he had embezzled \$50,000 in cash and other goods. C. L. Janzow stepped aside from his position the same year. The incident made national trade news in *The Publishers Weekly*. The report in the 1893 LCMS convention changed the Synod in fundamental ways. For legal stability, the Synod incorporated on June 2, 1894.⁶³

⁶¹ LCMS, *Einundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten versammelt als Sechste Delegaten-Synode zu Milwaukee, Wis. im Jahre 1890* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1890), 57. The Articles of Association for all LCMS organs used to be printed in the handbook that contained the constitution, bylaws, and regulations of the synod. See those of CPH in, for example, *Synodalhandbuch der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und Andern Staaten* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), 102–103. See also Seuel, "Publication Activity," 302. This later caused problems with the IRS. Looking for money during the Second World War, the Roosevelt administration pursued companies that were associated with churches, yet not incorporated in related fashion. CPH lost its case in U.S. district court. It paid the IRS and later reincorporated as a tax-exempt not-for-profit corporation. Details are in the CPH archives.

⁶² Dallmann, *My Life*, 36–37.

⁶³ LCMS, *Zweiundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten versammelt als Siebente Delegaten-Synode zu St. Louis, Mo. im Jahre 1893* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1893), 98–101. See also *Synodalhandbuch* (1924), 99–102. Details in Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 270–72, are given in cursory fashion following the reporting in *The Publishers Weekly*.

This loss was equal to 35.7 percent of the 1882–83 building cost of Concordia Seminary and 138 percent of the 1883 building cost of St. Paul's College in Concordia, Missouri. Even though this amount was dwarfed by LCMS financial irregularities in the 1960s, the effects were greater.⁶⁴ Those affected included CPH, Concordia Seminary, and everything that it held in trust for the LCMS. The general response, beginning in 1893, was to adopt current best business practices.⁶⁵

Martin S. Tirmenstein righted the ship and got her moving on course. He was the grandson of Samuel Tirmenstein, one of the Saxon immigrants of 1838. Martin's wife was Clara Louise Lange, related to Louis Lange. He was appointed general manager on November 17, 1891, at the same salary as Barthel. CPH celebrated its silver jubilee on February 27, 1895. Rev. E. A. Brauer, the only surviving member of the seminary faculty from the 1870 dedication, delivered the sermon. Tirmenstein oversaw the award-winning CPH display at the 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, after similar displays at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901. In 1905, CPH got its first Linotype hot-metal press; it had seven by 1922. Tirmenstein resigned his position on March 10, 1907, to take on a management position at a printing firm in Konstanz, Germany. He died of respiratory complications in January 1908 after sailing to Europe.⁶⁶

Johann Edmund Seuel, known as Edmund, became general manager on March 18, 1907, serving until 1944. He also served as pastor and missionary in Ogalalla, Nebraska (1886–88); teacher at Walther College (the first LCMS high school in St. Louis, 1888–1907); LCMS treasurer (1914–42); and co-founder of the Lutheran Layman's League. His position as treasurer was the catalyst for the LCMS to locate its corporate headquarters in St. Louis.⁶⁷ Previously, the LCMS presidents did

⁶⁴ See Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years Toward a More Excellent Ministry 1839–1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 83; "About Us," St. Paul's Concordia Lutheran Church and School, accessed March 26, 2019, <http://www.stpaulsconcordia.org/about>. Compare LCMS, *Proceedings of the Forty-Fifth Regular Convention of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), 154, 156; LCMS, *Convention Proceedings: 49th Regular Convention* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), 147–48; Fred C. Rutz, *A Businessman Looks at His Church* (Painesville, Ohio: [Fred C. Rutz Foundation], [1967]); *Supplement to A Businessman Looks at His Church* (Painesville, Ohio: [Fred C. Rutz Foundation], [1968]).

⁶⁵ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 270–72.

⁶⁶ Perhaps the best published account of Tirmenstein's life is in Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 14–15. Compare Seuel, "Publication Activity," 300–301, wherein Seuel is unusually critical of Tirmenstein. Seuel disapproved of Tirmenstein's exposition displays as a waste of resources and panned *Concordia Magazine* as a marketing failure until it was redesigned as the successful *Young Lutheran's Magazine*.

⁶⁷ Seuel, "Publication Activity," 301; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 17–19; *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, revised edition, ed. by Erwin L. Lueker and Luther D. Poellot (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), 713.

business from their respective parishes or locations of work in Cleveland, St. Louis, Chicago, and Oak Park, Illinois. The administrative business of the LCMS was conducted in crowded office space located at CPH. The “Lutheran Building” at 210 North Broadway opened as the LCMS headquarters in 1951.⁶⁸

Major changes occurred after 1911. With the merger of the English Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri and Other States as the LCMS English District, CPH absorbed the American Lutheran Publication Board (the original ALPB). Their catalog, printed out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, included the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* (second edition 1909); *Sunday-School Hymnal* (1901); *The Abridged Treasury of Prayer* (1906, an English translation of selections from the larger *Evangelisch-lutherischer Gebets-Schatz* by CPH); and a number of sermon collections and devotional works.

The two English hymnals that were brought into the LCMS helped to lay the foundation for a common LCMS worship experience that has existed for about a century. The move from *Christenlehre* to Sunday School was helped by the attraction of area children and their families to church.⁶⁹ Yet some changes heralded later tensions. Although some LCMS churches started using offering envelopes in the 1890s, they usually did not collect the offering during the service after the offertory.⁷⁰ The LCMS *Gesangbuch* strove to preserve the theological unity of the spoken word and the visible Word, seeing a collection as being disruptive to that.

The English Synod, on the other hand, used the Common Service developed by the predecessor bodies of the United Lutheran Church in America. The ULCA claimed that the collection of offerings after the offertory, with subsequent mandatory placement on the altar, was the act of the congregation actualizing the Gospel.⁷¹ Tensions between the *Gesangbuch* approach and that of the *Evangelical Lutheran Hymn-Book* created ambiguity regarding the scope and validity

⁶⁸ John W. Behnken and William J. Schmelder, *This I Recall*, revised edition (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 43–44. For photos and more information about the building see “Built St. Louis,” accessed May 1, 2019, <https://www.builtstlouis.net/opos/lutheran.html>.

⁶⁹ See also Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 479n15. *Christenlehre*, with both Lutheran and Roman Catholic roots, was a service of religious instruction, often held on Sunday afternoon, where the pastor expounded on Christian doctrine. When the LCMS shifted to Sunday School, it drew on both the tradition of Norwegian mission societies and approaches that had been imported from England into English-speaking American churches.

⁷⁰ Compare Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*, 13; Ludwig E. Furbringer, *Liturgik: Leitfaden für Vorlesungen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 18–19.

⁷¹ Luther D. Reed, *The Lutheran Liturgy* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1947), 308–309; Paul Z. Strodach, ed., *An Explanation of the Common Service*, 6th ed. (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1941), 41.

of actualized faith in the worshiping community. That ambiguity ignited arguments at the time and fueled later conflicts.⁷²

In 1899, C. L. Janzow published *Life of Rev. Prof. C. F. W. Walther* with the ALPB. It was a “Victorian,” sanitized version of Martin Günther’s *Dr. Carl F. W. Walther: Lebensbild* published by CPH in 1890. Janzow deleted Walther’s edgier, saltier expressions (recalled in detail by William Dallmann). The casting of Walther as a saintly *pater patriae*, a founding father of his church, helped to create common ground in the 1911 merger of the English Synod with the LCMS.⁷³

Perhaps chief among the English Synod contributions, however, remains *The Lutheran Witness*, started in 1882. In 1916, its circulation was already on par with *Der Lutheraner*, and it overtook the latter after the First World War. In 1922, *Der Lutheraner* reached its greatest regular circulation of 40,000. In that same year, *The Lutheran Witness* had a circulation of 505,000. *Der Lutheraner* lingered on as a bimonthly after the Second World War until the November-December issue of 1974. Its final circulation numbers were 2,700 copies, supported by members of the SELK, the German sister-church of the LCMS, as well as German speakers in Canada, Brazil, and Finland.⁷⁴ Yet *The Lutheran Witness* also changed from a biweekly to a monthly periodical like *Der Lutheraner*.

The turn of the twentieth century heralded a golden age in periodicals at CPH. Until 1866, the only periodicals were *Der Lutheraner*, *Lehre und Wehre*, and convention proceedings. *Evangelisch-Lutherisches Schulblatt* started in 1866, *Lutherisches Kinder- und Jugendblatt* (“Lutheran Newspaper for Children and Youth”) rolled off the presses from 1871–1938, and *Magazin für evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik* (“Magazine for Evangelical Lutheran Homiletics”) arrived in 1877. One can add the *Missions-Taube* (“Mission Dove,” 1879–1933) and *Lutheran Pioneer* (both started in 1879 for the Synodical Conference). The *Theological Quarterly* began in 1897, changing to a monthly in 1921. It was combined with *Lehre und Wehre*, the *Homiletic Magazine* (begun 1903) and the *Magazin für evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik* to form *Concordia Theological Monthly* (1930–72). *Concordia Magazine* ran only from 1896 to 1901, yet from its ashes rose *Young Lutherans’ Magazine* (1902–1948).

We set aside the growth of Sunday School materials, English parochial school materials, and other changes to focus on specific theological contributions that

⁷² For more context see Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 115–16, 154–56, 179, 297–99, and 341n37.

⁷³ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 403–404. See additionally Dallmann, *My Life*, 23f.

⁷⁴ Herman A. Mayer, “1844–1974: Der Triumphzug einer Zeitschrift,” *Der Lutheraner* 130, no. 6 (1974): 1–2.

suggest why the heritage of CPH in the German era still is good, right, and salutary for the teaching and defense of doctrine.⁷⁵

VI. Works We Miss in English

The LCMS, its districts, and its sister churches adopted well over 1500 doctrinal theses, which were considered *doctrina publica* from the early days until the 1970s. LCMS convention resolutions since then have made their authority ambiguous.⁷⁶ Many of these still-untranslated yet published theses and presentations explain theological matters in detail. They are the public record of a church body's thought processes regarding public doctrine and clear criteria for doctrinal standards and oversight. This testifies to a healthier condition of the church than we find today, when 58 percent of LCMS Lutherans fail to accept without reservation that the Bible is the literal, inspired, inerrant word of God as they live amid ambiguous doctrinal standards and church decline.⁷⁷

The "Schwan Catechism" was based mainly on Conrad Dieterich's *Institutiones Catecheticae* (his explanation of Luther's Small Catechism) with additions from the Dresden *Kreuz-Katechismus*.⁷⁸ Before the latter 1880s, the Synod used the

⁷⁵ An article cannot do justice to those topics. For more, see Seuel, "Publication Activity"; Cameron, *The Word of the Lord Endures Forever*; and Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 386–90, 394.

⁷⁶ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 131–41. Compare Noland and Loest, *Doctrinal Resolutions*. One finds such theses in the various Proceedings [*Verhandlungen*] of the synods and their districts. The referencing systems in early LCMS and WELS publications that compile and list the theses assume that one has firsthand knowledge of the *Proceedings*. They have no common system for organizing topics. Compare L. August Heerboth, *Inhaltsangabe zu den Synodalberichten der Missouri-Synode und der Synodalkonferenz* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1915); LCMS, *Register über die Synodal-Berichte vom Jahre 1847 bis zum Jahre 1881* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1884); *Thesen für die Lehrverhandlungen der Missouri-Synode und der Synodalkonferenz bis zum Jahre 1893* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1894).

⁷⁷ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 3–5, 472–90. See "U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Religious Beliefs and Practices," Pew Research Center, accessed May 1, 2019, www.pewforum.org/2008/06/01/u-s-religious-landscape-survey-religious-beliefs-and-practices.

⁷⁸ Conrad Dieterich, *D. Conradi Dieterici institutiones catecheticae depromptae B. Lutheri catechesi et variis notis illustratae annexisquatuor symbolis oecumenicis et Augustana Confessione siue catechismi Lutheri expositio primum edidit D. Conr. Dietericus a. 1613 ex editione a. 1640 ab Dieterici filio curata* (Berolini: sumptibus Gust. Schlawitz, 1864); Martin Luther, *D. Martin Luthers sel. Kleiner Catechismus: Auf Churfl. Durchl. zu Sachsen gnädigsten Befehl, Im Jahr Christi 1683. durch Frag und Antwort deutlich erläutert, und mit angeführten Sprüchen Heil. Schriftt bekräftiget; von dem Ministerio zum H. Creutz zu Dreßden, Folgens Von dem Churfl. Sächs. Ober-Consistorio zu Dreßden, und beeden Theologischen Facultäten zu Leipzig und Wittenberg censiret und approbiret, und nunmehr Auf Churfl. Sächs. absonderlichen Gn. Befehl zum gemeinen Gebrauch in Druck gegeben* (Dresden: Mieth, 1688), <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb11291260-3>.

translation of Dieterich by Friedrich W.A. Notz, co-published with Fr. Dette.⁷⁹ Yet CPH also produced an edition of the Schwan Catechism for pastors and teachers.⁸⁰ It contains the same questions and answers as the student edition, but with many more citations from Scripture and *The Book of Concord*, along with explanations of the additional material that go into great detail about the hermeneutical application of the verses and how one thinks through it.

In 1911, professor J. H. Herzer of Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, Illinois, wrote a book on catechetics, namely, everything necessary to teach the Small Catechism to older children and adults.⁸¹ He tied LCMS catechesis to the broader Lutheran tradition. The book excels in its comprehensiveness for the time, and it shows quite well how serious, how sacred a duty it is for a pastor or catechist to pass on the faith. No equivalent book in English exists.

The English Synod printed only an abridged translation of the “*Großer Gebets-Schatz*” (see above). The 1908 printing of the larger treasury included 478 pages of prayers, Scripture verses, and devotional song stanzas for every occasion, with an index. The included “Small Hymnal for the Home” was another seventy-six pages of hymns and an index. The full book has only recently been translated.⁸² Some of its contents are also in the current *Lutheran Book of Prayer*.⁸³

Walther’s edition of Johann Wilhelm Baier’s *Compendium Theologiae Positivae* (“*Compendium of Positive Theology*”), along with Carl Gottlob Hofmann’s *Institutiones theologiae exegeticae in usum academicarum praelectionum adornatae* (“*Instructions in Exegetical Theology Furnished for the Use of Academic Lectures*”), were printed respectively in 1879 and 1876 by the synodical press designated in Latin as *Officina Synodi Missouriensis Lutheranae* (“*Workshop of the Lutheran Missouri Synod*”). Both books come from late Lutheran Orthodoxy and were a part of Walther’s educational plan of building a bridge from the common Pietism of the day to a better time, then equipping soldiers of the cross to do the same.⁸⁴ These works shaped LCMS doctrine from the 1870s until about 1920. Especially Walther’s

⁷⁹ Conrad Dieterich, *Institutiones Catecheticae, das ist, gründliche Auslegung des Katechismus D. Martin Luthers in Frage und Antwort und mit Anmerkungen versehen*, trans. Friedrich Wilhelm August Notz (St. Louis, Mo., & Leipzig: F. Dette, 1876).

⁸⁰ Dr. Martin Luthers *Kleiner Katechismus in Frage und Antwort gründlich ausgelegt von Dr. Johann Conrad Dietrich, weiland Superintendent zu Ulm, mit Zusätzen aus dem Dresdner Kreuz-Katechismus und den Bekenntnißschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, und mit Sprüchen der heiligen Schrift versehen, nebst dreifachem Anhang: Ausgabe für Pastoren und Lehrer mit Ausdrück sämtlicher citirten Schriftstellen* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895).

⁸¹ J.H. Herzer, *Evangelisch-lutherische Katechetik* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1911).

⁸² See above, note 28.

⁸³ Translated by this author. See *Lutheran Book of Prayer*, ed. by Scott A. Kinnamann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2005).

⁸⁴ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 147–48, 197.

version of Baier, when compared to the edition of Eduard Preuss, shows how the LCMS interpreted the preceding Lutheran tradition for its time.⁸⁵

Although the *Outlines of Popular Theology* by Augustus L. Graebner survived to the early 1980s, his *Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in Amerika* (“History of the Lutheran Church in America,” 1892) did not. No other LCMS historian has yet filled that void; the work by G. F. Bente (*American Lutheranism*, two vols., 1919) came closest to that.

VII. Works with Influence Today

The most monumental publication of CPH in its German period was the “St. Louis Edition” of Luther’s works, *Dr. Martin Luthers Sämmtliche Schriften*: twenty-two volumes in twenty-four books, plus an index volume, published by CPH from 1880 to 1910. It is arguably the largest German-language work ever printed in the US.⁸⁶ The project was started by a motion from J. F. Bünger, emeritus president of the Western District, at a pastors’ conference attached to the district convention opened by President F. J. Biltz on September 24, 1879, at Trinity Church in St. Louis. The conference voted to pledge the support of the entire LCMS ministerium to a revised edition of J. G. Walch’s Halle Edition of Luther’s works. The project would be edited by K. Georg Stöckhardt with assistance by E. W. Kähler. The LCMS rapidly secured the support of its pastors, likely through subscription orders, at which time the CPH Board of Directors moved forward. At the time, no one knew what the product cost would be; the pastors simply promised to pay whatever it would take to do the right thing. The first volume appeared around the Festival of the Reformation in 1880. Stöckhardt edited the Genesis lectures (vols. 1–2), the Church Postils (vols. 11–12), and the House Postils (vols. 13a–13b). Candidate H. Beyer edited the catechetical writings (vol. 10). The rest were edited by pastor Albrecht F. Hoppe, with Stöckhardt as project supervisor.⁸⁷ Many English-language LCMS works, including *What Luther Says* (1959), refer to this edition.

Franz A. O. Pieper’s signature work, *Christliche Dogmatik*, influenced the LCMS in ways that were not intended by its author. Begun in 1917, its 1924 completion was supposed to herald an update of Walther’s edition of Baier, designed to meet the contemporary theological climate. Yet in 1934, J. T. Mueller published an abridged English translation, whose quality was spotty. An even worse attempt at translating the full *Dogmatik* was produced privately by Walter Albrecht in 1938

⁸⁵ Emmanuel Press (<http://emmanuelpress.us/>) has a reprint edition of Baier.

⁸⁶ Luther’s Genesis lectures encompass the first two volumes of the St. Louis edition and the first eight volumes of the English-language American Edition. Given this rough factor of four, the current American Edition has yet to surpass an equivalent ninety-six volumes.

⁸⁷ Mezger, *Denkstein*, 303–305.

for use at the practical seminary in Springfield. An editorial committee revised and corrected Albrecht's text and published *Christian Dogmatics* (1950–53). Pieper wrote clearly and simply and was very irenic. He put all the complicated material in footnotes. The English version put the footnotes into the body text, impairing its readability. They changed the tone to be very bellicose. They introduced jargon that did not exist in the German text. In some places, they replaced Christology with language about divine sovereignty. Finally, they altered Pieper's text regarding closed Communion, even when Pieper used the English words "closed communion" in his German text.⁸⁸ Pieper is an oft-cited LCMS author, yet he is remarkably unknown and misunderstood in English.

Walther's works continue to be translated for the benefit of the LCMS, and his legacy lives on today. Recent volumes include *Law and Gospel: How to Read and Apply the Bible* (2010), edited by the present author with contributions by Thomas Manteufel and John Hellwege and translated by Christian C. Tiews; *The Church and the Office of the Ministry* (2012), edited by Matthew C. Harrison; *Gospel Sermons* volume 1 (2013) and *Gospel Sermons* volume 2 (2014), both translated by Donald E. Heck; *Church Fellowship* (2014); *All Glory to God* (2016); *Pastoral Theology*, edited by David W. Loy and translated by Christian C. Tiews (2017); and *Predestination* (2018).

VIII. Conclusion

The early success of CPH depended on the pastors who taught and the congregations who received instruction according to the Bible and *The Book of Concord*. The enduring word of God, not the efforts of mere men, built the LCMS and her publisher. Do we hear that same word today? Before 1917, average worship attendance, reception of the Lord's Supper, attendance of children in parish schools and the like was high, at least 85 percent. By 1950, Sunday attendance was at 40 percent, regular Communion was at 33 percent, and children in parish schools were 25 percent.⁸⁹ Can we still teach our children well?

The LCMS founders worked themselves to death so that their children could have a better future and be free to learn, believe, and live out their faith according to Scripture and *The Book of Concord*. The German-era CPH was central to making the dream of our forefathers into our reality. As well-taught Christians, if we wish

⁸⁸ Schaum and Collver, *Breath of God, Yet Work of Man*, 318–22. A sampling of respective page comparisons that illustrate these observations includes Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950–1953), 1:23, 1:24, 1:28, 1:428, 2:387, 3:381; and *Christliche Dogmatik* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917–1924), 1:24, 1:25, 1:29, 1:524, 2:464, 3:444.

⁸⁹ John E. Herrmann, *The Chief Steward* (St. Louis: LCMS, 1951), 4; George U. Wenner, "Lutheran Parochial Schools," *Religious Education* 11, no. 2 (1916): 129–30.

God to be with us today, we should extol and teach His promises and their fulfillment among our forefathers.⁹⁰ An excellent pastor is one who takes out the Gospel treasures old and new for his flock (Matt 13:52). CPH still takes out those treasures to enliven modern Lutheran theological classics. As Christian parents and teachers, before our health shall surely fade, we are commended to teach Christ well to our children, properly dividing Law and Gospel, so that they know He loves them. Spiritually healthy pastors, congregations, and church bodies need also laity who live in Christ and daily read and meditate on Scripture. In the LCMS, whether in 1869, 1969, or 2019, we give thanks that CPH is built on the word of the Lord that endures forever.

⁹⁰ See Deuteronomy 11:21; Joshua 4:21–22; Nehemiah 9:23; Psalm 78:5; Ezekiel 37:25; and Ephesians 6:4.