

THE WELS SEAL:
NOT JUST ANOTHER SYMBOL

SENIOR CHURCH HISTORY
PROFESSOR FREDRICH

By
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5/19/'89

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NOT JUST ANOTHER SYMBOL

The world today is full of symbols. Besides just being the by-products of creativity or common sense, oftentimes they do seem to make our lives much easier. The reason for that happening, simply lies in it's own definition: symbol- 1. something used for or regarded as representing something else; a material object representing something, often something immaterial; emblem, token, or sign. 2. a letter, figure, or other character or mark or a combination of letters or the like used to designate something. 3. a word, phrase, image, or the like having a complex of associated meanings and percieved as having inherent value seperable from that which is symbolized, and as performing its normal function of standing for or representing that which is symbolized: usually conceived as deriving its meaning chiefly from the structure in which it appears, and generally distinguished from a sign.

Now, whether or not you commit to memory anyone of these definitions of a symbol, makes no difference. I believe I can safely assume that you, as the reader, already have a mental conception of a (any) symbol, what it is and what it does. As we are well aware, they are all around us. We live with them. At times we live by them. For example, a certain symbol (skull and crossbones) will warn us of poison; a certain symbol will tell us when to cross the street; scientists use symbols that are short and concise to refer to chemicals or elements like H₂O for water, Fe for iron; an eerie looking cross called a swastika immediately recalls to mind the Nazis and the Third Reich. I'm sure you can see the usefulness, the reason behind symbols. A symbol can eliminate long, drawn-out words or phrases which can easily be "summed-up" with a simple symbol. Depending on the symbol and it's particular intended purpose and meaning, life indeed is made easier with those that are without question, meaningful and significant.

As we turn our attention to the subject of this paper, the symbol, or better yet, the seal of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, I'd like to stress the previously mentioned words, 'meaningful' and 'significant.' The WELS seal is just that. It is like no other symbol around. I'm not saying that everyday "life" will be made much easier just because this particular seal exists, or that it inheritantly has magical powers vested in it, but that this seal is a badge of honor for the Synod and for Christians because of what it stands for. It does just that: it takes a stand; it makes a stand. If it means no more to people than just another pretty decoration on a piece

of paper or on a wall or wherever, than that is all it is, just another symbol whose significance can change at will. To members of the WELS, hopefully it's more than a pen and ink drawing, for the stand that it is taking and portraying DOES have an effect on "life." With that then, I will now introduce you to the WELS seal as it looks today, and proceed to prove to you that the WELS seal is NOT just another symbol:



What prompted this paper in the first place was my own ignorance, my own questions about the seal. Where did it come from? Who made it? Who thought of it? What does it mean? When did it first appear? Where is it used today and why? I, myself have seen this seal countless times and countless places, and yet previous to my research, I knew next to nothing about it. Should you have any of the same questions I did, or even some other ones I failed to mention, hopefully the content of this paper answers them for you.

As the title suggests, the WELS seal is not just any old symbol, and you recall that my aim is to show you why. To do

that I feel that it is necessary to begin with the date 1850. That may sound ridiculous, maybe even unnecessary, but historic background is crucial. Even though this seal as we know it today wasn't on paper back in 1850, and even though nobody even thought about it, still the seal existed. It existed in the minds and hearts of dedicated Christians. It existed in words and in actions. It existed in thoughts and speech. It came to life in meetings and debates, in arguments and agreements. It WASN'T plastered on literature and publications, it WASN'T hanging in churches and schools, and it WASN'T just a pretty decoration.' But it stood out and it stood strong. And by the grace of God it took the shape that we know it today.

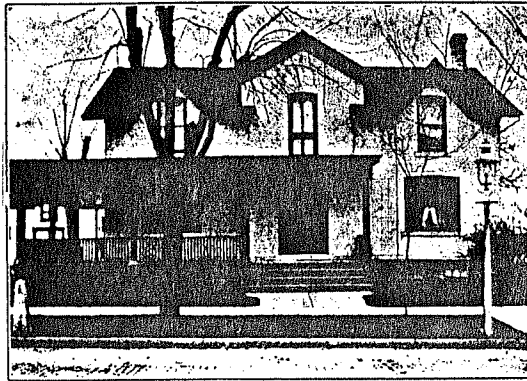
The reason I chose 1850 for a starting date is not a haphazard pick. But the year 1850 marks the time when the Wisconsin Synod was founded. The following information about the history of the synod and the seminaries obviously have been written about extensively already, but this history is pertinent to the development of the WELS seal.

Three men, John Muehlhaeuser, John Weinmann and Wrede met at Grace Church in Milwaukee on December 8, 1849 and decided to form the "First Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin." The first regular meeting was scheduled for May 27, 1850 in Salem Church at Granville, Wisconsin. At this time, the president was to present a constitution which should give expression to their confessional stand. But it was one day earlier, on May 26, that the first meeting of the newly founded Synod took place. Two things of noteworthy significance needs to be mentioned at this

time: 1) their confession was to be based upon the Scriptures and upon the Augsburg Confession (U.A.C.) and the other Lutheran Confessions, and 2) that even at this first meeting, the necessity of Christian schools was strongly urged. It was suggested here already that the Wisconsin Synod have its very own seminary! Just knowing at least these last two points, especially the first one about their stand on Scripture, hopefully you as the reader can see a little more clearly why I believe the "seed" started to take shape already.

The seed was planted, but growth and results were slow. But fortunately 'slow' did not mean 'dead.' Because of the influencing Civil War at the time, the Wisconsin Synod continued the practice of having their men trained at the Gettysburg Seminary of the Pennsylvania Synod. After a while, however, the Wisconsin Synod wasn't all that keen on this set-up. Too many spiritual lives were not being attended to! And so talk continued about a new seminary, and finally the talk stopped and turned into action!

It was in 1863 that the Wisconsin Synod voted to open its own seminary. The need and the reasons for it were all too great to overlook, to keep pushing it off as it had been. And so a simple, basic house, known as the Gardner House stands as a landmark in time. This Gardner House served as the first home of our seminary. This private residence was located on Fourth Street in Watertown, Wisconsin. To help give you an idea of our seminary beginnings, a picture of the Gardner House is found on the following page:



It is interesting to note, that in this same year that the Wisconsin Synod began to train its own pastors, it is also the year that President Lincoln proclaimed the freedom of the Negro slaves, and it was the year of the terrible battle of Gettysburg, which was near the site of the theological seminary that the pastors had been attending! The fact that our first Wisconsin Synod Seminary was founded in the midst of such war times shows how necessary it had become for the Synod to begin training our own pastors. It could no longer depend on Germany for its pastors, and it no longer wanted to be forced to accept poorly trained and sometimes untrustworthy men as its pastors. It was a small beginning (one professor, two students) but every long journey begins with only one step!

By the grace of God, however, that one step was followed by yet another! For it was less than a year later that the seminary took a different location, and the results were positive! The second home of the seminary was in the new building that had been erected to house the new college of the Synod, which we know today as Northwestern College. This move brought in 14 students! The Board of Control of NWC administered the seminary, but still this second step was shaky. Lack of education among the young men interested in the ministry made things difficult. It was

wholly by the grace of God that the institution survived at this point.

But then things took a turn for the better. When Adolf Hoenke accepted the call to become professor at the school in 1866, the outlook for the seminary began to improve tremendously. This man was indeed a precious gift of God to our Synod, for he was one who taught the pure Word of God and guided the Synod through its most difficult years. In his Ev.-Luth. Dogmatik he writes: "Holy Scripture, the sole source of the knowlege of religion, theology and dogmatics, is nothing less than the Word of God, written through inspiration of the Holy Spirit by the prophets, evangelists and apostles, in order that sinners may derive from it the knowlege of life everlasting," (WLQ, vol.86, #2, Spring 1989, p.84.). Little by little (and little did men like Hoenke know!) that the seal was taking shape!

In 1868/69, another step, another move. The seminary was transported to its third location, St. Louis Missouri. This move took place under the following arrangement: the college department at Watertown would prepare students of both synods (Wisconsin and Missouri) for the seminary, and to use the seminary of the Missouri Synod at St. Louis for the training of pastors of both synods. With such an arrangement, it might appear at this time that the Wisconsin Synod wasn't holding it's ground doctrinally, but that was not the case. Financial difficulties coupled with the lack of interest in the previous location also contributed to the move to St. Louis. The move was innocent.

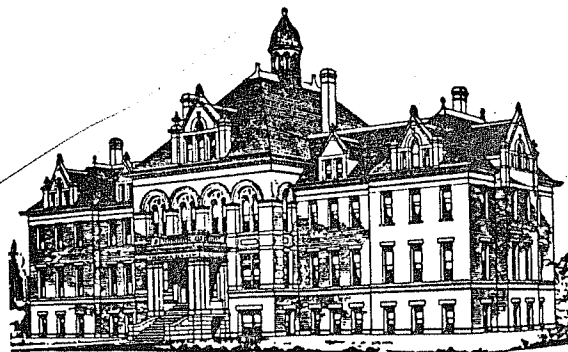
But again the location played a major role in the seminary's next move. Because only two or three graduates for the Wisconsin Synod were coming from the St. Louis Seminary each year, the Synod thought that if they opened a seminary in their own state of Wisconsin, that perhaps more students would attend, and consequently more pastors would would the message of God's Word out to people who needed to hear it. For these reasons then, a fourth move was made in 1878. This time they pounded their stakes in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It wasn't an ideal set-up, but for the time being, two small buildings were rented, located on the Northeast corner of Hubbard Street and Garfield Avenue. Just with this move, the seminary immediately had a class of six!

It may seem like a lot of hassle and confusion and uncertainty going on with all the different moves, but no doubt the Lord had his purposes. Despite the different locations thus far, the people changed, the locations changed, and the buildings changed, but one thing always remained the same: the heart and core of the seminary—God's Word.

It had never had been intended that the seminary should remain in those two small buildings; with about \$9500, a hall located at 13th and Vine Streets was purchased, remodeled, and set up for seminary use. This location in Eimermann's Park (also known as Vliet's Woods) served as another temporary base camp for the seminary. In a pastoral conference in 1890, it was recommended that a new seminary be built on the corner of 60th and Lloyd in Wauwatosa. The increase in the number of students demanded it. The site chosen was a beautiful but small section

Pabst Farm. As was just mentioned, the increasing number of students demanded the new building. It's essential to explain this increase: not only did the students increase for the Wisconsin Synod, but now the Synod itself had become a much larger body when the Minnesota Synod and the Michigan Synod joined the Wisconsin Synod to form one body. The new seminary was needed to serve these three synods and also the Nebraska Synod as well. So in 1892, they voted and it passed to build this new seminary. By September 17, 1893 the seminary was dedicated. Pictured next is this seminary.

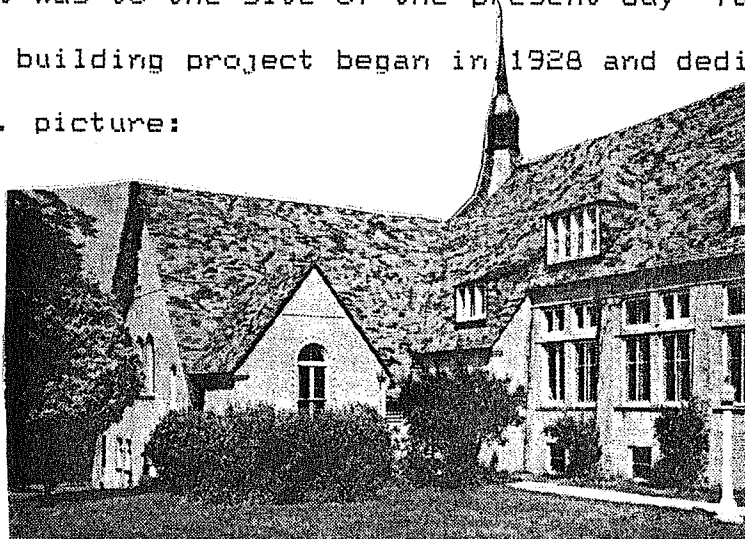
*The home of our
Theological Seminary
from 1893 to 1929.*



Moving into new quarters was not the only change this time. Before it was a purely Wisconsin Synod project, but now the concern shifted to the Joint Synod. These years with the Joint Synod under one roof proved to be quite interesting, for it was in these years that the distinctive characteristics of our seminary began to emerge. "For even as human beings have their individual marks of appearance and action...just so institutions have their own peculiar qualities...In the case of our Seminary Hoenecke had supplied the clear and sound doctrinal position.

His theology was preeminently Scriptural in its quality...Here the emphasis on a sound historical and grammatical interpretation of Scripture, on a thorough introduction of the student into the full and coherent content of Scripture, and on an unrelenting effort to determine what the words of Scripture mean to say, rather than what man would like to have them say—the things which were the distinctive contribution of Koehler and Pieper—served to create the pattern of a balanced theology which our Seminary is trying to follow to this day," (Continuing In His Word, p.146-147).

The decision to relocate once again came in 1920. Crowded conditions with no room for expansion set up the move again. This time it was to the site of the present day facilities in Mequon. The building project began in 1928 and dedicated August 18, 1929. Cf. picture:



*Classroom and chapel wing of our present Seminary
at Mequon, Wisconsin.*

With this seventh move came a time for rejoicing and a time for disappointment. Rejoicing, because it seemed as though all should be well. The buildings, the grounds, the staff, and the students were all there. And so was God's Word. Definitely

a time and place to rejoice. But also came a time of disappointment. For in 1939, a conference had to be held with the Concordia faculty in St. Louis. The subject of discussion was a Doctrinal basis for a union with the American Lutheran Church. The Synod took the position that only a joint statement covering the doctrines in controversy could be accepted as a possible basis for union with the ALC and declared that the ALC's acceptance of the Missouri Brief Statement "viewed in the light of the ALC Declaration is not acceptable."

"Church union" seemed to come up again and again. In 1943 this same topic brought out a statement of Dr. Arndt, chairman of the Missouri Synod Committee for Doctrinal Unity that "the chief obstacle consists in a different view of the fellowship question or of the subject of unionism." Finally in 1945, the Synod buckled down and asked the Missouri Synod not to enter into pulpit and altar fellowship with the ALC until matters had been clarified. From here on in, then, discussions concerning church union and fellowship never waned. Two more meetings with the St. Louis faculty were held in 1952 with the hopes of agreement. No such thing!

Since 1938 the seminary faculty had been preoccupied first with the proposal of pulpit and altar fellowship between the Missouri Synod and the ALC, and then with the controversy with the Missouri Synod itself, which in 1953 led to the resolution of the Wisconsin Synod to declare itself in a state of confession over against the Missouri Synod. As the years went on and as the heat of discussion grew hotter and firm stances were taken, it

became evident what was going to take place. And in 1961 it did: The Wisconsin Synod in session in Milwaukee voted to suspend fellowship with the Missouri Synod. And so the Wisconsin Synod stands alone. It stands strong and it stands unmoveable. Not because of men, but because of God and his Word.

It was God who allowed these events in history to take place, and as we know, he allowed them to happen to his glory. He knows what he wants done, when, where and how. He tells us in Jeremiah 29:11- "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." His ways oftentimes seem mysterious to us, but hindsight always shows that the Lord is in command.

Even in all the turmoil of the synods, with all the problems and disagreements, with all the "bad," still we see all the "good." The Lord promised it that way in Romans 8:28. We haven't even begun to look at the seal as we know it today, but as I look at hindsight and see the men and circumstances that God used to get us where we are at today, the seal was being formed, reworked, corrected, and filled out all along, ever since 1850. As we now look at the actual "footage" of the development of the pen and ink seal, you'll see that it indeed is God's Word that is the basis for it.

It was back on October 19, 1944 when a man by the name of Carl Lawrenz was installed as professor at the Seminary. Upon advice of the faculty, he enrolled at the University of Chicago to study Semitics, and he began teaching in April 1945. Three years before the Wisconsin Synod broke fellowship, Carl Lawrenz

was elected president of the seminary, in 1958. One year later, in 1959, a convention was held at Michigan Lutheran Seminary. It was at this convention that the Synod adopted a new constitution, and also a new name for the seminary. The Synodical Proceedings of the Thirtyfifth Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and Other States (August 5-12, 1959) reads as follows, (p.81):

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

REPORT OF INSTITUTIONS

Report of the Seminary Board of Control

"We further recommend for adoption the following name for the Seminary: 'Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary.' "

And then page 102 gives us this information:

REPORT OF FLOOR COMMITTEE NO. 5

(Requests of Institutions, Educational Survey Committee Report)

Resolution No. 1.

Subject: Requests of the Theological Seminary

B. Seminary Name

WHEREAS, The Seminary has no official name, and
WHEREAS, The Board of Control has been requested to select a
name,

therefore be it

Resolved, That we concur in the choice of the Board of Control that the Seminary be called "Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary."

So the new name was given to our seminary: The Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. In the days after that convention was over, Carl Lawrenz's mind was already at work on something new, too. In my interview with him, Lawrenz reflected: "As soon as the Synod had adopted our new name for the seminary, I went to work and had Pastor Fenske draw up a seal for me and I was very pleased with what he produced."

President Carl Lawrenz came up with a brilliant idea. No doubt he figured that with a new name and all, that a symbol, a seal was very much in order and a "worthwhile investment." But it was not Carl Lawrenz's hands that "created" the seal. Actually, credit goes to two people, Pastor Siegfried Hilbert Fenske and Mr. Harold Schmitz. Between the two of these men, the seal that was living in the hearts and minds of men of long ago, now put it altogether on paper!

Pastor Fenske was born Nov. 28, 1904 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He received his B.A. in 1930 from NWC, Watertown, and received his B.D. in 1933 from the Theological Seminary in Mequon. Fenske was a pulpit assistant at North Trinity Lutheran Church in Milwaukee from 1931-1935. He served as a parish pastor in Mercer, Wisconsin (1935-1938), Bruce, Wisconsin (1938-1941), and Rice Lake, Wisconsin (1942-1945). From there he accepted a position as editor and art supervisor at the Northwestern Publishing House in 1946, up until December 21, 1976. Fenske also was an instructor at Wisconsin Lutheran High School from 1948-1959, then was a parish pastor again in Milwaukee from 1963-1976.

The significant dates pertinent here are his editorial days at the Northwestern Publishing House. Fenske at first was a part-time editor, an associate editor to Pastor Werner Franzmann. When Fenske was called as the full time editor, he gave up his call as instructor at Wisconsin Lutheran Highschool. Pastor Franzmann said of him: "He was such an artist in the field, and I just admired it." Apparently Fenske never had any formal training in art, but it was just a natural thing with him.

When Fenske received the order to develop "some sort of seal" for President Lawrenz, Fenske came up with what he referred to as a "thumbnail sketch." He did the basic, original artwork in black and white, and then bounced his ideas off of his fellow worker in the art department- Harold Schmitz. Schmitz was also at the NWPH for many years, from 1950-1983. He had a commercial art and advertizing background which obviously was a plus for the Publishing House. Schmitz was actually responsible for rounding out Fenske's thumbnail sketch. Schmitz took the idea and ran with it. Credit goes to him for what he calls "finished art," or "camera-ready graphics," which is the final stage of the product that could and would be reproduced, then.

Schmitz recalled that "Fenske wanted to incorporate the basis, the foundation on which we work." He actually got his idea from a picture- a picture of the seminary cornerstone when the seminary was located in Wauwatosa on 60th and Lloyd. On this cornerstone, which also is the cornerstone of the presently existing seminary, is inscribed:

SOLA GRATIA
SOLA SCRIPTURA
SOLA FIDE

Fenske hit the nail on the head. He wanted the "basis," the "foundation" of the Synod's teaching to be reflected in the seal, and he had his answer. He had the answer that the Seminary had in its early beginning. "From the start, the Seminary was meant to be a Lutheran Seminary. It was built on these Reformation principles of "sola gratia," "sola scriptura," and "sola fide." These Reformation principles separate confessional Lutherans not only from the myriad of religions in the world, but from every other denomination of Christianity as well.

That is especially true of "sola gratia," by grace alone. Our seminary's continuing purpose is to train parish pastors to take that Gospel message of salvation by grace alone to a world which so desperately needs to hear it," (WLQ vol.86 #1, winter 1989, p.10.).

"God demonstrated his grace to you and me, to the church and to the whole world of sinners by giving us his Word. From the time of Moses on, he had it put into writing so that you and I might to the written Word and learn to know him as our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier. Through the gospel in the Word and the sacraments the Holy Spirit brought us to faith in Jesus Christ, our Savior, strengthens that faith daily as we search the Holy Scriptures, moves us to live lives that honor God and also assures us of a place with Jesus Christ in glory...Article II of the Constitution of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

leaves no question as to where our Synod stands, what position it takes. There we read: "The synod accepts the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the divinely inspired and inerrant word of God and submits to this word of God as the only infallible authority in all matters of doctrine, faith and life." Note the word "inerrant," which tells how we understand the word "inspired"; then the word "only," which takes up the sola in "sola scriptura"; and finally the word "all," in "all matters of doctrine, faith and life," (WLQ vol.86 #2 Spring 1989, p.83ff.).

God also gave us a means by which we might be saved. Scripture tells us about it: "For it is by grace you have been saved, THROUGH FAITH- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God," (Ephesians 2:8). Many church bodies like to think that the individual has to contribute to help out God in their salvation, and yet Paul's words refute that very attitude as he follows the previous verse with: "not by works, so that no one can boast."

The purpose of this paper is not to do an exegetical study of the three "solae," but I can direct you to a very thorough study of each one: the WLQ's volume 86, numbers 1,2 and 3, winter, spring and summer, 1989. These three essays were presented at the 125th anniversary convocation at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary on Friday, April 22, 1988. The convocation's theme was "The Seminary's Unchanging Foundation in a Changing World: sola gratia, sola scriptura, sola fide."

When Pastor Fenske and Harold Schmitz put their heads together to come up with the seal, they wanted not only to

include those precious words, but they also wanted to include more symbolism within the seal. And so right in the center of the seal they "pictured" sola gratia, sola scriptura, and sola fide. SOLA GRATIA is represented by the Dove, which is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, who offers and conveys God's grace in Christ. SOLA SCRIPTURA is represented by the open Bible. SOLA FIDE is represented by the Shield of Faith.

Besides the importance of the "solas," the two artists put much more thought and doctrine and history into it. They also included Luther's Coat of Arms, which symbolizes our Lutheran heritage. The Coat of Arms, itself is comprised of five things. The cross, a reminder to Luther and Lutherans of Christ's crucifixion; a heart, standing for faith in the Savior; a white rose fixed in a sky-colored field to denote that such joy of faith is but an earnest and beginning of heavenly joy to come; and a golden ring, to signify that such joy in heaven is endless.

Also as part of the seal:

The outer band: the vine and the grapes symbolize our unity in Christ (John 15:1-16; These verses in John are under the section entitled, "The Vine and the Branches." Verse five is noteworthy, for Jesus says, "I am the Vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.")

The color scheme for the seal is as follows:

Outside band- gold	Name of the Synod- black
The vine- green	Inner circle- blue
The motto- black	The Bible page- white
The dove- white	The shield- red
The Bible edges- gold	The cross- black

The symbolism of the colors:

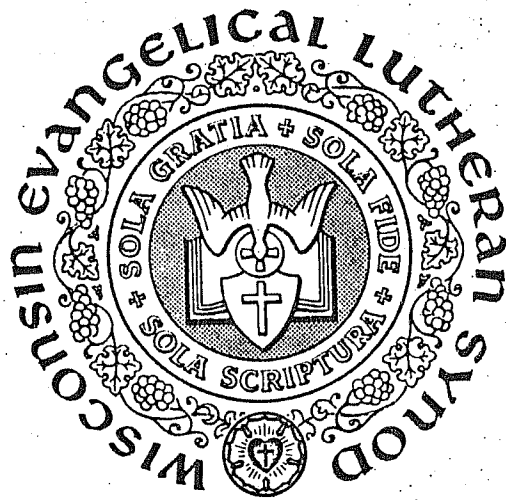
Gold- the glory and kingship of Christ
Green- Christian growth and Life (color of nature)
Red- the work of the church, Christian zeal, the blood of martyrs
White- divine holiness and perfection
Blue- heaven, faithfulness, loyalty

If you remember, President Lawrenz only asked Fenske to design a SEMINARY SEAL. That is what Fenske and Schmitz did. It looked like this:



When I questioned Carl Lawrenz about the striking similarity between the seminary and synod seal, this was his response: "I am interested in that because I think many of them feel that the sem took over the synod seal, but that was not true, this was our seminary seal!" "All at once I found out that the synod had taken over our sem seal and where it said Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, it says Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, otherwise it's just the same. They stole it. Nobody asked me for permission to do that. I can't tell you who got that idea and who took it over."

Despite the similarities and the fact that the synod seal came second, still I think everyone is very much satisfied and pleased with both seals. There are slight variations in some of the printed seals, but basically all of them are quite the same. Here is an older style of the synod seal:



The seals of both the Seminary and the Synod started appearing then on publications such as the Northwestern Annuals and the Northwestern Lutherans. I'd like to quote the article found in the Northwestern Lutheran, vol.51, #19, Sept 20, 1964: "The official seal of the Synod is a fitting adornment for this anniversary issue of the Northwestern Lutheran, for this churchpaper is the official voice of the WELS...This seal is rich in symbolism...this seal, by the way, was conceived by Pastor

Siegfried Fenske, associate literary editor at the Northwestern Publishing House."

Nota Bene: Pastor Fenske, at the time of this writing, was still living, however not in the best of health. He suffered a few strokes a year or so ago and his memory of the past has suffered. The Northwestern Lutheran gives credit to Pastor Fenske for the design of the seal, but does not inform us who actually commissioned him to interchange "Seminary" with "Synod." Because Carl Lawrenz does not know, and because Harold Schmitz does not know, unless somebody somewhere turns up more detailed information than I have gathered here, the mystery will remain just that- a mystery. Carl Lawrenz delightfully recalls his close friendship with O.J. Nauman, (President of the Synod, 1953-1979), but when Lawrenz confronted him with the question about the seal, Nauman chose the right to remain silent. Nothing more was said between the two men.

Did Nauman commission Fenske to insert the word "Synod" in the Seminary seal? Or did Fenske come up with the idea? Or did some other person unknowingly give Schmitz the idea? As of today's date, these questions cannot be answered with certainty. But then, when we think about and concern ourselves with the meaning behind it all, would we want the two seals any other way?

A gentleman that was so impressed with the design and beauty and meaning of the printed seal, one day decided to undertake a project that at this time all Wisconsin Synod people are proud of: He hand-carved the printed, Synod seal, out of wood. This

man is Mr. Wayne Boldt, from Muskego, Wisconsin (what better state to be from with such a project!).

His original work is comprised of six Birch boards that he had glued together, in the hopes that he could prevent the boards from twisting and warping. This masterpiece is 3 feet in diameter, 1 inch thick, with the exact center of the Dove's head being the center of the entire seal. I'd like to stress, that in its' entirety, the seal was hand-carved, none of the intricate design was pieced together or glued together! Mr. Boldt stained the wood when completed then, giving certain areas a darker color, simply to give the eye-catching "shadow-effect."

This wonderful piece of work was completed in 1976, and as I discovered on the outer edge of the seal itself, it is "DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF GOD AND IN MEMORY OF MR. AND MRS. EMIL BELTZ AND MR. AND MRS. WILLIAM BOLDT."

Mr. Boldt had the first five copies go to the following buildings: Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Dr. Martin Luther College, Wisconsin Lutheran High School, Wisconsin Lutheran College, and the Synod Office. The original one presently hangs in the office at St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church/School, the church where Mr. Boldt is presently a member. Copies of this seal are available through the Northwestern Publishing House.

And so the seal stands out, and it stands strong. It is printed on a variety of things, everything from diplomas to drinking glasses, from Seminary sweat-shirts to Synod publications. But the two seals are not just there for "decoration." They are not there just to fill up space. The seals tell us something. They tell us about a foundation, a rock

on which we stand. The seals portray and reflect our firm belief in Holy Scriptures which tell us about our one and only way to salvation- Jesus Christ. Design and detail may change, but the message does not. Our message is Jesus Christ. Our Foundation is Jesus Christ. This is the message that the Wisconsin Synod made it's beginnings with in 1850, the message that still describes the Wisconsin Synod in 1989, and God-willing to the end of time. Needless to say, the WELS seal is not just another symbol.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere thanks to the following people who helped me in my research for this paper:

Pastor Carl Lawrenz

Pastor and Mrs. Fenske

Mr. Harold Schmitz

Rev. Mentor Kujath

Mr. Cliff Koeller

Mr. Wayne Boldt

Pastor Werner Franzmann