

The Historical Background Which Led to the Formation of the Protes'tant Conference

[Written for and at the request of the Florida Pastoral Conference of South-Atlantic District]

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When the Florida Pastoral Conference assembled at North Fort Myers this past spring, 1976, the pastors pondered the weighty words of Prof. Joh. P. Koehler's essay "*Gesetzliches Wesen unter uns*," written over half a century ago. And weighty words they are, penetrating to the legal bent in all of us that is part of our natural inheritance. Some question came up regarding the termination of Prof. Koehler's services at our seminary, which this essayist tried to answer from faint recollections of matters read or heard years ago. This was followed by a request from the conference that the essayist prepare a paper on the historical developments that led to the formation of the Protes'tant Conference and Prof. Koehler's dismissal from our seminary and suspension from the Wisconsin Synod. We see from the notice in the Northwestern Lutheran that our secretary has adeptly condensed this rather clumsy concept to the more streamlined title: *The Historical Background Which Led to the Formation of the Protes'tant Conference*. It is our intention first, to briefly outline the historic events that led to the two above-mentioned actions; and then to engage in analysis of the same, assuming the charity of the brethren in the conference, and the improvement of the synodical climate and health in the past decade or so.

I. The Historic events that led to the formation of the Protes'tant Conference.

1917 was a momentous year. Not only was it the 400th anniversary of Luther's posting of the 95 Thesis on the Castle Church door in Wittenberg, but it saw an end to the *Allgemeine Ev. Luth. Synode von Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, u. a. St.* (The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and other states) and the formation of the new Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin and other States." The synods of Minnesota, Michigan and Nebraska each became districts in the new synod. Wisconsin was divided into the three Wisconsin Districts. The Pacific Northwest District was added in 1918; the Dakota-Montana District in 1920. Within 10 years, the new "Joint Synod," and especially its Western Wisconsin District would be embroiled in a controversy in which, at one time or another, either side accused the other of having lost the Gospel.

The first of a series of incidents that led up to this controversy occurred at Northwestern College in Watertown. On Friday, March 28, 1924, the two tutors in the dormitory at Northwestern College discovered a "thieving ring" among the student body. In all, 27 boys were involved in stealing various items from the stores in Watertown. The tutors conducted investigations through the night of March 28th (a Friday). A snowstorm cut off electrical power on Saturday, and the investigation was not concluded until the night of Sunday, March 30. On Monday morning, president Kowalke was informed of the investigations. The faculty cancelled classes, and all that day and part of the next met to consider each case individually. The final result: 7 boys were expelled (1 other left of his own accord); 8 more were suspended until the following year; the remaining 11 were given other lesser punishments. Dr. Ott read into the motion for expulsion of at least the first 2 boys the phrase: "Subject to the approval of the board." At that time, the College Board alone had the final right of expelling students, although the Board traditionally approved the actions of the faculty in such cases.

President Kowalke immediately informed the College Board of the actions of the faculty, but it seems that the parents of some of the boys got to the college board before him. (The fact that sons of some of the pastors in the synod were affected did not in any way mitigate the differences between faculty and board). What ensued was apparently a contest between the faculty and the board; the faculty pleading with the board to support them for the sake of discipline within the school, and the board determined to exercise their rights. The Board prevailed, freeing the boys who were suspended until the end of the year to return (5 did, 1 more returned the next year); and providing for a reopening of the cases of the boys who had been permanently suspended

(none of their parents responded to this action). As a consequence of this action, Professors Karl Koehler (son of Joh. P. Koehler) and Herbert Parisius resigned from the faculty, but offered to continue teaching to the end of the year, but, without accepting any salary from the board. This, the board refused to allow. One board member, Dr. Abelmann, also resigned, but later rescinded his resignation since, he explained, it was the synod that had elected him, and hence only the synod could act on his resignation.

Because both parties to this controversy were Christian men, and because it was a matter of administration, not doctrine, that was being contested, it should not surprise us that after this both the faculty and the board worked together to reach an understanding, and when two similar cases came up in March and November of 1926, the faculty and board were able to act together with common Christian respect for and cooperation with each other. (It should, in honesty, be noted that the reconciliation did take time, during which two other tutors and two more members of the college faculty resigned.)

Such goings on would hardly remain unknown or unnoticed in the Wisconsin Synod. (Could it be that the malady of itching ears and wagging tongues also sometimes affect men of the cloth?) There were those who sided with the board, and those who sided with the faculty. Some of those who sided with the faculty, (though apparently without the knowledge or blessing of the faculty as a whole) met on Commencement day, June 12, 1924, in Watertown in the college chapel. There was no general announcement of the meeting, and while it was supposed to be an open meeting at which the faculty's side of the controversy could be heard, it soon developed into a one-sided meeting, flavored with a good deal of "party spirit" at which the board was condemned, the board being represented only by the one dissenting member, Dr. Abelmann. It was already at this time that the term "Bolshevik" was applied by one member of this "Third Party" to themselves, and the name stuck. (As late as 1960 in at least some parts of Wisconsin the remaining Protestants were referred to as "Bolsheviks." I don't know whether that prevails today or not.) The meeting, by the way, broke the ranks of the faculty, many of whom could not in good conscience follow the leadership that was emerging there.

Meanwhile, a few miles south of Watertown, at Fort Atkinson, some completely unrelated trouble was brewing. Two lady teachers in the school of St. Paul congregation, Miss Gerda Koch and Miss Elizabeth Reuter, were disturbed about, and sharply criticized their pastor, A. F. Nicolaus, and the congregation for certain "sins" that prevailed there. Among these was the fashion of the women to wear short dresses and bobbed hair, contrary to Paul's exhortation in I Cor. 11: (regarding long hair for women). Also denounced was the trash and dance music sung by the church choir; and the fact that the choir was going to sing in St. Paul's Church in Oconomowoc, which had broken with the Wisconsin Synod and called a pastor from the Missouri Synod, with whom we were at that time in fellowship. Also sinful was the attitude of the young people who were more interested in the social activities than the Bible study the pastor conducted for them. (Is it any different in the 1970s?) Also condemned were the bazaars and suppers given by the Ladies' Aid. Perhaps the greatest sin of all was that several members of the Ladies' Aid entered Miss Koch's classroom and broke the stick she used (on misbehaving children) in front of the children. (The pastor's advice to her was to get a new one; but the church council later forbade corporal punishment in the school). The congregation also forbade the two teachers to have mission boxes on their desks to collect mission offerings from the children because there was some question as to just what missions and charities the monies were being diverted.

Of all these sins, the greatest was that the pastor did not preach against these sins! The ladies withdrew themselves from the activities of the congregation. Eventually they stopped attending church services and advised their pupils to do likewise. The two teachers ended up accusing Pastor Nicolaus of being a false prophet.

Meanwhile, the two teachers had informed the director at Dr. Martin Luther College (*Blieferricht*) of at least their side of the problems and he recommended them for call to Immanuel Lutheran School of Marshfield. The principal at Marshfield (O. Hellermann) asked for their version of the affair, and apparently he and the pastor, Oswald Hensel, were won over, for the two teachers were called to Marshfield in January, and just as the Ft. Atkinson congregation was about to deal with them, they disappeared, only to resurface on the faculty at Marshfield.

St. Paul congregation, Ft. Atkinson, quite naturally, and, under the circumstances, properly refused to grant the teachers an honorable dismissal, and so informed Pastor Hensel of Marshfield, at whose suggestion Miss Reuter and Miss Koch now appealed to the district president, G. Thurow, of Waterloo. They charged that the pastor and church council of St. Paul congregation had forbidden them to teach and live according to the Word of God, and had dismissed them when they failed to comply. They, therefore, protested other teachers being called in their place at Ft. Atkinson. President Thurow confronted St. Paul congregation with the charges, and, of course, the congregation had charges of its own to bring. Numerous meetings ensued. In the meantime, the two ladies continued to teach, one now in St. John, Wauwatosa, the other in Christ, Milwaukee. The congregation in Fort Atkinson, in utter disgust, resigned from the Western Wisconsin District until the praesidium of the district published a notice in the *Gemeidneblatt* and the *Northwestern Lutheran* stating that for the time being the two teachers were not to be considered eligible for a call to teach in our schools.

When the Western Wisconsin District met at St. Stephen's, Beaver Dam, in 1926, it approved the action of the praesidium. Fifteen pastors and two lay delegates protested, not because they agreed with the teachers, but because the district officials had intervened in the case before the Ft. Atkinson congregation had completed following the injunctions of Matthew 18. Among those who still supported the teachers was Pastor Oswald Hensel of Marshfield. When he was suspended in June, 1927, his congregation left the synod with him. (NB – He later married Miss Reuter).

Closely connected with the Fort Atkinson case is the Ruediger case. The same Prof. G. Ruediger of the seminary who had been somewhat of a leader of the “Bolsheviks” at Watertown in 1924, and in whose home they had sometimes met, had in 1925 been appointed to a committee to bring about a reconciliation between the Fort Atkinson pastor and congregation and the two teachers. Another member of the committee was Prof. Joh. P. Koehler. The committee was, of course, unsuccessful, but Prof. Ruediger became an ardent supporter of the position of the two lady teachers. Later (it is claimed, under some duress,) Prof. Ruediger confessed that he had discussed the cases in his seminary classes, that he had “made mistakes” and had made slanderous charges against synod officials and had neglected his academic duties. Ruediger then received a written absolution, signed by his fellow faculty members at the seminary, with the exception of Koehler. (Pieper, Meyer and Henkel). For some reason, both Ruediger's confession and the faculty's absolution were mailed out to every pastor in the synod. Then, in January 1927, Prof. Ruediger was dismissed from the faculty because confidence in him was lost. Ruediger returned to the congregation he had served in Marion Springs, Michigan, and continued as pastor there until 1959, when he retired to Brant, Michigan. In 1962 his home burned, along with all his possessions, and within a year he and his wife moved to Jordan, Minnesota, to live with his brother. They there became members of St. Paul Lutheran Church (W.E.L.S.) until his death, April 1, 1966. (I can't substantiate it right now, not having the copies of *Faith-Life*, but I seem to recall that even after his death *Faith-Life* debated whether or not Prof. Ruediger had ever really made his peace with the Wisconsin Synod). In the case of Ruediger, as in the case of the two lady teachers, and before, the college faculty at Watertown, the “Third Party” had a “martyr” around whose cause they could rally for a time. They had a bigger and better martyr to come, and villains to boot!

In the fall of 1926 Pastor Wm. Beitz delivered a paper at the Wisconsin River Valley Conference at Schofield, Wisconsin. The paper was titled: “*God's Message to us in Galatians: – The Just shall Live by Faith.*” Pastor Beitz was at that time a young man who had come to our synod from the Seminary of the United Lutheran Church at Maywood, Illinois. (Although apparently originally from our Synod.) He had spent some time in the ministry of our synod in Grace, Tucson, Arizona, and was now serving the congregation at Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Pastor Beitz had a lively, interesting, forceful, terse style, and was more than a little in demand as a preacher. His skill is evident in this so-called “Beitz Paper.” Yet, he was not the man to pour oil on the troubled waters of the synod or the Western Wisconsin District. While the paper mentions nothing of the “cases” which had been troubling Western Wisconsin, yet his liberal criticism of the pastors of our synod and especially the professors at our seminary was as disturbing to some as it was gleefully welcomed by others. At the same time, some thought that they detected “false doctrine” in the paper. (Although apparently they were not sure, or were not sure of themselves).

The paper caused no little stir. It was read again at the mixed conference at Rusk a month later and soon printed copies were being widely circulated beyond the confines of the conference. (How that happens, one can easily understand. Many requests for copies of this paper were received before the final draft was finished ... and it in no way compares with the Beitz paper, for all that one may be for or against it!) In the spring of 1927 Pastor Beitz read his paper the third time, at the conference at Marshfield. This time the West Wisconsin District officials were present, but President Thurow was not ready to pass judgement on it. He rather submitted it to the faculty of the seminary for a *Gutachten* (The word means Judgement, but was understood more in the sense of "Opinion").

The work on the *Gutachten* was done by three of the faculty members, Pieper, Meyer and Henkel. Its final draft was the work of Pieper. It was signed by all the faculty, including Joh. P. Koehler. Koehler had his reservations. He felt that the faculty should first talk with Pastor Beitz to determine just what he meant by what he wrote. This was sage advice, as any will recognize, who have ever been in the situation of having to say: "I know you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant." It is the opinion of the essayist that much tragedy might have been avoided, had Koehler's advice been heeded. The answer of the rest of the faculty, however, also merits consideration. The Beitz paper was not a private writing; by this time it had spread well beyond the confines of his own conference, or even the Western Wisconsin District, and that, at such troubled times. Such a paper was, de facto, if not de jure, fast becoming public doctrine of the church, and a public reply, favoring or disfavoring it, was needed.

The *Gutachten* was sent to District President Thurow. Instead of using it for discussions with Beitz, either privately or in a conference setting, he had the *Gutachten* printed and sent to every pastor and teacher in the district. Meanwhile, Koehler went to visit Beitz and seek "to understand our opponent, not as his words can or even must be understood, but as he wants them to be understood," as Koehler had stated earlier in his remarks on "The Analogy of Faith." Of this discussion between Koehler and Beitz I have no knowledge. (It would be interesting to some day find out just how the discussion went!) The result of it, however, was that Koehler prepared a card, stating among other things that, "The faculty *Gutachten* was published without my knowledge and consent." Koehler was persuaded not to send out the notice, but he did withdraw his signature from the *Gutachten*.

A special meeting of the West Wisconsin District was called for November 1927 at Watertown, in hopes of working out some kind of reconciliation. But, the party spirit that was before in evidence had now solidified (fossilized? petrified?). The "Third Party" who had first defended the Northwestern faculty and the Fort Atkinson teachers and Prof. Ruediger, now had a new "martyr-hero" and a "villain." The martyr-hero, of course, was Pastor Beitz. The villain, at first, was President Thurow, who had been a close personal friend of many of the "Third Party" not so many years before. The "Third Party" protested President Thurow chairing the meeting, and finally agreed to having Pastor G. E. Bergemann, the president of the Wisconsin Synod, chair the meeting. Pastor Beitz now read his paper for the fourth time. The three members of the seminary faculty (Pieper, Meyer and Henkel) were also present to defend their *Gutachten*. Pieper, it seems, held center stage, as he usually did anywhere he was present. In fact, the "Protes'tants later claimed that Beitz barely had time to read his paper, to say nothing of defending it, after Pieper had appropriated most of the time on the conference floor to himself and his theatricals; as they called them. (Pieper did have a rather dramatic way of presenting his material. He is purported to have told a seminary class: "*Meine Mutter hat es gewollt. Glauben sie nur nicht dass ich aus lauter Frommigkeit bin Pastor geworden. Ich wollte nach Hollywood...*") Be that as it may, the result of the Western Wisconsin District meeting was that the district would not accept the paper as it was written, and Beitz would not change a single word. (Now you know why some papers a conference receives with thanks, while in other cases the motion is "Move we that the essayist for his work!") The district rejected the Beitz paper and further resolved that all who subscribed to it would thereby have broken the bond of fellowship. A committee of twelve was appointed to deal with such as would do so.

This action had the effect of raising the "*Gutachten*" to the status of a confessional writing for the synod, and the Beitz paper to the same exalted position for the "Third Party." The real problem, for many, was that while they agreed with every bit of the theology of the *Gutachten*, they could not agree with the *Gutachten's*

understanding of the Beitz paper; while others, who did not agree with the Beitz paper, felt conscience-bound to continue their fellowship with those who were “ousted” from the district, if for no other reason than because of the seemingly unevangelical way in which the whole thing had proceeded.

The answer of thirteen pastors and sixteen laymen who constituted the “Third Party” (there were also others) was the “Elroy Declarations” which in effect said that none who signed it would deal with any committee unless all cases would be completely reopened as new cases.

Three months later the district again met (February 1928), but since none of the “Protes’tants” attended, it could do little but ratify what it had done in its November meeting. Later that spring the praesidium of the district announced in the *Gemeindeblatt* and *Northwestern Lutheran* the suspensions of 17 pastors, one teacher and five congregations. That number would be augmented before the whole matter died down.

Now follow one “case” after another. There is, for example, the second “Watertown case” regarding the handling and mismanagement of the college endowment funds. The actual fact was that some of the investments had shrunk in value at a time when a lot of investments were not sanforized. Then came many individual cases; the Globe case, the Mosinee case, the Friesland case, the Wilton case, the Marshfield case, the Oconomowoc case, the Gruendemann case, the Hensel case (referring to Paul Hensel at town Liberty and Valders, near Manitowoc, Wisconsin) and others ... all cases of pastors being suspended from the synod, in some cases, their congregations leaving with them, in other cases, the pastors suddenly finding themselves without congregations. These cases were all regularly reported, reviewed, studied, exegized, and, in many cases, canonized, in the pages of *Faith-Life*, the paper now published by the “Protes’tant Conference of the Wisconsin Synod.”

It would go well beyond the scope of this paper to further examine or even review these various cases. The Synod Convention of 1929 recommended to the Western Wisconsin District that all cases be reconsidered. Another special district convention was held in Baraboo, Wisconsin, October 1933. Since the Protes’tants continued their policy of not appearing at such meetings, the convention actually did little other than reaffirm all its previous resolutions. In the meantime, other districts were having their own problems with Protes’tants; in most cases, the question being ...what about people who continue to practice fellowship with Protes’tants who have been declared out of fellowship? Such cases arose in Minnesota (Albrecht, Baumann, Schuetze), Southeast Wisconsin (Golgatha Church in Milwaukee, Pastor Ziesler) and Northern Wisconsin (Gruendemann – Town Gibson; Hensel – Liberty, and others. Much was made of the fact that Pastor Gruendemann’s wife died in childbirth soon after he was dismissed by the Town Gibson congregation, and forced to vacate the parsonage). In its 1961 convention, the synod declared that the action taken on the 1927 resolutions of the Western Wisconsin District were crowded over with uncertainties. It again requested that Western Wisconsin reconsider its original actions. The July 15, 1962, issue of the *Northwestern Lutheran* contained the Official Announcement of Convention Action, listing the suspensions of the Western Wisconsin District, and including the following recommendations:

- A. That the District Praesidium appoint a group of individuals to attend the next conference of the Protes’tants.
- B. That pastors, teachers and laymen be encouraged to study the issues involved and seek to reestablish contact with the Protes’tants on an individual basis.
- C. That all of us pray for the day when mutual confidence will be restored and we again share in the outward fellowship of faith.
- D. That we urge the Protes’tants to regard these resolutions as a sincere and earnest effort on the part of this district to heal the breach between us.

(NB - interesting - On same page is a “Request for Names” by Pastor Pope for the “New Mission” in Fort Lauderdale area!)

Unfortunately, the Protes'tants were not likely to readily accept the sincerity of the last point, since between the action of the synod and the action of the district there also appeared in the *Northwestern Lutheran*, November 19, 1961, the notice that Pastor Gerald Hinz of Livingston, Montana, had been suspended from membership in the Wisconsin Synod by the praesidium of the Dakota-Montana District, "for cause." The cause was that he practiced fellowship with the Protes'tants! As the Protes'tants would say, the Dakota-Montana District finally won its spurs! This question, then, remains unanswered to this day, as far as I know: "If a member of the Protes'tant Conference should attend my church and desire to receive Holy Communion, could I commune him?"

But, back to 1928. If the Protes'tants had a "martyr-hero" in Pastor Beitz and a "villain" in President Thurow, they were soon to have bigger martyrs and villains in the persons of Prof. Joh. P. Koehler and Prof. August Pieper. August Pieper, born in Pomerania in 1857, educated at Northwestern College and Concordia Seminary, was one of four Pieper brothers to serve the Lutheran Synodical Conference.

(The passing remark of Pieper's brother-in-law, Dr. George Stoeckhardt, will probably paint a better picture of the man than I ever can. Regarding the four Pieper brothers, he is reputed to have said': "*Reinhold ist gar nicht begabt aber ist sehr fleissig. Franz ist gut begabt and ist sehr fleissig. Anton ist gar nicht begabt and ist faul. August ist sehr gut begabt aber ist stinken faul!*")

August Pieper was an original thinker, a dynamic teacher with a forceful and alert mind, a first-rate exegete (cf. his *Jesaias II*), and above all, a charismatic personality! He had a gift for saying things in a way that would stick. He it is that originally referred to the "Third Party" in Western Wisconsin as the "*Protestler*," which they adopted then as their name, the Protes'tants. Later, when the question came up of those who agreed with the theology expressed in the *Gutachten* but not with its understanding of the Beitz paper, the expression is attributed to Pieper "*Rum oder' raus*" (Come round or get out!) It was not difficult for the Protes'tants to find much in what Pieper had written, much in what he did, and much in what he said, to criticize. He finally became their arch-villain. This was augmented by the growing schism between Pieper (and the rest of the seminary faculty) and the director (president), Joh. P. Koehler.

If Pieper became the villain, Koehler became the final word in a martyr-hero. Pieper had a gift for taking the "deep things" and presenting them in a popular way (in the best sense of the word). Koehler also wrote deep things, but when you finished reading what he wrote (or often listening to him speak) you knew that you had gotten into deep things. (As you will also know from studying his one paper, *Gesetzliches Wesen*, or as you may recall from his commentary on Galatians.) That he was not always understood or appreciated in his day is, I think, an acknowledged fact. (Perhaps it was an already acknowledged fact back in the 20's, when it was said that only one of Koehler's students ever understood him, and he misunderstood him.)

The two men were extreme contrasts. Yet, this did not drive them apart. Koehler was called to the seminary from Northwestern College in 1900, Pieper from St. Marcus congregation in Milwaukee, in 1902. They served together for 23 years, with a number of co-workers, most notable being A. Hoenecke and J. Schaller. Pieper often gave popular verbal and written expression to the more abstract thought of Koehler.

One hears little of any involvement of Koehler and Pieper, in the first Watertown case, although Koehler's son, Karl, resigned from the faculty there. Pieper's part was to try to promote reconciliation between the faculty and the board. Koehler was at the time in Germany, researching his history of the Wisconsin Synod, especially in the Archives of the German Mission Societies and the Prussian State Archives.

In the Fort Atkinson case, Koehler was one of the members of the committee appointed to work a reconciliation; it didn't work. While he objected to the manner in which the whole case had been handled, he did not sign the "Beaver Dam Protest," although he had written a private, personal letter to President Thurow, expressing concern over the manner in which the case was being handled.

The schism between Koehler and the rest of the seminary faculty becomes more evident in the Ruediger case. Koehler did not approve of the way in which Ruediger had conducted himself, and involved himself in "synod politics;" but it was not Koehler's style to deal with a Christian Brother with written documents as the

Confession and the Absolution. Koehler would deal with a brother personally and privately. He is the only member of the faculty who did not sign Ruediger's "Absolution."

The schism reached its breaking point in the matter of the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten*. You will recall the faculty with the exception of Koehler, had worked on the *Gutachten*. Koehler's suggestion that they confer with Beitz to gain his understanding of his paper was vetoed. Koehler did sign the *Gutachten*, but it seems his understanding was that this was a critique that would be used to help Beitz see the objections to his paper, perhaps with the aid of the district praesidium or some other brothers. When Koehler found out that the *Gutachten* was mailed to every pastor and teacher in the Western Wisconsin District, he withdrew his signature and prepared a card to be mailed to each recipient of the *Gutachten*, saying that it had been made public without his knowledge or consent, although he was dissuaded from mailing out his notice.

I think we should carefully note here that Koehler did *not* support the Beitz paper! His objection was only to the manner in which Beitz was being dealt with. When Beitz refused to withdraw, or in any way clarify his paper, Koehler held him half responsible for the controversy.

After twice visiting with Beitz precisely for the purpose of trying to understand just what he intended with his essay, Koehler wrote his *Ertrag*, in which he attempted to show that the Beitz paper need not necessarily be understood as the *Gutachten* had understood and interpreted it. This fruitless attempt was followed by his *Beleuchtung* (analysis), written for the same purpose, and made available before the 1929 convention of the synod. This was answered by Pieper and Meyer in the "Antwort," which restates the original position on the Beitz paper found in the *Gutachten*, and seems to insinuate that Koehler, with his careful attempts to understand the matter from Beitz's point of view (as well as from the faculty's) was showing signs of theological relativism.

Meetings that were held between Koehler and the rest of the faculty produced no beneficial results. On August 13, before Koehler had received a copy of the "Antwort," he was dismissed from the seminary faculty by the seminary board, on the basis of the *Beleuchtung* and the *Antwort* (NB - Five days later, on August 18, 1929, the new seminary was dedicated at Thiensville. The vacancy caused by the dismissal of Ruediger five years before had not been filled; Prof. Henkel had died; and now Koehler was on the verge of being dismissed! That left a faculty of two, Pieper and Meyer. This faculty was soon augmented by the calling of M. Lehninger and F. Brenner.)

Although the seminary board had resolved to dismiss Koehler, this was not done at once. Koehler was relieved of all seminary duties for the school year 1929-1930. Koehler composed a long paper in German, but with the English title "Witness, Analysis and Reply" (containing much material from his *Ertrag* and *Beleuchtung*) and submitted it to the *Gemeindeblatt*. The *Gemeindeblatt* declined publication. (It was published in *Faith-Life*, July 1930). Finally, on May 21, 1930, Koehler was dismissed from the faculty of the seminary and ordered to vacate his house. (The false rumor spread at the time that Koehler, over 70 years of age at the time, had become emotionally unbalanced). Koehler went to live with his son, Karl, who was at that time pastor of a small Protes'tant congregation in Nielsville, Wisconsin. In the 1933 convention of the synod, Koehler was also suspended from membership in the synod, because he was "openly practicing fellowship with those who have severed fellowship with us."

Koehler lived in retirement for another 21 years. He often was essayist for the conferences of the "Protes'tant Conference." Many of his papers were printed in *Faith-Life*, and many were translated into English, perhaps the most notable being that which we have been studying, "*Gesetzliches Wesen Unter Uns*;" and "*The History of the Wisconsin Synod*," and his commentaries on Galatians, Ephesians and the Gospel of St. John, the last two of which are not in printed form in English, and hence not generally available to the present generation.

Pieper went on to be director of the seminary. A fall and broken hip in 1941 ended his teaching career, although he continued to contribute to the *Quartalschrift*, and was made an honorary member of the faculty by resolution of the synod. He died December 23, 1946, at the age of 89 years. Although Pieper (at the suggestion of the very Christian janitor at the seminary) attempted a reconciliation with Koehler in his last years, the reconciliation never took place, partly because of his deteriorating health, and partly because Koehler never

looked on the whole matter as a personal matter, and therefore felt no particular need for reconciliation between himself and Pieper.

The Protes'tant Conference still continues, although much smaller now than in the 1920's and 1930's. It never really became a separate church body in the sense that it made any provision for a formal organization, the training of future pastors, or mission work. (There was a mission fund in the 30's, used to aid in cases where small mission congregations left the synod, or to aid pastors who lost their means of support during a transition period. It did, for example, provide subsidy to the congregation in Rice Lake for a time and to Beitz's mission congregation in LaCrosse). I believe the correct and proper name of the organization is still "The Protes'tant Conference of the Wisconsin Synod," its purpose to preserve the "Wauwatosa Gospel" and warn the Wisconsin Synod of the Judgements of God; and its main contribution, making some of Koehler's valuable material available through the pages of *Faith-Life*. While a reconciliation between the Wisconsin Synod and the Protes'tant Conference has not been effected, we ought to gratefully acknowledge the contributions these erstwhile brethren have made. The translation of *Gesetzliches Wesen* was made by a man in the Protes'tant Conference. Our translation of Koehler's Galatians was made by Protes'tant E. E. Sauer. The publishers of *Faith-Life*, who had originally printed it, readily gave permission to Northwestern Publishing House to print it in book form. The most comprehensive history of the Wisconsin Synod is that of J. P. Koehler, printed by the Protes'tant Conference. Is it too much to hope that more of the material available to previous generations may yet become available to us? Is it too much to pray that in the hands of a gracious Savior one of the darkest periods of our synod's history may yet be brightened by a real understanding and reconciliation between the Wisconsin Synod and the few remaining Protestants?

II. The question still remains: why the Protes'tant controversy? And what effects, if any, did it have on our Wisconsin Synod?

These questions will not be fully answered here, even as this paper is not a full detailed account of the history of the Protes'tant controversy, but merely a sketchy outline. Yet there are some general observations that can be briefly made.

Since the one written document about which the controversy finally settled was the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten* of the seminary faculty, perhaps it would be well to begin with the charges (or critique) that were made regarding the Beitz paper in the *Gutachten*. There were four: (translation my own)

- 1) That he (Beitz) converted (perverted) a justification text into a sanctification preaching, with the result that he mixes justification and sanctification, Law and Gospel throughout his work, and (thus) perverts the way of salvation.
- 2) On the basis of a false understanding of the Epistle to the Galatians, he condemns the majority of hearers and teachers among us as dead legalists and represents the Lutheran Church, the Synodical Conference, and especially our synod, because of their legalism, as under the Judgement of God.
- 3) That he teaches as an enthusiast and antinomian regarding repentance, and beclouds the way to peace and eternal life for both the Christian and the non-Christian.
- 4) That, as an enthusiast, he condemns the teaching methods to which we are accustomed, particularly Catechism instructions, dogmatics, and homilistics, as leading to spiritual death, and commends his own enthusiast methods of teaching.

The *Gutachten* does not cite specific instances to substantiate the first conclusion, but rather shows that in general, in the whole paper, Beitz uses the text (Galatians 3:11) "The just shall live by faith" as a call to repentance for not living by faith, and an urging to "live by faith" in such a way that it makes "living by faith" a matter of works, of sanctification, at best.

Concerning Beitz's condemning the majority of the members and pastors as dead legalists, any number of places could be cited: "We have advanced so far on this road of spiritless Christianity that to the average

professed Christian, Christianity is a set of rules.” Again: “Our danger is to lose the spirit and then to boil down our Christian life to the observance of certain things. Christianity has become to most church members a barter, getting by with as little as possible. *Ein ganz ordinaerer Kuhhandel.*” Again: “Are we going to tempt the Lord further and force him to speak to us in the awful words: “Woe unto you, Lutheran Church, woe unto you, Synodical Conference, for if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in the Catholic Church and the Sects, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.” Again: “We must have emptied the gospel of its Life-giving power or our appeal would bring more response. We preach it as cold formal empty ceremony, not so far removed from the cold empty formal Mass of the Roman Church.” Again: “It beats all, and our faculties are not a little to blame for our being in such shakles.” Again: “I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the Catholic Church and Sects at the Day of Judgement than for you. And you, Wisconsin Synod, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell; for if the mighty works, which have been done in you had been done in the Masonic Order it would be God’s Church this day. But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the Masonic Order in the Day of Judgement than for you.”

Regarding point 3, repentance, the Augsburg Confession (Art. XII - 2) says: “Now, repentance consists properly of these two parts: One is contrition, that is, terrors smiting the conscience through the knowledge of sin; the other is faith, which is born of the Gospel, or of absolution, and believes that for Christ’s sake, sins are forgiven, comforts the conscience, and delivers it from terrors.” Of these, the first is a transitory state, the law terrifies me in view of my sins, until the second, faith, is given, which lays hold on the merits of Christ and drives away my fears and brings me peace, which is lasting. Besides this repentance, which marks the beginning of my new life as a Christian, there is also that repentance which the weakness of my flesh necessitates daily for the purpose of drowning my old adam, which is a part of my life of sanctification so long as I live. But now, which repentance is Beitz describing? While he is apparently speaking of fellow believers, he has condemned them as dead legalists and speaks to them as such: “John proved the spirits coming to him ... and finding them unrepentant speaks some very hard words to them. And they are written for us. He says to us: “Ye generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come.” Again: “Were we not as blind as this multitude coming out to John the Baptist, we would know what heart-felt repentance consists of.”

Having thus established that we are unrepentant, and then preached the need for repentance, and, having his ‘hearer’ or ‘reader’ ask “How shall I get such a consciousness of sin” he ends up saying, “You will find repentance at the foot of the cross. True heartfelt repentance is not obtained from the individual commandments as we have learned to know them in our Catechism or Catechetical course. They may bring about a head repentance, a formal confession, but it will not stand the test of time,” and then contrition is stressed as an emotional feeling, something which the sinner must work up in himself. (Is not contrition something that we undergo, or suffer, rather than something we attempt to produce in ourselves?) I must confess, were this paper the only exposure I ever had to the Christian faith, I would have ended up despairing of ever being able to be sorry enough, contrite enough, for my sins. From my personal reading of the Beitz paper, it is this third point that really made the paper unacceptable. (It must be said in all this, that we are quoting-bits and pieces. The serious student of the whole affair ought to read the whole paper!)

I rather suspect, however, that it was the fourth point of the *Gutachten* that causes the greatest furor at the time, that Beitz condemns the teaching methods we use, particularly Catechism instructions, dogmatics and homiletics. A few quotes from Beitz: “Our Catechism, as usually taught; our dogmatics, so stressed in our schools, has done much to bring about a state of affairs that we must admit exists today. All because we have listened to man’s ideas rather than God’s.” Again: “Our preparatory and college courses are usually only a rehashing of the husks of the Catechism course. Our dogmatical stress at our seminaries only serves that same purpose. It is only the advanced Catechism course and bleeds the life of faith in Christ of the life-giving blood, till we finally have the skeletons, the forms, the dogmas, the doctrines, the shells, the husks left; but the Spirit is departed.” Again: “It goes to show where our *formal* study of our courses, dogmatics, has gotten us to. It cuts up for the intellect, but just such a vivisection of the Body of Life makes for death; so that dissecting the Word of Life, the Body of Christ, in that way makes for a dead Savior, a corpse.” Why I believe that such statements (and more) were the real heart of the controversy, I shall come to later.

The strong language that Beitz used, the sharp judgements, the call away from dead formalism, were not new to Wisconsin Synod circles in the 1920's. Pastor Paul Hensel wrote a paper, "*Das Gutachten im Lichte des Wauwatosia Evangeliums*," in which he traces almost every sharp word of Beitz to some sharp word of August Pieper, showing that the student had learned well from his teacher (and perhaps plagiarized?). I think he misses one point ... namely that what may be acceptable from one person at one time under one set of circumstances may be a cause of offense when coming from another person at another time under different circumstances. To show how common this difference is, let me illustrate: In 1916, at a mixed conference in Milwaukee, the subject of *Gesetzlichkeit* was being discussed. Being discussed were the words: "*Du musst*" as "*gesetzlich*." Old Pastor Sprengler (Trinity, 9th & Highland), known to be evangelical, confessed "*So habe ich immer gelehrt*." Koehler replied: "*Wenn sie so lehren, dann ist es evangelisch*." Wm. Dallmann (Mt. Olive, then still on Walnut) then added: "*So habe ich auch immer gelehrt*." Koehler's reply: "*Dann ist es gesetzlich!*" The sharp language, the judgements, the calls to repentance from Pieper, were made, not at a time of controversy, but at a time of relative peace. Pieper was already an "elder" in the synod, Beitz a relative newcomer. Pieper was well known for his forthrightness, not to mention his theatricals; Beitz was an unknown ingredient. Whether they ought or not, these things do make a difference; and, whether right or not, there is that intangible difference between people that often is seen when two people tell the same jokes; from one it is funny, from the other it falls flat, or even is offensive.

Now, many of the men who sided with Beitz, I am sure, did not hold the teaching of repentance (contrition as a feeling that one strives to get and to deepen. By the way, Beitz doesn't point the contrite sinner to Christ on the cross for comfort, but merely to heighten his feeling of contrition!) They were sound theological, evangelical Lutheran pastors. They tried to understand Beitz in a different, and more proper way, because they saw the controversy over the Beitz paper and the *Gutachten* as merely part of a larger problem and controversy. This was already true in the Fort Atkinson case. The men who signed the Beaver Dam Protest explained that they did not necessarily share the position of the lady teachers, but that "we regard it as only one part of a larger question." I hold that larger question was twofold.

The first part of that larger question was the charge that the Wisconsin Synod and particularly the seminary faculty was losing the "Wauwatosia Gospel." Even today, we hear that the Wisconsin Synod has lost the Wauwatosia Gospel. This comes from those who misunderstand the whole movement within the circles of the Wisconsin Synod in the first quarter of this century that has been known as the Wauwatosia Gospel. To them the Wauwatosia Gospel goes no deeper than that for a time men were able to look beyond long-held orthodox doctrinal formulations and concepts, to the text of the Scriptures itself, to study the Scriptures in their historical context, understand them, and thus look at old doctrines with a new freshness and insight and sometimes even clear up old, longstanding false concepts (as with the analogy of faith). Along with this process went a good deal of self-criticism. What such a superficial reading of the situation would lead to was a discarding of all methods and forms such as dogmatics, Catechism, even homiletics ... and a study only of the Scripture in its context. (One pastor, the brother of Miss Gerda Koch, actually did teach his confirmation class in that manner! The idea doesn't sound bad, but clumsy). This conflict between the historical-exegetical and the dogmatic, etc., runs through the Beitz paper. After telling us that the dogmatic, and still other formal studies, give us a dead Savior, he continues: "And we have to join in the plaintive cry of Mary Magdalene: "They have taken away my Lord and I know not where they have laid Him." The only method, if you wish to call it such, that does not do this is the historical, the exegetical, the expository. It is the God-given way. It is the way that appeals to the heart. It is the way of the Savior here on earth." A little later he continues: "Or let us approach the Bible from the angle of dogmatics and we are at once pressing a form upon that life-giving word. We come with pre-conceived ideas, either our own or those of others. '*Wir trauen dem Evangelium nicht zu, dass es die Dinge macht.*' We seem to doubt the ability of God to do the things right through the means He has wisely chosen. We seem to think, or at least act, as though '*wir müssen dem lieben Gott unter die Arme greifen, sonst wird das Wort nicht recht aufgefasst.*' We are improving upon God's way. Let us not kid ourselves. The Spirit is well able to do that without our tampering."

Dogmatics vs. History – Exegesis. That, I believe, is the real message that the Protes'tants picked up from the Beitz paper and defended. There is a subtle concern with that all through the Protes'tant controversy. Take one small example: When Prof. Elmer Sauer preached in Oconomowoc at St. Matthews in 1927, he was suspended from the faculty of Northwestern (and the synod) because St. Matthews, which was the remnant from St. Pauls, that had not left Wisconsin for Missouri, had gone over to the Protes'tants along with their Pastor Hass. Elmer Sauer insisted that any hearing of his case would necessitate a review of the suspension of Hass and the reason for that suspension; in short, a review of the whole historical context. Board member J. Brenner (later president of Wisconsin Synod) made the passing remark "*Die Vorgeschichte geht uns nichts an,*" which became yet another rallying cry of the Protes'tants, to reveal the apostasy of synod.

But, had the Wisconsin Synod really abandoned the Historical-Exegetical method? (It is still taught today!) Had the Wisconsin Synod or the seminary faculty ever really intended the Historical-Exegetical method to replace *all* other disciplines in our seminary and synod? Here one must say, *die Vorgeschichte geht uns doch an!*

The situation in Lutheran theology (conservative at least) at the turn of the century is well described by Koehler: "With the Old Lutherans of the 19th century it was different. Its sources were the 17th century fathers of Lutheran dogmatics and the confessional writings and the struggle was directed against the Prussian Union.... In going back to those secondary sources, the old Lutherans not only took over the forms of organization and worship, but also the intellectualism which was just as much a part of the mentality of the 19th as the two preceding centuries. Whatever obtained in the 16th and 17th centuries was considered the Lutheran idea and was reintroduced. This was not always prompted by the freedom of the Gospel but by the lack of discrimination of this Romantic period and by the dogmatic ideas.... So there was no one in those days ... to pose the question whether or not the forms of the 17th century were suited to the 19th century ... (or) whether these forms even in the 17th century were an adequate expression of the great truths of the Gospel." To briefly illustrate this dependance on what previous dogmatists had deduced and written, I opened Walther's *Classic "Kirche and Amt,"* at random, to Thesis VII. The thesis itself requires 7 lines plus 2 words. The "*Beweis aus Gottes Wort* (Note the proof-text wording) takes 23 lines, including explanations. Quotations from the Confessions takes one and one half pages; quotations from the Dogmatics (of the past) takes 15 pages, including numerous quotations in Latin. (Scripture, though, is not quoted in Greek or Hebrew) Now, surely Walther knew better and was capable of better, as a study of his sermons will show. But he was bound by this reliance on accepted dogmatic formulas mentality!

In bringing our synod to return to the original source, Scripture, and to reading it in its original language and its original historical context, without prejudice, there was no disagreement between Pieper and Koehler. Koehler taught church history and New Testament Exegesis; Pieper, Old Testament Exegesis. If Koehler was interested in the historical context, Pieper was adept at applying it to the present situation and circumstances. If any were to object, it should have been Hoenecke and his successor, Schaller, who taught in the field of dogmatics. Both were open to the new spirit that was growing at Wauwatosa.

But the real purpose of this "Wauwatosa Gospel" was not to replace dogmatics (the Catechism, homiletics) with only the historical-exegetical method, but rather to put all in their proper relation to one another. Since this had been accomplished by the 20's (I suppose there might be some latitude of thinking as to what the proper relationship was and when it was reached), this would be the time when we would see a decreasing emphasis on the historical-exegetical method, in its contrasts to dogmatics *et al.* It was apparently this change in pace that some interpreted as a rejection of the historical-exegetical method and a return to straight 17th century dogmatics, a repudiation of the "Wauwatosa Gospel."

That was one part of the larger question. The other was the question of "*Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche*" (Popery in the church).

In reaction to the idea that the Saxon emigrants had left the church when they left the state church of Saxony, Walther had debated, and made his point well, that every local congregation, because it is composed of Christians gathered about Word and Sacrament, is church. In time, this clarity on church deteriorated to the idea that the local congregation is the only scripturally instituted form of church. In reaction to this, the Wauwatosa

Gospel with its spirit of going back to the Word without preconceived notions, to see what the Word said, not what the Word could be made to prove, led our synod to the conviction that the local congregation, while indeed church, is not the only valid form the church may take; indeed, that the scriptures do not dictate the form that the church must take.

Unfortunately, this unfolding of the doctrine of the church was not always completely understood. I dare say, it may not be quite understood today; else there would be no question about whether or not any group other than the local congregation has the right to excommunicate. (It's not a right, but a painful duty of Christian love, and that throws a whole different light on the matter.) Those very proponents of the Wauwatosa Gospel who feared its loss the greatest seem to also have been the ones who show the most confusion about church discipline when practiced by any form of church other than the congregation alone.

There was a danger, of course, that a certain amount of "overlording" would enter the church. The synod, in 1917, had been created as a united body, in place of a federation of synods. This was not accomplished without difficulty, as may be seen from the history of the Michigan Synod. The president of the synod, G. E. Bergemann, recognized the twofold problem; both that the synod and district officials could become over-officious, and that especially outlying districts could misunderstand various actions and misconstrue them as officious, by virtue of their distance from and isolation from the center of the synod. The obituary for Bergemann in the October 1954 *Quartalschrift* notes: "President Bergemann was untiring in his attendance of district conventions, mission board meetings, and sessions of the various boards of our synod's institutions of higher learning. Perhaps no one but the members of an outlying district far away from the center of our synod ... can fully appreciate the invaluable service he rendered in welding sometimes divergent elements into a harmonious whole by his appearance, representing joint synod in his person and in his words. It was during his presidency that a beginning was made of what is known among us as the General Synodical Committee. Strangely enough, when the troubles came, they came not far from the center of the synod in outlying districts, but in the very heartland of the synod.

Did our synod really fully comprehend the nature of the church in the course of the Protes'tant controversy? The final goal of church is, after all, *Seelsorge*, the care of and loving concern for the souls of men; not the rights of the local congregation, the district or the synod, or whatever form the church may from time to time take. Yet, I believe that there is confusion in this matter throughout the Protes'tant controversy. In the Watertown case, the question was not: "What is best for the souls of the boys, both those guilty of stealing, and the rest of the boys at the school;" but rather: "Who has the right to expel!" In the Fort Atkinson case, again it was a question of rights. Not ... how can we lead the lady teachers to see their sin, to repent, and to receive forgiveness from their fellow Christians (pastor, congregation, district, synod) and from God; but rather, who has the right to deal with them. Even Koehler's concern was that the district had meddled in the affair before the local congregation had finished dealing with the girls. In the Ruediger case, one can only wonder, since a confession had been made and an absolution given (in writing at that), that the professor could then be dismissed because confidence had been lost in him. Would not the confession and the absolution also restore confidence among Christian brothers? In the Beitz case, again, the *Gutachten* was published and distributed before anyone had actually tried to sit down with Beitz and show him his sins (judgement of hearts) and false doctrine. But, again, even though that was not done, does that negate the steps taken by the district and the synod as a whole? Am I, a sinner, absolved, because two or three brethren come to me, instead of "one" to "tell me my faults between him and me alone?" (Not to mention the difference between a private sin and a public sin and false doctrine taught in the church!) Finally, of course, the rallying cry "*Rum oder raus*," whether intended that way or not, was used to show that Pieper and the synod were interested not in brotherly admonition in the manner of the church, but only in enforcing from above the prevailing point of view. Hence, the title of one of Pieper's own long running essays in the *Quartalschrift*, "*Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche*," became yet another rallying cry for the Protes'tants. A personal opinion is that the district and the synod did not always act as church in dealing with brethren, but, in human frailty, often enough acted like a worldly power structure. On the other hand, the Protes'tants also did not comprehend the real nature of church when they refused to acknowledge the working of the district and synod as "church" simply because it could be pointed out in

a.legalistic way that not all steps had been followed the way one might wish, or dogmatically deduce from Matthew 18.

One final question concerning the Protes'tant controversy and the doctrine of church and ministry. That was the question: "Were the suspensions excommunications?" At the time, the question was asked because the suspensions were performed not by a local congregation but by the districts and synod. But that is hardly the point. The whole point should have been this: When we suspend someone from fellowship, for fellowshiping outside our fellowship, as in the Protes'tant cases, is that excommunication? We are not dealing with someone who has committed a sin of which they are unrepentant, which could lead to their soul's damnation; we are not declaring the persons unbelievers. We are stating that we are no longer united in doctrine and practice. We made it quite clear when we suspended fellowship with the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod that we were not excommunicating the LCMS. That was also true of the Protes'tant suspensions. Whether carried out by one form of church or another is of relative little significance.

While I realize the length of this paper, I would like to add a few personal observations of the effect of the Protes'tant controversy on our Wisconsin Synod. These are not meant to be judgements, but the mere observations of a simple parish pastor 50 years later; I hope they will be taken as such.

It has often been said that the Wisconsin Synod lost the Wauwatosa Gospel through the Protes'tant controversy. That I do not hold that to be true I think I have already demonstrated. And yet, for a time, we did lose some of the spirit of the Wauwatosa Gospel, the spirit of feeling free to restudy the Scriptures without being bound by traditional concepts; and to make them relevant to the present century; to make them public, and then expect brotherly criticism by which errors could be corrected and faulty concepts changed.

From 1900 to the time of the Protes'tant controversy, our synod through its Northwestern Publishing House produced a vast array of material for the church. Without a complete catalogue, let me name a few: Koehler's Church History, *History of the Wisconsin Synod (Part One)*, *Galaterbrief*, *Epheserbrief*, Hoenecke's *Dogmatics*, August Pieper's *Jesias II* and *Hausandachten*, Schaller's *Biblical Christology*, not to mention the dubious contributions of Bernthal: *Denksteine des Lebens*, *Taufnamen Schatz*, and "Physiology from a Christian Viewpoint." Certainly such were more than offset by Hoenecke's *Passionspredigten*. Then, too, the books by Bernthal were a private printing job by the publishing-house for the author, not a synod project. Add to that Carl Manthey-Zorn's "Der Heiland," Dallmon's "Jesus" not to mention a myriad of other books, agendas, hymnals, etc., etc.

But in the years from 1930 to 1960, what did we as a synod produce? What did we print for our people? The books I recall were a series of Lenten sermons (*The Solemn Hours of Lent* by Shiley); and *Translations of the Apache Indian Novels* by Harders, and Joh. P. Koehler's *Galatians*, and Hoenecke's *Passionsermons*. Now, making this material available to a generation not as proficient in German as the previous generations is worthwhile, but do you see the pattern.... Only print something safe ... something that has already found acceptance. Even our Sunday School materials ... hesitate to ever depart from the wording of the "accepted" King James. I could just as well have spared the cost of buying my children a *Bible History* and let them read the King James Bible, except for a few explanations in parenthesis of words impossible to understand and pictures. This terror is so widespread that it is commonly accepted as true today (although I find nothing in the constitution to substantiate it) that no one in our synod may publish anything publicly or privately until it has first been screened by a committee to make sure that no one rocks the boat by saying something that hasn't been said!

If this sounds harsh, let me hasten to add that we see, finally, this side effect of the Protes'tant controversy wearing out. In recent years our synod has again begun publishing and making available to our pastors and people much needed materials. Note the many Bible Class series now available. (When I entered the ministry, there were none!) Welcome is the book on pastoral theology, the commentary on Second Corinthians, the reprinting of Poellot's commentary on Revelation, and a host of other materials that we are now producing.

Along with this, we note the project of the women's group in St. Louis, making available to pastors some of the papers from other conferences. There is, I believe, a new spirit of openness, that characterized the Wauwatosa Gospel. We are not hiding behind the shell of what has already been said, but are beginning to

express ourselves; trusting our brethren in the conferences, district and synod not to condemn us, but, in a brotherly manner, to criticize so that through open and honest discussion we can all grow in knowledge and in faith.

This is the beginning, not of a new trend, but of a return to the real spirit of the Wauwatosa Gospel. I think it was epitomized in the action our own district took, requesting more materials relevant to the mission situation in the cities of our country today. May this spirit, under God's blessing, continue and flourish, to the blessing of His church, to the salvation of many souls, to the Glory of His Name.

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Periodicals Found Useful:

"Faith-Life," the paper of the Protes'tant Conference since Easter, 1928. The first years give a wealth of material. Unfortunately, one must sometimes wonder if the 8th commandment is not being broken. In these last years the paper seems to have deteriorated. Formerly contained some good material, especially by Joh. Koehler.

"The Northwestern Lutheran" and "Das Gemeindeblatt" never really discussed the Protes'tant Controversy, but official notices are there.

"Quartalschrift" (now "Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly"). The articles give insight into the theological thinking of the time. Still published irregularly four times a year.

IN ADDITION I did make use of several private letters. (We will let these remain private), and to some extent, recollections of things that have gathered dust and cobwebs in my mind for years. Wherever possible, I tried to verify such with printed materials.