

Three Doctors of the American Lutheran Church:

Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883)

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811-1887)

Gustav Adolph Theodor Felix Hoenecke (1835-1908)

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Introduction

July 3, 1863. 3:30 p.m. 90 degrees Fahrenheit. The angle, Emmitsburg Road, three quarters of a mile south of Gettysburg, PA. After two and a half days of the fiercest fighting in the War between the States. General Lee's proud Army of Northern Virginia mounts a massive assault from Seminary Ridge across a mile of open field to the Union lines on Cemetery Ridge. Some of General George Pickett's Confederates under the field command of General Lewis A. Armistead temporarily breach the Union lines defended by the remnants of the "Philadelphia Brigade" under the command of General John Gibbon. Civil War historians have dubbed this advance "The Highwater Mark of the Confederacy" because at that moment the Confederate army reached its deepest penetration into Union territory. After that decisive moment the South would be on a slow but steady retreat until it ceased to exist as an independent nation.

Although the South breached the Union lines that sweltering July afternoon the Confederacy never really had a chance to win the War between the States. Forces of history, geography, sociology, economics and international diplomacy worked against the South and its way of life. The South indeed had flashes of military brilliance and impressive successes against a much stronger Union. At times it seemed the South would gain the victory. However, for all its determination, sacrifice and skill the South was doomed to fail. For that reason, the highwater mark of the Confederacy really wasn't a highwater mark at all.

On that afternoon in Gettysburg, PA, the South advanced from Seminary Ridge. The seminary was Gettysburg Theological Seminary, opened in 1826 by the General Synod. It is interesting that this Lutheran Seminary witnessed such a battle between brothers at this time. For in its own right that seminary and the church body to which it belonged was in the beginning stages of a civil war of its own.

The civil war that raged in the General Synod also saw brother against brother and father against son. As the South broke away from the North for matters of conscience, so also the "Old Lutherans" broke away from the General Synod for what they believed in. Also, just as the North and South fought in the border states of Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, so also in the General Synod, the forces of the liberal "American Lutheranism" fought against the conservative forces of "Old Lutheranism" in those same states at about that same time.

Although the causes and ultimate goals of the South and Confessional Lutheranism bear no resemblance to each other, the histories of Old Dixie and Old Lutheranism do share some similarities. For Old Dixie the apparent highwater mark came on that hot July afternoon in Gettysburg. In the war between the Lutherans, the apparent highwater mark for Confessional Lutheranism also arrived in a small, southeastern Pennsylvania town. Three and half years after the battle of Gettysburg, seventy-five miles away and in weather about 80 degrees colder, the forces of Confessional Lutheranism met in Reading, PA. Representatives from conservative Lutheran synods convened to set the foundation for a new confederacy of Confessional Lutherans. The name of that conservative Lutheran confederacy was the General Council. And as the South was committed to preserving its old way of life and its "peculiar institution," so the Old Lutherans were committed to preserving the faith of their fathers and their "peculiar" Symbols: the Augsburg Confession the Catechisms of Luther, the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord. (Certainly the confessions of the Lutheran Church must never be equated with the South's institution of slavery!)

Unfortunately, the demise of the General Council was as certain as that of Dixie. The reasons for the failure of the General Council are many, but some are similar to the fall of the South. During the Civil War,

States' rights were so precious several southern states actually threatened to secede from the Confederacy. The General Council also suffered the particular individualistic tendencies that threatened to break up the South. Among other factors, the demand for Synods' rights by the individual members synods of the General Council and an inherent distrust of any form of higher church government prevented the General Council from cementing a truly united, conservative Lutheran Church body in America. History was also against it; liberal Lutheranism, unionism and Puritanism were simply too ingrained in eastern America. They left their infectious residue in the eastern synods of the General Council. European politics and American geography worked against a pure confessional Lutheran confederation in America: the more (conservative Midwestern synods inherited their confessionals directly from their rebirth of confessionalism in Germany, whereas the resurgence of confessionalism in the East was more homegrown. These two branches of confessional Lutheranism in America, although similar, had different approaches toward and conditions for union and different attitudes toward relations with synods with whom they did not share total agreement. The Midwestern synods, particularly Missouri and Wisconsin, demanded strict adherence to all points of the Lutheran Confessions. The eastern conservatives were strict confessionalists compared with the liberal Lutherans of the General Synod, but they did allow more latitude in "open questions" or as Prof. Fredrich states, "When it became apparent in the 'four Points' issue that the Council was not ready to match its theological practice to its confessional declaration, those who wanted a firmer stance either remained aloof from the beginning or soon withdrew" (Fredrich, page 49). This final point did more than any other to prevent the establishment of a strong confessional Lutheran federation under the auspices of the General Council.

As I have said, even though conservative confessional Lutheranism reached its highwater mark on December 11-14, 1966 in Reading, PA, the General Council was not meant to be. Certainly the General Council was formed and functioned as a conservative Lutheran Church body until the great merger fervor of 1918. However, it did not achieve its hoped for aim: a united confederacy of all confessional Lutheran Church bodies in America.

A study of every influential Lutheran church leader in America in the mid to late 1800s is far beyond the scope of this paper. We simply do not have the time to study such men as Wyneken, Wrede, Beale M. Schmucker, Spaeth, Bading, Sihler, Stoeckhardt, Loy, etc. However, a study of three prominent personalities associated with the highwater mark of Confessional Lutheranism will shed some light on the struggles of Lutheranism in America a little more than a hundred years ago. Hopefully, to achieve a greater understanding of the faith and work of our Lutheran Church fathers in America, this paper will endeavor to examine the lives of Charles Porterfield Krauth, Carl F. W. Walther and G. Adolph Hoenecke. A detailed biography of each of these men goes beyond the time limitations given for the presentation of this paper. Therefore, we will survey their lives with particular attention directed to how each of these men influenced their respective church bodies and contributed to a stronger confessionalism in the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod and the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin. Although only Krauth was personally present at the highwater Reading convention, Walther and Hoenecke exerted and would exert great influence on the present and future proceedings of the General Council.

Since the official title of this paper, as given by the assignment committee, is "Three Doctors of the American Lutheran Church," I thought it appropriate to begin with the man who was the only American-born of the three and the one who spearheaded the formation of the General Council

Charles Porterfield Krauth

Charles Porterfield Krauth was born on March 17, 1823 in Martinsburg, Berkeley County, (West) Virginia. Although C. P. Krauth had a Lutheran pastor for his father, his family background and early childhood experiences hardly foreshadowed his future emergence as a leading proponent of Confessional Lutheranism.

After immigrating from Germany in the 1790s, Charles Porterfield Krauth's paternal grandfather, Charles J. Krauth, served as teacher and organist in the German Reformed Church. Charles J. Krauth married a Lutheran girl and had a son, Charles Philip Krauth, on May 7, 1797. At the age of 22 Charles Philip Krauth received his license to preach from the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. He took charge of two congregations, one

in Martinsburg, (West) Virginia, the other in Shepherdstown. There he met and married Catherine Heiskell who bore him daughter, Susan, and son, Charles Porterfield.

In January of 1824, Catherine Krauth died. Unable to care for his two small children and his two small congregations, Charles Philip Krauth sent the children to his in-laws in Staunton, VA. When C. Philip Krauth became pastor of St. Matthew's in Philadelphia in 1827, Charles Porterfield moved there also. However, he was under the care of Philip's cousins on his mother's side of the family. In October of 1831, when Charles was nine years old, he entered the gymnasium style school in Gettysburg, PA which the General Synod established as a "feeder" to its seminary. In 1834 the Gettysburg gymnasium grew into Pennsylvania College and had, as its first president, Charles Philip Krauth. Although only eleven years old, Charles Porterfield entered the college that same year.

From 1834-39 Krauth excelled at his college studies. He preferred bookish, intellectual pursuits and developed an extreme love for English literature, botany and debate. In the winter of 1836-37 he received catechetical instruction from the college's pastor, was confirmed and then decided to enter into the ministry.

In October of 1839 he entered Gettysburg's Theological Seminary at the tender age of 16. At the seminary he received the bulk of his theological training from Dr. Samuel Simon Schmucker who was leading proponent of the New "American" Lutheranism of the unionistic, quasi-Lutheran General Synod. Schmucker's theology received influence from Methodism, Puritanism and Pietism. He wrote prolifically, had a keen mind and devoted his considerable teaching skill the Gettysburg seminary for forty years. However, he attacked the Lutheran Confessions and all which contained an American Augustana which, in reality, was a watered down statement aimed at the lowest common denominator in Lutheranism.

During his seminary years, Charles also received instruction from his father, C. Philip, who did not share Schmucker's outspoken liberalism. Philip saw himself as a moderate. Privately, he was more conservative than he let on publicly. But even at his death, Philip did not adhere to the Lutheran teaching on the Lord's Supper. Such was Charles Porterfield Krauth's theological training when he graduated from Gettysburg Seminary in the Spring of 1841 at the age of 19.

At the meeting of the Synod of Maryland at Hagerstown in October, 1841, Charles Porterfield Krauth was examined and "licensed to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and administer the sacraments according to the forms of the Lutheran Church for one year... wherever the Head of the Church... may call him to labor" (Spaeth, page 43). A few weeks prior to this licensing the younger Krauth had already taken charge of the Congregational(!) Church in Canton (SE Baltimore). During his nine month stay in Canton he made diligent use of his time. As he wrote to his father, "In the morning I study one chapter in the Hebrew Bible, reading in connection with it the Septuagint, and referring occasionally to the Vulgate, parsing as I go along... In the subsequent part of the day I study one chapter of the New Testament in the original... Besides this I have been reviewing Schmucker's Popular Theology" (Spaeth, pages 50-51).

After nine months in Canton, Charles Porterfield Krauth resigned for health reasons and moved back to Gettysburg. The Maryland Synod then ordained him on October 19, 1842. From there he received the call to shepherd a Lutheran congregation in Baltimore. Charles Porterfield Krauth took charge of Second English Church in September of 1842. "During the four years of his pastorate in this church he attained a brilliant reputation as a preacher... Large crowds gathered in attendance on the services of his church (B. M. Schmucker, page 6)." Unfortunately, Charles Porterfield Krauth was still influenced by less than Lutheran sources. While in Baltimore he regularly held Methodist style revivals and sought conversion experiences from those in attendance. Yet, already at this time he was developing a sense of "Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran pastors only" because he shunned the custom of inviting other non-Lutheran pastors in to help with these revivals. On a personal note, Charles Porterfield Krauth married Susan Reynolds on November 12, 1844.

While in Baltimore, Charles Porterfield Krauth kept requesting more and more books from his father's library to further his studies. Among his requests were the dogmatic texts of Calov and Quenstedt. In June of 1843 C. Philip Krauth sent his son the first volume of Chemnitz's *Loci* on Melancthon's *Loci Communes*. Also during this time Charles Philip Krauth chastised his son for flashy preaching and for publishing statements that

obscured the teaching on the Trinity. To his credit, his father told Charles Porterfield Krauth that if he wanted to study books, he should make the Bible the book he studied the most.

In 1844 the liberal Synod of Maryland nudged Charles Porterfield Krauth into the direction of confessionalism. Like many Lutheran Synods and many other Protestant church bodies, the Maryland Synod was struggling with its identity: New Lutheran or Old Lutheran? To find its identity, the Maryland Synod commissioned a number of studies. One of those studies fell on the 21 year old Krauth. He had the assignment of preaching on the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper at the next synod convention. Krauth attacked this assignment with vigor. Through serious study in the Lutheran Confessions he began to see the weakness of "American (i.e. liberal, unionistic) Lutheranism." He also discovered that Luther reached his theological stance in a way quite different from the subjective theological endeavors of pietistically influenced "New Lutherans." Krauth saw that Luther did not develop doctrine from Luther but from Scripture and the Church Fathers such as Augustine. This study of the Lord's Supper gave the Lutheran Church its distinctive position as the only orthodox church in all of Christianity. Therefore, any attack on the Lord's Supper was an attack on Scriptures and on the Church. Although he poured himself into this presentation for the Maryland Synod, he never presented it due to synod politics.

After four years of ups and downs in Baltimore, Charles Porterfield Krauth resigned and, in June of 1847, was promptly called to serve the dual parish of Martinsburg and Shepherdstown, (West) Virginia, the post his father held when Charles Porterfield Krauth was born. Serving a dual parish got the better of Krauth's physical abilities and in April, 1848 he moved on to become pastor at Winchester, Virginia. There he succeeded Joseph Few Smith who went to serve as professor at Auburn Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church.

As his successor in Shepherdstown/Martinburg, Charles Porterfield Krauth recommended a recent Gettysburg graduate, Beale Melancton Schmucker, son of Samuel Simon Schmucker. Beale Schmucker served there four years during which time Charles Porterfield Krauth befriended and "converted" him to Confessional Lutheranism, much to the chagrin of Beale's father! This relationship led Beale Schmucker to write about Charles Porterfield Krauth's confessionalism:

An interesting question arises as to the time at which the change in Mr. Krauth's theological views took place... In 1848 and 1849 and the following years...I may safely affirm that the change of view and conviction was substantially complete... It may very well be that that great masterpiece of Lutheran theology [Chemnitz's *Loci*], with its array of scriptural evidence and its clear, cogent argument, had great power with so philosophical and logical a mind as that of Mr. Krauth ...At the time of which I speak, he had already made himself familiar with much of patristic theology; he was engaged in following the course of thought in the Church through the ages; he was nearly as familiar with the very phrases and statements of the Book of Concord as we have all known him to be in these later years; he was then following the doctrinal disputations of the Reformation ...and the result at each successive stage of the examination was to confirm and deepen the conviction that the whole truth of the authoritative Word was nowhere set forth with such clearness, purity and fullness as in the collected Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and that in all their doctrinal teachings they were in conformity with that Word. (Schmucker, pages 9-10)

While serving in Virginia, Charles Porterfield Krauth furthered his reputation as a Confessional Lutheran by contributing greatly to the conservative periodical, *Evangelical Review*.

Also during his pastorate at Winchester, Krauth made contributions to Lutheran liturgies when he and B. M. Schmucker were on the Synod of Virginia hymnal committee. Under Krauth's leadership the Virginia Synod produced a more liturgical hymnal that brought about unity of worship forms. In the liturgy Charles Porterfield Krauth restored the Epistle and Gospel readings, the Apostle's and Nicene creeds, and the Lord's prayer. (Evidently, these were not included in their worship services at that time.) He also inserted Luther's Catechism and the Augsburg Confession into that hymnal.

Although Charles Porterfield Krauth had developed his confessional stance quite solidly at this time, he did not always put it into practice. For example, in the Fall of 1852 he and his family departed for Santa Cruz in the Caribbean so his wife's health might improve. Before arriving on Santa Cruz, they first landed on the island of St. Thomas where the elders of the Dutch Reformed Church begged Charles Porterfield Krauth to be their interim pastor because their Reformed pastor was away in New York City. Krauth agreed and for three months served this Reformed congregation which also included German Lutherans, English Episcopalians, Roman Catholics and Presbyterians from Scotland and Ireland.

In the Spring of 1853 the Krauth family returned to America. This trip for the benefit of his wife's health caused Charles Porterfield Krauth to be absent when the Pennsylvania Synod was readmitted to the General Synod after a 20 year absence. Ironically, Charles Porterfield Krauth's Winchester congregation hosted the General Synod convention that welcomed the Pennsylvania Synod back. Unfortunately, Mrs. Krauth died in November of 1853.

In May of 1855, Charles Porterfield Krauth married Virginia Baker of Winchester whose grandfather was Christian Streit, founder of the Church at Winchester and son of one of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's closest friends. "Dr. Charles Philip Krauth was much gratified that his choice had fallen on a descendant of that beloved and revered father in Israel, whose family record was linked with the earliest of the Lutheran Church history in this country" (Spaeth, vol 1. page 271).

In the Summer of 1855 Charles Porterfield received repeated calls to serve the English Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, PA. In accepting this call he showed a deeper understanding of the biblical teaching on the call. Although he did give a trial sermon in Pittsburgh, he wrote to the Pittsburgh congregation, "The trial sermon system is encumbered with such serious difficulties and falls so short of its object, that I have never been able to reconcile it with my conscience, or with my sense of what is due to the sacredness of the pastoral office, and the importance of the object which this system aims at, but does not attain" (Spaeth, vol 1. page 293).

Krauth, however, did go to Pittsburgh and succeeded William Passavant, founder of the Pittsburgh Synod. Passavant went West to found missions and hospitals, one of which was in Milwaukee. He built that hospital with the help of a Milwaukee pastor by the name of John Muelhauser. While in Pittsburg, Krauth "...was at his very best as a preacher and speaker, and he showed greater versatility in style of composition, and also in delivery of his sermons" (Spaeth vol 1. page 288). Also while at Pittsburgh, in 1856, Pennsylvania College, his alma mater, conferred on him the Doctor of Divinity degree.

While in Pittsburgh in September of 1855, Charles Porterfield Krauth received his copy of S. S. Schmucker's anonymously written and widely distributed "Definite Platform." S. S. Schmucker produced this document after seeing his mildly Lutheran General Synod slowly lose ground to forces of conservatism. Schmucker wanted a Lutheran identity in America but he did not go for the strict Lutheranism of the Confessions. So he proposed his own "American Augustana," which was the "Definite Platform." It accused the Augsburg Confession of these five errors:

1. the approval of the ceremonies of the mass
 2. the approval of private confession and absolution
 3. the denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath
 4. the affirmation of baptismal regeneration
 5. the affirmation of the real presence of the body and blood of the Savior in Holy Communion
- (Nelson, page 224).

In addition to this, the "Definite Platform" left out Articles XXII-XXVIII, removed Christ's descent into hell from the creeds, left out the Athanasian Creed and removed all other Lutheran Confessions because of their length and "errors."

Although most Lutheran Synods soundly rejected the "Definite Platform," it did show the depth to which "New Lutheranism" had descended. Charles Philip Krauth, S. S. Schmucker's colleague at Gettysburg, even publicly denounced it and feared that it would cause great division, not union, in the General Synod. This

document also further propelled Charles Porterfield Krauth to the forefront of establishing a soundly Confessional Church body in America.

At first, however, Charles Porterfield Krauth did not attack the “Definite Platform” directly. Yet, on behalf of the Pittsburgh Synod, he did write, “Now, as we have ever done... we regard the Augsburg Confession lovingly and reverently as the ‘good confession’ of our fathers, witnessed before, heaven, earth, and hell” (Spaeth, vol 1. pages 379). In spite of this statement, Krauth still believed in the unity of the Lutheran Church and he did not espouse radical reactions to the “Definite Platform.” Instead he displayed an aversion to controversy when he defended the existence of the General Synod in mid 1857. He also defended S. S. Schmucker when many called for his removal as professor at Gettysburg. He even went so far as to make it easy for the extremely liberal Melancthon Synod to enter the General Synod at its Pittsburgh convention in May, 1859. However, later in life, Charles Porterfield Krauth realized that his attempts to hush the storm of controversy were futile and even immature.

In October 1859, Krauth began his service to St. Mark’s congregation in Philadelphia. Like many other Lutheran congregations, St. Mark’s was divided by the growing rift between Old and New Lutherans. Krauth was increasingly more uncomfortable with these events and found his way out of the difficult situation by accepting the offer to become the editor *Lutheran and Missionary* in the Fall of 1861. “Dr. Krauth... entered upon that sphere of his life work in which he exerted an influence more important and far reaching than in any other department of church work to which he was called” (Spaeth, vol. 2, page 28). “Dr. Krauth had exposed the shallowness of ‘American Lutheranism’ in many able articles in *The Lutheran and Missionary* from 1861 to 1867” (Fry, page 67).

After a few years of editorship, Krauth and the entire General Synod arrived at the critical year of 1864. The General Synod held its 21st convention in York, PA in early May of 1864. The un-Lutheran Franckean Synod applied for membership. After lengthy debate, the General Synod admitted the Franckean Synod by a vote of 97-40, under the condition that the latter would accept the Augsburg Confession. The increasingly more Confessional Pennsylvania Ministerium, in which Charles Porterfield Krauth held membership, protested this conditional acceptance and withdrew its participation, although not its membership, from the General Synod.

Later that month, the Pennsylvania Ministerium held its 117th convention at Pottstown, PA. In view of the impending rift with the General Synod, the delegates to this convention realized the necessity for establishing their own seminary. This they did and called Charles Porterfield Krauth, W. J. Mann and C. F. Schaeffer as full time professors. (Charles Porterfield Krauth’s name did come up as a replacement for S. S. Schmucker when the latter resigned at Gettysburg in February of 1864!) “The [Philadelphia] seminary was to be founded on the unconditional acceptance of all the symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fry, page 66).” Relations between the two seminaries were strained. Charles Philip Krauth declared, “Now a division of the church cannot be avoided (Fry, page 67).” But yet, the Pennsylvania Ministerium still felt it was a part of the General Synod, although a protesting part at that.

All illusions of unity between the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the General Synod shattered at the General Synod’s Fort Wayne convention in May of 1866. Charles Porterfield Krauth, along with the other Pennsylvania Ministerium’s delegates to Fort Wayne, was refused recognition. After much debate, the General Synod and the Pennsylvania delegates made half-hearted attempts at reconciliation but to no avail. “The rupture had been made, and, as the sequel proved, could not be healed at that time (Fry, page 71).”

At its subsequent convention in May 1866 at Lancaster, PA, the Pennsylvania Ministerial officially severed its ties with the General Synod and issued the call to all Confessional Synods to join in the formation of a new Lutheran Federation, the General Council. Represented at the formative meeting in Reading, December 11-14, 1866 were: the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, New York Ministerial, Pittsburgh Synod, Minnesota Synod, The English Synod of Ohio, Joint Synod of Ohio, English District Synod of Ohio, Wisconsin Synod, Michigan Synod, Iowa Synod, Canada Synod, Norwegian Synod of America and Missouri Synod.

Charles Porterfield Krauth drew up and presented the “Fundamental Principles of Faith and Church Polity.” listed below are significant excerpts:

“IV. That Confessions may be such a testimony of Unity and bond of Union, they must be accepted in every statement of doctrine, in their own true, native, original and only sense.

“VI. The Unaltered Augsburg Confession is by preeminence the confession of that faith. The acceptance of its doctrines and the avowal of them without equivocation or mental reservation, make, mark and identify that Church which alone in the true, original, historical and honest sense of the term is the Evangelical Lutheran Church.

“VII. The only Churches, therefore, of any land, which are properly in the Unity of that Communion, and by consequence entitled to its name, Evangelical Lutheran, are those which sincerely hold and truthfully confess the doctrines of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.

“IX ...We declare our conviction that the other Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church ...are of necessity pure and scriptural ...all of which are... in perfect harmony of one and the same scriptural faith. (Fry. pages 104-105).”

With these principles set before them, the delegates were set to meet at Fort Wayne, November 20-26, 1867. That convention elected Krauth as its president and, from that point forward, the history of the General Council is practically identical with his own personal history.

As mentioned in the introduction, this constituting convention already showed that Krauth's dreams for the General Council were not to materialize. The General Council was not to include all confessional Lutheran Church bodies. Missouri, which demanded free conferences as the proper course of action, was absent feeling that the necessary doctrinal unanimity had not yet been reached (as, indeed, it had not). The Ohio Synod withdrew after the convention. The Iowa Synod maintained informal relationships.

No sooner had the General Council formed than Charles Porterfield Krauth had to deal with the “Four Points” issue. The Ohio Synod highlighted these problem areas: 1) Chiliasm, 2) Mixed communion, 3) Pulpit fellowship, 4) Secret societies. The General Council postponed its decisions on these matters until its 1868 convention and these “Four Points” would dominate Krauth's life and General Council politics for the next thirteen years.

At the 1868 Pittsburgh convention. Krauth presented his definitions of position on the “Four Points.” On the two main points of altar and pulpit fellowship, Krauth wrote:

“III. 1. We hold that the purity of the Pulpit should be guarded with the most conscientious care, and that no man shall be admitted to our pulpits, whether of the Lutheran name or any other, of whom there is just reason to doubt whether he will preach the pure truth of God's Word as taught in the Confessions of our Church.

“IV. 1. Heretics and fundamental errorists are to be excluded from the Lord's table. The responsibility of an unworthy approach to the Lord's table does not rest alone upon him who makes the approach, but also upon him who invites it (Wolf, pages 163- 64).”

Although these statements sound strict they still contain hidden “loopholes” which exhibit Krauth's basic ideas on fellowship, conservatism and the basis of union: innocent until proven guilty. That is: if you know that a pastor or communicant is non-confessional, there is guilt union. Otherwise, if they say they are confessional, give them the benefit of the doubt. In contrast, Walther by this time had convinced the Missouri Synod to adopt a stricter system of judging: guilty until proven innocent. That is: until total agreement on all points has been demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt, there is to be no union. As it turned out, Krauth's magnanimity would be the eventual undoing of the General Council. Fry gives this summary of the difference between the General Council and the “ultra-confessional” synods:

The aim of the General Council was to be gradually educational: the German Synods of the West desired thorough-going disciplinary regulations. The General Council aimed at Lutheran practice through a gradual process of education, but the Western Synod desired a prohibition of these four offensive practices (Fry, Page 107).”

Since the Wisconsin Synod was fast developing closer ties with the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod withdrew from the General Council citing that Krauth’s explanation on the “Four Points” were not wrong, but rather, not adequate. This would be the general reason given by the Minnesota, Michigan and Illinois Synods for their withdrawals.

In view of Missouri’s opposition to the General Council, it might seem that Krauth would be hostile to the LCMS and Walther. However, Krauth himself said,

“I have been saddened beyond expression by the bitterness displayed towards the Missourians. So far as they helped us to see the great principles involved in this disputation [concerning the Four Points] they have been our benefactors, and although I know they have misunderstood some of us, that was perhaps inevitable. They are men of God, and their work has been of inestimable value (Bente, page 185).”

However, seeing that the General Council was losing the more conservative synods, Charles Porterfield Krauth issued this statement at the 1870 Lancaster convention: “The Rule is this: Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers; Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants (Fry, page 107).” Unfortunately, this was only his personal judgement. The General Council had to wait until 1872 in Akron before it issued what would be its “definite” stand. To Krauth’s rule of 1870, the General Council added:

“2. The exceptions to this rule belong to the sphere of privilege, not of right..

“a. The determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles by the conscientious judgment of the pastors as the cases arise (Fry, page 107).”

Thus, the General Council clouded the issue by allowing for exceptions and subjective judgements. In 1875 Krauth drafted the Galesburg Rule which attempted to give the 1872 Akron resolution more teeth. However, the damage had been done and this fellowship issue festered in the General Council for the rest of its existence. Although Krauth did not espouse strict fellowship principles at the beginning of the “Four Points” controversy (1867), he developed a more rigorous view on this subject by the time the controversy abated in the late 1870’s.

Although Krauth’s General Council would quickly turn back to the General Synod after Krauth’s death, Krauth was by no means a failure. Keep in mind that while he was serving as president of the General Council, he was also teaching at the Philadelphia Seminary and he also frequently filled vacancies in many churches throughout the Philadelphia area. To his credit, he produced much excellent, soundly Lutheran work in the later part of his life. Together with Beale Schmucker he revised the old Virginia hymnal and produced the *Church Book* which was finally published in 1891. Along with that, Charles Porterfield Krauth also wrote prolifically. Besides numerous articles in *The Lutheran* and *The Lutheran and Missionary*, Krauth has over 80 published works to his credit. He also translated several hymns and composed much poetry.

However, Charles Porterfield Krauth’s greatest legacy remains, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, published in 1872. In the preface of this book, Krauth states his views on Church History and the Reformation. The following words are also unintentionally autobiographical:

“The history of Christianity... moves under the influence of two generic ideas: the conservative, which desires to secure the present by fidelity to the results of the past; the progressive, which looks out, in

hope, to a better future. Reformation is the great harmonizer of the two principles... Conservatism without Progress produces the Romish and Greek type of the Church. Progress without Conservatism runs into Revolution, Radicalism and Sectarianism... Conservatism is opposed to Radicalism both in the estimate of wrong and the mode of getting rid of it... Reformation and Conservatism really involve each other. That which claims to be Reformatory, yet is not Conservative, is Sectarian; that which claims to be Conservative; and is not Reformatory is Stagnation and Corruption. True Catholicity is Conservatism, but Protestantism is Reformatory; and these two are complementary, not antagonistic. The Church problem is to attain a Protestant Catholicity or Catholic Protestantism. This is the end and aim of Conservative Reformation (Krauth, pages vii—viii).”

Also in *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, whether intentionally or not, Krauth also hints at explaining his willingness to extend the hand of fellowship to a confessionally struggling synod by pointing out that doctrinal controversies will always afflict the church, He wrote:

“The life of the Church may largely be read in its controversies. As the glory or shame of a nation is read upon its battle-fields which tells for what it periled the lives of its sons, so may the glory or shame of a Church be determined when we know what it fought for and what it fought against; how much it valued what it believed to be truth; what was the truth it valued; how much it did, and how much it suffered to maintain that truth, and what was the issue of its struggles and sacrifices (Krauth, page 147).”

Krauth’s other later life achievements include his appointment as professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy at the University of Pennsylvania in 1868. In 1882 he assumed the editorship of the *Lutheran Church Review*. To his great credit, Krauth also imitated Augustine and later in life he published a retraction of all his earlier vacillations concerning fundamental articles in the Augsburg Confession. In 1865 he wrote, “The doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession are all articles of faith, and all articles of faith are fundamental (Bente, page 183).”

On January 2, 1883, Charles Porterfield Krauth died while preparing a biography of Luther. Many Lutherans of many Synods paid tribute to him and his life work. C. F. W. Walther wrote on the occasion of Krauth’s death in the January, 1883 *Lehre und Wehre*.

“Herewith a heavy blow is fallen, not only upon the General Council... but at the same time upon the whole American Lutheran Church. For the blessed one [Krauth] was indeed the most prominent man in the English Lutheran Church of this country, a man of unusual learning, at home not less in the old than in the new theology, and, what is the chief thing, in hearty accord with the doctrine of his Church, as he had leaned to know it; a noble man without guile (Steffens, pages 392-93).”

Since Walther and Krauth had so much mutual respect for each other, it is now fitting to turn our attention to the next *Doctor of The American Lutheran Church*:

Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther

Like Charles Porterfield Krauth, C. F. W. Walther had a Lutheran pastor for a father. In fact, CFW had Lutheran pastors for his grandfather and great-grandfather. Carl Walther was born in Langenschursdorf, Saxony on October 25, 1811, the son of Gottlieb Heinrich Wilhelm Walther and Johanna Wilhelmina Walther, nee Zschenderlein. He was the eighth child and fourth son in a family of twelve. Young Carl grew up in a typical Saxon parsonage of his day. His father served the same congregation as his father had served. The household rules were strict by our standards but normal for the times. Unfortunately, Gottlieb Walther did not do much to impress Carl with the truths of the faith. This may have, at least in part, been due to sending Carl away to the city school in Chemnitz (1819-1821) and the gymnasium in Schneeberg (1821-1829). Concerning these years. Walther wrote in 1878, “My dear, God-fearing father taught me from childhood that the Bible is God’s word. But I soon left my parental home—in my eighth year—to live in unbelieving circles. I did not lose this

historical faith. It accompanied me through my life like an angel of God. But I spent my more than eight years of gymnasium life unconverted (Steffens, page 21).”

In spite of little or no spiritual life, Walther did very well as a student. He had a keen mind and a deep love of music. He even aspired to become a professional musician. However, his father said, “If you wish to become a musician, you may see how you get along. But if you wish to study theology, I will give you a thaler every week (Steffens, page 14).”

Walther entered the University of Leipzig on November 21, 1829 as a student of theology. Yet, he was so financially and spiritually poverty-stricken that he did not even own a Bible. This was acceptable at the theology department of the University of Leipzig because Saxony was in the grips of German rationalism, English Deism and French paganism. So Walther was spiritually adrift until he fell in with a small group of students who spent their time studying the pietistic works of Arndt, Francke, and Others. This group resembled the Wesleys’ Holy Club at Oxford almost 100 years previous. During this time Walther suffered under the typical Methodist-style emotionalism and uncertainty of salvation.

Three factors rescued Walther from the Scylla and Charybdis of Rationalism and Emotionalism. First, in late 1829 he did buy his own Bible using his food money. Once he acquired God’s Word he devoured it with a voracious spiritual appetite. In addition to this good beginning, Walther came into contact with a firm Lutheran pastor by the name of Martin Stephan. In a letter Stephan showed Walther that his contrition had been sufficient and all that Walther needed was faith. This pure Gospel message to Walther prompted him to later write of himself in the third person, “He could not resist; he had to come to Jesus. And now the peace of God entered into his heart. There he vividly experienced what private absolution means to a heart-affrightened sinner. While Stephan in his letter had not formally spoken absolution to him, he had personally applied the gospel to him, wherein the real essence of private absolution consists (Steffens, page 49).” In addition to contacts with Stephan, Walther also came to a deeper understanding of the Gospel through the mixed blessing of a serious illness. Interrupting his studies in the Winter of 1831- 32, Walther spent six months at home. During this time he had ample opportunity to read Luther’s works in his father’s library. “From that time dates his living conviction of the sole scriptural character of the Lutheran Church and the necessity of its positive confession (Steffens, page 51).”

Walther completed his University studies in 1832. Before he received his candidate’s license for the ministry, he had to pass a test for his preaching license. Then, two Years later, he could take his test for his ministry license. During those two years he did as most graduates and took a job as a tutor. In 1837 Walther was ordained and took charge of a Lutheran parish in Braunsdorf, Saxony. After struggling against the Rationalism-infested state church for a little over a year, Walther resigned his call and answered Stephan’s call for all Confessional Lutherans in Saxony to migrate to America.

Had Walther then known of Stephan’s moral weaknesses, he may not have gone along. Already in Germany Stephan faced accusations of late night debauchery, neglect of duty, mismanagement of funds and other moral offenses. In fact trouble with the police and with the Mrs. probably led Stephan to migrate at this time since the theological persecutions against him were really not intense at all. Apparently unaware of these shortcomings, Walther joined the 650 other Saxons and during November 1838 left from Bremen in five ships: the Copernicus, the Republik, the Johann Georg, the Olbers and the Amalia.

This migrant group formed the seed of the Missouri Synod. Although small in quantity, it possessed large amounts of quality, even if you include Stephan. Among those 650 were seven pastors, eight candidates of theology, four school teachers, three physicians, an accountant and a lawyer. On the journey over to America the Amalia sank. Also while en route Stephan had himself elected bishop and bound the group to unconditional obedience to his popish rule.

On February 19, 1839 the last Stephanie emigrants reached St. Louis, Missouri. Shortly thereafter a majority of them followed der Herr Bischof Stephan and moved 100 miles south to Perry County. Upon arriving there, the settlers promptly set out to build a soundly Lutheran Church body. To do that, you need a school. Therefore, Walther and company started building a log cabin school which would soon grow into Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Building, was also on Stephan's mind. He diverted a large amount of the group's common fund and even larger amounts of their labor into building his palatial home. About this time, two girls from the St. Louis congregation brought allegations of sexual misconduct against Stephan. Although no hard evidence was produced, as in our day, when it came to these kinds of charges, you were guilty until proven innocent. Therefore, since Stephan was no longer a bishop "above reproach" he was dismissed.

This left the Saxon immigrants in a terrible quandary. They felt shame for following a mere man so blindly. They questioned their right to exist as a church. In the midst of the chaos, the 28 year old Walther emerged as their leader who patiently and convincingly argued from Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions that this little band was indeed a church. In the Altenberg debates with Franz Marbach, a lawyer, Walther led the Missourians to see that "the Church consisted of the Invisible Communion of Saints; that where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there is the Church; that, consequently, these congregations of the colonists were to be regarded as a part of the true Church of Christ, with full authority to call pastors (Fry, page 123)." Concerning the importance of these debates for the future of the Missouri Synod, August Pieper wrote, "The debate in Altenburg in April of 1841 is the real birthday of the Missouri Synod... With a single immense pull he again set the desperate little flock of Christians straight... In the Saxons' confusion, when everything else reeled beneath their feet, Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions continued to be their solid foundation (Pieper, "Anniversary Reflections," page 17)."

By 1841 matters had calmed considerably and the Saxon colony was flourishing both in Perry County and St. Louis. Walther exchanged his post of teaching at the log cabin school for the pastorate at Trinity congregation in St. Louis after his older brother, Otto Hermann, died at the age of 31. In his first two years at Trinity Walther put his ecclesiology into practice by drafting the constitution of that congregation, "which contained a confession of faith and definitely stated the qualifications for membership. It established the form and model for government and administration, not only for the congregations but for the synod itself (Fry, page 124)." Although it would be easy to assume that the Missouri Synod's extreme congregationalism sprung from this constitution and from a reaction to Stephan's overbearing popishness, the embryonic LC-MS did recognize that the Church at Large had functions over and apart from individual congregations as Fry states, "All administrative affairs, including the treasury, exercise of church discipline, and nomination of candidates for ministerial office, [were] managed by all the congregations as a unit (Fry, page 124)."

In 1844 Walther continued to further the cause of Confessional Lutheranism in America by initiating the publication, *Der Lutheraner*, which had the purpose,

"To prove that the Lutheran Church is the true Church of Christ, not a sect. It is to unite the divided members of the Lutheran Church, to recall those that are fallen away, and to prove that our Church has not become extinct, indeed, never can become extinct. Consequently, every article must stand the test of Holy Scriptures and the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fry, page 124)."

Through *Der Lutheraner* Walther attracted the support of other Confessional Lutherans in America at this time. Wyneken, the missionary to Indiana, the Franconian colonies in the Saginaw valley, and the Ohio men sent out by Loehe, all came to respect Walther's Clear Confessionalism as expressed so forcefully in *Der Lutheraner*.

As a result of these Confessional German immigrants contacting each other, the Missouri Synod officially came into existence on April 26, 1847 in Chicago. This confessionally strong synod had as its membership requirements:

"Acceptance of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the written Word of God and the only rule and norm of faith and of practice; acceptance of all the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and correct statement and exposition of the Word of God ...All sorts of unionism or fellowship with others who are not strict Lutherans was renounced ...In the matter of polity, a congregational form was provided for in the constitution. The synod, in relation to the individual

congregations, was an advisory body: its resolutions had no binding effect until adopted by the congregation as not contrary to the Word of God (Fry, page 127).”

Although the Synod was only advisory, the force of Walther’s personality gave more power to the synod than any advisory body had ever seen.

Walther’s influence over other men and other Church bodies also manifested itself in other ways. In 1853 Loehe and Walther broke their ties with each other over each other’s church polity. Some of Loehe’s men formed the Iowa Synod in part as a break-away from Missouri and the issue of “Open Questions” continued to prevent fraternal relations between these two synods. In 1866 Missouri attracted eleven Confessional pastors from the Buffalo Synod in reaction to Grabau’s dictatorial rule.

We have already seen Walther’s influence on keeping the Missouri Synod out of the General Council. However much Walther objected to what he saw as the indefinite Confessionalism of the General Council, Walther still possessed warm feelings for Charles Porterfield Krauth. In 1857 when Walther received a copy of Krauth’s Thanksgiving sermon, he sent Krauth a thank you in Latin which, because of this author’s limited Latin skill, I will assume was complimentary. In 1866 when the General Synod snubbed the Pennsylvania Ministerium at Fort Wayne, Walther wrote in its defense,

“Scarcely any event... within the bounds of the Lutheran Church of North America has ever afforded us greater joy than the withdrawal of the Synod of Pennsylvania from the unionistic so-called General Synod. This is a step which will undoubtedly lead to consequences of the utmost importance, and of the most salutary character. The plan to give prominence and supremacy in this land, by means of the ‘General Synod’ to a so-called American Lutheranism, which ignores the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church, and to compel the truly Lutheran Synods to occupy a separatistic, isolated and powerless position, is completely frustrated by this step. How uncomfortable the General Synodists are in view of this, they show most clearly by maintaining again and again that the Synod of Pennsylvania did not leave them on account of doctrine, but on account of treatment received at Fort Wayne. They know right well what a blow it would give them if it were known that the oldest and largest Synod of their connection withdrew, because the General Synod had departed from the true doctrine of the Lutheran Church (Spaeth, vol. 2, page: 162).”

Besides defending Krauth’s actions, Walther also felt the need to offer brotherly chastisement. In *Der Lutheraner*, Walther criticized Krauth’s seeming hierarchical tendencies even though Krauth claimed that his views on Church polity were basically the same as Walther’s. However, their views on the ministry were different. Walther made the distinction between teaching elders (pastors) and elderly (laymen) whereas Krauth saw no distinction at all and maintained that the New Testament term “elder” exclusively referred to the pastoral ministry. Much to Krauth’s credit he publicly defended Walther during the Predestination Controversy when Walther’s enemies accused him of Crypto-Calvinism. Finally, Walther repaid Krauth for his kindness and his firm stand on the Confessions by writing the memorial already quoted in this paper (page 11).

Besides these relations with Krauth and other synods, Walther also influenced several New York Ministerium pastors to join the Missouri Synod, one of whom served St. Matthew’s Church in New York City, the oldest existing Lutheran parish in America. After the Ohio Synod left the General Council in 1867, it joined with Missouri Synod in the Synodical Conference until the predestination controversy in 1881.

This brings us to Walther’s leadership in the formation of the Synodical Conference and Walther’s great influence on the newly Confessional Wisconsin Synod. Although many volumes have been written on Walther’s leadership in the Missouri Synod, for practical purposes, the bulk of his biography remaining in this paper will deal with his relations to the Wisconsin Synod.

The Ohio Synod took the initiative in founding the Synodical Conference among those Synods which were even more Confessional than Krauth’s Pennsylvania Ministerium. Although initiated by Ohio, Walther

quickly took the reins of the Synodical Conference, being elected its first president at the constituting convention at Bading's St. John's congregation, 8th & Vliet, Milwaukee, WI, July 10-16, 1872.

As stated, Walther exerted great influence over the Wisconsin Synod somewhat before, but primarily after, the formation of the Synodical Conference. The first contact between the Missourians and the Wisconsin Synod did not foreshadow the close ties these two Synods would enjoy. Muehlhauser and his "new" Lutheranism opposed the "Old" Lutheranism of the Missouri Synod Trinity Church in Milwaukee. The Wisconsinites and Missourians repeatedly censured each other in the 1850's. Furthermore, "Although the Wisconsin Synod was well on its way to improving its position by the mid 1860's, Missouri took little notice. Right up to 1868 it continued its charges that by that time were anachronistic (Fredrich, page 50)."

However, by 1868, after the Wisconsin Synod had already, on its own, withdrawn from the General Council, Missouri and Wisconsin pastors working the same fields in Wisconsin realized that they shared doctrinal unity more than anyone had previously thought. This led to a meeting in which the two synods sought closer ties. Closer ties quickly materialized. In an October 21-22 meeting in Milwaukee, Missouri discovered Wisconsin's firm Confessionalism and Walther quickly and joyously exclaimed. "All our reservations about... Wisconsin ...have been put to shame (Fredrick, page 52)."

This new-found concord led to the establishment of the worker-training arrangement which would see Walther's greatest influence on the Wisconsin Synod. As Wilbert Gawrisch points out:

"The Wisconsin Synod's ...second generation theologians were American-trained at Northwestern College in Watertown and Concordia Seminary in St. Louis. For six years after Hoenecke's death in 1908, three of Walther's students constituted the entire faculty of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary... They were J. P. Koehler...August Pieperand John Schaller... three of these men, who had been schoolmates in St. Louis, became presidents of the seminary and during their tenure perpetuated Walther's theology in the Wisconsin Synod. When Schaller died, the highest compliment Pieper could pay his colleague and friend was that he was 'a faithful student of Walther.' At the same time Pieper, who was no mean theologian himself, indicated the high esteem in which Walther was held when he said, "We are all dwarfs and cripples in comparison with Paul, Luther, Walther.' (Gawrisch, page 3)."

Although Pieper praises Walther here, he also pointed to a side of Walther many overlook. Pieper wrote, "The Wisconsin Synod as well often felt the sword of Walther to be much too sharp, and none of our older leaders ever got over the painful memory (Pieper, "Hoenecke." page 16)."

Part of Walther's sharp personality vented itself during the "State Synod Controversy" of 1877-78. The controversy started innocently enough. Walther wanted the Synodical Conference to become one unified Confessional Church consisting of State Synods broken down along existing geographical lines. The Wisconsin Synod heartily endorsed this plan and proved its willingness to cooperate by closing its seminary in 1870 and entrusting its students to Walther's tutelage at Concordia, St. Louis. However, Wisconsin did not approve of the "State Synod" plan because it threatened its very existence and seemed to make the Wisconsin Synod another district of the Missouri Synod.

Walther did not understand Wisconsin's fears and chastised Wisconsin at the Missouri Synod assembly in May of 1878 and called the Wisconsin Synod's action "ungodly." Walther's criticism and Wisconsin's independence may have led to a serious rift between these two synods. However, a more serious controversy brought them even closer together.

That controversy was the election controversy which ripped the Ohio synod out of the Synodical Conference and caused great sadness throughout Confessional Lutheranism. This controversy surfaced in the early 1870's but raged. from 1877 to 1882. Throughout the controversy Walther again used God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions clearly and boldly to reject the Ohio Synod's false teaching of election *intuitu fidei*. This was an especially painful struggle for Walther because, in 1878, the Ohio Synod's Capitol University had conferred on him the Doctor of Divinity only to charge Walther with heresy two years later.

In the heat of battle Walther overstated a point here or there and he rubbed a few men the wrong way. However, when all was said and done, he stood correctly on the Scripture's teaching on this matter. Throughout the controversy he also remained an evangelical theologian with a pastoral spirit. In Walther's defense, I quote a personal letter he wrote on March 29, 1881,

“To a layman who urged him to give up his Calvinistic errors... ‘Fifty years ago, by God’s grace, I came through long and severe anxiety of soul to a knowledge of my sinful misery, and hereupon through God’s word and Holy Spirit, to a living knowledge of my Savior. And now, since the deplorable predestination controversy has arisen, I cry and plead day and night upon my knees to God, that he will not suffer me to fall into error, but make me to know the truth and keep me in it until my end, which is not far removed for I am in my seventieth year. But God makes me more and more certain that the doctrine which I confess is right. For it stands in God’s Word and in the precious Confession of our faithful Church’ (Steffens, pages 350-51).”

Throughout this controversy, the Wisconsin Synod stood by Walther, learned from him and prayed for him. As J. P. Koehler wrote, “Synod [WELS] followed the leadership of Hoenecke who quickly came to Walther’s defense in the *Gemeinde-Blatt*. (Koehler, page I58).”

One interesting tidbit concerning Walther: He did not write out his famous “Law & Gospel” lectures. Instead, students took notes. The chief student stenographer was Fredrich Pfothauer, future president of the Missouri Synod and grandfather of our Synod’s Thomas Pfothauer.

Walther’s death came on Saturday, May 6, 1887.

“On Friday night, after praying with him at his request. Pastor Stoeckhardt asked a question similar to that asked of Luther on the night of his death by his friends, Jonas and Coelius... Stoeckhardt asked Walther if he stood ready to cheerfully die upon the grace of Christ, which he had proclaimed all his life? to which question Walther, too, answered with an audible, ‘Yes.’ He lingered... fully conscious until 5:30 Saturday evening, when he quietly and peacefully fell asleep in his Lord (Steffens, page 365).”

As already stated, much more could be and has been written about Walther and his firm Confessionalism. This presentation has barely scratched the surface of all his monumental contributions to the Lutheran Church in America. However, his reputation is so well established that it is now fitting for us to continue with our third *Doctor of the American Lutheran Church*:

Gustav Adolph Theodor Felix Hoenecke

Unlike Krauth and Walther, Hoenecke did not grow up in a parsonage. Rather, his father served in the Prussian army. According to Pieper, “His father was not a church-goer, to say nothing of being a believer, for the age of Rationalism was in full swing. He concerned himself very little with the religion of his sons. His mother, personally a believer, taught him to pray in his childhood, but had little influence on his later religious training (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 249).” Adolph Hoenecke was born into this sad state of spiritual affairs on February 25, 1835 in the city of Brandenburg, located in Prussia on the Havel River, fifty miles southwest of Berlin.

Since young Adolph did not have the physical strength for Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm IV’s crack Prussian army he did not follow his father and older brothers into military service. Hoenecke loved flowers so he intended to become a botanist. However, a visit to classmate’s home one evening directed Hoenecke to study theology. To this house the classmate’s father had also invited his old school friend who was a portly pastor. “In the course of the conversation, the [classmate’s father]...said to Hoenecke, ‘Look, Adolph, become a pastor and then you will have a good thing!’ (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 250).” Hoenecke must have taken that message to

heart because in that Fall of 1856 he enrolled in the University of Halle without giving too much thought to the spiritual implications of the ministry.

Hoenecke's transformation into a Confessional Lutheran theologian came from one man, Tholuck, the dean of students at the University of Halle. Hoenecke did not take a liking to his other professors, even the staunchly Confessional Guericke, because they "took no personal interest at all in their students (Pieper, "Hoenecke," page 250)." Tholuck, however, taught the Scriptures with warmth and Gospel motivation. Although Tholuck received the label of "unionist" and "pietist" from his contemporaries, we must remember that Tholuck's adversaries were caught in the deepest quagmires of Rationalism. Hoenecke's two main biographers, J. P. Koehler and August Pieper both urge us to consider Tholuck against the backdrop of the forced Prussian Union and the spiritual wastelands of his day. Koehler and Pieper praise Tholuck as an evangelical, pious, pastoral professor who took a firm stand on the Confessions. Hoenecke himself often expressed his debt to Tholuck and credited him with bringing him to faith. Tholuck did this with many of his students by taking them on long walks and discussing the deep truths of faith. Concerning Tholuck's peripatetic method, Hoenecke once said. "Tholuck did all the talking, when he took you along for a walk, and at the parting thanked you for the interesting conversation (Koehler, page 215)."

As he did with many of his students, Tholuck took a personal interest in Hoenecke and often gave him a free meal and a few pennies for pocket change. Tholuck also recognized Hoenecke's intelligence and urged him to continue his studies as a theologian. For that purpose, Tholuck introduced young Adolph to Calov and Quenstedt.

For reasons still unclear, Hoenecke did not pursue further theological training when he graduated from Halle in 1859. Like Walther, Hoenecke passed his examination for a license to preach. However, since a glut of pastoral candidates thwarted hopes of receiving a parish, Hoenecke, like Walther, settled for a job as a tutor; a position which Tholuck arranged.

On January 1, 1860 Hoenecke arrived in Bern, Switzerland and for the next two years served as tutor for the Major family. During this time Hoenecke had time to study those conservative theologians Tholuck had recommended. Located in a Reformed environment and studying Calov and Quenstedt, Hoenecke quickly and firmly developed a keen appreciation for the Lutheran Confessions. Here also Hoenecke found the other love of his life, his future wife, Rosa Mathilde Hess, the daughter of Rudolph Hess, a Reformed pastor in Hoechst, Bern, Switzerland. Mathilde brought refinement and education to the Hoenecke household, not to mention her contribution of nine children from whom many WEIS members still trace their ancestry.

Hoenecke's pleasant two year Alpine interlude came to a tumultuous end. Hoenecke realized he needed to move on. How and where were the questions. He had a number of options. Tholuck encouraged his prize student to make the most of his exceptional intelligence and further his theological education to pursue a teaching post at a prestigious university. Hoenecke ruled that out because of his extreme poverty. He had to beg from Tholuck just to make it through Halle. Hoenecke could not afford more tuition costs. Hoenecke also had the option of waiting for a parish post in his native Prussia. He decided against that for a number of reasons. First, since he had grown significantly in his Confessional stance, he would not tolerate the Prussian Union, even though it had been relaxed at this time to the point where Lutheran pastors could minister to Lutherans as Lutherans as long as they did not condemn Reformed doctrine and as long as they conducted the weekly union worship service. Hoenecke also ruled out service in the state church because it meant waiting at least three and up to seven years for a post. He did not want to keep his anxious bride waiting that long!

Hoenecke made a decision. An appeal went out to all pastoral candidates in Germany from the Prussian High Consistory on behalf of the many mission societies sprouting up all over den Vaterland to go and serve a congregation in America. The Prussian Consistory sweetened the deal by promising these candidates that years served in America would count for equal value in Seniority when they returned to Prussia. Hoenecke, decided for this plan of action for two reasons. It actually paid money instead of costing it. Furthermore, he could be back in a few years and settle down with his bride in a cozy little Prussian parish, which, perhaps, by that time would be ready for a Confessional preacher.

Tholuck reacted sharply to this decision, accusing Hoenecke of “lust for material gain (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 256).” Tholuck wrote to Hoenecke expressing his displeasure and broke off their heretofore pleasant relationship. Hoenecke, however, was committed to going to America under the auspices of the Berlin Mission Society even though he did not have “a clear picture of the confessional stand and practice of our synod and of conditions in the Lutheran churches of this country (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 257).” Hoenecke presented himself for ordination at the Dome at Magdeburg and in the Spring of 1863 he came to America. He promised Mathilde that he would send for her as soon as conditions were right.

The Berlin Mission Society had arranged with Muehlhauser to install Hoenecke in the vacant La Crosse congregation. By the time Hoenecke arrived in Wisconsin the La Crosse vacancy had been filled. Muehlhauser directed Hoenecke to serve a Racine vacancy and then finally Hoenecke accepted the call to serve the little congregation in Farmington, seven miles south of Watertown. Thus, at age 28, Hoenecke entered the full time work of the Wisconsin Synod. Our little Synod will be forever in debt to the Lord of the Church for arranging his arrival into our Church body.

Although Farmington was poor and small and although the Wisconsin Synod did not possess firm confessional moorings, Hoenecke immediately saw great advantages in his placement. Here he had the freedom to preach the pure Gospel according to the Lutheran Confessions. Here he did not suffer under the yoke of the unionistic Prussian State Church. Here the rugged individualist found his place to spread his Lutheran wings. He promptly severed his relationship with the Prussian state church and sent for his dear Mathilde.

Hoenecke found the Farmington situation particularly beneficial. Since it was a small parish, he had time to further his studies in sound Lutheran theology. Also, much to his pleasure, he discovered that his closest neighbor in Watertown, John Bading, shared his convictions toward the Lutheran Confessions. The two formed a fast friendship and when Mathilde finally arrived in Wisconsin, Bading performed the marriage.

Bading also introduced Hoenecke to the other soundly Confessional pastors of the “Northwestern Conference” around Watertown. Hoenecke strengthened the members of this conference, especially Bading and Philipp Koehler, by lending his expertise in the biblical languages to these men who did not know them. Furthermore, since Hoenecke had the advantage of receiving the most thorough theological edification of all of them, he supplied first this conference and then the whole synod with, “The doctrinal clarity and the doctrinal certainty which alone convince others and wins the day in doctrinal disputes (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 263).” Furthermore, Hoenecke “Had an unusually sharp mind, was precise in his definition of terms and concepts, and—he knew the subject from the ground up. In exegesis and in clear dogmatic exposition he simply was the unexcelled master in our circles (ibid).”

Hoenecke and Bading worked well as a team. Though amiable, Hoenecke possessed a more reserved nature. Bading was outgoing. Hoenecke’s deep humility caused him to shy away from taking the initiative in most situations. He was a “leader from behind” and “the power behind the throne” type of person. Pieper describes him this way:

”In his natural temperament, Hoenecke was neither a conqueror, not a leader of assault troops, nor a fiery champion, but simply an unrelenting defender of the Lutheran fortress against every attacker. Otherwise, he was altogether a man who sought peace in the church and the calm edification of his fellow Christians in the genuine gospel (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 16).”

Bading was the politician. Together, Hoenecke’s thorough and solid theology combined with Bading’s resourceful and influential leadership provided direction and stability for the young Wisconsin Synod in its early years and, humanly speaking, kept it on a soundly Confessional course long after both men had departed this earthly life.

It did not take long for Hoenecke to reach an extremely influential position in our Synod. When Bading became Synod president in 1860 he knew that the Synod needed its own worker training school. Under Bading’s leadership, the Watertown seminary opened its doors to one student in the fall of 1863. The faculty

that first year, Prof. Edward Moldehnke, who also served the Synod as *Reiseprediger* and vacancy pastor while Bading was off in Europe raising money for the school, held class in his living room.

By 1866, the Watertown seminary had grown to include a college and the seminary needed another faculty member. Hoenecke accepted the call. Moldehnke, however, considered two seminary professors extravagant and went back to Germany. Hoenecke then became the sole seminary professor. This post gave Hoenecke opportunity to demonstrate his humility and his loyalty to the Wisconsin Synod. When the seminary closed in 1870 and moved to St. Louis, Hoenecke remained in Wisconsin and took charge of St. Matthew's congregation in Milwaukee instead of pursuing a more illustrious career as a professor at a major seminary.

During the years 1866-78, before he resumed his tenure at the "new" seminary. Hoenecke contributed much to the theological integrity of our synod. In 1864, one year after his arrival in Wisconsin, the synod convention elected him secretary and assigned him to the candidate review committee. In 1865 Hoenecke joined Moldehnke as assistant editor of the new *Gemeinde-Blatt*. A year later Hoenecke was editor-in-chief.

As Hoenecke quickly entrenched himself into his new Synod, he began to see that all pastors and laymen did not share the same Confessionalism that he shared with Bading and the elder Koehler. Pieper notes,

“[Hoenecke's] eyes were slowly opened to the grave weaknesses of the synod. First of all, he took note that so many pastors lacked a thorough theological training—a defect that pervaded their ranks from the venerable, oldest pastor (Muehlhauser) down to the latest worker sent from abroad... He finally came to perceive the root ailment [of the Wisconsin Synod's weakness]: the ties of the synod to the German mission societies and its spiritual dependence on them... Deeply averse to doing battle in a fiery, vehement way, he took a more quiet road... of calmly and simply instructing the readers of the *Gemeindeblatt* in the Lutheran Confessions and grounding them in those writings (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” pages 30-31).”

Although not fully confessional, the Wisconsin Synod had never been as liberal as Pieper made it seem. For example, in 1856 the Wisconsin Synod took a firm stand against Schmucker's “Definite Platform.” It had repeatedly resisted membership in the General Synod even though its sponsoring German mission societies repeatedly urged it to join. However, Hoenecke's efforts propelled the Wisconsin Synod to its Confessional stand. By the 1868 Racine convention, the vast majority of the Wisconsin Synod's fifty pastors had been Confessional for quite some time, had recently become Confessional or were leaning heavily in that direction. This led the Barmen mission society to break relations with Wisconsin in 1868 and the Prussian Supreme Church Council to do the same, in 1869. For them, the Wisconsin Synod had become too Confessional.

In June of 1867, the Wisconsin Synod came close to being burned by the Iowa Synod. After Walther broke with Loehe and his Iowa men in the mid 1860's, ten men from the Iowa Synod visited the Wisconsin Synod convention and nearly won them over to their theory on open questions. That theory held that even though a church body does not err on matters such as chiliasm, the general future conversion of the Jews, the Antichrist and the perpetual virginity of Mary—even if a church does not err in these matters, it may hold fellowship with a church body that does err in these “non-fundamental” teachings. After hours of debate which the Fritschels of Iowa nearly won, Hoenecke rescued the synod convention from their influence. Pieper defines Hoenecke's winning argument by writing,

“In making concessions that [open questions] may be tolerated we can perceive only a dangerous concession to modern theology. It offers a welcome handle for bringing in everything in the church that stands firm and solid into a state of flux and for recasting everything in contradiction to the Symbols of our church. Moreover, it is one thing when we talk of tolerating and bearing with individuals who in this or that minor point deviate from the Symbols, so long as they do not overturn the foundation. But it is quite another thing when the demand is made that theories running counter to the Symbols be given authoritative status in the Lutheran Church. For example, in dealing with ...individuals who still cling to certain chiliasm opinions, we dare not immediately deny them further church fellowship. But as soon as

we are dealing with the abstract question as to the right of chiliasm as a whole to exist in the Lutheran Church—in other words treating chiliasm as an open question—then such a claim must be rejected most decisively (Pieper, “Goosenecked” pages 133-34).”

Hoenecke’s argument, carried the day and Wisconsin rebuffed Iowa’s attempts at closer ties.

In spite of this, however, just a few months later, Hoenecke, Bading and Professor Martin (Northwestern) joined Iowa at the General Council’s constituting convention held at Fort Wayne, November 20-26, 1867. This apparently contradictory action of the Wisconsin Synod has its explanation in Professor Fredrich’s comment, “The first two decades of Wisconsin’s history afford abundant evidence of a lively and diverse interchurch relationship on its part. It was definitely not an era of rigid isolationism (Fredrich, page 38).”

Since Hoenecke knew little English at that time, he did not take part in active debate during that week in Fort Wayne. However, he must have conversed with Krauth many times because Krauth knew German quite well. Unfortunately, history does not record any of their conversations. Although Hoenecke did not take part in much floor debate, he exerted great influence and proved that the Wisconsin Synod had become one of the most Confessional synods in America by this time. Along with Ohio and Iowa, Wisconsin raised questions on the “Four Points.” In fact, Hoenecke served on the committee commissioned to study Ohio’s questions on this matter. Unfortunately, Hoenecke’s demands for an immediate resolution of the “Four Points” went unheeded and the General Council voted to postpone definite action to a later convention.

Yet, in spite of this, Hoenecke wrote in the December 15, 1867 *Gemeindeblatt*,

“We have reason to thank God that he has permitted us actually to take a step forward toward unifying the Lutheran church, but we pray that this united body will be one that is held together not merely by the bond of human constitutions, but by a full unification for our dear church by virtue of spiritual oneness in doctrine and in a practice that is required by the same (Pieper, “Hoenecke,” page 139).”

The 1868 Wisconsin Synod convention directed Hoenecke and Bading to go to the General Council’s convention in Pittsburgh in late 1868. Although the General Council improved its attitude toward the “Four Points,” it did not satisfy Hoenecke and Bading. Krauth had not satisfactorily calmed their fears about “triangular fellowship.” The Wisconsin Synod formally withdrew from the General Council at their 1869 convention.

This action caused the Wisconsin Synod to look to Missouri for closer fellowship ties. Since the formation of closer ties with Missouri, up to and including the Predestination controversy, has already been summarized in the section under Walther, we will limit our comments on the Walther-Hoenecke relationship to a quote from a letter Hoenecke wrote to Walther. In this letter of March, 1870 Hoenecke wrote (Bading signed) quite strongly defending the Wisconsin Synod’s case when Wisconsin and Missouri congregations were having tiffs with each other in the southeastern Wisconsin area. Despite the general defensive tone of the letter, Hoenecke closes with words of peace and respect:

“It need hardly be mentioned that the present resolutions of the undersigned representatives of the Synod of Wisconsin, herewith submitted to Your Reverence, in no wise change the basic relationship of the Synod of Wisconsin to the Venerable Synod of Missouri that was established by the colloquy of October 20 and 21 last year at Milwaukee. That this basic relation of brotherly peace not only be not changed, but rather by the grace of God in our common lord and Savior Jesus Christ steadily grow in heartiness, firmness, and closeness, and that everything which brotherly love might desire as an expression of fellowship be not left behind but brought to pass in due time, this is the prayer to our faithful God of Your brethren in Christ (Koehler, pages 150-51).”

We now move on to Hoenecke's contributions once the Wisconsin Synod reopened its seminary in 1878. Hoenecke taught theology at the seminary in Milwaukee and Wauwatosa until his death in 1908. His tenure did not produce a lot of flashy history. He was content to be the humble, faithful and quiet professor instilling in his students the love of the Gospel. Yet, his influence on our synod through this position ranks as his most profound accomplishment, Fredrich writes, "[He trained] almost two whole generations of Wisconsin Synod pastors in theology, especially in its dogmatical and homiletical branches. By the time of his death in 1908 there were 250 pastors on the synodical role. Over 200 were Hoenecke's students (Fredrich, page 17)."

During his years as professor of theology, Hoenecke also produced his *Dogmatik*. Although, it does not always follow our system of organizing theology, it still ranks as one of the WELS' greatest contributions to Confessional Lutheranism. At the time of this writing (Jan, 1994), an English version of Hoenecke's *Dogmatik* is being worked on but has not yet been published.

One man who was not Hoenecke's student, but rather his vicar while Adolph served St. Matthew's in Milwaukee, was J. P. Koehler. Koehler had warm things to say about his bishop that reveal Hoenecke's human side. Furthermore, Koehler's quotes reveal that Hoenecke also influenced the synod more than theologically. He put the stamp of his own personality on our synod; a stamp which still leaves its impression on us today. Koehler writes:

"[Hoenecke] himself told his young vicar that he had been a heavy smoker at Watertown and had made a practice of drinking black coffee to stay bright at his study desk at night, until his doctor put a ban on it. In the Koehler home the premature graying of Hoenecke's hair was laid to this (Koehler, page 213)."

"Hoenecke was different, too, from the other early pastors in not joining in their custom of greeting each other at synod with a kiss. The Barmen and Basel men made a practice of this, very likely after the fashion of Rhenish pietism... The north German is not demonstrative, and to Hoenecke, who had nothing chummy about him anyhow, the Rhinelanders did not offer their special salutation (Koehler, page 214)."

"In his theological work and random remarks... Hoenecke... criticized the fathers of Lutheran theology more freely than did WaltherHoenecke was not a disciple of the scholastic system which governed the dogmatics of the 17th century...[His] doctrinal writings are not light reading but require concentrated study ...His colleagues... judged that Hoenecke's preaching did not go home because it was over their heads (Koehler, page 215)."

"The difference of form between the two men was that Walther would attach his comment to quotations from the fathers, thru a whole session; whereas Hoenecke spoke freely and conclusively about a given subject for about a half hour. In both cases the audience was spell-bound, by Walther's wealth of thought, by Hoenecke's briefer but conclusive argument (Koehler, page 21 S)."

As with Krauth and Walther, Hoenecke received a much deserved honorary Phd in Divinity. In 1903 Northwestern College and Concorde Seminary, St. Louis, confirmed what many had already known: Gustav Adolph Theodor Felix Hoenecke was indeed a Doctor of the American Lutheran Church.

The Lord called Dr. Hoenecke home at 2:45 am, January 3, 1908 after a brief illness. President von Rohr and Professor J. P. Koehler spoke at the funeral of the Wisconsin Synod's first great theologian.

Summary/Conclusion

Each of these Doctors of American Lutheranism served their respective synods in similar ways: pastor, professor of theology, editor, official representative in relations with many other church bodies. Each man experienced his own personal journey from theological uncertainty to a firm conviction in the Lutheran Confessions. Each man shared that experience with his respective Church body relative to his own personal

experiences. Each man experienced great difficulties and made huge sacrifices for the greater glory of God. Each man thoroughly deserves the title of “Doctor of the American Lutheran Church.” Concerning each man, Hebrews 13:7 applies very appropriately: “Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.”

Even a brief study of these three men shows us how God calls and equips his saints for the work of the church. Each man was “the right man for the job!”

In spite of this, however, Walther, in my opinion, had the easiest task. He served as a lightning rod attracting Confessional Lutherans to the Missouri Synod. With great devotion and magnificent skill he organized and inspired the Old Lutherans in America. Yet, Walther had the advantage of serving a theologically, culturally, linguistically and ethnically homogenous church body from almost the very beginning. When Walther took charge of the Missouri Synod, it needed leadership. It craved leadership. Walther was that strong leader suited for the task.

Hoenecke had a different task. Like Walther he had the advantage of serving a linguistically and ethnically homogenous synod. However, when Hoenecke began exerting his influence in the Wisconsin Synod, it was in flux between Muehlhauser’s mild Lutheranism and Bading’s Confessionalism. In his quiet but firm way, however, Hoenecke spearheaded the movement to cement the Wisconsin Synod into a strongly confessional Lutheran Church body.

Of the three, Krauth had the most difficult task. He faced the diversity of the Eastern Lutheran Church. There was no common language, culture or even theological bond in his Lutheran Church. Yet, he overcame great forces of liberalism and unionism both in himself and his Church to forge a Confessional Lutheran Church body from the pre-existing American Lutheran Church. He had to fight liberalism on the left and the impatience of conservatives on the right. But yet, as far as humanly possible, for a while at least, he turned the tide of liberalism in a large portion of the Lutheran Church and championed the cause of Confessionalism. We also owe it to Krauth and ourselves to ask of ourselves the question implicit in the quote from his, *Conservative Reformation*: “Are we undergoing a Conservative Reformation or has our synod lost its balance and fallen into Stagnation or Sectarianism?”

Since Hoenecke led the Wisconsin Synod out of Krauth’s General Council and Walther’s Missouri Synod never joined, it would be easy for us to disparage Krauth and dwell on his shortcomings as a Confessional Lutheran Theologian. But such attacks are unwarranted and do not appreciate Krauth’s monumental achievements. In my humble opinion, if Walther or Hoenecke had been placed in Krauth’s position, neither of them could have “converted” so many to Confessional Lutheranism as Krauth did. Walther did not have the charity. Hoenecke did not have the fight.

For that reason I urge the WELS of today to encourage and pray for those theologians in other synods not in our fellowship to keep the fight going for faithful adherence to the Lutheran Confessions. I do not recommend fellowship with church bodies who are wrestling with their confessional stance, that is, those synods which still have not solidly professed their unwavering subscription to the Book of Concord. I do, however, desire to see communication with all those who strive for Confessional Lutheranism.

I began this paper with an illustration from the Civil War. Although that war has been over now for almost 130 years, good old boys still cry out, “The South shall rise again!” I hope that in the ongoing battles for Confessional Lutheranism, especially now when Confessionalism seems to be on the verge of extinction in this country, we may also cry out in our own way, “Confessional Lutheranism shall rise again!”