

**THE HISTORY OF THE DOCTRINE OF  
THE MINISTRY IN THE WISCONSIN  
SYNOD**

**BY**

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**APRIL 11, 1994**

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The Doctrine of the Ministry has an interesting history in the WELS. This doctrine has come up for discussion at several points in our synod's past. It is a doctrine that is under discussion and even controversy today. It is a doctrine that will continue to be discussed in the future. We will always be having these discussions, because the Doctrine of the Ministry is a practical doctrine. It along with the closely related Doctrine of the Church is always relevant. These doctrines set Lutherans apart from other denominations. These doctrines are immediately brought to bear whenever there is a discipline case, whether on a congregational, district, or synodical level. They are doctrines that all who aspire to become pastors need to have a good handle on. For these reasons, I have decided to devote my Senior Church History paper to studying the history of the second of these doctrines, the doctrine of the Ministry as it has been taught and practiced in the WELS.

This paper is an in depth discussion and analysis of all of the doctrinal controversies and important documents pertaining to the Doctrine of the Ministry as it has been understood and taught in the WELS. As such it is rather lengthy. Also, much time is spent discussing this or that point or aspect of many individual articles. These discussions presuppose a good working knowledge of the Doctrine of the Ministry. For a quick review of this doctrine, and for a good idea of what a complete presentation on this doctrine in the WELS looks like, it would be a good idea to read through the Appendix B before reading the main body of the paper. This appendix is the official WELS doctrinal statement on the Doctrine of the Ministry adapted by the 1969 WELS Convention. As for the other three appendices, they have been included for differing reasons. For a review and chronological listing of all the events and major doctrinal articles in the WELS pertaining to the Doctrine of the Ministry, Appendix A has been prepared. Appendix C, the comments of Prof. Brug in regards to the proper definition(s) of the term "public ministry" has

been included in light of the recent confusion and controversy in this regard. Appendix D has been prepared in order to balance out the presentation given in the main body. There, my focus is the thrust or doctrinal emphases of the respective papers. I spend very little time analyzing their use of Scripture. In this appendix, I lumped all of the authors together in my presentation in order to show that, for the most part, the Wisconsin Synod theologians writing on the Doctrine of the Ministry basically use the same passages in the same way.

This goes to the thesis of this paper. It is my belief after reading through all the Quartalschrift articles written about the Doctrine of the Ministry and reading through the entire WELS Ministry Compendium and interviewing several of the recent writers on the subject, that there is a unbroken continuity of understanding concerning the Doctrine of the Ministry stretching from J. P. Koehler before the turn of the century to the present day theologians and writers. Different writers of course will have different emphases and different ways of expressing themselves. Some of these ways are even open to misunderstanding. And some of these ways have been misunderstood. But I believe and hope to show that Prof. Koehler's, Prof. Pieper's, and Prof. Schaller's understanding of the definition, purpose and functions of the public ministry are shared by the WELS writers and theologians of our era.

Different eras produce different questions and different topics of concern. And so it is with the Doctrine of the Ministry. Our present era is producing different questions and topics of concern than what needed to be hashed out in 1911. We can not automatically answer the questions of today with the answers of yesterday without being familiar with the questions of yesterday and most importantly without being familiar with the divine source of those answers, the Holy Scriptures. Shallow dogmaticism is just as much of a danger today as it was in the years

of J. P. Koehler and August Pieper. As we look at what our fathers have said, and as we look at what our leaders today are saying, may we always use their words and their works not as authorities in themselves, but as doorways into the Scriptures, the final authority which will never steer us wrong. It is for this purpose and for this purpose alone that a study of the History of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the Wisconsin Synod is beneficial. And it is for this purpose that this paper has been written.

In a recent paper delivered to the 1992 Symposium of Church and Ministry at Northwestern College in Watertown, WI, Prof. Em. Edward C. Fredrich II proposed a division of the history of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the WELS into five different generations of twenty eight years.(1) These five different generations are marked by differing practical concerns, and also differing levels of theological activity. Some of the concerns raised in one generation were not solved or resolved until the next. Later generations defended and codified new Scriptural understandings arrived at in the previous generation. This paper will review each of these generations, looking at their doctrinal statements and articles and examining the concerns, questions, and problems that shaped them.

The five generations run as follows: The first generation; 1850-1878, the second generation; 1879-1907, the third generation 1908-1936, the fourth generation; 1937-1965, the fifth generation; 1966-1994.

## THE FIRST GENERATION: 1850-1878

The first generation, 1850-1878, was a time of doctrinal fluidity. But 1868 by God's grace the Wisconsin Synod was strongly committed to a strict adherence to the Lutheran Confessions. The founding fathers of the Wisconsin Synod did not have any large discussions about the doctrines of Church and the Ministry. They were too busy reaching and serving Lutherans scattered throughout the state. Then they had to worry about finding pastors for them. Then on top of that they had to worry about funding the pastors they did have.

Also, there were plenty of other doctrinal concerns to hash out in the early years. It was not necessarily an easy transition in the Wisconsin Synod from the doctrinal outlook of its first president and founder, Rev. Muehlhauser, to the strict confessionalism of Bading and Hoenecke. Involved with this transition were also the dealings with the General Council and the Missouri Synod. Here more burning issues such as the four points, open questions, quia subscription to the Book of Concord, and other doctrinal matters discussed throughout American Lutheranism took up the time and attention of the early conventions of the Wisconsin Synod.

However, the lack of controversy or discussion about the doctrine of the Ministry did not mean that there was no doctrine of the Ministry. Since the Wisconsin Synod called itself a Lutheran church body, from the beginning it had the doctrine of the Ministry found in the Lutheran Confessions.

The Wisconsin Synod was a Lutheran Synod, and as such it inherited the Lutheran doctrine of Church and Ministry. While this is a self evident statement, it is nevertheless an important one to remember. The history of our doctrine of the Ministry did not begin in 1850. It

did not even begin in 1519 with Luther's 95 thesis. It did not even originate from the church fathers. The history of the doctrines of Church and Ministry began with the New Testament. And it always goes back to the New Testament. For it is there where the priesthood of all believers is established on the basis of Christ's perfect sacrifice for the world. It is there where God promises to give gifts of prophets, preachers, teachers, evangelists, and so on to His church. And it is from there we learn the Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry.

It is from the Bible that the Book of Concord draws its doctrine and its authority. And it is to the Bible that we must first turn to when we have questions about our doctrines.

The Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry as expressed in the Confessions is a confession of Scriptural truths over against several different errors at that time. The most prominent errors concerning this doctrine were those of the Roman Catholic Church, which had systematically perverted the Doctrines of Church and Ministry for the sake of its own power, authority, wealth and influence. But there were also the enthusiasts and the Zwinglians. Against all of these errorists, the Confessions maintain the divine institution of the Office of the Ministry and also the derivation of its authority from the Word of God.

Article V of the Augsburg Confession says: "That we may obtain this faith the Ministry of Teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments was instituted." (2) Then in Article XIV The Augsburg Confession says: " Of Ecclesiastical order they teach that no one should publicly teach in the Church or administer the Sacraments unless he be called." (3) In article XXVIII the Augsburg Confession strikes at the abuses of the combining of church and state that were so prevalent in the Roman Catholic Church. It speaks not only against the Catholic claim to have temporal power, it also reminds us that "bishops (and anyone else, for that matter) have no power



to teach against the gospel."(4) This article directly contradicts the claims of the Roman Catholic Church.

Later, this article is spelled out even more clearly in Melancthon's two treatises appended to the Smalcald Articles, entitled 'On the Power and Primacy of the Pope' and "On the Power and Jurisdiction of the Bishops." These two treatises, along with Article X of the Smalcald Articles teach very clearly: that the church made up of individual Christians has the right and duty to call and ordain suitable persons to the pastoral office; (5) that only spiritual power is given to the church; (6) that the church (as opposed to the Papacy) has final jurisdiction and the power of the Keys and Ordination; (7) that God gives his gifts of ministers throughout the world where the church is dispersed: (8) and that the Gospel assigns to those who preside over the churches the command to teach the Gospel, to remit sins, to administer the sacraments, and to excommunicate and absolve.(9)

These Scriptural truths are all part of the doctrinal heritage that the Wisconsin Synod had available to it in the confessions of the Lutheran church. These truths concerning the doctrine of the Ministry were there from the beginning of our Synod in the Book of Concord.

But while the Wisconsin Synod was minding its own business, there were major debates and discussions raging throughout German and American Lutheranism over the Doctrine of the Ministry around the time of the Wisconsin Synod's founding. These debates were touched off by Willhelm Loehe in 1849. Without going into the considerable details of this far ranging and multi-faceted discussion, we need to note two different extreme positions advocated in them.

The first of these was the one held by Pastor John Grabau and his Buffalo Synod. When we read references to Romanizing Lutherans in WELS authors on the Doctrine of the Ministry,

this man was exhibit A. He taught that Jesus did not give the keys of heaven to the believers collectively, but only to the ministry. Also, just the call of a group of believers was not enough to bestow the office of public ministry, but also ordination by another pastor was necessary. He even went so far as to say that the efficacy of the sacraments depended on the presence of the properly established ministerial office.

On the other extreme of the spectrum of these debates was a Johann Hoefling in Germany. He taught that the pastor's call was not of divine origin, but originates merely from expediency. The Wisconsin Synod has in its history been charged with following the doctrine of Hoefling. As a result, from Hoenecke on WELS authors will frequently state that they reject Hoefling's error. Both of these extremes are aberrations from the Lutheran doctrine of the Ministry. It was C.F.W. Walther and the Missouri Synod which really took the lead in presenting the proper Scriptural and Lutheran understanding in America.

But while the Missouri Synod was deeply involved with the debates and discussions of this controversy, the Wisconsin Synod was not. As previously stated, the founding fathers of the WELS were not involved in this or any major doctrinal discussion and study of the Doctrine of the Ministry. They were content to follow the lead of the Missouri Synod and others in this matter. Their much more pressing concern was in getting ministers for all the newly organizing groups of Lutherans in Wisconsin and then funding the pastors they did have.

As far as the polity of the infant church went, it was organized along the lines of the Pennsylvania and New York Ministeriums. By this point in history, they had evolved from being strictly ministeriums, that is an association of ordained ministers, much closer to a synodical structure as we have today. At the time, the church was too small to worry about all of the

implications and relationships of this polity. There was no time to worry about alternate forms of ministry. The few public ministers there were all served as parish pastors. There was no reason to debate about whether synodical officials held divine calls. They were all parish pastors first, and Synodical officials second. There was no need to determine the nature of the parish school teacher's call, because the pastor taught the parish school!

Controversy and questions concerning the Doctrine of the Ministry historically almost always arise when there is a shift in a church's polity and a change in regards to its called workers. In later generations, as the synod would grow and new, specialized forms of ministry were developed to meet the changing circumstances. New questions would be raised that this first generation had no time, no energy, and no cause to worry about.

### **THE SECOND GENERATION: 1879-1907**

By 1879, the Wisconsin Synod had become established in its doctrine and in its self sufficiency, although throughout the history of the WELS there have always been money problems. It had become a member of the Synodical Conference, and its school in Watertown had been stabilized. In view of the growing membership of its older congregations, their pastors found themselves unable to carry out the rest of their pastoral duties and teach a day school at the same time. Teachers were being trained and called to provide for this need. Naturally, in this second generation from 1879 to 1908 questions would arise as to their status in the synod.

In this second generation from 1879 until 1908, there are three events that are key to

understanding how the doctrine of the ministry fared during this time frame. The first of these would be the publication of Hoenecke's Dogmatik. Even though it was published at the end of this era after Hoenecke's death, we will discuss it first, because it gives us a good view of the Wisconsin Synod's understanding of the Doctrine of the Ministry throughout this era. The second major event or series of events was the discussions concerning the parish school teacher's call centered chiefly in the Manitowoc conference. Thirdly, there was the Cincinnati case, which raised questions about the role and status of the synod, along with its officials.

Neither of these two questions were resolved during this generation. They were still "hot topics" of discussion throughout the latter part of this generation into the third. In fact it was these two practical concerns which are the historical background for the development of the so-called "Wisconsin Synod position" on Church and Ministry.

This era also marked the transition between the first and second generation of WELS theologians. Adolph Hoenecke on the one hand was alive and active throughout this period. August Pieper and J. P. Koehler, the next generation, were beginning their tenures at the Wauwatosa seminary. During this era, many of the pastors who would be around during the next era were trained by Dr. Hoenecke.

For this reason, we will begin our study of the second generation by looking at what Hoenecke's Dogmatik has to say about the doctrine of the ministry. Hoenecke's Dogmatik was published after his death by his sons, but it gives us a first hand view of what Prof. Hoenecke was teaching his students throughout this era.

"Paragraph" 68, vol. IV is where Hoenecke treats of the doctrine of Ministry. He entitles it "Das Lehramt" or The Teaching Office. However, lest we think that Prof. Hoenecke just wants

to talk about LES teachers and no one else, we do well to look at the first thesis, or "Lehrsatz" in his presentation. It reads: "Das Lehramt, worunter wir hier den Stand der Diener am Wort, die Pastoren, verstehn, ist goettlicher Einsetzung."(10)

(The Teaching Office, under which we here understand the servants of the Word, the pastors, is of divine institution.)

Prof. Hoenecke is not necessarily referring exclusively to pastors here. Rather, this sentence could also be understood to place the pastors under the umbrella of Das Lehramt. Since pastors usually perform the lion's share of the duties of the Teaching Office, and since there were few other forms of public ministry besides the pastors, it was only natural that Prof. Hoenecke should immediately mention pastors in this connection. Further proof that Prof. Hoenecke did not necessarily equate Das Lehramt with Das Pfarramt in his Dogmatik will be discussed later under thesis V.

In this first thesis, Prof. Hoenecke shows that the preaching office is divinely instituted in the abstract sense and in the concrete sense. The abstract sense is the means of grace, as Article V of the Augsburg Confession teaches: "To achieve such faith, God has instituted the office of preaching, has given the gospel and sacrament, by which he gives the Holy Spirit, as by means, etc." The concrete sense of the preaching office is the occupants of that office, those who carry out the preaching office in abstracto. Hoenecke gives clear Scriptural support for the divinity of the preaching office in concreto, and discusses some of the 19th century theologians who deny it, chief among which would be Hoefling. This is important to note, because later, the WELS would be accused of following Hoefling's error in respect to the next generation's understanding of the Doctrine of the Preaching Office.

Hoenecke's second and third theses are self explanatory, and he gives each of them scriptural support. They are as follows:

Lehrsatz II: "Niemand kann anders als durch aussern, rechtmassigen Beruf (Vocation, vocatio legitima) ein oeffentlicher Diener am Wort werden."(11) No one can become a public servant of the Word other than through an external, legitimate call.(vocation, vocatio legitima)

Lehrsatz III: "Die Ordination macht niemand zum Pastor, sondern bestatigt nur einen Pastor als rechtmassig berufenen Pastor."(12) (Ordination does not make anyone a pastor, but it only confirms a pastor as being a legitimately called pastor.)

In his fourth thesis, Prof. Hoenecke gets to the essence of the preaching office, or teaching office as he referred to it earlier:

Lehrsatz IV reads: "Gewalt and Recht des Predigtamts ist: Evangelium predigen, Sakrament verwalten, Sünden vergeben oder behalten, Zucht ueben"(13) (The power and right of the preaching office is to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, forgive or retain sins, and practice discipline.)

This definition of what the preaching or teaching office is all about is the key to all future discussions concerning the doctrine of the ministry. In this definition we see what this office does. Anyone who performs one or more of these functions publicly, that is, on behalf of other Christians is performing the duties of the Predigtamt, or Lehramt, as Hoenecke also calls it. And, in connection with thesis II, anyone who is called by a group of Christians to perform these functions is a servant of the Word, or a public minister, no matter what the scope of their office is. This understanding is brought out further in the discussion under Hoenecke's final thesis:

Lehrsatz V: "Wesentlich sind alle Prediger an Rechten und Wurdn gleich."(14)

(Essentially, all preachers are the same in rights and honors.)

This thesis is directed against the Catholic church as well as what Hoenecke calls "Romanizing Lutherans" (romanisierenden Lutheraner)(15) Examples of these would be the Buffalo Synod and also the Breslau Synod in Germany at Hoenecke's time. Part of Hoenecke's discussion of this thesis has direct relevance for later discussions of the doctrine of ministry in the WELS. Hoenecke discusses I Corinthians 12:28ff and Ephesians 4:11, which the Papists and the Breslau Synod quote as proof passages where a divine institution of various offices with their church activities is taught. In his *Contra to the Roman Church and the Breslau Synod*, Hoenecke makes some very fundamental observations concerning these passages, and also quotes Martin Chemnitz regarding them. Prange and Tackmeir have translated this section as follows:

1. We are not speaking of a divine institution of differences in rank among offices arranged by degrees...Instead the Corinthians passage (I Cor. 12:28ff) shows that activities and gifts are being spoken of for the benefit of the church. The gift of healing, of doing miracles, of tongues, etc. is brought up in the very same connection. If these are not church offices arranged by degrees and rank...then the others are not either, or, if they are also called offices, still they are not enumerated here in order to confirm really and essentially different offices in rank.

2. The official activities in the episcopate or office of an elder, or of a church servant of the Word and Sacraments, are originally brought up. At first they were united in the regular office of bishop, elder, or pastor. Yet by necessity, these were transferred to various persons, like deacons, for the sake of efficiency, if there were people in the congregation who had received greater gifts for the one or the other activity than the elders that already existed.

Chemnitz expresses himself in a similar way. He says correctly concerning Ephesians 4:11ff that five gradus ministerii are enumerated:

- a. Apostles, who directly called, had a universal call, and all miraculous gifts, and whose preaching and teaching was inspired and therefore God's Word in the true sense and the source of teaching for others.
- b. Prophets, who interpreted tongues and the scriptures (I Cor. 14:1-6)
- c. Evangelists, who were not apostles, but were sent out with the general mission

of preaching the gospel, ergo poieson euangelistoiu.. Examples are Philip (Acts 21:8) Timothy (2 Timothy 4:5, and Tychicus (Acts 20:4, Eph. 6:21, Col. 4:7)  
 d. Pastors, who were overseers of a certain flock of the church. (I Peter 5:2)  
 e. Teachers, didaskalon nepiwn (Romans 2:20 Hebrew 5:12), apparantly the later catechists (Examen, pars. II, p. 217ff)

But, Chemnitz says, the apostles have always combined these various degrees under both names, "bishops and elders." Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21 are very strong proofs, where Paul designates Tychicus, who was publicly an evangelist, as a servant and fellow servant, and I Peter 5:1,2, where Peter calls himself a fellow elder and characterizes the elders at the same time (vs. 2 as pastors, shepherds. Passages like I Tim. 3:1ff also point to one person with a recurring union of the activities of the office which were at first separate and exercised by various persons, if, for example, it is demanded that he be able to teach (vs. 2), and that he must manage the congregation (vs.4&5), thus both tend as well as rule. Thus the divine institution of the church hierarchy, of the Roman or romanizing way, is not to be proven from the passages Ephesians 4:11 and I Cor. 12:18.

Chemnitz closes his discussions with the declaration that the enumerations of Eph. 4:11 and I Cor. 12:28 only show into what degrees the obligations of one and the same church and preaching office are divided. Finally, he adds the following principles:

- a. The Word of God sets no numbers of grades.
- b. From Scripture it is clear that at the time of the apostle the same gradus were not represented in all congregations.
- c. Likewise it is also certain from Scripture that the division into gradus was not a necessity, so that all activities were not often united in one person. Rather, the whole order was a matter of freedom, and was directed according to the need and the use of the church.
- d. All grades were not offices besides the preaching office, but ipsa et vera officia ministerii verbi et sacramentorum.(the one and the same true office of the Ministry of Word and Sacrament).(16)

I find it interesting that the truth that Hoenecke sets along with Chemnitz over against the Catholic Church and the Buffalo Synod is basically the same one which August Pieper, John Schaller, and J. P. Koehler set over against those who disagreed with them in the Synodical Conference. Especially points c. and d. will be made in the next era over and over again. The



Wauwatosa men used the same basic lines of argument over and over again against anyone who tried to fix a certain form of ministry as THE Biblicly mandated form.

Prof. Hoenecke's entire treatment of the Doctrine of the Ministry really sets the stage for the future of this doctrine. Even though he did not specifically draw the same application of the truths he developed in his fifth thesis, still what the three Wauwatosa men maintained concerning the doctrine of the ministry in the next generation is essentially the same as Hoenecke's point against the Catholic Church and also the "Romanizing Lutherans." Those who accuse the "Wisconsin Synod position" on the Doctrine of the Ministry of being a new invention of J. P. Koehler are overlooking not only Hoenecke's presentation of this doctrine, but also Martin Chemnitz's. Their argument is not only with August Pieper, but with the second greatest and most respected theologian in the history of the Lutheran Church. Their argument is also with the Holy Scriptures, but that will be demonstrated amply by the Wauwatosa theologians in the next generation.

However, even though Adolph Hoenecke wrote the above quoted section, he still seemed to be a little slow in applying it to the calls of the new school teachers who were becoming more and more abundant in the WELS. Indeed, their appearance on a more or less widespread basis caused some confusion as to their status.

Throughout the history of the WELS, renewed study and interest in the Doctrine of the Ministry seems to come about, only when there is a new practical concern in the life of the church. This can be seen very clearly around the turn of the century. The Quartalschrift articles of the Seminary faculty in the 1910s were a direct result of conditions, events, and questions raised in this second generation, the years from 1879 until 1908.

The first of these was the repeated discussions and controversy concerning the nature of a schoolteacher's call in the Wisconsin Synod parish schools. According to Koehler, these discussions were held at various times and places from the late 1870s through 1892. Prof. Koehler leads his account of the discussions with an interesting comment. "The controversy regarding the office of the Pastorate might have been obviated if the repeated early discussions regarding the divine call of the School Teacher had been followed up and carried to their conclusion."(17)

But it was not to be so, as Prof. Koehler observes in his next comment: "The outcome always showed that the current conception remained that of the uniquely and distinctively divine characteristic of the Pastorate."(18) Finally, Koehler has a stinging assessment of the manner in which these discussions were carried out. "The argument proceeded along the current "dogmatic" lines, i.e. the reasons and counter-reasons advanced were not deduced by careful exegetical examination of the Scriptures and determination of doctrine and history, but from the theories that the current doctrine of the ministry or the ideas concerning the duties and privileges of parents suggested."(19)

To illustrate his point, Koehler summarizes the two opposing lines of argumentation:

The teachers of the Missouri Synod readily acknowledged that there is no direct Scriptural ordinance regarding the parochial school, excepting that some had reference to Acts 13;1 and Eph. 4:11, where among other offices 'pastors' and 'teachers' are mentioned. Generally, reference was had to Christ's sayings 'Suffer little children to come unto me' and 'Feed my lambs', spoken to His apostles; and these sayings were interpreted to indicate a difference between the pastor and teacher and the latter's dependence on the former, in that the Apostles' mission was the pastor's calling, and the teacher's office received its divineness only thru the benefit of clergy.

The argumentation goes to show the lack of intensive linguistic-historical Bible study, which would have done better justice to the Scripture passages cited

than merely to operate with the sound of the words. At the same time, there was faithful Bible reading in vogue in these circles, and the general vital truths of the Bible were appreciated and made for sincerity and earnestness and a proper conception of the dignity of the Christian teacher's calling, though the definition of doctrine in the matter was still naive.

The same kind of argumentation was used on the other side, with the opposite result. It proceeded along this line: It is the parents' business to bring up their children and train them in the Word, Eph. 6:4 and elsewhere: Ye fathers, bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; when a Christian congregation establishes a school, it does so as a matter of free choice on behalf of the parents, nowhere in Scripture is it thus enjoined; hence the teacher's calling is the same as any secular calling, left to Christian discretion. That was implemented with Bible texts and examples (the same as on the other side); the stories of Abraham, Joshua, the boy Jesus, and Timothy, afforded the principal material, then the founding of the Lutheran public school in Luther's day and the parochial school in America. The handling of the latter subject as well as that of the Scriptures betrayed the want of understanding for historical development. And the exegetical and historical operations were not calculated to discover the development of the teacher's calling so much, as to formulate a thesis that was in line with the current system of doctrine. That even for the latter purpose something in the nature of historical-exegetical research was prerequisite, entered no one's mind in the dispute." (20)

Thus Koehler's summary of the first round of discussions held in the late 1870s. These discussions involved not only the Wisconsin Synod but also Missouri Synod members in Wisconsin. They were held mostly in joint conferences centering around Watertown, Oshkosh, Manitowoc, and Sheboygan. These discussions never really went away. They persisted into the next decade, along the same lines that Koehler delineated above. Then, in the middle 1880s Koehler records a breakthrough of sorts at a Synodical Conference meeting of pastors and teachers in Manitowoc.

At this particular conference Pastor Reinhold Pieper read a paper on the question of the teacher's call and espoused the "secular" interpretation outlined above on the basis of the then current doctrine of the ministry: There is only one office of the ministry in the church, that of the pastor or preacher; in this office all the gifts, powers, and functions of the Gospel are embodied, and it alone is of

divine ordinance; the office of the teacher stems from the parents on whom God has enjoined the training of their children; they assign a part of this obligation to the teacher, by virtue of their Christian liberty, and so this office is not directly of divine ordinance; it is a commendable conception of their office when the teachers look upon it as divine, and that view of it no doubt will make for faithfulness on their part, but their calling belongs to the same category as that of the Christian cobbler or tailor.

The last three sentences are quoted practically verbatim, in translation, excepting that the German "Schuster und Schneider" conveys something of a slight (which the English doesn't) like the American 'hired man'. The thoughts were summed up in four or six theses, grouped in pairs, which cannot be reproduced, since the present writer {Koehler} at that time pastor in Two Rivers, has no copy of them. But his reply to them at the time will serve to give a picture of the discussion. It consisted in the hoary rules of medieval scholasticism which in their Latin wording invested the answer with a special nimbus of theological learning: E mere particularibus nihil sequitur and E mere negativis nihil sequitur. That is to say: From mere individual instances and negative conclusions you can't draw general conclusions. This rule of logic fitted the form of the theses so admirably that nothing much could be said against their application.

To adduce Christ's sayings 'Suffer little children to come unto me' (Matt. 19:14) and 'Feed my lambs'(John 21:15) in support of the pastoral office was a miscue. The first saying involved a rebuke of the Disciples, and to take the second saying as a reference to the first, is doubly awkward, in view of the rebuke. Besides, according to the best manuscripts, the original has not the distinction between lambs and sheep, as of age, but two diminutives (Laemmer, Schaefflein), indication that they are endearing terms of the Lord's for the flock that He has chosen as his own, and expressive of the tender love for Peter too, after his denial, as he confers on him the high calling of the ministry. Of course, the children are a part of the flock; but just as much a matter of course, the ministry belongs to the teacher and to every Christian as well as to the pastor.

Another angle is presented by the pairing of 'pastors' and 'teachers' at Eph. 4:11 (Acts 13:1 the latter are mentioned together with the 'prophets') 'Pastors' via the Latin, is the translation for the Greek 'shepherds', but the mere identity of the words gives no license to identify them with the office of our present-day pastors and teachers; the little we do know about them indicates that their functions were different.

These details were not threshed out at the Manitowoc conference. There the application of the rules of logic to the essayist's argumentation, without express endorsement by the whole conference, led to general agreement on the following position: Because the Christian teacher's whole work of teaching is governed by the Word of God, his work in the school merits the same appreciation of being "divine" as that of the pastor in the congregation. Such was the half-hearted progress at the Manitowoc conference. Soon thereafter numerous changes in

Synod took place, whereby those who had taken a leading part in the discussion were scattered abroad. But it may be said that the Manitowoc discussion signaled the beginning of a real exegetical and historical analysis of such questions in Wisconsin, and beyond, that was destined to have its repercussions.(21)

These extended excerpts from Koehler give us a good insight into the nature of the issues that were to be resolved later in the *Quartalschrift* articles. They also give us a first hand account from the man who, historically speaking, was the pioneer or father of the Wauwatosa viewpoint later on. It also shows, as Prof. Koehler never seems reluctant to point out, a shallow, dogmatic thinking based on the present day conceptions and language of the times. This kind of thinking is really inevitable without a working knowledge of the Biblical languages, as well a good understanding of history and how different words have changed meaning or taken on new meanings over the years. Semantic errors produce doctrinal errors. And the only way to avoid this is to be well grounded in the original languages of the Bible.

The last phase of the discussions concerning the call of the teacher took place in 1892. In this year, at the convening convention of the Federation of the Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan Synods, an essayist treated the doctrine of the Ministry, which according to Koehler, "treated the doctrine of the divine call of a Christian preacher in the traditional way."(22) This essayist soon ran into trouble from questioners from the floor, and the final result was that Prof. Hoenecke, who according to Fredrich "had evidently been trying to help out a beleaguered essayist, reacted by withholding final judgement but suggesting that the novel approaches merited further study."(23)

Later that year, in a general pastoral conference of the Wisconsin Synod at Milwaukee, the question of the teacher's call came up again. This time the paper was presented by none other than

Director Hoenecke himself. Prof. Koehler sums up his line of thought as follows:

He attached the teacher's call to the pastorate in the usual way. Along these lines: Since the public administration of Word and Sacrament is delegated to the pastorate of the congregational body, the parochial teacher, however, also is appointed for public teaching, it becomes necessary, since the Word of God does not specifically mention the parochial school teacher, to incorporate this office in some way with the pastorate. The teacher, then, should receive a regular call from the congregation, in accordance with the Augsburg Confession's demand that no one is to teach publicly in the church without a regular call. And the teacher's work is to be subject, of course, to the pastor's supervision. Thus the call of the teacher is to be considered divine, like that of the pastor.(24) Here, as in the Manitowoc conference, the question arose, "Why detour through the office of the pastor in order to establish the divine nature of the teacher's call?"(25) Prof. Koehler further comments: That which distinguishes the pastor's call and exalts it above others is the fact that he labors in the Word and doctrine. That is what the Twelve asserted of themselves (Acts 6:2-4) and the same Paul says of the elders (I Tim. 5:17). It is likewise true of the parochial school teacher; and he is called thereto by the congregation. Why then should not Acts 20:28: 'The Holy Ghost hath made you overseers over the flock' apply to teachers as well as to pastors, and to the other church officers whose work does not constitute laboring in the Word in its specific sense, but who are also to be classed with the elders and bishops (the 'elders' of Ephesus are called 'bishops' Acts 20, and there were elders who did not labor in the Word, I Tim. 5:17). Prof. Hoenecke acknowledged the comment as novel and worthy of careful study.

It would now have been in place to investigate what the functions of the various offices in the Apostolic church were, of which Paul, Peter, and Luke make mention; when and how the offices came into being- for that had evidently never been given any thought by most of the conference members. The discussion, however, went off on a tangent.(26)

And that is where we leave the discussion on the teacher's call. These discussions were very important. They give us a good background into the thinking that the Wauwatosa men later would take issue with. We also see the position later taken by Pieper, Schaller, and Koehler to be identical with the one put forward by Koehler twenty years earlier. Even the side which affirmed the divinity of the teacher's call felt the need to make it an "auxiliary call" to the pastorate. They

did this because they had not thought through the implications of the doctrine Hoenecke spelled out in his Dogmatik concerning the grades or forms of ministry.

It would be interesting to explore whether Director Hoenecke taught what he did in his fifth theses concerning the "Lehramt" before this confrontation with Koehler in 1892. According to Koehler, Prof. Hoenecke was open minded about his position in 1892, even though it had contradicted what he had just presented in his paper. The Dogmatik was published in 1909, so either Hoenecke had changed his mind by that time, or he never did make the application of Chemnitz's points to the school teachers.

Just as the questions concerning the teacher's calls in the late 1800s were part of the catalyst for the serious studying of the doctrine of the ministry in the 1910s, so the case known as the Cincinnati case became a major catalyst for the restudy of the doctrine of the church. Even though this paper is treating the doctrine of the Ministry, the implications of this case also had an impact of the Wisconsin Synod's doctrine of the Ministry, since the two doctrines are so closely connected.

The Cincinnati case was a case where a Missouri Synod congregation's excommunication was overturned by the Missouri Synod. The congregation and its pastors were suspended from the Missouri Synod because they refused to withdraw their excommunication. Then, this congregation in Cincinnati, Ohio applied to the Wisconsin Synod for membership. The Wisconsin Synod never took them in, out of brotherly respect for the Missouri Synod's procedures. The first WELS convention which considered the request for membership was in 1904. They were able to duck the issue because the case had not yet been resolved in the Missouri Synod.

The case dragged on for years and caused a great amount of discussion and controversy in

the Wisconsin Synod. There was a group that favored acceptance of the congregation.

According to Fredrich, "the reasoning ran along the line that congregational action in excommunication is supreme and inviolable or that in this instance the action had been proper."

(27) The case gave way to much thinking and controversy as to the role of the synod vs. the role of the congregation. Which was church? And in what sense? The answers to these questions directly affect the doctrine of the Ministry. If the synod is not church, how can its officials be ministers of the word unless through congregations? It is in the heat of these arguments that we leave the Second Generation. It was this generation that raised the issues, and it was this generation that saw Prof. Koehler pioneer his understanding as kind of a lone voice in the wilderness. But it was in the next generation that will see a concensus reached about them based on Scriptural study. We now proceed to the most famous generation of the WELS when it comes to the Doctrine of the Ministry, the Third Generation.

### **THE THIRD GENERATION: 1908-1936**

Whenever the topic of the doctrines of Church and Ministry are ever raised in the Wisconsin Synod, the conversation is never complete without a reference to this era of our synod's history. It was in this era that most of the questions of the previous one were hammered out on the basis of intense Scriptural study. Dominating this era of the Wisconsin Synod's history were the three men on the Seminary faculty at the beginning of it: John Schaller, J.P. Koehler, and August Pieper. These three men, publishing in the *Quartalschrift* and teaching in the classroom made an impact on the Wisconsin Synod which is still felt today.

Since at the time the Seminary was located in Wauwatosa, this chapter of the history of



the doctrine of the Ministry in the WELS, and indeed, the history of all doctrine in the WELS is titled by all Wisconsin Synod writers since then as the "Wauwatosa Theology" or the "Wauwatosa Gospel." This term was coined to describe the kind of theological writing and teaching that was done there, a theology in some ways unique to American Lutheranism ever since.

There are many attempts to define "Wauwatosa Theology", but as Prof. Fredrich says about it, "As with any such intangible term, there will be about as many definitions of this one as there are definers."(28) In essence Wauwatosa theology is the use of the historical-grammatical approach to interpreting the Scripture, the emphasis on the prominence of the pure Gospel as taught by the Scriptures, and the resolution of all theological questions first of all from the Scriptures and the basing of all theological positions on solid Scriptural exegesis. This is the method and approach to theology that is still taught and emphasized in the Wisconsin Synod and at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary in Mequon.

The Wauwatosa theologians are most famous for, among other things, their writings about the Doctrine of the Church and Ministry. These articles are often held up in our circles as the shining example of the Wauwatosa Theology in Action. As Prof. Fredrich says: What happened was that the Wauwatosa's theologians simply looked beyond the current viewpoint and the ready dogmatical explanation and the deposit of an ecclesiastical situation of the past to what Scripture actually said about church and ministry. This and nothing else was determinative for them in their doctrinal formulations and should be for us in ours.(29)

The three men on the Wauwatosa faculty at the beginning of our Third Generation were all very gifted men with strong personalities and a strong love for the gospel. Their writings in the *Quartalschrift* from that era are characterized by Prof. Fredrich as "a wealth of theological

thinking and writing " (30) All of them were united in their teaching on Church and Ministry.

Prof. Koehler wrote "In the ensuing controversy about the Doctrine of the Church and the Office of the Ministry, as precipitated by the Cincinnati differences, the three Seminary men stood shoulder to shoulder."(31)

While acting as a united team, each of them had their own roles. Prof. Schaller was the director of the Seminary and leader of the team. While he had an amiable personality, he also was able to command the respect and cooperation of his two brilliant and strong willed colleagues. His one contribution "The Origin and Development of the New Testament Ministry" is especially valuable for the scope of this paper.

Prof. Pieper was the popularizer of the Wauwatosa viewpoint on the Doctrine of the Church and Ministry. He wrote six major articles appearing in the *Quartalschrift* over the course of three years, and a good number of articles and papers on the topic after this series. He had a dramatic personality and a unique writing style.

Prof. J.P. Koehler was, as stated above, the exegetical pioneer who won over his colleagues to his position as he had set it forth years earlier in the debates over the parochial school teachers and the Cincinnati case. Because of health problems, other commitments and other projects, he did not do much writing on the subject, but left it in the hands of his colleagues.

In all of the articles which appeared in the *Quartalschrift*, the Wauwatosa theology can be detected. There is an exegetical emphasis based on the historical-grammatical approach. There is an emphasis on the gospel character of the New Testament church and its ministry. There is a going back to the source of the Scriptures and starting from there before dealing with the Lutheran Confessions, the church fathers, the orthodox dogmaticians, and Walther. These articles

are a prime, perhaps the prime, certainly the most famous, demonstration of the "Wauwatosa Theology" in action.

These articles, Pieper's, Schaller's and one by E.R. Kaehler, a Missouri Synod man, all appeared in a three year span. Each of these articles is important, although there is a good deal of repetition and similar material among them. First, we will discuss Prof. Pieper's six articles, and then Schaller's and Kaehler's. Then, we will briefly look at Prof. Pieper's other articles which he wrote on the topic later.

The articles which Prof. Pieper wrote are as follows in order of publication: 1. 'Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche' Jan. 1911; 2. 'Die Suspension Noch Einmal' July, 1911; 3. 'Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt' Jan. 1912; 4. 'Die Lehre von der Kirche und ihren Kennzeichen in Anwendung auf die Synode' April, 1912; 5. 'Zur Verstaendigung in der gegenwaertigen Diskussion ueber Kirche und Amt' July, 1912; 6. 'Abschluss der Diskussion ueber die Lehren von der Kirche etc. Jan. 1913.

These articles deal mostly with the doctrine of the Church, but there is a considerable amount of treatment in them of the doctrine of the Ministry as well. There is a wealth of material in these articles. No treatment of the history of the doctrine of the Ministry in the Wisconsin Synod would even begin to do justice to the topic without discussing them.

The first of these articles, 'Menschenherrschaft in der Kirche {Human Rule in the Church}' starts out dealing with the temptations and perceptions of tyranny in the synod. It deals with the relationship of boards and officials and congregations. The dangers and perceptions of nepotism in a small church body are discussed, and then finally Prof. Pieper gets around to his main topic, the suspension of a Synod or District president and its relationship to the bann or excommunication,

and also exclusion.

The next of these articles, 'Die Suspension Noch Einmal' {The Suspension Once Again} came about after Prof. Pieper evidently received a good deal of flack for the contents of the first. In this paper he continued to maintain and defend his basic position that synodical discipline is church discipline, since the Synod is church.

In the third article he writes, 'Die Stimme unserer kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt', {The Voice of our church in the question of Church and Ministry} Prof. Pieper discusses Walther's classic book entitled Kirche und Amt. The history around this book is a fascinating history, since it is the history of the birth of the Missouri Synod. The book is basically written around the Altenburg Theses, which C.F.W. Walther drew up for the Altenburg debate, where he managed to unite the Perry County Saxon immigrants behind his doctrine.

Prof. Pieper discusses not only the doctrinal contents of Walther's book in this article, he also discusses much of this history in his review article on Walther's book. He also goes into some of the Romish conceptions of the original leader, Martin Stephan, who had the immigrants swear their loyalty to him as their bishop. He also describes the self doubt and uncertainty that gripped the immigrants when this man was found to be living an immoral life and therefore removed from office. In order to clear up the uncertainty and to remove the doubts about the validity of the pastors' calls who had broken with Stephan, Pastor Walther was forced to go back to the Bible and to study what it said about Church and Ministry. Walther also quotes the Lutheran Confessions, Luther, and the church Fathers in his book. When C.F.W. Walther managed to unite the immigrants once again, this time under his spiritual leadership, the God-given results historically speaking were tremendous, and by the time Prof. Pieper wrote this article

in 1912, the Missouri Synod had grown from a small group of immigrants to a great church body founded squarely on God's Word.

Prof. Pieper goes on to make some minor criticisms of the book. First, he makes the observation that the quotations of the church fathers sometimes were taken out of context to make a point that they really were not making. Prof. Pieper attributes that to the fact that Walther got most of his patristic quotations from the Orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians. Also, he remarks that Prof. Walther seemed to use Predigtamt and Pfarramt interchangeably in theses #2. But since the Pfarramt is the chief form of the Predigtamt today, it is natural to speak of them interchangeably unless one is specifically discussing the distinction between them, which Dr. Walther was not doing.

Prof. Pieper's closing thoughts in this article, however, are the reason this article is important to the understanding of the history of the doctrine of the Ministry in the WELS and indeed the understanding of the history of every doctrine in the WELS. It is there where he turns his attention from the past to the present, and from history to guiding principle. It is there where he evaluates the role and value of respected church fathers and theologians.

Far too often, all of us take the easy shortcut of jumping to their conclusions and pronouncements and basing our doctrine on what our teachers and forefathers say. This is a natural phenomenon, but it is our duty as Christians, let alone theologians and pastors, to base everything we believe and do on the Scriptures.

If a church body relies first and foremost on what its teachers' say, it will eventually lose the truth, because somewhere down the line one or more of them eventually is bound to teach heresy about something, intentionally or unintentionally. And even if there is not, a church which

bases its teachings on what its old and respected teachers say, no matter how orthodox they were, has a problem when it comes to reaching out. People who are not members of our church, for example, usually have at least some respect for the Bible, but how many unchurched people have you ever met who could<sup>14</sup> care less about what Dr. Adolph Hoenecke once said? Truly, as Prof. Pieper wrote in this article, "Wir gehoeren in die Schrift."(32) {We belong in the Scriptures.}

And this is where our orthodox teachers and forefathers have their value, for their works are meant for one thing, to get us to be where we belong, in the Scriptures. As Prof. Pieper continues: "Da haben Walther und Luther uns wollen hinfuehren, die bindet und befreit das Gewissen und macht uns fest in der goettlichen Wahrheit, denn die hat keine menschlichen Schwaechen in ihrer Darstellung. Was sie sagt, Keonnen und sollen wir immer und ueberall nachsagen, ohne Furcht, etwas verkehrtes zu sagen."(33) {There is where Walther and Luther have wished to lead us, (to the Bible) which binds and frees the conscience and makes us strong in the divine truth, for it has no human weaknesses in its presentation. What it says, we can and should in all times and in all cases repeat, without fear of saying something wrong.}

This is one of many statements which give us a good feel for the concept of "Wauwatosia Theology". It is important for us to not only repeat this statement, but to live it, as theologians, as pastors, and especially, as Christians.

With the next of Prof. Pieper's articles, 'Die Lehre von der Kirche und ihnen Kenntsechen in Anwendung aur die Synode', we are back to one of the chief sticking points in the controversies swirling around the Doctrines of Church and Ministry. That is, of course, the question of whether or not the Synod is church. In this article, Prof. Pieper goes back and does word studies on several of the terms used for church in the Hebrew, the Greek, and German. He states his

position near the end of this article on p. 101 "Ist die Wisconsin Synode Kirche oder Gemeinde im strengen Sinne des Worts? Die Antwort kann nach obigem nur Ja lauten"(34) {Is the Wisconsin Synod church or assembly of the saints (lit. congregation) in the narrow sense of the word? According to the above, the answer can only run: Yes.}

This article's relevance for the Doctrine of the ministry is basically parallel to the entire Doctrine of the Church's relevance to the Doctrine of the Ministry. What is taught about the church, its makeup, its mission, and its Means of Grace, is naturally going to affect what is taught about its public servants, its ministers. More specifically to the point at hand, if the Wisconsin Synod is not church, then by definition its officials and the professors at its schools are not called to the public ministry of the church. If the Wisconsin Synod is church, then, its officials and professors who are called by it to administer the ministry of the Means of Grace in whatever specific form they are called to are public ministers of the church.

This question arose and historically always seems most pertinent and relevant during a case of Synodical discipline. Because there are always discipline cases, the correct answer to this question always needs to be at hand. Because this is a paper on the history of the doctrine of the Ministry and not on the Doctrine of the Church, I am not going to go into the Scriptural basis for Prof. Pieper's answer, but basically it can be summed up: The Synod is church because it has the marks of the church which are taught to us in the Bible.

The status controversiae to which all these articles were addressed can be summed up in two questions, one of which Prof. Pieper has dealt with extensively in the articles already mentioned and which he will continue to go back to throughout this series of articles. These questions could be put as follows: 1. Is only the local congregation Church in the narrow sense?

2. Can only a parish pastor of a congregation be a "Traeger des Predigtamt" or a holder of the preaching office?

In his next article, 'Zur Verstaendigung in der gegenwaertigen Diskussion ueber Kirche und Amt', Prof. Pieper answers both of these questions with a negative. This article is important to the study of the history of the Doctrine of the Ministry because it gives a good of definition of what the Wauwatosia theologians understood to be the "Predigtamt".

In this his fifth article concerning the Doctrines of Church and Ministry, Prof. Pieper sets up a series of four propositions, the first of which he agrees to and the rest of which he spends this article rebutting. Again, most of this article is dealing with the Doctrine of the Church, but Prof. Pieper has some very important things to say about the Doctrine of the Ministry of the Church and its relation to the Church. The four propositions are as follows:

1. Nur die Kirche kann bannen. {Only the Church can excommunicate}
2. Kirche ist nur die Ortsgemeinde. {Church is only the local congregation. }
3. Ortsgemeinde ist nur der Haufe von Glaebigen, so zu einem Pfarrer gehoeren. {The local congregation is only the group of believers belonging to a pastor. }
4. Also kann nur ein Haufe von Glaebigen, so zu einem Pfarrer gehoeren, bannen. (35) {Thus, only a group of believer<sup>s</sup>so belonging to a pastor can excommunicate}

In the previous articles Prof. Pieper has dealt with Proposition #2, and in this article he once again spends several pages summarizing his opponents arguments and then several more pages refuting them. Then, he moves on to dealing with the third Proposition. His major criticism of this proposition can be found on pg. 195 of this article: "Der Fehler also bei der Definition von Ortsgemeinde gemacht wird, ist der dass man den Pfarrer als ein wesentliches Stueck mit hinein rechnet."(36) {The mistake made thus with the definition of local congregation, is the one saying



that the parish pastor is considered as an essential part of it.}

Furthering his point Prof. Pieper notes on the next page: "Der Bischof macht nicht die Kirche, sondern die Kirche den Bischof. Nicht erst das konkret besetzte Bishopsamt ist das Kennzeichen der Ortsgemeinde, sondern schon das in der Ortsgemeinde konkret gehandhabte Amt des Worts und der Sacramente."(37) {The bishop does not make the church, but the church makes the bishop. The concrete established bishop's office is not first the mark of the local congregation, but already the concretely present in the congregation office of the Word and Sacraments.}

Later in conjunction with this point, Prof. Pieper moves into his definition of the Public Ministry in the following lengthy and rather serpentine section. It is this article's fullest explanation of what church offices are instituted by God and in what sense:

"Jedes Amt, das vongemeindewegen das Wort allein oder ein Sakrament allein, oder Wort und Sakrament zusammen, treibt, ist von Gott gestiftet, d. h. mit dem Blut Christe erworben, durch den Heiligen Geist gegeben, von Christo befohlen; und diejenigen, die von der Kirche nach Gottes Wort in solche Aemter gewaehlt sind, sind im eigentlichen Sinne vom Heiligen Geist drein gesetzt, genau so wie die Bishoefe von Ephesus, Act. 20:28. Es ist falsch, wenn man sagt: Nur das Pfarramt ist in diesem Sinne goettliche Stiftung, und alle andern kirchlichen Aemter des Worts sind es nur, sofern sie sich vom Pfarramte ableiten lassen. Das Pfarramt ist nicht das von Christo gestiftete genus des Amtes, sondern das genus ist das in Matt. 28,2; Kor. 3; I Peter. 2 u. a. St. erwaehte Amt des Neuen Testaments, des Geistes, das in der Augustana Art. 5., genannt wird 'ministerium decendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta" Davon ist das Pfarramt erst eine Species. Und nun sagen auch wir: Das Pfarramt in der bei uns gewoehnlichen Form ist die Hauptspezies, die vollstaendigste, wichtigste, noetigste Spezies des kirchlichen Amtes, aber nicht die einzige von Gott gestiftete Form des kirchlichen Lehramts."(38)

{Every office, which on behalf of a community of Christians sets forth the Word alone or a Sacrament alone, or Word and Sacrament together, is instituted by God, that is, won with the blood of Christ, given through the Holy Spirit, commanded by Christ, and those individuals who are chosen by the church

according to God's Word into such offices are in the actual sense placed there by the Holy Spirit, exactly as the bishops of Ephesus in Acts 20:28. It is false when it is said: Only the parish office is in this sense a divine institution, and all other ecclesiastical offices of the Word are it only in so far as they are derived from the Parish Pastorate. The parish office is not the instituted by Christ genus of the Office, but the genus is that Office of the New Testament mentioned in Matt. 28, II Cor. 3, I Peter 2, and other places, the office of the Spirit, which is called in the Augsburg Confession Article 5: "ministerium docendi evangelii et porrigendi sacramenta". Of that the parish office is first a species. And now we also say: The parish office in the form common with us is the chief species, the most perfect, important, necessary species of the ecclesiastical office, but not the single instituted by God form of the ecclesiastical teaching office.

This rather long and involved section of Prof. Pieper (that first long sentence is actually the last third of a sentence literally lasting half of a page) gives us a good example of not only the truth Prof. Pieper was contending for, but also the error he opposed. Prof. Pieper goes on to say on the next page:

"Das einzige von Gott gestiftete, mit Christi Blut erworbene und vom Heiligen Geist direkt gegebene Amt ist das allgemeine heilige Predigtamt, das private und oeffentliche, und gar keine besondere aeußere Form deselben ist als solche eine Stiftung Gottes, wenn man hier den Apostolat, den der Herr ja auch der Form nach bestimmte, ausnimmt."(39)

{The single office instituted by God, won with Christ's blood, and directly given by the Holy Spirit is the common holy Preaching office, the private and public, and other special outward form of the same is as such an institution of God, if here the Apostolate, which the LORD also fixed according to form, is excluded.}

And finally, making an application of his understanding of the Doctrines of Church and Ministry, Prof. Pieper concludes this section about the New Testament Office of the Ministry by saying:

"Wer nun durch Wahl oder Zustimmung der Lokalgemeinde, Synode oder sonstiger Kirche in irgend eine Form des kirchlichen Lehramtes berufen ist, der ist

von Gott selbst in ein von Gott gestiftetes Amt berufen."(40)

{Whoever now through choice or consent of the local congregation, synod or other church is called in any kind of a form of the ecclesiastical teaching office, that one is called by God Himself in an office instituted by God.}

But is one in a divinely instituted office of the church if what he or she does is not preaching or teaching, but doing something in support of it? What about the janitor, subject to so much discussion and debate these days? Well, Prof. Pieper does not leave this uncovered. Prof. Pieper elsewhere in this article states:

"Nach dieser Regel haben wir nun aber auch die Bedeutung der goettlichen Stiftung oder Einsetzung des Aeltesten oder Bischofsamts damaliger und anderer Zeiten und schlechweg aller Aemter und aeusseren Einrichtungen in der Kirche zu beurteilen. Jeder Kirchendienst, vom Apostolat herab bis zum Janitor (Tuerhueter, Ps. 84:11), ist, wenn Gott die Maenner dazu gibt, Gottes gabe und 'Stiftung'"(41)

{According to this rule, we have now however to judge also the significance of the divine institution or installation of the elders and bishop's offices at that time and other times and simply all offices and outward institutions in the church. Each ministry of the church, from the Apostolate down to the janitor (Doorkeeper, Ps. 84:11) is, when God places men into it, God's gift and institution.

In his last of the six articles, appropriately titled 'Abschluss der Diskussion ueber die Lehren von der Kirche etc.' {Conclusion to the discussion concerning the Doctrines of the Church etc.} Prof. Pieper sums up the conclusions and propositions he had been maintaining in this series of articles, as well as the positions he had been attacking as contrary to God's Word. Since the controversy of the day had much to do with the doctrine of the Church, naturally Prof. Pieper concludes the series of articles by saying a lot about the doctrine of the Church. However, he does describe the controversy over the Doctrine of the Ministry as three fold, and he lists the three points of controversy and the chief arguments he has for his position. The following are

Pieper's three points of controversy:

"1. Die erste war die nach der sachlichen Ableitung des kirchlichen Lehramts. Ist es eine Fortsetzung des ausserordentlichen Apostolats der Zwölf in seinen spezifischen Praerogativen, Vollmachten und Functionen, die ueber das geistliche Priestertum aller Christen hinausliegen, als Inbegriff solcher Vollmachten und Funktionen neben und unabhängig vom geistlichen Priestertum von Christo fuer die Kirche gestiftet und ein fuer allemal als Lehr- und Regeiramt von aussen in die Kirche hinein gesetzt und als solches der Kirche wesentlich? Oder wurzelt es sachlich im geistlichen Priestertum aller Christen so, dass es in seinen Funktionen mit diesem identisch ist und seinen Ursprung in der Gemeinde, der Kirche selbst hat, also wesentlich nichts anders ist als die Verwaltung des geistlichen Priestertums von gemeinschaftswegen? (42)

{The first was the question concerning the actual derivation of the ecclesiastical teaching office. Is it an embodiment of the outwardly ordained Apostolate of the Twelve in its special prerogatives, authority, and functions, which lay outside the spiritual priesthood of all believers-as the holder of such authority and functions instituted by Christ for the church next to and independent of the spiritual priesthood and outwardly installed once for all time as teaching and ruling office?

Or is it actually rooted in the spiritual Priesthood of all Christians thus, that it is identical with this in its functions and so has its origin in the congregation, in the church itself thus essentially it is nothing other than the administration of the spiritual priesthood on account of the fellowship?}

"Beim zweiten Punkt handelte es sich um die innere Art der Stiftung des neutestamentlichen Lehramts. Ist die Stiftung desselben gesetzlicher oder evangelischer Natur, Gebot oder Gabe, klar vorgeschriebenes, der Kirche wesentliches, aeusserliches Institut, ohne das die Kirche nicht Kirche ist oder doch nicht funktionieren darf, oder ist es eine Schoepfung Christi durch den Heiligen Geist, mit dem Glauben oder Priestertum der Kirche als Gemeinschaft an- und eingestiftet zum Zweck der vollkommenen Erbauung des Leibes Christi?"(43)

{The second point deals with the inner manner of the institution of the New Testament teaching office. Is the institution of the same of a legal or evangelical nature, command or gift, a clearly prescribed, essential to the church, outward institution, without which the church is not church or yet is not permitted to function, or is it a creation of Christ through the Holy Spirit, instituted with the faith or priesthood of the church as fellowship for the goal of the perfect edification of the body of Christ?}

"Damit sind wir schon mitten in den dritten Punkt hineingekommen.



Still, August Pieper was not the only writer about these doctrines during this era. His colleague on the faculty, Prof. Schaller, contributed two articles from this period, one in the *Quartalschrift* and one in the *Seminary Catalogue*.

His first article appeared in the April, 1912 issue of the *Quartalschrift*. Its title was 'Von der Entlessung aus einer Ortsgemeinde'. {Concerning the removal from a local congregation.} In this article Prof. Schaller mostly talked about discipline cases within the congregational setting. He did make the point in connection with this topic the point previously discussed made by Prof. Pieper that the congregation did not necessarily have to have a "Pfarrer" or a parish pastor to be considered a Christian congregation. Other than that Prof. Schaller has little to say in this article.

However, in his article in the *Seminary Catalogue* of the 1911-12 School years, Prof. Schaller has a great deal to say about the doctrine of the Ministry. This essay is entitled 'Ueber die Entstehung und Ausgestaefung des Neutestamentlichen Predigtamts.' {The Origin and Development of the New Testament Ministry'} This article, unlike Prof. Pieper's articles previously discussed, is translated into English and is available in the [WELS Ministry Compendium](#):

"Among us no question can arise about the real essence of the New Testament ministry. Christ gave his disciples only one commission. He has therefore also established only one office, one ministry in the church, the ministry of preaching the gospel. He summarizes his will briefly in the words, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: (Mk. 16:15). That same commission lies in the words, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Mt. 28:20); for only someone who does not know the gospel of Christ will lapse into the view that Jesus is here speaking about ethical precepts somewhat like those he gave in the Sermon on the Mount.

According to John 1:17 Jesus' preaching is grace and truth, in contrast to the preaching of Moses. Since he sends out his disciples with the same commission which he received from his Father (John 20:21), nothing else could have been committed to them but the preaching of grace and truth. Hence Paul describes this

preaching in particular as the ministry which has been established and instituted as a result of God's reconciliation (II Cor. 5:18ff). He expressly contrasts the New Testament ministry, as the office of the Spirit, with the ministry of the preaching of condemnation which was promulgated through Moses (II Cor 3:6ff). If the New Testament is the covenant of grace and of God's reconciliation through Christ, then the New Testament ministry is concerned with nothing other than this very gospel.

It should at once be mentioned here that this New Testament ministry, the preaching of reconciliation in Christ, did not first begin with the coming of the Son of God into the flesh. We call the proclamation about the woman's Seed the Protevangel because God through that one brief word offered mankind for their acceptance complete salvation in Christ. He there at once placed beside the covenant of the law the new covenant of reconciliation and thereby without doing anything further established the ministry of reconciliation among men. (46)

In this section, Prof. Schaller makes several important points about the New Testament Predigtamt. (Literally, preaching office, translated here as ministry) First, he makes the point that the New Testament preaching office is the only office or ministry that is commissioned by Christ in the Great Commission. Most importantly, Prof. Schaller reminds us that the preaching of grace and truth, that is the Gospel, is what the New Testament Ministry or Office is all about. Finally, Prof. Schaller teaches us that the New Testament ministry did not begin in the New Testament, but in the Garden of Eden and continued throughout the Old Testament.

To this point Prof. Schaller adds: "Strictly speaking, therefore the ministry of the New Testament is posited by the gospel itself and was instituted by God through the gospel when he revealed it."(47)

Then Prof. Schaller goes on to explain in what sense the New Testament ministry is divinely instituted: "God very obviously wills the preaching of the gospel. He has accomplished this will by calling people to the fellowship of the gospel, and thereby, that is through regeneration, awakens them to new spiritual life and makes them true active preachers of the

gospel" (48)

Tying this in with the doctrine of the Spiritual priesthood of all believers Prof. Schaller writes:

"This is basically nothing other than the doctrine of the spiritual priesthood. The New Testament church has taken this term for the relation between a believer and God from I Peter 2:9. In this passage it has found the truth expressed that every believer, on the one hand, can deal with God personally, without an earthly mediator, and, on the other hand, that in dealing with his fellow men he is to exercise a priestly function. Since every Christian is a spiritual priest, the special priest class which God ordained in the Old Testament here finds its antitype and is thereby abolished. But whatever could be said about the nature of an Old Testament priest's responsibility now applies to every believer on earth by virtue of the fact that the Holy Ghost applies the term to him. When Malachi 2:7 says, "For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law in his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts," that now applies not to a special class in the time after Christ, but to each individual Christian. He is to grow in the knowledge of God and so possess God's doctrine ever more perfectly (Col. 1:10; 3:10; Eph. 4:13ff.). One is to teach and admonish the other with the Word of Christ (Col. 3:16) because each one is a messenger of the Lord (I Peter 2:9) In this capacity the New Testament priests are to judge the doctrines of others (I John 4:1) and are directed to pronounce judgement on false doctrine by outwardly separating themselves (2 Jn 10: Ro. 16:17).(49)

Prof. Schaller goes on to make the point that the New Testament words used for the preaching activity of Christians do not mean a specific kind of presentation or length of the message. They all, *keerussein*, *euaggelizesthai*, *epaggellein*, and others, have in them the concept of speaking, proclaiming, and communicating. Sometimes we lose sight of this because for us preaching means the twenty minute address given by the man in the pulpit every Sunday morning. Concerning this, Prof. Schaller states:

If, therefore, we want to gain a correct understanding of the forms of the ministry as we find them in the church of all times, we have to free ourselves from the thought that only official public proclaiming is gospel preaching. This false



view betrays itself immediately when one simply identifies the ministry (Predigtamt) with the pastoral ministry (Pfarramt), even when the clear presentation of thoughts demand something else, as for example, if one takes the sentence, "The ministry (Predigtamt) is the only office (Amt) that Christ ordained in his church" and construes it without further thought as if it were speaking exclusively about the pastoral office. Our studies, which have adhered strictly to what is set forth in the Holy Scriptures, incontrovertibly show, that the ministry, that is the commission to preach the gospel, is given to every Christian, that at conversion not only the ability but also the impetus for this preaching is implanted in him: and that the gospel by its very nature as a message presupposes this preaching activity and at the same time by the effect it has guarantees it will occur.(50)

Prof. Schaller then moves on to talk about some of the ways Christians carry on this ministry of the Gospel in their lives. Christians who witness to their neighbors, who sing doctrinally correct hymns in church, who speak words of comfort or admonition to their neighbor are all engaged in the ministry of preaching.

The next topic Professor Schaller delves into is the direct nature of the call of the Old Testament Prophets and New Testament Apostles and the special nature of their ministries. After he makes the point that the office of the Apostles and the Prophets was not transferrable, he turns to the topic of forms of the New Testament office in general, noting that besides the special ministry of the apostles, there is no definite command for establishing a particular form of the public ministry:

"We can also consider it as settled that nowhere in the New Testament can a definite command be cited that Christians should establish a particular form of the public ministry in their midst. But if one wishes to speak about an institution, one must, of course, be able to cite the instituting command. It was supposed, to be sure, that the divine institution of at least one form of the public ministry had been indirectly established. But it is certainly a questionable undertaking to try to establish a divine command, and hence a positive moral precept, by means of circumstantial evidence. Is it God's practice otherwise in serious matters that directly concern our soul's salvation to leave it to our reason to make a deduction

concerning a particular act of the will? (51)

After discussing and refuting several other attempts to draw commands from examples in the Scriptures, Prof. Schaller goes to the directives that the Apostle Paul gives for the bishops in the Pastoral Epistles. To this attempt to prove the divine institution of a certain form of public ministry. To this he says:

"Paul is therefore doing nothing more here in respect to the office of bishop than to set down for the already existing organization the proper standards for judging the intellectual and moral qualifications that have been made as legitimate in God's sight, without, however, saying that they have been instituted by God in that form. He does the very same thing here that he does elsewhere when he sets the relationship of Christian masters to their slaves and vice versa in the light of proper morals, without making it possible for someone to prove from this that God has established slavery as an institution. In the same way he clearly shows in Romans 13 that God has of course instituted no specific form of government, but where government exists, in whatever way it has been established and in whatever form people under God's guidance or permission have chosen, such government is ordained of God.

We come thus to the indisputable conclusion that God can indeed recognize something that has been established under his invisible dominion and yet also according to human decisions. One cannot immediately infer from this, however, that there is a formal divine command, a divine institution, for just that changeable form. When, moreover, we continue to hold firmly to the truth that whatever involves a preaching of the gospel is a form of the New Testament ministry, we will see clearly how these forms come into existence without God's special command and then are recognized by him.(52)

With that conclusion we will leave Prof. Schaller and move on to the third author of the Wauwatosa era, Pastor Kaehler. It is interesting to note that of all the articles in this series, the longest one is by a Missouri Synod author who was not a member of the Seminary faculty. This goes to show the truth that what is commonly referred to as the "Missouri Synod position" in this controversy was not shared by all the members of the Missouri Synod. Also, it is true that not all

the members of the Wisconsin Synod at this time followed the lead of the Wauwatosa faculty and adapted the "Wisconsin Synod position".

Editor Kaehler wrote a very lengthy article in two parts for the Quartalschrift entitled: 'Die Lehre vom heiligen Predigtamt.' {The doctrine of the holy preaching office}

In his first part he deals with the question: "Was uebertraegt der einzelne Christ als Gleid einer Ortsgemeinde dem von ihm mitberufenen Pastor?(53) "What does the single Christian give over as a member of a local congregation to the pastor called by him?"

In this article Editor Kaehler maintained that the single member of a congregation does not give up any of the priestly rights that he or she has as members of the Universal Priesthood of all believers. He gives four reasons why this is so:

1. Priestly rights are not transferrable, they can not be delegated.
2. Not even the public exercise of his priestly rights can be delegated.
3. The parish office does not belong to any single Christian, so no single Christian can delegate his rights over to it.
4. It is not the single congregational member himself, but the congregation as a unity and a whole which is the calling body for a pastor.

These answers are summaries of the four sections in the first part. I think that this article clears up a common misunderstanding, not of that day alone, but also of this present day. Many times, when we say the public ministry is derived from the spiritual priesthood of all believers we imagine it working like a shell game. The pastor receives, the parishioners hand over their rights.

But no single Christian can delegate the public ministry to someone, because it is not his to delegate. Only the group or calling body delegates their right to speak as a whole to the

pastor. And we have the same spiritual rights as Christians, whether or not we are in a congregation with a pastor or not, or even if we are the pastor.

Another common misconception which seems to be becoming more widespread today about the derivation of the public ministry from the priesthood of all believers is involved in the term "representative ministry". While it is true that the pastor's divine call is a mediate call derived from the right of the church or group of priests to call public ministers, still the pastor's duty is not to speak primarily as this or that group's spokesman. The pastor is to speak for God publicly, just as individual Christians are to speak for God personally, condemning sin and preaching forgiveness. The pastor speaks in the name of congregation only in the sense that it is he who is exercising the congregation's collective right and responsibility to speak for God and to say what God says in his word. The pastor does not represent the congregation in the sense that our political officials represent their constituencies. He is not responsible to represent their ideas, desires, interests and beliefs when they are not in agreement with God's Word.

In the second, much longer part, Pastor Kaehler poses three more questions to be dealt with. We will look at each of these and his answers. He starts off the second part of his two part article with his second question:

## II

Die zweite Frage, die wir unsern Lesern vorlegen, lautet, Was lehrt die Schrift von der Entstehung und Entwicklung des Gemeindeamts? Unsere Antwort lautet: Nach der Schrift ist die verfassungsmaessige Organisation des Gemeinde oder Pfarramts, seine Gleiderung und die Verteilung seiner Functionen, kurz alles, was nicht zum Wesen des heiligen Predigtamts sondern zu dessen aeussern Gestaltung gehoert, nicht von Gott eingesetzt und verordnet, sondern Sache der Gemeinden, die darueber jenach ihren Verhaeltnissen und Beduerfmissen in christlicher Freiheit verfuegen."(54)

{The second question, which we lay before our readers runs: What does the Bible teach about the origin and development of the congregational office?

Our answer runs: According to Scripture the constitutional organization of the congregational or parish office, its membership and the division of its functions, in short everything which does not belong to the essence of the holy preaching office but to its outward form, is not established and ordained by God, but a matter of the congregation which enacts concerning it according to its circumstances and needs in Christian freedom. }

### III

Wie haben wir nach Gottes Wort und dem Bekenntnis unserer Kirche die Lehre zu beurteilen, dass das Pfarramt eine ausserhalb des Priestertums der Glauebigen stehende besondere und unmittelbare gesetzliche Verordnung Gottes sei?

Auf dies unsere dritte Frage geben wir die folgende Antwort: Eine solche Lehre hat nicht nur keinen Grund in der heiligen Schrift, sondern sie ist auch geradezu schrift und daher auch bekenntniswidrig; sie ist also nicht nur ein agraphon, sondern auch ein antigraphon.(55)

How do we have to judge according to God's Word and the Confession of our Church the doctrine that the parish office is a special and immediate legal arrangement of God, one standing outside of the priesthood of all believers?

To this our third question we give the following answer: Such a doctrine has not only no basis in the Holy Scriptures, but it is also directly contradictory to Scripture and because of that also contradictory to the Confessions. It is not only a agraphon (something not written in the Scriptures) but an antigraphon (something against what the Scriptures say).

### IV

"Inwiefern ist das Pfarramt und jedes andere Gemeinschaftsamt der Kirche eine heilige goettlich Ordnung und Stiftung?

1. Das Gemeinschaftsrecht jeder Gemeinde Christi ist ein ihr vom Herrn der Kirche selbst verliehenes, also goettliches Recht. Dieses ihr goettliches Recht uebt die Gemeinde vor allem durch die Berufung von Gemeinschaftsdienern aus. Und so sind denn jdie Personen, die die Gemeinde zum heiligen Dienste beruft und denen sie ihr Gemeinschaftsamt in gueltiger und rechtmaessiger Weise uebertraegt,- Pastoren, Schullehrer, Vorsteher, Professoren usw. eben durch die goettlich autorisierte Berufung der Gemeinde vom Heiligen Geist selbst zu Bischoefen der Herde Christi gesetzt, gemacht, geschenkt, Act 20:28, und daher fuer Christi Diener und Haushalter ueber Gostes Geheimnisse zu halten, I Cor 4:1. Das goettliche Berufsrecht der Gemeinden verbuergt jedem Pastor und jedem andern Gemeinschaftsdienern den goettlichen Ursprung des ihm von der Gemeinde uebertragenen Amtes."(56)

2. "Wie die Gemeinde das Goettlich Recht hat, so hat sie auch die goettliche Pflicht, Kirchendiener, die von Gemeinschafts wegen den Dienst des Wortes in irgend einer Form verwalten sollen, zu berufen und zu bestellen." (57)

3. "Aber nicht bloss deswegen ist jedes Gemeinschaftsamt der Kirche eine heilige, goettlich Stiftung, weil das Goettliche Gesetz der Ordnung seine Aufrichtung fordert, sondern auch deswegen, weil trotz der wesentlichen Gleichheit der Gleider der Kirche doch eine Verschiedenheit der Einzelnen hinsichtlich ihrer Natur- und Gnadengaben besteht, und weil eben dieser Unterscheid der Charismen se ist, der die Kirche zu einem organisch gegleiderten Leibe des Herrn macht." (58)

4. "Endlich aber, und zwar vor allem, ist das Gemeinschaftsamt nach Gottes Wort deshalb eine goettlich Stiftung, weil es als Amt der Verwaltung und Spendung der goettlich gegebenen Gnadenmittel wesentliche ein Amt der Dienerschaft Christi und Haushaltung ueber Gottes Geheimnisse, ein Amt des Handelns im Namen Gottes mit dem Menschen ist." (59)

{In what manner is the parish office and each other congregational office of the church a holy, divine order and institution?

1. The congregational right of each congregation of Christ is one bestowed to it by the Lord of the Church Himself, thus it is a divine right. The congregation exercises this divine right before all through the calling of congregational ministers. And thus then the persons whom the congregation called to the holy Ministry and to whom it has given over its congregational office in valid and legitimate manner, pastors, schoolteachers, principals, professors, etc. -even through the divinely authorized call of the congregation are placed, made, sent as bishops of the flock of Christ (Acts 20:28) by the Holy Spirit Himself and are to be considered accordingly as Christ's Ministers and stewards of the secrets of God. The divine calling authority of the congregation guarantees to each pastor and to each other congregational minister the divine source of the office handed over to him by the congregation.

2. As the congregation has the divine authority, so it also has the divine duty to call and to place ministers in the church, which on behalf of the congregation should administer the service of the Word in some kind of form.

3. However, not merely on account of that is each congregational office of the church of a holy, divine institution, because the divine law of order demands its establishment, but also on account of it, because in spite of the essential equality of the members of the church, yet a difference of the individual members exists with respect to their natural gifts and gifts of grace, and because it is even this difference of gifts it which makes the church an organic complete whole.

4. Finally however, and to be sure before all else, the congregational office

is of a divine institution according to God's Word on this account, because it is as the office of the administration and dispensation of the divinely given Means of Grace essentially an office of the ministry of Christ and stewardship over God's mysteries, an office of dealing in the name of God with human beings. Exactly to this goal has Christ given his congregation not only apostles, prophets, and evangelists, but also shepherds and teachers that the saints be prepared for the work of the office through which the body of Christ is built (Eph. 4:12). They are given and fixed for "the work" or the occupation of the Ministry and this is the building of the body of Christ, the church, and it consists even in the teaching and preaching. }

As can be seen from these extended excerpts of Kaehler's main points, he was in agreement with the Wauwatosa faculty. This man from the Missouri Synod contributed a 50 plus page article which was a significant addition to the Quartalschrift series. There is also a wealth of Scriptural argumentation and quotations from Luther and the confessions in this article, which there is not time or space to reproduce in this paper.

The above articles were all written in a two year period. This period of writing (1911-1913) is the most important, productive, and profitable two years for the Doctrines of the Church and Ministry in the History of the WELS. It is the shining moment in the illustrious history of the Wauwatosa years. These articles are crucial for understanding the rest of the history of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the WELS. The doctrinal positions and contents of these articles have been maintained intact and defended by the Wisconsin Synod and its major theologians ever since.

Of course, Prof. Pieper had more to write on the subject, but he did not really say anything fundamentally new or even that much more comprehensive than what was covered in this series of articles. During the remaining 30 some years of his tenure at our Seminary, Prof. Pieper wrote

the following articles which dealt with these topics, some of which can be found translated in the WELS Ministry Compendium:

1. "Luther's Lehre von Kirche und Amt" {Luther's Lehre von Kirche und Amt} translated by Harod Johne (July, 1917, Jan. and April, 1918)
2. "Was lehren wir im Artikel von der Kirche und ihrem Amt?" {What do we teach in the article concerning the Church and its Office?} (April, 1921)
3. "Die Grundlagen und die rechte Ausfuehrung der synodalen Kirchenzucht." {The ground laying and the correct execution of the synodical church discipline} (Jan. 1928)
4. "Concerning the Doctrine of the Church and of its Ministry with Special Reference to the Synod and its Discipline", translated by H.J. Vogel, (WLQ, April, 1962)
5. Are there Legal Regulations in the New Testament? translated by Prof. Em. Carl J. Lawrenz, (WLQ January, 1989)

This last article, written in 1917, demands our attention, because it is the only other article by Prof. Pieper writes about which deals with one of the burning issues about the doctrine of the ministry of our day. That issue is: Are people called by the church to perform functions that do not directly use the Word and Sacraments properly considered public ministers? And if so, in what sense?

Prof. Pieper touches on this point in the following paragraph of this article:

"No, there is in the Scripture of the New Testament no explicit prescription, no word of institution of universal significance and binding force, for any specific form of the New Testament ministry of the church, if one excludes the apostolate, which is something special. The Lord directly and personally calls and sends and instructs the apostles; but nowhere does he say that in every local congregation an elder, bishop, pastor, evangelist, prophet, shepherd, and teacher, deacons, such as admonish, speak in tongues, work miracles, heal the sick are to



be elected and engaged. In establishing the various offices, the apostles nowhere cite a command, a commission, or an authority bestowed upon them by the Lord to do so. And yet they establish the episcopate and the diaconate, the office of the elder without teaching activity (I Tim. 5:17), and other offices in the church; and the congregations willingly receive them and make use of them for their own edification and for the spreading of the Word."(60)

From this paragraph it is clear that Prof. Pieper views these offices which did not directly work in the Word as being forms of the one Public Ministry of the New Testament. But this point is not explicitly made again in WELS literature on the Doctrine of the Ministry for over seventy years. About the only trace of it can be seen in the scriptural support given by the various WELS authors in the meantime. Many times, Acts 6 and references to deacons, and I Timothy 5:17 are used to directly support statements made about the Public Ministry of the Word. These citations seem to presuppose the inclusion in the public ministry offices not directly working in the Word but in a supporting capacity to it.

The articles, papers, and conversations of the Wauwatosa theologians and their allies did not go unchallenged. After a Synod-wide pastoral conference in 1911 in which Prof. Pieper had presented a paper on the doctrine of the church, of <sup>s</sup>Synodical <sup>d</sup>Discipline, and especially doctrinal discipline, only a few weeks later he was publicly opposed by the President of Northwestern College, August F. Ernst.

So there was at this time in the history of the Wisconsin Synod a situation where the president of Northwestern College and the Seminary Faculty were publicly disagreeing over doctrinal matters! Professor Ernst's thesis are found in translation in J. P. Koehler's History of the Wisconsin Synod. They read as follows:

"1. The synod is an association of a number of congregations together with

their pastors for the building of the kingdom of God, entered into in the exercise of Christian liberty according to human regulations.

2. The synod is not church in the strict sense of the word.

3. A synod therefore, has no special rights or authority over the congregations, but only such rights or authority over the congregations as have expressly been delegated to it by the congregations.

4. Whoever claims that the synod as church has special church authority, deprives the congregations of their God-given rights and squanders the birthright of the Reformation.

5. The synod, according to human law, has those rights over its members that issue from the nature of the association and its purpose.

6. God has given all church authority to the church in the proper sense, that is the communion of saints, and therewith to the local congregation.

7. Especially has God given the right and the command to expel from the congregation, that is to excommunicate, exclusively to the pastors of local congregations together with them.

8. Whoever arrogates to himself to excommunicate outside of the congregation or without its authorization or consent, violates the Word of God and becomes guilty of the sin of popery.

9. The doctrine of a representative church has no Scriptural foundation and serves to make the congregations forgetful of their duty and excommunication of no effect.

10. Synodical discipline is not church discipline, but is derived from human regulations, even when administered by Christians according to the Word of God.

11. Suspension from synodical fellowship is not excommunication but for the time being discontinuance of church fellowship.

12. The officials of the synod supervise the doctrine and practice of the congregations and pastors who belong to it, according to the agreement of the congregations and the purpose of the synod.

13. In case a pastor commits a grievous sin and remains impenitent, the officials of the synod are to inform the congregation and hold it to proceeding according to the Word of God and, as a final contingency, to remove from office and excommunicate the offender.

14. In case a congregation lapses into false doctrine and perseveres therein, it thereby deprives itself of its synodical membership, but it cannot be excommunicated.

15. In case a congregation stubbornly persists in false practice, the synod should expel it, but that is not excommunication.

16. Only the local congregation with its pastor can excommunicate, but only its own members."(61)

These are the thesis which the Quartalschrift articles were contending against. According to Koehler, "Each of these sixteen thesis was implemented with more or less proof-texts from the Scriptures, the Confessions, Luther's, Hoenecke's and Walther's writings. The objections to the Wauwatosa faculty's teachings were refuted in the Quartalschrift and at conferences and some of the misunderstood proof-matter, adduced in support of the theses, placed in the right light."(62)

Other local opposition came from a Pastor O. Kaiser of the Missouri Synod at the April, 1912 mixed pastoral conference of Milwaukee, who took the same stand as President Ernst. But in that same conference, two other Missouri Synod men, Pastor Boerger of Racine and Editor Kaehler of the Rundschau were the principle Missouri Synod speakers and they agreed with the Wauwatosa faculty. Editor Kaehler, of course, was the man who contributed the above discussed article to the Quartalschrift.

After the Wauwatosa men had managed to win over most of their own Synod to their position and a considerable number of the local Missouri Synod pastors, they were confronted with the opposition of the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, led by none other than Dr. Franz Pieper, the older brother of August Pieper. Prof. Koehler records several meetings between the two faculties, with no agreement. Prof Koehler writes about these meetings:

"The upshot, however, was that there was no agreement, both in regard to the formulation of the doctrine and the method, as well, by which it is to derived from the Scriptures. That will always happen when the dogmatician, the exegete, the historian, the practical theologian allow the method which is peculiar to their particular discipline to make them one-sided, even though all are agreed that all teaching is to be derived from the Scriptures alone...The real issue was the definition of the term 'institution' as applied to the church and the office of the ministry in their concrete form. That afforded a striking illustration of the

difference in the method of interpretation; on the one side, the linguistic-historical research to establish the meaning of the Scriptures and formulate that dogmatically; on the other side, the interpretation of the terms according to the preconceived dogmatic notions- the same difference as before in connection with the 'analogy of faith'. The disagreement was not such that the opponents accused each other of false doctrine; still some of the things said by individuals on both sides were not according to Hoyle."(63)

These differences never really were settled, even though the Synodical Conference would not be broken up for another thirty five years or so. The issue finally came to a head officially after the Protestant Controversy broke from the WELS. At that time, on the basis of the Wautasosa faculty's teaching and doctrine, the synodical officials were directly disciplining members of the Protestant party. Eventually, J.P. Koehler himself would be forced to resign on account of this controversy.

The massive exercise of Synodical discipline in this controversy brought on a protest from the Missouri Synod visitors from the North Wisconsin district to the Wisconsin Synod's Western Wisconsin district. According to Prof. Koehler, "the long and short of the Missouri argument was that only a congregation is 'church' and empowered to excommunicate; hence West Wisconsin's synodical action and doctrine was contrary to the Word of God."(64)

As a result of this protest, the Presidents of the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod, together with the faculties of the St. Louis and Thiensville seminaries met together and hammered out a compromise document. While neither side viewed it as the final word, it was a statement of what they could agree on, with the remaining differences to be worked on later. The resulting document is known as the "Thiensville Theses". Translations of these theses can be found in Koehler and also the WELS Ministry Compendium. The following is a copy of the latter:

I. As we know from Scripture, it is God's will and regulation that Christians who reside in the same area also establish an external connection in order to exercise jointly the obligations of their spiritual priesthood.

II. As we know from Scripture, it is furthermore God's will and regulation that such Christian local congregations have shepherds and teachers, who in the name and on behalf of the congregation carry out the duties of the ministry of the Word in their midst.

III. As we know from Scripture, it is also God's will and regulation that Christian local congregations give expression to their unity of faith with other congregations and carry on jointly with them the work of the Kingdom of God, as is done among us in the unprescribed form of a Synod.

IV. Because every Christian possesses the keys of the kingdom of heaven, every judgement pronounced in agreement with God's Word by an individual Christian or by more Christians in any kind of combination, is valid also in heaven. But as we know from Scripture, it is God's will and regulation that proceedings against a brother who has sinned shall not be considered completed until his local congregation has acted. Congregational discipline and synodical discipline, if everything is done properly, cannot cause a conflict, since the local congregation excludes from the local congregation and not from the Synod, and Synod excludes from Synod and not from the local congregation.(65)

This compromise of course did not address the real issues of the matter. It does not say whether or not the Synod is church, and its officials bearers of the ministry of the Church. Since they took place after Prof. Koehler's departure from the Wisconsin Synod, he takes a very harsh view of them:

"The Theses are evidently just an inter-synodical *modus vivendi*, a compromise, whether intended so or not, that leaves matters unclear and both sides free to put their own construction on them and to pursue the even tenor of their ways. They are externalistic, couched in the terms of law, in that they are concerned about jurisdictions, when, of all things, the doctrines of the Church, the Ministry, and the Office of the Keys cry for a presentation from the Gospel point of view."(66)

Prof. Fredrich, however, puts a better construction on this document:

"If the four theses were assumed to be the final word on the subject, the charge of compromise would be in order. If they on the other hand, represent the maximum agreement attainable on the issue at the 1932 meeting and leave the unresolved issues for subsequent discussions then a more charitable judgement is in order.

There is good reason to opt for the latter viewpoint. Brethren spiritually united in the faith were discussing a difference and seeking agreement. The difference transcended synodical boundaries with Missourians, often parochial school teachers, siding with Wisconsin and Wisconsinites, President Ernst as a notable example, never agreeing with the Wisconsin position. The difference often seemed more practical than doctrinal because the well-oiled synodical machinery of Missouri could be viewed as an exhibit for the Wisconsin position. Contrariwise, the overabundance of "rugged individualism" in the Wisconsin parishes and pastorates seemed to endorse Missouri views. It is not surprising, therefore, that issues did not come to a head at Thiensville in 1932.

It is true that no immediate follow-up meetings were held. The time was, it should be remembered, the thirties and meetings then did not come a dime a dozen in the economy of the decade. The discussions would eventually be resumed over a decade later when a new order of problems plagued the Synodical Conference. That is however another and subsequent story. Most important of all, soon after the Thiensville meeting Missouri became involved in discussions with other Lutheran church bodies."(66)

With the close of the Thiensville theses we come to the close of the Third Generation or Chapter of our history. It was in many ways the defining era in the history of the Doctrine of the Ministry in the WELS. The doctrine of the Ministry of the WELS cannot be understood in its historical context without a thorough knowledge of this era of history. Without a thorough understanding of the issues being debated and discussed in this era, the Doctrines of Church and Ministry can not be appreciated or even fully grasped, understood, and consistently applied in our Synod today.

That was a very strong statement. But I believe it is a defensible statement. I do not mean to say that the Holy Spirit can not work through the Scriptures alone, but needs August

Pieper, J. P. Koehler and John Schaller to help God explain things. I do mean that we need to think like they thought, to work with the Scriptures as they worked with the Scriptures. We also need to think in the terms of the gospel, not in the terms of legalistic hierarchies. If are not familiar with the Wauwatosa theologians, it is very easy to succumb to the pitfalls and temptations that they warn against.

More to the point, since we inherited their legacy, we tend to speak and write in the same patterns as they did. If we do not understand the historical background of these patterns and emphases, we keep on repeating them without necessarily understanding them. When that happens, we have fallen into the dogmatism they so vigorously opposed. Our generation is not guiltless in this matter. We have rested on the laurels of these men for decades. We have repeated their arguments and patterns of speaking so long in this doctrine, that today, when faced with new questions and applications of the Doctrine of the Ministry, we have fallen into confusion and controversy. And the only way out of this confusion and controversy is to do as our fathers did. Go back to the source.

### **THE FOURTH GENERATION: 1937-1965**

In the next generation, Wisconsin Synod theologians would have their hands full defending the doctrine of the ministry as well as other doctrines in the Synodical Conference. The attention and witnessing of the men in this generation was focused primarily and heavily on the Missouri Synod in the years leading up to the suspension of fellowship with the Missouri Synod and the

breaking up of the Synodical Conference.

Another major event of this generation was the completion of the switch-over to the English language. The previous third generation had made considerable progress in this regard, but the WELS in those years was best described as bilingual. Almost all the serious theological work and also classroom instruction was in German. While World War I certainly hastened the switch to English, it was not complete until the fourth generation of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans stepped onto the scene.

As we have said, the Fourth Generation was almost entirely consumed with the issues surrounding the breakup of the Synodical Conference. And while the difference between the Missouri Synod and the WELS over the doctrines of Church and Ministry was not the greatest issue between them nor the single issue which forced the eventual break, it still was an issue, and an important one.

After the Thiensville theses, the discussion of the differences was pretty much put on the back burner until World War II came along. And then it erupted with a vengeance because of the Missouri Synod's decision to supply the U. S. Military with military chaplains. Also, with the growing liberalism in the Missouri Synod there were a number of breakaway groups which were leaving the Missouri Synod. Since these groups were primarily interested in preserving the Old Missouri theology as opposed to what was coming out of Concordia Seminary in the late 50s, 60s, and 70s, they also were very fanatical about taking the extreme of Dr. Franz Pieper's position over against his brother August. With these conservative 'old Missouri' Lutherans, specifically the group which became the Lutheran Churches of the Reformation, the difference between the more dogmatical approach of the Old Missouri Synod and the exegetical approach of the



"Wauwatosa Theology" was pushed to the extreme. Dr. Franz Pieper's Christian Dogmatics were elevated by some of these groups to a position perilously close to the Bible itself. In some of these groups, if you could not back up what you were saying with a quote from Walther and/or Pieper, you had no credibility.

To both of these situations the WELS theologians of the Fourth Generation addressed themselves. Regarding the first situation, at the request of the Twin Cities Mixed Pastoral Conference for a study of Army and Navy Chaplaincies, an Interim Committee of the Synodical Conference was given the task of investigating not only this issue, but the whole doctrines of the Church, the Ministry, and the Call.

Earlier, President Brenner in the 1937 convention had this item in his presidential report.

Prof. Fredrich quotes the following in his book:

"Requests have come to District Presidents and to me to recommend ministers for chaplaincies in the service of the Government. My stand has been that we have no authority to do this as long as our Synod has not included such work in its program. If the Synod decides to take up this work, a Commission will have to be created to issue calls to men and to supervise their work, as faithfulness to a divine call would, as I see it, forbid that a minister on his own initiative look about for a new field of labor. We should not act hastily in this matter. The committee to which this matter will be referred should answer these three questions:

1. Is there need for this work?
2. Is such service in the employ of the Government compatible with Scripture principles?
3. Would it not be more expedient to pay the salaries of such missionaries ourselves?"(68)

A special committee was appointed to study the matter and report back to the 1939 convention. The chairman of this committee was Al Mass. Other members of this committee

were O.J.R. Hoenecke, G.L. Press, F. Soll, and A. Wacker. Prof Fredrich describes their report as follows:

"The Michigan based committee...presented a three-point report the synod accepted. The first point with its statement that "any ordained pastor is at liberty to minister unto the men in service" was of course suggesting the use of regular pastors stationed near military camps. This would eventually become a major part of the program of the Spiritual Welfare Commission that was eventually established.

The second point dealt with the call and ministry problems of a pastor chosen, placed, and salaried by the government. The conclusion was that "the fundamental principle of the separation of Church and state is thereby violated."

The third point concerned itself with doctrinal and confessional principles and voiced the fear that, on the basis of the official manuals, it would "become a practical impossibility to uphold them.

A final paragraph on "the advisability of calling and supporting our own chaplains" suggested a "comprehensive survey of Army camps and Navy zones." Eventually such a synodically supported camp pastor was sent into the cluster of military camps in Louisiana. This was Erwin Scharf, who would also serve later in Vietnam.(69)

When the Interim committee of the Synodical Conference met in 1946 after World War II to discuss the issue of Military chaplaincy and other matters involved with the doctrines of Church and Ministry, it soon got hung up on the old debates. Excerpts from the majority report which represented the traditional Missouri Synod position show the divisions which this committee was not able to solve:

Pursuant to this resolution, your Interim Committee held no less than six plenary conferences, with from three to five sessions at each meeting. Conscious of the great responsibility resting upon it, your Committee sought to become clear, first of all, on what exactly is in controversy within the Synodical Conference. Disagreement was found to exist on the following questions:

1. What is a Christian congregation?
2. Is the local congregation a specific divine institution, and is it the only divinely instituted unit in the Church?

3. Is a synodical organization divinely instituted, or does it exist purely by human right?
4. Does a synod possess the rights and powers of a congregation, including that of exercising church discipline?
5. Is the office of the public ministry a specific divine institution, distinct from the universal priesthood of all believers?
6. Is the power to call vested solely in the local congregation?
7. May a synod as such, without specific delegation of authority by its constituent congregations, extend calls?
8. Is the placement of chaplains by the Government a usurpation of the prerogatives of the Church and a violation of the principle of separation of Church and State?
9. Does the performance of a chaplain's prescribed duties necessarily involve him in unionistic practices?"(70)

This committee only was able to discuss the first three questions, and even there, a consensus was not reached. The only hold out was, of course, the Wisconsin Synod man, Rev. H.H. Eckert. Actually, there were three men from the Wisconsin Synod. The other two went along with the majority, which clearly espoused the "Missouri Synod position". Their names were Rev. A.F. Westendorf and Mr. A. J. Schwantes.

In his dissenting opinion Rev. H.H. Eckert, maintained that while there were differences in the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference in the matter of Church and Ministry, these were not differences in doctrine as such, but merely differences in application. While otherwise he gives a good presentation of the Scriptural doctrines of Church and Ministry, he is entirely wrong to be calling these differences merely differences of application, because they are clearly also differences in doctrine.

In his Minority report, Rev. Eckert first lists the areas of agreement between the "Missouri Synod position" and the "Wisconsin Synod position". Then he describes the differences, which he calls differences in application. Finally he describes what he and the majority also disagreed about

as follows:

"The interim committee has reached no unanimous agreement in these two marked differences, so that differences of application exist within the committee.

A. The majority, seven members, restricts the concept of a divinely instituted church local, "ekklesia, Matthew 18," to the local congregation and insists that the local congregation is the only divinely designated group of the so-called "visible church" with the right and privilege to carry out, perform, all functions of the Church.

B. The minority, one member, holds that no group of believers within the "visible church", has been specifically and specially designated as "ekklesia, Mt. 18" with the sole right and privilege of all the functions of the Church, to the exclusion of all other gatherings, but that the Lord gave the right and privilege of all the functions of the Church to the «)2»Church. Every individual believer as a priest and member of the Una Sancta has the right and privilege of all the functions of the Church, and the right to exercise them. However, he may not violate the right of other Christians- (public ministry, the doctrine of the call, God's law of order, and the law of love). Furthermore, all groups of believers gathered in Jesus' name, that is , gathered by the Holy Spirit through the Word, around the Word, jointly to preach the Word, as part and parcel of the Una Sancta, have the right and privilege of all the functions of the Church and the duty to exercise them through the public ministry wherever they do not sin against the doctrine of the call, the Lord's law of order, and the law of love in the public administration of the keys."(71)

And so the disagreement between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod continued, unresolved. It never would be resolved in the forum provided by the Synodical Conference, either. And to this day this disagreement between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod persists.

The disagreement between the Missouri Synod and Wisconsin Synod in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s was of course hardly confined to the Doctrines of Church and Ministry. Other points of concern were the innerrancy of the Scriptures, the historical-critical hermeneutical method, and the Missouri Synod's deviation from Scriptural doctrine and practice in the matter of fellowship. After this report, which never even got around to the issue of Military Chaplaincy,

there were never any more major official discussions of the doctrinal issues concerning Church and Ministry between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod. Each went their own way. And since the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod were parting ways not only in this matter but in many others, the break in 1961 was inevitable.

However, even with the Synodical Conference breaking up, the issue of the doctrine of Church and Ministry did not die. In fact it was given new life. When various dissident conservative groups were leaving the Missouri Synod and thinking about joining the Wisconsin Synod, this old controversy was given new life as some of these groups balked at joining the Wisconsin Synod because the WELS disagreed with the sainted Dr. Pieper on this doctrine.

The most prominent of these groups was and still is the church body entitled 'Lutheran Churches of the Reformation'. This group's adherence to the traditional "Missouri Synod view" can be seen already in their name. Since only a local congregation is a church, a nationwide church body can not legitimately be called a church, therefore it is not Lutheran Church of the Reformation, it is Lutheran Churches of the Reformation.

Other Missouri Synod men who left the Missouri for doctrinal reasons did not share this position. Notable among them was Pastor A. T. Kretzmann serving a congregation in Crete, Illinois. He was asked by his congregation to point out to them the differences between the "Missouri" and "Wisconsin" positions. In 1965 he produced an excellent paper delineating the two positions and examining the Scriptural support given for each of them. This in my opinion is the single best document to read, German or English, if one wishes to get a good grasp of the issues involved in the controversy and also what the Scriptures say about them. Pastor Kretzmann in this article, which can be found in the WELS Ministry Compendium, examines

what the two sides agree on and what they disagree on. He also examines not only the "theory" or stated doctrine, he also looks at the "practice" or how these doctrines are actually put into practice in the Wisconsin Synod and Missouri Synod.

Every point is covered clearly and concisely in this essay. Every point is also clearly supported by Scripture in this essay. This essay is also a testimony to the fact that not all Missouri Synod theologians adapted the "Missouri position" even though it was taught and maintained by most of the Missouri Synod's leading theologians.

Also, there was some activity in the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Quarterly during this era on the doctrine of the Church and the Ministry. These articles were basically a repetition and restatement of the points made in the Quartalschrift decades earlier. In fact, the majority of these articles are translations of Prof. Pieper's later articles. 'Concerning the Doctrine of the Church and of its Ministry, with Special Reference to the Synod and its Discipline' appeared in April, 1962, translated by Prof. H. J. Vogel. 'Luther's Doctrine of Church and Ministry' appeared in the January, April, and October issues of the 1963 WLQ. 'The True Reconstruction of the Church', the 1919 Wisconsin Synod Synodical Convention essay by Prof. Pieper was translated by Prof. Vogel for the April and July issues of the 1965 WLQ.

Original articles appearing in the Quarterly during this period were not as frequent as in the previous generation. However, what does appear shows a continuity with the previous generation's understanding of the Doctrines of Church and Ministry. Prof. J.P. Meyer, who was already a member of the WELS Ministerium when the original series of articles were published on the subject from 1911 to 1913 was the author of an article in the October 1964 Quarterly titled "Synod and Congregation".