

Seth Degner  
Modern Church History  
Professor Korthals  
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### "An Interview With Donald Walther"

This interview took place in Tucson, Arizona, November 30, 2006. Donald Walther was a member of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, North Hollywood, California. He was involved in its split from the Missouri Synod, and its involved in the Federation of Authentic Lutherans.

**2 Timothy 1:13** Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. NASB

This verse was quoted in the preface of the opening edition of the magazine "Sola Scriptura." "Sola Scriptura" was the publication written by the Federation of Authentic Lutherans. Donald Walther was involved with the printing of many of the tracks published by FAL.

Donald Walther attended St. Paul's Lutheran Church at the time it split from the Missouri Synod. It was interesting to learn from him the outlook not of a theologian, but one of the lay leaders and who struggled with the issues of those times.

As I did the interview, I wondered what caused St. Paul's to split from the Missouri Synod, while other churches remained. Mr. Walther told of how Pastor Alvin Wagner was their leader who steered them out of the Missouri Synod. Mr. Walther had fond memories of the first time he visited St. Paul's and was so impressed that the man introducing and greeting them before church was Pastor Wagner himself.

Pastor Wagner was involved in the Commission of Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) for the Missouri Synod. Mr. Walther talked of how Pastor

Wagner would come home looking sick from his meetings in St. Louis and they thought it was weariness from travel. But, they soon found out he was distressed over doctrinal issues in the Missouri Synod. I learned how it is important at times for the pastor to be transparent, and to communicate with his members.

Pastor Wagner led the people of the church to understand what was wrong with the Missouri Synod. I think Mr. Walther understood much of what the problems were. There were some details he still wondered about. He asked me what JEDP was and was hungering for more answers for some of his questions even after all these years.

I also learned how members and leaders of the church can come from all classes of people. Mr. Walther never graduated from a four year college. He was a barber by trade until his shop was destroyed in an earthquake. At that time he became full-time printer for St. Paul's and the FAL.

Mr. Walther has an amazing faith, and grasp of Scripture. He talks to everyone in an evangelical matter about his faith. I can't help but wonder if much of his study comes from those struggles and realizing the importance of studying the Scriptures and testing like the Bereans. Even still at the age of 92 he just read For God So Loved the Word by Professor Lange, and loved it. He eats up People's Bibles like candy. It was inspiring talking to Mr. Walther, I can't help but think of St. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 4:16-19.

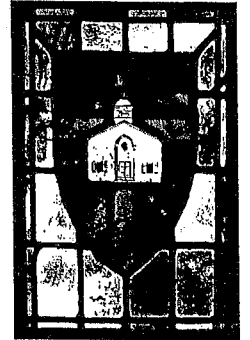
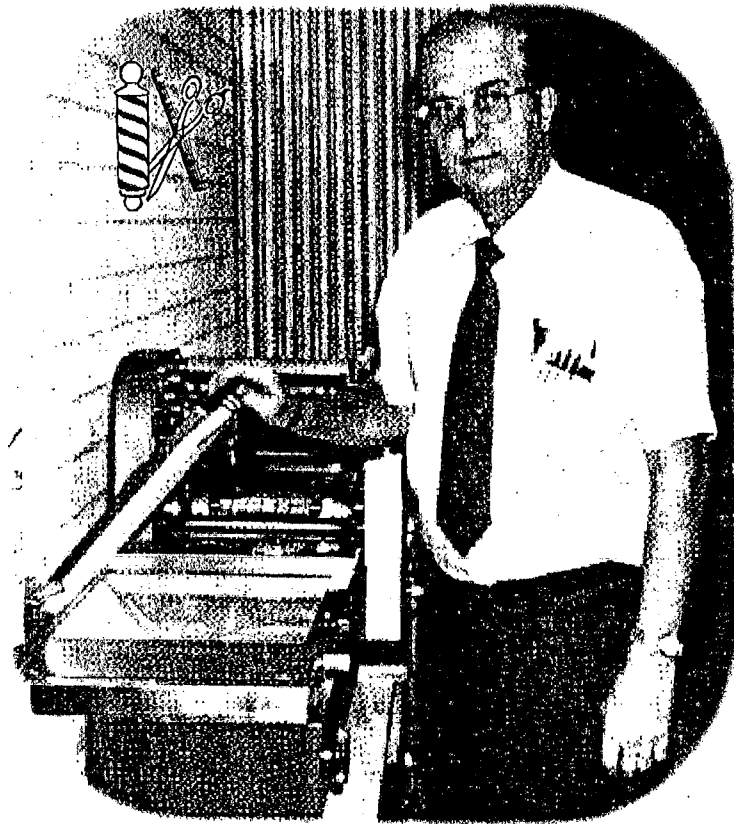
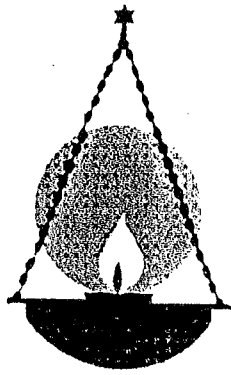
<sup>16</sup> I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love

that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

A life of 92 years meditating on the love that surpasses knowledge.

I also was struck by looking back at history at what I'm sure were very difficult times, yet the Lord was with his people through all of them. There will always be controversies, heresies, and trials this side of eternity. But, the world did not end, it was not yet time. The Lord rules all things for his church. Looking back through history at times we can get a glimpse of the rule of that omnipotent hand, that during the time of crisis we just trust is there.

I learned quite a bit researching FAL, and interviewing Donald Walther. But, more than anything I was encouraged, by his words and the example of his life. To God alone be the glory for staying with his dear children through thick and thin!



**J. A. L.**

**Lutheran Publishing House**

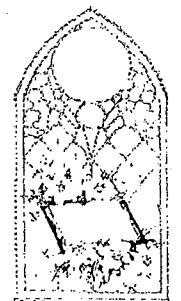
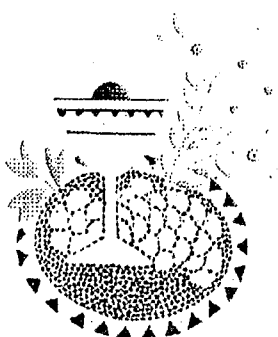
*You Were A Whirlwind Of Action*

*Moving Between Many Different Projects,*

*No Task too Small Or too Large, Or Too Difficult*

*And Seldom Seen Without A Genuine Smile*

*You Are Without A Doubt, Sorely Missed!*



*A Birthday card made for the 92nd birthday of Donald walther.*