

The Church Polity of C.F.W. Walther and Its Context

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The church polity of C.F.W. Walther has been described as the scriptural polity by some and as a compromise with American democratic ideology and a denigration of the Pastoral Office, by others.

In this paper we will look at his polity in order to help determine which, if either, of these is true. In doing so, we will look briefly at 1) the historical/theological context behind Walther's polity, 2) his thoughts on the Pastoral Office, 3) his thoughts on the rights of individual Christians and the Christian congregation, and 4) how these played out in his view of a proper, salutary congregational polity for Lutheran congregations independent of the state. I will conclude with some thoughts of my own on the polity Walther promoted.

I. The Historical Context

A. The relationship between church and state in Germany in the early 1800's.

The relationship between church and state in Germany, the homeland of Walther and his colleagues, was much different than that in America. In Germany there was no separation of church and state. Churches in Germany had no freedom to practice their faith according to their conscience as was and is the case here.

The situation in Germany had deteriorated considerably even in the limited freedoms that the churches had enjoyed upon Frederick William III becoming king of Prussia in 1798. He initiated the "Prussian Union," an effort to unite Lutheran and Reformed churches despite their differences in confession of faith. A union church was formed, the Evangelical Christian Church, congregations were ordered by the state to drop the names "Lutheran" and "Reformed," an ecumenical ordination vow was required of pastors to vow loyalty to the Evangelical Church, and a union Agenda was forced upon the churches which compromised the doctrine of the Lutherans, particularly on the Sacraments. Pastors who refused to use the union Agenda and maintained the sacramental rites of the Lutheran church were suspended from the ministry by the state. If they continued to carry out pastoral duties after they were suspended, they were imprisoned. (1)

These requirements of the state were not without opposition, however. There were Lutherans in Germany who opposed them, sometimes suffering consequences at the hands of the state for doing so. J.A.A. Grabau, whom we will discuss shortly, was imprisoned two different times for maintaining Lutheran faith and practice.

Some found the situation intolerable and emigrated to America, where, they had heard, they could practice their faith without fear of persecution. C.F.W. Walther was among the number who emigrated. He and several other pastors and candidates for the ministry, along with some 650 others, emigrated from Bremen in November, 1838, under the leadership of Pastor Martin Stephan, who likewise had stood for the old Lutheran ways.

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B. Martin Stephan (1777-1846)

Theologically trained at the universities of Halle and Leipzig, from 1810 to 1837 he served as pastor

of the Bohemian Lutheran congregation in Dresden, St. John's. He developed a reputation for adherence to the old Lutheran faith, good spiritual counsel, and care for the members of his flock. He became an influential religious figure in the community through membership in the Saxon Bible Society and the Dresden Mission Society and through the devotional meetings that he held in addition to the worship services held at St. John's. (2)

Due to Stephan's increasing popularity and exposure to others in the community, including the local group of Pietists, the number of people attending his meetings and services at St. John's increased rapidly, to the point that the original members of the congregation became a small minority. However, despite the good that Stephan accomplished, an unhealthy trend and direction began to take place. Stephan's personal charisma began to overshadow the doctrine that he taught. In his book, Zion on the Mississippi, Walter O. Forster describes Stephan's time at St. John's this way:

"The story of his work during that time, which in a general sense is the story of Stephanism, can be divided into two major periods of nearly equal length. The first period, from 1810 to 1823, comprises the more constructive, peaceful years of Stephan's career, the beginnings of concerted opposition to his teachings and practices, and the efforts on his part to meet this criticism. The second period extends from 1823 to 1837, when the plan for emigration was launched. These years were characterized by a great increase in the number of his followers, the development of a remarkable ascendancy over his adherents, the degeneration of his activity into a personal movement, and the elevation of his idiosyncrasies into a system." (3)

During the voyage from Bremen to America, the tendencies noted by Forster in the second period at St. John's took more concrete form as Stephan's leadership degenerated into power struggles where he used whatever tactics he could to assert absolute control over the people, once resorting to the virtual "cabin arrest" of the pregnant wife of one of the leading laymen (Adolph Marbach), and that after they had lost a son to death earlier in the voyage. (4)

Such was Stephan's persuasiveness and control over the pastors that they petitioned him to be their bishop. After accepting the office, he then demanded obedience from them and the people in all matters ecclesiastical and temporal. All adults aboard the ship on which he sailed except one then signed a "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan," part of which follows:

"Above all, we affirm and testify before the countenance of the omniscient God, in agreement with the truth, that we have complete and firm confidence in the wisdom, experience, faithfulness, and well-meaning fatherly love of our Very Reverend Bishop; and we abhor all distrustful, suspicious statements and thoughts, in which he is accused of injustice, harshness, aggrandizement, selfishness, carelessness in the administration of our temporal goods, etc. We reaffirm with sincere heart that we are determined to adhere steadfastly and firmly to God's Word and the pure old-Lutheran confession of faith. We further declare that we are determined to hold fast with heart and soul, to keep most faithfully, and to live, suffer, and die under the episcopal method of church polity, with the introduction of which among us a beginning has already been made and which, when established according to the Word of God, has been used by the Apostolic Church, has been recognized by the true Church at all times, has been retained by the Lutheran Church of Sweden until this very day, and is in accord with the Symbolical Writings of the Lutheran Church.

Further, we solemnly pledge ourselves, as we have already promised by signing the Emigration Code, par. 3, to submit with Christian willingness and sincerity to the ordinances, decrees, and measures of His Reverence in respect to both ecclesiastical and community affairs, and not to regard

them as an irksome yoke, but as the means of promoting our temporal and eternal welfare.” (5)

Forster summarizes the situation this way: First, Stephan allowed veneration by his followers. Second, he accepted it as his due. And finally, he demanded unqualified agreement with his views.(6)

This all fell apart, however, after they reached St. Louis and Stephan had been accepted in his episcopal office by the entire group of emigrants. In 1839 he was charged with having affairs with women of the company and with embezzlement, excommunicated, and driven out of Missouri into Illinois.

This had drastic effects upon the emigrants, the pastors and the laity. On the part of the pastors, they realized their responsibility for letting things develop as they had and had guilt over not recognizing the dangers sooner and for leading the people into such a mess. Walther himself expressed this in a letter to his brother written in May, 18:

“Every sad look of a member from our congregations is to me like an accuser before God; my conscience blames me for all the broken marriages which occurred among us; it calls me a kidnapper, a robber of the wealthy among us, a murderer of those who lie buried in the sea and the many who were stricken down here, a member of a mob, a mercenary, an idolater, etc.” (7)

Besides the emotional struggles, basic theological questions were being asked. Were they still Church? Did the pastors among them have valid ministries? Were they justified in leaving Germany in the first place? Should they, in fact, return there?

In this sad state of affairs, C.F.W. Walther stepped forth as the theologian who would bring peace and stability to the group. In the Altenburg debate, held on April 15 and 21, 1841 he defended eight theses.

The true Church is invisible, Walther stated. The name Church also belongs to all visible companies of men among whom God’s Word is purely taught and the holy Sacraments are administered according to the institution of Christ. All such companies, even heterodox companies who have partially departed from the truth, yet possess so much of God’s Word and the holy Sacraments that children of God may be born and their members may be saved, have church power; among them the goods of the Church may be validly administered, the ministry established, the Sacraments validly administered, and the keys of the kingdom of heaven exercised. (8)

For all of their mistakes, they were Church. Their ministries were valid because the Church, even though visibly imperfect, has the power to exercise the keys of the kingdom of heaven and to establish the ministry in its midst.

C. Johannes Andreas August Grabau (1804-1879)

J.A.A. Grabau was a Prussian Lutheran pastor who also opposed the Prussian Union. After receiving his theological training at the University of Halle, Grabau served as pastor of St. Andreas Church in Erfurt, where he refused to use the union Agenda. As noted previously, he was jailed twice for refusing to do so.

In 1839 Pastor Grabau emigrated with other like-minded “old Lutherans” to Buffalo, N.Y., where he founded Martin Luther College, and in 1845, along with four other pastors, founded The Lutheran Synod of the Lutheran Church emigrated from Prussia, later known as the “Buffalo Synod.”

In 1840 he received a query from some Lutherans in Wisconsin asking whether or not it would be permissible for them to elect men from among themselves to preach and administer the Sacraments due to the extended absence of a pastor. This, along with what he saw as a tendency in America for people to take it upon themselves to preach without a proper call, led him to write a Pastoral Letter (Hirtenbrief) on related issues and send it to various congregations in New York and Wisconsin. He also sent a copy to the Saxons in Missouri, expecting their approval and support.

Some of the points made by Grabau in this letter included the following:

1) Directly concerning the question asked by the Wisconsinites:

“By this we are convinced that a man frivolously chosen by the congregation may neither give absolution nor distribute the body and blood of Christ, rather he gives mere bread and wine.” (9)

2) Concerning AC XIV and who would be considered frivolously chosen or unappointed:

“The Confession names someone unappointed or unordained who has not been appointed through the ritual (*rite*); that is, appointed in accordance with old church orders.” (10)

3) Concerning the old church orders:

“They” (the elders of a congregation) “shall always have orders at hand, such as the Pomeranian Great Church Order of 1690 and the Saxony-Coburg Church Order of 1626. Everything, which is contrary to these church orders must be considered innovation and must not be introduced.” (11)

4) Concerning the individual Christian’s right to determine what is in conformity with God’s Word:

“What is contrary or in conformity to God’s Word is not determined by an individual member of the church but by the church itself in its symbols, church orders and synods.” (12)

5) Concerning how God deals with us:

“God wishes to deal with us on earth through public church office, instruct us through the same, absolve, communicate, etc. therefore the church must have a certain infallible proof that the person in office is a certified officer in the divine order and according to God’s will so that God may deal with us through him. ... Back to the oldest times the church has believed that the Word alone is not enough for the proper administration of the holy sacraments and the communication of absolution but rather proper divine vocation and mandate must be in place.” (13)

6) Concerning the obligation of pastor and congregation:

“He pledges himself to the congregation with his loyalty to teaching and service and the congregation binds itself to him with its loyalty and obedience in all things, which are not contrary to God’s Word.” (14)

Reaction by the Saxons:

The reaction of the Missouri men (Walther, Gruber, Keyl, Lober) was not what Grabau expected. They were alarmed by some of what Grabau said. Walther puts it this way:

“As we read the *Hirtenbrief*, we became not a little afraid. For we found in it the same incorrect tenets whose destructive consequences we had but recently experienced, and from which only the overwhelming grace and patience of God has saved us.” (15)

After two years of discussing Grabau’s letter among themselves, G.H Lober drafted a response. Among the points they raised were the following:

1) While the church orders were not despised, they did find binding consciences to the old orders acceptable. (16) As a basis for saying this, they appealed to the Confessions, which state that the canons are not strictly kept and should not bind consciences (e.g. AC, XXVIII,67). They also appeal to Matthew 15:9, where the Lord chastises the scribes and Pharisees for teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.

2) Also, they did not accept the contention that individual members of the church may not decide what is and what is not in conformity with God’s Word. (17) In support of this objection they cite:

a) John 10:5, where Jesus says of His sheep, “Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

b) 1 Corinthians 10:15, where Paul writes, “I speak as to wise men; judge for yourselves what I say,” and

c) Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:15, “Beware of false prophets ...”

If Scripture calls upon Christians to judge what the prophets say and to judge which prophets are true prophets, God must give them the right and the ability to do so. Also, those who do so are commended in the Scriptures, as the Bereans are commended in Acts 17:11.

3) Nor did they find acceptable Grabau’s premise that the congregation owes its pastor obedience in all things which are not contrary to God’s Word. (18) They believed that in keeping with Luke 10:16 (“He who hears you hears Me ...”), congregations owe their pastors obedience only in so far as they faithfully preach, teach, and apply God’s Word to the people.

Correspondence went on for some time between Grabau and the Saxons, however all relations were finally severed in 1859. Part of the problem was theological in that there were real differences between the two groups regarding what the Scriptures and the Confessions say about Church and Ministry. Part of the problem was that they were coming from two different experiences. Grabau had concerns over laymen taking it upon themselves to preach, teach, and administer the Sacraments. This propensity among the sects had begun to infect some of the Lutherans. Hence, and understandably, he emphasized proper call, Office, and vocation.

The Saxons, on the other hand, had experienced the episcopal system and the consequences of absolute pastoral authority at their worst. Therefore, they emphasized the rights of individual Christians and congregations. They did not deny the divine institution of the pastoral office, but they did not recognize in it the absolute authority espoused by Grabau.

D. Johann Konrad Wilhelm Lohe (Loehe) (1808-1872)

One final name that should be mentioned in the formulation of the Saxons’ doctrines of Church

and Ministry as well as church polity is Wilhelm Loehe.

Loehe was a confessional Lutheran pastor in Germany (Neuendettelsau), who received his theological education at the University of Erlangen. Like Stephan and Grabau, he too opposed rationalism, confessional laxity among the Lutherans, and state control of the churches.

Loehe became involved in missionary efforts in America in answer to appeals made by F.C.D. Wyneken, who would later become an important figure in the Missouri Synod. Loehe was instrumental in founding the seminary at Ft. Wayne, Indiana as well as in sending many pastors from Germany to serve the Germans emigrating to the United States. He was also involved in missionary efforts to the Indians and his men established the “Franken Colonies” in Michigan for that purpose (Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, Frankenlust, and Frankenhilf, which would later be named Richville.)

At first very cordial relations existed between Loehe and the Saxons, however, by the early 1850's that changed. Loehe did not agree with the polity established in the Missouri Synod and its member congregations, nor did he agree with the Missourians on their doctrine of the Ministry.

The following quotes will shed some light upon Loehe's views.

Regarding the constitution and polity of the Missouri Synod:

“With heartfelt sorrow we have noted that your synodical constitution, as it now stands, could not completely meet the model of the first congregations and we fear, certainly with complete justification, that the fundamental strong mixing of democratic, independent, congregational principles in your constitution will cause greater damage than the mixing of princes and secular authorities in our homeland. Careful attention to many teachings of the holy apostles about the organization of the church and the Seelsorge in general would have taught the dear lay brethren something different.” (19)

Regarding polity and regard for the pastoral office:

“One thing is regrettable. When our good people arrive over there and breathe the American air they become imbued with democracy and one hears with amazement how independent and congregational they think about church organization. They are in danger of forgetting the high honor of their office and becoming slaves to their congregations.” (Loehe in a letter to fellow German pastor L.A. Petri) (20)

Regarding ordination and the pastoral office:

“This setting apart and conferral of both office and the grace and authority needed for it is called ordination, and although they are never lacking, the essence of ordination does not consist in them; on the contrary, its essence is the conferral of office, authority, and grace of office.” (21)

Regarding election and call to the pastoral office, Steven Hein sums up Loehe's views in this way, “for Loehe, both election and call must come from the ministerium.” (22)

II. C.F.W. Walther's Theology and Church Polity

A. The Pastoral Office, undermined and denigrated or upheld?

A significant part of the Church polity question involves the status of the pastoral office in relation to the congregation (and *visa versa*). Or, another way of putting it would be the authority of the pastoral office in relation to the rights of the laity in the Church.

Some contend that Walther's Church polity undermines the status and authority of the pastoral office as found in the Scriptures and the Confessions. Some claim that just the opposite is the case, that Walther upholds the proper status and authority of the office.

In order to determine which of these is the case, there is no better place to turn to than to Walther's Theses on the Ministry.

Thesis I - "The holy ministry" (*heilige Predigtamt*), "or the pastoral office" (*Pfarramt*), "is an office distinct from the priestly office, which belongs to all believers."

Thesis II - "The ministry" (*Predigtamt*), "or the pastoral office" (*Pfarramt*), "is not a human ordinance, but an office established by God Himself."

Thesis III - "The ministry of preaching" (*Predigtamt*) "is not an arbitrary office, but its character is such that the Church has been commanded to establish it and is ordinarily bound to it till the end of days."

Thesis IV - "The ministry of preaching is not a peculiar order, set up over and against the common estate of Christians, and holier than the latter, like the priesthood of the Levites, but it is an office of service."

Thesis V - "The ministry of preaching has the authority to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments and the authority of a spiritual tribunal."

Thesis VI - "The ministry of preaching is conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of all church power, or of the keys, and by its call, as prescribed by God. The ordination of those called, with the laying on of hands, is not by divine institution but is an apostolic church ordinance and merely a public, solemn confirmation of the call."

Thesis VII - "The holy ministry is the authority conferred by God through the congregation, as holder of the priesthood and all church power, to administer in public office the common rights of the spiritual priesthood in behalf of all."

Thesis VIII - "The ministry is the highest office in the Church, from which, as its stem, all other offices of the Church issue."

Thesis IX - "Reverence and unconditional obedience is due to the ministry of preaching when the preacher is ministering the Word of God. However, the preacher may not dominate over the Church; he has, accordingly, no right to make new laws, to arrange indifferent matters and ceremonies arbitrarily, and to impose and execute excommunication alone, without a previous verdict of the entire congregation."

Thesis X - “According to divine right the function of passing judgement on doctrine belongs indeed to the ministry of preaching. However, also the laymen have this right, and for this reason they also have a seat and vote with the preachers in church courts and councils.” (23)

In considering these Theses, one of the first things we can say is that for Walther the “holy ministry,” “the ministry,” and “the ministry of preaching” (all translations of the German *Predigtamt*), are synonymous with the pastoral office (German *Pfarramt*). For in Thesis I Walther writes, “The holy ministry” (*heilige Predigtamt*), “or the pastoral office” (*Pfarramt*) “is an office ...,” and in Thesis II, “The ministry” (*Predigtamt*), “or the pastoral office” (*Pfarramt*).

He does not write, “The holy ministry, or the pastoral office, etc” as some these days would have us believe. The “holy ministry,” “the ministry,” “the ministry of preaching,” and “the ministry of the New Testament” (Proof from the Word of God, Thesis II), equal the pastoral office. In fact, the title of his Ministry Theses in German is, “*Vom Heiligen Predigtamt Oder Pfarramt*,” “The Holy Preaching Office Or Pastoral Office.”

Lutherans of our day who teach that incumbents of the office of the Public Ministry of the Word, the divinely instituted preaching and teaching office (John 20:21-23, John 21:15ff, Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 9:36-38, Ephesians 4:11-12, 1 Peter 5:1-4, Acts 20:28), include incumbents of the pastoral office and also Mrs. Schmidt, the first grade Lutheran school teacher, and Miss Olsen, the second grade Sunday School teacher, find no support for their teaching in Walther’s Theses.(24)

Which brings us to something else we find concerning the pastoral office in Walther’s Theses (and in his corresponding Proofs from the Word of God, for each Thesis is followed by “Proof from the Word of God,” in which Walther substantiates from Scripture the assertions he has made).

We find that the pastoral office, the ministry of the New Testament, is a divine institution, a divinely instituted office distinct from the priestly office which belongs to all believers. The pastoral office is not a human ordinance, nor an institution established by the Church, but an establishment of God Himself, finding its origin in the call of the apostles (Matthew 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, John 20:21-23, 21:15-17). Incumbents of the pastoral office are then, as the Scriptures themselves say, colleagues of the apostles in their office (1 Peter 5:1, 2 John 1, 3 John 1, 1 Corinthians 1:1, 4:1). And being instituted and established by the Lord, the Church may not abrogate this office. The Church is commanded to establish it in time wherever the Church gathers and is ordinarily bound to it until the end of time. (25)

This being the case, we find that the pastoral office is the highest office in the Church from which, as from a stem, all other offices issue. Every other office in the Church is an inferior, auxiliary or helping office (German *Hilfsamt*, “helping office”), the incumbents of which are servants not only of God and of the congregation, but also of the pastor. (26)

While the apostles were called immediately, directly by Christ, incumbents of the pastoral office are chosen and called mediately through the Church (even as Matthias, the replacement for Judas Iscariot, was chosen through the Church, Acts 1:15-26). The choice and calling are God’s, as we see from Acts 20:28 where Paul says that the elders were in their office by the Holy Spirit, but the

choosing, electing, and calling are done through the Church, specifically, through the local congregation. (27)

The pastoral office is not a “holy order” like the Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament but is a ministry of service to God and to the Church. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:1, “Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God,” and again in 2 Corinthians 4:5, “We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus’ sake.” Regarding the “priestly estate,” there is no difference between pastors and people. They are all of the priestly order and are priests before God. “However,” Walther says, “as in the Old Covenant all sons of Aaron were indeed of priestly descent and *order*, while only *some* were engaged in the priestly *office* and ministered, so in the New Covenant also those who are in charge of the public ministry of preaching are not priests on that account or priests before others, but they are only ministering persons among a priestly people.”(28)

So what authority do these “ministering persons,” the incumbents of the pastoral office, exercise? By divine right they have the authority to administer the Office of the Keys in the name of Christ and in the name of the Church, which possesses the Keys immediately (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23, 1 Peter 2:5-10). That is, by divine right the pastoral office has the authority to preach the Gospel, to administer the Sacraments, and the authority of a spiritual tribunal. Even though all members of the congregation possess the Keys, all are not to exercise them publicly. The Keys are to be exercised publicly in the manner prescribed by God, that is, through the pastoral office. However, in the case of excommunication, pastors are not to exercise this authority alone. The congregation should also be involved in the process, including in the verdict reached condemning the accused (Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5:4). Incumbents of the pastoral office are also given the authority to pass judgment on doctrine in the Church. (29)

Prerogatives of incumbents of the pastoral office also include involvement in the process through which the Church calls men to the office, for the Church, properly constituted, consists of both pastors and the laity, preachers and hearers. Isolated congregations should seek the advice of pastors when they are in the call process, and if there are pastors already serving the calling congregation, they should be directly involved in the process, so much so that if their cooperation in extending a call is denied, the call of the multitude is invalid. (However, if the advice of no orthodox pastors can be obtained, the call of the multitude is valid.) Incumbents of the office are particularly to be given the opportunity and duty to examine candidates and to publicly approve of and install the man called into office. (30)

Lastly, in Walther’s view, what kind of obedience is to be given incumbents of the pastoral office? While pastors are not to domineer over their congregations, making new laws and arranging matters of indifference and ceremony arbitrarily, unconditional obedience is due to the pastor as he is ministering God’s Word to his congregation, “whether he be teaching or admonishing, reproving or comforting, publicly or privately.” Why is this so? It is so because “the principal and efficient cause of the ordinance of the public office of preaching is God, Most High Himself.” “It is an institution of the Triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.” “Therefore, when official authority has been conferred on a person by the congregation by means of a regular, legitimate call, that person has been placed over the congregation by God Himself, though it was done through the congregation,” and “the congregation hears from his mouth Jesus Christ Himself and owes him unconditional obedience as to a person by whom God wants to make known His will to them and guide them to eternal

life.” “The more faithfully the preacher discharges his office, the greater must be the reverence of which the congregation deems him worthy.” (31)

While of necessity condensed, this is a summary of Walther’s thoughts on the pastoral office as found in his Theses on the Ministry.

B. The rights of the Christian and of the Christian congregation

As we noted above, the Church, properly constituted, consists of both preachers and hearers, incumbents of the ministerial office and lay members of the congregation. We now turn to Walther’s thoughts on the rights of the Christian and of the Christian congregation.

Walther holds that the rights of the individual Christian and of the Church, seen concretely in the congregation at any given place, are substantial.

First of all, Christians comprise a holy people, a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:5-10), and to them and to the Church belong the Keys and all the treasures of the Church immediately (Matthew 18:15-10, 1 Corinthians 3:21-23). Therefore, each congregation, no matter how small, is given full Church authority and power by Christ Himself. It does not derive its authority and power from the Church at large, nor is it dependent upon or by divine right subservient to any superchurch or larger body. Also, the congregation does not derive its power from the ministry, but rather the ministry from the congregation.

This is not to say, as we have noted above, that Christ has not assigned certain duties and authority to the pastoral office. He has, namely, the authority to preach the gospel, to administer the sacraments, to forgive and retain sins, to judge doctrine, and the authority of a spiritual tribunal. However, the ministers of the Word receive this authority from Christ through the congregation, for Christ calls them into office through the congregation.

As possessors of “all things,” one right individual Christians and local congregations have is the right to judge doctrine and those who teach it. Besides the passages of Scripture mentioned above [page 5, 2)] given to support this claim, Walther also lists 1 Corinthians 10:15-16, “I speak as to wise men: judge for yourselves what I say...” and 1 John 4:1, “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.”

Since Church courts and councils deal with matters of doctrine, among other things, laymen have the right to have a seat and vote in such courts and councils along with the preachers. As an example of this, Walther points to the first apostolic council in Jerusalem, referred to in Acts 15. There, while the apostles and elders were leaders in discussing the questions before the council (namely, whether the Gentiles must obey the laws of Moses, including circumcision), the whole Church was also involved in the decisions made. Walther points out that the letter sent out following the council was also sent in the name of the apostles, the elders, and the brethren (i.e. the laymen of the Church). He based this point on translation of the “Textus Receptus,” the “Received” or “Majority” (Byzantine) text, upon which Luther’s German Bible, the King James Version, and other earlier translations were made. This text reads (Acts 15:23), “The apostles, the elders, and the brethren, to the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia.” Some manuscripts discovered later read, “The apostles and the elders, your brethren, to the brethren ...” This latter tradition is reflected in some newer translations, such as the NIV.

While this is not the place for a detailed discussion on the relative merits of the manuscript traditions (nor am I the best one to lead such a discussion), suffice it to say that Walther's point is based on a sound text.

Another duty and right of the congregation is to establish the ministry ordained by Christ in its midst. As we have noted above, the call of men to the office of the holy ministry, comes from God through the Church, and in the calling process the whole Church, both pastors and people, are involved. Any voting member of the congregation may propose a candidate. Then, under the direction of an ordained minister, if one may be obtained, the voting members choose from among those candidates meeting the scriptural requirements for the office, the candidate receiving all or a majority of the votes cast being recognized as the man whom God has called through the congregation.

Walther bases these thoughts on Titus 1:5ff, Ephesians 4:11-12, Acts 14:23, Article XIII. 12 of the Apology ("The Church has the command to appoint ministers."), and on the words of Luther ("It is a great blessing for which we need to thank God that He has commanded that the Church itself should choose men for the office of preaching and administering the Sacraments," and "The entire community shall have the power to choose and depose the pastor.") (33)

The congregation does have the right to depose a pastor whom it has called, but only when it is evident from God's Word that God Himself has removed him. A congregation has no right to take away his office from a faithful pastor. If it does, it thrusts aside Jesus Christ Himself, in whose name their pastor ministered the Word. (34)

The congregation also has the duty and right to see that all things are done decently and in an orderly manner in its midst. Public worship services should be scheduled on Sundays, festival days, and on other special days and earnestly observed, although not as under legalistic constraint. The congregation should also have a voice in ceremonies practiced in the church and in "indifferent matters" (adiaphora, things neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word), for while "It is lawful for bishops or pastors to make ordinances that things be done orderly in the Church" (Augsburg Confession XXVIII, 53), they are servants and stewards, not masters of the Church.

It is indeed the right of the pastor to guide and instruct the people concerning such things and to see to it that nothing harmful is adopted, but in matters of ceremony and indifference he may not demand unconditional obedience. Rather, "it is the business of the entire congregation, of the preacher together with the hearers, to decide the question whether what has been proposed should be accepted or rejected."

This is so because the Church is a holy brotherhood, in which no one should domineer and exercise force. (35)

Lastly, the congregation has the right to be included in any excommunication executed in the congregation. The public execution of the excommunication, by divine right, belongs to the pastor, but also by divine right "the investigation preceding the execution of excommunication and the final verdict must come from the entire congregation," that is, from the preachers and hearers. According to Walther, excommunication may only occur after it has been unanimously decided by the congregation, and this after following the process laid out by the Lord in Matthew 18:15-20.

Walther bases this not only on that particular passage (Matthew 18:15-20), but also on 1 Corinthians 5:1-5 where even Paul would not unilaterally excommunicate an open sinner, even

though he declared him worthy of such action, but told the congregation to deal with the matter and to excommunicate him when they had gathered together.

The congregation may, however, be represented by a “presbytery” or “consistory” made up of the pastor(s) and laymen that handle matters concerning excommunication, provided only that it is done with the consent and knowledge of the people. (36)

This briefly summarizes Walther’s thoughts on the rights of Christians and of the Christian congregation.

C. Walther’s Church polity

Walther incorporated these thoughts and teachings on the pastoral office and on the rights of the Christian congregation into a church polity which bears his name, the “Waltherian” model of church polity.

It was novel and alarming to those who were used to and preferred the state-church arrangement or the episcopal polity of Europe. There the congregations had no rights. They were subservient to the clergy or to the state.

Walther, however, given what he read in the Scriptures and Confessions and from his experiences in the state-church of Germany and the episcopal system under Martin Stephan, promoted a polity which gave the congregation an active voice in arranging and governing its affairs.

Public meetings of the congregation would be scheduled and conducted “for the purpose of transacting its business as a self-governing body,” each adult male member of the congregation being entitled to active participation by way of speaking, deliberating, voting, and resolving concerning the matters under discussion.

Women and children, however, were not entitled to such participation. Children are precluded for obvious reasons, for children are to be obedient to their parents and elders. They are not to rule with them or over them. Women are precluded because of God’s Word, for God’s Word says that women are not to speak in the churches, but are to be submissive, even as the Law says (1 Corinthians 14:34-35). (37)

Walther’s Theses on Church and Ministry were adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1851. His outline for congregational polity, “The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the State,” was submitted to the Western District of the synod in 1862 and published in 1863. Based on these writings a Church polity was established in congregations of the synod consisting of voters’ assemblies making decisions for their congregations with spiritual instruction and guidance provided by their pastors. The synodical polity also incorporated Walther’s views. Laymen were given a voice and vote in district and synodical conventions as well as at the congregational level.

However, Walther’s polity has not been limited to the Missouri Synod. Other Lutheran church bodies in America have adopted it as well. In fact, today all major Lutheran synods and associations in this country use his polity in one form or another.

Objections are being raised, however, questioning the biblical and confessional faithfulness of Walther’s polity, just as they were in the 1800’s by Pastors Loehe and Grabau. The next section of

this paper will list some of these objections. It will also include responses to them.

III. Objections to Walther's Church Polity and Responses to the Same

A. Objections to Walther's polity

While undoubtedly this is not a complete list, the following objections have been raised concerning Walther's Church polity:

- 1) It demeans the pastoral office, taking authority away from pastors given to them by Christ in His Word (such as the authority to make laws on ceremonies in the Church and to excommunicate sinners).
- 2) It places those taught in the churches over their teachers, those ruled over their rulers.
- 3) It provides for "mob rule" on the part of the laity and abuse of power in the Church.
- 4) It enables the "unlearned" to bring heretical doctrine and practice into the Church and so undermines the Church's confession and doctrinal integrity.
- 5) It encourages division and factions in the Church and a "we win, you lose" attitude among the members.
- 6) It is contrary to the polity found in the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions.

B. Responses to these objections

Regarding Walther's polity demeaning the pastoral office, taking away the pastors' God-given authority, we should consider several questions:

- 1) What exactly is the authority given to the pastoral office?
- 2) What does it mean for a pastor to rule over his congregation?
- 3) What guidance do we find in Scripture concerning how this should be done?

In looking at the Scriptures and the Confessions, we find that the authority given to the pastoral office is the power of the Word, that is, the power and authority to preach the Gospel, teach the Word, administer the Sacraments, and to forgive and retain sins (including the authority to excommunicate manifest sinners who refuse to repent and to absolve those who do).

(Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; John 20:21-23; Apology of the A.C., Article XXVIII, 13; Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, 60-61)

This authority belongs to incumbents of the pastoral office by divine right, as our Confessions say:

"The Gospel assigns to those who preside over churches the command to teach the Gospel, to remit sins, to administer the Sacraments, and besides jurisdiction, namely, the command to excommunicate those whose crimes are known, and again to absolve those who repent. ... this power by divine right is common to all who preside over churches, whether they are called pastors, elders, or bishops" (the three terms being synonymous). (Treatise, 60-61)

When a pastor carries out this command and exercises this authority faithfully, it is Christ

speaking and ministering through him, for as Jesus says, “He who hears you hears Me,” (Luke 10:16); and again, “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you. ... If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.” (John 20:21, 23) For this reason, because the word is Christ’s not the pastor’s, obedience is due to the pastor even as obedience is due to Christ.

Walther reaffirms this authority and obedience in Thesis V on the Ministry, where he writes, “The ministry of preaching has the authority to preach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments and the authority of a spiritual tribunal,” in Thesis IX, where he writes, “Reverence and unconditional obedience is due to the ministry of preaching when the preacher is ministering the Word of God,” and in the Proof for Thesis IX.C, where he writes that “according to the Word of the Lord and His sacred ordinance the public execution of excommunication belongs to, and must remain with, the incumbent of the public ministry.”

But wait a minute, some say, on this last point Walther also says that the pastor cannot excommunicate *alone*; it is the *congregation* that excommunicates. The pastor just publicly announces the unanimous verdict of the congregation. The pastor then really has no power to excommunicate at all, and this weakens the authority of the pastoral office.

While at first it may appear that this objection has merit, if we consider what Walther actually says and compare it to the Scriptures, we will find that it has very little merit. The entire sentence in the Proof for Thesis IX.C, quoted in part above, goes like this, “Therefore, while according to the Word of the Lord and His sacred ordinance the public execution of excommunication belongs to, and must remain with, the incumbent of the public ministry, nevertheless, according to the express prescription and order of the same Lord, the investigation preceding the execution of excommunication and the final judicial verdict must come from the entire congregation, that is, from the teachers and hearers.” (Underlined emphasis mine.)

In other words, the pastor must not excommunicate without involvement of the other members of the congregation.

In support of this, Walther lists Matthew 18:15-20, where Christ says that in addressing sin, one should finally, “Tell it to the Church,” and 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, where Paul turns the matter of dealing with a manifest sinner over to the congregation when it is gathered together. (38)

In these passages, Walther’s basic premise finds support. As it does in the Confessions, which say, “nobody certainly is to be condemned without due process of law,” (Treatise, 76) and, “Christ gives supreme and final jurisdiction to the Church.” (Treatise, 24) And who makes up the Church? Both preachers and hearers. The entire congregation, preachers and hearers, is to be involved in the excommunication process.

Walther’s contention that the congregation must *unanimously* support an excommunication presents more of a problem. He would have a difficult time backing that up from either the Scriptures or the Confessions.

Finally there is the question of whether or not a pastor has the authority to excommunicate a manifest sinner if due process has been followed, the congregation has been involved in the process, and yet the hearers (or some of the hearers) refuse to support excommunication. Walther does not address this in his Theses on Church and Ministry. However, from the Scriptures and the Confessions, we can safely say that in such a case the pastor would indeed have the authority to excommunicate the sinner.

Ruling in the Church

We now turn to the contention that Walther's polity, with laymen deciding matters through voters' assemblies, upends the divine order where pastors make decisions for their churches; that it paces those taught over their teachers, those ruled over their rulers.

Concerning teaching in the Church, teaching is, by divine right, the prerogative of the pastor. He is the steward of the mysteries and the teacher in his church. However, that does not preclude laymen also being involved in making doctrinal decisions in the Church. We see in Acts 15 that the whole Church, preachers and hearers, teachers and those taught, were involved in discussing and deciding the issues before the council. This did not place those taught over their teachers, but it did involve them in the decision making process. There we have a salutary example for the Church for all time.

Concerning ruling in the Church, pastors are called in Scripture, "overseers" (episkopoi) and "rulers" (hegoumenoi) in their churches. As such they are to oversee doctrine and other matters in their churches and in a certain sense, to rule over them.

The writer of the Hebrews speaks of this ruling in Hebrews 13:7, where he writes, "Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct," and in 13:17, where he writes, "Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account," and again in 13:24, where he writes, "Greet all those who rule over you, and all the saints."

But what does it mean for a pastor to "rule over" his congregation? Does it mean that he makes all the decisions and that the people are simply to obey everything he says? Does Walther's polity undermine the pastor's rule?

The word often translated "to be ruler over" (hegoumenos) comes from the verb hegeomai, which means "to lead, to be chief, to govern, to rule." Therefore, hegoumenos can mean "leader, chief, governor, ruler."

Other examples of hegoumenos are found in Scripture besides in Hebrews 13, examples being:

- 1) Acts 7:10, where we are told that Pharaoh made Joseph "governor" in all of Egypt;
- 2) Acts 14:12, where Barnabas was called Zeus and Paul was called Hermes, because Paul was the "chief" speaker.
- 3) Luke 22:26, where Jesus tells the disciples (who were arguing about which of them should be considered the greatest) that while the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over people, it is not to be so among them, but rather he who is "chief," as one who serves.

So, in Scripture, the word hegoumenos is used in different ways. It can refer to one who rules in a fairly absolute sense (as Joseph did in Egypt, where only Pharaoh and his family were exempt from his rule), or it can mean one who is chief among others (as Paul was the leader or chief spokesman, not Barnabas).

However, when we consider how pastors are to "rule over" their churches, Luke 22:26 sheds some important light. Pastors are not to exercise lordship over their congregations. They are to lead, as the chief among them, by means of humble service.

Peter says the same in 1 Peter 5:1-3, “The elders who are among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder, ... Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly, nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

So in the Church, it is not lordship and demand for obedience, it is oversight and service by the chief among others. This type of “rule” no more precludes laymen from being involved in decisions made in the Church than Paul being “chief” precluded Barnabas from speaking.

On a practical level, we also see how pastors are to “rule” in the example of the apostles in Acts 6. When the duty of distributing alms became a hindrance to their ministering the Word, the apostles had the people choose seven men to assist in caring for the poor. The apostles were certainly “chiefs” among the people, but rather than making the selection themselves, out of respect for the people and their rights and status as Christians, they had the people select the men. The apostles then gave their approval of the selections by the laying on of hands.

Have there been cases where laymen have abused their rights and status, using voters’ assemblies to domineer and to “rule over their ruler?” Of course there have. We see examples of it today, with voters demanding that things be done their way, despising the instruction and guidance of their pastors. We see voters cutting off their pastor’s salary, and we see them deposing pastors from their divine call without just cause. We see all kinds of sin. However, it is not Walther’s polity which makes the sin. It is perversion of his polity and sinful misuse of it which makes the sin - just as misuse of the authority of the pastoral office results in sin as well.

Walther’s polity undermines the confession and doctrinal integrity of the Church by letting the “unlearned” formulate doctrine.

In responding to this objection, the first thing we can say is that God’s Word establishes doctrine in the Church, not the decisions of men, whether they be pastors or laymen. The Church, if it is to be faithful to Christ, will submit to His Word, from whatever source it comes. As Jesus says in John 8:31, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed,” and again in John 14:23, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.”

Doctrine that is contrary to Christ’s Word is to be rejected, whether it is promoted by the pastor or by the laity of the Church.

Of course, in not a few cases in the history of the Church her confession has been perverted, and her doctrinal integrity has been compromised. It still is today. This should not surprise us, however, for the apostle Paul prophesied this very thing. In fact, he not only prophesied that it would happen, he also prophesied how it would happen.

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4 he tells Timothy, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

And in Acts 20:29-30 he says to the pastors at Ephesus, “I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.”

The doctrine will be perverted by the laity, and the doctrine will be perverted by pastors. Therefore, the apostles warn and exhort ministers as Paul did Timothy, “Hold fast the pattern

of sound words which you have heard from me.”(2 Timothy 1:13) And they warn and exhort the people, “Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world,” (1 John 4:1) and, “Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.” (Romans 16:17)

Pastors and laymen both have the responsibility to see to it that sound doctrine is taught and confessed by the Church, and problems develop whenever either group fails to carry out its responsibility. Placing doctrinal discussion and decision making only in the hands of the pastors does not solve the problem. Seminex, the ELCA, and the Episcopal Church show this

to be true, as do countless other cases. For who led the Missouri Synod astray before and during the walk-out and who is behind the heresy taught in liberal churches but the clergy? And who has allowed the heresies to take root in the Church but fellow clergy who said nothing and laymen who failed to be informed, to test the spirits by the standard of the Word, and to be actively involved in keeping the doctrine right?

No, Walther’s polity, allowing laymen a voice and vote in the doctrinal decisions of the Church does not necessarily lead to heresy. In fact, practiced according to Walther’s guidelines, it has just the opposite effect. For when pastor and people respect Christ’s Word and the rights, voice, and status of one another, the confession of the Church remains sound.

Walther’s polity breeds division in the Church by pitting faction against faction in congregational meetings and by creating a “we win, you lose” mentality.

Divisions and factions from time to time appear in the Church. They always have and they always will. In 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 Paul reports that divisions had arisen in the Church at Corinth, and that not long after he himself had founded the congregation there.

However, it is sin on the part of the members that causes factions in the Church, not a particular polity, whatever it may be. Voting in congregational meetings is no more the cause of divisions than is the pastor making all the decisions and then some supporting and some opposing the decisions he makes.

Actually, Walther’s polity provides an opportunity to put Christian love, kindness, humility, patience, and thoughtfulness into action. If congregational meetings should devolve into squabbles, factions, and a “we win” attitude, it provides the pastor the opportunity to expose these for what they are and to direct the people’s hearts to forgiveness in Christ and to ways and attitudes that are Christian and pleasing to their Lord.

Walther’s polity is contrary to that found in the Scriptures and in the Confessions.

First of all, we do not see a carefully delineated polity laid out in either the Scriptures or the Confessions. In Scripture we find the apostles and their assistants (Silas, Timothy, Titus, etc.). We also find the offices of elder (pastor) and deacon. However, we find no promised or commanded ecclesiastical office or structure for the Church except for the pastoral office. On their part, the Confessions accept the basic structure of the Roman Church, which is episcopal. They are willing to accept the rank of bishop, for example, but they make clear that this rank exists by human right, not by divine right. The Confessions state clearly that bishops have no

authority by divine right over the pastors of the churches. (39)

In Scripture we find the laity involved in making decisions in the Church, including in the selection of their pastors. For in Acts 14:23, when Paul and Barnabas “appointed” elders in every city, the word translated “appoint” (cheirotoneo) means “to raise or stretch out the hand; to select; to vote for.” Evidently, as in the case of the selection of Matthias and in the choosing of the seven in Acts 6, the people also had a voice in selecting the pastor who would serve them.

This right of the people to choose their pastor is also seen in the writings of the early Church fathers. For example, Cyprian (200-258 A.D., Bishop of Carthage) writes, “A people obedient to the Lord’s precepts, and fearing God, ought to separate themselves from a sinful prelate, ... especially since they themselves have the power either of choosing worthy priests, or of rejecting unworthy ones.” (40)

Precisely how the people go about choosing their pastor and making decisions in the Church, whether it be through oral consensus or through a formal voting process is not spelled out in Scripture. However, God does give the Christian and the congregation, as well as the pastors, rights and responsibilities in churchly matters. Walther’s polity, with its organized congregational meetings, officers, and manner of conducting business laid out in detail in his treatise, “The Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the State,” is not the commanded way of exercising these rights, nor is it the only way. However, it is not contrary to any polity laid out in either the Scriptures or in the Confessions.

IV. Conclusion

Of necessity this has been an overview of C.F.W. Walther’s Church polity, but hopefully it has been beneficial, both in answering some questions and apprehensions about his polity and in providing food for thought and discussion.

His polity was not dreamed up in an academic setting. It was developed through much study of the Scriptures, the writings of Luther, and the Confessions. It was also developed after having personally experienced the state church in Germany, the abuses that took place before, during, and after the emigration under Martin Stephan, and the theological debates with Wilhelm Loehe and J.A.A. Grabau.

You cannot take the theologian out of his context, for it conditions the issues he addresses and results in either doctrinal faithfulness or compromise on his part. In Walther’s case, it was the former.

His polity incorporated freedoms and ideals newly found in America. There is no question about that. However, to say that Walther compromised Scripture and the Confessions because of these freedoms and ideals does an injustice to the man as a faithful Lutheran theologian. He respected the God-given rights and authority of the pastoral office. He respected the status and rights of the Christian and of the Christian congregation. And he did his best to formulate a polity that respected both in the “fresh, free air” of America.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,

**but to Your name give glory,
Because of Your mercy, and because of Your truth.**

Psalm 115:1

End Notes

- (1) Unless otherwise noted, information on the Prussian Union, M. Stephan, J.A.A. Grabau, and W. Loehe has been taken from Wikipedia (online) and/or from the Lutheran Cyclopedia, Revised edition, CPH, 1975.
- (2) Zion on the Mississippi, by Walter A. Forster, CPH, 1953, pp. 30-32 (hereafter referred to as Z.M.)
- (3) Z.M., p. 29
- (4) Z.M., p. 284
- (5) Z.M., p. 293-294
- (6) Z.M., p. 65
- (7) Z.M., p. 515
- (8) Z.M., p. 524 / Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 22, “Altenburg Theses”)
- (9) “Pastoral Letter and Correspondence between J.A.A. Grabau and the Missouri Synod” (hereafter referred to as PL&C), www.archivia.com “The Lutherans,” p. 16
- (10) PL&C, p. 12
- (11) PL&C, p. 19
- (12) PL&C, p. 15
- (13) PL&C, p. 16
- (14) PL&C, p. 15
- (15) Roy Suelflow, “The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866,” Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly (April, 1954:10) as cited in J. Wohlrabe, Ministry in Missouri, p. 6 and in Steven A. Hein, “Influences on the Office of the Ministry in the History of American Lutheranism,” (augustanamministerium.org)
- (16) PL&C, p. 26, 27
- (17) PL&C, p. 29

- (18) PL&C, p. 29
- (19) John T. Pless, “Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod: forgotten paternity or living legacy?” CTS, Fort Wayne, IN
- (20) John T. Pless, cited above
- (21) John T. Pless, cited above.
- (22) Steven A. Hein, “Influence on the Office of the Ministry in the History of American Lutheranism.” (augustanaministerium.org)
- (23) Walther And The Church (hereafter W&TC), by Wm. Dallmann, W.H.T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (editor), CPH, 1938, pp. 71-86
- (24) This is the teaching of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod (ELS), found in the synod’s current doctrinal statement on the Ministry, “The Public Ministry of the Word”
- (25) Theses I, II, & III on the Ministry and their Proofs; Proof for Thesis IX.A; W&TC, pp. 71-73, 80
- (26) Thesis VIII on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 78-79
- (27) Proofs for Theses II & VI on the Ministry; W&TC, pp. 72, 75
- (28) Thesis IV on the Ministry and its Proof; Proof for Thesis VII; W&TC, pp. 73, 77
- (29) Proof for Thesis VII on the Ministry; Thesis V; Thesis VI.A and its Proof; Thesis IX.C and its Proof; Thesis X and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 77-78, 74, 74-75, 83-83, 85 respectively
- (30) Proof for Thesis VI on the Ministry; W&TC, p. 75
- (31) Thesis IX.A and its Proof; W&TC, p. 80
- (32) Thesis VI.A on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, p 74-75
“Proper Form of an Evangelical Lutheran Congregation Independent of the State” (hereafter P.F.), Chapter I; W&TC, pp. 90-91
- (33) P.F., Chapter III.B.20-21; W&TC, pp. 97-98
- (34) Thesis IX.A on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 80-81
- (35) P.F. Chapter II.9, Chapter II.B.22; W&TC, pp. 93, 99
Thesis IX.B on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 81-83
- (36) Thesis IX.C on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 81-83
- (37) P.F., Chapter III.12,13; W&TC, pp. 94-95

(38) Thesis IX.C on the Ministry and its Proof; W&TC, pp. 83-85

(39) Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope; Concordia Triglotta, CPH, 1921, pp. 521, 523

(40) The Anti-Nicene Fathers, Vol. V; T.T. Clark / Eerdmanns, reprinted 1986, p. 370