



Historical Footnotes

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C. F. W. Walther Remembered

Even though C. F. W. Walther, the first president of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, is often remembered as a pastor, a theologian, or possibly even a church politician, he was much more than that. He was, in addition to these things, a loving father, a devoted husband, a gracious neighbor and a beloved teacher. To be sure, he had his share of idiosyncrasies and even failings. But he was nonetheless a sinner who was confident that he had been redeemed freely by Christ, and this realization made this great leader of the Lutheran Church a very humble servant. The following anecdotes may help to illustrate his personal life.

Walther was born in Langenchursdorf, Germany, on October 25, 1811. His parents, Gottlob Heinrich Walther and Johanna Wilhelmina nee Zschenderlein, raised him in the parsonage in Langenchursdorf, where Gottlob was the pastor. August Suelflow, who wrote *Servant of the Word*, a biography of Walther that reflects years of detailed study, remarks:¹

The home of young Walther was a typical Lutheran parsonage of that time. It was marked by an upper-middle class culture and by parsonage discipline. Two interesting stories have come down to us. When he was only three years old, he experienced his first pre-Christmas visit by St. Nicholas, who came to the Walther home on December 6. Also known as “Pelznickel,” the saint inquired about the progress the children had made in studying the Bible and the Catechism. Children were asked to give an account of themselves and recite a poem or a prayer of some kind. The little three-year-old, standing in awe before St. Nicholas, shyly said:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress
Wherein before my God I'll stand
When I shall reach the heavenly land.

Johanna Wilhelmina Zschenderlein



Gottlob Heinrich Walther



Langenchursdorf, Germany

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Quite a memory feat for a three year old! So thought Walther's father who was so overjoyed and proud of his little boy that he gave him a three-penny piece. Ferdinand (as C. F. W. went by) concluded this must be a very special verse to be worth such a generous response from his father. The youthful mind had been indelibly impressed with this theology, which was to become the center of his entire life.²

The young Walther was sent away to the Latin school in Schneeberg to continue his studies. Suelflow notes an interesting entry from Walther's diary during this time, dated February 8, 1829:

Today my parents came and surprised me, which was most welcome. I can honestly admit that I am more pleasantly satisfied in the midst of my own family, even though I have been trying to tell myself that I like it best in the midst of my fellow students.³

It was difficult for a young man to be a pious Lutheran in nineteenth-century Germany. Rationalism had a firm grasp on the intellectual life, and Calvinism was slowly creeping into the worship life. In spite of these impediments, the Holy Spirit preserved a desire for orthodox Lutheran doctrine and practice in the young Walther. E. M. Buerger, who met Walther before he emigrated to Missouri, recorded his first impressions of Walther:

Since a believing student, even at that time already was extremely seldom, and I had heard four years earlier already, from Kuehn and Keyl that he [Walther] belonged to the very minority number of students in Leipzig who were thoroughly concerned about justification, I was very happy to learn to know him. Since my return trip to my paternal home led me through Langenchursdorf, we were able to spend three hours together [daily?]. I recognized him immediately as a very serious, humble and extremely timid Christian, and his conversation betrayed him, that he carried about with him a deeply repentant, shattered, and even a heart that was filled with tentatio [spiritual struggles]. We became good friends on this journey and remained that until his end.⁴



St. Wolfgangskirche, Schneeberg, Germany

This desire for true Christianity—in spite of cultural influences against it—became a quality well-suited for a future president of a Lutheran synod in America. Without the Holy Spirit's diligent protection, it would be very easy to take pride in one's recognizably great talents. Walther, however, remained remarkably humble. For example, when he was awarded an honorary doctorate by Capitol University in Ohio, Walther was moved to tears and explained that he was unworthy to receive such a high honor; God alone was responsible for his successes.⁵ He knew what might happen if he should revel in his Lutheran "celebrity." For instance when he read Hochstetter's history of the Missouri Synod, Walther responded:

At first, I grant you, I dreaded to read your splendid book, because I myself occur in it so often. I was afraid of my own evil heart, which is so greatly prone to ascribe a little bit also to me for what God has done to me out of incomprehensible mercy and for what he has used me as his most unworthy instrument. Finally, however, after God allowed me again and again to feel my incompetence for all good and my damnable [apart from him], I overcame my dread.⁶

All the Lutheran congregations in St. Louis were originally united, and Walther served as their pastor. He was

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Walther warmly greets his coachman outside his house on Texas Avenue before they drive to Trinity for the Christmas morning service.

always humble and cordial, a style that appealed to both the cultural elite and the common man. One incident serves to illustrate how well-loved he was.

It is Christmas morning. Nature is surrounded by a solemn quiet; a soft blanket of snow is spread upon it. The winter air is crisp, and soon the first bell of the nearby church tower will be sounding to observe this holy festival morning.

There the careful, faithful steward of Concordia, Mr. Heinrich Jungkuntz, hastens across the backyard to the stables. "Hello, Charley!" he greets the pitch black horse who is happily neighing, its fiery eyes always expressing that he is very sly. "Did you enjoy your meal? Come, now we have to drive the Doctor to Trinity."

He pushes the carriage—a modest, single-seat carriage—out into the street, lays the harness on Charley, who always has a twinkle in his eyes, and clamps it down. Then he drives up to Dr. Walther's home, jumps from the box and opens the carriage door.

But no sooner is this done, than the doctor [appears]—who was always a very punctual man. He had already been waiting for him in his study, where he had been studying his homily, from very early in the morning with prayer and supplication, and memorized it carefully on the spot.

With a "Good morning, my dear Mr. Jungkintz," he

was quicker with his salutation [than the coachman]. "God grant us a very merry Christmas!" "Yes, sir, Doctor, thank you, thank you!"

The artist of *The Abendschule* [who drew the picture to the left] has depicted the scene admirably: the doctor in his fur coat, his hand-Bible and sermon manuscript lie in his arm, the steward in his storm coat, each from a distance tilting their hats toward each other in greeting, and finally, the mischievous black horse Charley impatiently waiting.

On this nimble journey, it will go to Trinity Church, and after the service, just as quickly back home. Walther was for many years—until his blessed end—the pastor of the *Gesamtgemeinde* in St. Louis which was [composed] of the four district congregations: Trinity, Immanuel, Zion, and Holy Cross, each under its own pastor who alternated the preaching task every Sunday among themselves. On feast days he was accustomed to take a turn himself in these churches, holding a festival sermon, just as he always led the community meetings—the General Assembly—and held a great many wonderful educational lectures in these [churches]. The steward in the coach, and the black Charley with him, used to drive him back and forth to these gatherings. Both the coach and the horse were noble gifts of the *Gesamtgemeinde* for their beloved pastor, a gift that always remained in his mind with heartfelt thanks. But he did not value any less his true and faithful coachman, who definitely understood how to handle the wild Charley.⁷

When it came to Walther's family life, he was not always as polished as he was in the pulpit. From his letters, though, it is readily apparent that he deeply loved his wife and children. In 1840 he wrote a letter to his brother, Otto Herman, a portion of which was written in Latin, possibly to conceal it from Otto's wife, Agnes, who was Emilie's sister. In the letter Walther demonstrates his uncertainties about getting married.

As far as my getting married is concerned, I am still awaiting an indication from God, as to when He wills that this be done. I am at present more frightened of this than I am attracted to it. I am afraid that I will make my future wife unhappy. I am now entirely convinced, that I acted contrary to God's will in this matter [the immigration], still I do not see how I can go back on this decision now without offending God. May God give me a penitent heart, that what I have

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wrongly begun, may with God's help be brought to a good end, and that He, in accordance with His patience, may turn away the offense that I have committed. I uncover, that God may cover; I reveal, that He may conceal; I stand, that He stand by to help; I condemn, that He may approve.⁸



you and brings with it many a care and also some danger. . . . Ever since I have known of it, therefore, I have daily implored our dear God to continue to be with you, to protect and keep you in all your ways, to lighten your burden, and in His time safely to deliver you and make you a happy and blessed mother of children.¹⁰

One further scene from the Walther household exemplifies C. F. W.'s humility.

The scene presented in this picture was not an unusual occurrence—it did not happen because of his wife's or maid's absence—that he himself carried the necessary firing material into his home. No—the contrary was correct—it was a daily routine. Even during extreme winter weather one could see him in his study robe carrying an ample

Nearly eighteen months later, Walther apparently had received the confirmation he had been seeking. He sent a letter of proposal to his future wife, Emilie Buenger. In it, he confessed that just as he was unworthy of God's grace, so he was unworthy of her love. Nevertheless, even a small excerpt will demonstrate how he felt for her:

Dear heartily beloved Emilie,

As little as I have till now had the right to write to you, and particularly with such a greeting, yet I cannot do otherwise if I am to be honest with you. [. . .] Therefore I cannot wait any longer to express this my wish frankly, also to you. It is this: Will you, dearest Emilie, become my life's companion? Can you return at least in some degree the love which, as I now confidently hope, God has enkindled in my heart for you? Do you believe that you can live with me happily, contentedly, and God-pleasingly in a union as intimate and inseparable until death as the holy estate of marriage is?⁹

A week later, she wrote to accept his proposal, and they were married a month later. Their marriage was blessed with six children, four of whom survived to adulthood. One letter to his daughter illustrates his love for his children:

I noted with joy in your last letter that the Lord has again blessed you with maternal hopes. That of course again poses a heavy burden for



Emilie nee Buenger Walther

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supply of firewood from the shed behind the house upstairs to his study.

He was not interested in the modern and comfortable way of heating with coals, at least not in his study, and he insisted until the very end to continue having the old comforting and pleasing warmth of his wood-burning stove.

Students often offered to take over this task after they saw the dear man carrying his own firewood up to his study, and once in a while, during the doctor's absence, he was surprised to find a decent supply of the same already in place without him even knowing who had done the work. Other than that, nobody could take this pleasure away from him and he very much disliked the thought of asking his wife or even a servant to accomplish this task. Nobody was allowed to perform such low duties for him—he took that upon himself, and besides that he enjoyed tremendously to “drink in” a couple of breaths of fresh air during his hectic work schedule.¹¹

These are just a few glimpses into the personal life of C. F. W. Walther. He was always remembered as a man of great theological insight, but he should also be



Walther carrying a supply of firewood from the shed to his study upstairs

remembered as a humble, loving, family man. As we commemorate his two-hundredth birthday this year, we can take a moment to put a personal face on, arguably, the most influential leader of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

1. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 11-12.

2. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 15.

3. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 19. [Tagebuch gehalten von F. Walther; Primaner zu Schneeberg (Den Ersten Januar, 1829 [Walther's Diary, 1829-1831]), C. F. W. Walther Papers, M-0004, f. 373, Concordia Historical Institute.]

4. letter from E. M. Buerger to A. L. Graebner, February 24, 1888, translated by A. R. Suelflow. Concordia Historical Institute [Suelflow files, f. B-99]

5. *Die Abendschule*, 57:22 (May 18, 1911), 11-12.

6. letter from C. F. W. Walther to Chr. Hochstetter, July 31, 1885. Concordia Historical Institute [Suelflow files, f. 523]

7. *Die Abendschule*, 57:22 (May 18, 1911), 18-19. Translated by David Herald.

8. letter from C. F. W. Walther to O. H. Walther, May 4, 1840. Concordia Historical Institute, translated by James Ware, December 30, 1986 [Suelflow files, f. 41]

9. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 224.

10. letter from C. F. W. Walther to Magdalene Keyl, April 18, 1867. *Servant of the Word*, p. 249.

11. *Die Abendschule*, vol. 57, number 22 (May 18, 1911), 30. Translated by Reed Lessing.

DR. MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN: A FAITHFUL SERVANT (PART ONE)

Time can often benefit the historian. Looking back and thoughtfully considering events in the near or distant past, one finds it helpful to have gained some distance, some separation, from the critical events of another time period. Such may be the case with the life of Dr. Martin H. Scharlemann.

Dr. Scharlemann was a military chaplain, scholar, author, administrator, professor, pastor, father and volunteer. He served on the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for over thirty years including the years 1970 to 1975, a time which his colleague on the faculty, Dr. Richard Klann, has termed “that difficult season.” In many ways Dr. Scharlemann was at the center of events that dominated the headlines in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during that time.



Martin Scharlemann and Dorothy Hoyer's wedding

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Following Dr. Scharlemann's death in 1982, Concordia Historical Institute received many of his personal papers and manuscripts. These items, which had been closed to research since that time, have now been opened. Dr. Scharlemann's collection contains thousands of pieces of correspondence, manuscript drafts, his military record, personal journals, course notes and various media. There is a total of thirty-six boxes in the collection. To re-acquaint our readers with Dr. Scharlemann we will be publishing a five-part series on his life. This first part offers a brief overview and summary of Dr. Scharlemann's life. Part two will look at his career in the military chaplaincy, where he served in both the Army and the Air Force and he found himself ministering to a little-known group of Protestants in Italy. Part three will look at the Lutheran Academy for Scholarship. Dr. Scharlemann was a major driving force behind this organization and served as its president for more than two decades. Part four will consider his academic life, as a professor and au-



Dr. and Mrs. Scharlemann and their four children

Scharlemann collection now open for research

Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis; a Master of Arts and a Doctor of Philosophy degree from Washington University, Saint Louis; and a

Doctor of Theology degree from Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

While Dr. Scharlemann may be most well-remembered as a seminary professor, he began his ministry serving parishes in Minnesota, Indiana, Missouri and Wisconsin before becoming an active-duty army chaplain in 1941. In 1952 Scharlemann accepted a call to Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, but remained active in the Reserves until his military retirement in 1971. Dr. Scharlemann continued to serve at Concordia Seminary until his death.

Dr. Scharlemann and his wife, Dorothy (nee Hoyer), were blessed with four children and together celebrated forty-four years of marriage. He was called to his eternal glory on August 23, 1982.

Throughout his life, Dr. Scharlemann received many accolades. These include: the Legion of Merit, the Air University Medal, the Saint Martin of Tours Medal and the Chief of Chaplains Special Award. In 1982 he became the first recipient of the Aeterna Moliri (Builders for Eternity) Award from Concordia College, Saint Paul, Minnesota, and also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Dr. Scharlemann, his writings and his activities elicited a great many discussions and articles during his life. More has been written and said since his death.

And now, with the opening of his personal collection at Concordia Historical Institute, we may come to know this dedicated servant of Christ and the Gospel more fully.



Martin Scharlemann served as chaplain during WWII

thor. Part five will conclude the series and will look at the "controversial" Dr. Scharlemann. It will give a broad overview of the critical events which occurred in the LCMS and at Concordia Seminary during the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s.

Ernst Karl and Johanna Harre Scharlemann welcomed Martin into the world on December 28, 1910, at Nashville, Illinois, the eleventh of twelve children. Dr. Scharlemann studied at Concordia Colleges in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Saint Paul, Minnesota, in what would prove to be only the beginning of his educational pursuits.

Dr. Scharlemann earned a Master of Divinity degree from

Muhlenberg Traveling Exhibit Visits CHI



Tim Koch, David Herald
(photo by Rebecca Wells)



Dr. Gerhard Bode, Dr. Robert Kolb
(photo by Rebecca Wells)

Concordia Historical Institute, along with Concordia Seminary, hosted a traveling exhibit this spring. The exhibit, *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787): Patriarch of the North American Lutheran Church*, was developed by the Francke Foundations in Halle, Germany. It consisted of twenty panels detailing Muhlenberg's life and ministry through text, documents and images. The exhibit remained at CHI for four weeks.

The opening event, held on April 26, began in the seminary library with two excellent lectures given by seminary professors Dr. Robert Kolb and Dr. Gerhard Bode. They presented "'So Much Began in Halle:' The Mission Program That Sent Mühlenberg to America" and "Man on a Mission: Henry Melchior Muhlenberg and the Lutherans in America" respectively. The roughly thirty attendees then walked over to CHI for a reception where they enjoyed wine and appetizers while viewing the exhibit and conversing with each other. What a lovely way to celebrate the 300th anniversary of Muhlenberg's birth!

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TO OUR FRIENDS OF HISTORY:



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Concordia Historical Institute congratulated Concordia Seminary graduates at its annual CHI reception on April 14, 2011. Pictured above are David Herald and Daniel Suelzle. (Photo by Patrice Russo)

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