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WILLIAM ALFRED PASSAVANT: HIS INFLUENCE  
ON NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICAN LUTHERANISM

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Historical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by

Charles Reimnitz

June, 1954

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Reader



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## CHAPTER I

### THE TWENTIETH CENTURY LOOK AT A NINETEENTH CENTURY GIANT

#### Introduction: Objectives of the Study

Drawing from the source of all life and power, Jesus the Savior, the Christian Church has existed for almost twenty centuries. During the course of these centuries times of storm and stress have come upon the Church, for which occasions the Heavenly Shepherd has given His Church consecrated men to guide and direct it. One such leader was William Alfred Passavant, an outstanding figure in the Lutheran Church in America of the nineteenth century. The purpose of this study was to make an extensive investigation of his life and his beloved Lutheran Church in order to determine in what way and to what extent Passavant's ministry influenced the Lutheran Church in America.

#### Limitations of the Study

Since Passavant was a man of wide interests and remarkable gifts, it was necessary to limit the study to certain specific phases of his work in order to delineate a few of his major contributions. Specific attention was given to three important areas, all of which pertained to his influence in giving the Lutheran Church in America a more conservative cast: his influence on the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, and the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. Consequently whole sections of Passavant's fruitful ministry



of mercy were omitted. Little attention was paid to his institutions of charity, although a minor section of this paper treats of his most outstanding contribution, the institution of deaconess work in America.

Since most of the source material in German dealt with the influence on Passavant, rather than Passavant's influence on the church, the study did not make exhaustive use of such material.

It was necessary to lean quite heavily on Gerberding's Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D. to fill in on portions of Passavant's life for which no other material was readily available. This extensive use of Gerberding will be especially noticeable in the chapter on Passavant's early life.

Once the research was directed to Passavant's ministry a wide variety of sources of information became available. The microfilm materials of the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, in particular played an important part in shaping the body of this thesis. All issues of The Missionary, a paper published by Passavant, were available on film, as were most of the Synodical Minutes referred to in the body of this paper.

#### Method of Procedure

This report has been laid out under four general headings: The early life of Passavant, his labors first in the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, then in the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America, and finally, his contacts with the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

It was impossible to place all the events under these four headings in exact sequence without some overlapping. Because some of the labors



of Passavant began during one stage of his ministry and were continued and completed at another time, no definite statute of limitations could be set up to place his labors under a particular heading. As a result, events were placed under the heading which seemed most appropriate. Whenever it was evident that a project was carried on to a greater extent during the time that Passavant was closely connected with the General Synod, that project was listed under the chapter "Passavant and the General Synod." This general principle applies to all sections of this study.

The chapter on the Missouri Synod was arbitrarily placed in last position because the Missouri Synod did not play a primary role in Passavant's life. This chapter serves to sound the closing note of the life of a God-fearing and influential Christian man, William Alfred Passavant.

W. A. Passavant, *Life and Labors of W. A. Passavant, D.D.*  
(Cincinnati, Pa.: The Young Men's Press, 1896), pp. 117.



## CHAPTER II

### EARLY LIFE OF PASSAVANT

#### French-German Ancestry and Early Home Life

The life story of William Alfred Passavant is not the popular rags to riches adventure. One could hardly say that his family was poor and unknown. Indeed, had he bothered to do so, he could have traced the Passavant line as far back as the year 1200 when it was already illustrious in France. He might even have traced another ancestral line in the De la Haya family back to the tenth century. Even to this day one can find some traces of the Passavant greatness in the castle Burg Passavant which overlooks the little town La Cote Passavant about twenty miles from the city of Loxon in Burgundy, France. The great of this family were eminent in church and state, in literature and science, in bravery and benevolence.<sup>1</sup>

It seems that from earliest times some of the Passavants were drawn to the teaching emanating from Wittenberg. Before and after the Edict of Nantes in 1598 many refugees left Burgundy, and among them we find members of the Passavant family.<sup>2</sup> In the year 1595 Nicholas Passavant went to Basel with his wife and one child. From Basel we find the various Passavants traveling into all parts of the world, as far afield as

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<sup>1</sup>G. H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D. (Greenville, Pa: The Young Luthersn Co., 1906), pp. 17 f.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.



India. A descendant of Nicholas, one Rudolph Emmanuel, settled in Frankfurt, Germany. Four generations later we find Philip, the father of William Alfred Passavant, leaving that city to settle in America.<sup>3</sup>

William Alfred Passavant was born October 9, 1821 in the Bassonheim home, near Zelienople, Pennsylvania. He was the third son born in the house. His father, Philip, had married Selia Basse of Frankfurt, Germany. It had been her father's wish that they move to America and live in the "Bassonheim" which he had built.<sup>4</sup>

Letters from W. A. Passavant's mother to one of the brothers in 1824 give us a glimpse of William's early disposition. According to his mother he was very gentle and affectionate, a well behaved boy when he wanted to be good, but stormy when his quick passions were not under control. It seems that his affection was not restricted to the family circle. As a boy he had many pets. Not only could they be found out in the barnyard, but one would find them in and around the house. Years later, when writing home, he would ask his mother about the welfare of the little ducks, chickens, and kittens at the old home place.<sup>5</sup>

When the time came for young William to attend school there was as yet no public school in the town of Zelienople. Because of this fact his mother began to teach him at home, just as she had taught the other children. Later he also attended the public school when its doors were opened. During these early days of school he was already showing himself

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 20

+ <sup>4</sup>Ibid.

+ <sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 24 f.



to be a leader of men. No game was complete unless he was there, and often the games would be delayed until "Willie" Passavant appeared. His mother noticed this trait in her boy, and once remarked to a company of ministers gathered in her home, "When the boys play soldier, Willie always wants to be Captain."<sup>6</sup>

### College and Seminary Years

Childhood and youth passed quickly for "Willie" Passavant, for he was but fifteen when his parents considered him ready for college. As there was no Lutheran college west of the Allegheny Mountains he was sent to Jefferson College, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, a Presbyterian institution, at that time considered one of the best colleges in the land.<sup>7</sup>

It was at college that some of Passavant's stronger personality traits began to appear. While on the one hand he was so thrifty that he wrote his mother of resolutions not to go to the confectionery shops, play cards, read novels or spend his money on sleigh rides, on the other hand his kindness and liberality caused him to give his last three dollars to a poor woman whose house had burned down.<sup>8</sup> He was deeply religious. Among his old papers was found an account of his religious experience at college. It reads like a confession of Augustine, Luther, or John Bunyan.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 33.



Passavant's religious zeal was not wasted in trivial personal matters. Even at this early college age he spent much of his spare time canvassing and teaching in mission Sunday schools. The zeal which he had for the ministry and the service of the Lord was used to direct other men into the ministry. Once he came across two young men, S. K. Brobst and M. Schweigert, one a tinker the other a tailor. Seeing that they seemed to be brighter than their fellows, he pleaded with them to enter the ministry. They did, and afterwards they both became useful ministers of the Lutheran church.<sup>10</sup>

At this time also his schoolmates saw evidences of his ability. In a debate with the son of the Mahlenberg who was running for the Governorship of Pennsylvania, he was outstanding and won the match. He had taken the affirmative side of the proposition: "That there is more profit in the study of modern than of ancient literature."<sup>11</sup>

While he was yet a student at Jefferson College he published one of the first Lutheran almanacs issued in America.<sup>12</sup> By 1837, when he was but sixteen, he planned and partly prepared the almanac. However, he could find no printer for his work because there was already one German and one English Lutheran Almanac in the field. For four successive years he prepared manuscripts of the almanac before he finally succeeded in having it published in 1842. Both a German and an English edition were printed, and eighteen thousand copies were sold. The following year

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 37

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 38

<sup>12</sup> J. L. Nevo, History of the Lutheran Church in America, edited by W. D. Allbeek (Third edition; Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 77.



Passavant published another almanac, and like the first volume it was filled with useful and interesting material.<sup>13</sup> After this he did not again publish an almanac, but left this work to fall on the shoulders of others who might feel brave enough to undertake such an enterprise.

#### Influences on Passavant and the American Lutheran Church

On November 3, 1840, Passavant left home to attend the seminary at Gettysburg. There he was to study under a man who had a profound effect on the whole program of the Lutheran Church from about 1820 until the time of his death near the end of the century. This ~~man~~ was Dr. Simon S. Schmucker. What were his qualifications as a teacher? In the words of Gerberding:

Simon S. Schmucker had never made an earnest study of Lutheran theology but was thoroughly imbued with the teaching, spirit, and life of the Reformed Churches. He taught and modeled Lutheranism. Such was the first professor in the seminary during the two years of Mr. Passavant's theological course.<sup>14</sup>

Until the year 1826 there were no Lutheran seminaries which were worthy of the name. Men were trained privately. As a result each new pastor became the composite of his own and his teacher's personality.<sup>15</sup> When the seminary was established at Gettysburg, Mr. David Jacobs was appointed teacher in the classical department. All the other branches of study were taught by Professor Schmucker for four years. With this

<sup>13</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 55.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Theodore E. Bowman, They Called Him Father, The Life Story of John Christian Frederick Hoyer (Philadelphia: The Knickerbocker Press, 1942), p. 15.



beginning Schmucker during his life was able to exert great influence on the Lutheran ministry. By the time of his death it could be said that his students occupied more than half the prominent English Lutheran pulpits, professorships, and presidencies of the General Synod.<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Schmucker had been trained at the University of Pennsylvania and the Presbyterian Seminary at Princeton. By the time he was twenty-one years old and had graduated from the University of Pennsylvania he was called to head the classical department of the York Academy. In June of 1820 he was licensed by the Synod of Pennsylvania as a pastor. After his ordination nearly all the important papers adopted by that Synod were drawn up by him, although for several years he was the youngest man in the body. During the years that followed Schmucker produced some forty-two publications. One of his most important works was the preparation of the "Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Churches." It was finished only a few days after his twenty-third birthday. In 1823 it was laid before the General Synod, was adopted, and was used for more than fifty years by the churches.<sup>17</sup>

It was through Schmucker's efforts that the General Synod was saved from dissolution at the most critical moment. By his efforts he turned the tide and caused enough delegates to appear at the Synod meeting at Frederick, Maryland, in October, 1823 to make it feasible to form a new synodical group. At the age of twenty-two he was already appointed to

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<sup>16</sup>G. Diehl, "Dr. S. S. Schmucker," The Quarterly Review, IV (January, 1874), 47.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 13 f.



teach a catholicist and a theological student. By the time he was twenty-five Schmecker had been elected professor of theology, actually head, of Gettysburg Seminary.<sup>18</sup>

Passavant was to study under this important and influential man, and he absorbed many attitudes from his teacher. For all Passavant escape the long arm of Schmecker's influence when he left the Gettysburg Seminary. Schmecker was an advisor at the second Synodical meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland which Passavant attended.<sup>19</sup>

If Schmecker was to influence his life, then "New Measures," or Revivalism was to have an even greater effect on him. It has already been stated that Passavant was a deeply religious man, and as such it would have been quite difficult for him to escape the influence of the "awakenings" that swept the country from time to time. It would have been hard to find an English speaking Lutheran body of that time which did not directly or indirectly advocate use of the "New Measures," as they were called.<sup>20</sup> In the General Synod alone members of twenty-two different Synods were making use of the New Measure movement in order to increase their church membership.<sup>21</sup> One need only glance over the

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>19</sup> Proceedings of the 27th Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Room, 1843), p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> Paul W. Spunde, The Lutheran Church Under American Influence: A Historical-Philosophical Interpretation of the Church in Its Relation to Various Modifying Forces in the United States (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1943), p. 379.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 391.



minutes of the various synods between the years of 1839 and 1843, important years in Passavant's training, to see how greatly the synods were touched by revivalism. The Franckean Synod,<sup>22</sup> the Hartwick Synod,<sup>23</sup> and the Synod of the West<sup>24</sup> are among those which accord praise to the "New Measures" in their synodical proceedings. The Synod of Maryland, which licensed Passavant in 1842, mentions with favor the revivals experienced in its churches during the years 1840<sup>25</sup> and 1841,<sup>26</sup> while in 1843 the General Synod itself reported synodwide revivals, and stated that they were even being held at the seminaries.<sup>27</sup> This indeed was nothing new to Passavant as he himself had experienced such a revival while at Gettysburg Seminary.<sup>28</sup>

This emotional type of Christianity had its roots in pietism and came largely from southern Germany. It was manifested most strongly in the left-wing religious bodies, but eventually found its way into the

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<sup>22</sup> Journal of the 3rd Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelical Lutheran Synod (Fort Plain: David Smith, 1840), p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Minutes of the 9th Session of the Hartwick Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the State of New York (Albany: J. Munsell, 1839), p. 30.

<sup>24</sup> Journal of the 5th Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the West (Louisville: Penn & Eliot, 1839), pp. 12 f.

<sup>25</sup> Proceedings of the 22nd Session of the Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1840), p. 25.

<sup>26</sup> Proceedings of the 23rd Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1841), p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> Proceedings of the 12th Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1843), p. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 53.



Lutheran groups.<sup>29</sup> Another root of the American revival can also be traced to England where John Wesley sought to quicken the spiritual life within the Anglican church. At the same time George Fox and the Quakers taught the doctrine that Christianity is a purely spiritual or "inner light."<sup>30</sup>

What was it that made the revival so popular in the land of America? First of all it might be noted that revivalistic churches were mostly rural.<sup>31</sup> Frontier life was lonely and as the people grew weary of the ceaseless isolation they turned to the popular camp meeting, the first of which took place as early as 1794 in North Carolina. Revivalism flourished because it appealed to the individual. It tried to shape Christianity to meet America's needs.<sup>32</sup> One of the popular items of the revival was the "anxious bench" instituted by Finney in the years 1824 to 1827.<sup>33</sup>

Then as now revivalism over-emphasized the emotional and underestimated the rational element in religious experience. It brought people into the church on the basis of emotional experience, and when that cooled off there often was little left.<sup>34</sup> As Charles P. Krauth,

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<sup>29</sup>William Warren Sweet, Revivalism In America: Its Origin, Growth, and Decline (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 24. +

<sup>30</sup>Carl Manselshagen, American Lutheranism Surrenders To Forces Of Conservatism. A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Minnesota (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936), p. 22. +

<sup>31</sup>Sweet, op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>32</sup>Sweet, op. cit., p. xii.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 145.



a Lutheran pastor and friend of Passavant put it, "It mistakes justification by sensation for justification by faith."<sup>35</sup>

What view did Lutherans take of the "New Measures"? On the one hand they could speak of the benefits of revivals as being gifts of God and deplore the evils as faults of man on the other. They appealed to the "children of God of every name and denomination" to pray for this "outpouring of the Holy Ghost."<sup>36</sup> Yet they too realized that revivals was highly emotional and often did not touch the heart:

We believe that a man can be converted, by his feelings, from a Lutheran to a Calvinist, from a Calvinist to a Methodist, and from a Methodist to an Episcopalian, without being once converted by a real and genuine Religious Experience to Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup>

When we add to this the fact that Lutherans often had to go to non-Lutheran schools for at least part of their training, it is not surprising that a door was left open to revivalistic methods, so that even Passavant himself carried the "New Measures" to an extreme.<sup>38</sup> During the same session in which Passavant was given permission to be ordained, the Synod of Maryland, which had advocated revivals for the preceding two years, appointed a committee to study the new measures.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>T. Bente, American Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), II, 77.

<sup>36</sup>G. A. Lutzner, "Thoughts on Revivals," The Lutheran Magazine, II (August 28, 1827), 166.

<sup>37</sup>Lutzner, op. cit., II (November 28, 1827), 220.

<sup>38</sup>Bente, op. cit., II, 87.

<sup>39</sup>Proceedings of the 25th Annual Session of the Synodical Lutheran Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1843), p. 8.



What was Passavant's resulting attitude toward revivalism? When he took charge of his first parish in 1842 he found that the common Lutheran service would not draw people into the church so he used revivalistic methods in an attempt to bring in new members. It was at this time that he was most thoroughly imbued with the "New Measure" spirit and he was always trying to bring about a revival.<sup>40</sup> An article which appeared in The Missionary, a mission paper founded and edited by Passavant, expressed his opinion of revivals as of the year 1851. The article stated:

To argue against revivals, or to say and do any work in opposition to the idea of revivals, has the appearance of finding fault with God's spiritual and providential administration.<sup>41</sup>

In 1856 another article stated that "Genuine revival affords the most beautiful sight on earth!"<sup>42</sup> As late as 1858 The Missionary carried articles by Harriet B. Stowe<sup>43</sup> and the great revivalist Finney<sup>44</sup> advocating revivals. Still we should state that it is to the credit of Passavant that he eventually turned from these methods and finally deplored them.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>41</sup>"Revivals," The Missionary, IV (September, 1851), 70.

<sup>42</sup>Archibald Alexander, "Genuine Revivals," The Missionary, IX (October 2, 1856), 142.

<sup>43</sup>H. B. Stowe, "The Revival," The Missionary, III (June 3, 1858), 75.

<sup>44</sup>Finney, "Baptism of the Holy Ghost," The Missionary, IX (November 6, 1856), 163.

<sup>45</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 339.



The revival movement and Schmucker, one of the most influential, non-confessional teachers in the Lutheran Church were to have a great effect on Passavant and the Lutheran Church. But Schmucker and revivals were only two of the forces of influence acting on the Lutheran Church between the years 1830 and 1870. At that time there was a sharp conflict between "American Lutheranism" and "historic Lutheranism."<sup>46</sup> Because of the necessity of obtaining pastors almost wholly from foreign supply in the earlier days of the church, the rationalistic theology which had crept into Halle, Germany, found its way into this country. In general there was a disregard for confessional differences and since emphasis was placed on the matters of agreement there was a tendency to encourage open fellowship with other denominations.<sup>47</sup>

One reason for the laxity of doctrine may be found in the fact that the pioneer synods had not been well united in faith and practice, but spent much of their time fighting one another.<sup>48</sup> At the same time the church was very poor and almost helpless because many of her members refused to make use of the English language in the church service. A third disturbing factor was the marriage of the German-American youth to youth of English and Scotch-Irish descent, which caused a resulting loss of church membership.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Lars P. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1942), p. 489.

<sup>47</sup>Manuelshagen, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>48</sup>Qualben, op. cit., p. 486.

<sup>49</sup>Manuelshagen, op. cit., p. 42.



In order to counteract these dangers, the leaders of the church tried their best in a sincere effort to perpetuate Lutheranism by uniting the various factions of the Lutheran church into one general body. The Ministerium of Pennsylvania in 1818 initiated such a movement in a proposal that the "several synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the United States of America appoint deputies to form a Constitution for a general synod."<sup>50</sup> This resulted in formation in 1821 of the General Synod.

#### Baltimore: A Young Ministry

Passavant was to become associated with the General Synod through membership in the Synod of Maryland. But even before he was to become an ordained pastor of the Synod of Maryland, something happened which had an important part in shaping Passavant's later editorial ability. On February 12, 1842, Passavant, who was only twenty years old at the time, received a letter from Dr. R. Kurtz, editor of the Observer, asking him to come about the first of June to take charge of the Observer during his absence and to be permanent assistant editor. For some time Passavant considered the offer because he could not decide whether or not he should take over such an important post. At the time he was plagued with a sore throat and thought that he might never be able to become a pastor. With this thought in mind he finally accepted the offer about April 1, 1842.<sup>51</sup> When Passavant arrived at Baltimore he was

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., pp. 42 f.

<sup>51</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., pp. 60 f.



directed to the office of "The Book Company of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States." According to his title he was assistant editor of the Observer, but really, as far as work was concerned, he was the principal editor during the absence of Dr. Kurtz.<sup>52</sup> According to Mauselsheugen the paper was:

an ultra-liberal American periodical in favor of "New Measures" and strongly anti-symbolical, in criticism of the exclusiveness of the "Old Lutherans" of America.<sup>53</sup>

During his stay with the Observer Passavant wrote many editorials. Between June and October, 1842, he wrote editorials on Street Preaching, Temperance and Religion, Pulpit Eloquence, Revivals. He also composed a draft of a proposed Historical Society. With the return of Kurtz he was offered the permanent position of editor-in-chief. This was a great honor, and Passavant wrote his mother that he was pleased at the honor bestowed on him. However, neither his mother nor his father thought very highly of this offer, and on the advice of his mother Passavant positively refused to listen to any further propositions to become editor-in-chief. But Kurtz finally brought so much pressure to bear on him that he agreed to remain for a time with the Observer as assistant editor.<sup>54</sup>

At the time a former classmate of Passavant's, Charles Porterfield Krauth, was serving a small congregation in Baltimore. When Krauth resigned the charge in 1842 he suggested that the congregation ask his friend Passavant to serve them. Upon this suggestion they approached

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>53</sup> Mauselsheugen, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>54</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 87.



Passavant and asked him to preach in their little church. He stated that he would consent only if they would allow him to organize them into a Lutheran congregation. They agreed to this, and Passavant took temporary charge of the Canton church, located in a suburb of Baltimore, as his first pastorate and organized 'The First English Evangelical Lutheran Church of Canton.' This of course was to be a temporary call, but Dr. Morris, a lifelong friend of Passavant, pressed him to accept a permanent call to Canton and Luther Chapel, a small church at Oldtown on Monument Street. On August 29, 1842, the church at Canton and Luther Chapel extended a call to him.<sup>55</sup>

Passavant was at the time a member of the Synod of Maryland, which had been organized on October 11, 1820. Its first president and leading personality was the Rev. J. Daniel Kurtz, D.D.<sup>56</sup> This synod had already licensed Passavant on October 18, 1842<sup>57</sup> and when it met for its annual session in Baltimore the following year, Luther Chapel requested that Passavant be ordained and installed in their church as soon as possible.<sup>58</sup> This request was handed to the fifth committee of the session on Monday afternoon, October 16. That same evening the request was considered by the committee which passed the resolution that Passavant "be ordained and installed in said chapel at such time as may be

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>56</sup> A. R. Wertz, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran Church in America 1820-1920 (Harrisburg: Evangelical Press, 1920), p. 57.

<sup>57</sup> Proceedings of the 24th Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1844), p. 21.

<sup>58</sup> Twenty-fifth Session of Maryland Synod, op. cit., p. 14.



convenient to the congregation and pastor." The following morning Passavant preached a sermon to the convention on Isaiah 57:15. He may have been in a hurry to take up his charge at once, for we find that on Wednesday morning he asked for and obtained leave of absence from Synod.<sup>59</sup> Passavant accepted the call to Canton and Luther Chapel for six months at \$150, and served those congregations until the year 1844 when he received a call from the First Lutheran Church of Pittsburgh.

Although Passavant had been licensed in 1842 and had been given permission to be ordained in 1843, it was not until October 21, 1844 that he was finally ordained by the Synod of Maryland.<sup>60</sup>

On March 7, 1844 Passavant received a letter from W. H. Smith, pastor of the First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, telling Passavant of his resignation from that church. The same letter informed Passavant that Smith had recommended him as the new pastor of the congregation on the grounds that he might be able to be in Pittsburgh within three to seven days.<sup>61</sup> Passavant deliberated over the call and decided to write a letter of acceptance. He mailed the letter but upon returning home he found the men of his church council waiting for him. They pleaded with him to remain in Baltimore, and told him that they had managed by desperate effort to secure subscription of \$3,000 for the building of a new church. Deeply touched, Passavant decided to remain at Canton. He

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid., pp. 17 ff.

<sup>60</sup> Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth Annual Session of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1844), pp. 20 f.

<sup>61</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 108.



hurried back to the post office and took his letter out again just before the mail was being taken away.<sup>62</sup>

#### Pittsburgh: A Field to Cultivate

On April 22, a second unanimous and most urgent call came from the church in Pittsburgh.<sup>63</sup> Despite the pleadings of his members he now felt that it was the Lord's will that he accept the call. In the spring of the year he took charge of the "First Evangelical Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh." This church, together with two others in the Pittsburgh area had been organized in 1837 by the famous missionary to India, Father Hoyer.<sup>64</sup> During the time that he served as pastor of the Pittsburgh church, Passavant became one of the most popular Lutheran pulpit orators, and many people from the city of Pittsburgh came to hear him preach.<sup>65</sup>

There were other very important things on Passavant's mind besides church work. May 1, 1845 had been set as the date of his marriage to a certain Miss Eliza Walther of Baltimore. Charles Porterfield Krauth, a friend of Passavant, had boarded at the home of Eliza's parents in Baltimore during his ministry at Canton. As a result of his frequent visits to see Krauth, Passavant met Eliza who later became his wife.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 112.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> W. A. Passavant, "Consecration of the New German Lutheran Church, Pittsburg, Pa.," The Missionary, I (December, 1848), 92.

<sup>65</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., pp. 119 and 280.



The date of the marriage had to be postponed because of the Pittsburgh fire of April 10, 1845 which destroyed the homes of many of Passavant's members. A few weeks later, however, he was able to leave for Baltimore where he married Elisa.<sup>66</sup>

Upon his return to Pittsburgh Passavant found that there was a heavy load of work for him to carry. Aside from the regular services of his church he had many extra meetings, some of which lasted for weeks at a time. He was showered with extra work by Synod in connection with its missionary program and its churches. Besides all this an immense amount of correspondence poured into his study and many people appealed to him for advice in the most delicate and difficult matters. Within a year of his marriage he became so exhausted that his family and friends realized that he must have a rest. His mother saw that the only real rest would be a trip abroad, and so she, together with her husband, arranged to furnish the means.<sup>67</sup>

#### European Journey and Deaconess Work

On July 16, 1846, after seeing that his wife and baby were sent to Baltimore to stay with her relatives, he sailed from Boston for Europe on the steamer Britannia. The first general conference of the Evangelical Alliance was to meet in London during that summer. When Passavant noticed that he would be in Europe at that time, he made plans to attend the

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., pp. 130 f.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., pp. 138 f.



Alliance. When the Pittsburgh Synod met in June of 1846, they resolved to send him as their official delegate.<sup>68</sup>

The prospect of attending the Alliance pleased Passavant and he made further plans to be at the summer meetings. But the most important part of Passavant's trip to Europe was not attendance at the Alliance, but a visit to an obscure village on the Rhine called Kaiserswerth. There he was met and welcomed by Pastor Fliender, the founder of the institution of Protestant deaconesses in that city.<sup>69</sup> In cooperation with Pastor Fliender he became interested in the work and planned to found deaconess work in America.<sup>70</sup>

Passavant did not wait until his return to America to make plans to establish deaconess work. From Europe he already wrote the members of his congregation that he "seeks the pleasure of giving the brethren an opportunity of learning more of this wonderful institution of protestant deaconesses."<sup>71</sup> He was so sure that deaconess work in America would go forward that he left money with Pastor Fliedner for his further preparation, and for the expenses of the trip to America.<sup>72</sup> Upon his return to America Passavant did what work he could in preparation for the coming of Fliedner, and in the spring of 1848 rented a house in Allegheny as his Deaconess Hospital. In June of that year The Missionary carried this announcement about the "Deaconess Institute and Infirmary:"

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 145.

<sup>70</sup> Neve, op. cit., p. 77.

<sup>71</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 180.



The doors of this Institution will be opened for the reception of Christian ladies of tried and approved character, who desire to devote themselves to works of mercy, among the sick, the ignorant, and the unfortunate. <sup>73</sup>

Not only did he score a first by instituting deaconess work in America, but he also opened the first Protestant hospital in this country. <sup>74</sup>

The arrival of Pastor Theodore Fliedner and four Deaconesses from the Parent Institution in Kaiserswerth, on the 14th of July, 1849 was noted in The Missionary, together with the information that the Infirmary had been moved from Allessing to a new location in Lauryville. The same issue tells of the troubles the Institution has had. The hospital, which was to open in June, 1848 was kept from opening for eight months by the French Revolution which prevented the coming of the Deaconesses. For a long time the hospital stood unoccupied because no nurses could be found. During this entire time rent was being paid on the hospital while no income was being derived from it. Finally the first patients, three soldiers back from the war in Mexico, arrived. The three were nursed in the hospital for six weeks. <sup>75</sup>

By the following year however, Passavant could paint a brighter picture of the Deaconess work. In March, 1850 he wrote: "The friends of this Institution, in this city, will be rejoiced to learn, that it continues to enjoy the smiles of Providence. . . ." He also wrote about the progress and growth of the Institution, and that they soon hoped to

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<sup>73</sup>W. A. Passavant, "Deaconess Institute and Infirmary," The Missionary, I (June, 1848), 44.

<sup>74</sup>Gerhardings, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>75</sup>W. A. Passavant, "Missions within the Church," The Missionary, II (March, 1850), 17.



build a hospital near the Infirmary.<sup>76</sup> In July of the same year he noted that the legislature of the state had granted an act of incorporation for the "Society of Christian Females"<sup>77</sup> and so he organized the "Institution of Protestant Deaconesses of the County of Allegheny, Pennsylvania."<sup>78</sup>

Nor did he escape the headaches which were to follow the organization of the Deaconess Institution in America. He had trouble keeping deaconesses for very long, for many would marry after only a few short years of service. Then too it seems that the smear campaign was not unknown at the time. For a while a story which made the rounds of the press was that those women who went into Deaconess work had to make vows of celibacy for that purpose. The paper which had originally printed the story had corrected its error, but other papers did not seem to notice the correction and kept up the misrepresentation.<sup>79</sup> By June of 1853 the Institution seemed to be over the hardest and highest hurdles and was expanding into new fields of endeavor:

Hitherto, the principal labor of the sisters has been the cure and relief of the sick.

A second field of labor has been among the female prisoners in the Western Penitentiary, located in Allegheny City.

A third field of labor has been among the Orphans.

A fourth class, for whose relief something has been done are aged and friendless females.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup>W. A. Passavant, "Deaconess Institution," The Missionary, III (March, 1850), 17.

<sup>77</sup>W. A. Passavant, "Institution of Protestant Deaconesses," The Missionary, III (March, 1850), 52.

<sup>78</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>79</sup>Pitts. Com. Journal. "Protestant Deaconesses," The Missionary, III (July, 1850), 53.

<sup>80</sup>W. A. Passavant, "The Deaconess Institution at Pittsburgh, Pa.," The Missionary, VI (June, 1853), 44.



Such was the background of the man William Alfred Passavant and the church into whose ministry he entered on October 17, 1842 at the age of twenty-one. By the time he was twenty-seven Passavant has published two issues of the Lutheran Almanac, had been assistant editor and editor-in-chief of the Observer, served three different churches, made a trip to Europe and had founded Deaconess work in the United States.



## CHAPTER III

### PASSAVANT AND THE GENERAL SYNOD

#### There Must be a Pittsburgh Synod

The overwhelming amount of work Passavant did at Pittsburgh threatened to ruin his health. Despite this fact he refused to sit back and let things take their own course. Already during his first year at the First Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh he had felt the need of a synod in the western part of Pennsylvania having Pittsburgh as its center.<sup>1</sup> Western Pennsylvania was so far from the old established congregations in the eastern part of the state that the mission churches around Pittsburgh could not expect the leaders in the east fully to appreciate their difficulties and needs. It took Passavant some time, but he finally brought a conference together composed of a few Lutheran ministers who lived in western Pennsylvania. They met in Pittsburgh on August 27, 1844.<sup>2</sup> At that time the foundation out of which the Pittsburgh Synod grew was laid. This little group of pastors decided to investigate the possibilities and the necessity of establishing a new synod; then if a real need were felt, a new synod would be formed.

At first Passavant had some trouble organizing the group, because some of the men he had counted on for help backed out. However, he

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<sup>1</sup>G. H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D. (Greenville, Pa: The Young Lutheran Co., 1906), p. 121.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 122.



finally succeeded in bringing together another group of men in his Pittsburgh church. There were eight pastors and six lay delegates present at the meeting on January 15, 1845 when "The Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church" was founded.<sup>3</sup>

By bringing these groups together and convincing the men present that it was necessary to form a new synod, Passavant was again displaying his leadership ability. His efforts came to an end when he had accomplished the formation of the Pittsburgh Synod. Although he was but twenty-four years of age at the time, it was Passavant who in the main drew up the constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod. In 1847, two years after it was drawn up, the constitution was adopted by the Pittsburgh Synod.<sup>4</sup>

The Pittsburgh Synod was composed largely of young men, and the synod had a fervent missionary zeal from the beginning. The missionary operations were guided by the never-lagging efforts of Passavant, who has been called "The father of Inner Mission work in America." Under his leadership the Pittsburgh Synod became known as the "Missionary Synod", and founded the Canada, Texas, Minnesota, and Nova Scotia synods.<sup>5</sup> Because of Passavant's interest in missions and his leadership in those lines, the synod's Home Mission activity set the pattern for the whole church.<sup>6</sup> Besides founding the above mentioned synods, the Pittsburgh Synod also carried on successful missionary work in such cities as

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> F. Bente, American Lutheranism (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), II, 178.

<sup>6</sup> J. L. Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America, edited by W. D. Allbeck (3rd edition; Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 77.



Knoxville, Chattanooga, Nashville, Wheeling, Fort Wayne, Canton, Cleveland, Chicago, and other western cities.<sup>7</sup>

While we cannot state definitely what caused Passavant's deep interest in mission work, the answer may be found in the character of the Maryland and Virginia Synod in which he was licensed and ordained. On October 19, 1828 that Synod met at Shepherd's-town, Virginia, and founded what is known as the "Parent Domestic Missionary and Educational Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia."<sup>8</sup> The object of the missionary society was stated in the constitution as follows:

To help indigent students, supply the destitute brethren with the means of grace, and to promote the general interests of the Gospel in the Lutheran Church.<sup>9</sup>

Two of the men who were appointed managers of the society were a Mr. Walk and Mr. David Martin of Baltimore, the city in which Passavant edited the Observer and took charge of his first parish. When the society met for the second time and submitted its first annual report on October 20, 1829 it was reported that there were already seven auxiliaries of the society, two of which belonged to the English Lutheran church in Baltimore.<sup>10</sup> While Passavant may not have had direct contact with these men and the English Lutheran church in Baltimore, yet because of his membership in the Synod of Maryland and Virginia he doubtless knew about the society and its aims. Many requests for ministers and missionaries came

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<sup>7</sup>Edmund Jacob Wolf, The Lutherans in America (New York: J. A. Hill & Company, 1889), p. 450.

<sup>8</sup>G. A. Lintner, "Domestic Missionary and Educational Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia," The Lutheran Magazine, II (November, 1828), 243.

<sup>9</sup>Lintner, op. cit., II (December, 1828), 261.

<sup>10</sup>Lintner, op. cit., III (December, 1829), 242.



to the mission society of the Maryland and Virginia Synod. During the course of one winter twenty-five congregations applied for missionaries.<sup>11</sup>

Passavant knew of the great need for missionaries in the western part of the state. While the Ohio, West Pennsylvania and other Synods claimed to be serving the scattered Lutherans there, actually the congregations were unattended. It was the object of the Pittsburgh Synod to help these scattered and destitute brethren.<sup>12</sup>

#### In the Interest of Missions: The Missionary

A few years after the founding of the Pittsburgh Synod Passavant began the publication of a monthly paper called The Missionary. According to Dr. Mamm, a leading Lutheran pastor of the time, The Missionary stood solidly on the Augsburg Confession by the year 1856. Mamm called The Missionary a popular paper, and attributed its popularity to the fact that it did not resort to brawls even when bitterly attacked by the Lutheran Observer, one of the leading Lutheran papers in those years.<sup>13</sup>

While Passavant printed many articles in The Missionary on behalf of the sick, poor, widows, orphans, and all others in need of help, the real purpose of The Missionary was to promote interest in missions. With the help of Passavant's friend, Charles Porterfield Krauth, it took on a theological character. Some thought it heavy reading for a weekly because

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>12</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 126.

<sup>13</sup> J. W. Mamm, Lutheranism In America (Philadelphia: Lindsay & Blakiston, 1857), p. 101.



of this, but despite its drawbacks it had a powerful and permanent influence upon the educated ministry.<sup>14</sup> Under Passavant's guidance The Missionary was one of the strongest forces of conservatism in the General Synod, because it fought against the liberal tendencies of that body.<sup>15</sup>

In the year 1861 The Missionary was merged with The Lutheran which was published in Philadelphia. The new paper was edited by the younger Doctor Krauth who furthered the conservatism of the paper by exposing the shallowness of "American Lutheranism."<sup>16</sup> All issues of The Missionary were filled with articles about the missions of all churches, and Passavant published special articles in connection with the missionary work of the Pittsburgh Synod.

#### The Canada Synod: Northern Adventurs

As a result of its missionary zeal and activity, the Pittsburgh Synod was directly responsible for the formation of three well-known Lutheran Synods. The Canada Synod was the first of such organizations which can trace its formation to the work of the Pittsburgh Synod. The Pittsburgh Synod's contact with Canada came as a result of action on the part of the Canadian brethren. In the spring of 1849 some members of a congregation in the city of Vaughan, Canada, met and appointed one of its members, Mr. Adam Zeffer, to visit J. Munemacker, in Sagerstown,

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<sup>14</sup> Neve, op. cit. p. 80.

<sup>15</sup> Carl Kauselshagen, American Lutheranism Surrenders To Forces Of Conservatism (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936), p. 47.

<sup>16</sup> Neve, op. cit., p. 109.



Pennsylvania. The congregation requested Hunsacker, a member of the Ohio Synod to secure a pastor for them.

Hunsacker could do nothing for them at the time, but he knew that the Pittsburgh Synod was meeting at Klecknerville, Pennsylvania just then, and so he took Mr. Keffer to the conference.<sup>17</sup> Hunsacker and several other pastors had served the congregation in Vaughan, and another located at Markam, a city some miles distant, for several years, but could not remain with them permanently. When Mr. Keffer appeared before the delegates of the convention, he made a plea that they would do something to supply the needs of the destitute congregations in Canada. Immediately the group appointed the president of the Pittsburgh Synod, Rev. G. Bassler, to visit the two churches as soon as possible and to stay with them and minister to them for a month or six weeks.<sup>18</sup>

Bassler visited the congregations and supplied them for the prescribed time. Nothing further was done to supply a pastor to the Canadians during the following year, and when synod met in 1850 Mr. Keffer again appeared before the delegates to plead for help. At this convention the delegates passed a resolution to send aid to these congregations as soon as possible.<sup>19</sup> By October, 1850 G. F. Diehl, a student at Gettysburg, was chosen to be missionary and appointed to serve the congregations in Canada.

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<sup>17</sup>Valdimar J. Rylands, *Lutherans In Canada* (Winnipeg: The Columbia Press Limited, 1945), p. 59.

<sup>18</sup>W. A. Passavant, "Fourth Annual Report of the Missionary President and Committee of the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *The Missionary*, II (September 1849), 71.

<sup>19</sup>"Mission in Canada West," *Ibid.*, III (June, 1850), 44.



On October 16 he was examined and approved for the ministry, licensed and at the same service commissioned as Missionary to Canada.<sup>20</sup>

The arrival of Diehl in Canada marks the beginning of Pittsburgh Synod mission work north of the International boundary line. By March, 1851, the work was well under way, and synod's mission committee wished to find at least one man to serve as reinforcement for Diehl. Diehl himself wrote Passavant of plans to organize a Canada Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church at some future date.<sup>21</sup> A few months later it was announced that E. Wurster, a student at Gettysburg, would be sent to Canada as a second man in the field as soon as he would receive his license from synod.<sup>22</sup> Wurster was ordained in the Lutheran Church in Vaughan, where a conference of Lutheran Ministers had assembled. This is the first known ordination of a Lutheran pastor to take place in Canada.<sup>23</sup>

In August, 1851, Wurster wrote Passavant that he had translated the Constitution and Discipline which was recommended by the Pittsburgh Synod, and that this was to serve as the constitution of the church he was serving. He hastened to note that though he had made some changes in the Constitution, and enlarged it in a few points, still this has been done in such a way that it does not in any way conflict with the letter and

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<sup>20</sup>"Canada Mission-Appointment of a Missionary," Ibid., III (November, 1850), 92.

<sup>21</sup>"The Canada Mission," Ibid., IV (March, 1851), 17.

<sup>22</sup>"Missionary Intelligence," Ibid., IV (May, 1851), 36.

<sup>23</sup>"Conference of Lutheran Ministers in Canada," Ibid., IV (July, 1851), 53.



spirit of the original.<sup>24</sup> As we shall later see, both the Texas and Minnesota Synods also made use of the constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod in forming their own constitutions. It was a wise move on the part of Passavant and the Pittsburgh Synod to supply their missionaries with a constitution after which they could model the constitution of the newly formed churches and synods. This action tended to draw the younger groups closer to the mother body.

With the arrival of Diehl and Wurster in Canada there came more pleas for missionaries as people in outlying districts came to these men asking for ministers. In 1851 Wurster wrote Passavant that men came to him from distant settlements asking for pastors of Christian character. He added that he could quickly place three "pious and well educated men." Diehl too tells of the need for more pastors, stating that while the English language is generally spoken, still there are many in his district who speak German and need pastors. His suggestion is that synod send a man who would officiate in both the German and the English language.<sup>25</sup>

Diehl tried to arrange the first conference of Lutheran pastors in Canada in November, 1852. He wrote to men of the New York Ministerium in Canada, to Rev. Wurster and other individuals, of his plan to have a conference in Markham on October 1, 1852. Because of sickness and the fact that some of the men were absent from their parishes to attend their own

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<sup>24</sup>"Canada West-Waterloo Mission," Ibid., IV (August, 1851), 56.

<sup>25</sup>"Markham and Vaughan Mission, Home District, C.W.," Ibid., IV (November, 1851), 82.



synodical conventions, the only man who showed up was Rev. J. Fishburn, from Pennsylvania. He arrived in time to preach at Diehl's church, but the conference proved a failure.<sup>26</sup> Despite the problem of great distance, short supply of pastors, and the fact that the pastors could seldom meet, scarcely five years after the first missionary was sent to Canada there were already fourteen churches under the care of the missionaries of the Pittsburgh Synod.<sup>27</sup>

After some time it became apparent that it would be necessary to organize a separate conference for Canada within the Pittsburgh Synod. This was done at Trinity Church, New Hamburg, Canada, on February 2, 1859. But it was soon discovered that just forming a conference within a Synod which had headquarters in the United States was not satisfactory. It was deemed necessary to organize a separate synod in Canada. The Canada Conference of the Pittsburgh Synod held its last meeting in Old Zion Church, Gaughan, on July 22, 1861, where resolutions were passed to form a new synod. The new organization was named "The Evangelical Lutheran Canada Synod."<sup>28</sup>

Passavant's aid to the Canadian brethren did not come to an end with the formation of the new synod. As late as 1867 he made a laborious journey to visit that synod. They needed his help badly, because there were many impostors, adventurers, and place-seekers who were imposing on the Canada Synod, and the synod itself did not know how to take care of

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<sup>26</sup>"Canada Missions," Ibid., V. (November, 1852), 80.

<sup>27</sup>"Missions among the Germans in Canada West," Ibid., VIII (March, 1855), 22.

<sup>28</sup>Eylands, op. cit., p. 95.



the problem.<sup>29</sup> The Canada Synod became a member of the General Council in 1866 and is at the present time a member of the United Lutheran Church. +

#### The Texas Synod: Southern Exposure

A second synod which owes its existence primarily to the Pittsburgh Synod and to Passavant's missionary zeal is the Texas Synod. In 1842, while he was with the Observer, Passavant had directed the attention of the church to the Texas mission field. Since nothing had been done to relieve the needs of the Lutherans in Texas by 1849 he complained that there was no missionary among the Germans who are flowing into that state. He suggested that a missionary be sent to Texas at once.<sup>30</sup> In 1850 the Synod of South Carolina sent Rev. George Guebner, a licentiate of that body, to Texas as its missionary. +v

In June and August of 1850 Passavant wrote editorials about the mission prospects in Texas in an attempt to keep the attention of the Church focused on that field. In the latter article he points out that the Texas mission field is particularly important because Texas is on the highway to New Mexico, Utah, and California. People of the Lutheran church were following the tide of immigration into those states, and he felt that they should have missionaries who would accompany them to their new homes.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 371. +

<sup>30</sup>"Germans in Texas-Their Religious Condition," The Missionary, II (July, 1849), 55.

<sup>31</sup>"Texas Mission Field," Ibid., III (August, 1850), 58.



When Rev. Guebner made a return trip to Pennsylvania late in 1850 he presented the needs of the German Lutherans in Texas before the Middle Conference of the Pittsburgh Synod. As a result of his presentation it was resolved that the Mission Committee study the propriety of procuring several men for the Texas field.<sup>32</sup> In May, 1851, Rev. Guebner wrote Passevant a letter begging the Pittsburgh Synod to send Rev. Braun, who had been trained for the ministry at the Basler Missionhaus in Switzerland, to Texas as soon as possible. Rev. Braun was commissioned by the Pittsburgh Synod in June, 1851, to serve as missionary among the Germans in Texas.<sup>33</sup> +✓

The work of Rev. Braun was centered around Houston, Texas, where he founded a church which was incorporated under the title of the "First German Evangelical Lutheran Church of Houston." The charter of that congregation required that the pastor of the church was to hold membership in the Pittsburgh Synod until such time as a Lutheran Synod would be organized in Texas, at which time he was to become a member of that group.<sup>34</sup>

The Texas Synod used the constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod as a model for its own constitution. In fact, very few changes were made in the original before it became the constitution of the Texas Synod. On November 10, 1851, seven men met at the Presbyterian Church in Houston for the purpose of organizing a synod and chose Rev. Braun to be temporary chairman of their group. By May, 1852, nine churches belonged to

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<sup>32</sup>"A Texan Mission," Ibid., IV (January, 1851), 4.

<sup>33</sup>"Texan Mission," Ibid., IV (June, 1851), 44.

<sup>34</sup>"Texas," Ibid., IV (November, 1851), 83.



the "First German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas." A supply of pastors continued to come from Switzerland, and by July, 1856, there were twenty-one pastors in the Texas Synod, most of whom had been trained at Basel.<sup>35</sup>

The Texas Synod joined the General Synod in 1853 and remained in that body until it withdrew in 1868. It joined the General Council in 1868 and remained with that group until 1894. In 1895 it joined the Iowa Synod and was accepted into that body June, 1896. But not all the men of the Texas Synod went into merger with the Iowa Synod. Eight of the pastors and fifteen of the congregations remained separate because the Iowa Synod had insisted on a complete severance of the bond which had united the Texas Synod with the St. Crischona Institute of Basel. Later on this little group joined the General Council and was absorbed into the United Lutheran Church.<sup>36</sup>

#### The Minnesota Synod: Western Expansion

The Minnesota Synod is the third group which came into existence through the efforts of Passavant and the Pittsburgh Synod. One of the leading personalities of that Synod was John Christian Frederick Heyer, noted missionary to India. Heyer was born at Helmstedt, Germany, on July 10, 1793, and came over to America when yet a very young man. He did his first American mission work in Kentucky and Indiana after he had been commissioned by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania to visit these

<sup>35</sup>"The Texas Synod," The Missionary, IX (July, 1856), 90.

<sup>36</sup>W. H. Bewie, Missouri In Texas (Austin: The Steck Company, 1952), p. 5.



districts.<sup>37</sup> In 1835 the General Synod organized the "Central Mission Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," and two years later sent out six men, among Hoyer to explore the missionary possibilities of the Mississippi Valley. At that time Hoyer founded three congregations in and near Pittsburgh, where Passavant was to begin his labors seven years later. Because of his work in Pittsburgh, Hoyer has been called the "Father of Lutheranism in Pittsburgh."<sup>38</sup> Hoyer made two trips as missionary to India, the first when he was forty-eight years old, the second when he was seventy-seven. His arrival at Guntur, India, on July 31, 1842, is now celebrated as the birthday of American Lutheran missions in India.<sup>39</sup>

Such was the man Passavant induced the General Synod to send to Minnesota in 1857. After he had been appointed missionary to Minnesota, Hoyer stopped over in Pittsburgh to make final arrangements with Passavant regarding the manner in which the first English Lutheran home mission project in that territory should be promoted. Passavant had already been to Minnesota the year before and had secured \$1,200 for a church lot in St. Paul. On November 9, 1857, Hoyer left Pittsburgh on his way to St. Paul where his labors in connection with the Minnesota Synod were to begin.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Martin L. Wagner, The Chicago Synod and its Antecedents (Waverly, Iowa: Wartburg Publishing House Press, n.d.), pp. 31 f.

<sup>38</sup> Theodore E. Bachmann, They Called Him Father, The Life Story of John Christian Frederick Hoyer (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1942), p. 112.

<sup>39</sup> Bachmann, op. cit., p. 122.

<sup>40</sup> "Church Intelligence," The Missionary, I (November, 1857), 166.



During the early days of the Minnesota Synod Hoyer was its president. It was because of his own conservatism that the Minnesota Synod was founded on the orthodox position which appointed the Unaltered Augsburg Confession its confession. Despite a firm resolve to be founded on a conservative basis, it was fourteen years before the Minnesota Synod reached this goal. Father Hoyer lived long enough to see this come to pass. Before he died quietly and unattended during the night of November 7, 1873, he saw his beloved Minnesota Synod join the Synodical Conference.<sup>41</sup>

What sequence of events brought Hoyer into mission work in Minnesota where he helped organize the Minnesota Synod? The men who was most directly responsible for the organization of a Lutheran Synod in Minnesota was Passavant. From the time that he first began to publish articles in The Missionary about the coming of Swedes and Norwegians to Minnesota, Passavant became interested in that nationality group. Because of letters which men from St. Paul wrote him about the necessity of having men who could preach both English and German, Passavant became aware of what must be done. He set his heart on founding a synod which would unite the Swedish, Norwegian, German, and American brethren in one body. For this reason he called on the veteran Hoyer to do mission work not only among the German, but also the English speaking Lutherans in St. Paul and vicinity. During the entire time that Hoyer was working in Minnesota for the formation of the synod, he and Passavant were in constant correspondence with reference to the proposed synod. However, they kept the matter

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<sup>41</sup>Beckmann, op. cit., p. 332.



secret until they had found what was the general attitude of all parties concerned.<sup>42</sup>

Although Heyor was not sent to Minnesota until 1857, Passavant was already trying to stir up the church's interest in that territory as early as 1849. At the time The Missionary was little more than a year old, but Passavant's interest had widened enough to include all those parts of Zion which needed spiritual help. He wrote that other church bodies were sending men to serve the people of Minnesota and that it was now time to send a missionary to that young Territory in the North West. The article was a strong appeal to the Lutheran church to begin mission work in Minnesota:

Shall not the Evangelical Lutheran Church at least follow, as we cannot lead in this holy work? Grand and noble it would be, if the Home Missionary Society of the General Synod would commission some one of our brethren who could preach in both languages, and lay broad and strong the foundations of primitive Christianity in the settlements of this incipient state.<sup>43</sup>

But his appeals were of no avail and no mission work was planned for Minnesota during the next few years. By the year 1853 Passavant could no longer keep silent, and when he read a notice from the New York Tribune that Swedes were passing through New York on their way to Minnesota and likely had no pastor, he made another appeal. It was written in fervent language: "Oh that the Church would awake to her solemn responsibilities, and would devote her utmost energies to supply the need of her constantly increasing population."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup>George M. Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850 - 1860: (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1927), pp. 93 f.

<sup>43</sup>"Minnesota Territory," The Missionary, II (July, 1849), 55.

<sup>44</sup>"Scandinavians in Minnesota," Ibid., VI (December, 1854), 92.



Again nothing was done. A full year passed by without the church taking notice of the needs of the destitute brethren of the Lutheran Church in Minnesota. He wrote that he has "again and again for several years called attention to the important field in Minnesota" but that thus far all his efforts have been in vain. Passavant was not one who intended to criticize, but being a man of action he had definite plans in mind. He appealed to the Home Missionary Society again to send a man to Minnesota who could preach in both the German and English language. Passavant tried to drive home the point that the time for action had come. He wrote that "every year's delay will throw back the cause ten years."<sup>45</sup>

In the spring of 1855 he renewed his appeals that the church send missionaries to Minnesota, but again nothing was done. By the fall of that year a pastor in St. Paul who had heard of Passavant and his interest in Minnesota missions wrote a letter which Passavant printed in The Missionary. The writer stated that he was the only German speaking pastor of the Lutheran Church in that part of the country. He stated that it was "high time that the many German emigrants should be provided for." The need was evident and help must be sent immediately because the people are "as sheep without a shepherd."<sup>46</sup> But the old story of delay and disappointment continued. In January, 1856, Passavant printed a letter from another pastor in St. Paul who also pleaded that a missionary be sent to that city. This pastor appealed to Passavant to use all the persuasion he could in securing an English speaking missionary for Minnesota.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>"Church Intelligence," Ibid., VII (December, 1854), 92.

<sup>46</sup>"Extracts from Correspondence," Ibid., VIII (August, 1855), 62.

<sup>47</sup>"Minnesota Territory," Ibid., IX (January, 1856), 3.



By the fall of 1856 Passavant had made arrangements for a trip to Minnesota. On this, his first trip to that territory, he passed through Chicago where he met a Norwegian pastor, the Rev. Paul Anderson, who accompanied Passavant on his journey. At LaCrosse, Wisconsin, they found a number of Norwegians, and held a Norwegian-English service in a private house.<sup>48</sup> At this time Passavant felt it best to establish only English missions in Minnesota, but by the time he had completed his tour of the state he was convinced that there was need for German missionaries also.<sup>49</sup> +V

Passavant and Anderson not only held services for the Norwegians they had gathered together for worship at LaCrosse, but they also stayed over in that city for a few days to help those interested in building a church gather up money for the purpose of buying a lot. On Monday and Tuesday they collected all but forty-five dollars of the sum needed. The remaining amount they supplied from money they had along for such purposes and secured the lot which had been chosen.<sup>50</sup> Moving on to Red Wing, Minnesota they ministered to members of the Lutheran Church there and traveled twelve miles out into the country to meet Pastor Norelius who was working among his Swedish brethren. This was Passavant's first contact with Norelius. In the years which followed Passavant had many contacts with both Norelius and the Augustana Synod.

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<sup>48</sup> George Henry Trabert, English Lutheranism in the Northwest (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1914) 53p; 19.

<sup>49</sup> Abdel Ross Wentz, The Lutheran Church in American History, second revised edition (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1933), p. 366.

<sup>50</sup> "Notes of a Tour to Minnesota," The Missionary, IX (September, 1856), 134.



Eight days were spent in St. Paul itself, and during that time Passavant had time to become acquainted with the town, its people, resources, and prospects. After spending some time visiting various parts of the city, Passavant and the Lutherans of St. Paul who followed his guiding came to an agreement and chose the site on which the proposed church was to be located. In the meanwhile he succeeded in raising more than \$1,200 for a church, but found it impossible to buy the lot as the owners were out of town. As a result there was a delay in securing the lot on which the church was later built.<sup>51</sup>

In the fall of 1857 Passavant made a plea to the East Pennsylvania Synod, meeting at Lancaster, in behalf of the scattered Lutherans in Minnesota. The delegates to the convention passed the resolution that five hundred dollars be appropriated to the support of the mission in St. Paul. Thus it came to pass that the East Pennsylvania Synod cooperated with the Pittsburgh Synod in its mission work in Minnesota.<sup>52</sup>

Passavant advised the men in Minnesota to organize a Church union or Conference. This conference was held in the Swedish Lutheran church Red Wing, Minnesota, July 3-5, 1858. Hayer was elected chairman of the conference. Although the Swedes were in favor of forming a new Synod, they wished to have time to speak to their Swedish brethren in Illinois before joining the proposed synod. Despite the fact a movement to form the Minnesota Synod was already under way in 1858, it was not actually founded until July 6, 1860. It received the name "The Evangelical

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<sup>51</sup>"Notes of a Tour of Minnesota," *Ibid.*, IX (October, 1856), 146.

<sup>52</sup>Neve, *op. cit.*, p. 236.



Lutheran Synod of Minnesota." This group first belonged to the General Synod but later affiliated with the General Council. In 1871 it went over to the Synodical Conference, and still belongs to that group as a part of the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>53</sup> ✓

#### The General Synod: A Time for Labor

These then are the synods which for a great part owe their existence to the missionary zeal of Passavant and the Pittsburgh Synod: the Canada Synod, the Texas Synod, and the Minnesota Synod. Strictly speaking, the mission which was carried on by Passavant and the Pittsburgh Synod between the years 1845 and 1853 cannot be considered as being done directly in connection with the General Synod. The Pittsburgh Synod did not become a part of the General Synod until the year 1853. When the Pittsburgh Synod joined the General Synod, the Texas Synod followed the example of its mother synod and also joined the larger group. Since the Minnesota Synod was not founded until much later, it did not join the General Synod in 1853, but came into that body in 1864. However, none of these synods were to remain in the General Synod permanently. By the year 1868 all three of these synods were among those who withdrew from the General Synod to become members of the General Council which was organized in the year 1866. ✓

The work which Passavant did in the General Synod was an attempt to bring that body to a more conservative position. Over the years a liberal tendency had crept into the Lutheran Church, especially into the

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<sup>53</sup>Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church In America (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1907, p. 50).



General Synod. Men in the Lutheran church were beginning to study the confessions and saw the danger that lay ahead for the church if the liberal tendencies would not be curbed. Some of those who longed for a return to a more conservative historic Lutheranism published the Evangelical Review. The Missionary too became more conservative. By the end of 1855 Passavant had decided, on the advice of many friends, to publish The Missionary on a weekly basis in hopes that it might strengthen the conservative element in the General Synod.<sup>54</sup>

The liberal group of the General Synod had control of the Lutheran Observer and used that paper to spread their views. This group of men thought they were stronger than they really were. In September, 1853, they sent out a pamphlet of fifty-two pages under the title "Definite Platform." They had hoped that this pamphlet, which was intended to be "An American Recension of the Augsburg Confession," would win supporters to the cause of overthrowing conservative Lutheranism. Instead, the attitude of the various synods of the General Synod was to oppose the Liberals.<sup>55</sup>

As the liberal tendencies in the General Synod continued to grow, the weekly Missionary was launched in the defense of the old Lutheran faith. The new series of The Missionary began in the first week of January, 1856, and carried articles on the Augsburg Confession, together with quotes from Luther and Lutheran dogmatists.<sup>56</sup> While there were many who

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<sup>54</sup> Gerberding, op. cit. p. 332.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p. 326.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 332.



followed the way pointed out by Passavant, there were still those elements in the General Synod which tended to lean even more toward liberal ways. In the year 1863 Passavant wrote an editorial giving seven illustrations of the liberal tendencies in parts of the Church "which ought to arouse every man who loves the truth."<sup>57</sup>

When the Pittsburgh Synod met in May, 1856, at Zelienople, Pennsylvania, for its annual convention, it passed several resolutions favoring the Augsburg Confession and endorsing a more conservative trend in the General Synod. Passavant was not trying to advocate a split from the General Synod at the time, but still attempted to work from within the group in the hope of bringing enough pressure to bear to cause the body to accept a more conservative outlook. In The Lutheran And Missionary, the paper which resulted from the merger of The Missionary and the Lutheran which was published in Philadelphia, Passavant wrote an editorial to the General Synod, about to convene in York in 1863, asking the General Synod to make certain reforms. His requests were made in a quiet, man- nerly way, stressing the fact that the church must work for the retention of the pure faith of the Lutheran church. He told the members of synod that they must not adopt the Definite Platform or any other substitute for the Augsburg Confession, if for no other reason than that it was con- trary to the constitution of the General Synod.<sup>58</sup>

The Ministerium of Pennsylvania, which had left the General Synod in 1823, had at the time it re-entered in 1853, reserved the right for

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 443.



its delegates to withdraw from General Synod conventions at any time to report to their own synod if they felt that the General Synod had violated its own constitution. This they did in 1864. When the General Synod met again in 1866 the leaders of synod tried to keep the Ministerium from taking part in the convention. Knowing the situation, Passavant came to the aid of the Ministerium. When a vote was to be taken to decide whether or not the Ministerium should be admitted to the convention, Passavant read a short Scripture lesson (Acts 16:35-37) in the hope that it would influence the delegates of the various synods at the convention to allow the Ministerium of Pennsylvania to be admitted. When, however, the vote decided that the Ministerium be not admitted, Passavant gave notice that he and others would protest, and asked all who felt as he did to meet at the residence of a Mr. Ruthrauff during the afternoon. The group which met that afternoon drew up a resolution against the arbitrary action of the General Synod. The resolution which was signed by twenty-eight delegates belonging to the Synods of New York, Pittsburgh, English Ohio, English Iowa, Northern Indiana, Minnesota, Illinois, and Hartwick of New York was later read to the convention by Passavant.<sup>59</sup>

From this time on there was little doubt that there would be a split in the General Synod. One week after the Ministerium had been excluded from the convention at Fort Wayne it sent out a call for a convention of representatives of all Lutheran synods that accepted all the Lutheran Confessions to meet at Reading, Pennsylvania, in the following December. When the Pittsburgh Synod held its convention in Rochester,

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<sup>59</sup>  
Ibid., p. 446.



Pennsylvania in October, 1866, Passavant was probably the most influential in causing that synod to send representatives to the convention called by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. This action marked the end of Passavant's activity in connection with the General Synod. <sup>60</sup>

Passavant's work from the time he entered the ministry until he, together with the Pittsburgh Synod, withdrew from the General Synod was a busy time. He had helped found the Pittsburgh Synod and had published The Missionary. He had seen his influence cause the founding of the Synods of Texas, Canada, and Minnesota. At the same time he had watched the General Synod parting far from historic Lutheranism, even though he had done much to give that body a taste of conservative Lutheranism. Because of his editorials in The Missionary he had opened the eyes of many to the dangers of liberalism, and because of his own personal influence he had caused still others to gain heart and leave the General Synod to help found a more conservative group, the General Council.

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 449 f.



## CHAPTER IV .

### PASSAVANT IN THE GENERAL COUNCIL

#### A Guiding Light

Before the year 1866 had come to an end, the General Synod could no longer lay claim to the services of one of its most valuable and important men, W. A. Passavant. After the Ministerium of Pennsylvania had been refused admission to the Fort Wayne convention, the Ministerium issued a call to all Lutheran Synods which accepted the Unaltered Augsburg Confession as their official confession to assemble for a convention. When the convention began at Reading, Pennsylvania, in December 1866, Passavant, together with three other pastors of the Pittsburgh Synod, was present as an official delegate of his synod. Thirteen synods were represented at the Reading convention. Those which are of interest to us were the Wisconsin, Pittsburgh, Minnesota, Missouri, and Canada Synods.<sup>1</sup>

When the first regular convention of the General Council was held in Fort Wayne in the month of November of the following year, the Missouri Synod did not again send delegates. Of course Passavant was again in attendance. If we include the preliminary convention of 1866, Passavant attended twenty-four conventions of the General Council during the years 1866 to 1893. He was absent from only one convention, the fifteenth,

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<sup>1</sup> B. E. Ochsenford, Documentary History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1912), p. 131.



held in the year 1882. As a result of his faithful attendance, he has the best record of attendance between the preliminary convention in 1866 and the last convention before his death which occurred in 1894.<sup>2</sup>

Immediately upon the formation of the General Council the talents of Passavant were put to use by that body. One of the first assignments the General Council gave to Passavant was work on a committee which was to draw up the English Church Book. As if this were not enough, he was assigned to a committee which planned the outline for a constitution of the General Council. There was little doubt that he had the ability for such a project, for he had been instrumental in writing the constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod when he was yet in his early twenties. The outline drawn up by the committee was presented to the General Council and was approved. Passavant was then placed on another committee which wrote the constitution. The finished product was also presented to the General Council, and like the outline, was approved.<sup>3</sup> Knowing that Passavant was well-known and influential in the state of Pennsylvania, the Council also appointed him to work in conjunction with six other men to obtain a charter for the Council. As a result of the committee's action, the state of Pennsylvania granted the charter to incorporate the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.<sup>4</sup>

The years of Passavant's life between 1866 until he died in 1894 were, if it is possible, even more crowded with activity than those spent before the formation of the General Council. He was immersed body and

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 547.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 142 f.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 174.



soul in supervising the institutions of mercy which he had founded in Pittsburgh, Rochester, and Zellenople, Pennsylvania, and in Milwaukee, Chicago, and New York. About this time he was founding a college in the opening of Thiel Hall, at Phillipsburg, Pennsylvania. He had great interest in the Philadelphia Seminary, and was already planning and praying for the Chicago Seminary. He was co-editor of The Lutheran and Missionary, and pastor of churches in Rochester and Baden, Pennsylvania. He served as everybody's counsellor and advisor, and was appealed to from every side. His advice was asked in many letters every day.<sup>5</sup>

#### The Indiana-Chicago Synod: A Friend in Need

Not only individuals, but also synods and whole nationality groups appealed to Passavant for help. One of the synods which turned to Passavant for counsel and aid was the old Indiana-Chicago Synod. Although Passavant had no direct part in the founding of this synod, he did aid it in that he directed that two Inseensee brothers to Indiana to labor among the Lutherans of that state.<sup>6</sup> The earliest Lutherans had made their way into the southern portions of Indiana as early as 1810, and at that time they appealed to their homeland, Germany, praying for spiritual attention. But help was at hand. It is certain that the Reverend Paul Henkel was instrumental in planting the Lutheran Church in Indiana. During the years

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<sup>5</sup>G. H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D. (Greenville, Pa: The Young Lutheran Co., 1906), p. 448.

<sup>6</sup>Martin L. Wagner, The Chicago Synod and its Antecedents (Waverly, Iowa: Wartburg Publishing House Press, n.d.), p. 173.



following 1810 many Henkels were found laboring in Indiana or neighboring states.<sup>7</sup>

By the year 1835 some pastors in Indiana became convinced that united action was the proper course, and issued a call for a convention to be held in Johnson County, Indiana, August 15, 1835. The outcome of this convention was that the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Indiana," the first Lutheran synod organized west of the Ohio, was formally organized August 15, 1835. The formation of this anti-General synod group was hastened by a similar movement among the General Synod pastors residing in the west. In 1834 preachers in Tennessee, Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois began a movement to form a synod. This group of General Synod men met at Louisville, Kentucky, in 1835 and organized the "Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the West." It was this synod to which Wynken, who for some time was president of the Missouri Synod, belonged for a time.<sup>8</sup>

The Synod of Indiana, the Union Synod and the Indiana-Chicago are historically one body. In time the Indiana Synod was dissolved because it was weak and poorly organized. From this organization the Union Synod was formed. Because it became disappointed as to its purpose, was torn and distracted, it too was soon disbanded. Seeing the state of affairs in Indiana, Passavant counselled the remaining good leaders of the Lutheran Church in that state. When the General Synod was organized it gave aid to

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 71 f.



these men.<sup>9</sup> The new Indiana-Chicago Synod united with the General Synod, and is today a part of the United Lutheran Church.

#### Scandinavian First Aid: A Friend Indeed

Passavant was not only interested in aiding individuals and synodical groups, for as a matter of fact he labored for the welfare of entire national groups. A prominent part of Passavant's work was done among the Scandinavian brethren of the Lutheran Church. He was advisor, counselor, and procuror for the Norwegian and Swedish Lutherans in the United States.

The first organization among the Norwegians in America was the "Evangelical Lutheran Church of America," founded in 1846 with Eielsen as leader.<sup>10</sup> By 1849 Passavant was printing articles in The Missionary which told the church of the necessity of sending missionaries to work among the Norwegian brethren in the west.<sup>11</sup> On his first trip to Minnesota, Passavant and Anderson gathered a group of Norwegians in LaCrosse and ministered to them in that city, assisting them to purchase a lot and procure money to construct a church on that lot. The Rev. Jens C. Rose-land, who was a leader in the Norwegian Augustana Synod stated that an address made by Passavant at the St. Ansgar Conference, held to unite all Norwegian Lutheran groups, had more to do with the making of Norwegian church history in America than is usually conceded.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

<sup>10</sup> Oscar N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1950), p. 44.

<sup>11</sup> "Missions Among the Norwegians," The Missionary, II (December, 1849), 98.

<sup>12</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 359.



There was a warm and intimate friendship between Passavant and the Rev. O. J. Hatlestad, the first president of the Norwegian Augustana Synod. Hatlestad, who had come over to America in 1846 and became one of the editors of the first Norwegian paper published in America, held the office of President of the Norwegian Augustana Synod, from 1870 to 1880. For a time he served a congregation in Milwaukee, and it was there that he came into contact with Passavant. In conjunction with another pastor of Milwaukee he assisted materially in the founding of the Passavant hospital in that city. Hatlestad had a high appreciation of the wisdom and counsel of Passavant, and it was through contact with Passavant that the Norwegian Augustana Synod entered into fraternal relations with the General Council and would no doubt have joined that group if it had not merged into the United Norwegian Church.<sup>13</sup>

Of the position and influence of Passavant in the Norwegian Augustana Synod pastor Jens Roseland stated:

From 1870 to 1875 Passavant was looked upon as the foremost spiritual adviser of the Synod. It has often been asked why the Little Norwegian Augustana Synod led the Norwegian Lutherans in the English work. I believe it was owing to the keen interest and the helpful direction of Passavant with whom our early leaders stood in the most intimate relation. He served as a sort of connecting link between the orthodox English Lutheran Church and the Americanizing wing of the Norwegian Lutheran Church. It was undoubtedly through his assistance and direction that our classical school at Marshall, Wisconsin, became the most thoroughly Americanized Norwegian Lutheran school in America.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 360.



The Augustana Synod: A Helping Hand

While Passavant did much to assist the Norwegian section of the Scandinavian brethren, no national group received so much counsel, aid, and advice as did the Swedish Lutherans in America. E. Norelius, one of the early leaders among the Swedish Lutherans in America said of him, "No one who did not belong to our nationality was as well known among Swedish Lutherans as he. He had early come in contact with us and had become intimate with us and our work."<sup>15</sup> Through articles in The Missionary Passavant awakened interest in the East for the Scandinavians, and many of the gifts given to the Education Society for the Scandinavians were largely due to the interest he stirred up. He was interested in a colony in Northern Iowa or Southern Minnesota, which was to be exclusively Scandinavian, in order to allow the Scandinavians to work out their Lutheran ideas of a practical education without opposition or interference.<sup>16</sup>

Swedes began to settle in New Sweden, Iowa, as early as 1848, and by February of that year Passavant was already working to arouse the church to send missionaries among the Swedes and Norwegians who were at the time being tyrannized by the Mormons.<sup>17</sup> The first Swedish church building in Minnesota was erected in Red Wing, where Norelius served as

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<sup>15</sup>Olson, op. cit., p. 246.

<sup>16</sup>George M. Stephenson, The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850-1860 (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, 1927), p. 147.

<sup>17</sup>"Missions among the Norwegians and Swedes," The Missionary, I (February, 1848), 14.



pastor. Because of its appearance it received the name "the Swedish barn," but despite its appearance it became the cradle of the Minnesota Synod which was organized there in 1858.<sup>18</sup>

In 1850 Passavant again appealed to the church to aid the Scandinavians. He complained that men of the Frankean Synod were disrupting the Scandinavian national groups. He feared the results of this particularly because of the lax confessional basis of the Frankean Synod, which would lead many of the Scandinavian brethren astray. He was also afraid of the Missouri Synod work among the Scandinavians, but for exactly the opposite reason, they were too strict and confessional to suit him. †

Since he could not expect immediate help from the General Synod, he appealed to the Norwegians and Swedes to form a Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Synod, because he was convinced that it was the only way in which they could be provided with the Gospel and its institutions.<sup>19</sup> In reply to an article to this effect which Passavant had printed in The Missionary a letter was received from Lars P. Esbjorn, a Swedish pastor in Minnesota, who asked for copies of Luther's Small Catechism in English as there were none to be had in that language in Minnesota. Esbjorn added that he had not yet united with any synod because he wanted time to examine "the religious matters in this country." He had hopes that a Lutheran synod would be organized in Illinois, and planned to join such a group unless it "throws away the Augsburg Confession." In the same letter Esbjorn stated that his congregation was erecting a church building, but

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<sup>18</sup> Olson, op. cit., p. 202.

<sup>19</sup> "Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Synod," The Missionary, III (April, 1850), 27.



was unable to complete it because of a lack of funds. As a result of this information Passavant wrote an interesting appeal to the readers of The Missionary in behalf of that congregation:

Will not some of our brethren send us donations for the completions of the Swedish church referred to by Brother Esbjorn? Christian Reader! how much owest thou thy Lord! Then sit down quickly, take thy pen, and write a check for five, twenty, or fifty dollars for these poor brethren in Christ.<sup>20</sup>

Esbjorn was the first ordained Lutheran pastor who came to serve the Swedish immigrants. He came over to America from Sweden in the summer of 1849 and settled in Andover, Illinois. The following year he founded a church there and later founded other churches at Princeton, Moline, Henderson, and Galesburg, Illinois.<sup>21</sup> When the Home Mission Society of the Pittsburgh Synod, of which Passavant was president, met in 1851, Esbjorn was there to make an address to the Society.<sup>22</sup> His appearance before the Pittsburgh Synod Home Mission Society was only one stop among the many he made on a long journey to the East to solicit aid for the poor Swedish churches in the West. This trip which Esbjorn made in 1851 resulted from Passavant's trip to the west the year before. Esbjorn had been counselled by Passavant to make the trip for the Swedish churches.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>"The Swedes in the North West," Ibid., III (July, 1850), 50.

<sup>21</sup>C. J. Sodergren, "A Brief History of the Augustana Synod," The Augustana Synod, 1860-1890, edited by L. A. Johnston (Rock Island, Ill: Augustana Book Concern, 1910), p. 19.

<sup>22</sup>"Home Missionary Society of the Pittsburgh Synod," The Missionary, IV (August, 1851), 60.

<sup>23</sup>"Swedish Churches in Illinois," The Missionary, IV (June, 1851), 44.



Under the leadership of Esbjorn, and against the protests of Passavant, a large number of Swedes and a smaller number of Norwegians formed the Synod of Northern Illinois, which became a district of the General Synod. They co-operated in the work of Illinois State University, which was later sold to the Missouri Synod and is now known as Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois. The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Northern Illinois was founded at Palmyra, Illinois, May 19, 1851.<sup>25</sup>

A second Swedish leader who received advice from Passavant was Tuve Nilsson Hasselquist. Hasselquist was the second ordained Swedish pastor to come to America, arriving in 1852. He was elected president of the Augustana Synod after the Scandinavians left the Northern Illinois Synod. Passavant had given warning that the merger with the Northern Illinois men would not work. When the Scandinavians saw that they could no longer agree with the men of the General Synod because of differences in doctrine and practice, they withdrew from the Northern Illinois Synod and gave up their part in the Illinois State University. A general meeting of Swedes and Norwegians was called in Chicago to take steps in the preparation of a Scandinavian synod of their own. This plan was consummated June 5, 1860, at Clinton, Wisconsin, when the Scandinavian Augustana was formally organized, and Hasselquist became its first president. That the influence of Passavant was felt in the Augustana Synod can be learned from Hasselquist's testimony that he felt himself indebted to Passavant for sound advice in synodical matters.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>"Northern Illinois," The Missionary, IV (July, 1851), 49.

<sup>26</sup>Oscar Fritiof Ander, "T. N. Hasselquist. The Career of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist, and Educator," Augustana Library Publications, I (Rock Island, Ill: The Augustana Literary Publications, 1931), 35.



Still another early Swedish pastor much indebted to Passavant was Eric Norelius, who had come to America in 1854. Lars Paul Ebbjorn, Ture Nilsson Hasselquist, Eric Norelius and Erland Carlson were the four original Swedish pioneer pastors in America. The first letter from a Swede published in The Missionary came from Norelius. When Passavant made his trip to Minnesota in 1856 he paid a visit to Norelius at Red Wing, where the two men met for the first time. From then on Passavant and Norelius were on friendly terms. In October of that same year Passavant wrote to Norelius about an offer of land for a school at Lake City, Minnesota, and asked him to investigate the place.<sup>27</sup>

Passavant took a deep interest in Norelius' endeavors, and when the first issue of the paper which Norelius wrote, the Minnesota Posten, appeared November 7, 1857, Passavant wrote Norelius that he liked the paper very much, but expressed concern about the expense that the paper might cause Norelius.<sup>28</sup> Even after the Swedes had left the Northern Illinois Synod without joining the Minnesota Synod as Passavant had hoped, Passavant still befriended them. In 1862, after the great Sioux massacre in Minnesota, Passavant sent Norelius crates of supplies for the victims of the Indian raids.<sup>29</sup>

Passavant had a great concern for the Scandinavian Lutherans and wished to help them. He had early recognized the fact that the Scandinavian

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<sup>27</sup>Olson, op. cit., p. 297.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 354.

<sup>29</sup>Theodore E. Bachmann, They Called Him Father, The Life Story of John Christian Frederick Hoyer (Philadelphia: The Muhlenberg Press, 1942), p. 265.



brethren would never be able to work with the General Synod element of the Northern Illinois Synod. He had warned Norelius and others about this, but to no avail. Since it seemed apparent that a break with Northern Illinois must come some time in the near future, Norelius, together with some of his Swedish brethren in Minnesota attended the convention held at Red Wing on July 5, 1858. This convention was held to establish the Minnesota Synod. Half the clerical delegates were Swedes, and of the six lay delegates five were Swedes. However, the Swedes did not at that time join the Minnesota Synod because they wanted time to discuss the matter with their fellow countrymen in Illinois.<sup>30</sup> Passavant's reason for wanting the Swedes to join the Minnesota Synod was that it was too expensive for men like Norelius and others from Minnesota to travel from that state to Illinois for the various conventions of the Northern Illinois Synod. But instead of joining Passavant's Minnesota Synod, they organized their own Swedish Conference, Chicago Lake, Minnesota, October 7 and 8, 1858. The main reason why the Swedes did not come into the Minnesota Synod was the sentiment of nationality.<sup>31</sup>

The break of the Scandinavian churches from the Synod of Northern Illinois early in 1860 resulted in the formation of the Augustana Synod. The stated reason for the withdrawal was that there was a movement among the General Synod men of the Northern Illinois Synod to get the definite platform men to withdraw from synod and form a new anti-Augsburg Confession

<sup>30</sup> Olson, op. cit., p. 305.

<sup>31</sup> Bachmann, op. cit., p. 274.



synod and establish a new liberal seminary.<sup>32</sup> That the Scandinavians at this time still respected Passavant and his judgments can be seen from the action taken at the meeting of the united Chicago-Mississippi and Minnesota Conferences of the Scandinavian Lutheran church in Chicago, April 23-27, 1860. It was resolved that a committee be appointed to send Passavant the resolutions of the conference regarding Esbjorn's resignation as Professor at Illinois State University, and the Scandinavian separation from the Synod of Northern Illinois.<sup>33</sup>

The "Scandinavian Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod" was organized in a Norwegian Lutheran church near Clinton, Wisconsin, June 5, 1860. The name "Augustana" is the Latin term for the Augsburg Confession, and was proposed by Dr. Norelius.<sup>34</sup> It was not long before the Augustana Synod was appealing to Passavant for advice. He counselled them on how and where to build their seminary, and informed them as to what type of professors they should call to the school. Later he also gave them sage advice on the founding of an orphans' home. He was instrumental in securing the land in Carver, Minnesota, on which was located the school which grew into Gustavus Adolphus College. He visited a convention of the Augustana Synod held in Rockford, Illinois in the early 1860's and held at Altona, Illinois, in 1892.<sup>35</sup> Passavant had been eager to have

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<sup>32</sup> I. O. Rothstein, "Selected Documents Dealing with the Organization of the First Congregations and the First Conferences of the Augustana Synod and their Growth Until 1860," Augustana Historical Society Publications, X (Rock Island, Ill: Augustana Book Concern, 1944), 149.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 185.

<sup>34</sup> Sodergren, op. cit., p. 35.

<sup>35</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 372 f.



the Augustana Synod join the General Synod in 1860 in hopes that the orthodox element of the General Synod would be strengthened.<sup>36</sup> While Passavant was unsuccessful in his attempts to keep the orthodox element of the General Synod strong enough to avoid a split in that body, still it was to a great extent due to his influence that the Pittsburgh, Texas, Minnesota, Canada, and Augustana Synods joined the General Council, giving it a strong orthodox and conservative backbone.

#### English Missions: A Seer Saw Clearly

Passavant was not the kind of man who could sit around and wait for things to happen. When he saw that there was need for work to be done among Lutherans in America, he did his utmost to see that help was sent where it was needed. Even before all the synods he was counselling could stand on their own feet, and before all his institutions were firmly established, he was already working in another field of endeavor. He had had an early desire to see English mission work carried out in all parts of Zion. He foresaw that English would become the established language of the Lutheran Church in America and that unless work were done in that language, many people of the Lutheran church would be lost to other denominations.

The Church's second chance to make good in English mission work came in the West. Losses in the East had been great, and much had already been lost before the church realized it or knew what to do about the situation. Even as other things move more rapidly in the West than the East, so the

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<sup>36</sup> Ander, op. cit., p. 108.



language question came with startling speed and frightening force. But there were men who saw the danger and prayed and planned to avert it. Passavant was a seer in that he early saw the need of using the English language in church mission work.<sup>37</sup> +

Passavant was in a certain sense the founder and starter of the English Lutheran work which grew into the Synod of the Northwest. For years he had urged the importance of occupying Minneapolis and St. Paul. When Pastor Trabert was called as the first English Lutheran missionary west of the Mississippi, he found that Passavant had been in St. Paul two years before him, had purchased an old Swedish church and had moved it to a lot purchased for the building. When the church was later opened as St. John's English Lutheran church, Passavant was invited to be present.<sup>38</sup> It was Passavant's idea that an entirely English synod should in the course of time be developed in the Northwest. This may have been because appeals coming from the Northwest not only begged Passavant to send missionaries to that territory, but at times specified in particular that they be English Lutheran missionaries.<sup>39</sup> +

The church which did much to further English missions in the Northwest was St. John's Lutheran church in Philadelphia, the first entirely English Lutheran congregation in America which has had an uninterrupted existence until today. It was brought into being after a desperate struggle

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<sup>37</sup>George Henry Trabert, English Lutheranism in the Northwest (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1914), p. 10. +

<sup>38</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 380.

<sup>39</sup>"Minnesota Territory," The Missionary, IX (January, 1856), 3.



in 1806. It is this congregation that in a measure, made it possible for Passavant to begin English work in the Northwest, especially in Minneapolis and St. Paul, when he did.<sup>40</sup> This same congregation sent supplies to Hoyer when he was in India, and sent him Sunday school books and other necessary materials when he was working in Minnesota. The people of St. John's knew that their contributions were to a great extent going into English mission work, for when Hoyer was on his way to Minnesota in 1837, he stopped to confer with Passavant to see in what manner the first English Lutheran home mission project in that state should be carried on.<sup>41</sup>

Passavant himself began a trip to the Northwest in 1850 to see what could be done for the Scandinavian brethren there, and also to determine how to establish English mission work in that territory. He went as far as Milwaukee and would have continued westward into the interior of Wisconsin and Northern Illinois, but he received information that cholera had broken out in Pittsburgh and that he was needed there. Passavant returned to Pittsburgh, leaving his partner, Rev. Anderson, to continue the journey alone.<sup>42</sup> Anderson's report underscored the fact that it was highly important that young men training for the ministry of the Scandinavian church learn to speak not only their native tongue, but also the English language.<sup>43</sup>

A factor in promoting the advancement of the Lutheran church in the English language, especially in the Northwest, was the founding of the

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<sup>40</sup> Trabert, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>41</sup> Bachmann, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>42</sup> "Return Home--Work to be Done," The Missionary, III (September, 1850), 68.

<sup>43</sup> "Report on a Trip to Minnesota," The Missionary, III (October, 1850), 79.



Chicago Theological Seminary. Passavant had long been convinced of the need of a seminary in Chicago. As early as the sixties he had already begun to pray and plan for it. When the General Council met in 1869 he preached a sermon in which he pleaded so forcibly for such an institution that, at the same convention, Dr. Charles P. Kranth put forth a resolution that the General Council take the necessary steps towards the establishment of such an institution.<sup>44</sup> Despite the adoption of this resolution, it was not until 1891 that the institution was incorporated, and it was not opened for students until 1893. Since 1910 this seminary has been located at Maywood, a suburb of Chicago, and has served the territory about Chicago and the Northwest.

The English work in various large cities was always of interest to Passavant. He watched with interest the efforts of Rev. A. D. Haupt, a young pastor laboring in Minneapolis. Haupt came to the conclusion that the hope of the Lutheran Church in English in the Northwest rested in the gathering in of the young, and building the Church with entirely new material. Thirty years later this conclusion was verified by the fact that comparatively few of the members of the English Lutheran congregation there could trace their ancestry to Lutheran stock coming to the Northwest from Pennsylvania and other Lutheran states.<sup>45</sup>

It is a surprising fact that although Passavant had founded a hospital in Chicago in 1856, and English services were held there from that time on, there was no self-supporting congregation in Chicago until 1887.<sup>46</sup> Also

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<sup>44</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 557. +

<sup>45</sup> Frabert, op. cit., p. 43.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 17.



surprising is the fact that there was not one English Lutheran congregation in any of the cities of Wisconsin before 1890. This seems strange since Passavant had founded a hospital in Milwaukee in 1863. But Milwaukee was a German city, and was not ready for the English language.<sup>47</sup>

It was at Passavant's suggestion that Rev. A. Reek was sent to Cincinnati and that English Lutheran work was begun there. In 1841 Passavant preached at Wheeling, West Virginia, and was deeply impressed with the need of an English mission there. Though work was delayed for a time, it was later begun there too. During the summer of 1841 he also began to agitate for an English church in Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>48</sup>

Passavant's interest in English work also extended far enough to cover St. Louis. In 1849 he noted that the population of St. Louis was 63,381 an increase in four years of 27,206. He exclaims:

And yet no English Lutheran Church! Members and families constantly moving there from our cities, towns, and churches in the East, and no provision made for their spiritual welfare! O, when will the Church of the Reformation awake to her duty.

Although the leaders of the Swedish Augustana Synod were born and educated in Sweden, they soon caught Passavant's vision and saw the need of the use of the English language in the service of the Church. They knew that this would be a necessity as soon as there were those to whom English was more familiar than the language of their fathers. Norelius saw the need of purely English congregations in the cities and towns of the west when many others ridiculed and opposed them. Realizing the

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>48</sup> Gerberding, op. cit., p. 78.

<sup>49</sup> "Population of St. Louis," The Missionary, II (April, 1849), 32.



importance of having an English professor in their seminary, the men of the Augustana Synod turned to Passavant for advice, asking him to recommend a suitable man for the chair. Passavant's counsel resulted in the appointment of the Rev. H. Reak to the chair of English of the newly established Augustana College and Theological Seminary.<sup>50</sup>

#### The Northwest Synod: A Dream Came True

Passavant lived long enough to see his dream of an English synod in the Northwest fulfilled. In 1891 the "English Synod of the Northwest" was organized, and joined the General Council in 1893, the year before Passavant's death.<sup>51</sup> The first president of the Synod of the Northwest was the Rev. G. H. Gerberding who was born August 21, 1847 in Pittsburgh, less than a year before Passavant began publishing The Missionary in that same city. Gerberding received his classical training at Thiel College, a school which had been founded by Passavant. From Thiel Gerberding went to Muhlenberg College, Allentown, Pennsylvania, and then completed his ministerial studies at the Philadelphia Seminary. He was ordained in 1876 and served congregations from that time until 1894, when he was called to be Professor of Practical Theology at the Chicago Seminary, another institution established by Passavant.<sup>52</sup> That the life and work of Passavant seemed important to this first president of the Synod of the

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<sup>50</sup> Trubert, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>51</sup> Oshenford, op. cit., p. 513.

<sup>52</sup> J. L. Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America, edited by W. D. Allbeck (Third edition; Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 173.



Northwest can be seen by the publication of The Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D. D., one of Gerberding's best known publications.

The work which Passavant carried on just previous to and during his membership in the General Council has had far reaching influence upon the Lutheran Church in America. He gave heart to those who could not decide whether to leave the General Synod or leave that group, and showed them the proper course of action. Once it was decided to form the General Council he played an important part in its organization. He helped formulate its constitution, took part in procuring its charter, served on its Committee for the English Church Book and took charge of its Home Mission work. He served as advisor and counsellor to individuals and groups and at the same time served as co-editor of The Lutheran and Missionary. He lent counsel and aid to the Chicago synod and helped bring it into the General Council. He appealed to the church in behalf of the Scandinavian brethren in the United States and helped them found the Augustana Synod. When this group split into Swedish and Norwegian segments in 1870, he aided both groups, bringing the Swedish Augustana Synod into the General Council, and almost succeeding in doing the same with the Norwegian group. He furthered the church's interest in English mission work and thus helped save many people for the Lutheran Church. He founded Thiel College and the Chicago Seminary, making it possible for more young men of the Lutheran church to receive a classical and ministerial training, swelling the ranks of the Lutheran ministry, in turn helping the church to conserve many people who would have joined other denominations.



## CHAPTER V

### PASSAVANT AND "MISSOURI."

#### Early Storm Warnings

The first known personal contact between Passavant and the Missouri Synod procedure took place in December, 1866, when the preliminary convention of the General Council was held at Reading, Pennsylvania. Pastor J. A. Mueller was the Missouri Synod representative at this meeting, and although he was on none of the committees appointed by the preliminary convention of the General Council, he doubtless had an opportunity to meet the man from Pittsburgh, W. A. Passavant. If the two did not strike up an acquaintance at that time, then Passavant missed his only opportunity to have personal working contact with the men from "Missouri." When the Council held its first regular convention in Fort Wayne the following year, the Missouri Synod did not send delegates, though its delegates to the preliminary convention had united in the adoption of the Fundamental Principles, a confessional statement drawn up by C. P. Krauth and adopted by the General Council.<sup>1</sup>

The men who joined the General Council had received an early warning of Missouri's position over against groups which were not entirely orthodox. Even before the Council was called into being the church papers of the Missouri Synod expressed regret that the Ministerium of Pennsylvania

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<sup>1</sup>E. E. Oehsenford, Documentary History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1912), p. 131.



had not immediately withdrawn from the General Synod at the Pottstown convention in 1864. The delegation of the Ministerium had left the Pottstown convention as a protest against the liberal moves made by the General Synod.<sup>2</sup> Passavant in particular should have known the attitudes which Walther, the president of the Missouri Synod, had toward the General Synod or any synodical group which was not founded on a strict confessional basis. Walther had been overjoyed when he was told that the Pittsburgh Synod, under the leadership of Passavant, decided not to join the General Synod in 1848 because of the General Synod's lax confessional basis.<sup>3</sup> When, however, the Pittsburgh Synod, at its 1856 convention, passed several weak sounding resolutions concerning the Augsburg Confession Walther tore them apart, especially the resolution which stated that the Pittsburgh Synod accepted the Augsburg Confession "rightly interpreted." Walther pointed out that through the years there have been many who have accepted the Confession with that reservation, only to go astray in their teaching because they did not take a more determined stand of the Augustana. According to Walther, restricting the Augsburg Confession led to more abuses than doing completely without it.<sup>4</sup>

Because the Missouri Synod did not send a delegation to the Fort Wayne convention in 1867 the men of that synod explained their action by stating that they could not join in an official convention with any group until the points of disagreement were removed. As a result the men of the

<sup>2</sup> J. L. Neve, History of the Lutheran Church in America, edited by W. D. Allbeck (Third edition; Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), p. 173.

<sup>3</sup> "Wider eine Lossagung von der Generalsynode," Der Lutheraner, IV (January 11, 1848), 77.

<sup>4</sup> "The Missionary," Ibid., XII (July 1, 1856), 180.



Missouri Synod requested that free conferences be held outside official conventions.<sup>5</sup> They felt that the problems should be settled first, and non-essentials could be taken care of in later conventions. But there were men in the General Council, Passavant being among them, who felt that such medication and patching must be done from the inside out.

Passavant felt that the various synods must come together in official capacity, join in an organization and then mutually solve their problems. †

As early as January, 1856 Walther had printed articles in Lehre und Wehre requesting the men of the East to meet with the Missouri Synod in free conferences. These free conferences were to be composed of all those synods which "conscientiously receive the Augsburg Confession." Through such official meetings doctrinal problems could be solved before the synods joined in an official organization. Passavant hoped that free conferences would follow in time so that there would finally be a whole network of them spreading over the entire nation. However, he felt that it was far too early for such conferences in the year 1856, so nothing was done to bring the Missouri Synod and the General Synod to a discussion table.<sup>6</sup>

Now in 1866 the Missouri Synod was again agitating for free conferences, this time with men of the General Council. The Council replied † that it would set aside time during its conventions for such conferences. Walther and the presidents of the Missouri Synod's four districts felt that they could not accept such a proposal. As a result of the attitudes of

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<sup>5</sup>Ochsenford, op. cit., p. 156.

<sup>6</sup>"Free Conferences," The Missionary, IX (May 1, 1856), 54.



both sides correspondence was broken off, and within a few years after the Council was organized there was no more official contact between that group and the Missouri Synod.<sup>7</sup> †

The Missouri Synod stood on a strict confessional basis and found it hard to understand why the General Council could not agree with its position. Actually, it is surprising that the Council even decided to claim acceptance of the Augsburg Confession. By accepting the Augustana as a statement of their faith they had gone a long way in leaving the liberal views of the General Synod behind them. Passavant's old teacher, Schmucker had written:

No considerable or respectable Lutheran Synod or convention of Lutheran ministers in this country ever passed a resolution and published it, acknowledging the authority of the former symbolical books of our church in Germany, or any of them as binding on them and on all who would unite with their body, until it was done within the last few years by several German Synods in the West.

With this thought in mind we can understand the attitude of the General Council toward the strict orthodox position held by the Missouri Synod which would not allow for discrepancies in the doctrinal position of any Lutheran synod.

The Missouri Synod was not the only group which could not come to an agreement with the General Council. The Joint Synod of Ohio, the German Synod of Iowa, and the Minnesota Synod had misgivings about the organization which was being formed. When the Iowa Synod presented a

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<sup>7</sup> Ochsensford, op. cit., p. 161. †

<sup>8</sup> S. S. Schmucker, The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated (Springfield, Mass: D. Harbaugh, 1852), p. 183.



conservative resolution on fellowship and communion to the Council, only to have it rejected, Hoyer, the old friend of Passavant, and head of the Minnesota delegation, was among those who lodged a protest against this action.<sup>9</sup>

#### English Missions: A Sluggish Giant

The German synods of the Lutheran church in America tended to be more conservative than the English synods. Loeh's attitude was that the English Lutherans of the East had departed from Lutheranism when they departed from the German language.<sup>10</sup> This general attitude may have been prevalent in the Missouri Synod also, for there was an insistence that the German language be used in the Missouri Synod's theological seminaries. At the time of the cornerstone laying for the old seminary in Saint Louis, one of the speakers remarked among other things that the school was "not only an institution for training servants of the church, but also a school in which were to be fostered German art and learning in the distant Occident of the new world."<sup>11</sup>

But in time the attitude of the Missouri Synod toward the English language began to change. In 1907 President Pieper of Concordia Seminary in Saint Louis stated that if a pastor was not familiar with the English language his usefulness for church work was impaired. By the year 1912

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<sup>9</sup>Ochsenford, op. cit. pp. 161 f.

<sup>10</sup>Carl Mauelshagen, American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936), p. 63.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 86.



the Walther League of the Missouri Synod declared that both the German and the English languages were to be recognized as official for that body.<sup>12</sup>

One reason for the changing attitude of the Missouri Synod toward the English language may be found partly in the English mission work carried on by the General Council. Under the leadership of Passavant the Council was carrying on its English missions in the Northwest. While the English missionaries of the Council were as a rule on the best of terms with other Lutheran pastors, the Missourians in Saint Paul tended to look askance at the English work, because they were not especially in love with the Council. But because of the work the Council was doing in that city the Synodical Conference, of which the Missouri Synod was a part, began English mission work in Saint Paul for fear that the Council would gain all their young people. Trabert feels that if the General Council committee had not made the beginning, it would have been a question whether there would have been any English mission work done in Saint Paul for another quarter century.<sup>13</sup>

While the General Council's English mission work in Saint Paul may have been the cause of the Missouri Synod English work in that city, it is not true that Council English work caused the general shift to English that has taken place in the Missouri Synod since that time. It is doubtful whether Passavant or any General Council man had anything to do with the beginnings of English preaching and church work among the Missouri

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<sup>12</sup> George Henry Trabert, English Lutheranism in the Northwest (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1914), pp. 146 f.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 73.



Synod Lutherans in Pittsburgh, even though that was Passavant's home town. Missouri Synod English services began in Pittsburgh on September 22, 1889, when the Reverend Frederick Brand conducted English services in Saint Paul's Lutheran church. From this time on English services were held on Sunday mornings and evenings in one of the rooms of Saint Paul's school.<sup>14</sup>

Although the English work in Pittsburgh is one of the earlier signs of English movements in the Missouri Synod, Walther's contacts with the English language in churches connected with the Missouri Synod took place twelve years before that time. In 1872 Walther traveled to Gravelton, Missouri, to meet with Lutherans of the Tennessee Synod who had come to Gravelton from North Carolina. This conference, held from August 16 to 20, 1872, and this remote place in the Ozarks were in reality the mother and the birthplace of the English Synod of Missouri, and its successor, the English District. It would have been interesting to have heard the sermon which Walther preached during the convention. As Walther preached in German, Moser, one of the leaders of the Gravelton settlement, translated the sermon into English. If Walther had not gone to visit these men, likely their group would have ended in the United Lutheran Church, the successor of the Tennessee Synod, and English work in the Missouri Synod might have been pushed off for years.<sup>15</sup>

Walther had a less fortunate brush with English Lutheran preaching when he made an attempt to bring English into St. Louis Lutheran churches

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<sup>14</sup>"The Birth of the English District in Pittsburgh," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XIII (January, 1950), 151.

<sup>15</sup>Fred C. Stein and H. William Lieske, "Old Gravelton Revisited," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XI (January, 1948), 162 ff.



by means of Doctor S. L. Harkey of the General Synod. Though Walther was far in advance of his brethren of the Missouri Synod as far as English work was concerned, he allowed the difficulties connected with the establishment of English preaching in Saint Louis to cause him to put off dealing with the problem until a more convenient time. Despite this fact, he was the first man who made an effort toward the establishment of an English Lutheran church in Saint Louis. He rented the Hall of the Sanitary Commission for the purpose of holding an English service in it, published the notice in all the German and English daily papers of Saint Louis, had it announced in all the German churches of the Missouri Synod in Saint Louis, took Harkey in his own carriage to see some of the people who were favorable to the enterprise, and finally took Harkey to the hall in his carriage. Because the attendance was so slim Walther made only a feeble attempt to establish an English church in Saint Louis, and in time the project ceased completely.<sup>16</sup>

The very earliest effort to establish an English congregation within the bounds of the Missouri Synod was begun in 1854 by members of old Saint Paul's in Baltimore, the city in which Passavant held his first charges. A few of the members of Saint Paul's addressed a communication to their fellow church members on April 28, 1854, requesting cooperation in the forming of an English church. The assistance was given, and English work progressed until the Civil War caused the congregation to be disrupted and disbanded in 1865. Ten years later, in the year 1875, the

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<sup>16</sup> S. L. Harkey, "Personal Recollections of C. F. W. Walther," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XVII (October, 1944), 92 f.



English church was again reorganized and subsequently became the mother of the Ohio Synod congregations in and around Baltimore.<sup>17</sup>

While other members of the General Council may have had misgivings about the Missouri Synod, Passavant was ready to help that group, just as he helped other Lutheran bodies in need. When Walther sent out a plea for contributions to help build the seminary in Saint Louis, Passavant sent a contribution of one dollar to further the cause.<sup>18</sup> While this may seem a very small amount, we must keep in mind that determination and faith which Passavant had when working on building projects. He had sent one dollar to Pastor Muehlhauser in Milwaukee and instructed him to begin planning for the hospital which was later to be organized in that city. This did not seem unusual to Passavant for he had begun plans for his first hospital after receiving a contribution of twenty-two cents.<sup>19</sup>

As further proof of his desire to assist in the construction of the Saint Louis seminary, Passavant printed an encouraging editorial in The Missionary during the same month in which he sent his contribution to Walther. The article closed with a brief comment on the seminary's first professor. This early article gives us some insight into Passavant's attitude toward Walther at the time:

All who are acquainted with the character and writings of Prof. Walther, however they may differ from his doctrinal positions, will freely accord to him all these qualifications which one occupying so important a position should possess. The unanimity of his election, is sufficient evidence of the

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<sup>17</sup>H. B. Hemmeter, "Early English Mission Efforts in the Missouri Synod," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XI (October, 1938), 67 f.

<sup>18</sup>"Empfangen," Der Lutheraner, VI (December 27, 1849), 72.

<sup>19</sup>G. H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D. (Green-ville, Pa: The Young Lutheran Co., 1906), p. 389.



confidence which he so eminently enjoys among his brethren in the ministry.<sup>20</sup>

Whatever Passavant's real inner attitude toward Walther and the Missouri Synod was, he favored any person or group laboring to build up the Lutheran Zion. He followed the moves of the Missouri Synod with interest, taking note of the graduating classes of its seminaries, publishing changes of address for its pastors, and publishing such news items as the consecration of a Missouri Synod church and the dedication of a new wing of the seminary in Saint Louis.<sup>21</sup>

The seminary in Fort Wayne also attracted his attention. In 1849 he wrote that of twenty students at the seminary in Fort Wayne, seven were supported by one church, and that a society to support ministerial students was branching out into all the Missouri Synod.<sup>22</sup> Seeing the determination of the "old Lutherans" of the Missouri Synod to train up a well-educated clergy, Passavant could not but admire their efforts. He knew that it took consecrated effort to carry on the seminary projects such as the Missouri Synod was promoting, and he called the work "exertions" and "sacrifices." Passavant held this spirit of self-sacrifice up before the church in hopes that the example of the Missouri Synod would "prevail in all portions of our Zion."<sup>23</sup> When Sihler's church in Fort Wayne made a generous offering to the seminary in that city, Passavant wrote, "Let

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<sup>20</sup>"Removal of a Theological Seminary," The Missionary, II (December, 1849), 97.

<sup>21</sup>"Christian Education," Ibid., III (September, 1850), 65.

<sup>22</sup>"Christian Education," Ibid., IV (January, 1851), 1.

<sup>23</sup>"Church Intelligence," Ibid., IX (March 13, 1856), 26.



not the example of these poor Germans be lost upon many of our wealthy congregations, who give little or nothing to the cause of the Redeemer!"<sup>24</sup>

In later years Passavant wrote about the dedication of a new seminary building in Saint Louis. He recalls an old article which he had read in the Anzeiger des Westens advertising the little log cabin seminary in Perry County. From this humble beginning sprang the "new" seminary building in Saint Louis, which was, according to Passavant, "the most complete ecclesiastical structure in the Lutheran Church of America, and a noble monument to its Evangelical faith." Passavant felt that its influence would be far-reaching and would serve to quicken all other movements in the Lutheran Church to increase facilities for training men for the ministry.<sup>25</sup>

#### Casper Braun: The Connecting Link

While Passavant could only view the actions of Missouri from far off Pittsburgh for the greater part of his life, we know that he had one and perhaps two definite secondary contacts with the Missouri Synod. The first contact was the Reverend Casper Braun, who was commissioned by the Pittsburgh Synod to serve as missionary to the Germans in Texas. Braun had received his ministerial training at the Basler Missionshaus in Switzerland, and for a time served congregations in Pennsylvania. Because of a plea made by G. T. Guebner, a missionary who had been sent to Texas by the Synod of North Carolina the year before, Braun was chosen for the

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<sup>24</sup>"Church Intelligence," Ibid., XI (July 1, 1856), p. 90.

<sup>25</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 353.



field in Texas and was soon on his way. For some time after his arrival in Houston in 1851, Braun was in contact with Passavant, sending him notices of the progress of mission work in Texas and telling Passavant of the difficulties he was encountering in the Houston mission.<sup>26</sup> †

Five months after Braun's arrival in Houston, five men arrived there from the St. Chrischona Institute located near Basle, Switzerland. These men had been sent to work among the spiritually destitute Germans in Texas, and having no place to stay while in Houston, they all lodged at Braun's cabin until they began branching out into various parts of Texas. Before they left Houston, these men assembled with Braun at the Presbyterian church in Houston and formed the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas on November 10, 1851, electing Braun first president. Following the example set by other missionaries sent out by Passavant and the Pittsburgh Synod, Braun used the constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod as a † model for the constitution of the Texas Synod. One interesting change was made in the original constitution: under the leadership of Braun the Texas Synod accepted all the unaltered symbolical books as found in the Book of Concord of 1580.<sup>27</sup>

In the years following the formation of the Texas Synod Braun remained in contact with Passavant. During his first two years in Texas the Sunday school of St. John's English Lutheran church in Philadelphia contributed to Braun's salary. In 1854, when he was having trouble raising enough money to finish his church in Houston, Braun made a trip to

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<sup>26</sup>"Texas--Houston Mission," The Missionary, IV (August, 1851), 58.

<sup>27</sup>Arthur C. Repp, "Beginnings of Lutheranism in Houston, Texas," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXVI (July, 1953), 54. †



Pennsylvania to appeal for funds. The trip seems to have been successful, for soon after Braun's return to Houston the church building was completed. During the trip to Pennsylvania Braun took two young boys to Passavant's orphanage. When yellow fever struck the congregation in Houston in 1856, Braun contacted Passavant again and sent orphaned children of his congregation to Pittsburgh to be cared for by Passavant.<sup>28</sup>

When his first presidential term lapsed Braun was re-elected president of the Texas Synod, and seems to have been a leading light in that synod for several years. Because Braun disagreed with some of the actions of the General Council and the Texas Synod, he withdrew from that group and began dealings with the Missouri Synod. For nine years he made no move to join the Missouri Synod. At the Western District convention of 1876 in Saint Louis in the early part of May, Braun was accepted after a colloquy as an advisory member of the Missouri Synod. His friendly relations with the Missouri Synod ended three years later when he was told to leave his congregation because his members did not feel he was teaching the truth. After a dispute over the matter, Braun left the Missouri Synod and never again rejoined that group. Despite the fact that he did not remain in the Missouri Synod for a very long time, he did play an important part in Missouri Synod Lutheranism in Texas in that he was the man who kept Houston open for the Missouri Synod, and saw to it that pastors of that synod were located nearby.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 56 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 61 ff.



## Minnesota: Common Ground

The fruits of the labors put forth by Passavant and Esyer in Minnesota were almost completely reaped by the Synodical Conference. It is interesting to note that when Passavant made his first trip to Saint Paul in August, 1856, a representative of the Missouri Synod was in Minnesota to investigate the advisability of establishing a mission among the Chippewa Indians of that state and to look up openings for mission work among the German Lutherans. This man was Ferdinand Sievers of Frankenlust, Michigan. These two men, Sievers of the Missouri Synod, and our friend from the Pittsburgh Synod, William Alfred Passavant, may have passed each other on the streets of Red Wing or Saint Paul, each unaware of the other's presence.<sup>30</sup>

While the trip which Sievers made to Minnesota was profitable, he found that there were fewer Lutherans in Minnesota than had been expected. He did succeed, however, in organizing a congregation in Minneapolis on the basis of the Symbolical Books. This group was the beginning of the oldest Missouri Synod congregation in Minnesota. Sievers also visited Red Wing, where Morelius served among the Swedes, and one of the first cities visited by Passavant on his way to Saint Paul. Her Sievers succeeded in gathering a few Lutherans and held a service and distributed communion. This group discussed the Lutheran Confessions with Sievers, accepted them, and agreed with him to organize a congregation.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Esther Abbetmayer-Selke, "Two Interesting Visitors in Saint Paul During August, 1856," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, IV (July, 1931), 37.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 41.



The beginnings which Passavant made in Minnesota were much more successful, and by the year 1858 Passavant's representative in Minnesota, Father Hoyer, had called a convention to meet at Red Wing for the purpose of forming the Minnesota Synod. It was Hoyer who advised Trinity Congregation of Saint Paul to call J. H. Sieker of West Granville, Wisconsin, to serve them in 1867. When Hoyer permanently retired the next year, Sieker became president of the Minnesota Synod. With the coming of Sieker the spirit of Missouri entered the Minnesota Synod. Sieker favored union or cooperation with Missouri, drew preachers from that synod, brought his synod out of the General Council and in 1872 had it join the newly organized Synodical Conference.<sup>32</sup> Thus by means of the Synodical Conference the Missouri Synod has succeeded in reaping the benefits of the labors of Passavant and Hoyer in behalf of German missions in Minnesota.

Today two Synodical Conference parishes stand as monuments to Hoyer's labors. On June 17, 1866 a fine brick church building was dedicated in New Ulm, Minnesota, as the Evangelical Lutheran-Reformed Saint Paul's Church. Today this congregation founded by Hoyer is a strong parish of the Wisconsin Synod.<sup>33</sup> On Sunday, the third of December, 1848, just six months after Passavant began publication of The Missionary, Trinity Lutheran German church of Pittsburgh was dedicated. This congregation too was founded by Hoyer, and is now a strong parish of the Missouri Synod.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Esther Abbtmeyer-Selke, "The Beginnings of the German Lutheran Churches in Minnesota," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, II (January, 1930), 112.

<sup>33</sup> A. Kuhn, Geschichte der Minnesota-Synode und ihrer einzelnen Gemeinden (St. Louis: Louis Lange Publishing Company, n.d.), pp. 164 f.

<sup>34</sup> "Consecration of the New German Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.," The Missionary, I (December, 1848), 92.



Seeing the work which the Missouri Synod was doing among emigrants to Missouri in 1849 and 1850, Passavant wrote in The Missionary that the Missouri Synod was the only group doing mission work in that territory, and appealed to the churches of the General Synod to send workers to Saint Louis. Passavant knew the importance of a city such as Saint Louis and called it "the gate to the West." The same issue of The Missionary carried an account of the Missouri Synod convention which had been held in Fort Wayne, the account being quoted from the Lutheran Observer. The writer notes with surprise that there were already sixty-one ministers in the Missouri Synod, stating that although the Missouri Synod is but three years old, it is the largest Lutheran synod in the country. Passavant's attitude towards the Missouri Synod at this time may be reflected in this excerpt about the Missouri Synod which he also quoted from the Lutheran Observer:

We most earnestly wish they could descend from their isolated position and mingle more fraternally with those whom they now recognize as "other Lutheran synods." We wish they could bend from their constrained stiffness and harmonize ecclesiastically with men who sincerely wish them well, and who would love to co-operate with them. <sup>35</sup>

In 1852 Passavant added an editorial of his own making in which he belabors the "exclusiveness and unpardonable one-sidedness" of the Missouri Synod. Despite his condemnation of the Missouri Synod's attitudes, Passavant again expressed his admiration of the work which the Missouri Synod was carrying on:

The activity of these brethren in establishing institutions of piety and learning--in educating pastors and teachers--in

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<sup>35</sup>"The German Synod of Missouri and Adjacent States," Ibid., III (January, 1850), 6.



carrying on Missions among our Western Indians--in printing, importing and circulating good books among their people--in gathering congregations and erecting churches, amid poverty, indifference, materialism, rationalism, atheism, and devilism of every hue and form is truly wonderful.<sup>35</sup>

To show that he has no desire to be bitter toward the Missouri Synod he adds this item at the end of the editorial, telling the readers that contributions for the support of the seminary at Fort Wayne could be sent to Doctor Sihler in Fort Wayne. 7

Der Lutheraner, The Missionary and Lehre und Wehre

When Passavant began publication of The Missionary, Walther took note of this action in an editorial in Der Lutheraner. Walther was very noncommittal in his opinion of The Missionary, merely stating that it would be published monthly in the interest of missions. This review was closed with a prayer that Passavant and his paper might be of much service to the Lutheran Church, and Christ its Head.<sup>37</sup>

While Passavant did not print many reviews on Walther's publications, he did express his opinions more openly than Walther had. Although Passavant had definite negative opinions about some of the articles written in Der Lutheraner, he felt that it was by far the most able German paper in the Church.<sup>38</sup> When the first issues of Lehre und Wehre appeared, Passavant also took note of this publication, saying that it "appears as the advocate of the peculiar 'richtung' of that body." But he softened his

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<sup>36</sup>"Church Intelligence," Ibid., V (May, 1852), 37.

<sup>37</sup>"The Missionary," Der Lutheraner, IV (February, 1848), 95.

<sup>38</sup>"Our German Church Papers," The Missionary, II (February, 1849), 13.



blows by commenting that Lehre und Wehre is edited by Walther "with learning and ability."<sup>39</sup> When he again made note of Lehre und Wehre in 1859, Passavant's attitude toward Walther and his publications seems to have hardened a bit more:

Several of those papers are written with much ability, and are well worthy of perusal. We regret, therefore, the more, that we are obliged to say, that the spirit of this Review has not improved--and that its judgments are often not only grossly <sup>40</sup> uncharitable, but sometimes wholly one-sided, and even untrue.

In 1836 Passavant, who was recovering from a severe illness, was told that Walther had written an attack on the Emigrant House, one of Passavant's institutions of mercy. Passavant was determined to write Walther personally, but was told by friends that Walther was at the time near death. This attack was a bitter stroke to Passavant who exclaimed: "Oh, how unutterably sad that good men can come under the influence of partisan and party spirit and do such unworthy things."<sup>41</sup>

Passavant was not one to remain bitter for long. On the fiftieth anniversary of Walther's ordination in 1887, Passavant wrote an article about Walther in the Workman, a paper which he had established in 1881. Passavant stated that German Protestantism was indebted, under God, more to Walther than any one else in the nineteenth century. Passavant also felt that Walther's testimony for fundamental truth, teaching the living center justification by faith in Christ, was nowhere to be exceeded in fullness and strength.<sup>42</sup> Although Walther passed away in 1887, Passavant

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<sup>39</sup>"Church Intelligence," Ibid., VIII (March, 1855), 20.

<sup>40</sup>"Our Book Table," Ibid., IV (January 27, 1859), 3.

<sup>41</sup>Gerberding, op. cit., p. 499.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 528.



was still voting in the General Council conventions for free conferences in hopes that both the General Synod and the Missouri Synod would take part in the conferences and thus come to a better understanding of each other's shortcomings.<sup>43</sup> All his efforts to bring this to pass were of no avail, and Passavant died twenty-four years before the General Synod and the General Council united to form the United Lutheran Church of America.

### "I'm Going Home"

The last ten years of Passavant's life were as busy and constructive as any of his early years had been. After serving as co-editor of the Lutheran and Missionary for nearly twenty years, there arose a misunderstanding with the management of that paper, and for several years Passavant did no editorial work. But because he felt that there should be another Lutheran paper on the market which would be cheaper than the others and thus circulate more widely, he launched the Workman on February 17, 1881, after much prayer and earnest consultation with his most trusted friends. The format of the Workman was much like that of the old Missionary, and the new paper soon gained wide circulation in the church. Passavant was the chief editor of the Workman from its inception in 1881 until October, 1887, when he retired from that post.<sup>44</sup> This did not mean full retirement for Passavant. He continued to assist his son, W. A. Passavant, Junior, who had taken over the position of editor of the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 543. +

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., pp. 553 ff.



Worshipman. Passavant wrote his last editorial on the passing of an old Lutheran pastor, who died only twelve days before Passavant himself.<sup>45</sup>

Passavant's death was hastened by a cold which he contracted while riding in a train coach in which one of the windows was left open. For a week Passavant became progressively weaker, but he insisted on coming downstairs for meals, and went to his desk to work and study as usual the day before his death. On Sunday, June 3, 1893, Passavant passed on to his eternal reward.

Passavant's contacts with the Missouri Synod show his desire to cooperate with any group interested in furthering the work of the Savior in the Lutheran Church. We can see traces of his influence in that he caused the Missouri Synod to begin English work in the state of Minnesota years before this would have happened normally. But when Passavant met and tried to influence the movements of the Missouri Synod, he found himself confronted with an "unmoved mover," a determined and unflinching attitude toward the confessions of the historic Lutheran church. While he could not always agree with the attitudes of Walther and the Missouri Synod, he could not help but admire the efforts they put forth to further the Kingdom of God in the West. Despite his efforts to work with the Missouri Synod through the General Council his influence was little felt in the Missouri Synod.

As before, Passavant's influence was felt in those parts of Zion which were connected with the General Synod and General Council. He continued his charitable work, did editorial work on the Lutheran and Missionary,

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 575.



and finally established the Workman, through which his influence was felt in the General Council in particular. Many people were still appealing to him for advice in heaps of letters each day, as in his earlier years.

Passavant, that venerable man of God, was as ever ready to help all in need. Stricken with weakness, hardly able to hold these letters in his hands, Passavant was reading these appeals for help when he was out of bed for the last time before his death.



## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY

Passavant's life can be characterized by the motto: "To live, to love, to labor." His life is a study in self-abasement and love. A glance at the summaries at the end of the chapters of this study will show the reader that this motto ascribed to Passavant truly characterizes his life work.

By means of the various editorials which he wrote, Passavant was able to wield great influence over the Lutheran Church in America during the nineteenth century. He began his editorial career at the age of sixteen when yet a student at Jefferson College. There he published a Lutheran almanac which was well received. Eighteen thousand copies were sold, a fact which attested to his editorial ability. Passavant also prepared and published a second almanac the following year; it too gained popular recognition.

At twenty-one, shortly after he had completed his training at Gettysburg Seminary, Passavant was called on to become co-editor of the Lutheran Observer during the absence of the regular editor, Doctor Kurtz. During the few months Passavant was with the staff of the Lutheran Observer he became, for all practical purposes, editor-in-chief. His pen was busy, and he wrote editorials on a wide range of subjects, showing a mature understanding of the problems that faced the Christian in everyday life. Unknowingly he was being prepared for that day six years later when he began publication of The Missionary.



The Pittsburgh field was the proving ground which served to test his editorial ability and to mold him into a first rate editor. When he came to that city and saw the need for closer cooperation among the ministers in the Western part of Pennsylvania, he immediately agitated for the formation of the Pittsburgh Synod. When the formation of that synod became an established fact, he instituted deaconess work in the United States and led the church to greater efforts in works of charity. But his labors in Pittsburgh reached their culmination in publication of The Missionary.

The little Missionary was published monthly from June, 1848, to December, 1855, and weekly from January, 1856, until 1861, when it was merged with the Lutheran, a paper which was being published in Philadelphia. By means of The Missionary Passavant began to exert a powerful influence over the educated clergy of the Lutheran Church, particularly in the eastern United States. His editorials led the church to begin mission work in Canada, Texas, Minnesota, and in leading cities in the east and the middle west. The appeals which Passavant wrote in behalf of the Scandinavians, the Missouri Synod, and many other Lutheran groups, caused many people to become alive to the needs of various sections of Lutheran Zion. Much of the aid which was sent to destitute sections of the Lutheran Church came as a direct result of Passavant's appeals written in The Missionary.

Passavant and the conservative element in the General Synod felt that The Missionary would be a more influential force for conservatism in the General Synod if it were merged with the Lutheran, which was being published in Philadelphia. The merger of these two papers took place in



1861 and the new and enlarged paper was called the Lutheran and Missionary. From the time of the merger until the late eighteen seventies Passavant served as co-editor of the Lutheran and Missionary. At that time a dispute about procedure arose between Passavant and other members of the staff, and Passavant resigned his position with that paper. Passavant did no more editorial work for several years.

By the year 1881 Passavant was convinced that he should begin another sheet in form much like that of the old Missionary. The resulting paper was called the Workman. Passavant was editor of this sheet from its inception until 1887 when he resigned that position because of his advanced age. Although Passavant was no longer editor-in-chief of the Workman, he continued to contribute editorials to that paper until his death in 1894.

A total of more than forty years of Passavant's life were spent in doing editorial work. He wrote with a popular and appealing pen. Therein lay his power to influence people. He had a heart which could understand the cry of the least among the members of Zion. He knew how to respond to a cry for help, and could move others to respond also.

Along with his great editorial ability, Passavant was a seer in the best sense of the term. He could sense the needs of the Lutheran church in America even before they became apparent to others. Because he wished to apply preventive medicine to the church, he was interested in beginning English missions in America's frontiers. He knew that the German language and all other languages except English were losing ground. He saw that the younger generations of those church groups which did not employ the English language would be lost to the Lutheran church unless something



was done to provide them with English preaching and teaching. Passavant helped save many young people for the church.

Because of his constant agitation for mission work among the spiritually destitute Lutherans of America Passavant earned the title, "Father of Lutheran Inner Missions." Because of his labors in English missions, an entirely English synod, the Synod of the Northwest, came into being. These two factors, Passavant's agitation for home mission work, and his insistence that these missions be carried on in English, worked together to cause English mission work to be begun in St. Paul. The English work which the General Council carried on in St. Paul directly influenced the Missouri Synod to go into English mission work in that city.

While Passavant's appeals for English mission work were not the primary motivation for all Missouri Synod English work, they did play an important part in speeding Missouri Synod English work on its way to a greater degree and at an earlier date than if Passavant had not done his work.

At the same time Passavant did other important work for the Lutheran Zion. Whole sections of the church owe their existence either directly or indirectly to the pen that was always busy in Pittsburgh. If it had not been for his efforts, the "Missionary Synod," as the Pittsburgh Synod is known, might never have come into existence. No doubt missions would still have been carried on by the Lutheran church, but not to the degree of intensity they reached because of Passavant's ability to point out the desolate places of Zion. Passavant was, more than any other man in the nineteenth century, the gatherer and upbuilder of the Lutheran church of America.



The helpless were helped, the needy were provided for, and the broken walls of Zion were mended because of Passavant's appeals. At the same time that he appealed for help for the spiritually destitute brethren, they were appealing to him for counsel and often heard from him the answer to their most perplexing problems. Passavant became a counselor on a grand scale. Whole synods came to him for advice, and he lent his counsel and aid in special measure to five synods: the Pittsburgh, Texas, Canada, Minnesota, Indiana-Chicago, and Augustana Synods. These five synods later joined the General Council, at least for a time, and following Passavant's guidance became more conservative than the average synod which remained in the General Synod.

The life of Passavant shows us first of all that if the Lutheran Church wishes to remain strong and continue to grow, it must have men who are zealous to serve Christ and His church with every fiber of their being. Our Lutheran Zion must produce men of vision and courage, imagination, and fire.

It is worth noting at this particular stage in the history of the Missouri Synod that we must not become so anxious to grow that we over-extend our lines. Passavant learned the hard way that he who "sows the wind, reaps the whirlwind." In harmony with practice current in early and middle nineteenth century Lutheranism, Passavant employed revivalistic methods and learned to cooperate with nonconfessional church groups. The whirlwind was the sadness and disappointment which filled his breast when he realized how far non-confessionalism could lead men astray from the truth. Unless our Church properly trains its converts, it may reap the whirlwind in the future.



In the closing years of his life Passavant, mature and wise, found it important to press ever nearer to the divinely inspired Word of God and the confessions and linking them with a desire to "live, to love, to labor," the Missouri Synod too may continue to work in the Kingdom of God among men to heal the sick and bring the lost to Christ.

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