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A Historical Study of the Early Missouri Synod Missionary Work in Kansas

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AN HISTORICAL STUDY OF EARLY MISSOURI SYNOD MISSIONARY WORK IN KANSAS

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this thesis to present the chief facts of the history of the Missouri Synod's mission work in the state of Kansas in the context of its time.

The period of time considered covers the years from 1854 to 1888. The former date is chosen because this is the year in which the Territory of Kansas was formed by an act of the Congress of the United States. Although the Missouri Synod was not active in the area for almost seven years after this date, the writer feels that at least an overview of what had transpired before the advent of the Missouri Synod in Kansas is essential to an understanding of the growth of that body in the state. The terminal date of 1888 is chosen because by that year the congregations of the Missouri Synod in Kansas had advanced to the point that they were able to form a separate district of the synod.

Although the work of the Kansas missionaries extended farther west than the border of Kansas, the present day boundaries of that state constitute for the purpose of this paper the geographical limits of the investigation.

The work of the synod in Kansas is studied with respect to the whole group of congregations in Kansas claiming allegiance with the Missouri Synod. It is, therefore,

not a collection of congregational histories.

The matter of sources for this treatment deserves mention. The secondary source material for such a subject as this is not extensive. Beyond two histories of the Kansas District very little has been written on the subject. There are in existence a number of congregational histories, but since the facts given in these are seldom documented and are often recollections of individuals, extreme caution must be exercised in using them.

It is to be noted that in this paper the terms "the church" and "the synod," unless otherwise designated, refer to the new Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod.

CHAPTER II

THE SCENE

The idea of mission work in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod is considerably changed from that which existed and which governed it a century ago. For her missionaries in the nineteenth century the chief task was that of seeking out those people who fulfilled, generally speaking, two requirements. They must have previously claimed allegiance to the Lutheran church, and they must be German-speaking people. It was with this aim in mind that the missionaries went to build and to serve the church in the state of Kansas in the early years of its existence. Consequently, by the time the church arrived much had taken place in this section of the country and the church found a situation with which she had to deal rather than a situation which she could mold to fit her interests and inclinations.

For almost ten years before the arrival of the first resident pastor of the Missouri Synod in 1861 there had been a movement of people into the Kansas Territory. It was as part of the Louisiana Purchase that Kansas in 1803 had come into the possession of the United States of America. This vast tract of land, extending from the Gulf of Mexico in the South to the Pacific Ocean in the Northwest,

was generally unknown and unmapped when the United States entered into the transaction, and so it was that in 1804 the well-known expedition of Meriwether Lewis and Captain William Clark set out from St. Louis with a party of forty-five to explore a portion of the country which had recently been acquired. On this trip they traversed the Great Plains, touching in July a corner of what was to be the state of Kansas.[1]

In 1806 another expedition was sent out under the leadership of Lieutenant Zebulon Pike to return a group of Osage and Pawnee Indians to their villages. This party continued on west as far as the Rocky Mountains, following the course of the Arkansas River. Lieutenant Pike's report was not one to foster the settling of the country when the frontier had advanced to the eastern edge of it, for he recorded in his journal after he had seen much of the countryside of Kansas:

> In the western traverse of the Louisiana the following general observations may be made: From the Missouri to the head of the Osage river, a distance in a straight line of probably 300 miles, the country will admit a numerous, extensive and compact population; from thence, on the rivers La Plate, Arkansas and Kansas, and their various branches, it appears to me only possible to introduce a limited population.[2]

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[1]Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: Caroline E. Prentis, c.1899), p.16.

[2]Ibid., p. 279.

This portion of the country in the years which followed was commonly known as the "Great American Desert."

The nineteenth century saw the phenomenon of a westward-moving frontier, a thing which was one of the most influential factors in the development of the United States in that century and which has connotations relevant to this study.[3] Professor Paxson has stated that there were two forces which kept in motion the westward movement of population: the necessity of society to care for those people reaching adulthood, to provide them with an opportunity to earn their livelihood; and the opportunity to fulfill this necessity given in the supply of unclaimed land to the west.[4] The great increase in immigration in the middle of the nineteenth century made the spread to the west even more imperative as the press of population in the eastern sections of the Union became greater. At the turn of the century in 1800 the western frontier lay approximately at the western boundaries of the present-day eastern seaboard states,[5]

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[3]The pioneer student of the frontier and its significance in American history is F. J. Turner, who broke ground with his paper, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," The Frontier in American History (New York: Henry Holt and Co., c.1920), pp.1-38. See also, F. L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., c.1924), a very significant contribution.

[4]Paxson, op. cit., p. 186.

[5]Ibid., p. 113.

while by 1830 it had advanced to the Mississippi River, with a "tentacle" extended along the Missouri River to Kansas City.[6]

In spite of the momentum of the frontier and the call of the unexplored wilderness with its power to attract the peculiar frontier personality which had developed in the years of the westward trend the fact is that with the reaching of the western boundary of Missouri in 1820 the movement paused for some twenty years. There are various reasons to which can be assigned the cause of this fact. Ever since the journeys of Lewis and Clark in 1804 to 1806, and of Pike and his party in 1806, the Great Plains had been by reputation an uninhabitable stretch of land, and people would do better to "leave the prairies, incapable of cultivation, to the wandering aborigines of the country."[7] For people who had come from the woods and rolling country of the eastern half of the continent the land must indeed have appeared barren. The threat of danger from Indian tribes in this country was also somewhat more than imaginary, and if rumor was as powerful then as now the popular idea of the danger of living in that portion of the country was

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[6] Ibid., p. 261.

[7] Pike's journal of 1806, quoted by Prentis, op. cit., p. 24.

probably even greater. But the reason which seems to have been most responsible for the pause in the westward movement was the fact that if settlers ventured out into the prairies, that even if they were successful in raising crops and obtaining enough marketable goods, there was no way in which they could then send their goods to the markets farther east. At Kansas City it was still possible for them to ship their goods by way of the Missouri River to the market at St. Louis, but a move farther west cut them off both from the supplies they would need and from the demand for their products.[8] For years the force of these facts was sufficient to keep the vast majority of would-be settlers from entering upon the plains west of Kansas City, so that even in 1853 there was no large population in the area.[9]

In the three decades before the throngs did eventually arrive, the way was being prepared by various events and developments. The first of the major preparations was the

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[8]Paxson, op. cit., p. 423, gives as reasons for the above mentioned pause the facts that the land did not look desirable, and that its crops would have had no market without means of transportation.

[9]Ibid., p. 424. Paxson here states that "as late as 1853, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, George W. Manypenny, reported that there was no serious encroachment of squatters upon the lands of his wards west of Iowa and Missouri."

opening of the Santa Fe Trail in the year 1824, significant for this study in view of the fact that four hundred of the some seven hundred miles of this trail lay in the Kansas area. This meant that in the years this trail was in use some people were constantly traveling through this countryside, discovering by their own experience that while the land was not like the woods of the East, it was not so barren as had first been assumed. When they had themselves crossed the Great Plains and survived they realized that although life here might be difficult it was certainly not impossible. As a result of the Santa Fe Trail settlements were set up along the path to provide supplies for the perilous journey. In the years this trail was in use supply stations were gradually built farther and farther west. Thus, while the last supply station was in Franklin, Missouri at the opening of the trail, after several years had passed a supply post had been set up at Council Grove, Kansas.[10] As these outposts of civilization were established in the territory the journey and the country gradually came to seem less forbidding.

In view of these developments it is possible that the movement into the Kansas territory might have started much earlier. This possibility was checked, however, with the

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[10]Prentis, op. cit., p. 30.

establishment of the Indian Territory by the act of Congress ratified on May 26, 1830. The westward flow of people had presented the government of the United States with a problem. The land which was being occupied by these settlers was land which had formerly been the realm of the American Indian tribes. Recognizing that the two civilizations were incompatible the government adopted the policy of moving the Indian tribes farther west as the throng of settlement advanced in that direction. By the act of 1830 the Indian tribes of the territory being occupied were moved west of the Mississippi River to make room for the settlement of the country. Maintaining the current opinion that the "Great American Desert" would prove to be uninhabitable for all time, the government set aside these lands of the Great Plains for the perpetual use of the Indian tribes, "to be theirs forever,"[11] the way was prepared for the ultimate invasion of the land by civilization. It was in connection with these Indian lands that various forts were set up in Kansas, such as Fort Leavenworth (established in 1827), and later, Fort Scott, Fort Riley, Fort Hayes, Fort Larned, Fort Dodge and others. Thus, even in the years when the land of the plains was ostensibly the exclusive property of the Indians there existed these out-

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[11] Ibid., p. 33.

posts of western civilization. The forts formed hubs for the little circles of settlements which were established in this period, for it was always possible for a limited number of civilian people to make their living from a military post. While these establishments did not draw the people into the territory in any great numbers during this period, when the territory was thrown open to settlement these forts attracted the settlers first.

In this same period of time the founding of the Indian missions in Kansas took place. The Roman Catholic church was somewhat active in this work there, but it is the work of the Methodist missionaries among the Indians of Kansas that is most significant about this time.[12] Beside the soldier and the missionary the other white man whose presence

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[12]The Methodist church had become interested in Indian missions earlier in the century, dating especially from 1816. In 1825 missionaries were appointed to serve the Choctaws, but with the removal of the Indians to the West their work was delayed for a time. It was, however, only a delay, for in 1830 steps were taken to serve the tribes in Kansas. In July, 1830, Geo. Vashon, government agent among the Shawnees wrote to Jesse Greene, presiding elder of the Missouri District of the Methodist church, urging him to start a mission among the people of that tribe. Greene presented the letter to the conference at St. Louis in September and they without delay assigned the brothers, Thomas and William Johnson to the task. In 1845 there were enough missions in existence to form the Indian Mission Conference. This information is from William Warren Sweet, "The Methodists: A Collection of Source Materials.": Religion on the American Frontier. IV. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1946.), pp. 499-500.

was common west of the frontier was the Indian trader. Thus, throughout this period, although the country was given over to the Indian tribes, there were still representatives of the white race among them. When the land was later thrown open to settlement it was not the first time a white man had stepped into the country to live, and it may be that the knowledge of this fact calmed the fears of those who were afraid that it was impossible to maintain oneself on this land.

The single factor perhaps most responsible for the settlement of the territory of Kansas was the railroad. As noted above, one of the things which held back the wave of settlers from entering the Kansas area was the lack of adequate transportation facilities to take their produce to market. With the solution of this problem it is not remarkable that the wide open reaches of the plains should also have been taken over in the drive to the west.

The plan for a transcontinental railroad was not a new one, for as early as 1836 a convention had assembled in Knoxville, Tennessee under the chairmanship of Robert Y. Heyne to discuss just such a project.[13] This plan, as Professor Paxson observes, was concerned with a "Great Southern Route," for the belief was still prevalent that

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[13]Paxson, op. cit., p. 411.

the United States had reached its full growth. A plan for a more central route was rendered impossible of execution by the barrier of the Indian lands.[14] In 1845 again a southwestern convention was held in "a renewed attempt to give vitality to southern and western transportation,"[15] which proved to be the beginning of further efforts to extend transportation lines into the west. During the decade of the forties the western communities also began to agitate for the extension of transportation and succeeded in moving the federal government to make wholesale land grants for the use of railroads in the years after 1850.[16] Although something of a start was made with the building of a small line in Missouri, the plan was held back both by financial difficulties[17] and by the barrier of the Indian territories. With respect to the latter

> . . . a demand arose that the Indian Frontier be abolished, that the tribes of the border be made to cede their lands again, and that a right of way for the agricultural frontier be acquired west of the Bend of the Missouri. The commissioner of Indian Affairs was directed in 1853 to undertake the negotiations and remove the tribes.[18]

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[14] Ibid., p. 411.

[15] Ibid., p. 412.

[16] Ibid., p. 417.

[17] Ibid., pp. 413-417.

[18] Ibid., p. 431.

Thus began the activity by the government of securing the land on which the Indians lived, in most cases by means of cash settlements.[19]

It was with a view to the building of a transcontinental railroad through the territory designated for the perpetual use of the Indians that Senator Douglas of Illinois in 1854 proposed the Nebraska Bill to organize the land into a territory.[20] When that failed to pass he brought another proposal which split the area into two territories, Kansas and Nebraska, thus creating the possibility of North

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[19] Ibid., p. 432. Some of the tribes, of course, refused to enter into the spirit of the venture and disdained any sort of settlement for their land, which they wanted to retain. The most important of these were the Delawares, whose reserve touched the Missouri line at Independence and thus presented an obstacle to the settlement of the region around Fort Leavenworth. Even in these years, however, there was some white population in the area, and Prentis, op. cit., p. 41, states that already in 1852 there were some feeble efforts to become a territory.

[20] There has been considerable discussion and disagreement by historians concerning the motives of Douglas in proposing the Nebraska Bill and later the Kansas-Nebraska Bill to congress. Facts, however, would seem to favor the judgment that rather than seeking thus to foster the cause of slavery he was primarily concerned with the railroad plan, and particularly with seeing that plan involve a route through the central rather than the southern section of the country. One must remember that the Gadsden Purchase of 1853 had made the southern route a very real possibility. For a discussion of this by one who seeks especially to view the problem from the Southern viewpoint see Avery Craven, The Coming of the Civil War (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, c.1942), pp. 325-331.

and South each gaining a state. This, of course, was contrary to the understanding of the Missouri Compromise, but in spite of that the bill was signed by President Pierce in May, 1854. The bill provided with reference to Kansas that

> . . . when admitted as a State or States, the said Territory, or any portion of the same, shall be received into the Union with or without slavery, as their constitution may prescribe at the time of their admission.[21]

This clause concerning slavery was to be the major factor in the speedy populating of the state. Northern and Southern citizens were equally convinced that this new territory should be brought into their own particular camp, and to insure that end's being reached steps were taken by both sides. The decision concerning the future allegiance of the state was ultimately up to the inhabitants of the territory, for it was they who would determine by their adoption of a constitution whether the state would be Slave or Free. In view of this fact the most feasible plan for both sides seemed to be that of making certain that there were enough of one's own adherents present and voting to carry any decision or election. Each of the factions, however, sought to accomplish this in a different manner. The

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[21]The Kansas-Nebraska Act, section nineteen, quoted in Robert Birley, Speeches and Documents in American History. II. (London, England: Oxford University Press, n.d.), p. 196.

North brought in her voters and settled them in the state. The South, less able to carry out such a program, was represented in the voting chiefly by devoted, sometimes fanatical followers from Missouri who made the trip across the state line to vote on vital issues.

Since 1853 the federal government had been purchasing the land from the Indians. On May 30, 1854, the Kansas-Nebraska Bill became active, and a land office was opened in the Indian Country across the border from Missouri in July, 1854 to retail the land of the territory to settlers.[22] Still, it seems there was no immediate rush by either side to populate the land and to purchase tracts of land from the government. That rush was to come when the North and the South began to compete with one another in amassing representation in the territory. In the month immediately following the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act the immigration was made up chiefly of people from across the border in Missouri, strongly pro-slavery, who "honestly supposed that the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act implied that Kansas was given over to slavery,"[23] and people from the Western States, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, who entered

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[22]Paxson, op. cit., p. 432.

[23]James Ford Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850. II. (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1892), p. 78.

"actuated by the pioneer spirit."[24] The activity of the definitely partisan groups was not long in starting, however, and in the years which followed this it kept pace with the high feeling existing between the two sections of the country.

In July, 1854, the Emigrant-Aid Company in New England sent out its first party to Kansas, but the influence of these people in Kansas was not particularly strong in the election held in November, 1854.[25] In fact, it was generally assumed that this scheme for gaining a controlling interest in the government of the state had failed.[26] In the months which followed, however, things became more heated and more complicated.[27] As the cause of the abolitionists in Kansas gained support the emigrant aid societies also profited and were able to send more and more people into the territory. This was especially true after

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[24] Ibid., p. 78.

[25] Ibid., p. 80.

[26] Ibid., p. 81.

[27] By the end of 1855 Slave and Free parties had each elected its separate legislature and adopted its own constitution. The federal government then was faced with two legislatures. To determine which one was legal and empowered to pass legislation a congressional committee was appointed to investigate the troubles in Kansas. Feeling over the Kansas issue ran high in both North and South, with the North incensed over the illegal voting of the pro-slavery adherents and the South regarding the activity of the emigrant aid societies as unfair.

the excitement arising from the events of 1856 (the sack of Lawrence, the activity of "Lane's Army," the raids of the "Border Ruffians") had died down. This was not the end of the struggle however, and in the years following this the territory was still disturbed by countless skirmishes between the two parties.

Among those whom the emigrant aid societies enlisted and persuaded to enter Kansas Territory were also European immigrants. Recently come into the country, in need of a means of support, and by vocation people of the soil,[28] these people were likely prospects to join the parties of people then being organized to populate the Territory of Kansas.[29]

The method of the Southern sympathizers was, by force

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[28] H. E. Faulkner, American Economic History (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1935), p. 361, states that before 1860 the German immigrant was likely to be a farmer. The statement is found in John A. Hawgood, The Tragedy of German-America (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, c.1940), p. 57, that German immigration, which had been increasing since 1830, hit a peak in 1854 of 215,000 people, half of the total European immigration.

[29] An example of this is given in the founding of the city of Humboldt, Kansas. The founders of this town, J. A. Coffey and N. B. Blanton, after purchasing land for their proposed town set about finding people to start their town. They soon located a colony of German immigrants which had been organized at Hartford, Connecticut during the winter of 1856-1857 and had been sent to Kansas to help make it a free state. These people Coffey and Blanton induced to locate on the proposed town site. Seventy-fifth Anniversary St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Humboldt, Kansas, June 12, 1938, p. 5.

of circumstances, somewhat different from that of the groups just discussed. The plan of sending compatriots into the territory was also considered by the South, but they were not as readily able to take advantage of this means of making slavery an institution in the state.[30] Those who were best fitted to introduce slavery into the territory, the property owners, were economically rather strongly bound to their plantations and could not easily give up those places and move. Thus, the only representatives the South could muster in the short time were the poor whites who owned no land, and the people of western Missouri.[31]

Of the people who in the decade of the fifties were flowing into the Kansas Territory we are most concerned with those who had recently come from Germany, for it was to these that the synod at that time directed its domestic mission endeavors almost exclusively. The Missouri Synod of that day was itself a first generation German church, conducting its business and spreading its message in the German language, and so it is not remarkable that it also saw its chief task as one of seeking out the thousands of German Lutherans who were entering the States every year.

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[30] It was the theory of Stringfellow that if enough slaveholders with slaves could be brought into the territory the practice would be so firmly established that they would not be disturbed. Rhodes, op. cit., p. 100.

[31] Ibid., p. 101.

Thus, one finds in considering the work of the synod in the early days of Kansas that she was interested here also in the people of German origin.

Immigration from Germany in the last century may be divided into three "waves" according to the judgment of Friedrich Muench.[32] The first of these, attracted by Duden's book on America, consisting chiefly of people of the laboring and peasant classes, came to this country during the thirties and forties of the nineteenth century, the numbers reaching a high in 1854.[33] The next wave of German immigrants entered in the years following the Civil War. This was probably to a large measure the result of the Franco-Prussian difficulty in Europe with its threat of military duty and increased taxes. This final wave reached its peak in the middle of the eighth decade of the last century.

The specific causes for each of these mass movements from Germany differed in their details, of course, but there are certain common factors which can be detected in

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[32] A. B. Faust, The German Element in the United States With Special Reference to its Political, Moral, Social, and Educational Influence (New York: The Steuben Society of America, c.1909), I, pp. 588-589.

[33] Hawgood, op. cit., p. 57. It would seem that this first wave included also the group of the latter years of this period, consisting largely of merchants, manufacturers, journalists and such. They applied the terms to each other, "die Gruene" for the latter group; "die Graue" referring to the former.

all three of these periods; factors which were to a large part responsible for the phenomenon. During this period Germany was beset with problems of overpopulation and overproduction. The industrial revolution had had its effect also upon Germany, and in consequence the artisans and craftsmen found that they were no longer essential.[34] The overcrowding affected also the farming regions, and many of the younger generation saw a better future for themselves in the New World. The reports which came from America of an abundance of land, of financial success, of light taxes, all these were welcome news to people who could not see much hope for a betterment of their conditions at home in the near future. The fact that ocean travel was cheaper at this time and that many of their fellow countrymen were making the trip no doubt made the decision much easier.[35] Of those people entering from Germany many were Lutherans,[36] and during the period before the war many were also farmers.

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[34]Faust, op. cit., p. 584.

[35]Hawgood, op. cit., pp. 62-66, notes the significant correlation between immigration from Germany and economic conditions both there and in this country. At the times when the outlook in Germany was gloomy and the conditions in the United States healthy we find that there was a very definite rise in the number of people coming to this country from Germany.

[36]This was to be especially true after the Civil War. A. R. Wentz, The Lutheran Church in American History (Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, c.1933), p. 179.

It is not amazing then that even the earliest missionaries to the state were able to muster congregations.

The people who came from Germany during this time were people who were, generally speaking, opposed on principle to any curtailment of an individual's rights. Thus it is that in the question of slavery they aligned themselves "almost to a man" with the Union cause.[37] To them Faust credits the turning of "the tide of sentiment in Missouri in favor of the Union cause."[38] With this attitude over against slavery they were likely prospects when the emigrant aid societies of the New England states were looking for people whom they could organize to enter the Territory of Kansas, people upon whom they could depend to maintain the antislavery position.

The slave-free question was probably not the paramount concern for the German immigrant when he considered the prospect of settling in the recently opened territory. This is particularly true with reference to those Germans who moved into Kansas from other states of the Old Northwest. Rather than being advocates of the Free State doc-

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[37] Faust, op. cit., I, p. 446.

[38] Hawgood, op. cit., p. 50, observes on this point that while the Germans shunned slavery they are not to be classed among the abolitionists. They were rather opposed to the further extension of slavery and for that reason they were opposed to the Kansas-Nebraska Act.

trine these people were primarily farmers, and as such they were more interested in the prospect of having their own piece of land in the West. The German, raised in a country where every acre of land was precious, was very respectful of land, and because of that he was particular and careful with his own property.[39] A. B. Faust observes that the German farmer coming to this country in the last century succeeded in his vocation here for various reasons: he looked for good, productive land; he was careful in caring for the soil; he was economical; he cared for his livestock; he was orderly; he, with the family, did all the work of the farm alone; and he was interested in keeping the farm in the family.[40] Thus, when the American farmer moved on with the frontier, selling his farm, the German was ready to buy it and to expend the energy necessary to make the farm profitable.

As a class the German people were not frontiersmen. Rather than spearhead the drive to the West they preferred to follow in a later wave and to develop the land which had been broken by the first settlers of the country. Coming as they did from Europe, they were used to having at least more of the comforts and embellishments of civilized culture

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[39] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

[40] Faust, op. cit., II, pp. 29-30.

than they were able to have living in the Far West.[41] Although a considerable number of them had come to live on the frontier it was not in answer to any "call of the unknown" or any Wanderlust,[42] but what would seem to be rather the result of circumstances. These people were coming to this country in great numbers, they needed a means of support, the land in distant Kansas provided an answer to their problem; and so they were ready to join the groups organizing to settle in the West.

That their attraction was not the frontier is not only a deduction from knowledge of their general character, but is evident in the fact that in the following years, when the frontier moved on west, the German farmers were not tempted to leave the land they had settled and to follow the wave, but they remained where they were. Nor would the type of land they found on the Great Plains appeal to these people particularly. Given his choice the German farmer would understandably choose that land which most resembled the land to which he was accustomed, wooded, rolling coun-

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[41]This was particularly true of the immigrants known as "die Gruene" and mentioned above, who were accustomed to a high order of culture in their lives.

[42]Carl Heinzen, about 1860, pointed up the difference between the American temperament which had developed and that of the German immigrant in two phrases: "Was als Deutscher ein Traeumer wird, das wird als Amerikaner ein Loafer," and, "Wo der Deutsche eine Phantasie hat, hat der Amerikaner eine Speculation." Quoted by Hawgood, op. cit., p. 24.

tryside.[43] Once there, however, these people would settle in one locality and would there build up their own community. Since they had in common a language, background and temperament which were different from the other settlers on these lands, they were inclined from the very first to be clannish. This characteristic was self-perpetuating, especially since they clung so tenaciously to the language which was dear to them.[44]

But the German settlers did come to Kansas, and they found there a land vastly different from that to which they had been accustomed since their childhood. The face of the prairies, as indicated above, was something new and strange to them. While they were accustomed to trees and woods, these settlers found that even in the eastern section of the state, where they first made their homes, trees were scarce, and were generally to be found only alongside the streams. The western part of the state, to which the immigrants were to go in the succeeding years, was devoid

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[43] Ibid., p. 27. Particularly revealing in this matter of the German's attitude over against the land of the prairies is an article written by a Lutheran pastor in Wisconsin, Hoffmann, "Einiges ueber innere Mission aus der Missourisynode," Evang.-Luth. Mission und Kirche unter den Deutschen Nord-Amerika's, II (February, 1866), p. 19.

[44] This was a characteristic of the German immigrants throughout this period. It was only in the case of those immigrants who settled in areas where there were not many of their language group that the English language came into current use with them. Faust, op. cit., II, p. 410.

of even the small hills of the eastern part of the territory. Such a countryside was very likely not considered inhabitable by these German people at that time. Some idea of the appearance of the southeastern corner of the territory is given us in a certain Mrs. Colt's description:

> These prairies spread out far and wide, like a green ocean, and they present something of that optical illusion seen in deserts, called "mirage, causing distant objects to be seen double, as if reflected in a mirror, so as to appear as if suspended in the air;" in deserts it presents the appearance of water - here it makes the next wood seem nearer. . . .

or again,

> A broad green sea of prairie is spread out before us, and in the distance large mounds stretch themselves along the horizon; some in the form of cones, others roof shape - not a tree or shrub shade their summits or sides, but the bright rays of the morning rays of the morning sun illumine their whole surfaces.[45]

An Englishman who had come to this country and who was stationed with the army at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas described the countryside of Kansas in 1856 as "appearing very fine but the land is rather deficient in wood and water and the resources of the Country are as yet but feebly developed."[46]

The importance of readily available water in the life of the settlers dictated that the settlements should be

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[45]Miriam Davis Colt, Went to Kansas (Watertown: L. Ingalls and Company, 1862), pp. 39-40.

[46]H. O. Brayer, To Form a More Perfect Union (Albuquerque, New Mexico: The University of New Mexico Press, c.1941), p. 77.

placed alongside the streams and rivers. It is for this reason that the earliest forts and towns were always situated beside or within easy access of fresh running water. This was a factor also in the case of the German farmers coming into Kansas, and so it is that

> . . . already at the time it was still a territory many German Lutheran, especially from Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin, immigrated to Kansas and settled particularly in the fruitful valleys of the many creeks.[47]

The cities which existed at the time were small. At first the towns quite naturally grew up about the forts. In the very early days of settlement it was necessary that the settlers have adequate protection, for in those days this was still Indian country. With the abolition of the Indian Lands the threat of marauding tribes in at least the eastern section of the state became less, and people felt safe in organizing towns farther away from where the militia were stationed. Here also, however, it was the usual practice to settle close together, for there were still times when the safety of numbers was to be desired. Once the territory had been thrown open to settlement and the positions of the Slave and the Free parties with respect to Kansas had come into the open, the organizing of town companies became common practice. It seems that this could

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[47] M. K. C. Vetter, Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Kansas-Distrikts (Leavenworth, Kansas: Leavenworth Tribuene, 1913), p. 4.

be done in several ways. In some cases the companies were organized in the East, the shares being sold there with the promise that there would be provided for the settlers the necessities of life, such as a mill and a means of marketing their goods.[48] Or, in another case, an individual or a group of individuals might select a location which should prove suitable for a town, buy the claims of the man or men to whom the land belonged, and sell the lots to the people who were coming into the state.[49] In the earliest days the German people seem to have been attracted by the land rather than by the towns. In later years, however, we find that some of the towns boasted a considerable German population.

The Germans who came were not, as a rule, wealthy. The offer of the federal government to sell land for $1.25 per acre to any head of a family who lived on it for a set period of time was one which many of these people seized. Since this was virgin soil it was necessary first of all to break up the sod so that it could be put to seed. It was the sort of work which required such essentials as a team of oxen, a plow, seed grain and a minimum of miscellaneous tools. In most cases these things were brought with the

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[48]See, for example, the plan of the company organized in 1856 and known as the "Vegetarian Settlement Company" in Colt, op. cit., pp. 277-285.

[49]Saint Peter's, Humboldt, p. 5.

settlers when they came, the oxen being used to draw the wagons in which they made the journey. A horse was a luxury most of these people forewent. Farming this land was not an easy task, and there were constant dangers connected with it, for the rainfall was not so dependable as in other localities.

The winter of 1859-1860 was mild, but it brought with it also a slack in business.[50] This in itself does not seem to have been serious, but the following summer was an exceptionally dry one and no crops were raised in Kansas that season. In consequence it was necessary for aid to be forwarded from people in the eastern states to stave off starvation in at least some parts of Kansas. When that was followed by a severe winter and by high waters in the Spring, and when the threat of civil war became increasingly more real,[51] the outlook of the people in the territory in the Spring of 1861 must have been rather dim. The marauding bands of men representing both sides of the struggle over the slavery question did nothing to make life in eastern Kansas more bearable.

Religion was not absent from the scene of Kansas in this era. In fact, it was often an integral part of the life of the frontier settlers, and in that atmosphere

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[50] Brayer, op. cit., p. 89.

[51] Ibid., p. 94.

developed in most church bodies a character and tone all its own. The public to which religion had to appeal in most cases was a group hardened to disaster and to discomfort, restless people who also wanted in their religion something to break the boredom and the everyday struggle to provide for themselves and to protect themselves against the dangers which surrounded them. Among most of these people that religion fared best which appealed to their emotions, which stressed rhythmic singing and yearly "conversions." Because of their method the most successful of the sects among the frontier people was the Methodist.

In most cases there was no point of contact even in religion between the settlers from Germany and the others who had come to Kansas. The language barrier was such that the groups could not easily mix. The Methodist church body early recognized that there was a promising field to be found in the German people streaming into the country. They realized that they had lost a chance to work among the Germans who had entered the country and had settled in Pennsylvania in the previous century.[52] As early as the first years of the 1830's the editor of the Methodist publication, the Western Christian Advocate, urged that this opportunity not be lost by his church body and that work be

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[52] W. W. Sweet, Methodism in American History (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, c.1933), p. 270.

begun with the new German population. As a result of that plea, in 1835 William Nast, a young German who had come to the States in 1828, was given the task of directing this work. For many years thereafter Nast was the guiding light in the work of the Methodist church among the Germans of the United States, and was active in translating many Methodist works into German. The new endeavor grew gradually and in 1839 gained new force with the publication of the first issue of the weekly Der Christliche Apologete at Cincinnati.[53] When the work was first begun among the Germans it was placed under the direction of one or more German presiding elders, but when this plan proved distasteful to the Germans they petitioned the General Conference in 1864 for separate Annual Conferences. Their request was granted and three conferences were formed.[54] Another significant action taken at this General Conference was the establishment of the Church Extension Society to aid in the building of churches.

The Methodist church had gotten its start in Kansas very early in the area's history and was consequently the strongest of the church bodies in that territory. Already

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[53]That this periodical was considered as having some influence may be inferred from the fact that in its early years especially Der Lutheraner often referred to and refuted statements or articles which had appeared in Der Christliche Apologete.

[54]Sweet, Methodism in American History, p. 270-271.

in 1830 the Methodists had begun work in Kansas among the Indian tribes, which brought their men into Kansas long before there was any dream of statehood. As a result of their many years of labor on the frontier they and their religion formed in the general thinking of this new country the pattern for religion and for religious action. When they began to approach the Germans in their own beloved language here on the frontier they were able to bring many of them also into their fold.

During this early period it would seem that other Lutheran bodies were as unaware of the mission opportunities in the state as was the Missouri Synod. The task of beginning work in this area did not properly belong to the older Lutheran bodies in America. Many of them had made the complete change to the English language and had in the same period of time also lost something of their distinctive Lutheran character. In fact, with their favoring of "new measures" they usually felt themselves closer in spirit and teaching to the Reformed bodies, and so, indeed, they often were. As a result largely of this they lost something of the mission imperative which drove other Lutheran bodies to go to the people on the distant frontier. It is likely also that since the Methodists were so active in this section of the country the older Lutheran groups felt that there was no immediate and needed service they could render by also

entering this section. The work with the immigrants from Germany they left up to their brethren who still retained that language, which meant notably the Ohio Synod. But this was the period of free conferences and friendly relations between the Missouri and Ohio Synods. Consequently, this field to the west of Missouri seemed to be more within the sphere of operations of the Missouri Synod, and the Ohio Synod might not have been moved to enter this region after Missouri had begun working there. The responsibility of going to serve the German people entering Kansas was by force of geographic location that of the Missouri Synod.

The only other body to be very active in the area began its work in this same period of time. This was the Swedish group which was later to have its Kansas headquarters in Lindsborg. The first record of Swedish Lutherans entering the state is that of two brothers, John A. and N. P. Johnson. These two men had come to Galesburg, Illinois in 1852, but three years later, in 1855, John A. Johnson moved to Kansas with William Shannon, a farmer for whom he was working. He was favorably impressed by the land on the Blue River about twenty miles north of Manhattan where they had settled, and he persuaded his brother to move with his family to that region. They arrived after a month's trip by wagon and oxen on May 22, 1856. The next year other families arrived and settled near them. Like the German

settlers they were without the ministrations of the church for several years. They were not completely out of touch with their church, however, for one of them, Louis Lybecker, wrote in Hemlandet on March eighth and fifteenth in 1859, describing the life in this territory, seemingly quite distasteful to these people from a northern climate.[55] It was not till October 14, 1863 that the first congregation was formed in the community which had by then been named Mariadahl.[56] The activity of that body was centered about this Swedish settlement during the entire period under discussion.

The prospect which faced the first missionary from the Missouri Synod to Kansas was not that of little work. He was faced by the fact that in this territory of Kansas there were scattered a great number of German people, many of whom, nominally at least, were of Lutheran persuasion. They were people who were not used to the climate and the land on which they had settled. The wide open plains, the lack of water, the winds which made both summer and winter more severe, the climate which granted its favors in a rather cavalier fashion; these were what they experienced. They

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[55] O. N. Olson, The Augustana Lutheran Church in America (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Book Concern, c.1950), pp. 86-87.

[56] E. Norelius, De Svenska Luterska Forsamlingarnas och Svenskarnes i Amerika (Rock Island, Illinois: Lutheran Augustana Book Concern, 1890), p. 769.

had left their families; in many cases they had left the things with which they were familiar, and had ventured out into a country which was in every conceivable way a stranger to them. They were cut off from their own culture by distance and they were excluded from the culture of the country in which they lived by their language. Gathered, as they were, into groups, they were to stand apart from their fellow citizens for many years.

They were also people faced with the alternatives of supporting themselves on the land or of perishing. For them there were no other alternatives. It was only in rare cases that one of them could afford to move from this country to another place where he might find something more tolerable. Placed thus into a situation which was not to his fancy, but forced by circumstances to make the best of it, it is no wonder that the Missouri Synod at that time saw as a very real danger the work of the German Methodist preachers in this area. Aliens in a strange country, surrounded by difficulties and disappointments, the Germans were eager for and welcomed any missionary who came to speak to them in the language they could understand and who could tell them of something other than their troubles. In this situation they were ready and anxious to see their familiar Lutheran pastors, but if these were lacking even the Methodist preacher was a welcome sight.

This was the situation which Pastor Fritze of Adams County, Indiana, found when he went to visit his in-laws in Kansas, and it was in this atmosphere that the work of the Missouri Synod was to take root and to grow.

CHAPTER III

BEGINNING STRUGGLES

Although the Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other states was not the first Lutheran body to be represented in Kansas,[1]

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[1]In the past it has been mentioned in connection with the visit of Pastor J. A. Fritze to Diamond Creek, in the vicinity of Council Grove, that "it is quite probable that Pastor Fritze held divine services with his relatives, and thus he may have been the first to preach a Lutheran sermon on Kansas soil." J. W. Werling, History of the Kansas District Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States (Newton, Kansas: Herald Publishing Company, 1938), p. 5. The facts underlying the judgment made in this paper are these: In Der Lutheraner of March 19, 1861, a letter from Fr. Brunn of Steeden, Germany was printed. In this letter Pastor Steeden made a reference to a certain Pastor Sack: ". . . und doch war der nun selig entschlafene Pastor Sack der einzige lutherische Prediger in Kansas. . . ." In Wilhelm Loehe's Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika, 1860, numbers 1 and 2, pp. 10 ff., is found the announcement of the death of a certain Pastor Adam Sack together with a short biography and a copy of the last letter he had written to his parents. The pertinent facts from this article are these: Adam Sack was born in 1834, trained as a tailor and determined "to serve the Lord Jesus and His kingdom." In 1854 he entered the Neuendettelsau institution as a student. Because of a nervous condition (Nervenschwaeche) and very likely a disease of the lungs ("wahrscheinlich aber ein verborgenes Lungenleiden," p. 10), he was forced to remain at home for a year. The summer of 1857 he came to America where he finished his schooling at Wartburg Seminary of the Iowa Synod. He was ordained May 8, 1859, and decided to accept the call to a small congregation being formed in Kansas. With a small party he made the five-week trip to Kansas by ox and wagon, going by way of Fort des Moines, Iowa; Saint Joseph, Missouri; and Topeka, Kansas. Pastor Sack had been in Kansas only a few weeks and had preached only three times when he took ill. He died September 22, 1859, at 6:30 p. m. The place at which he had been stationed was Upper Mill Creek, P. O. Wabaunsee, Wabaunsee County, Kansas Territory.

it was the first to carry out an extensive mission program in that state. If the historians of the Kansas District are correct it was in 1860 that Pastor Johann Andreas Fritze, then forty-three years of age and pastor of the Saint Peter's Lutheran congregation in Adams County, Indiana, new Fort Wayne, made the journey from his home to a German settlement about one hundred miles west of the Kansas-Missouri border.[2] The purpose of the trip was to visit his

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[2]A problem concerning the time of this trip presents itself. Vetter, (and probably following his lead) P. E. Kretzmann, and J. W. Werling all state that this trip was taken by Fritze in 1860. However, there appeared in Der Lutheraner of March 5, 1861, p. 118, the news item: "Kansas. Am 19. Febr. reiste hier Herr Past. Fritze durch nach einer lutherischen Gemeinde in Council Grove, Kansas." This note was part of the regular column entitled, "Zur Kirchlichen Chronik." In view of the fact that Pastor Fritze was present at the 1860 meeting of the General Synod (Zehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1860, p. 10) held in St. Louis, Missouri from October tenth to twentieth of that year, several explanations present themselves. 1. He may have made the trip to Kansas during the Summer of 1860, returning to St. Louis for the meeting of synod in the Fall. In this case the note in the Lutheraner referred to above forces one to say that he must have made another trip in the early part of 1861. 2. He may have made the trip to Kansas after the closing of the synodical meeting on October 20, 1860. If this is true, then the item in the Lutheraner may be in error in stating that Pastor was on his way "nach einer lutherischen Gemeinde in Council Grove, Kansas." (Italics ours) In the first conjecture one must face the fact that a trip to Kansas was no small undertaking at the time with which this study is concerned and had to be made by boat, horseback, wagon, by foot, or by whatever means one might find at hand. The last miles across Kansas to his destination also had their dangers. It seems rather unlikely that a pastor would leave his charge two years in a row for such an extended period as would be required for this trip. If, on the

widowed mother-in-law, Mrs. Hegwer, and other members of her family who lived on Diamond Creek near Council Grove, Kansas.[3] There is no positive indication, but it is likely that while he was there Pastor Fritze conducted services for the family and perhaps others of the neighborhood, for this was a section of the country which had seen quite a few German people settling in it in the few years previous to this.[4] Because this community of German-speaking people had no Lutheran pastor to minister to them the relatives of Pastor Fritze asked him to find a pastor for them.[5] On the return trip from Diamond Creek Pastor Fritze also discovered some Lutheran people in the vicinity on nearby Lyons Creek and Clarks Creek. With this information he then returned home and spoke with the Reverend F. K. D. Wyneken, at that time president of the Missouri Synod, concerning the need

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other hand, we accept the second possibility we are confronted with the statement of the Lutheraner. If he was actually returning from Kansas at that time, the delay may have been due to the extremely hard winter which was experienced in Kansas that year, which may have prevented him from returning home during the winter. Present evidence seems to favor this latter possibility, but until further evidence is brought forth it is rather difficult to make a final judgment.

[3]M. K. C. Vetter, Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Kansas-Distrikts (Leavenworth, Kansas: Leavenworth Tribune, 1913), p. 4.

[4]"Adam Sack," Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika, XVIII (January-February, 1860), 11.

[5]Vetter, op. cit., p. 4.

of these people in Kansas and their request for a pastor.[6] In spite of the fact that there were only three men graduating from the practical seminary in Fort Wayne in the summer of 1861,[7] one of them, F. W. Lange, was called upon to be the first missionary of the synod in the state of Kansas.

Friedrich Wilhelm Lange, born March 28, 1839 in Heithoefen, Hannover, Germany, had come to America with his parents in 1855 and with them had made his home in Washington, Missouri. Three years later (1858) at the age of nineteen he entered the practical seminary at Fort Wayne. Now in 1861, twenty-one years of age, he was to enter what was generally considered the "wilderness" of Kansas to confront the mysteries of the American frontier and to minister to the German people he might find there. He was to be cut off from almost any connection with his fellow clergy.

It is possible that Lange was able to visit his parents in Washington, Missouri, yet before he entered his new mission field, but if so it was a very limited time he spent there.[8] Because of the outbreak of the Civil War he

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[6]President Wyneken was at that time living near Pastor Fritze in Adams County, Indiana. G. E. Hageman, "Friedrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken," Men and Missions (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1926), III, 52.

[7]P. E. Kretzman, "The First Twenty Years of Sound Lutheranism in Kansas," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, IV (January, 1932), 109.

[8]On August 18, 1861 Lange had already reached his destination and on that date preached his first sermon.

could not travel directly from his home to his new charge, so he went by rail as far as Iowa City, Iowa, from which place another young missionary, Heinrich Lossner, took him on his way by springwagon. From Iowa City in eastern Iowa they traveled together westward across the state to Council Bluffs, thence south along the Missouri River to Nebraska City, Nebraska. Here the trail may have left the river as they struck out for Topeka. In Topeka, Kansas, they turned southwest to Council Grove, perhaps traveling through the Pottawatomie Indian Reservation just west of Topeka, and then to the little German communities on and near Clarks Creek. They arrived here on the evening of Tuesday, August 18, 1861 after a journey of three weeks, during which time they had camped out along the way and fixed their own meals.[9]

The next Sunday already Lange was at work, and in the

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[9]It is most interesting to note that the trail which they followed from Iowa City, Iowa was that which was much used in those days, being the path by which the famous "Lane's Army" was entering Kansas Territory. James A. Lane was a dedicated opponent of slavery, active during the territorial days, who convinced people in the New England states that his cause was right and persuaded them to give to his cause. With the aid of the New England Emigrant Aid Society he recruited thousands of men to help settle and make Kansas safe for abolitionists. When the pro-slavery forces in Missouri blockaded the regular ways of travel the so-called "Lane Trail" was begun, beginning at Iowa City, the terminal of the railroad, and ending in Topeka. Stone cairns were erected along the way by Iowans so that travelers would not become lost. Charles C. Howes, This Place Called Kansas (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, c.1952), p. 36.

home of Mr. Wetzel he preached his first sermon to a congregation which numbered only a handful of people.[10] As his text he had chosen one which would most certainly be familiar, John 3:16.[11] On the next day Lange set out on his first Missionsreise, going first to Lower Lyons Creek, where he contacted Mr. Wetzel's brother-in-law, who lived there. In telling of this visit the observation is made that these people were surrounded by Methodists.[12] On he went to Upper Lyons Creek, where he found four families and a hermit; to Diamond Creek, the home of Pastor Fritze's mother-in-law; to Upper Mill Creek (now know as Templin), where there were seven families; and finally to Lower Mill Creek (the site of present day Alma), to find three families. Having visited these six settlements in the region he ended his first trip and returned to Clarks Creek where he had made his home with the Wetzels.[13] Trips such as this were made for the most part without the benefit of paths or trails, and involved a great deal of walking for Pastor Lange. From Diamond Creek to Clarks Creek, for example,

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[10]Vetter, loc. cit., p. 5.

[11]Ibid., p. 5.

[12]Ibid., p. 5.

[13]Ibid., p. 5. Lange referred to it in a letter to Prof. Craemer as "wo ich meine Buecher und Kleider habe." In this same letter a description of his parish is found. It was printed in Der Lutheraner, XVII (April 2, 1862), 135.

was a distance of some forty-six miles.[14]

The distance was not the only of the difficulties which met Lange. He was also confronted by the fact that a German Methodist preacher had been active among these people, seemingly for at least a few months, for a few of the people had already become Probeglieder in the Methodist church.[15] Under these circumstances it was no doubt encouraging to discover a family who, after having heard the Methodist preacher, had become convinced that he was in error and had begun holding their own services, one of the group reading a sermon each Sunday from Luther's Postille.

After Lange had been there for three weeks the first congregational meeting was held at the home of Mr. Wetzel on Clarks Creek, at which were present representatives of all of the groups to which Pastor Lange was ministering.[16]

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[14]M. Meyer, "Huelferuf aus Kansas," Der Lutheraner, XVII (July 9, 1862), 190.

[15]Ibid., p. 190. The rule of the Methodist Church in 1868 concerning Probeglieder was: "Keine Person soll als volles Glied in die Kirche aufgenommen werden, ehe sie wenigstens sechs Monate auf Probe gewesen und empfohlen worden ist von der Fuehrer- und Verwalter-Versammlung oder, wo keine solche Versammlung gehalten wird, von dem Klassfuehrer. Auch muss sie die Taufe emfangen haben und soll bei der durch den Aufsichtshabenden Prediger vor der Gemeinde vorgenommenen Pruefung, sowohl ueber die Richtigkeit ihres Glaubens, als auch ihre Willigkeit, die Regeln der Kirche zu beobachten, genuegende Versicherung geben." Die Lehre und Kirchenordnung der Bischoefl. Methodistenkirche, (Cincinnati: Verlag von Hitchcock and Walden, 1869), pp. 34-35.

[16]Mr. Wetzel of Clarks Creek, Mr. Poerich of Lyons Creek, Mr. Fink of Diamond Creek, Mr. Lahmberg of Upper Mills Creek, and Mr. Hannkammer of Lower Mill Creek all signed his call. Vetter, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

By decision of this group a call was extended to Lange to serve this parish, and it was accepted by him. Regularly from that time he served these places, preaching and holding services at each place once every three weeks.[17] In keeping with the policy of the Missouri Synod at that time he also started instructions for the young people, attempting to give them a rudimentary education as best he could under the unfavorable circumstances. His advent in Kansas was noted in a news item in the Lutherische Zeitung of November 2, 1861:

> Wir freuen uns zu hoeren, dass Pastor Wilhelm Lange, ein Zoegling des Seminars zu Fort Wayne, seit August, d. J. in Junction City, Kansas, wohnt und unter den dortigen deutschen als Reiseprediger arbeitet.[18]

All this time, of course, Lange had not been ordained. By an interesting circumstance he could not be ordained by Lossner because Lossner himself had not yet been ordained. At this time the neighboring clergyman of his synod closest to Lange was Pastor Biltz in Concordia, Missouri.[19]

Lossner, meanwhile, perhaps after staying with him for a few days, had left Lange to return home. In doing so he took a different route, this time going through Leavenworth,

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[17] Ibid., p. 6.

[18] Lutherische Zeitung, XXI (January-February, 1860), 141.

[19] Vetter, op. cit., p. 6.

Kansas.[20] Pastor Lossner found no Lutheran people "aus unseren Kreisen,"[21] but in nearby Kickapoo he discovered a family by the name of "Scheer." On the following Sunday, August 25, 1861, Lossner held his first service in Kickapoo, using the Methodist church of the community. Upon leaving the place Lossner seems to have been convinced that here was a promising mission field, for on his return through St. Louis he relayed the information to the faculty of the seminary there that there was need for a missionary in the region of Leavenworth.

Shortly after this report was received action was taken upon it, for already on November 9, 1861, Candidate Michael Meyer arrived in Leavenworth on the last steamboat to travel the Missouri River before its being closed to shipping for the winter. However, even in the few weeks between the departure of Lossner and the arrival of Meyer important developments had been taking place in Leavenworth. It seems that a preacher who had called himself a Lutheran had been holding services in Leavenworth. For some reason the people now let him go and asked Lange to come to Leaven-

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[20] In view of the letter of Adam Sack in which he mentions the fact that he had heard of other German people in the Kansas Territory, it is not unlikely that Lossner and Lange had heard there were a number of German people at this place. See "Aus Sack's Brief an seine Eltern vom 9. Juli 1859," Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika, XVIII (No. 1 and 2, 1860), column 12.

[21] Vetter, op. cit., p. 6.

worth and to serve them. Thus, until Meyer arrived in Leavenworth Pastor Lange ministered to the people in this place.[22]

Not long after the arrival of Meyer the group in Leavenworth extended a call to him,[23] and thus began a twenty-year ministry for Pastor Meyer in Leavenworth. During this time he not only served the congregation in Leavenworth, but he was also instrumental in the founding of congregations in Weston and Parley, Missouri, and in Millwood (now Potter), Kansas.[24]

To appreciate the work of these men during their first year in Kansas one must bear in mind several facts. Life was more difficult in these settlements on or near the edge of the frontier, with commodities more scarce and consequently higher priced. These men did not at first have the convenience of a horse, so most of the traveling they did was on foot. They were men freshly out of the seminary, and, because of distance, cut off from other pastors and the advice and encouragement for which they must have felt a need at times. Moreover,

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[22]Since these two places are approximately seventy-five miles apart, and since only ten weeks intervened between the departure of Lossner and the arrival of Meyer, it is not likely that Lange was able to serve the congregation very many times.

[23]Signed by G. P. Elbert, Geo. Luender, Elias Ulrich, Peter Schott, H. Steinker, and John Becker. Vetter, op. cit., p. 6.

[24]Ibid., p. 8.

> . . . Kansas, in spite of the war that had raged over its plains, was not much of a State even in 1861. Most of its settlers lived in its extreme eastern counties, near the rivers that were its sole connection with the Union. Two hundred miles west of Missouri was still the open range, and the village at the old Council Grove . . . was on the actual frontier even yet . . . There had not been a rush of incomers on any terms.[25]

In addition to this they reached Kansas at a time when the nation as a whole was in the midst of a depression, the effect of the breaking out of the Civil War. Those most severely affected were, as usual, the professional classes, among them the clergymen.[26] The first salary which Lange received was eighty-five cents which he got from several of his parishioners to use for postage. It seems that Meyer had written, remarking that Lange had not yet written to him. Lange replied that Meyer was at least more fortunate than himself, since he could afford postage for the letter. Some assistance was given Lange when Meyer sent him some of the money which he had brought with him when he had come to Leavenworth. Lange is also reported to have received aid from his parents in the form of new clothes. Pastor Vetter in his history of the Kansas District calls attention to the fact that one of the things which complicated mission work in those early days was the lack of a system for financially

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[25] Frederic L. Paxson, History of the American Frontier (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1924), p. 448.

[26] Harold U. Faulkner, American Economic History (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, c.1935), pp. 408 f.

assisting these beginning mission fields and their missionaries.[27] In the first years of work in Kansas this aid was markedly absent, in part because of the financial situation existing in the entire country at that time. In August, 1861, Der Lutheraner had noted that the Methodists at this time had asked the farmers to double their efforts to aid the work of missions, "because the general standstill of business keeps the townspeople from doing what they had formerly done."[28] The editor of Der Lutheraner observed that the same situation obtained in the Lutheran church.

Beside the vagaries of Kansas weather these men also had to be concerned about the work of the Methodist preachers in the region. In these years the synod of Missouri as a whole was concerned about the inroads the Methodist church seemed to be making upon the German population. This was the era in which almost every Lutheraner carried some news item or article about the Methodists. The opposition was no less forceful where the settlements were younger. In his letter to Professor Craemer, for example, Lange speaks of an experience with a Methodist group in the vicinity. Briefly it was this: Some weeks previous to writing the letter Lange had met a Methodist preacher who claimed that Lange was teaching false doctrine. Asked to prove his charge

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[27] Vetter, op. cit., pp.10-11.

[28] Der Lutheraner, XVII (August 6, 1861), 206.

on the basis of Scripture, the preacher replied that Lange claimed to be able to forgive sins, which, he said, was contrary to John, chapter twenty. It was some two weeks later that Lange heard from his congregation that the Methodist preacher had reported to his own people that Lange had been able to reply only "Mum, mum" to his accusation. When he heard that Lange determined to talk to the people of that Methodist congregation and at least to show them how their preacher had deceived them. Thus it was that on the following Sunday Lange visited their church, only to discover that none of the Methodist ministers was there, but that only a Lokalprediger was present. Undaunted he asked them if he could talk to them, and since they said neither yes nor no, he began to speak. After an hour's debate with the Lokalprediger Lange forced him to admit that the words of Jesus to His apostles in John twenty applied to all Christians. Invited to address them in their afternoon service Lange declined, feeling that if they wanted to hear him they could take the few steps to the place where he would be preaching to the Lutherans that afternoon.[29]

It was finally on Cantate Sunday of the next year, May 18, 1862, that F. J. Biltz, pastor of the congregation in Concordia, Missouri, was able to make the trip to Leaven-

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[29] Ibid., XVIII (April 2, 1862), 135.

worth and to ordain Meyer.[30] Meyer, in turn, ordained Pastor Lange on Sunday, September 7, 1862[31] at one of the places of his parish in Davis, Dickinson, Morris and Wabaunsee Counties. Meyer was received into membership with synod at the Western District convention in 1862 as an advisory pastor, as was Lange in 1863. The latter's postal address at that time was given as Junction City, Davis County, Kansas.[32]

Significant developments were taking place in the nation at this time. The Civil War was in progress, but the German people as a rule were not enthused about becoming embroiled in this affair. Of utmost significance even for them, however, was the Homestead Law, passed by Congress on May 20, 1863, to take effect on January 1, 1864. This law

> . . . granted a quarter section (160 acres) free to a head of a family or a person over twenty-one who was a citizen of the United States, or to anyone who had filed his intention of becoming one. Residence of five years was required, good faith was to be evidenced by cultivation. After six months, however, the entry might be commuted by the payment of $1.25 an acre. Later amendments have further liberalized the act by permitting veterans of the Civil and succeeding wars to count the time served in the army against the five-year required residence period.[33]

In the ten years after the passage of this law twenty-six

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[30] Ibid., XVIII (August 6, 1862), 208.

[31] Ibid., XX (April, 1864), 167.

[32] Allgemeiner Synodal-Bericht, 1863 (St. Louis: Druck von August Wiebusch und Sohn, 1864), p. 5.

[33] Faulkner, op. cit., p. 431.

million acres were "homesteaded" in this manner.[34]

Another important move was the United States government's practice of granting land to railroads. This practice had begun somewhat earlier, but the grants of this time were the first in Kansas. The assurance that transportation would soon be available in the new state, linked with the passage of the Homestead Act, was largely responsible for the great numbers of people taking up farming in Kansas in this period. Among these were also many immigrants.[35]

The congregation in Leavenworth was growing during this period, and only a few months after the start of mission work in that area they were planning to erect their own building in which to hold their services. In a "Huelferuf aus Kansas"[36] Meyer reported on the prospects in the area and on the work which they had under way. At the beginning of his activity the only place they had been able to secure for worship had been a building which housed an English school during the week; and when the school failed, the place was rented as a dwelling, forcing the congregation to find quarters elsewhere. The situation was further complicated by the fact that the rate of rent of twelve to fifteen

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[34]Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: Caroline E. Prentis, c.1899), pp. 123-124.

[35]Faulkner, op. cit., p. 402.

[36]Der Lutheraner, XVII (August 6, 1861), 206.

dollars a month was somewhat out of their financial reach. The problem was solved at least temporarily when they were permitted to use the local courtroom. However, since this was free to them only on Sundays they could not celebrate many of the church festivals with public services, and even their Sunday morning service was hindered sometimes when the case before the court was particularly knotty and the jury had not yet rendered its decision on Sunday morning. At those times the courtroom was still occupied. Another reason for securing their own building was the lack of a school for the children of the small congregation.

Their plan was to build. They had already purchased a lot for the building for $625 and had collected $110 toward the payment of that debt. They hoped to be able to meet that obligation themselves. In paying for the building itself they would need assistance. Concluding the letter Pastor Meyer stressed four points: 1. The future growth and existence of the congregation depended upon their having a building. 2. They could attract no new members under their existing circumstances. 3. If the congregation had to disband the people would soon be snatched up by the Methodists and the Albrechtsleute. 4. The future of the congregation at Saint Joseph, Missouri also hung in the balance, for they were without a pastor and being served by Meyer.

The appeal was rather moving, and in the following months the Lutheraner showed that contributions were re-

ceived for the Kansas mission field. On Christmas Day of 1862 they were able to dedicate their new church.[37]

Having completed the church they did not stop their expansion, for at Easter of the following year (April, 1863) the congregation at Leavenworth started its school with Pastor Meyer as teacher.[38] Already at the convention of the Western District in the Fall of 1863 the congregation at Leavenworth was received into complete membership in the Missouri Synod.

Nor did Pastor Lange slacken his efforts after having made a start in the six congregations of his first parish. Just what he was able to do is rather difficult to determine with the lack of sources, but it would seem that some eighteen months after he had come to Kansas Lange gathered a group of Lutherans together in Humboldt, Kansas, almost a hundred miles from his home in Junction City. In 1863 he received a call from this group, which he accepted, being installed there by Pastor M. Meyer on May 22, 1864.[39] In the years he was at Humboldt he also reached such places as

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[37]A small building, twenty-six by forty feet on Delaware Street between sixth and seventh. About $400 was contributed toward the building by other congregations in synod. Seventy-fifth Anniversary, Saint Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Leavenworth, Kansas (Leavenworth, Kansas: n.p., 1937), p. 4.

[38]Vetter, op. cit., p. 8.

[39]Der Lutheraner, XX (April, 1864), 167.

Owl Creek, Leroy, Garnett, Paola and Fort Scott.[40]

This year of 1864 also saw the coming of a new missionary into the state. After Lange had received and accepted the call to Humboldt he stayed at his first charge to help them until they could get a pastor. On Pentecost Sunday, May 15, 1864, he ordained and installed Carl Berner as pastor of the congregations in Wabaunsee, Davis (now Geary), Dickinson and Morris counties.[41] As pastor of the six-congregation parish Berner made his home in Council Grove, which was some distance from the northernmost congregations of the parish. Consequently, those congregations on Lyons Creek and on Clarks Creek together decided to call a pastor. In answer to this call Candidate R. Koehler was sent from the seminary and was ordained and installed by Pastor Berner on July 30, 1865.

The Civil War meanwhile was raging to the east of them, but the Kansas region had not been bothered directly by the hostilities. The only effect was indirect. After going through a long and severe winter[42] they found in the Spring

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[40]Vetter, op. cit., p. 7. A glance at a map of Kansas will reveal that Pastor Lange was not a "stay-at-home."

[41]Berner had been a student of Pastor Brunn in Steeden, Germany and had attended the practical seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. Der Lutheraner, XX (March, 1864), 159.

[42]H. O. Brayer, To Form a More Perfect Union (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, c.1941), p. 137.

of 1864 that the prices of commodities were going higher.[43] Nor was the situation much changed in 1865.[44] The people of the synod there at that time would probably have echoed the comment of a young army officer's wife living in Fort Riley: "You can Imagine that It takes something to support a family from one month to the other say nothing about their clothing."[45]

It was also about this time, toward the end of the Civil War, that the Indians in the western part of Kansas began to be a threat. At the time this did not particularly disturb many people, since the population of Kansas was at that time still centered in the eastern section of the state.[46] More disturbing may have been the campaign under General Sterling Price of the Confederate Army aimed at Fort Leavenworth, but this was turned back in western Missouri by an emergency volunteer army of Kansans.

In 1865 the first teacher of synod in Kansas, Mr. C. Th. Diessner, came to take over the school begun by Pastor Meyer in Leavenworth two years previous to this. He remained, however, for only two years, after which time Pastor Meyer took charge of the school and taught for seven

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[43] Ibid., p. 139.

[44] Ibid., p. 142.

[45] Ibid., p. 142.

[46] The center of Kansas population in 1865 was in the western part of Douglas County. Prentis, op. cit., p. 177.

more years.[47]

About 1866 it was learned that the plains of western Kansas were suited to the raising of cattle,[48] a fact which was to be the chief factor in the later populating of this portion of the state. This same year the church building in Humboldt was completed and was dedicated May sixth, Pastor Meyer preaching the sermon.[49] This was also the time at which the Reiseprediger began to be a significant figure on the Kansas scene. The first of these in the area was Pastor C. F. Liebe, ordained March 11, 1866. In one of his first trips the latter half of the year he visited northeastern Kansas, preaching for the first times in Atchison, in Brown and Nemaha counties, in Lawrence and in Eudora, Kansas.[50] As usual, his procedure was to look for people who spoke German and who were Lutherans. Atchison was a potentially rewarding mission field, for of its seven thousand inhabitants approximately one-third were Germans. Pastor Niedner states that most of these were "Turner" however, and so were not much interested in the church.[51]

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[47] Seventy-fifth Anniversary, Saint Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, Leavenworth, Kansas (Leavenworth, Kansas: n.p., 1937).

[48] Faulkner, op. cit., p. 428.

[49] Vetter, op. cit., p. 7.

[50] Ibid., p. 9.

[51] Friedrich Niedner, Kurzgefasste Geschichte der Deutschen Ev.-Luth. Dreieinigkeits-Gemeinde U. A. K. zu Atchinson, Kansas (Atchison, Kansas: 1916), p. 5.

Those who were interested formed a congregation, and on March 10, 1867 Candidate Lorenz Menge, originally from the Hermannsburger Missionshaus, was ordained and installed as pastor of the Atchison parish by Liebe.

The economic effects of the Civil War continued, causing a general prosperity, which was increased in the state of Kansas by the prospect that the railroad might extend into the state in that year.[52]

The forces of the church were greatly depleted in 1867 when both Pastor Berner and Pastor Koehler accepted calls outside the state, and when Pastor Liebe, the Reiseprediger for the region, became pastor in New Orleans, Louisiana, toward the close of the next year. In October of 1867 Pastor Menge of Atchison resigned because of ill health and returned to Germany,[53] where he died soon after. These vacancies were partially filled with the coming of three young men just out of the seminary, E. Sitzmann, C. Landgraf, and W. Zschoche.

The plan of work was of the same general pattern as that following in other sections of the synod. Ordinarily a pastor stationed at one congregation extended his labors to any German communities nearby and attempted to start churches there. Synod looked with favor upon this procedure,

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[52] Brayer, op. cit., p. 151.

[53] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1868 (St. Louis: Druck von August Wiebusch und Sohn, 1868), p. 17.

for in the proceedings of the Western District in 1867 the following is found:

> Die Frage, ob ein ansaessiger Pastor auch missioniren solle, wenn er dazu Gelegenheit habe, und ob ihn die Synode dabei unterstuetzen wolle, wurde mit Ja beantwortet, jedoch mit einigen Einschraenkungen, was die Unterstuetzung der Synode betrifft. Es wurde maemlich bemerkt, dass die Synode nur in den Faellen, wo wirklich besondere Frucht zu erwarten ist, den missionirenden Pastor unterstuetzen werde. Wenn der Pastor bloss auf Entdeckungsreisen ausgeht, kann er die Unterstuetzung der Synode nicht beanspruchen. Wenn aber der Prediger weiss, dass in dieser oder jener groesseren Entfernung eine groessere Ansiedelung ist, und er ist zum Missioniren befaehigt, so gehe er in Gottes Namen hin, und wenn ihm daraus Unkosten entstehen, so wende er sich an Herrn Dr. Sihler.[54]

A significant event of the summer of 1868 was district President J. F. Buener's Visitationsreise through Kansas. On this trip he visited most of the missionaries at work on the western prairies and learned at first hand of their needs and difficulties. Included in his itinerary were also the vacant congregations at Lyons Creek, Maryville, and Alma. As a direct result of the visitation of President Buenger all three places received pastors the following year. Pastor Buenger seems to have noted it was absolutely necessary that pastors be provided to serve these parishes if they were to survive. The parishes were too far apart to be served effectively by neighboring pastors, who were already serving parishes of several congregations; and when, as in

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[54]Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1867 (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch und Sohn, n.d.), p. 53.

the case of Lyons Creek, they were forced to go without a pastor for a long period of time they were happy to welcome even a Reformed preacher.[55] Some congregations were actually lost during this period because of the lack of pastors.[56]

During the first decade of work in Kansas the work was rendered difficult by several factors. The men were cut off from other pastors because of problems of transportation. The distance prevented them from having close contacts with their fellow pastors. To a certain extent it was this same problem which also prevented them from reaching mission fields they might have wished to contact. As a result of the great lack of pastors the sheer volume of work they were forced to take upon themselves precluded extensive mission work. Yet, by means of such resources as the Reiseprediger the church was able to reach many of the German Lutherans who had settled in the state of Kansas.[57]

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[55] Diamond Jubilee, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, (Lyons Creek) Herrington, Kansas (Herrington, Kansas: n.p., 1936), p. 4.

[56] Vetter, op. cit., p. 10.

[57] Ibid., p. 11.

CHAPTER IV

ADVANCE

About 1870 and the years following the reputation of the state of Kansas was improved somewhat by the advertising campaign which was supported chiefly by the railroads seeking to extend their lines through that region. It was the aim of this campaign to make the western lands known to the people in Europe in such a manner that they would be moved to come and to settle on them.[1] The prospect of living in the state must have appealed to at least some of these people, for the census of June, 1870 showed that there was a population in Kansas of 362,307, an increase for the decade of the 1860's of 235.99 per cent as compared with 21.52 per cent increase for the entire United States.[2]

The decade of the 1870's saw Kansas develop as an agricultural state. With the advent of the railroad the markets opened to the farmers and they could move farther west along with the rails. This movement seems to be exactly what took place. Farming in Kansas, however, was not always the most pleasant of occupations. People accustomed to regular seasons and an assured minimum rainfall must have been non-

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[1] Noble L. Prentis, A History of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: Caroline E. Prentis, c.1899), p. 145.

[2] Ibid., p. 140.

plussed when they found that the productivity of the land on which they now lived might vary greatly from year to year, yielding anything from "failure" to "bumper" crops. In 1868 a woman could write that the crops had been very poor because of the dryness. The summer of 1869 was very wet, with floods and "the country . . . almost covered with water."[3] Food was abundant for the next year. In May, 1870 the winter had been mild, there had been very little moisture since Christmas and the people looked for another dry year.[4] Their forebodings proved to be warranted that summer, but the following winter and spring were wet. In August, 1871 a citizen of Junction City could say in a single letter both that "the earth is dry for want of rain," and, of the preceding months, "our Wheat was ruined by too much rain."[5] The next winter again was very cold and severe.[6] The wish of this woman was probably the perennial wish of every person who lived in Kansas: "I hope that we may have good crops next season."[7]

In 1874 more difficulty appeared in the form of a grass-

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[3]Herbert Oliver Brayer, To Form a More Perfect Union (Albuquerque: The University of New Mexico Press, c.1941), pp. 181-182.

[4]Ibid., p. 195.

[5]Ibid., pp. 208-209.

[6]Ibid., pp. 211-212.

[7]Ibid., p. 201.

hopper "plague." After the wheat was harvested that year it became very dry, and with the dry weather came also grasshoppers, devouring any vegetation that remained. It was feared that there would be a recurrence the following year, but in the spring they departed as mysteriously as they had come.[8] 1875 and 1876 were both good years agriculturally.[9] It was about this time that the state became known as a fruit state,[10] a distinction which it has not retained. Wheat also became a major crop, and in 1878 Kansas stood at the head of the states in the production of this grain.[11]

An event of utmost importance for the development of the western part of the state was the discovery that cattle could thrive on the prairies. In a letter of July 12, 1871 we find the somewhat ungrammatical message that

> . . . farming in Kansas is indeed the last thing, stock raising is the only thing that has paid here for the last eight or nine years. now that is coming down. people go from here to texas and buys cows there for ten or fifteen dollars a head that you would pay fifty or sixty here for. there is several parties here engaged in shipping them from there here and from here to the eastern markets and of course are making money very fast on it.[12]

This was the era in which such towns as Abilene and Dodge City became renowned as the links between the cattle trails

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[8] Prentis, op. cit., p. 150.

[9] Ibid., pp. 150-151.

[10] Ibid., p. 159.

[11] Ibid., p. 159.

[12] Brayer, op. cit., p. 208.

from Texas and the railroad to Kansas City.

The work of the railroad companies to create interest in the land of the prairies continued into the next decade also. Largely as a result of their efforts and advertising campaigns the flow of settlers into Kansas continued to hold a high level also in the eighth decade of the last century. The provisions of the Homestead Act were the lure for most of them, and although the land they acquired thus might not be the sort they would judge most desirable, yet by 1881 over ten million acres of land in Kansas had been homesteaded.[13]

The years from 1880 to 1890 were economically quite prosperous, but not on a level with the ten years previous to that time. The first five years of this period saw something of a "boom," especially in the towns and cities of the state of Kansas.[14] As a result land sold quickly and at a good price. The cities expanded and there was a veritable rash of building. In a twelve month period about the year 1886 ninety-four new towns were chartered in Kansas.[15]

During this time the congregations of the Missouri Synod in Kansas also benefited from the financial condi-

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[13] Prentis, op. cit., p. 161.

[14] Ibid., p. 169.

[15] Ibid., p. 170.

tions, for it permitted them to erect churches, many of them for the first time. This situation was not to last. When a student of Concordia Seminary in Springfield, Illinois arrived in Clay Center, Kansas in the summer of 1887 the conditions were such that he commented, "Alles boomte."[16] In two years the situation changed:

> Nach zwei Jahren kam der Krach. Ein Geschaeft nach dem andern machte Bankrott und nach drei Jahren war in Clay Center ueber 400 leere Haeuser zu finden, so dass ich mitten in der Stadt ein Wohnung von 5 Zimmern fuer $2.00 pr. Monat mietete.[17]

The decade of the seventies, which saw the railroads advertising the land in Europe, also found many people entering the state of Kansas as a result. A standard practice at this time was the sale of large tracts of land to European immigrants who came to this country in groups.[18] Typical of these are the Swedish Lutherans in central Kansas and the German-Russian Lutherans scattered throughout the western half of the state. Of the latter, originally religious refugees from Germany who had moved to Russia and thence to the United States, many were brought into the fold of the Missouri Synod.

The pastors in Kansas recognized quite early that they had a certain responsibility over against the inhabitants of

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[16] P. D. Mueller, Lebensgeschichte. Unpublished autobiography, in possession of T. H. Mueller, Dodge City, Kans.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Prentis, op. cit., p. 146.

the western portion of the state, for already in October, 1870 the Leavenworth Pastoral Conference decided to ask synod for a Reiseprediger for Kansas. When the Western District adopted the proposal they observed three things: that the Lutherans in Kansas were surrounded by sects and false Lutherans; the pastors in the state at the time could not fulfill the task alone; and the congregations of the area were not able to support such a project.[19] This was a practical solution to the problem, for at this time there was not a supply of pastors for all the charges which required them. In 1873 the lack of young men preparing for the ministry was serious enough to call forth the appeal at the convention of the Western District:

> Auf! ihr Gemeinden; auf! ihr Prediger; auf! ganz besonders ihr Schullehrer. Sehet euch unter euren Kindern und Schuelern um nach Knaben fuer unsere Anstalten![20]

It was an attempt to solve the difficulty as best they could under the existing circumstances.

During this period the area was gradually being improved. However, one must not picture the region at that time in terms of the more centralized society farther to the east. This area was still a comparatively new one, with the generation of settlers still occupying the land. Towns were continually being built up, but for many years they remained small, frontier settlements, lacking many of the conveniences

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[19] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1871, p. 69.

[20] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1873, p. 83.

common even then in the towns farther east. That Kansas was not completely domesticated is revealed by an announcement in the Western District Report of 1871:

> Unter die Todten ist auch zu zaehlen Herr Pastor Theobald Walther. Derselbe hatte einige Monate nach seiner Ordination und Einfuehrung zur grossen Zufriedenheit seiner Gemeinde in Humboldt, Kansas, das Predigtamt verwaltet, ist aber seit dem 31. Januar 1871 spurlos verschwunden. Er war der Einladung der Gemeinde an der Lyons Creek in Dickinson County, Kansas, gefolgt, um ihre neuerbaute Kirche mit einweihen zu helfen. Nach vollbrachter Kirchweihe fuhr er mit Herrn Pastor Luecker nach Junction City, ging auf die Eisenbahn und ist bis heute nicht angekommen. Da er erst sechs Wochen verheiratet war und in seiner Gemeinde geliebt wurde, auch den Tag seiner Rueckkehr bestimmt hatte, so ist ihm aller Wahrscheinlichkeit nach ein Ungluck zugestossen, ist vielleicht von den Cars gefallen und um sein Leben gekommen. Alle sorgfaeltigen Nachforschungen sind bisher ohne den geringsten Erfolg geblieben. . . .[21]

In an attempt to remedy the lack of workers, individual pastors of the area made Missionsreisen from time to time. The reports do not reveal what might inspire a pastor to make such a trip such as that made by Pastor Luecker of Dickinson County in the Fall of 1870, which took him as far west as the northeast corner of Mitchell County, a county in the north central portion of the state. As he traveled he preached wherever he found people of his faith.[22] The goal of the work was still to gather together those German-speaking people who claimed allegiance to the Lutheran church.

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[21] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1871, p. 21.

[22] M. K. C. Vetter, Kurzgefasste Geschichte des Kansas-Distrikts (Leavenworth, Kansas: Leavenworth Tribuene, 1913), p. 11.

Also active in the work of extending the ministrations of the church to Lutheran settlers in the state was Pastor Senne. Resident pastor at that time in Alma, Kansas, he made trips from time to time for the purpose of contacting groups of Lutherans of whom he had heard. In this way he was active in Geary, Riley, Pottawatomie, and Wabaunsee Counties, and reached people as far west as Beloit in Mitchell County.[23]

Until this time most of the activity had been concentrated in the northern half of the state, perhaps because the church had had its start in the northeastern section of Kansas and had proceeded west from that area. At this time the western extremes of the area of work were about the middle of the state.[24] About the year 1877, however, a group of German people from Russia settled in Rush County, and in that year Pastor H. F. F. Krause was sent to care for the group there[25] and to function as missionary in the vicinity of his charge at Pleasant Valley in McPherson County.[26]

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[23] Ibid., p. 12. Although these places are in the central and eastern sections of the state, they were probably considered western communities.

[24] President Biltz in 1877 visited a special conference in what was termed "western Kansas." The pastors present came from as far east as Alma and no farther west than Great Bend. Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1877, p. 20.

[25] Ibid., p. 14.

[26] E. Kirchner, "Obituary of Hermann Friedrich Ferdinand Krause," Der Lutheraner, LXIX (August 19, 1913), 269.

Two years later he was installed as pastor in Ellinwood. The next westward extension of mission work was to the southwest of Pastor Krause's charge. In 1879 it is reported that Pastor J. G. Schwemly had been installed by Krause in the newly formed congregation in Ford County.

That the aim of the missionaries in Kansas was definitely to the West is evident in the resolution of the 1880 convention of the Western District of the Missouri Synod, that Pastor Michael Meyer of Leavenworth, Kansas be called as missionary for Denver City, Colorado.[27] Missionary work, however, still meant for them the task of finding the German Lutheran people. Of home missions they said in 1880:

> Es ist ja ein ueberaus schoenes, edles und herrliches Ding, unsern verwahrlosten Glaubensbruder auf zu suchen, ihnen Wort und Sacrament zu bringen, sowie ihnen zu Kirchen und Schulen zu verhelfen.[28]

The status of missionary work is well presented in the report of 1888:

> Das Feld unserer Inneren Mission hat, wie gesagt, in den letzten Jahren an Umfang und Wichtigkeit bedeutend zugenommen, so dass wir ohne Uebertreibung sagen duerfen: wir koennten die doppelte Anzahl von Reisepredigern und Missionaren anstellen, wenn uns die Leute und Mittel zu Gebote staenden. Besonders ist dies der Fall im Staate Kansas, der bisher noch zu unserem District gehoerte und auch fernerhin auf unsern Beistand Angewiesen ist. Dort werden immer neue Ansiedlungen gegruendet und aeltere aufgefunden, und selbst mancherorten ist uns eine Thuer zu den englisch redenden Lutheranern aufgethan worden.[29] (Italics ours)

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[27] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1880, p. 68.

[28] Ibid., p. 68.

[29] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1888, p. 8.

he final statement, if it is at all representative of the attitude of the synod or of the district of that time, would seem to indicate that the methods of missionary work which were in current use, notably the practice of limiting the work to that of reaching German Lutheran people, was grounded not upon a deep seated conviction that the German language was God's language, that the use of it was necessary to preserve pure doctrine, but rather upon other considerations. The reason for this procedure is most probably that the Missouri Synod then saw as her particular task that of caring for the many German people pouring into the country. That in itself presented a greater challenge than they were able to answer completely at the time.

The younger mission places in the West were comparatively poor, and the district's interest in these congregations moved her to respond when they were in need in 1880, and to send clothing and sustenance for the coming winter to the congregations in Ford County and bordering counties.[30] The western portion of the state was further recognized as a field for missions when in 1880 G. Toenjes was called as Reiseprediger and was stationed in Ellinwood, Kansas, from which place he could visit the southern and western sections of the state.[31] The years 1883 and 1884 saw movement in the

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[30] Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1880, p. 71.

[31] Ibid., p. 16.

north and in the south of the state when Candidate J. H. Ehlers became pastor in Mulvane[32] and Candidate J. W. Lehr in Smith County, Kansas.[33] In 1887 the northwestern corner of Kansas had been reached, for on April 24 President F. J. Biltz ordained and installed H. G. Kranz in Herndon, Kansas as Reiseprediger for northwestern Kansas.

By 1887 the Missouri Synod in Kansas had progressed so that it was felt a separate Kansas District could be formed. In that year the delegate synod, meeting in Fort Wayne, Indiana, was memorialized to create a new district, to embrace these congregations in Kansas. With the consent of synod secured, the organizational meeting convened in Leavenworth, Kansas on September 25, 1888, and the Kansas District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and other States came into being. The infant district was well aware where her future work lay, for after hearing a report from Pastor Rauh on his Missionsreise to Colorado she declared:

> Beschlossen, dass Herr P. Rauh die Gemeinde in Pueblo frage, wie viel sie an Gehalt aufbringen koenne, und dann an die Commission berichte, damit dieselbe erkenne, ob und wie sie dort helfen koenne.[34]

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[32] Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1884, p. 5.

[33] Allgemeiner Synodal-Bericht, 1884, p. 130.

[34] Synodal-Bericht des Kansas-Distrikts, 1888, p. 49.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

With regard to the missionary work of the Missouri Synod in Kansas in the years between its beginning in 1860 and the formation of the Kansas District in 1888 several points stand out in particular.

1. The mission endeavors of the Missouri Synod in Kansas were aimed at people who spoke the German Language. The truth of this statement is borne out by the course which the work of the Missouri Synod followed in this state. Although Kansas lay immediately west of the state of Missouri, the center from which the Missouri Synod expanded, that church body did not begin her work in Kansas for a number of years. This is partly understandable in view of the fact that in the first part of that period the Territory of Kansas was not settled to any great extent. However, even with the birth of interest in Kansas throughout the nation this synod made no move in the direction of considering that state with a view to missionary work there. It is not until the state had seen some considerable German immigration, and the synod had become aware of that fact that any effort was made to send a missionary into the area.

The record of the work in the state bears out the same fact. Throughout the history of the Kansas missions the communities into which the synod entered and in which she

stayed were characteristically German communities or communities which contained a considerable German contingent. The towns in which she expended her efforts were not necessarily the larger centers of population, but they were without fail those in which there was a rather high proportion of German-speaking people. Consequently, the movement was very often in the direction of the smaller communities.

The task of proclaiming the Gospel of God in Kansas was fulfilled by the Missouri Synod during this period entirely in the German language. In all the records of her labor there is no indication that any attempts at mission work were made in the English language. The hymnals, the catechisms, the translations of Holy Scripture, all were in the German tongue. The sermons, the instructions in the teachings of the church, the business meetings of the congregations and of the district were in German. Wherever the Missouri Synod carried out her task in Kansas, she did it through the medium of the German language.

It is quite easy to account for this fact, however. It had been only twenty-one years before the opening of the period of time under consideration that the founders of the Missouri Synod had entered the United States as immigrants from Germany. Thus the founding generation of the body was still alive, and most of its members were still active and in influential positions in the synod. The policies of the synod where then being made by people to whom the German

language was native and who had not been forced by circumstances to adopt the language of their new country. It was those people, moreover, who were training the clergy entering the mission fields at that time; which meant that the pastors were trained in the German language.

Many of the young men who entered the mission field of Kansas had themselves been born and raised in Germany. Almost all of those who were born in the United States had lived from their childhood in German communities and among German people. For twenty years before and for twenty years after the start of the Kansas mission field this immigrant flow continued almost unabated. It was a logical course of action for Missouri Synod pastors to serve first of all those people with whom they shared a common language and who would otherwise be left without this care. It is even more understandable in view of the fact that of all the Lutheran bodies in the United States at that time, the Missouri Synod was perhaps best suited by training and geographical position to carry out this mission to the German-speaking people in Kansas.

Once begun, the very size of the task prevented the Missouri Synod from entering upon any new field of mission endeavor in this period. To perform the job adequately exhausted her every available resource. Thus the momentum of the task itself prevented the following of any other course of action for many years, and certainly throughout the entire period of time here treated.

2. The mission of the Missouri Synod in Kansas was not one of converting people to Christianity, but rather a mission of caring for those people who were already Christians of the German Lutheran faith. One can see this fact attested to in the practice of the missionaries in Kansas. When these men went to a certain section of the country they went with a definite purpose, to seek out those people who were already Lutherans. It appears that a great many mission fields were not entered until it had been reported that there were Lutheran people in that particular locality.

It is possibly for this same reason that the work was directed at groups of people rather than at individuals. Since the missionaries were interested particularly in caring for those who were Lutherans, in gathering such people together into congregations, logically the unit to approach was the group rather than the individual. It must be admitted, however, that this characteristic of the work may be due only to the practice of the Germans of settling in groups rather than as isolated individuals, which means there were few isolated German individuals.

There were at this time certain church bodies for whom the chief goal was that of effecting conversions of people to Christianity. The hallmarks of such groups and their representatives were itinerant preachers, revivals, and the conversion experience. The concern of the Missouri Synod for the care of Christians rather than for the conversion

of people is evident also in her practice of building up parishes. This involved provisions for the future spiritual life of the people, as opposed to an immediate religious experience. The results of this concern are especially evident in the early provisions for the training of the youth of the parish, if possible by means of a parochial school.

This goal of the Missouri Synod in Kansas must be understood in terms of the situation at that time. The church in this section of the country throughout this period of time was confronted with a great number of Lutheran people without spiritual care. The force of the numbers involved in the task the synod had set herself decreed that for the time this was the only goal with which she could concern herself. Whether or not this was true in each individual case throughout all of this period is something which can be determined only on the basis of further and more detailed study.

As indicated above, the character of Lutheranism was such that it did not measure its success in terms of the number of conversions effected. The Missouri Synod, especially in the early years, was foreign to the frontier scene and to the spirit of that scene. The religion of this body then was not a typically frontier religion, which had developed during the previous years. Like the people whom she served she was German, and when she came to a place she settled to stay and was not prepared to move on when the frontier continued west.

3. However, one cannot say categorically that this body was unaware of or unconcerned about its obligations to those who were not Germans or who were not Lutherans. That this awareness or concern was not keen can perhaps be said, and, as shown, the circumstances tended to obscure the sense of responsibility toward those outside the German Lutheran group. But the evidence does not warrant the judgment that the Missouri Synod in Kansas was completely oblivious to any task other than that she had set herself, the task of ministering to the German Lutherans in Kansas.

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