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**A HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NEW
ZEALAND FROM 1843 TO 1950 WITH A BRIEF SURVEY
OF THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE POPULATION OF THE
DOMINION ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS**

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

**This thesis by Clemens Koch was written and
presented in November of 1954. The Degree
of Bachelor of Divinity was not conferred
until June of 1955.**

Wm. H. Zimmerman
Reader

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by

Clemens I. Koch

November 1954

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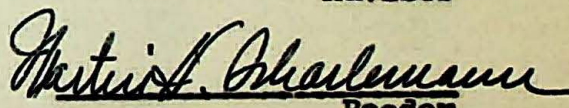

Reader

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CHAPTER I

PIONEERS OF LUTHERANISM IN NEW ZEALAND

The Lutheran Church has been represented in New Zealand for more than a century, yet membership today is smaller than it was some fifty years ago. This fact is of importance to every man called to work in this Dominion, as he is confronted with the fact that the many who have preceded him, while having given of their best, have little to show for their years of labour. What is more natural than for the new worker to ask; "Will the record of my work show the same lack of progress as has been revealed in the past?"

However, before any reasons can be advanced for this apparent stationariness of the Church in this Dominion, it is essential that we be able to peruse the history of the Lutheran Church in this country. Although various men have left some record of their efforts, no attempt has been made so far to put these facts into their logical sequence. It is obvious that before any comments can be made on methods of work or improvements suggested, such an historical background is necessary. It is the aim of this thesis to present simply the facts connected with the historical development of the work of the Lutheran

Church in New Zealand. This presentation will enable the matter of methods to be more fully considered and with a greater degree of accuracy. In the present work we shall endeavour to give merely historical facts without entering into subjective judgments as to the methods and procedure adopted.

The period up to the turn of the nineteenth century will be covered in full so that the work of all Lutherans is reviewed. However in covering the activities of the Lutheran Church in this Dominion from the year 1900 to 1950 we shall concern ourselves primarily with the work of the Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference in New Zealand. At the close of this material a chapter will be devoted to the position of some of the leading denominations as recorded in the Government statistics. Where possible these figures will be compared with the figures presented in the reports of these denominations.

While the Lutheran Church is today largely an unknown Church in this country, the introduction of Lutheranism to New Zealand dates back to early immigrant days. The setting up of a Government, acceptable to Maori and European, was achieved in 1840 and since that time, inspite of disastrous wars and misunderstanding over land sales, European and Maori interests have been maintained under

British law. In 1812 the Reverend Marsden arrived in New Zealand as the first white missionary to preach amongst the Maori people. He was a member of the Wesleyan Church. Since that time other denominations have also worked among the original inhabitants so that today Maoris in general at least claim some nominal Church membership.

The first Lutheran representatives to work in the Dominion were commissioned by the North German Missionary Society.¹ It was on December 26, 1842, that the small vessel, the "Saint Pauli", left Hamburg for New Zealand carrying missionaries J. H. F. Wohlers and J. C. Riemen-²schneider together with assistants Heine and Trost. The ship also carried about 120 immigrants from various parts of Germany as Wohlers commented, "there were Catholics from Bavaria, Unionists from Prussia, Lutherans, Reformed, and a few Baptists from the North."³

The ship arrived at Nelson and the passengers disembarked on the 16th of June, 1843. The missionaries and their lay-helpers immediately set out to establish them-

¹ J. H. F. Wohlers, Memories of the Life of J. H. F. Wohlers, translated by John Houghton (Dunedin: Otago Times and Witness Newspapers Co., 1895), p. 40.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., p. 47.

selves on the land purchased by the North German Missionary Society. This represented one acre in Nelson, fifty acres in the neighborhood, and one hundred and fifty in the country.⁴ After much trouble and many hardships, they began to establish themselves on their land, but it was evident immediately that this location was quite unsuitable as a base of operations for Maori mission work. It must be remembered that these missionaries were sent, not to minister to the immigrants, but specifically to undertake work amongst the Maoris. In the Nelson area other missionaries had already established mission posts and the number of Maoris living there at the time was not large. Wohlers observes that just as they were unwilling to give up their independence, similarly they had no desire to interfere in the fields of others. But how were they to locate new fields? They were advised to "cruise around New Zealand" and find another center. Good advice and so simple as Wohlers admits, except for the fact that they had no funds for the passage money.⁵

We can best imagine the thoughts which passed through the minds of these men when we remember that from the out-set Wohlers had doubts as to the wisdom of

⁴

Ibid., p. 68.

⁵

Ibid., p. 66.

selecting New Zealand as a field of labour. He gave as his reason that it was "well known that the English missionaries, after long and apparently unsuccessful efforts had won over the hearts of the natives to Christianity". On the other hand Wohlers had resolved from the beginning that the Missionary Society "Had to decide for us where our labours among the heathen lay"⁶. It was because of this knowledge that he could not "get rid of the idea that as New Zealand had become a British colony and British settlers were going there, that we should appear to be sectarian intruders"⁷.

However, for some months they remained in the Nelson and Lower Moutere areas and attempted to establish some form of mission headquarters on the land of the Society. While making these attempts they had to undergo many hardships, also because of the frequent floods which swept over their holding. Many of the immigrants were also experiencing trials as the New Zealand Company, under whose program they had come, had collapsed so that it was most difficult for many of them to find sufficient work in this area. For this reason quite a number of the settlers took ship for Australia. Hence when another

⁶

Ibid., p. 37.

⁷

Ibid., p. 38.

group of immigrants arrived in September, 1844, on the "Skiold", many of them left immediately for Australia.⁸

Fortunately for these Lutheran missionaries, the chief surveyor of the New Zealand Company, who seems to have had headquarters at Nelson, took an interest in the work which they had been commissioned to do. He invited Wohlers to accompany him on a trip of exploration to the south of the South Island where he hoped to find suitable land for immigrants who were to come from Scotland. So it was that Wohlers, without funds, set out onboard the schooner "Debora" in February of 1844 in order to find a suitable field of labour among the Maoris.⁹

The first place he examined was the Banks Peninsula area. Here he was well received by the Maori people but he refrained from making this his field of labour because he felt that as other church authorities moved into the area, "as is their custom, they would have greeted and treated me in a friendly manner" but this "friendship would have had the aim of incorporating us into their Church and that personally I did not desire." Wohlers also remarks, "I love Christianity as the Bible teaches it which included all disciples of Jesus but I cannot

⁸
The Cyclopedia Of New Zealand (Christchurch: Horace J. Weeks Ltd., 1906), V, 13.

⁹
 Wohlers, op. cit., p. 84.

bear to be in an exclusive Church co-erced by human rules". This approach to Church life had a profound influence on the future of the mission work established by Wohlers.¹⁰

The Island of Ruapuke, which is situated just south of the South Island, was then suggested as a possible base for mission operations. This island has an area of eight by four miles but while small in size it was at the same time the residence of distinguished chiefs and a gathering place of the southern Maoris. Wohlers was rowed ashore by the pilot, a Mr. Palmer, who explained to the Maoris that he had brought a missionary who would remain with them. The possessions of Wohlers were also landed. They were a portmanteau, two woollen rugs, a fouling piece, a little axe, a handsaw, a sack of flour, and some salt.¹¹ Surely this may be called the bare essentials as we also remember that contact with the outside world was very spasmodic and uncertain.

The conditions under which Wohlers was forced to live were extremely crude while hardships were the order of the day. To make matters worse he was soon to learn that "the battle of the churches" had already been brought

¹⁰

Ibid., p. 96.

¹¹

Ibid., p. 101.

to these folk. They were divided into Wesleyan and Church of England groups without either party understanding the reasons for such a division.¹² Such conditions brought sorrow to Wohlers and at the same time made him determined that, "without founding a Church of any particular denomination - neither Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican nor Wesleyan," he would go to work in "the name of Christ, bringing souls to him". So we find that because of the personal approach of Wohlers to his mission work, and because of the problems facing him in his newly chosen field of labour, he made no attempt to establish "a permanent mission station of the North German Missionary Society".¹³ His first house measured fifteen by nine feet and had a thatched roof, while in 1846 he erected a Church with the help of the Maoris.

After Wohlers left the Nelson area Riemenschneider also set out in quest of a suitable area where a mission station could be founded. It was in August of 1844 that he set out for the Lake Taupo area in the North Island as it had been suggested that this might prove a suitable field. After landing at Mokau he went inland following the Mokau river. Here he met Schnackenburg who had been

¹²Ibid., p. 105.¹³Ibid., p. 156.

brought up as a Lutheran but was now serving with the Wesleyans. He gave Riemenschneider several Maori guides who were to help him reach the Taupo area. On the way some of these men threatened to desert Riemenschneider but fortunately one of the Maoris remained loyal and saved the day for the missionary. When they reached the settlement of Motukaramu the Maoris living in the area urged Riemenschneider to remain and to establish his mission station in their midst, at the same time informing him that the Roman Catholics had already undertaken work near Taupo. After spending some days in the area this place was chosen as a permanent mission headquarters. Towards the end of 1844 Trost came over to join in the establishment of the mission.¹⁴ Unfortunately for these men it was not many years before the number of inhabitants remaining in the area was so small that a new field had to be found. The Maoris had been steadily drifting into settlements closer to those areas where towns were being established by the immigrants.¹⁵

It was in 1846 that Riemenschneider set out for New Plymouth in order to find a new location for his mission.

¹⁴
J. C. Riemenschneider, Ein Deutsche Missionsarbeit auf Neu Zeeland (Bremen: Hilgerloh, 1875), p. 46

¹⁵
Ibid., p. 51.

While in New Plymouth he met the Reverend Turton of the Wesleyan Church who suggested the Taranaki area as a possible field of labour.¹⁶ Although at first doubtful as to the suitability of this field, after he had made a survey, he decided to transfer and chose Warea as the headquarters for his new field. It was in September of 1846 that he left Motukaramu for Warea, being followed a short time after by his assistant Trost.

While Warea was his headquarters, he also could reach a good number of Maoris who lived in the surrounding area. He estimated the number of Maoris within his reach to be some twelve-hundred persons.¹⁷ The Maoris planned a welcome for Riemenschneider at which they requested him to give a lengthy dissertation on Luther. These folk had already had some contact with missionaries and so had some idea of the Reformation. This discussion went on so long that finally Riemenschneider asked that the discussions be brought to a close for this, the first night, to which the Maoris replied; "Teacher, we would not have thought of sleep even if your speech had lasted all night."¹⁸

In contrast to his former field, Riemenschneider

16

Ibid., p. 53.

17

Ibid., p. 56.

18

Ibid., p. 57.

here found good scope for his work so that at the end of the first year he listed 234 persons under his care in thirteen villages.¹⁹

On the 17th. March, 1847, Trost joined Riemenschneider at the Warea mission station. It was immediately evident that Trost was a seriously sick man. Severe homesickness, and the added effect of living in isolation, had unsettled his mind. There was nothing to be done but to send Trost back to Europe.²⁰

During this time Heine had remained in the Nelson and Moutere areas. He had continued to serve the immigrant folk who had settled in the locality. The first attempts to establish a mission in the Moutere were not very successful. The first attempt was made on the 26th of July, 1843. The foundation stone of a Church was laid on the 16th of June, 1844, but because of frequent floods this building was never completed. In 1845 Heine moved to Nelson where the immigrant people formed a congregation on the 8th of February, 1846.²¹ On March the 29th, 1846, this newly formed congregation called Heine to become

19

Ibid., p. 60.

20

Ibid., p. 62.

21

J. W. C. Heine, "Personal Diary" Unpublished Diary in the possession of Mrs. Heine, Upper Moutere, New Zealand.

their Pastor. The call was accepted by him and later he was ordained and installed by Wohlers.²² Mr. Tuckett presented the immigrants in the Nelson area with a large house which they converted and used for school and worship purposes.²³

Wohlers continued to conduct a single handed struggle on Ruapuke in order that his mission station might be established. In these early years he received no support from the Mission Society at home and so the few purchases he was forced to make, ran him into debt. Fortunately Mr. Tuckett remembered Wohlers and gave him assistance from time to time.²⁴ Towards the close of 1848, an assistant, Abraham Honore, was sent out from Europe. But matters were not made easier when it was revealed that he had been sent out without any form of support. When Wohlers asked Honore the reason for this strange action, he was informed that back in Europe the members of the Missionary Society commonly held the opinion that New Zealand required no support and so all available help was directed to the work in India.²⁵ This was a severe blow for

22

Wohlers, op. cit., p. 177.

23

Ibid., p. 176.

24

Ibid., p. 169.

25

Ibid., p. 170.

Wohlers. At the same time he had been requested by the Mecklenburg Church to ordain Heine at Nelson, but no funds were sent so that he might undertake the trip.²⁶ However he decided to undertake the journey, leaving it to God to provide as he felt it was also necessary for something to be done in regard to support for his mission work. While at Wellington, on his way to Nelson, he met Volkner who had just arrived from Europe for the purpose of assisting Riemenschneider.²⁷ Wohlers proceeded to Nelson where he ordained J. W. C. Heine according to the Hamburg Liturgy, taking as his text for the occasion II Corinthians 5:19-20. The ordination and installation of Heine took place on August 12th, 1849. On September 9th of the same year, Heine married Miss A. C. M. Bensemann with Wohlers conducting the ceremony. The Nelson folk collected goods which they gave to Wohlers in order to lend some assistance to his work.²⁸

On the return trip he met his old friend Riemenschneider at Wellington. It was five years since they had parted to found their respective mission stations. Besides meeting his old friend, Wohlers also made a new

²⁶

Ibid., p. 173.

²⁷

Ibid., p. 175.

²⁸

Heine, op. cit..

friend who was to assist him at his mission post until his death. This person was a widow by the name of Mrs. Elsie Palmer. Wohlers had been given a letter of introduction to this good lady by a Mrs. Creed, the wife of a Wesleyan missionary. Although they had not met previously, Wohlers made to her a proposal of marriage. He records that at first she hesitated, reminding him that this thought of their marriage had not originally been their idea, where-upon Wohlers agreed but added that "it is good, marriages are made by the angels in heaven, and Mrs. Creed is as good as an angel." This apparently had the desired effect as Wohlers returned to Ruapuke accompanied by his wife.

Misfortune struck them soon after they had returned to the mission when the house which had not long been completed was utterly destroyed by fire. At the same time his library was lost and as he realised that he would never be able to replace it, he knew that it was the end of a work he loved so well, the study of the ancient languages. His wife was a blessing to him in his work as she applied herself to the task of uplifting the Maoris with determination and success. At this time the

Missionary Society began sending out artisans to the mission stations so that the native peoples might be taught some trade. But the trouble lay in this that the Maoris had little or no money to pay for these services. On the other hand the white settlers sought after these men and paid them well for their work. The result was that soon the plan fell through as the artisans asked to be released for other employment offering. ³⁰ In 1855 Honore went to work on his own at Stewart Island, while in 1859 he ³¹ moved to the Jacobs River area.

In the meantime Riemenschneider continued working in the Taranaki field. There were many hardships and difficulties to face yet in it all he could still say, "how wonderfully and graciously the Lord hath dealt with me". He had also taken to himself a wife. She was the eldest daughter of a missionary Woon who also worked in Taranaki. At the time of their marriage on October 24th, 1849, she was only sixteen years of age. Nevertheless she proved a worthy help-meet to him both in this field and in the fields in which he was to spend his last years. In recalling the experiences of labours at this time he com-

³⁰

Ibid., p. 188.

³¹

C. Stewart Ross, The Story of the Otago Church and Settlement (Dunedin: Wise, Caffin and Co., 1879), p. 247.

mented, "He tries His servants in the fire of affliction; but then stretches forth His hand and sends help where it was least expected".³²

In his work amongst the Maoris, he often had to repeat the words of the Apostle, that these people had the appearance of Godliness, but that they denied the power thereof. He worked hard at establishing schools for both the children and adults, but his efforts on the whole were unsuccessful. His chief problem was that of a complete indifference amongst his pupils towards study.³³

Another cause of trouble was that various Maoris had set themselves up as "Prophets". These men usually mixed something of Christian belief with their old heathen beliefs and tried to stir up strife between the white settlers and the Maoris.³⁴

When Volkner came, it appears that at first they divided the Taranaki field, so that while they both worked in the Taranaki area they were independent.

However, at this time the Taranaki war broke out over the question of land sales. This was in 1860. At first Riemenschneider acted as peace-maker between the

³² Riemenschneider, op. cit., p. 69.

³³ Ibid., p. 72.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 96.

Maoris and white settlers. But after some time the Governor requested Riemenschneider to leave Warea as he considered it could well become the central battlefield in this trouble.³⁶ On the other hand the members of his congregation among the Maori people pleaded that he should stay with them. After much consideration he decided to take his family to Nelson and then to return himself to Warea. On his return he received perhaps the most crushing blow of his life, for he was not given permission by the Maoris to remain. When Riemenschneider was away many other Maoris had moved into the area, and all the Maoris had an equal say in the question as to whether he be allowed to remain with them or not so that many who were openly hostile to Christianity demanded that he must leave them. Later, when one of the Maoris heard that Riemenschneider had died, he remarked that they had killed him when they refused him permission to continue work in their midst.³⁷ It could well be.

Volkner also was affected by these conditions of unrest and war in Taranaki. On the other hand the reasons

³⁵ Ibid., p. 100.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 114.

³⁷ T. G. Hammond, In The Beginning - The History Of A Mission (Hawera: Parkinson and Co., 1915), p. 46.

for his transfer to the Church Missionary Society of New Zealand are not very clear. It is possible that the matter of support was one of the chief reasons. His transfer took place soon after his arrival as he was with the Church Missionary Society already in 1852. He served at Maraetai, was married to Emma, daughter of William Lanfear of Christian Malford in 1854, was naturalized in 1857, and in 1858 he was transferred to Waerengahika. In 1863 he was ordained a priest in the Church of England.³⁸

At first, after leaving Taranaki, Riemenschneider worked in the Nelson area among the Maoris. It was not long before he was offered a position by the Society for the Elevation of the Maoris in the Otago area.³⁹ He accepted the position on the condition that his adherence to the Lutheran Church would not have to be altered, and similarly he desired that his relationship with the Missionary Society back in Europe should be allowed to remain. Since these matters were readily agreed to, he accepted the post. Before long he experienced trouble from the Anglican Bishop at Christchurch who claimed that the

³⁸
G. H. Scholefield, A Dictionary Of New Zealand Biography (Wellington: Department of Internal Affairs, 1940), II, 426.

³⁹
Ross, op. cit., p. 250.

whole area was under his jurisdiction. Riemenschneider took the matter to the Maoris among whom he was to work and left the decision with them. They requested him to remain at work among them. Shortly after the Society for which he was working demanded that he sever his connections completely with the European Missionary Society. Once again he took the matter to the people among whom he worked and once again the Maoris asked him to remain with them. Thus he broke with the Society which had originally placed him in Otago in October of 1863.⁴¹

Riemenschneider became very ill at this time, and his old friend Wohlers, who now was not so far distant, came over to visit him. Riemenschneider rallied and was able to continue his work. In 1864 he held a memorable celebration at the Otago Heads when the Church which they had just erected was dedicated. Some five-hundred guests were invited. When the guests saw that the Church was without an harmonium, they decided to present one to the Church out of appreciation for the pleasant day spent at the opening ceremonies.⁴² This was a source of great joy to the Maoris.

40

Ibid., p. 251.

41

Ibid., p. 252.

42

Ibid., p. 253.

Riemenschneider was not to enjoy the success of his work in this place for long as his health began to fail again. It was not long before he was restricted to the Otago Heads in his labours. It was on the 25th of August in 1866 that this pioneer Lutheran worker was called to his eternal rest. He was buried at Port Chalmers. At his death the Maoris said, "Such a true father and teacher we shall never see again".⁴³ It is of interest that at this time the North German Missionary Society asked the Presbyterian Church to take over this work. Yet how strange that a few years later men were sent out from the Hermansburg Mission in order to undertake work amongst the Maori people.

Wohlers was still at work on Ruapuke. In 1868 the Government opened a school on the island. As they had difficulty in securing teachers, Wohlers was placed in charge of this work. This was a blessing as it meant that no longer would he have to do such hard physical toil in order to earn his living.⁴⁴ In 1885, because of failing health, he resigned and went to Stewart Island to live with his daughter who had married a Presbyterian minis-

⁴³

Riemenschneider, op. cit., p. 124.

⁴⁴

Wohlers, op. cit., p. 197.

ter, the Reverend Trail. At the age of seventy-three, he passed away on Thursday, 7th of May, 1885. The Maori folk mourned his passing as one who had been their true friend and helper. A correspondent of those days wrote that "it is very touching, both before and since his death, even men might be seen kneeling by his bedside and weeping unrestrainedly". He was well termed a "Patriarch" of the Maori people.⁴⁵

Wohlers evaluated the work done by the North German Missionary Society as having been done in accordance with the injunction of Christ, "Let not thy right hand know what thy left doeth". "That means", says Wohlers, "to do good without looking for thanks in a selfish way." A Missionary Society may well rejoice at the development of their community from heathendom, and may then consider it theirs, even though it no longer needs their guidance. And what of the efforts of the North German Missionary Society in New Zealand? Wohlers gives us his answer when he wrote, with the help of God, "the raw, stinking heathen have become changed into civilized Christians" who in "no respect are inferior to ordinary Christians in old Christendom" and they "considerably surpass the converted native

⁴⁵

Ibid., p. 213.

of the North Island".⁴⁶

Before closing this section, let us turn to the concluding scenes in the life of the Reverend Volkner who had come to New Zealand to serve as assistant to Riemen-schneider but who had then transferred to work in the Church of England. In 1861 he had been transferred to Opotiki in the Bay of Plenty. This place was to be the scene of his martyrdom.

In the early sixties, a fanatical sect of the Maoris who were called "Hau Haus", beginning from Taranaki where Volkner had once laboured, moved through the Dominion and spread terror where ever they went. One of the leaders of this sect was Kereopa. It is possible that Volkner had met this man in Taranaki. It is also clear that Volkner was well received at the Opotiki mission. When news came of the trouble, Volkner and some other missionaries transferred their families to Auckland. Volkner then set out to return to his station. A native, called Pataia, is said to have attempted to warn Volkner of the serious nature of the trouble, but he either ignored the advice,⁴⁷ or did not receive the message. When Volkner arrived at

⁴⁶

Ibid., p. 203.

⁴⁷

Andreas Reischek, Yesterdays in Maoriland (Wellington; Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1930), p. 145.

Opotiki aboard the schooner "Eclipse" on the 1st March, 1865, he was immediately taken prisoner together with the other men from the boat. Kereopa is said to have addressed the Maoris in this manner; "If you do not believe my words, then my god will destroy you; these are the words of my anger. Bring this white missionary here so that I may kill him." A Maori, Te Ranapia, is said to have spoken for the release of Volkner, but the influence of Kereopa prevailed, and Volkner was hung. It seems clear that after Volkner was killed his head was taken into the Church where Kereopa swallowed the eyes and others are supposed to have drunk the blood of Volkner from the communion cup. However the body was later buried at the rear of the Church and since that time the Church was enlarged so that today the grave of Volkner lies in the sanctuary of the Church. His wife on hearing the news said; "Then he has won the crown."⁴⁸

Another account is perhaps worthy of mention. It states that the Opotiki Maoris were against taking any part in the trouble which threatened at this time between the Whites and the Maoris. But this attitude altered after the arrival of Father Garavel who brought cer-

tain letters from the hostile Waikato natives. Struck with concern at this change of attitude, Volkner, after some inquiries, discovered the cause to be the content of the messages brought over by the Priest. After discussing the matter with Father Garavel, Volkner informed him that he considered it his duty to inform the police. The Government immediately asked Bishop Pompalier to summon Father Garavel, but this he declined to do. After further requests, Father Garavel was summoned for questioning and as he could give no satisfactory answer in regard to his actions, his co-religionists made a collection to defray the costs of his passage to Sydney, to which port he was sent without delay. With this background, some accounts infer that the Maoris were incited also by other agents⁴⁹ besides those connected with the "Hau Hau" movement.

The other assistant who had come out in 1848, Abraham Honore, after serving with Wohlers for a time, was at the request of the North German Missionary Society and with the consent of Wohlers, ordained by the Presbyterian Church of Southland in 1869. Wohlers was not only present but also took part in the ordination service. Before Wohlers died, Honore had left the South Island and had

49

R. Taylor, The Past And Present Of New Zealand (Wanganui: H. I. Jones Ltd., 1868), p. 157.

begun to work amongst the Maoris in the Rangatikei area in the North Island. He began this work in 1871.⁵⁰ It is of interest to note that here he also ministered to the Scandinavian Lutherans as opportunity offered. He was also able to serve these people in Danish.

Thus, of the efforts of the early pioneers, the Lutheran Church as such had grown little. Yet without doubt, through the preaching of the Word of God, souls were added to the Church. Only the work of the Reverend Heine resulted in the establishment of a Lutheran congregation which has continued in existence to our day. In 1863 the congregation at Upper Moutere decided to erect a house of worship. On November 2, 1864, the foundation stone of the building was laid, while the Church was completed the following year. Unfortunately this Church was constructed of timber subject to borer, and so after about forty years the building had to be replaced.⁵¹ We also find that at this time a Pastor Christian F. Meyer, who had served as an assistant to Heine, was now called to take direct charge of the Waimea congregation. This was in 1866. Pastor Meyer laboured here until 1884, at which time he moved to the North Island and took up residence in the Midhirst

50

Ross, op. cit., p. 256.

51

Heine, op. cit.

area. In about 1837, he went to the United States of America.

The work of these men brought them up against many hardships and trials. The gain for the Lutheran Church was indeed small but this factor is surely of secondary importance as we realise that the gains for the Christian Church were, under the blessing of God, considerable.

CHAPTER II

THE SCANDINAVIAN IMMIGRATION AND THE GROWTH OF THE
CHURCH TO THE CLOSE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

It was in 1865 that we find the first real impulse being given to Scandinavian immigration to New Zealand. In this year Bishop Monrad of Denmark arrived in Napier, and after moving to the Wanganui area, settled at Karere¹ near Palmerston North. This man was a voluntary exile from his native land because of the political and national troubles in Europe at this time. Several other families accompanied the Bishop and settled close by. The Bishop returned to Denmark in 1868, but in the next fifteen years some six to seven thousand Scandinavians immigrated to New Zealand. Apart from the short stay of Bishop Monrad, it appears that no Lutheran Pastor was sent to minister to these folk until about 1878.

At this stage let us briefly review the men at work in New Zealand in 1870. The pioneer Wohlers is still at work on Ruapuke Island, Heine and Meyer are serving the Nelson, Waimea, Moutere area, with the rest of New Zealand not manned by any Lutheran pastors. In 1872 Pastor

¹
Alan Muligan, *The City of The Strait* (Wellington: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1939), p. 279.

Lohr arrived in order to serve the Lutherans in the Christ-²church area. He was followed in 1876 by three men sent out by the Hermannsburg Mission Society. They arrived in Nelson on the 1st. April, and were Pastors Loose, H. Kowert, and J. H. C. Dierks. Shortly after Pastor Goesling also arrived. However, these men were sent for the express purpose of doing work amongst the Maoris.³ In 1878 Pastor Sass arrived to serve the scattered Scandinavian folk of the North Island.⁴ Thus the force of three Lutheran pastors of 1870 had been increased by the arrival of six more men in the space of ten years. Yet of this increase we find that four had been sent to labour amongst the Maoris. If the judgement of Wohlers was right in 1843, then this was surely a wrong move. Let us also note that these new men were not to man the missions begun by the pioneer workers, but were to begin new fields. We wonder how different the history of the Lutheran Church in this country might have been had these men been directed to work amongst the Lutheran immigrants who were arriving in large numbers at

²
The Cyclopedia Of New Zealand (Christchurch: Horace J. Weeks Ltd., 1906), III, 205.

³
 Anna Dierks, "Personal Diary". Unpublished, translated by Theo Dierks, in the possession of F. Jurgens, Bulls, New Zealand. p. 13.

⁴
 G. C. Petersen, The Pioneer Days Of Palmerston North (Levin: Kerslake, Billens and Humphrey Ltd., 1952), p. 49.

this time.

The Scandinavian settlers seemed to concentrate in the Manawatu and Wairarapa areas. In the space of a few years they were largely responsible for the development of the towns of Mauriceville, Dannevirke, Makaretu, Norsewood, Palmerston North, as well as other settlements from Napier to Taranaki. The first man to minister to these people was Honore. Although he had been ordained in the Presbyterian Church and now worked among the Maoris in particular, nevertheless he preached to many of these people in the Danish language.⁵ The first attempt to serve these immigrants by the Lutheran Church was when Pastor Sass came in 1878.

At first Sass was resident in the Norsewood area. From here he travelled extensively, taking services in Norsewood, Palmerston North, Napier, Makaretu, Dannevirke, and Mauriceville, with an occasional trip to serve the people living in the Taranaki area. His work was by no means easy. The religious education of the young was a problem, while many also showed a rather indifferent spirit towards spiritual matters. Some attributed this to the State Church background. At some centers schools were established.

⁵

Ibid., p. 50.

The work was also made more difficult because of the period when these settlers had received no ministrations from the Lutheran Church. This had the result that some drifted into other Church bodies.⁶ Also Edward Nielsen, a Norwegian of the Wesleyan Church, severely attacked the work of Sass. At last he apparently over-reached himself in a pamphlet against Sass which had the effect of turning quite a number back to the Lutheran Church.⁷

At Norsewood, on the 1st September, 1878, a congregation was formed with 120 members. At Makaretu one was also formed on the 12th September, 1878, with some thirty members. Napier also organised a congregation. In 1879 Church buildings were erected at Norsewood and Makaretu with other centers soon following the lead. But the field was obviously too extensive for one man. The length of the field was about 250 miles. It was in 1880 that another helper arrived in the person of Pastor Gaustad.⁸ This man was a Norwegian. He had served for some time in India until he was forced for reasons of health to resign. He had also

⁶
J.R.Elder, The History Of The Presbyterian Church Of New Zealand (Dunedin: Coulls, Somerville Wilkie Ltd., 1940), p. 206.

⁷
M. Christensen, "History Of The Danish Lutherans In New Zealand." Unpublished, manuscript in the possession of A. Christensen, Palmerston North, New Zealand. p. 7.

⁸
A Dictionary Of New Zealand Biography, edited by G. Scholefield (Wellington: Government Printers, 1940), I, 288.

served for a time in Australia. Gaustad was settled in Palmerston North, serving this center and Halcombe regularly, besides making occasional trips to serve other places. In 1881 Sass moved to Napier and began publishing "The Evangelical Lutheran Monthly", but because of financial difficulties this paper had a short life.⁹

A Church and parsonage was built in Palmerston North in 1882, while a Church was also erected at Halcombe and dedicated in July of 1883 on land presented to the congregation by Mr. Petersen. Christensen observes that through out this period "proselytising amongst Lutherans was rife by Mormons and Methodists in particular". A Church was also erected at Mauriceville at this time.

Yet these two men were in no position to meet the need for serving these vastly scattered Lutheran folk in an adequate manner. Hence Sass went to Denmark in 1883 in order to appeal for more help for the work in New Zealand. He was partly successful in this that a grant of £100 was to be made annually to the work. The field was also to be considered as a part of the Danish inner mission work with Sass being appointed as Director for the work in New Zealand.¹⁰

9

Christensen, op. cit., p. 16.

10

Ibid., p. 13.

Unfortunately, this was also the beginning of serious strife amongst these two men. The trouble seemed to be both personal and national and became so bitter that a complete break was made between them in 1884. This break naturally had repercussions in almost all centers where these two men had served. Because of this, much of the promised success of their earlier endeavours was destroyed. The years between 1883 and 1889 should have been years of expansion, but unfortunately we must record that rather ground was lost to the Lutheran cause.¹¹

Sass appealed for further help to Denmark, while the congregation at Norsewood also asked directly for assistance from Hermansburg and Brechlum. In December of 1885 A. C. Clausen was sent out by Hermansburg, but after looking over the field it was decided that he was not suitable for this work. He was ordained at Waitotara by Ch. Dierks, assisted by Heine and H. Dierks. After helping these men for a short time in their Maori mission work he left for Australia. This was in 1887.¹²

Another man was sent by Hermansburg in the person of Hans Madsen Ries. He accepted the work with joy and was

¹¹

Ibid., p. 18.

¹²

F. J. H. Blaess, "Centennial Of Hermansburg Missionary Society", The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1950, (1950), p. 62.

examined and ordained in the Norsewood Church on the 24th July, 1886, by Sass, Clausen, and H. Dierks. Pastor Sass¹³ now moved to Makaretu.

Another pastor arrived at this time in the person of M. Christensen. He arrived in New Zealand in November of 1886 and was ordained to the ministry on the 19th December, 1886, while his field of labour was to be specifically at Mauriceville and Ekatahuna.¹⁴ This meant that the Scandinavian Lutherans of the Wairarapa area could now receive a moderately good service.

Inspite of the sad break between Sass and Gaustad, efforts were being made to record some progress amongst the Scandinavian brethren. A Church was dedicated at Makaretu on the 27th October, 1888. Sass at this time moved to Palmerston North and Legarth, who had arrived from Denmark on October 7th, 1888, and assisted Christensen for a time, was now moved to the Makaretu congregation.¹⁵ An attempt was made this year to heal the breach between Sass and Gaustad. A special meeting was called at Palmerston North for this purpose and after lengthy dis-

¹³

Christensen, op. cit., p. 20.

¹⁴

Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁵

Ibid., p. 24.

cussion it was announced to the congregation that a settlement had been reached. Unfortunately the apparent reconciliation was to be short lived.¹⁶

Not long after a disastrous fire swept through the Norsewood area and the Church was destroyed. Funds were raised so that the Church could be rebuilt. At this time Ries was minister of the congregation and there was friction between the minister and some of his members; some had even requested the resignation of their minister. At the time of dedication Gaustad was not invited, but that section of the congregation which favoured Gaustad had privately sent him an invitation. On the day of dedication, as the other pastors came for the ceremony, they found Gaustad already in the Church ready for the service. There-¹⁷ upon, Ries and the other men retired to a nearby hall. The day of dedication was December 15th, 1888. It is clear that much of the trouble was on national lines and possibly had a direct connection with events in Europe. It was this trouble which led the people to realise the need for some form of co-operation so that their work would be more closely co-ordinated. This led directly to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Immanuel Convention of

¹⁶

Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁷

Ibid., p. 24.

New Zealand.

As these men considered the formation of a Convention, they also thought of the other men at work in the Dominion. Attempts were made to form a Convention in which all Lutherans would take part, but Christensen reports that "a union between the Scandinavian and German (Missouri) Lutheran Church had been attempted, but without result."¹⁸ Then the Scandinavian brethren decided to act independently. Sass, being a senior man, was asked to draw up a suitable constitution. A meeting was held on the 1st February, 1889, at Palmerston North, at which the constitution was submitted and accepted.¹⁹

Legarth, who until this time had been serving as an assistant to Sass, was now ordained and installed to take complete charge of the Makaretu congregation. Gaustad, who now lived at Halcombe, made a trip to Europe at this time. During his absence, at the invitation of some of the members, Sass visited his congregation and held services. On the return of Gaustad this naturally led to further bitterness and estrangement.²⁰

At the Convention of the newly formed Synod, an inter-

18

Ibid., p. 26.

19

Ibid., p. 27.

20

Ibid., pp. 30-31.

esting step was taken in the matter of serving the Luther-
ans in diaspora. Thomas Petersen, Hans Fabrin, and I.
Storring, were accepted as Home Missioners. These men were
not ordained clergy, but offered to bring the Gospel to
such families as could not receive regular services, re-
ceiving as their remuneration such contributions as the
members might give. Storring had served in this manner for
some time in the Taranaki area.²¹

In 1893 Bjelke Petersen, a teacher in Tasmania, of-
fered to come to New Zealand and help in the work. He came
and assisted for some time. On July 1st, 1893, a Church was
dedicated at Hastwell, near Mauriceville. Sass made a trip
this same year to Denmark, and to the surprise and dis-
appointment of many of the folk, accepted an appointment
from the home Church.²² Christensen was then called to
Palmerston North. Legarth was called to Mauriceville. Sass
returned the following year on a visit, bringing several
immigrant families, while missionary Thomas Petersen and
student Topholm came out to assist in the work.

At the Convention in March, 1894, the work was reap-
portioned. Ries was made President and given the task of
serving as a travelling minister, while also in charge of

21

Ibid., p. 32.

22

Ibid., p. 34.

Dannevirke. Topholm was called to Norsewood, Bjelke Petersen to Makaretu, with Christensen at Palmerston North, and Legarth at Mauriceville. Thus the Immanuel Convention had five ordained pastors and three home missionaries at work. The work of Ries as an itinerant pastor was soon discontinued. Petersen, because of a misunderstanding, resigned from his charge and was later called to Australia. It is interesting to note that at this time the chief language used by these men was still Danish.²³

Let us now turn to see what the other workers are doing. The German Lutheran settlers in Christchurch erected a Church in 1872. The foundation stone was laid on the 6th November of that year. Lohr was made their minister the same year. Lohr laboured here until 1878, when Pastor Jacobsen took up the work. It seems that the work was most difficult and with little success, so that he left for the United States of America about 1884.²⁴ The Church was then closed because of a lack of interest and support from the members.

It is of interest to note that this Church had the first full peal of bells in the Christchurch area. These were a gift from Prince Bismark. Unfortunately, it was

²³

Ibid., p. 38.

²⁴

Dierks, op. cit., p. 40.

falsely rumoured that these bells were cast from captured French cannon metal. Hence in 1915, they were solemnly removed from the turret of the old Church and melted down in a local foundry. As one writer has said, "it says little for the sense of humour of the folk of the city," but then "humour does not thrive amid the clamours of war."²⁵ It is of more importance to realise that if this attitude was adopted towards inanimate objects, what attitude must we not expect to be shown towards persons connected with this Church!

At a later period services were once again commenced in this Church but only by the wildest stretch of imagination could these be termed Lutheran. The minister was the Reverend Theodore Albert Meyer, who while holding the position of Curate for the Anglican Church at Heathcote in Christchurch, also served what still remained of the congregation connected with the old Church. He was appointed²⁶ Pastor for the congregation in 1892. The congregation was simply termed "German" rather than "Lutheran." This was more accurate as membership seemed to be along national rather than spiritual lines. A visitor at this time said that while the Church could seat two-hundred

25

J. Alpers, Cheerful Yesterdays (New Zealand: Billing and Sons Ltd., 1927), pp. 126-127.

26

Cyclopedia Of New Zealand, op. cit., III, 205.

the usual attendance seemed to be about thirty at the fortnightly services. It was not long before the Church building was once again up for "hire to the highest bidder" from among the sects.

In other centers work was being continued. Heine and Meyer were at work in the Nelson-Moutere area. From this center they made occasional trips to other centers to serve Lutherans in diaspora. In 1884 Meyer left to go and work in the Taranaki area. The congregation at Waimea now became part of the Upper Moutere parish again. In July of 1884 Heine had also resigned from the position of pastor and the congregation had desired to call W. Meyer who had come out to New Zealand with Hatwig Dierks in 1880.²⁷ But since these men had been sent out from Hermansburg to work amongst the Maoris, permission had to be obtained before this work could be left. The result was that finally Kowert who had come out earlier and was stationed at Onepui, near Marton, was called and accepted.²⁸ There was further trouble after the arrival of Kowert on the lodge issue. The result was that the congregation divided, and two congregations operated in the area until the beginning of the next century. The reorganised congregation under

27

Dierks, op. cit., p. 29.

28

Ibid., p. 30.

Kowert dedicated its House of Worship in 1886 on the Second Sunday in Advent.²⁹ Shortly after, Kowert resigned and went to America. The congregation then wanted to call Clauseen but as he was not released by Hermansburg for this purpose, the congregation called Pastor Bertram who laboured among them from 1886 to 1891.³⁰ He was followed by Pastor Schwartz who served the congregation from 1892 to 1902.³¹ This year also marked the end of the strife between the two congregations, and the "Kreutz Kirche" was amalgamated with the other congregation. This congregation had called Pastor Theil from Germany in 1888. He was born in Mechlenburg and served the Church at Upper Moutere from 1888 to 1907. After the congregations had been reunited³² he continued as pastor.

Let us turn to the exploits of the other men who had come from Hermansburg with Kowert in 1876. At first these men had visited some of the Lutherans on the West Coast of the South Island. Heine had been appointed Director for

29

"I Remember The Days Of Old", The Australian Lutheran, XXIV (October 2, 1936), p. 235.

30

Blaess, op cit., p. 58

31

"W. F. Schwartz", The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1921, (1921), p. 31.

32

"J. Theil", The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1927, (1927), p. 112.

the work of the Hermandsburg Missionary Society in New Zealand. J. H. C. Dierks had worked at the establishment of a Maori mission in the Waitotara area. In 1877 Loose had been called to the newly formed Saint Martins congregation at Marton. Goesling, after serving in various places with apparently little success, was called to Australia. Upper Moutere was the hub of the church work at this time and so naturally we find all the men making frequent visits to this center especially for the festival occasions. In November of 1877, on the arrival of their brides from Europe, the three missionaries, Kowert, Loose, and Dierks, were married at a joint ceremony conducted by Heine in the Moutere on the 14th of November. ³³

J. H. C. Dierks, working in Waitotara, gradually succeeded in building up a station. With timber sent from the Moutere, he had erected a house. He also had begun to hold classes and soon had some thirty-two pupils enrolled. But he experienced similar trouble to his predecessors in that the pupils soon tired of attending. Dierks also set himself the task of learning the Maori language. He hoped that this would help him to train natives who could serve as mission helpers. It is clear that he experienced many difficulties in trying to carry out this plan. It was in

September of 1886 that he saw the dedication of Saint Paul's Church at Waitotara.³⁴

In the Marton area, good progress was made among the immigrant families settling there. In about 1860, several families of German origin came over from Australia. Mr. Heinrich Goile may be termed as a spiritual leader of these people. In the beginning, lay-reading services were conducted in his home, and later he donated a piece of land for the purpose of the erection of a parsonage and Church. Heine from the Moutere, and other Hermansburg men made visits to these settlers from time to time. Finally the congregation was organised in 1877 with Loose being called to serve them as Pastor. The foundation stone for the Church was laid on September 25th, 1877.³⁵ However, Loose never saw the completion of the building because of his early death.³⁶ His tragic death took place as he was returning from his wedding in the Moutere. During the sea crossing from Nelson to Wanganui, he had been unwell, and in the morning he was found dead. This was a severe blow for his newly wed wife who had just arrived from Europe as well as for his congregation. The Church was then dedic-

³⁴

Ibid., p. 52.

³⁵

"Historical Sketch," Unpublished material in the Archives of Saint Martin's Lutheran Church, Marton.

³⁶

Dierks, op. cit., p. 18.

ated by Dierks of Waitotara on December 18th, 1877. He continued to serve the congregation during the vacancy and finally T. Heine, a son of Heine from the Moutere, who had just completed his training for the ministry in America, was called by the congregation. He accepted the call and served the congregation until 1881. He also established a Day School for the children of the congregation and filled the dual roll of pastor and teacher.

It was in 1881 that T. Heine was forced to resign from his work with the Marton congregation because of ill-health. He was followed by W. Meyer, who had just recently arrived in New Zealand. His term of office with the congregation was from 1881 to 1898. These were troubled years as friction developed between the pastor and his people to the extent that for a time there were two congregations. At one time both groups had their own building on the Church block. The newly formed congregation had the name of Saint Pauls, and was served at intervals by Dierks of Waitotara. They had even issued a call to Dierks which he declined. Dierks worked for a healing of the breach between the two groups. Under the blessing of God this was achieved before the departure of W. Meyer from the congregation. After peace had again been restored the extra Church building was used for a school, and today serves as

a hall for the congregation.

After W. Meyer, the congregation called Pastor Klitscher, who served the congregation from 1899 to 1903. He died after an operation on April 2nd, 1903, while still a very young man. His work in the congregation had showed great promise and yet God saw fit to call him to his eternal reward just when it appeared that he was being most successful in the work of building the Kingdom.

Hatwig Dierks, who had come to New Zealand with W. Meyer in 1880, at first worked as an itinerant pastor. He spent some time at the Waitotara mission where his brother was at work. Later he decided to work amongst the Maoris in the Maxwelltown area. On the 12th July, 1882, he married Anna Heine, a daughter of the pioneer Heine. When he returned to Maxwelltown mission after having been married, he found that the Maoris had taken possession of his home. All efforts to induce the Maoris to vacate the building were in vain.

Besides the work in Maxwelltown, Hatwig Dierks also visited Christchurch and Oxford in the South Island. The congregation he served in Christchurch had no connection with the German congregation referred to earlier. It appears that the brethren at Oxford had a building of their

own. He also conducted services at Wanganui where there was also a small congregation. In 1887 a small chapel was dedicated at Woodville, now called Alton. On occasion he also took services in Wellington, which shows that while these men worked amongst the Maori folk at their home base, they also travelled to give some services to the immigrants.

In 1888 we find that the connection with the Hermansburg Missionary Society is first called into question. The result was that they were told that either they would have to accept pastorates in Australia, or support themselves. Both of the Dierks brothers decided to remain in New Zealand.³⁸ The matter was considered by Australia of accepting these men and their work into their Synodical organisation but it was finally decided to support the work in New Zealand on a voluntary basis. At this time Heine also asked to be relieved of the position of Director in New Zealand for Hermansburg Mission.³⁹ Heidenreich of Australia was then made Director for the whole area. He came to New Zealand in order to find a solution in regard to the problems which had been raised between the Hermansburg Missionary

³⁸

Ibid., p. 67-73.

³⁹

"I Remember The Days Of Old", The Australian Lutheran, XXVII (December 8, 1939), p. 295.

Society and the Dierks brothers. It seemed that the matter had been successfully settled, but certain matters which Heidenreich promised to rectify, continued as before, so that the settlement was short-lived.⁴⁰

Another point which increased the tension at this time was the doctrinal position adopted by the Hermansburg Missionary Society men on the inspiration of the Scriptures. This matter also caused a break between the two brothers at work in New Zealand. Hatwig Dierks considered the position of Hermansburg as unionistic and contrary to Lutheran doctrine and so he broke completely with them in 1891.⁴¹ However he continued to work at Maxwelltown and received some help from Australia.

He dedicated a Church, Saint Peters, at Maxwelltown on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1889. This Church was dismantled in August of 1919. Besides working amongst the Maoris he made regular trips to the other centers where Lutheran immigrants had settled as mentioned previously and remained at this work until his death on February 2, 1911.

In the meantime his brother at Waitotara continued working under Hermansburg. He had also been made Superin-

40

Dierks, op. cit., p. 80.

41

Ibid., p. 88.

tendent for the work of the Hermansburg Missionary Society in New Zealand. This appointment was made in February of 1892.⁴² He then made a trip through the King country and considered that there was fair scope here for additional workers. In response to his appeal we find that G. Blaess was sent out, arriving just before Christmas of 1893.

Blaess had been sent by the Hermansburg Free Church. His headquarters were at Pungarehu, in Taranaki, but he found the work "heartbreaking". Most of the Maoris had returned to heathenism after having had some instruction in Christianity. He laboured at this post for thirteen years. Just before the mission was closed in 1906, he experienced the great joy of baptising Hauwera Te Punga. This man later studied in America and rendered sterling service to the Lutheran Church in New Zealand. In 1894 Blaess had married Doretta M. Bensemann. Besides working at the Maori mission Blaess also made regular visits to some of the surrounding centers in order to serve other Lutheran families.⁴³

Thus at the turn of the century we find the following Lutheran pastors at work in New Zealand. Christensen is at Palmerston North and Halcombe, Legarth at Maurice-

42

Ibid., p. 89.

43

"G. Blaess", The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1929, (1929), p. 116.

ville and Wellington, Ries at Dannevirke, Topholm at Norsewood and the Hawkes Bay area, Petersen at Makaretu, with the inner mission workers stationed as follows, Hans Fabrin at Bunnythorpe, Jens Storring at Inglewood, and Lauridsen at Dannevirke. These men were all directly linked with the Immanuel Convention and worked chiefly amongst Lutherans of a Scandinavian background. The following men worked without specific Synodical connection. Gaustad was still at Halcombe, Klitscher at Marton and Halcombe, Schwartz at Upper Moutere and Oxford, Theil at Upper Moutere, Wainea, and Nelson, Hatwig Dierks at Maxwelltown, while Blaess worked at Pungarehu under the Hermansburg Free Church. J. H. C. Dierks, who had worked at Waitotara, had passed away on the 5th January, 1898. F. W. C. Heine, pioneer worker in the Moutere, was called to his eternal rest on 18th March, 1900.

This gave eleven ordained pastors and three home missionaries to serve the Lutherans of New Zealand. The Government statistics at this time listed about five thousand Lutherans, which would give about 450 Lutherans to each ordained pastor. It is of interest that the highest number of Lutherans listed was in 1886 with 5,917 adherents, while the highest percentage of Lutherans as compared with the total population as shown in Government figures was in 1878 when Lutherans formed 1.36 percent of the people.

CHAPTER III

LUTHERANISM IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE WORK OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONCORDIA CONFERENCE OF NEW ZEALAND.

It was in the year 1902 that New Zealand Lutherans received a visit from one of America's Lutheran leaders in the person of Dr. A. Graebner.¹ His visit is remembered chiefly because he was mainly responsible for the healing of the old split in the Upper Moutere congregation. After his visit, the congregation was united under Theil with Schwartz being called to work in Australia.

We note that after the visit of Graebner the work in New Zealand became more closely connected with the Missouri Synod of America both as regards direction in the work and the supply of man-power. In 1903 Pastor M. T. Winkler came from America to work as missionary at large. In 1904 Pastor A. H. Teyler arrived from the States to take charge of the Lutheran congregation at Maston. Pastor F. Hassold was sent out to assist in the work in 1905, so that in the space of three years the Lutheran Church in New Zealand had received a very tangible

¹
The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1927, (1926),
p. 112.

proof of the assistance from America. At about this time Pastor Ch. Dierks, a son of the Dierks who had laboured for many years among the Maoris at Waitotara, completed his studies in Europe and returned to work in New Zealand. On his arrival he served as an itinerant worker in the out-lying fields.

An important development resulting largely from this influx of American brethren was the organisation of the Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference of New Zealand. This Conference was formed in 1907 at a convention held at Marton with the Pastors Theil, Winkler, Teyler, and Hassold taking part.² While from the outset this Conference worked in the closest co-operation with the Missouri Synod of America, official recognition in this regard was not requested before 1909.³

The Maori mission at Pungarehu which had been under the control of Blaess was closed in 1906. Although he spoke of some success and also of prospects in the Waikato area, work in these areas was never again taken up among the Maoris by the Lutheran Church. On the other hand we must note that just before the mission was closed in 1906

² "Official Minutes Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand." Unpublished, in the Conference Archives at Saint Martins Lutheran Church, Marton, New Zealand. p. 21.

³ Ibid., p. 37.

Blaess was privileged to receive into Church membership through baptism Hamuera Hautuirirangi Te Punga, alias Te Takua. Te Punga was born on August the 16, 1880. In the same year as he was received into Church membership he left for the United States of America to prepare for the ministry at the Lutheran Seminary at Springfield in Illinois. Henry Harting also went at this time to the United States to study for the ministry. Te Punga himself recalls how he was drawn into contact with the work of our Mission through the simple invitation given to some of the young folk to help with the singing at the service. After this he became interested in assisting Blaess in matters of language. Some today would speak of this as the "front porch" method, however it was this factor which caused Te Punga to stress at all times the importance of the "approach" in our mission work. In this instance it was not only a means of bringing a man to Christ but it also had the result of giving to the New Zealand Lutheran Church the only Maori Pastor to serve in its ranks, and this with distinction.

Theil, who had served for many years in the Upper Moutere parish and surrounding area, resigned in 1908. His reason was that he felt he was losing hold on the young folk of his congregation because of the language problem. Their language was English, and he felt that he

was not sufficiently conversant with this tongue to minister adequately to them.⁴ He was called to Australia where he laboured faithfully until his death.

The Upper Moutere congregation then called Pastor Hoyer who served them from 1909 to 1914. At this time the congregation numbered 284 souls.

Winkler, who had come out in 1903 to serve as missionary at large, accepted a call in 1905 to the Halcombe-Rongateca parish. Not long after he was advised to resign from this work because of health reasons. He received a call to Concordia Seminary, Adelaide, in 1908, which he accepted. He continued to serve the Church in this position until his death.

These men saw the necessity of increasing the ministerial strength of the Lutheran Church if the people who lived in the out-posts were to be held for the Church. Their attempts resulted in Pastor Frese being sent from America in 1909 to serve in the city of Auckland. He was ordained together with H. C. Dierks at a Reformation Festival service in Halcombe. At this service Dierks was also installed as Pastor of the Halcombe congregation. Hoyer installed Frese in Auckland on the twenty-second

⁴"Theil", The Australian Lutheran Almanac 1927, (1926), p. 112.

Sunday after Trinity, 1909.⁵ The work in Auckland proved rather difficult and as the congregation had no place of its own for worship the congregation was faced with rather a major problem. The attendance at the normal services was about thirty, while there was a good number of prospects so that all had hope for the success of this venture. A severe blow was struck to the cause in this important center when Frese was forced to give up his post because of sickness. He returned to America towards the end of 1911.⁶ The severity of the blow lay in the shortage of men at this time so that it was immediately recognised that a successor would not easily be found.

At this time work in Taranaki was also receiving close attention. From the history of the area it would appear that prospects for establishing congregations in this area should have been good. The American brethren assigned Candidate R. Heimann to this work, but it is unfortunately recorded that he was advised to decline this call because of reasons of health.⁷ Hassold, who

⁵ "Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lutherisches Kirchenblatt für Neuseeland, I (December 1, 1909), p. 23.

⁶ "Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lutherisches Kirchenblatt für Neuseeland, II (February 1, 1910), p. 6.

⁷ "Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lutherisches Kirchenblatt für Neuseeland, II (October 1, 1910), p. 40.

was resident in Wanganui for some time, also served the Taranaki area. Two sections had been purchased in Wanganui for the purpose of erecting a Church in this city. At this time the congregation in Wanganui numbered forty-five souls with twenty-one communicant members. Services were conducted each Sunday with alternate reading and preaching services, while the preaching services were conducted alternately in the English and German languages.⁸

The Convention held in Halcombe in 1910 revealed the following statistics. There were five pastors in the Concordia Conference. They served seven congregations and twenty-two preaching places with a total of 1021 souls, with 429 communicants. Ch. Dierks was resident at Halcombe and served another fourteen preaching places in Taranaki, Rangitike, and the Waimarino area. Frese was in Auckland with fifty-six souls listed as under his care. Hassold, who was now living at Rongatea, also served Wellington with forty-four souls, and Palmerston North with twenty souls. Both of these centers were considered as congregations although they had as yet not been officially accepted as such by the Conference. Hassold also served at Levin, Christchurch, Rangiora, and Oxford, the last three

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"Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lutherisches Kirchenblatt für Neuseeland, II (January 1, 1910), p. 2.

places being in the South Island. Wanganui with fifty-five souls, and Maxwelltown with twelve souls, were also under his care. Services were also taken by these men at Rukuhia, Taumarunui, and Orautoha, on the Main Trunk route. Hoyer served Upper Moutere and Waimea, with a total of 284 souls. Teyler was at Marton where the congregation now numbered 168 souls.

Negotiations with the Emmanuel Synod were also undertaken at this time in order to consider the possibility of an amalgamation. In these discussions, Hassold and Teyler were to represent our Conference.⁹ A meeting was held on the 19th March, 1910, at Palmerston North, while somewhat later another was held at Dannevirke.¹⁰ However at the Convention in 1912 it was recommended that for the time being official negotiations be discontinued but ministers were encouraged to make private efforts to bring about the desired union.¹¹

After four years of untiring effort, Saint Matthew's Congregation was finally organised on the 26th of February, 1911. All now hoped that the matter of building a Church

⁹ "Official Minutes Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand," *op. cit.*, p. 55.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

in this center would not be too far distant. The "Kirchenblatt" at that time carried the note that Mrs. Dierks gave the pews and the windows of the old Church at Waitotara towards the Wanganui project. It is unfortunate indeed that the record shows that the much hoped for Church was never erected so that even today the city of Wanganui contains no Lutheran Church building.

In regard to the work in Christchurch and the neighbouring places, Hassold reported after one of his visits that at the morning service about thirty people attended while in the evening about ten to twenty were present. At Oxford eleven people partook of the Sacrament. These trips would take about three weeks so that all the folk could be visited and at least in Christchurch services could be conducted on two consecutive Sundays. The reports a year later showed a further decline in attendance.

Auckland at this time was also served by visiting pastors. Naturally these visits could not be more frequent than about quarterly. After one such visit it was reported that the service was attended by twenty persons while ten received the Sacrament.

At Marton the congregation continued to grow. By 1912 it was necessary for the congregation to call a full-time teacher for their school. Teacher Palmer came from America to serve in this capacity and remained until 1915.

He was followed by Teachers Mackenzie and Lange, while in 1925 the school was closed because of the difficulties experienced in securing teachers. On the 28th of December, 1913, Teyler preached his farewell sermon to the Marton congregation before returning to America. Harting, who had gone to America in 1906 to prepare for the ministry, was called by the Marton congregation but he declined. Candidate Hoffmann, who had just finished his studies in Europe, was called and accepted. He was ordained and installed by F. Hassold at Marton on the 14th of February, 1915, assisted by Ch. Dierks.¹²

Hoyer had been forced to resign from his parish at Upper Moutere because of a throat complaint. At first Candidate Klattenhof of America was called, but declined. Finally A. Appelt was called from Australia and accepted. He began his ministry in this center in 1914.

Te Punga, who had gone to Springfield Seminary in 1906 to prepare for the ministry, successfully completed his studies in 1912. On the 22nd. of September, 1912, he was ordained and commissioned by F. Sievers, assisted by H. Pflug, at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Chicago. In the same Church and in the same year he was also married to Miss Lydia Gose. For some months after completing his

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"Historical Sketch," Unpublished material in the Archives of Saint Martin's Lutheran Church, Marton.

studies he visited congregations in America giving information on the work in New Zealand. His return trip was made through Europe and Australia. When he arrived in New Zealand he was placed at Waiwhetu, in the Hutt Valley area, to work amongst the Maori people living there. He was resident in this place until 1921. Besides the work amongst the Maori people he assisted much in the itinerant work in general.

During the period of the World War of 1914-1918, we find that reports are few. Work was not easy in those years largely because many of the members of the Lutheran Church had a European background. In regard to some centers the terse but telling report states that services "have been discontinued because of the request of members." One Church was destroyed by vandalism at this time, while another for a long period had to be watched constantly by the members in order to save it from destruction. International issues have certainly left their mark on the work of the Lutheran Church in this Dominion.

At the Convention of the Conference in 1914, the matter of Synodical affiliation was considered. It had been suggested from America that it might be expedient for the New Zealand Church to be worked as a part of the Australian Church. The American brethren promised that they would continue to support the work as they had done in the past.

The Convention then agreed to ask the Australian brethren to accept the New Zealand Conference.¹³ Thus we find that today the New Zealand Lutheran Church is still operated as a district of the Australian Lutheran Church.

In 1918 a further blow was struck against the work at this time when Ch. Dierks of Halcombe was taken in the influenza epidemic of that year. He was buried by Te Punga in the Marton Church Cemetery on the 13th of December.

The first Convention after the war was held at Upper Moutere in 1919. Pastors present were Appelt of Upper Moutere, Te Punga of Wellington, and Hoffmann of Marton. In making reference to the beginning of the Conference the President concluded that although he did not know just what the folk at that time expected to achieve through such an organisation, "from the view-point of the world and the indifference of some members of these congregations very little had been accomplished to justify such a project."¹⁴

The report on Wanganui made poor reading as it reported that because of the war members had left the congregation, while others "appear to be pessimistic as to

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"Official Minutes Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand," op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁴

Ibid., p. 147.

the future." Services had been curtailed at the request of members, while no delegate was at the Convention as "there was no organised congregation in Wanganui" at the time. This description of the state of affairs in Wanganui after the war should not be considered as an isolated instance of the way much of the work had been ruined because of the war. Some ground was still owned by the Church in Wanganui, and a little over £100 stood to their credit in the building fund, but as the report states, the "building of a chapel is as remote as ever."¹⁵

"If we can hold what we have at present" then the future of the Lutheran Church in New Zealand is assured; such was the attitude of the men in 1920. At this time efforts were made to obtain another pastor and teacher from Australia. In considering their needs, they decided that it would be more advantageous to place a teacher in the Rongatea area than a pastor in Auckland. Five calls were issued and all were declined. In 1920 we find that the Lutheran Church was represented in the Concordia Conference by Appelt, Te Punga, and Hoffmann; while the Immanuel Synod had Christensen, Legarth, and Ries. Gaustad was unattached. This meant that the ministerial strength was less now than at the turn of the century.

T. Nickel Junior spent some months assisting with the work in 1920-21. At the Convention held in 1921 it was recommended that the work in Auckland be closed and that the centers of Orautoha, Ohutu, and Taumarunui, be included in the field for the man to be called to the Halcombe congregation.¹⁶ This meant that this area would be near self-supporting. It was also decided to call a man for the Christchurch field. R. H. Altus was called for this field and arrived in New Zealand in 1922. He was also to take occasional services in the Wellington field.¹⁷

In 1922, the Church numbered six congregations, with some seventeen preaching places. There were 800 souls with some 500 communicant members.

The following year Altus reported that from an attendance of eight when he arrived, his services were now visited by some thirty-four persons. At this time services were being held in the Y. M. C. A. On Christchurch city he reported that it had "a population of about 106,000 people of whom many are churchless," while many others are of German or Danish parentage. He also served Oxford eight times a year, where we now had five communicants and two children. At one time the Church had thirteen

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Ibid., p. 23.

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Ibid., p. 55.

families in this area but "because of insufficient and infrequent services and the persistent use of the German language" the work had now almost ceased. At this time the old German Church in Christchurch was passed over to our Conference by the Government. The fact that this Church was presented to us for the purpose of preaching the Gospel must be credited almost solely to the efforts of Te Punga. The Church was then dedicated by Altus and Te Punga on April 22nd., 1923. A residence was also now bought for the pastor of this area.

When the District President was reviewing the work for the 1923 Convention he gave a number of reasons for the lack of progress. Some of these were, the "great and universal indifference to the Word of God," the unionistic spirit of the day, the lack of immigration of Lutherans, the constant shortage of funds and ministers which precluded sufficient and regular services in the mission fields and which made it impossible to "search out new fields or to follow up members who settled outside the regular mission beat," the great distances between most of the congregations, the lack of Christian Day schools, and lastly, the "language question."

The report for 1923 shows that services were conducted by Te Punga at Halcombe, Ohutu, Orautoha, Taumarunui, Wanganui, Waitotara, Waverley, Hurlyville, Hawera,

Midhurst, Awatuna, and Inglewood. Hoffmann served Marton, Rongatea, Palmerston North, Mangaweka, and Ashurst. Altus, living at Christchurch in the South Island, served also at Oxford and Wellington. Appelt ministered to the Upper Moutere and Waimea congregations.

It is seen from the preceding that Te Punga was no longer at the Maori mission near Wellington but was now the minister of the Halcombe congregation, besides serving many of the places in the itinerant fields. The work among the Maoris was discontinued after the visit of Doctor Darsow, the President General of the Lutheran Church.¹⁸ Hence in March of 1921 Te Punga took over the Halcombe and lower Main Trunk field and continued serving this area, besides being often called upon to minister to other Lutherans in isolation, until his retirement in 1950.

Christchurch was officially organised into a congregation in 1924. The same year saw Altus leave this new field to accept the call to the Upper Moutere congregation which had become vacant through the retirement of Appelt. Fortunately, the successor to Altus was not long in coming. Bruhn was installed into this field on the 8th. March, 1925. The congregation was reported to consist of fifty-one souls with thirty communicants. The congregation

was described as "a closely knit body of Lutherans" where but three years ago no such body existed, which is surely "an assurance that the Holy Spirit operates through His Word as effectively today as in times past." Wellington was now being served from Christchurch on a six-weekly basis, while the attendances at service averaged about thirty persons.

In 1925 the Marton congregation lost their minister when he accepted a call to Australia. The following year the successor to Hoffmann arrived in the person of M. R. R. Heidrich. He was installed as pastor of the congregation on October 14th, 1926. The Taranaki field was also placed under his care. This year also saw the Church School of this congregation closed because of the problem of staff.

Ries, of the Immanuel Synod, passed away on the 14th April, 1926. For many years he had continued to serve his Church in an honorary capacity. However it was noticeable that the work of the Scandinavian brethren was steadily
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on the decline.

At the Pastoral Conference held in Marton in November of 1926 some interesting resolutions were passed. The Mission Board was to be asked to call a second man to the

Christchurch field. The idea being to have missionaries working in pairs. The plan was termed "workable," as well as "thoroughly Scriptural" and presented the only possible way of keeping another man in the field" from the financial point of view. The Christchurch pastor would continue to serve the Wellington congregation on the present basis, until the Christchurch congregation would become largely self-supporting. The Convention of the District held that year agreed to put the plan into operation "where-ever²⁰ circumstances permit."

In view of the resolution just mentioned, the following action seems somewhat strange. Without any further comment Pastor Noffke was called, not as one would expect, to work in the Christchurch field, but to the Wellington field. This action was taken in 1927. He was installed in September, 1928, with an attendance of some eleven persons for the occasion. The congregation was listed as having thirty-six souls.

On the 5th. February, 1927, Gaustad, who had at first been connected with the Scandinavian brethren but who had then worked alone,²¹ was called to his eternal rest and was buried at Urenui.

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"Official Minutes Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand," op. cit., II, 122.

21

Scholefield, op. cit., I, 288.

In 1929 Altus accepted a call to Australia. A successor for the Upper Moutere congregation was found in the person of Pastor G. A. Venz, who took charge of the congregation as from the 1st February, 1931.

In Christchurch, Bruhn worked energetically until his resignation in February of 1930. Pastor Traeger was then installed as the next pastor of the Christchurch congregation in November of 1930. At the time of Traegers installation the congregation was listed as having sixty-two souls, with thirty-seven communicants. These figures represented the result of some seven years labour in this field.

Heldrich, serving in Taranaki, reported to the 1932 Convention that little mission work could be done in this area because "services were conducted in private homes," while the time of service was often such as to be quite unsuitable for the convenience "of prospective mission material," and besides this, the time which could be devoted to each center was far too short to do mission work as it was often "only a few hours." If more extensive work was to be attempted, it would interfere with the work in the home congregation of the missionary.

In the same year, the District President reported that although mission work had been carried on for over two decades, it was only in the "last three years that the

specific mission aspect has been seriously recognised" and that specific efforts were being made to find "the heathen nearer, and to help them at our door." In speaking of the problems of the Church, prominence is given to that of members moving away from those centers where the Lutheran Church was represented to isolated places where the Church because of man-power and finance was unable to serve and hold them for the Church. The number lost to the Lutheran Church in this way is said to "run into treble figures." Mention is also made concerning the growth of other groups with the question being put, "why not we?" The vacancy of the Auckland field is considered as another lost opportunity. The renting of mission halls is considered to be money "thrown away" while it is at the same time urged that we should do more in the matter of building. The Australian Home Mission Board suggested to the New Zealand brethren that they consider a "suburban policy" rather than a central policy for their city mission work.

It was decided at this time to take down the old Church building at Christchurch and replace it with a chapel. Accordingly, on April 17th, 1933, the foundation stone for the new building was laid with Traeger preaching the sermon, taking as his text, Ephesians 2:19.

On the 22nd. April, 1934, the foundation stone was

laid for the Wellington church. The building was dedicat-
 ed on the 3rd. July of the same year. ²² The work in the
 Wellington field was showing considerable promise accord-
 ing to the results from other fields. After two years
 work by a resident minister the congregation listed
 sixty-eight souls, with thirty-five communicants. Work
 in the Sunday School which had begun well was not so
 favourably situated now as there were only three mission
 children attending. The young folk and the women of the
 congregation had been organised into societies which in
 turn were proving themselves good for making new contacts.
 For the Christmas service in 1933 some 150 people were
 present. It was just at this time that a sad blow came to
 this congregation. For certain reasons the Pastor found
 it "incumbent upon him" to forward his resignation to
 the congregation and the Conference. This resignation took
 place on March 3rd, 1935. At this time Wellington had a
 membership of 101 souls, with forty-three communicants.

It might be of some interest at this stage to com-
 pare the statistics of the various centers as from 1923
 to 1934. Marton had increased from 154 souls with 85 com-
 municants, to 176 souls with 109 communicants. During

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"Wellington Report," The Australian Lutheran,
 XXII (June 22, 1934), p. 153.

this period, the congregation had been served by Hoffmann and Heidrich. Christchurch had grown from 36 souls, to 103 souls with 58 communicants. Pastors who had served the congregation were Altus, Bruhn, and Traeger. Wellington had increased from 32 souls, to 101 souls with 43 communicants, and had been served by Altus and Noffke. Upper Moutere decreased from 197 souls with 124 communicants, to 193 souls with 125 communicants. Pastors had been Appelt, Altus, and Venz. Halcombe also declined from 153 souls with 78 communicants, to 135 souls with 84 communicants. Te Punga had served the congregation for this period. Rongatea declined from 94 souls, to 78 souls with 48 communicants. For a time this congregation was linked with Marton but later was attached to the Halcombe parish. In 1923 we find 17 preaching places listed, while in 1934 the number was stated as 18 preaching centers.

In 1931, the Marton Ladies Guild was formed. The Guild was organised for the purpose of aiding the poor and needy, visiting the sick, and fostering an active interest in the work of the congregation and the Church.

An important venture in 1933 was the formation of the New Zealand Luther League. This was an attempt to provide something on a Dominion-wide basis for the youth of the Church. This League was designed to assist the young people in developing their ability to serve the Church. The President expressed the hope that a new era "had

dawned for the young people" of our congregations, and with it "a new era for our Church."

After the resignation of Hoffke, Wellington was served by Pastor P. D. Pahl. He was installed on the 9th of February, 1936. His reports were not at all encouraging. The Luther League was reported as having gone into "recess indefinitely", while the work in general is described as "very discouraging." Attendances of eleven and twelve at the services are spoken of as "quite frequent." He reports that if the work in Wellington had been most promising earlier, "it ceased to be so before my arrival." On the other hand he reports that it is amazing "to find how many so called Lutherans there are in Wellington." If they would all come the Church would be far too small to hold them. Sunday School work showed little promise as the children seemed to stay where they get the "best deal materially." The report concludes on the uninspiring note that while some progress has been made, "above all we have held the fort."²³ The statistics had dropped sharply to 70 souls with 29 communicants for the year 1938.

In Taranaki, the work was reorganised with a congre-

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"Wellington Report", Proceedings Of The Twenty-Ninth Convention Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand 1938, Duplicated, pp. 7-9.

gation being formed at Stratford on the basis that the members from the surrounding areas would assemble at Stratford for their monthly service. This congregation was called Saint Luke's of Stratford, and was organised on the 20th December, 1936, being received into membership in the Conference as a congregation the following year.²⁴

Traeger, who at this time served Christchurch, made a survey trip of the West Coast of the South Island. Here he was informed by a Mr. Schaefer, that years before, a block of land had been purchased for the erection of a Lutheran Church at Hokitika. Others were also mentioned as being interested in services by our Church.²⁵ It will be remembered that in the early days fairly regular trips had been made to this area. Unfortunately, subsequent history shows no follow up of this visit. In 1936 Traeger left New Zealand to take up work among the Australian natives at Koonibba.

Considerable difficulty was experienced in filling the vacancy in the Christchurch city. At first Pahl took occasional services. Three calls sent to Australia were

²⁴ "Taranaki Report", Proceedings Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference, 1937, (Duplicated), p. 17.

²⁵ "Mission Board Report", Proceedings Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference, 1936, Duplicated, p. 14.

declined. Some members of the Executive Board of the Church had wanted to call from the outset from America. Now that three calls had been declined from Australia, the whole Board was ready to turn to America in order to fill the Christchurch vacancy. This move was immediately successful. Pastor E. Gebauer was installed at Christchurch on November 28th, 1937.

The President reported that the year had been an anxious one. However, those people who are "acquainted with the nature of our difficulties" would not be discouraged "by the absence of great progress." "Plans are made easily; many plans could be put into operation if it were not for the obstacles." The simple comment on the statistics is that "they do not make cheerful reading." The number of souls under the care of Conference had shown a decrease of forty-nine. The plea is made that we do not launch out on mere imagination, but that first a rational survey be carried out, lest we go on a wild "goose chase" and finish up with a "white elephant" which by some "inherent or magical power metamorphoses itself into an insurmountable unget-over-able financial hurdle." The advice is for more concentration on such fields where we have²⁶ pastors and nucleus, together with Church plant.

Pahl, in reporting on the work in the Wellington area, now considers that the prospect for growth here is as good as in any other center where the Church was at work in the Dominion. Special emphasis is made of the fact that the work in this city mission is done "in the spiritual atmosphere alone."

Gebauer, in his first report on Christchurch, listed many points which he considered needed attention. Let us note these somewhat in detail. His opinion of the congregation was that it had "greatly dwindled, become pessimistic, and to a large extent lost interest in Church work." There were very few young folk attached to the congregation. All organisations, such as Sunday School, Ladies Guild, Young Peoples Society, and the like, had ceased to exist. The administration of the congregation was poor, while the financial set-up was in need of a "complete overhaul." The members were poorly informed about the doctrine and practices of the Lutheran Church. Above all, mission work is made difficult because of a popular prejudice against our Church; some holding that it is German, and others that it belongs to the Spirit-²⁷ists. Surely this is a formidable list of difficulties with which to confront a new pastor.

Pahl, reporting in 1939, makes mention of the fact that "no systematic canvass work can be attempted under existing circumstances." The reason being that it takes the city missionary all his time to "keep track of the people he contacts in the ordinary course of his duties." In view of this, he urged the Conference to give the matter of canvassing their "earnest consideration."

The Conference of that year did give the matter attention and adopted a resolution to use a collective system of canvassing in the cities. Undoubtedly, this idea of a collective canvass was largely the work of Gebauer and so it is not strange that Christchurch was the center chosen where the plan was to be tried. The report which followed this canvass revealed that the Church was not situated in an area where there were many mission opportunities. On the other hand it was the means of making contact with an additional forty-five families. The position of the Church had this redeeming feature that it could be easily reached from any part of the city.

At this time efforts were also made to have the International Lutheran Hour broadcast, but all attempts were invain. The chief difficulty lay in the fact that the Broadcasting Commission was against selling time to any religious body. The number of Lutherans in the country was so small that it was also impossible to qualify for

free time.

While the desired progress was missing from the work in New Zealand, it must be conceded that in the period just considered, there was no lack of ideas for improving the work. It seems just as clear that many of the ideas never went further than the "Conference Room." Another feature which militated against progress was the constant change in personnel, particularly in the city areas.

In 1939, Pahl left for a position in Australia, while his successor, Pastor C. W. Appelt, arrived on the 2nd. February, and was installed on the 11th of February, 1940. At the close of his first year of labour at this post, he reported that while the number of souls listed was 77 with 42 communicants, during the year 20 baptised members had not even attended a service, while 22 com-
28
municants had not attended the Lord's Supper.

Because of certain difficulties over naturalisation and citizenship, Gebauer returned to the United States in 1942, while the Christchurch vacancy was filled in 1943
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in the person of G. Fischer.

²⁸
"Wellington Report", Proceedings Of The Thirty-Second Convention Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference In New Zealand 1941, Duplicated, pp. 6-8.

²⁹
"New Zealand Convention Report", The Australian Lutheran, XXXI (July 7, 1943), p. 167.

During the war years from 1939 to 1945, there were naturally many additional hardships to be faced. On the other hand New Zealand Lutherans did not have to suffer the insults and injuries which their fathers bore at the time of the first World War. But war naturally brings with it restrictions and problems.

In the 1945 Convention the matter of calling a missionary to work at large in the North Island was given attention. This move had been under consideration for some time. The Board of Conference was instructed to proceed in the matter if they were satisfied that the time had come for such a move. The result was that in 1946 a graduate was secured for this purpose. It is also of interest to note that the President made special mention of the fact that during the year some eight adults had been gained for the Church, yet the general statistics showed a decline.

Wellington again received a change of pastors in 1946. Appelt was succeeded by J. A. Paech. Almost immediately Paech interested himself in the matter of youth work by arranging several Youth Camps which proved most successful. This was the first step towards the reorganisation of the Luther League which had ceased to function in latter years.

In 1947, C. I. Koch arrived to take up the position

of itinerant pastor in the North Island mission fields. He was installed for this work on the 18th May, 1947, by President Venz. The field assigned was simply that of the North Island fields known at that time as the Main Trunk, Taranaki, East Coast, Wairarapa, and Wanganui Fields. The idea behind this move was that scattered Lutherans should be looked up and some systematic form of service be arranged for these areas.

Dr. Cl. Hoopmann, General President of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australasia, visited the New Zealand Church in 1947. This was the first time for some twenty-four years that the District had received such an official visit from the Australian brethren.

The Lutheran Laymen's League of New Zealand was organised in 1948. It was to concern itself particularly with the matter of raising funds which could be used for building purposes in Church Extension activities.

In 1948, it was reported that as a result of the move to place an itinerant missionary in the field, some eighteen preaching centers were receiving monthly services, while several other places were being given quarterly services. The total number of souls in the area was 121. More than one-thousand miles had to be covered monthly in order to serve these folk. A committee was set up by the Convention to further study this work. As a result of the

work of this Committee, a call was issued for an assistant in this work. Candidate F. H. Eckert was given the call in 1948. He accepted and took up duties early in 1949. He was installed by Te Punga at Marton on March 27th, 1949.³⁰

During Easter of 1949, a number of young folk met at Marton and decided to form a Dominion wide Luther League. The organisation of this League was designed to meet the needs of people living in isolated parts of the country as far as our Church was concerned, and not merely to concern itself with places where local societies could be formed. The constitution of the League was submitted to the 1949 District Convention and approved.³¹

An important date for the Church during this period was June 28th, 1949. On this day the first draft of Displaced Persons arrived in New Zealand, bringing some 300 nominal Lutherans. The Church had set up a special Immigration Committee to meet this need. Koch was sent to Camp Pahiataua to act as Lutheran Chaplain. The New Settlers were to remain at the Camp for some three months in order to have some opportunity to learn the language

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"Presidents Report", Proceedings Of The Thirty-Eighth Convention Of The Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference Of New Zealand 1949, Duplicated, pp. 13-15.

31

Ibid., p. 43.

and general conditions of their new home-land. This also gave the Church an excellent opportunity to become acquainted with these people and also to follow them as they were posted to their respective places of employment by the Government. In the draft, there was also a Latvian Lutheran Pastor, R. Reinfelds, who made application for membership in the Conference. After a colloquy he was accepted into membership and immediately employed to assist in serving these people. The fact that it was part of the policy of the Department of Labour to scatter these people as much as possible, naturally added to the problem of the Church in serving Lutherans in diaspora.

The Latvian section of the immigrants formed a Church organisation but immediately entered into a doctrinal agreement which gave full fellowship between these folk and the established Conference. This was followed by a "Working Agreement" whereby almost all chance of a division between these people and the other Lutherans in the country was made negligible. The future of the Lutheran Church in New Zealand will undoubtedly depend much on the attitude of these people towards their mother-church in their new home-land. The total number of folk with a Lutheran background to be brought to New Zealand under these immigration schemes is about one-thousand souls.

When it is realised that this is almost the same number of souls as were listed in the Concordia Conference before the arrival of these immigrants, it is needless to state that an impetus has been given to Lutheranism in New Zealand through their arrival.

Thus in 1950, Lutheranism in New Zealand was represented by the Evangelical Lutheran Concordia Conference with some 1054 souls and eight pastors, and by the Immanuel Synod with some 250 souls and one pastor, giving an all-over strength of some 1300 souls and nine pastors. This figure includes only a part of the immigrants as at this time by no means all had become members in the local congregations of the Church. At the turn of the century the Lutheran cause was represented by eleven pastors, and while there are no statistics available from the respective organised congregations, the Government figure for the period lists some five-thousand Lutherans.

Lutheranism has certainly not experienced days of prosperity in this Dominion. The Church experienced its chief loss in the Immanuel Synod which declined in its ministerial strength from five pastors to one in this period. On the other hand the record of the Concordia Con-

ference is not such that it arouses great enthusiasm, yet it is a matter of no small importance that several congregations were consolidated during this period and hence brought to the work of Conference a certain measure of stability. On the other hand it must be born in mind that in recent years the work of the Conference has been heavily subsidised from the Australian Church. Without this help even the expansion work under-taken in the last ten years would have been impossible.

We pray for God's blessing, that the next fifty years may see a greater measure of growth for the Lutheran Church, but that above all the pastors of the Church will labour loyally under all conditions so that for the sake of numerical gain the truths of God's Word be not compromised.

CHAPTER IV

THE RELATION OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS TO THE POPULATION OF NEW ZEALAND

Although the country was discovered by Tasman in 1642, the first known instance of Europeans landing on the shores of this Dominion was when Cook visited the country in 1769. The first known instance of Europeans being left here to their own resources was in 1792 when a party of sealers was stranded on these shores. The first body of immigrants under a definite colonisation scheme landed at Port Nicholson in 1840. After this period the population grew rapidly through immigration.

It was not until 1880 that the number of births in the country exceeded that of the immigrants. However it is worth noting that in very recent years the number of immigrants has again increased considerably. For example, in the 1945 census the number of births was 37,723, while the figure for immigrants was only 1704. The census of 1951 gave the number of births as 44,651, while the figure for immigrants had increased to 18,234.

These factors have had a noticeable effect on the

¹
Pocket Digest Of New Zealand Statistics (Wellington: Government Printers, 1952), p. 35.

position of all the leading Church groups in New Zealand. The number of Lutherans in the Dominion was at its highest level just after the strong immigration period from Europe towards the close of the last century. We note that in 1887, Lutherans represented 1:36 percent of the total population, which is the highest percentage of Lutherans this Dominion has known. The highest number numerically was reached in 1886, with a total of 5, 917 persons.

Similarly we find that when certain areas were opened for settlement, it was necessary to belong to a certain Church in order to qualify for the scheme. Thus in the South Island we find that Canterbury was settled by Angli-²cans, while Otago was settled by the Presbyterians. It is small wonder then that today we still find those Church groups predominant in those areas.

The distribution of the population of New Zealand reveals that although a larger percentage of people live in the North Island, the country is fairly evenly settled. Although the South Island contains about one-third more land than the North Island, it also contains much country of a mountainous nature, which precludes all thought of

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Population Census 1945 (Wellington, Government Printers, 1948), p. 3.

closer settlement. At present the population drift is towards the north. The reason given is that the climate is warmer, and as the population is an aging one, this factor is of considerable importance. Another point is that the north is closer to the main world trade routes.³

A further study shows that the Auckland Provincial area which represents about 24 percent of the area of the Dominion, contains a little over 35 percent of the population. However, the density per square mile is only about twenty-five persons. The Wellington Province has the densest population per square mile in New Zealand, with a little in excess of thirty-two persons.⁴

In 1945, the average density of population per square mile for the Dominion was about sixteen persons. It should be noted that in relation to the population of the country as a whole, there are no predominantly large cities as for example in Australia. The capital of New Zealand has about 10 percent of the total population, while Auckland, which is the largest city, has about 15 percent of the population. More than 46 percent of the population live in towns of ten-thousand or more people. The densest area of population is to be found in Auckland

³
Ibid., p. 11.

⁴
Ibid., p. 12.

where in one section of the city we find some sixteen persons to the acre. This is considered to be about the maximum density under the present system of housing.⁵

Thus the population can be divided into 38 percent rural, 61 percent urban, and the rest migratory. The Auckland Provincial area, besides having the present highest percentage of population, has also registered the greatest constant increase for the past fifty years.⁶

The population is divided on a religious basis chiefly among four denominations, Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodists, and Roman Catholic. Their combined membership in 1851 accounted for 91 percent of the people, while in 1945 they represented 82 percent of the population. At the same time we must remember that in the census returns more than two-thousand names were listed in answer to Church membership, although it was obvious that many of the names could be recognised as synonyms.⁷ The Government report recognises about forty different denominations. Of these about fifteen can be considered as Christian Churches, while the others are chiefly anti-Christian in their endeavours.

⁵

Ibid., p. 12.

⁶

Population Census 1951 (Wellington: Government Printers, 1952), p. 13.

⁷

Population Census 1945, op. cit., p. 1.

A comparison of the number of adherents to the leading denominations as in 1851 and 1945 is of interest. The Anglican Church decreased from 53 percent of the population to 37 percent. The Presbyterian Church increased from 15 to 23 percent of the population. The Roman Catholic Church has remained almost stationary with 13 percent. The Methodists have shown a decline from 10 to 8 percent. The Baptist Church has shown some headway and now have almost 1 percent. The Congregational Church has decreased from 7 to 1 percent. We realise that in these figures we have already accounted for most of the population of New Zealand. The groups which are headed, "Refuse to State" and "All Others" have shown the somewhat alarming increase from 4 percent to more than 15 percent of the population of the Dominion.

Among the groups mentioned by name which showed a decline between 1936 and 1945, only three are given, the Spiritualists who decreased by 36 percent, then the Lutherans who decreased by 15 percent, and lastly the Congregationalists who decreased by 10 percent. The groups which showed the largest increase were anti-christian groups, led by the group "No Religion," with an increase of 157 percent, which in turn represented some 6,500 people.

The Rationalists increased by 39 percent. On the other hand the four leading Churches showed much smaller increases as follows, the Anglican Church by 12 percent, the Presbyterians by 2 percent, the Methodists by 7 percent, and the Roman Catholics by 10 percent.

From these figures it at once becomes evident that the majority of the population in New Zealand claim to belong to some Church. The number who have listed themselves as not belonging to a Church or even as belonging to some group which is opposed to the Church, is a small group when compared with the total number of people in New Zealand. On the other hand we must remember that some of the smaller groups have active mission programs, so that when we remember the number of people already claiming some affiliation, we must realise that the problem of "sheep-stealing" is a very real one when considering a more aggressive mission policy. It is most important therefore that we make a comparison between the figures given by the Government and those presented by the respective Churches.

Unfortunately, the Anglican Church, listed as having some 800,000 adherents, does not state separate figures, but we note that the number of people who communed at Easter time would represent only one in ten of the communicants according to the Government statistics. The

number of children listed as attending their Sunday Schools represents about one-quarter of the number which should be enrolled on the basis of the Government statistics.⁹

In the case of the Presbyterian Church we have more accurate figures. In 1948 the Church reported that there were some 130,000 persons who considered themselves as Presbyterians, but with whom the Church had no contact. In the following years a special effort was made to reach these people, and some 70,000 people were contacted with a gain to the Church of some 5,000 persons.¹⁰ From their latest figures it would still appear that there must be some 100,000 persons who can only be considered as nominal members of the Presbyterian Church.¹¹

The picture of the Methodist Church is very similar. On a conservative reckoning there must be some 60,000 nominal members with whom the Church has actually no contact. On the other hand we should not overlook the fact that this Church has one minister at work to every 100

⁹
Proceedings Of The Thirty-Second General Synod Of The Church Of England (Christchurch: Coulls Somerville Wilkie Ltd., 1952), pp. 194-195.

¹⁰
"Reporting Progress", Pamphlet issued by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, 1952, pp. 1-3.

¹¹
Proceedings Of The General Assembly Of The Presbyterian Church Of New Zealand (Dunedin: Otago Daily Times and Witness, 1952), passim.

communicant members listed in the Church records.

On the other hand, such groups as the Brethren are definitely more accurately listed in the government figures, although the Brethren have no figures of their own to show Brethren membership throughout the Dominion. This is a minority group which has shown considerable increase for a number of years. They are perhaps chiefly active in the rural areas. As there are many areas in New Zealand where the population is too sparse to make it possible for the Churches to station ordained clergy, we find that the Church order of the Brethren, where the local people are elected to be ministers of the congregation, naturally suited for work in the remote rural areas. However in any place where they are active, it is obvious that one reason for their expansion is that every member is considered as an active missionary for the Church. In New Zealand the Brethren have some forty full-time workers in their Church.

13

From the national statistics we see that the only Christian Church listed as having more male adherents than female, is the Lutheran Church, with 57 percent male

12

Minutes Of The Annual Conference Of The Methodist Church Of New Zealand 1952 (Christchurch: Willis And Aiken Ltd., 1952), passim.

13

Religious Professions Census Report 1936 (Wellington: Government Printers, 1940), p. 2.

members. Similarly, the Lutheran Church is one of the four groups mentioned which have more rural than urban members, actually heading this section with 69 percent rural members.¹⁴

As we turn to the number of ministers or full-time workers employed by the Churches in New Zealand, we find one officiant for seven-hundred members. If we omit the figures for the four leading denominations, we find that the smaller groups show one full-time worker for every 220 persons. In this figure we must bear in mind that the membership of such groups as the Brethren is listed, and that such groups in turn do not list many full-time workers, although many of their members serve as ministers of the Church on a part-time basis.¹⁵

Another factor which we must keep in mind is that in the larger denominations also, besides the regular full-time clergy, there is a considerable force of lay-preachers. These are men who have completed a certain prescribed course of instruction set down by the Church which makes them eligible, where the congregation invites them, to take a regular preaching service. This is of particular importance when ministering to scattered rural communities

¹⁴

Ibid., pp. 4-6.

¹⁵

Religious Professions Census Report 1945 (Wellington: Government Printers, 1952), pp. 2-6.

is being considered. This would appear also to be one important factor in the growth of the Brethren groups in isolated communities.

The statistical position of the Lutheran Church in 1951, which represents the latest statistics available from government quarters, lists 3309 members, while the Lutheran Church could only account for about 2000 members. The 1951 census figures are an increase on the census figures for 1945 by about 1000 persons. This gain is the result of increased immigration from European countries since the war, and the fact that many Baltic people have been forced to leave their homeland because of political problems. ¹⁶

Thus we note that from the statistical point of view it must be granted that New Zealand is well represented in respect to membership of its people in Christian Churches. On the other hand, it must also be remembered that for many people it is rather a matter of social custom to claim membership in some Christian Church, than a matter of conviction or of religious belief. In other words such membership is purely nominal. This must also be remembered in connection with considering the problems of the Lutheran Church in this Dominion as it faces the task of mission expansion.

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