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MARTIN GÜENTHER: LIFE AND WORK

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

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by

James William Albers

May 1964

28449

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1964  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Need for the Study

The investigation of the life and work of Martin Guenther evolved out of the writer's desire to investigate some aspect of the history of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. The writer's advisor, Dr. Carl S. Meyer, suggested Martin Guenther as a suitable and worthwhile subject for inquiry. A preliminary survey of Guenther's life revealed that he was a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, for twenty years, managing editor of the Lutheraner for almost twenty years, managing editor of the Homiletisches Magazin from its inception in 1877 until his death in 1893, the author of Populaere Symbolik, which received widespread distribution and use, and the first man to write a major biography of C. F. W. Walther.<sup>1</sup>

At the time of his death only a few short articles about Guenther's life and work appeared in print. Among those who wrote briefly about Guenther were A. L. Graebner,<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The best overview of Guenther's work was found in Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), pp. 115-121.

<sup>2</sup>A[ugust] G[raebner], "Professor Martin Guenther," Der Lutheraner, IL (6 June 1893), 89.

Franz Pieper,<sup>3</sup> and George Stoeckhardt.<sup>4</sup> Guenther's life and work were not reviewed again until 1944, when Ludwig Fuerbringer wrote a seven page sketch of him in Eighty Eventful Years.<sup>5</sup> In this brief review of Guenther, Fuerbringer stated that "No lengthy biography of him ever appeared,"<sup>6</sup> thereby indicating, perhaps, that Guenther was worthy of a more extensive treatment than he had thus far received. The preliminary investigation by the writer resulted in the same conviction. Thus the study was undertaken.

The immediate purpose of this study was to describe the life and work of Martin Guenther. The ultimate purpose, and that upon which the validity of the study rests, was to analyze the significance which Guenther's work had for the history of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. This last objective received further stimulus by the question raised in the writer's mind about the previous recognition, or better, lack of recognition, of Guenther's work, especially by those who were his contemporaries. Was Guenther so unimportant for the Missouri Synod, that his work was largely unrecognized?

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<sup>3</sup>[Franz Pieper], "Prof. M. Guenther," Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1894 nach der Geburt unsers Herrn Jesu Christi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 23-25.

<sup>4</sup>G[eorge] St[oeckhardt], "Professor M. Guenther," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (May 1893), 139f.

<sup>5</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., pp. 115-121.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 120.



## Limitations

The study was limited by the resources available. The writer had to rely mostly upon official publications and secondary resources, because there were very few manuscript and documentary materials extant. The manuscript materials which were available consisted of several bound volumes of Guenther's classnotes from college days, a few ledger volumes containing portions of Guenther's lecture notes while professor at the seminary, some of Guenther's sermons, most of which were in outline form, and several miscellaneous documents. There were very few pieces of Guenther's correspondence in the Guenther collection in Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis. Perhaps Guenther did not save his letters, or else they were destroyed after his death. Manuscript materials from other collections, such as the Walther papers, were consulted only when the need was indicated.

The use of official publications included the scanning of the Lutheraner in a page by page fashion, especially the years from 1853-1894 (X-L), similarly the official Proceedings of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod from 1853-1893, the Proceedings of the Northern (1855-1873) and Western Districts (1873-1894) of the Missouri Synod, Lehre und Wehre, especially from 1870-1894 (XVI-XL), and the first two volumes of the Homiletisches Magazin (1877-1878), with spot checking in

the latter up to 1894 (XVIII). Other sources, such as the Statistical Yearbook, were consulted as needed. Ludwig Fuerbringer's chapter on Martin Guenther in Eighty Eventful Years was most helpful in giving a basic overview of Guenther's life and for corroborating the evidence found in other sources. Recourse to general works dealing with the history of the Missouri Synod, American Lutheranism, and American Christianity are acknowledged in the selected bibliography. Histories of congregations which were served by Guenther were used when available; all of these may be found in Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. It should also be noted that the writer had the benefit of information derived from work on a fellowship project dealing with ministerial education in the Missouri Synod, under Dr. Carl S. Meyer.

In general the writer did not feel constrained to elaborate on general background information in order to present the various aspects of Guenther's life and work. The criterion for the inclusion of background material, such as information about the seminary or the events which were transpiring in the Synod, was whatever was necessary for understanding Guenther's particular role and influence. Further limitations are noted in the following section which presents an overview of the organization of the study.

### Organization

Guenther's life and work divide well into three major

periods, each of which span about twenty years. Chapter II accounts for Guenther's life from 1831-1853, or from his birth in Saxony until he entered the parish ministry. The chapter presents the early known connections of the Guenther family of Dresden with Martin Stephan, and the effects which these may have had upon Guenther. For this reason a brief sketch of Louise Guenther and her relationship to Martin Stephan are included. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to Guenther's preparation for the Lutheran ministry.

Chapter III seeks to portray the second major portion of Guenther's life, a twenty year period, 1853-1873. It was during this period that Guenther was a pastor, primarily in Wisconsin and Michigan, but also in Chicago. Included in the chapter are Guenther's activities on various Synodical levels, as well as the little information that remains about his private life up to 1873. It was during this period that Guenther wrote Populaere Symbolik. The fact is merely noted in Chapter III; because of the importance of this particular volume, a separate chapter, VI, is devoted to consideration of Populaere Symbolik.

Chapters IV and V take up Guenther's work during the last period of his life, 1873-1893. This period was the most significant of Guenther's life and therefore the subject matter was the most extensive. The large bulk of materials demanded a division of this period into two chapters. The most suitable arrangement seemed to be to place all the material except that

which pertained specifically to Guenther's literary activity into Chapter IV, and to reserve a separate chapter, V, for what the writer has designated for want of a better heading, "Literary Activity." Thus Chapter IV deals with Guenther's role as professor, Synodical worker, pastor, and his private life and characterization. The section on Guenther as Synodical worker includes Guenther's work carried out specifically at the direction of the Synod: his work with English missions, the revision of the Synodical Handbook, and the compiling of the Statistical Yearbook. The section on Guenther's private life and characterization attempts to pull together some of the loose strands of information about Guenther as a person. Included is a brief characterization of his theology. Chapter V deals with Guenther's literary activity, specifically, his work with the Lutheraner, Lehre und Wehre, the Homiletisches Magazin, Luther-Vergissmeinnicht, and his biography of C. F. W. Walther.

Chapter VI describes and evaluates Guenther's Populaere Symbolik. Because of its importance and significance a separate chapter was devoted to this work, although it might have been incorporated into either Chapter III, in which instance it would have fallen into its proper chronological slot, or into Chapter V, where it would have fallen into the section on Guenther's literary activity. A theological analysis of Populaere Symbolik probably would have been rewarding. This, however, would have opened up a much broader area of

research. Because of time and space this was omitted.

Chapter VII contains a summary of Guenther's work and also the conclusions derived from the study. The general conclusion of the study is that Guenther contributed a great deal to the Missouri Synod, largely because of the great variety and amount of work which he produced. His work is best described as an energetic laboring to execute and further the goals and objectives which characterize the Missouri Synod during this period.

## CHAPTER II

### EARLY YEARS: 1831-1853

#### Son in an Immigrant Family

In late 1838 a group of about eight hundred persons left Saxony under the leadership of Martin Stephan. They were immigrating to the United States chiefly for religious reasons.<sup>1</sup> Among those who embarked for the United States was the Guenther family of Dresden. The head of the household was Johann Samuel Guenther, age sixty. His occupation was that of joiner. With him came two older and more or less independent children, who seem to have been Johann's children from a previous marriage; they were Louise, age thirty, the maid of Martin Stephan, and Gotthold, age twenty-eight and lithographer by occupation. Johann Samuel Guenther's wife was Frederike, nee Kolbe; she was twenty-five years younger than her husband. Their four children were: Immanuel, age eight; Martin, seven; Theodore, five; and Benjamin, two.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The standard monographs on the Saxon immigration and their early difficulties in the United States are Walter O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1953), and Carl S. Mundinger, Government in the Missouri Synod: The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1947).

<sup>2</sup>Forster, op. cit., p. 543. The passport of Johann Guenther lists only himself, his wife, and the four younger children. However, all eight came on the same boats, the

Martin Guenther was born 4 December 1831, presumably in Dresden, Saxony. One of his godparents was Karl Julius Otto Nitzschke,<sup>3</sup> who later taught in the Perry County school. The relationship between Nitzschke and the Guenther family is interesting because Nitzschke, "a factor at the royal china warehouse in Dresden,"<sup>4</sup> was very much involved in the group immediately surrounding Pastor Martin Stephan. Forster states that Nitzschke "was completely under his [Stephan's] sway."<sup>5</sup> Agitation against Stephan on the part of civil authorities because of Stephan's secret meetings increased in 1836. When Stephan was arrested 1 February 1836, it was while at a gathering in the home of Mr. Nitzschke.<sup>6</sup> In a meeting on 8 November 1837, Nitzschke was again present, when the gathering was interrupted by officials.<sup>7</sup> Thus Nitzschke, who seems to have been rather close to the Guenther family, was also closely involved with Martin Stephan. Nitzschke was one

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Olbers across the Atlantic, and the Selma up the Mississippi. "Reise Pass of Johann Samuel Guenther," MS., Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. Hereafter Concordia Historical Institute will be abbreviated C. H. I.

<sup>3</sup>In honor of Martin's first birthday, Nitzschke composed a five stanza poem entitled, "Liebes Pathchen," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>4</sup>Forster, op. cit., p. 59.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 90. When official action was taken against Nitzschke, he was transferred to another city. When Nitzschke refused the transfer he was discharged from his position. Ibid., p. 103.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 100.

link which served to bind the Guenther family to Martin Stephan.

Another link, and by far the most important, was that of Martin's step-sister, Louise. Louise had been the maid of Pastor Stephan. When Louise began working for Stephan is not certain. At any rate on 4 and 5 June 1839, less than a week after Stephan had been tried and expelled from the settlement in Perry County, Louise could testify that the strange behavior of Stephan had begun about 1831 or 1832,<sup>8</sup> and, among other things, that she herself had had illicit relationships with Stephan for about seven or eight years.<sup>9</sup> Thus she must have known him at least since 1831, and was probably also in his employ by that time also.

Whatever the precise relationship of the entire Guenther

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 426. Forster's source for this is "Bekennnis der Louise Guenther," MS., C. H. I. Stephan had been deposed from his position of bishop 30 May 1839, and was taken across the Mississippi River to Illinois on the following day. A week and a half later, after having given her testimony, Louise escaped from the colony and joined Stephan across the river. She remained with him until his death, 22 February 1846. For a brief description of the living conditions of the two in Illinois, see Gustave Koerner, "The Old Lutherans and Bishop Stephan," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXXIII (October 1960), 82. (Hereafter Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly will be cited as CHI.Q.) After Stephan's death Louise returned to her father in St. Louis and asked for admittance to Trinity Congregation, pastored at the time by C. F. W. Walther. Her request for membership was accepted on the condition that she write a letter of public confession and repentance, which she did with the help of her father. Forster, op. cit., pp. 422-428. See also, "Transcript of Minutes of Trinity Congregation, St. Louis, 1839-1853," minutes of 27 July 1846, typewritten MS., C. H. I. (Hereafter these will be cited as "Transcript of Trinity Congregation.")



family may have been to Martin Stephan, it was strong enough for them to join the group which immigrated to the United States. The family was processed through Dresden 16 October 1838, and through Bremen 6 November 1838.<sup>10</sup> They sailed on board the Olbers and arrived in New Orleans 18 January 1839, making the trip to St. Louis on board the riverboat Selma. Louise Guenther remained with Martin Stephan and went with him to Perry County, while the rest of the Guenther family seems to have remained in St. Louis.<sup>11</sup> Gotthold Guenther found it difficult to earn his livelihood as a lithographer and returned to Germany in July 1839. Upon his return to Germany he wrote a book about the Saxon immigration and its current condition in America.<sup>12</sup> Little more is known about the Guenther family, except that their economic condition was probably not good. In 1844 Trinity Congregation in St. Louis, resolved to continue giving Johann financial assistance.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>"Reise Pass of Johann Samuel Guenther," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>11</sup>While in New Orleans, Louise had been appointed to care "especially for the needs of the Herr Bishop." Forster, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 489. The title of Gotthold's book was Schicksale und Abenteuer der aus Sachsen ausgewanderten Stephanianer. Ihre Reise nach St. Louis, ihr Aufenthalt dasselbst und der Zustand ihrer Colonie in Perry-County.

<sup>13</sup>"Die Herren Guenther, Heinrich Hoffmann, Heid, sollen in ihrer Noth jeder noch mit \$6.00 unterstuetzt werden." "Transcript of Trinity Congregation," minutes of 22 July 1844. In November of the same year, "Herr Guenther" was made responsible for two school desks with benches and also a blackboard and a bookcase for the school. Ibid., minutes of 4 November 1844.

## Preparation for the Ministry

The year 1844 found Martin Guenther attending the college in Perry County, which had been founded in the fall of 1839. His trip down to the college in Altenburg, Missouri, a pair of trousers, and money for the purchase of a few English books and some Latin classics were all paid for by Trinity Congregation.<sup>14</sup>

What induced twelve year old Martin to begin study for the Lutheran ministry is not clear. Several conjectures, however, might be offered. A partial, and perhaps significant, reason may lie in the fact that Trinity Congregation in St. Louis, began taking a greater interest in the school around 1843 and 1844.<sup>15</sup> Another factor may be found in Guenther's home life, which must have been rather pious despite the actions of Louise. Evidence for such piety is the family's continued residence in St. Louis and membership in Trinity Congregation. Furthermore, when Louise returned in 1846, her father did not seem to have retained any bitterness toward her, at least he was willing to help her write the letter of confession and repentance which the congregation

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., minutes of 24 June 1844.

<sup>15</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "Secondary and Higher Education in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1839-1874" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954), p. 49. A copy is located in C. H. I.

had requested.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Martin's youngest brother, Benjamin, later became a Lutheran school teacher in Columbia, Illinois.<sup>17</sup> Another explanation may be that Walther recognized in Guenther the qualities necessary for the Lutheran ministry and encouraged him in that direction. An added incentive may have been the fact that Guenther's tuition, board, and some miscellaneous expenses were paid for by Trinity Congregation, thereby making a financially favorable situation for the Guenther family. Another possible, albeit highly conjectural, motive may have been some sort of guilt feeling created by the actions of his step-sister, Louise. As will be shown later, Guenther was somewhat of a social introvert, possibly because of real or imagined onus which hung over the family.<sup>18</sup>

When Guenther went to the college, there were no dormitories. Students stayed with the teachers or with nearby members of the Altenburg congregation.<sup>19</sup> Guenther lived with Rector Goenner.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Cf. n. 8.

<sup>17</sup>Benjamin died in the Spring of 1862. Fr. W. Holls, "Todesnachricht," Der Lutheraner, XVIII (16 April 1862), 143.

<sup>18</sup>Infra, p.

<sup>19</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p. 51.

<sup>20</sup>"Transcript of Trinity Congregation," minutes of 14 October 1844. Goenner was reimbursed in the form of a barrel of flour for the two St. Louis students who were living with him.

The student body in those days was small. In the Spring of 1845 there were eight students in the college; three of these were in the first class, which was composed of students sixteen to twenty years old; five were in the second class, which ranged in age from eleven to fourteen. Guenther was in the second class and received instruction in Latin, Greek, and English from Rector Goenner. Pastor G. H. Loeber of Altenburg taught the Lutheran Catechism, German composition, drawing, and declamation; Loeber also instructed in geography, history, arithmetic, and geometry. Teacher J. F. F. Winter gave both classes instruction in singing and on the clavier.<sup>21</sup> There were no special extracurricular activities; however, "Classroom activities and problems spilled over to extra-class activities."<sup>22</sup> A good example of this in Guenther's case is the celebration of the Lutheran Reformation by the college in the fall of 1846. The students presented a program of one hundred and twenty questions and answers dealing with the Reformation. The program was both educational and edifying, and probably also to some extent recreational. The precise role which Guenther played in the program is not altogether certain, but it might very well have been a

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<sup>21</sup>All of the information in this paragraph was contained in an article by G. H. Loeber in Der Lutheraner, I, 24 (26 July 1845), no pagination. Cf. Meyer, op. cit., pp. 59-62.

<sup>22</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p. 72.

major one.<sup>23</sup>

Student Guenther received a great deal of financial assistance from the congregation in St. Louis. In addition to having financed his trip to Altenburg, purchasing his books and several other basic items, the congregation voted in December 1844 to pay for any other necessary supplies which he needed.<sup>24</sup> Two months later the congregation bought Guenther a new suit.<sup>25</sup> In May of 1846 Guenther again received money to purchase necessary supplies.<sup>26</sup> In 1848 the congregation bought him a new coat.<sup>27</sup> In April of 1849 the college students received a gift of \$30.<sup>28</sup> When Guenther entered the seminary department of the school in 1850, the congregation voted to support him along with the other seminarians, Metz, Ahner, and Weiler.<sup>29</sup> Since there is no further reference

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<sup>23</sup>A handwritten copy of the program is extant. The cover bears the title, "Schriftliche Fragstuecke zur Feier des jaehrlichen Reformationsfesten, 1846." The copy has a "2" on the cover, indicating that it was copy number two, and M. Guenther's name (signature?) on the bottom of the page. Although the program was probably written by Loeber or Goenner, it was probably copied by the students who participated in the program. The copy is over forty-two pages in length and more than ten thousand words. The manuscript is located in C.H.I.

<sup>24</sup>"Transcript of Trinity Congregation," minutes of 9 December 1844. The same minutes stated that each of the college students was to receive a gift of \$10.00.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., minutes of 10 February 1845.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., minutes of 18 May 1846.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., minutes of 16 October 1848.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., minutes of 10 April 1849.

<sup>29</sup>"Die Seminaristen Metz, Guenther, Ahner und Weiler sollen uns der College Casse der Gemeinde verhaeltnissmaessig

to the support of Guenther or of the other Seminarians in the minutes of Trinity Congregation, either this resolution was intended to finance the remainder of Guenther's training, or else it indicates that the Guenther family was able to support Martin during his last three years in school.

Guenther was not ungrateful for all the assistance which his congregation had given him in his education. The minutes of 18 April 1853 read:

Der Herr Desing Past. Guenther liess der Gemeinde ein herzliches Lebewohl sagen, und danke zugleich der Gemeinde fuer die erwiesene Liebe . . . .<sup>30</sup>

In December 1849 the college was moved from Perry County to St. Louis. Guenther thus received his formal theological training in St. Louis. The theological curriculum was divided into five departments: Exegetical, Systematic, Historical, Practical, and Biblical.<sup>31</sup> Although this formal program began for Guenther in 1850, his extant class notes reveal that he already had had some acquaintance with theological writings, if not theology, before he came to St. Louis. As early as January and February 1847, there are notes on Martin Chemnitz. There are also notes entitled Anotationes ad Hutteri locos theologicos, which are dated September 1847. The remainder of Guenther's notes dealing with theology are dated between

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unterstuetzt werden." Ibid., minutes of 19 August 1850.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., minutes of 18 April 1853.

<sup>31</sup>Meyer, op. cit., p. 161.

April 1850 and March 1853. The notes are generally in Latin.

The extant class notes, known at that time as Kollegienhefte, reveal courses in Dogmatics, based on Baier's Compendium theologiae positivae, which Guenther's professor for the course, O. F. W. Walther, later edited and published. These notes extend over four hundred and twenty pages of rather small script, and are dated from February 1851 to March 1853. Other class notes indicate courses in Metaphysics, Practical Philosophy, Exegesis of the Gospel of St. Matthew (these notes are very extensive, covering over 702 pages for only the first twenty-two chapters), Exegesis of the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians, and Introduction to the Old and New Testaments. There are no extant notes dealing with Historical Theology or with Practical Theology. There is, however, a sermon on Acts 10: 34-41, which has survived. It was preached in April 1851, in "Central Township . . . [?]. St. Louis Co. Mo.," which was perhaps Guenther's first sermon.<sup>32</sup>

The report about the seminary to the Synodical convention in 1853 confirms that the above courses were taught and adds a few others, which Guenther probably also received:

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<sup>32</sup>This sermon and all the class notes referred to above are located in Concordia Historical Institute. Hindered by the fact that the notes are in both German script and in Latin and limited by time factors, these notes were not thoroughly read for the present study. A cursory examination of these notes, however, did not reveal anything unusual. The notes are contained in three bound volumes; the earliest begins with 1847. The sermon referred to is unbound.

Die nachfolgenden theologischen Disciplinen im Seminar wurden ausschliesslich vom Herrn Prof. Walther gelehrt, naemlich: Dogmatik, Kirchengeschichte, Synopsis der drei ersten Evangelien, Hermeneutik, christl. Alterthuemer, Catechetik, und Homiletik, beides mit praktischen Uebungen verbunden. Hebraeische Sprache wurde vom Herrn Rector Goenner gelehrt, und in derselben folgende biblische Buecher gelesen und ausgelegt: das erste Buch Mosis, die historischen Buecher theilweise, auserlesene Stuecke in Iesaias und Psalmen und die Evangelien in habraeischer Version. Herr Prof. Biewend lehrte im Seminare die Philosophischen Disciplinen, mit Ausschluss der Logik, welche vom Hrn. Professor Walther vorgetragen wurde. Ferner: Einleitung ins neue Testament, Auslegung des Briefes and die Epheser, Physik, englische Sprache, Geschichte der englischen Literatur, und Auszuege aus englischen Schriftstellern, verbunden mit Aufsuetzen in englischer Sprache.<sup>33</sup>

After Easter 1853, classes for six of the seven seminarians ended.<sup>34</sup> The exact date seemsto have been 19 March 1853.<sup>35</sup> Five of the six, including Guenther, took examinations and passed with honors (wohlbestandenen). These five, G. Volk, C. Metz, M. Guenther, O. Eissfeld, and M. Stephan entered the ministry immediately. The sixth, T. Gruber, postponed his examination.<sup>36</sup> This was the first "class" to "graduate" since the Seminary had been moved from Altenburg to St. Louis, with

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<sup>33</sup>Siebenter Synodal-Bericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten vom Jahre 1853 (St. Louis: Moritz Niedner, n.d.), p. 36.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>35</sup>The last of Guenther's notes end with large flourish marks and bear the date, "19 Maerz 1853." It seems to have been a happy day for Martin Guenther.

<sup>36</sup>Siebenter Synodal-Bericht der Deutschen Evangelischen-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten vom Jahre 1853 (St. Louis: Moritz Niedner, n.d.), p. 37.



Guenther becoming one of the first ten men to "graduate" from the school.<sup>37</sup>

Before Guenther left St. Louis in April to take charge of two congregations in Wisconsin, he became a citizen of the United States.<sup>38</sup> While citizenship was desirable in itself, it was probably more desirable and perhaps even necessary in the case of a clergyman.

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<sup>37</sup>Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 115.

<sup>38</sup>"Certificate of Citizenship," dated 1 April 1853, MS., C. H. I.

## CHAPTER III

### MIDDLE YEARS: 1853-1873

#### Pastor in Wisconsin

Martin Guenther was called to two congregations about twenty miles north of Milwaukee. The main congregation was St. Paul in Grafton; the lesser congregation was Immanuel in Cedarburg. St. Paul Congregation in Grafton was founded in 1851, when Karl Zeige, a member of Trinity Congregation in Milwaukee, moved to Grafton. The German Evangelicals, also known at the time as the Albrechtsleute, were attempting to form a congregation in the area and pressured Zeige and several other Lutherans in the Cedarburg and Grafton area into attending one of their services. The immediate reaction of these Lutherans to their first Evangelical service was to request Zeige's pastor, Friedrich Lochner, to come to Grafton and preach to them. This Lochner did and on 28 July 1851, brought along with him a constitution and the congregation was formally organized.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The German Evangelicals were only one group of German Protestants working in the area. The congregational history of St. Paul tells of a certain "D" who came from Milwaukee, preaching in various places, baptizing, "und besonders konfirmierte er viele Kinder, ohne so viel unterrichten; daneben aber betrieb er allerlei andere Geschäfte, besonders das eines Viehhändlers." Festbuechlein zum 75-jaehrigen Jubilaeum der Evang.-Luth. St. Pauls-Gemeinde in Grafton, Wisconsin, 1851-1926, [1926], p. [7]. Hereafter this will be abbreviated as Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. [7].

After its organization the congregation was served on an informal basis by Pastor J. G. Boehm, who had originally been sent to the United States by Wilhelm Loehe. When Boehm joined the Buffalo Synod, the congregation refused to go with him.<sup>2</sup> Until January 1853 the congregation had been meeting in a barracks (Kaserne), then in a cooper's shop (Kueferwerkstaette), and finally in a two-storied stone building, large enough to house several establishments; the latter was known as the Steinblock. In 1852 an attempt was made to build a church structure; however, a storm struck while the building was in the frame-up stage and was destroyed. The attempt was then abandoned.<sup>3</sup>

After Boehm left, reading services were conducted in the home of Karl Zeige. Pastors Lochner and Dulitz occasionally came out from Milwaukee to preach to the group. Lochner seems to have realized the opportunity and the need for a permanent pastor in the Grafton and Cedarburg area and accordingly wrote C. F. W. Walther whether a candidate from the seminary might be available to these congregations. Walther's reply indicated that candidate O. Eissfeldt was available. The congregation's call arrived in St. Louis too late, however; Eissfeldt had already accepted a call to Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

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<sup>2</sup>Boehm then went to Cedarburg, four miles southwest of Grafton, in January 1853. Boehm remained in Cedarburg for about a year. Ibid., p. [8].

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Walther did, however, state that another candidate, Martin Guenther, was available. Guenther was subsequently called and on 1 May 1853 ordained and installed.<sup>4</sup> The announcement in the Lutheraner was simple enough; it read:

Am Sonntag Rogate, als den 1. Mai d. J. ward der Candidat der Theologie, Herr Martin Guenther, von den lutherischen Gemeinden zu Cedarburg und Grafton, Wash. Co., Wisc., berufen, inmitten derselben vor einer zahlreichen kirchlichen Versammlung zu Cedarburg nach dem Vormittagsgottesdienst durch die lutherischen Pastoren von Milwaukee, Lochner, Dulitz, zu seinem leiligen Amt ordiniert, sowie des Nachmittags in Grafton in dasselbe eingewiesen.<sup>5</sup>

When Guenther arrived, he was confronted by a rather chaotic situation. The constitution and all the official records had disappeared. Thus Guenther had to reorganize the congregation:

Es waren eigentuemliche Verhaeltnisse, die Pastor Guenther vorfand. Wohl war er von der Gemeinde in Grafton berufen worden, aber von einer organisierter Gemeinde konnte eigentlich keine Rede sein. Eine von Pastor Lochner vorgelegte Cemeindeordnung wars fruher wohl angenommen worden, aber diese Gemeindeordnung sowie alle Protokolle und andere Schriftstuecke waren verschwunden, und man wusste auch nicht genau, were eigentlich zur Gemeinde gehoere. Unter diesen Umstaende blieb Pastor Guenther nichts anderes uebrig, als die Gemeinde neu zu organisieren. Er legte eine neue Ordnung vor, die nach langer, gruendlicher Bespraechung schliesslich angenommen wurde.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. [10].

<sup>5</sup>Der Lutheraner, IX (5 July 1853), 157. Washington County was soon changed to Ozaukee County. Guenther received his "Ordinationszeugniz" 14 June 1855, signed by Fr. Wyneken, President of the Synod, "Ordinationszeugnis," MS., Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri. Hereafter Concordia Historical Institute will be abbreviated C. H. I.

<sup>6</sup>Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. [11].

Guenther quickly took up his work in Cedarburg, also. Although Boehm was still active there, and although there was a sogenannten Humanisten Gemeinde active in Cedarburg, Guenther succeeded in organizing Immanuel Congregation on 22 May 1853. Thus when the Missouri Synod convention was held during the first days of June 1853, the two congregations and their pastor became members of the Missouri Synod. The two congregations were the fourth and fifth in Wisconsin to become members of the Synod.<sup>7</sup>

In the fall of 1853 Guenther began work at Mequon, known at that time also as Mequon River, a village about seven miles south of Grafton. Pastor E. G. W. Keyl of Trinity Congregation in Milwaukee, had made preaching stops at Mequon on his way to preach at Freistadt, from 1847-1850. Keyl's successor, Friedrich Lochner, also preached at Mequon as he made his trips

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<sup>7</sup>Siebenter Synodal-Bericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1853 (St. Louis: Moritz Niedner, n.d.), p. 17. (Hereafter these Proceedings will be cited in the following abbreviated form: Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1853, p. 17. The Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. 11, states that it was the third congregation in Wisconsin to become a member of the Synod. Otto F. Hattsteadt, History of the Southern Wisconsin District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (Translated from the original German by the Wisconsin Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Works Projects Administration; Madison, Wisconsin, 1941, mimeographed), p. 22, is correct in stating that it was the fourth. The three congregations which joined the Synod previously were Trinity, Milwaukee (Pastor Lochner), Trinity, Freistadt (Pastor L. Fuerbringer), and St. John, Milwaukee (Pastor Dulitz).

to Zeige's group in Grafton.<sup>8</sup> On 10 October 1853 the congregation at Mequon decided to call Martin Guenther to be its pastor, but only on a part time basis.<sup>9</sup> Guenther held the first communion service in Mequon 30 October 1853.<sup>10</sup> In 1855 the congregation dedicated its first church building;<sup>11</sup> this was the same year in which it joined the Missouri Synod.<sup>12</sup>

In 1853 Guenther also began work in Fredonia, a village twelve miles north of Grafton. Pastor Romanovsky from Milwaukee had been making occasional trips to Fredonia, but when Guenther arrived in Grafton, which was much closer to Fredonia, the group in Fredonia asked Guenther to serve it. He did this by coming to Fredonia every four weeks to conduct week-day services. Elders were elected to conduct reading services (Lesegottesdienst) during the intervening three weeks. Guenther continued to serve the Fredonia group until 1858, when Pastor W. Kolb took over the work.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, after the establishment of the two congregations

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<sup>8</sup>Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866" (S. T. M. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1945), p. 151.

<sup>9</sup>"Berufen of Trinity Congregation, Mequon," dated 10 October 1853, MS., C. H. I.

<sup>10</sup>One Hundredth Anniversary; 1853-1953; Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church, South Mequon, Thiensville, Wisconsin, p. 4. The congregation is now a member of the Wisconsin Synod.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 6. Cf. Der Lutheraner, XII (11 September 1855), 1

<sup>12</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1855, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup>[R. G. F. Jagow and H. J. Panning], Diamond Jubilee, St. John's Lutheran Church, Fredonia, Wisconsin, 2 July 1936, p. [8

at Mequon and Fredonia, Guenther was the pastor of four congregations by the end of 1853, two of which were members of the Synod; two were not. By the end of the year Guenther had 370 souls under his care and two schools. He had performed thirty-one baptisms, confirmed seven, communicated 378, and performed four marriages and seven burials.<sup>14</sup>

Four congregations, however, were not the extent of his responsibilities. The needs were great:

ebenso predigte er in Saukville und Port Washington. So hat Pastor Guenther eifrig in der Umgegend missioniert, und seine Graftoner Gemeindeglieder wurden nicht muede, ihn mit ihren Ochsenfuhrwerken nach seiner Predigtplaetzen zu fahren.<sup>15</sup>

In 1854 Guenther made occasional trips to Sheboygan to help fill the vacancy caused by the death of his former classmate, O. Eissfeldt.<sup>16</sup>

Meanwhile work at Grafton was also progressing. Services were still held in the Steinblock, but in 1856 the congregation purchased a lot, and by 1857 a double-storied building was erected. The upper floor served as a church hall, while the lower floor was used as the school and parsonage.<sup>17</sup>

In his ministry Guenther was concerned that his members

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<sup>14</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1854, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup>Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. 12.

<sup>16</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1855, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup>Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. 12.

be well grounded in the doctrines of the Lutheran church and used every opportunity to instruct his people:

Pastor Guenther suchte seine Gemeinde vor allen Dingen in der Erkenntnis der reinen lutherischen Lehre zu gruenden un zu befestigen, besonders durch die oeffentliche Predigt. Wo immer sich sonst Gelegenheit bot, in den Gemeindeversammlungen und bei geselligen Zusammenkueften in den Haeusern, liess er an Belehrung nicht fehlen.<sup>18</sup>

In his efforts to strengthen the faith of his members Guenther introduced the practice of private announcement or confession before the Holy Communion. This was met with strong opposition:

Neben andern guten Ordnungen suchte Pastor Guenther die Abendmahlsanmeldung einzufuehren. Auf welche harten Widerstand er dabei stiess, dafuer ein Beispiel. Als der Schreiber dieses vor einigen Jahren einen alten Mann fragte: "Warum kommen Sie nicht zur Kirche, da Sie doch lutherische sind?" antwortete er: "Das ist Pastor Guenther's Schuld; der verlangte, wir sollten uns anmelden zum heiligen Abendmahl; das wollten wir nicht; darum sind wir von der Kirche weggeblieben, denn so was lassen wir uns nicht vorschreiben."<sup>19</sup>

On the use of Private Confession Guenther was much more adamant than most of the pastors in the Northern District at the time. For the years in which statistics are available, there

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 12. The authenticity of the term Abendmahlsanmeldung might be questioned. It is used here by a writer living almost seventy-five years later. Probably what is meant is not only a written announcement but also some form of Private Confession. In 1856 the Northern District discussed the problem of Private Confession (Privatbeichte), and used the term not merely in the sense of announcement but of actual confession. It was stated that the practice was not only a desirable one but even a necessary one, although it could not be used legalistically. Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1855, pp. 11-17.



is only one year in which Guenther did not exclusively use Private Confession. That year was 1858. The only other pastor to practice Private Confession with equal or greater consistency was Guenther's father-in-law, Ottomar Fuerbringer. There is no evidence that Fuerbringer ever practiced a form of general Confession in his congregations.<sup>20</sup>

Guenther's work among his congregations was going well, well enough to make it necessary for another pastor to be called. In 1857 the congregation in Mequon, which Guenther had begun serving in 1853, called him to be its full-time pastor. Feeling an obligation toward the congregation he accepted the call.<sup>21</sup> Guenther's change of address to Mequon River was noted in the 6 October 1857 issue of the Lutheraner.<sup>22</sup> The date of his installation at Mequon is not known, if indeed he was even installed. On 6 December 1857 Guenther installed his successor at Cedarburg and Grafton, Pastor F. A. Ahner. It was a day for special rejoicing, for on the same day the new church building in Grafton was dedicated.<sup>23</sup>

The move south to Mequon enabled Guenther to work more extensively with another congregation, St. Peter, in the Town of Granville, seven miles southwest of Mequon. When Guenther

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<sup>20</sup>Cf. Table 1.

<sup>21</sup>Festbuechlein, St. Paul's, Grafton, 1926, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup>Der Lutheraner, XIV (6 October 1857), 32.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., XIV (15 December 1857), 71.

TABLE I

PRIVATE AND GENERAL CONFESSION  
BEFORE COMMUNION IN THE NORTHERN DISTRICT, 1857-1871

Year	Guenther		Fuerbringer		Sievers		Lochner		Ahner		Hattsteadt		Sources
	Gen	Pri	Gen	Pri	Gen	Pri	Gen	Pri	Gen	Pri	Gen	Pri	
1857	---	---	---	858	200	600	---	1308	314	---	1098	---	ND, 1858, pp. 36f.
1858	428	48	---	---	600	224	---	1424	382	10	973	17	ND, 1859, pp. 34f.
1859	---	412	---	1430	229	569	---	1451	348	8	983	---	MS, 1860, pp. 91f.
1860	---	461	---	1449	251	584	---	1665	447	2	1100	---	ND, 1861, p. 20
1861	---	---	---	1534	300	580	---	1620	---	---	1050	---	ND, 1862, p. 14
1862	---	480	---	1620	342	610	---	1686	---	---	800	---	MS, 1863, pp. 114f.
1863	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
1864	---	677	---	1699	328	732	---	1961	---	342	970	30	ND, 1865, p. 63
1865	---	755	---	1730	260	699	---	2432	---	380	1077	25	MS, 1866, pp. 97f.
1866	---	726	---	1691	194	660	---	1457	---	411	---	---	ND, 1867, pp. 55f.
1867	---	804	---	1701	243	796	736	934	---	432	1260	20	ND, 1868, pp. 36f.
1868	---	821	---	1847	---	811	741	833	---	451	1130	20	MS, 1869, pp. 121f.
1869	---	829	---	1859	---	828	917	435	---	435	1130	---	ND, 1870, pp. 60f.
1870	---	844	---	1896	---	996	1288	504	---	460	1200	21	ND, 1871, pp. 31f.
1871	---	943	---	1897	---	982	1211	564	---	519	1330	---	MS, 1872, pp. 130-132

Note---These six men were chosen because they remained in the Northern District during the entire period. Very few other pastors practiced private confession on a regular basis. Parochial reports before 1857 do not distinguish between general and private confession.

Abbreviations:

- MS - Missouri Synod, Proceedings.
- ND - Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings.

began work in the Town of Granville is difficult to determine, but by the first Sunday in Advent in 1858, the congregation dedicated its first church building.<sup>24</sup> The move to Mequon did not mean less responsibility for Guenther, for by the end of 1859, Guenther was caring for 520 souls, or ninety more than he had been responsible for in Grafton at the time of his departure in 1857.<sup>25</sup>

Guenther finished his pastoral work in Wisconsin in the spring of 1860, when he accepted a call to Holy Cross Congregation in Saginaw, Michigan. During his stay in Wisconsin, Guenther had cared for seven congregations in one way or another. These were the congregations in Grafton, Cedarburg, Fredonia, Port Washington, Saukville, Mequon, and Town of Granville. In his pastoral activity he showed himself to be an energetic missionary and a pastor who was concerned with developing in his people a thorough knowledge of and love for the doctrines of the Lutheran Church.

Pastor in Saginaw, Michigan

Holy Cross Congregation in Saginaw, Michigan, unanimously called Martin Guenther to become its pastor on 8 January 1860.

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., XV (14 December 1858), 72. The congregation joined the Synod in 1855. No pastor is listed for the congregation at that time, perhaps it was Guenther who had organized it, although it would have been a considerable distance to travel. Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1855, p. 6.

<sup>25</sup>Cf. Table 2.

TABLE 2

COMPOSITE OF GUENTHER'S PAROCHIAL REPORTS, 1853-1873

Year	Congreg'ns. Mo. Synod	Non-Mo. S.	Members Souls	Voting	Schools	Pupils	Baptisms Members	Non-Memb.	Total	Confirmed	Communions Private General Confession	Total	Marriages	Burials	Sources
1853	2	2	370	--	2	--	--	--	31	7	--	378	4	7	MS, 1854, p. 22
1854	3	2	450	--	2	--	--	--	44	6	--	480	3	8	ND, 1855, p. 30
1855	2	2	430	75	2	47	--	--	47	16	--	425	4	7	ND, 1856, p. 26
1856	2	2	430	--	2	--	--	--	52	12	--	473	3	7	MS, 1857, p. 76
1857	2	2	520	90	1	--	11	16	27	28	424	334	2	11	ND, 1858, p. 36
1858	2	2	520	108	1	--	33	24	57	28	412	472	6	7	ND, 1859, p. 35
1859	1	1	380	68	1	--	21	6	30	1	461	412	8	10	MS, 1860, p. 20
1860	1	1	400	73	1	--	25	2	27	--	480	444	3	4	ND, 1861, p. 14
1861	1	1	400	80	1	80	--	--	23	12	480	480	5	5	ND, 1862, p. 114
1862	1	1	400	87	1	90	29	4	33	7	677	677	3	11	MS, 1864, p. 97
1863	1	1	400	90	1	150	--	--	28	12	755	755	4	7	MS, 1865, p. 63
1864	1	1	400	96	2	160	--	--	30	10	726	726	5	14	MS, 1866, p. 97
1865	1	1	400	100	2	175	23	8	31	10	804	804	4	9	ND, 1867, p. 55
1866	1	1	400	100	2	175	31	9	40	19	821	821	6	6	ND, 1868, p. 36
1867	1	1	400	100	2	175	31	9	40	19	821	821	6	9	MS, 1869, p. 122
1868	1	1	400	110	2	175	--	--	33	18	829	829	10	9	ND, 1870, p. 60
1869	1	1	400	110	2	175	--	--	45	25	844	844	6	12	ND, 1871, p. 31
1870	1	1	400	117	2	--	--	--	36	25	943	943	9	14	MS, 1872, p. 130
1871	1	1	400	176	2	--	--	--	88	25	420	420	29	64	WD, 1873, p. 95
1872	1	1	400	176	2	500	--	--	258	34	1567	1567	62	112	WD, 1874, p. 752
1873	1	1	400	176	2	500	--	--	258	34	1567	1567	62	112	WD, 1874, p. 752

Abbreviations: MS - Missouri Synod, Proceedings.  
 ND - Northern District, Proceedings.  
 WD - Western District, Proceedings.

<sup>1</sup>Since the Summer of 1872.

<sup>2</sup>Includes ministerial acts performed by Guenther Successor, H. F. E. Engelbrecht.

Guenther accepted the call and was installed on 4 March 1860.<sup>26</sup>

The congregation in Saginaw, known at that time as Saginaw City, had been founded in 1849, with Ottomar Cloeter becoming its first pastor. When Cloeter left to do mission work among the Indians in Minnesota in the spring of 1857, Pastor J. A. Huegli was called. Huegli remained until the winter of 1860, when he accepted a call to Detroit.<sup>27</sup>

Undoubtedly instrumental in Guenther's receiving and accepting the call to Holy Cross was Ottomar Fuerbringer, who was President of the Northern District at the time and also Guenther's father-in-law. In his Jahrsbericht to the Northern District in 1859, Fuerbringer stated that he had visited the congregation in Saginaw and that the situation there was a mixed one. There were many good confessional church members, but there was also a definite need for faith and self-denying love in the congregation.<sup>28</sup> The congregation was therefore a definite challenge. The personal relationship between Guenther and Fuerbringer may also have been a factor. Fuerbringer had been in Freistadt only seven miles from Mequon. Saginaw City was only twelve miles from Frankenmuth, where Fuerbringer was

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<sup>26</sup> Emil H. Voss, A Brief History of Holy Cross Evangelical Lutheran Church, U. A. C., Saginaw, Michigan, 1849-1949, no pagination. Cf. Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1860, p. 32.

<sup>27</sup> H. Speckhard, Gemeindebuch der evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinde zum heiligen Kreuz, U. A. C. (Saginaw, Michigan: F. & C. Reiter, 1899), pp. 27-30.

<sup>28</sup> Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1859, p. 14.

pastor in 1860. Perhaps, he even served the congregation in Saginaw as vacancy pastor and suggested Guenther's name. The temptation is strong to conclude that more was involved in Guenther's selection than merely the needs of Holy Cross congregation.

Part of the problem which Guenther faced upon his arrival in Saginaw, seems to have stemmed from previous associations with men sent to the United States by W. Loehe. These had been the first men to be operative in the Saginaw area. The constitution of the congregation had to be revised, probably in the area of church polity, since it was primarily on this issue that Loehe and the Missouri Synod had separated. The work of revision had already been begun by Huegli, but it was completed under Guenther.<sup>29</sup>

Like his predecessors in Saginaw, Guenther also taught in the parochial day school. In 1861, however, a regular teacher was procured.<sup>30</sup> In connection with the school it is interesting to note a discipline case which arose in 1861. John Stach writes in his History of the Lutheran Schools of the Missouri Synod in Michigan, 1845-1940:

Most interesting is a case which occurred at Saginaw in 1861, when a member of Holy Cross Congregation

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<sup>29</sup>H. Speckhard, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 50f. In April 1861, W. von Renner became the teacher. He remained until 1862, when Christian Schaeffer became the teacher.

objected to the use of the Bible in the parish school, and suggested that the Writings of Thomas Paine, and the Rule of Reason be substituted for the Scriptures. Quite naturally this suggestion and its author were dealt with summarily.<sup>31</sup>

The congregation's growth during Guenther's pastorate in Saginaw was good. From 1861 to 1872, when he left, the congregation grew almost sixty per cent.<sup>32</sup> The congregation's school also grew. In 1862 there were eighty pupils. By 1869 the enrollment had grown to 175. By the end of the Civil War the congregation was large enough to support a branch school and by 1872 was perhaps supporting three schools.<sup>33</sup> The task of supporting a Christian day school was not an easy one, but it was considered of great importance.<sup>34</sup> Further indications of growth, perhaps due to post-Civil War prosperity, natural increase, and immigration, can be observed in the building of

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<sup>31</sup>John Frederick Stach, A History of the Lutheran Schools of the Missouri Synod in Michigan, 1845-1940 (Ph. D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1940; Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., c. 1942), p. 66. Stach's source was Protokolle, I, Holy Cross, Saginaw, 5 May 1861.

<sup>32</sup>This percentage is based on the increase in voting membership, since the statistics for the total numbers of members are not available. At the end of 1861 there were sixty-eight voting members and 117 at the end of 1872. It is possible that the growth was even greater than sixty per cent, since the adult male membership, which constituted the voting membership, may have been restrained because of the Civil War. Cf. Table 2.

<sup>33</sup>Cf. Table 2. John Stach, op. cit., p. 82, using Protokolle, Holy Cross, Saginaw, Michigan, 12 November 1872, states that there were three branches, although the official synodical statistics only indicates two schools.

<sup>34</sup>Speckhard, op. cit., pp. 51f., 77.

a new church structure in 1868. The facilities were dedicated 7 February 1869. One of the dedicatory sermons was in English.<sup>35</sup> The building of the church may have been one reason why Guenther declined a call to St. John's Congregation in Crete, Illinois, in 1868.<sup>36</sup>

In Saginaw, as in Wisconsin, Guenther placed a great deal of emphasis in his pastoral activities on instruction in Lutheran doctrine. Guenther's successor in Saginaw, Pastor Joseph Schmidt, who later became the director of Concordia College, Fort Wayne, stated:

Ich fand beim meinem Amtstritt in Saginaw eine wohl geordnete und wohl gepflegte Gemeinde vor, und in ihr eine ganze Schar von Gemeindegliedern von ausgezeichnetem (fast haette ich geschrieben "theologischer") Erkenntnis.<sup>37</sup>

St. Matthew Congregation in Chicago, Illinois, had extended a call to Martin Guenther, which he declined. The call was extended to him a second time in the spring of 1872. When the congregation met to consider the call, it was not convinced that the call was important enough that Guenther should leave.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 79f. Guenther's notice in Der Lutheraner, XXV (1 March 1869), 102, stated that Pres. O. Fuerbringer, Pastors F. Sievers, F. A. Ahner, G. Bernthal, Mueller and Partenfelder, plus large portions of their congregations attended the dedication. Pastor F. Eirich of Ohio, preached the English sermon.

<sup>36</sup>"St. Johannes Gemeinde zu Crete, Illinois to M. Guenther, 1 November 1868," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>37</sup>Speckhard, op. cit., pp. 31f.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 32.



Guenther then stated that he had sought out the counsel of his fellow clergymen and that after a strenuous internal struggle he felt compelled to accept the call. The congregation then had the following statement entered into the minutes:

Es draengt uns im innersten Grund unseres Herzens nach einem 12 jaehrigen Zusammenleben mit unserem uns lieb gewordenen teueren Pastor, ihm unseren herzlichsten Dank fuer alle Muehe, Arbeit und Traue, sowie fuer alle Kaempfe und Anfechtungen, welche derselbe in unserer Mitte fuer uns und unsere Kinder bestanden hat, auszusprechen. Und obwohl es uns schwer faellt, es begruetet zu finden, dass wir ihn, unseren teueren Pastor sollen ziehen lassen, so wollen wir uns doch in die weisen und ueber unsere Gedanken fuehrenden Absichten Gottes fuegen, nicht zweifelnd, dass denen, die Gott lieben, alle Dinge zum Besten diesen muessen. Gott aber wolle unserem lieben Pastor in seinem neuen Wirkungskreis mit seinem heil. Geist kraeftig beistehen, und ihn viele schoene Fruechte seiner Arbeit reifen sehen lassen. Zugleich bitten wir unseren scheidenden Seelsorger, er wolle auch fernerhin-unser gedenken und uns in seine Gebete einschliessen.<sup>39</sup>

The congregation's fondness and respect for Guenther was both sincere and genuine; twenty-one years later upon hearing of Guenther's death, the congregation sent its pastor, Joseph Schmidt, to St. Louis to represent them. It was Pastor Schmidt who spoke at Guenther's graveside. It was there that Schmidt stated that even after twenty years Guenther's work had not been forgotten in Saginaw; there were many men, unaccustomed to crying, who went around with tears on their cheeks when they heard of Guenther's death.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 32, 37.

## Pastor in Chicago

When Guenther came to Chicago, he came to an area which was experiencing extraordinary growth. Within four years, 1867-1871, six new congregations had been founded in Chicago: St. John, 1867; Zion, 1868; St. James, 1869; Bethlehem, 1871; St. Peter's, 1871; and St. Matthew, 1871.<sup>40</sup> Experiencing a post-Civil War boom and increases through immigration, Chicago began extending to the southwest. By 1869 Immanuel opened a branch school in the southwestern area to provide educational facilities for its children. By the fall of 1871 enough Lutherans had moved into the area that it was deemed advisable to begin a new congregation. On 6 September 1871 a group from Immanuel congregation petitioned the congregation to grant them a peaceful dismissal in order to organize the desired congregation. The petition was accepted, and the congregation organized. On 19 November the new congregation decided to call its own pastor. Three candidates were nominated: Rev. F. E. Gottlieb of Staten Island, Rev. M. Guenther of Saginaw, Michigan, and Rev. J. Herzer of Minneapolis. The first choice, Gottlieb, declined the call, which was then extended to Guenther.<sup>41</sup> Guenther also declined the call. It was extended to him a second time.<sup>42</sup> Apparently Guenther's congregation in Saginaw

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<sup>40</sup>[E. F. Lorenz], 1871-1946: Seventy-fifth Anniversary of St. Matthew Evangelical Lutheran Church, Chicago, Illinois, no pagination.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Speckhard, op. cit., p. 32.

was putting great pressure upon him to remain. At any rate, Pastor A. Wagner, whose congregation in Chicago, Zion, also contributed a number of members to the new St. Matthew Congregation,<sup>43</sup> wrote a special letter to the congregation in Saginaw advising it of the great needs and opportunities in the St. Matthew area in Chicago. In the letter Wagner also stated that he had communicated with Prof. Walther and Walther had agreed about the importance of the call for the overall welfare of the church.<sup>44</sup> After great duress Guenther accepted the call. He was installed on the third Sunday after Trinity, 16 June 1872, by Pastor H. Wunder, who was assisted by Pastors A. Wagner and C. Koerner.<sup>45</sup>

Worship facilities begun before Guenther's arrival were dedicated 1 December 1872, the first Sunday in Advent.<sup>46</sup> The year 1872 saw the congregation join the Missouri Synod,<sup>47</sup> and also dedicate its first parsonage.<sup>48</sup>

Wagner was not mistaken about the challenge of the situation and possibilities of growth for the congregation.

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<sup>43</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX (15 December 1872), 47.

<sup>44</sup>"A. Wagner to congregation in Saginaw City, 14 May 1872." MS., C. H. I. Wagner described the area as "ein groesseres Arbeitsfeld."

<sup>45</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXVIII (1 August 1872), 167.

<sup>46</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX (15 December 1872), 47.

<sup>47</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1872, p. 22.

<sup>48</sup>[E. F. Lorenz], op. cit.

The statistics for the years 1872 and 1873 are almost incredible. In a year and a half, from the summer of 1872 to the end of 1873 Guenther and his successor, Pastor H. F. E. Engelbrecht, baptized 346 persons, performed 91 marriages, 176 burials, and communicated 1987; and by the end of 1873 there were five hundred children in four schools.<sup>49</sup>

Guenther's pastorate in Chicago was very short. In the summer of 1873 he was elected to a professorship at Concordia Seminary.<sup>50</sup> Although Guenther was in Chicago only one year, he performed almost as many burials and marriages as he had in the previous nineteen years of his ministry.

#### Work on the Synodical Level

During his twenty years as a pastor Guenther played a rather significant role in Synodical activities, primarily on the District level. O. Fuerbringer, F. Lochner, and to a lesser degree H. Fick and F. Sievers, were the acknowledged leaders in the Northern District during Guenther's pastorates in Wisconsin and Michigan. These men were all older and, since they were well equipped for the tasks of administration, retained administrative control in the District. Guenther's major contributions to the general life of the Synod occurred

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<sup>49</sup>Missouri Synod, Western District, Proceedings, 1873, p. 95; Missouri Synod, Western District, Proceedings, 1874, p. 75. Cf. Table 2, p. 30.

<sup>50</sup>Infra, Chapter IV.

roughly between 1858 and 1868. The five year gap before this period (1853-1858) seems to be best explained by Guenther's extensive parish and missionary activities, his relative inexperience, and organizational problems within the District itself. The Northern District held its first convention in 1855, although the Synod had divided itself into four districts already in 1854. The decline in Guenther's Synodical activity from 1868-1873 may be explained by his efforts in writing his Populaere Symbolik, which was published in 1872.

Probably Guenther's most significant contributions to Synodical life were a number of sets of theses which he prepared and presented to Northern District conventions. In its first convention in 1855, the District was primarily concerned with organizational and casuistic problems. In 1856 the convention dealt with a number of doctrinal questions, Private Confession (Privatebeichte); apparently Pastor P. Fleischmann<sup>51</sup> led this discussion, and church discipline (Kirchenzucht) which was discussed on the basis of theses prepared by Pastor K. Roebbelen at the request of President O. Fuerbringer.<sup>52</sup>

For the 1858 convention (there was no district convention in 1857) Guenther prepared and presented twenty-nine theses, "Von der Goettlichkeit eines Gemeindeberufs zum heil Predigtamt." The theses were both theoretical and practical, stating the

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<sup>51</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1856, pp. 11-17.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., pp. 17-19.

essence of a call and the conditions under which a pastor should or should not accept a particular call. The second and third sessions of the convention were devoted to the presentation and discussion of Guenther's theses, which were printed with a few minor emendations by the convention in the Proceedings.<sup>53</sup> No supplementary material, such as Scripture references, citations from the Lutheran Confessions, or quotations from the writings of former theologians were published. Whether Guenther presented such material to the convention cannot be determined; probably he did. Following the theses in the Proceedings there is the digest of the discussion by the convention about the theses; it was noted that many theses required no discussion.<sup>54</sup>

An interesting sidelight was the convention's attempt to put Guenther's theses to practical application. Pres. O. Fuerbringer, pastor in Freistadt, Wisconsin, had received a call to Frankenmuth, Michigan. The convention tried to decide on the basis of Guenther's theses whether or not Fuerbringer should accept the call. The attempt proved inconclusive, since the convention could not arrive at a decision.<sup>55</sup>

In 1859 Guenther again presented theses to the Northern District Convention on the "Lehrartikel von der christlichen

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<sup>53</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1858, p. 11. The theses themselves run from pages 11-14, and the discussion from 14-19.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

Freiheit und den Mitteldingen zu aergernis freiem Gebrauch der ersten in vorkommenden Gewissensfragen." Two other sets of theses were presented at the same convention. Pastor A. Huegli presented theses on "die geeignete, dem Prediger obliegende Art und Weise Gemeinden zu der ihnen zustehenden und des Evangeliums wuerdigen Theilnahme am Kirchenregiment heranzuziehen." Huegli's theses were to be for publication in the Lutheraner and therefore did not appear in the Proceedings. F. Sievers also presented theses "ueber das rechte, christlich weise Verfahren unter Lutheranern eine geordnete Liebesthaetigkeit herzustellen," which Sievers was to have published privately and therefore also did not appear in the Proceedings. Since Guenther's theses were considered to be of the greatest importance (der groessten Wichtigkeit), and since their presentation took up most of the sessions the Synod resolved that they be printed in the Proceedings along with an abstract of the discussions.<sup>56</sup> Most of the twenty-six theses had Scripture references appended, many had references to the Lutheran Confessions, and a few were supplemented by quotations from Luther, Chemnitz, and Augustine.<sup>57</sup>

In 1860 the general Synod met. In 1861 and 1862 there do not seem to have been any major doctrinal presentations

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<sup>56</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1859, p. 14.

<sup>57</sup>The theses appeared on pages 14-19. The discussion appeared on pages 19-24.

in the Northern District.<sup>58</sup> In 1863 and 1864 the general Synod again met. In 1865 Guenther was again selected to present theses to the District convention on "Die Lehre vom Unterschied des Alten und Neuen Testaments."<sup>59</sup> Ahner also presented theses on the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.<sup>60</sup> Guenther's theses were accompanied by references to Scripture, the Lutheran Confessions; there were numerous quotations from Luther. There were twenty-two theses altogether, but many had subdivisions. C. F. W. Walther, elected president of the general Synod the previous year, was present at the convention, thus giving him first-hand knowledge of Guenther's theological growth since Guenther's seminary days. As noted below, it was probably Walther who was primarily responsible for Guenther's election to the professorship at

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<sup>58</sup>In 1861 there was discussion on instruction in the Catechism and a Referat on the correct place (Mitte) of the Lutheran liturgy; Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1861, pp. 14-18. In 1862 the convention dealt with the Ten Commandments and with the practical problem of Church discipline, Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1862, pp. 7-13.

<sup>59</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1865, pp. 15-52. The Proceedings do not identify Guenther as the author of these. This was probably due to Guenther's own modesty, since he was elected secretary of the District in this year, ibid., p. 62. F. Sievers took the minutes during most of Guenther's presentation. The Lutheraner had run the announcement of the convention along with the fact that Guenther would present these theses. Der Lutheraner, XXI (1 May 1865), 136. The same announcement repeated, ibid. (1 June 1865), p. 151.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-59.



the seminary in 1873.<sup>61</sup>

It is probable that Guenther was also the author of the theses presented to the 1867 Northern District Convention. The Proceedings themselves did not state the author, nor did the Lutheraner.<sup>62</sup> If they were his theses, it was probably modesty that prevented Guenther from mentioning his own name, since he was secretary of the District at this time.<sup>63</sup> The theses, twenty-eight altogether, were entitled, "Grundsätze der luth. Kirche ueber Schriftauslegung."<sup>64</sup>

In 1868 Pastor J. A. Huegli presented theses to the District Convention,<sup>65</sup> which were continued in 1871.<sup>66</sup> In 1870 the doctrinal discussions centered around ten questions

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<sup>61</sup>Infra, p.

<sup>62</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIII (15 July 1867), 175. In reviewing the Proceedings the theses were mentioned, but not their author.

<sup>63</sup>This strongly suggests that the author was Guenther. Had someone else presented the theses, Guenther most likely would have been sure to credit that person. The following year, 1868, when Guenther was still secretary to the District he did credit the theses to Huegli. Another reason for suggesting Guenther's authorship is that he previously always quoted Luther from the Erlangen Ausgabe. In these theses the Erlangen Ausgabe is cited. Huegli, who presented theses in 1868 and 1871, does not use the same method of presentation as Guenther and cites Luther from the "Milw. Ausg." The style is similar to Guenther's theses of 1865; the one noticeable difference is the more generous quoting of Lutheran dogmatists such as Gerhard, Kromayer, Rambach, and others.

<sup>64</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1867, pp. 7-49.

<sup>65</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1868, pp. 12-26.

<sup>66</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1871, pp. 15-21.

on the necessity of a congregation unanimously calling a pastor. Their authorship is not easily identifiable, but it does not seem likely that they were by Guenther.<sup>67</sup>

Thus in the ten convention of the Northern District in which doctrinal presentations were made,<sup>68</sup> Guenther made the major presentations in at least three and probably four of them. There are only six men who can definitely be identified as having presented such discussions: Guenther (3), Ahner (1), Sievers (1), Huegeli (2), Fleischmann (1), and Roebbelen (1). Guenther was thus the person most utilized to make the doctrinal presentations to the Northern District during the period that Guenther was in the District.

Guenther also served in various secretarial capacities while in Wisconsin and Michigan. He seems to have been secretary of the Wisconsin Pastoral Conference in 1859.<sup>69</sup> In 1860 Guenther was elected secretary of the Missionscommission of the Synod, a position which he apparently held

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<sup>67</sup>0. Fuerbringer announced in Der Lutheraner, XXVI (1 April 1870), 118, that these would be presented, but he did not state to whom they had been assigned. He also stated that either Huegeli's theses of 1868 or the theses which Th. Brohm presented to the Synod in 1869 would be discussed. If the ten questions and their elaborate answers were by Guenther, it seems likely that Fuerbringer would have given him credit.

<sup>68</sup>1856, 1858, 1859, 1861, 1862, 1865, 1867, 1868, 1870, and 1871.

<sup>69</sup>There are no extant minutes of the small groups to substantiate this. However Guenther did announce the meetings of the Conference in Der Lutheraner, XV (9 August 1859), 206.

until 1874, when Pastor H. P. Partenfelder was named secretary.<sup>70</sup> From 1863 to 1865 Guenther probably was secretary of the Michigan District Pastoral Conference; at least he was authorized to announce its meetings.<sup>71</sup> In 1865 Guenther was elected secretary of the Northern District.<sup>72</sup> He continued in this post until 1869, when he was succeeded by F. A. Ahner.<sup>73</sup>

Negotiations were carried on with the Wisconsin Synod in the 1860's with the goal of establishing fellowship. The basic problem lay in the connections which the Wisconsin Synod had with the "United" (unirte) missionary societies in Germany and their connections with the General Council. In 1868 a committee was appointed to represent the Missouri Synod in these negotiations. C. F. W. Walther, O. Fuerbringer, F. Lochner, C. Strasen, and Martin Guenther composed the committee.<sup>74</sup> Guenther, however, was not present when the representatives of both synods met in Milwaukee in October 1868. The reason for his absence is not stated. His place

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<sup>70</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1860, p. 62; Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1874, p. 84.

<sup>71</sup>Der Lutheraner, XIX (15 June 1863), 168; ibid., XXII (15 September 1865), 16.

<sup>72</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1865, p. 62.

<sup>73</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1869, p. 110.

<sup>74</sup>Missouri Synod, Northern District, Proceedings, 1868, pp. 28f.

was taken by E. A. Brauer.<sup>75</sup>

When the Synodical Conference was formed in 1872, Guenther was named an alternate delegate to the conference, representing the Northern District. He did not attend in 1872,<sup>76</sup> however, because he had left the District by that time. Guenther never seems to have taken much part in the activities of the Synodical Conference, although he did serve as an alternate delegate for a number of years.

An interesting, though perhaps not significant episode which occurred during this period, involved the writing of the chronicle of the Missouri Synod. The chronicle included primarily the dates of the ordinations and installation of all the pastors of the Synod, but also contained other important events of the Synod such as its conventions, the dedication of institutional buildings, and other noteworthy occurrences.<sup>77</sup> At the first Synodical convention in 1847, Ottomar Fuerbringer had been named the official chronicler (Chronicist) of the Synod.<sup>78</sup> In 1854, however, Fuerbringer delegated the responsibility to Guenther, apparently

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<sup>75</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1869, p. 87.

<sup>76</sup>Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synodal Conferenz von Nord-Amerika zu Milwaukee, Wis., vom 10. bis zum 16. Juli 1872, pp. 12f.

<sup>77</sup>"Namen der von der hochwurdigen deutschen evang. luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. andere Staaten bestellten Chronicisten," bound ledger volume, C. H. I.

<sup>78</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1847, p. 16.

unofficially.<sup>79</sup> When the Synod met in 1857 in Ft. Wayne, Guenther either forgot the book in Ft. Wayne, or left it behind for some specific reason. Whatever the reason, the book lay in or around Ft. Wayne for about seven years, until the Synod again met there in 1864. During this time the book had acquired several ink blotches, mostly on the edges of the pages.<sup>80</sup> When the physical condition of the book was discovered along with the fact that entries had not been made for several years, a committee was appointed to consider the matter. The committee's directives were that Pres. Fuerbringer and Pastor Guenther were to bring the chronicle up to date and

1. dass das sehr befleckte Buch mit einem neuen vertauscht werden moege;
2. dass in Zukunft die

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<sup>79</sup>It is possible to dispute the date 1854. On the cover of the original volume there is a note signed by Guenther: "Chronik gefuehrt seit der Synode 1854 im Auftrag Pr. Fuerbringer's [sic] von dem Unterzeichneten. NB. Die Dintenflecken [sic] sind in's [sic] Chronikenbuch gekommen, waehrend es 1857-1863 irgendwo oder in bei Fort Wayne gelegen. M. Guenther." The first page of the volume, on the other hand, has the following, anonymously written statement: "Pastor O. Fuerbringer. 6. Mai 1847 bis 10 Nov. 1866. Anm. P. O. Fuerbringer vollzog die Ausarbeitung der Chronik persoehnlich nur bis zum 7. Mai 1854. Von da uebertrug er die Ausarbeitung anderen Amtsbrueder. P. M. Guenther uebernahm im Namen des P. O. Fuerbringer diesselbe vom 15 Febr. 1857 bis 31 Juli 1864. Von da an bis zum 10 Nov. 1866 vollzog F. Sievers, Sen., die Pflichten eines Chronisten . . ." The precise dating of Guenther's responsibility by the anonymous scribe is compelling. However, the personal statement by Guenther himself seems to be even more compelling, when he stated that he was responsible since 1854. "Namen der von der hochwuerdigen deutschen evang. luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. andere Staaten bestellten Chronicisten," MS., bound ledger volume, C. H. I.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid.

wichtigeren Nachrichten mit etwas mehr Ausfuehrlichkeit gegeben werden moechte.<sup>81</sup>

The Proceedings also stated that several mistakes which had crept into the book had been corrected by Dr. Sihler. The Synod then named Pastor F. Lochner as chronicler, although this seems disputable.<sup>82</sup> The uncertainty about the person entrusted with the position of chronicler, however, does not change the fact that both Fuerbringer and Guenther received a public and probably valid reprimand.

During his years in Saginaw Guenther wrote and published his Populaere Symbolik. A later chapter is devoted to discussing this work, but it is noted at this point because it must be considered a contribution to the life of the Synod and place it in its proper chronological position. Guenther was encouraged to write Populaere Symbolik, as he was encouraged in his other theological pursuits, by his father-in-law, Ottomar Fuerbringer.<sup>83</sup> The first edition of Populaere

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<sup>81</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1864, 1866, p. 7 (the Proceedings of both conventions were published together.) The book apparently was not replaced, nor were the ink spots as bad as the Proceedings would lead one to believe.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid. This seems to contradict what the anonymous scribe wrote in the front of the book, i.e., that Fuerbringer continued keeping the chronology until 1866, cf. n. 83. In 1866 the Synod named E. J. M. Wege as official chronicler, ibid., p. 92.

<sup>83</sup>Ludwig Fuerbringer states, "My parents thought very highly of him, and Guenther regarded my father as an outstanding theologian and fatherly friend. I remember when he published the first edition of Populaere Symbolik he stated, I think it was in a private letter, that my father really influenced him and stimulated him to those and similar studies, that he owed

Symbolik appeared in 1872.

### Private Life

Guenther traveled considerably as he cared for the congregations in his charge. Yet he found time to travel to Freistadt, Wisconsin, about eight miles southwest of Grafton, where his closest colleague, Ottomar Fuerbringer, lived but the visits were not always for the purpose of sharing theological insights. In the fall of 1854 Martin Guenther married the foster daughter of the Fuerbringers, Theresa Harzdorf. Theresa had been one of the original Saxon immigrants coming to the United States at the age of four, accompanied by her mother and brother.<sup>84</sup> Theresa's mother died, apparently rather early after arriving in Perry County, and probably during the first year or two when many of the settlers fell victim to the strange climate and poor living conditions. It was probably at that time that the Fuerbringers adopted Theresa. Fuerbringer was probably teaching in the college then.

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very much to him, a debt which he never would be able to repay. In the presentation copy of this work for my father he simply says in his laconic way, "Von deinem M.G." Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 116. The letter to which Fuerbringer referred is extant in part and substantiates Guenther's indebtedness to O. Fuerbringer, "Guenther to O. Fuerbringer, 8 June 1853," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>84</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 115. The exact date of the wedding is not known. It must have been late in 1854, for \$5.68, collected at the wedding and donated to the Concordia College Building Fund, was acknowledged in Der Lutheraner, XI (13 February 1855), 104. Walter O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1953), p. 543, gives her name as Maria Theresia.

The marriage, which seems to have been a happy one, produced six children, all of them daughters: Agnes, Concordia, Renate, Martha, Lydia, and Mathilda.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>There may have been more than six children, but this writer has been able to discover the names of only six. The "Family Register," MS., C. H. I., an incomplete list, gives the names of four: Agnes Christiane Fried., born 29 October 1855 (godparents were O. Fuerbringer, Immanuel Guenther, Mrs. F. Lochner, and Mrs. M. Buenger; Agnes later married Hermann Grote, a school teacher); Ernestine Elisabeth Concordia, born 21 December 1857 (godparents were Mrs. Agnes Fuerbringer, Pastor F. A. Ahner, Mrs. Henr. Guenther, and Theodore Guenther); Johanne Louise Renate, born 22 November 1860 (godparents were Renate Fuerbringer, Mrs. F. A. Ahner, Pastor F. Sievers, and Benjamin Guenther); and Martha Marie Katharine, born 19 February 1863 (godparents were Mrs. Kash. Huebschmann, Teacher Chr. Schaefer, Pastor C. C. Metz, and Mrs. S. Burckhardt). Ludwig Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 121, omits the names of Martha and Renate, but he does give the names of two others, Lydia, who married Pastor Hans Wein, and Mathilda, the youngest, who married Prof. H. Jurgensen, an instructor at Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota. Fuerbringer also states that Concordia married Pastor Nils J. Bakke, a missionary among the southern colored.



## CHAPTER IV

LATER YEARS: PROFESSOR, SYNODICAL WORKER, PASTOR,  
PERSON, 1873-1893

Professor and Librarian

Professor

In 1869 a new theological professorship was created at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, with Eduard Preuss filling the new position. Preuss, however, defected to the Roman Catholic Church in 1871. Rector Georg Schick of Fort Wayne was suggested as the replacement, but it was Gottlieb Schaller, pastor of Trinity Congregation in St. Louis, who finally was elected.<sup>1</sup> In finding a replacement for Prof. Schaller, the congregation called Prof. E. A. Brauer, whose service in the Seminary had become hampered by eye difficulties.<sup>2</sup> Thus another vacancy was created in 1872.

In the spring of 1873 action was begun to obtain the needed professor. Th. Brohm, secretary of the Election Committee and Vice-President of the Synod, announced on 1 June in the Lutheraner that nominations could be made for the position. He stated that the Board of Control must nominate

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<sup>1</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "Secondary and Higher Education in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1839-1874" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954), pp. 384f.

<sup>2</sup>Albert Brauer, Lebensbild des weiland ehrwuerdigen Pastor Ernst August Brauer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1898), p. 94.

three candidates, but that congregations could also make nominations.<sup>3</sup> The Board of Control apparently nominated Guenther, J. A. Huegeli, and A. Crull, at least Walther stated privately in a letter to Pastor F. Sievers of Frankenlust, Michigan, that these were the men that he, Walther, considered best for the position. In this letter Walther stated that he favored the selection of Guenther because he was the best prepared theologically and could also lend a much needed hand in editing the Lutheraner and Lehre und Wehre. The only drawback Walther saw in Guenther was that he was not as stimulating (anregend) as he desired:

Auch ich wuerde Guenther primo loco stellen, da er ohne Zweifel die besten Vorstudien fuer das fragliche Amt mit sehr guten Erfolg gemacht hat. Er ist zwar weniger anregend, als ich wuenschte, allein das naechste, dringendste Beduerfniss hier ist ein Mann, der in der Redaction unserer Blaetter kraeftig mithilft. Die in dieser Beziehung auf mir fast gaenzlich allein liegende Last will mich schier erdruecken, so dass ich fuerchte, bald das Redacteur-Amt allein auch nicht einmal schlecht ferner verwalten zu koennen. Guenther hat aber dazu sehr guts Gaben und steht mit uns voller Harmonie der Lehre und des Geistes. Uebrigens waeren mir auch Heugli und Crull, die Sie ferner nennen, als Collegen ganz recht.<sup>4</sup>

On 1 August 1873, Brohm announced in the Lutheraner that Guenther had been unanimously elected. The election, however,

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<sup>3</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX (1 June 1873), 134.

<sup>4</sup>"C. F. W. Walther to P. F. Sievers, 22 May 1873," MS., Concordia Historical Institute. (Hereafter Concordia Historical Institute will be abbreviated C. H. I.) The letter does not state that these three men were the nominees of the Election Committee, presumably they were.

still had to be ratified by at least two-thirds of Synod's voting congregations within eight weeks.<sup>5</sup> By October the election was official. Some congregations had voted for Guenther; none had voted against him; uncast votes were considered affirmative.<sup>6</sup>

Guenther served as professor for almost twenty years. It is not difficult to determine which courses Guenther taught during his twenty years in St. Louis; when he taught them and how heavy his teaching schedule was seems difficult, if not impossible, to determine. Ludwig Fuerbringer, who as a student lived in Guenther's home for over a year and had his dinners with Guenther for three years, gives the most complete list of subjects taught by Guenther: Encyclopaedia and Methodology, Introduction to the Old and New Testaments, Symbolics, sermon delivery, after Walther's death in 1887, Catechetics, and after Schaller's death in the same year, Homiletics.<sup>7</sup>

When Guenther began teaching Encyclopaedia and Methodology is uncertain, although he probably began teaching it rather soon upon his arrival in St. Louis. This seems likely

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<sup>5</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX (1 August 1873), 168.

<sup>6</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX (15 October 1873), 208.

<sup>7</sup>Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 118. George Stoeckhardt, "Professor M. Guenther," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (May 1893), 149, writes, "Seine Faecher waren Encyclopaedie, Isagogik, Symbolik, Homiletik, und Katechetik."

because the course dovetails neatly with the task of librarian which Guenther seems to have assumed rather early, at least by 1877, and probably earlier.<sup>8</sup> The course was meant to introduce the students to the various theological disciplines and acquaint them with the basic books of the specific disciplines. Guenther's notebook for the course, still extant,<sup>9</sup> reveals that the course was divided into about a dozen major units,<sup>10</sup> with most of these being subdivided. Each unit had a brief introduction to the particular discipline, followed by a list of recommended books. The titles of major sections included, A History of the Theology of Encyclopaedia and Methodology, Biblical Isagogics, Biblical Criticism, Hermeneutics, Exegesis, Commentaries, Dogmatics, Apologetics and Polemics, Symbolics, Ethics, Church History, Catechetics, Homiletics, Pastoral Theology and Liturgics. It is interesting to note that the majority of the books listed are by sixteenth,

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<sup>8</sup>There is no clear statement that Guenther became librarian this early. He definitely was librarian by 1883; Fuerbringer, *op. cit.*, p. 119. That Guenther was librarian earlier is based on notices which appeared in the Lutheraner. In July 1875, Walther acknowledged donations for the Seminary library. Walther may have done this, however, as President of the school, or because the donations were addressed to him; Der Lutheraner, XXXI (1 July 1875), 104; *ibid.*, XXXI (15 July 1875), 112; In 1877 Guenther acknowledged several gifts for the library, thus indicating that Guenther was probably librarian at this time; *ibid.*, XXXIII (1 July 1877), 104; *ibid.*, XXXIII (15 August 1877), 128; *ibid.*, XXXIII (1 December 1877), 183.

<sup>9</sup>"Theol. Encyclopaedia and Methodology," MS., bound ledger volume, C. H. I.

<sup>10</sup>The divisions between major heading and subdivisions are not altogether clear in Guenther's notes.

seventeenth, and eighteenth century Lutherans, with emphasis perhaps on those of the seventeenth century. The commentaries listed, for example, were predominately by sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran writers. The commentaries listed for the book of Romans are typical. Of the fifteen commentaries listed, six are from the sixteenth century, seven from the seventeenth century, and two from the eighteenth century. Martin Sommer's recollection that most of the works seemed to have been written in Latin was probably correct. Sommer also describes the teaching method for the course:

Professor Guenther also lectured to us on Theological Encyclopaedia. After defining the branch of theology which he was treating, he dictated the chief books on these subjects. It seems to us that he favored the writers who used the Latin language.<sup>11</sup>

Isagogics, Introduction to the Old and New Testaments, seems to have been taught in alternating years. This was possible since the first and second classes would meet together for some courses.<sup>12</sup> The course seems to have been taught largely by the dictation method. A comparison of Guenther's notes with those taken by one of his students, F. E. Tilly, in 1890-91, reveals that many passages are

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<sup>11</sup>M[artin] S. Sommer, "Reminiscences of My Student Days at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., from 1889-1892," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XII (April 1939), 16. Hereafter the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly will be abbreviated CHIQ.

<sup>12</sup>"Einleitung in das Alte Testament von Prof. Guenther," MS., bound ledger volume, C. H. I. Written on the bottom of the first page, apparently in Guenther's hand are the dates: "1876 - 78 - 80 - 82 - 84 - 86 - 90 - 92." Guenther's notes on Introduction to the New Testament are not extant.

identical. As expected, Guenther's notes are much fuller. Both sets of notes, especially Guenther's, are well sprinkled with Greek and Hebrew words and phrases. The Old Testament course included material about the Apocryphal books.<sup>13</sup>

For the course in Symbolics, Guenther used J. T. Mueller's edition of the Lutheran Symbols.<sup>14</sup> The classroom procedure for this course seems to have consisted of having the students write Guenther's comments in the margin of their copies of Mueller's text.<sup>15</sup>

For most of his twenty years, Guenther seems to have taught homiletical practice or exercises, which consisted mostly of assigning students texts from which the students were to draw doctrinal and practical applications.<sup>16</sup> After

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid. and F. E. Tilly, "Isagogik in das Alte Testament und Neue Testament vorgetragen und dictiert von Prof. M. Guenther, Studienjahr 1890-91," MS., bound, C. H. I.

<sup>14</sup>Die symbolischen Buecher der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche, deutsch und lateinische, besorgt von J. T. Mueller (Stuttgart: Verlag von Samuel Gottlieb Liesching, 1848). There were other editions of this work. The present writer has discovered editions from 1876, 1890, 1900, 1907. Guenther personal copy was the 1848 edition, C. H. I.

<sup>15</sup>There are not extant notes by Guenther on Symbolics, if indeed there ever were any. Guenther's personal copy is full of marginalia. Ludwig Fuerbringer would seem to concur with the teaching technique when he writes, "And some of the students who failed to take notes, as is often the case, borrowed my copy of Mueller's edition of the Confessions in their Senior year and copied these notes, then realizing their value," op. cit., p. 119. Fuerbringer again: "Symbolics . . . was chiefly confined to the reading and explanation of the symbolical books." Ibid., p. 118.

<sup>16</sup>Th. Buenger writes that these applications were called "porisma," for which the slang phrase, "We pull porisma today,"

the death of G. Schaller in 1887, Guenther took over the full course in Homiletics<sup>17</sup> which also included listening to students' sermons.<sup>18</sup> Guenther's original lecture notes on Homiletics do not seem to have survived. What might be considered a reasonably good reproduction of them, however, appeared in the Magazin fuer ev.-luth. Homiletik in 1894. They were entitled "Homiletische Regeln," and a note by F[rederick] B[ente] stated that they were "Ein Dictat des sel. Prof. M. Guenther."<sup>19</sup> When the notes were dictated is not stated, although it must have been sometime after 1887, when Guenther replaced Schaller in teaching Homiletics.<sup>20</sup> In the Homiletisches Magazin, the notes covered twenty-five printed pages. However, as lecture notes and presumably with comments from Guenther interspersed, they make a rather formidable set of homiletical notes. Altogether there were

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developed. Theodore Buenger, "St. Louis Seminary: Reminiscences, 1879-1882," CHIQ, XIII (January 1941), 98.

<sup>17</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>18</sup>Sommer, op. cit., p. 17. He may have listened to students' sermons before this time.

<sup>19</sup>[Guenther], "Homiletische Regeln," Magazin fuer ev.-luth. Homiletik, XVIII (May 1894), 158-160; ibid., XVIII (June 1894), 177-181; ibid., XVIII (July 1894), 210-216; ibid., XVIII (August and September), 255-266. The notes probably were not taken by Bente, who graduated from the Seminary in 1881. Hereafter Magazin fuer ev.-luth. Homiletik will be referred to as Homiletisches Magazin.

<sup>20</sup>Gottlieb Schaller homiletical notes appeared in the Magazin fuer ev.-luth. Homiletik, XXIV (January 1900), 28-31; ibid., XXIV (March 1900), 90-96; ibid., XXIV (May 1900), 150-160; ibid., XXIV (July 1900), 217-223; ibid., XXIV (September 1900), 284-288.

forty-seven thetical rules, which were divided into four sections. The first section, four rules, dealt with the importance and function of preaching in the life of the Church, especially in the life of the Lutheran Church, which strongly emphasized the Word as a means of grace. The second section, entitled Invention stated the manner of selecting texts and demonstrated the importance of careful study of the text in the original Greek or Hebrew language. The third section was entitled Disposition. This contained the rules for the development of the basic theme of the sermon and its natural divisions. The fourth section dealt with the actual writing of the sermon and contained rules for outlining the sermon. A large portion of this section dealt with Amplification, in which Guenther demonstrated the various oratorical and rhetorical devices that might be employed to make the sermon more interesting, forceful, and compelling. There were usually quotations for the point in question, either from Luther, Rambach, Gerhard, or other Lutheran theologians. Guenther included numerous examples from Scripture to illustrate his particular point, as well as numerous examples of correct and incorrect outlines, themes, introductions, etc. It is this writer's impression that these rules would not compare unfavorably with present day sermonizing techniques.

After Walther's death in 1887, Guenther took over the area of Catechetics. Sommer gives the following description of the course:



After a number of lectures on the subject each one of us was required to construct and deliver a catechesis upon some part of the Catechism. On certain days of every week four boys from Holy Cross School were brought to our classroom, and each of us gave in turn a demonstration of his ability to catechize. The student who had catechized the boys was required to give each lad five cents.<sup>21</sup>

As a pedagogue Guenther may have been master of his material, but the unmistakable impression left by those who studied under him harmonizes with Walther's original judgment that Guenther was not as exciting as he might have been.<sup>22</sup>

To quote Martin Sommer again:

Because he [Guenther] was rather slow and not given to any demonstrative manner of speech, some did not appreciate the valuable material which he offered to us students.<sup>23</sup>

Ludwig Fuerbringer, an honest but charitable historian, wrote:

In his lectures he gave considerable dictation, but elucidated what he had dictated in brief but very pertinent remarks. Such remarks, again, were not made in a very impressive, rhetorical, forceful way, and for that reason some of the students did not appreciate his lectures as highly as they should have done.<sup>24</sup>

Others have made similar judgments.<sup>25</sup> It seems a fair conclusion that Guenther was probably not an extremely effective

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<sup>21</sup>Sommer, op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>22</sup>Supra, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup>Sommer, op. cit., p. 16.

<sup>24</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>25</sup>"Guenther was dry, yes very dry, in his lessons. Once just before the beginning of Christmas vacation, he dictated a passage in Isagogics to us. In the middle of the sentence

teacher, certainly he was not very stimulating.

Besides teaching, Guenther also seems to have served as registrar for the seminary. At least he announced the opening of the school year and reminded the entering students, the graduates from the Fort Wayne preparatory school, that they should be sure that their completion certificates (Zeugnis der Reife) were sent to the Seminary on time (rechtzeitig).<sup>26</sup>

#### Librarian

One of Guenther's duties while on the faculty was that of librarian, a role which he seems to have assumed rather soon upon assuming his role of Professor, at least by 1877 and probably earlier.<sup>27</sup> The library was not large. In 1874

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the bell rang. Guenther made a mark in his book and left the room. Two and one half weeks afterwards, when we were again assembled in the classroom, he proceeded dictating with the next word of the sentence. That was saving time." Otto F. Hattstaedt, "Personal Reminiscences," CHIQ, XIV (July 1941), 36. Theodore Buenger, op. cit., p. 98f., refers to inattentiveness in Guenther's classes. Peer Stroemme, a Norwegian student, often worked out chess problems clipped from the Globe-Democrat in Guenther's class; W. H. T. Dau, "The Merger Synods," Theological Observer, II (March 1922), 82. Cf. Alma Mater, XXIV (1 February 1934), 92.

<sup>26</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXXI (15 August 1875), 126; ibid., XXXVIII (August 1882), 126. Guenther occasionally also acknowledged gifts for poor students; ibid., XXXV (15 November 1879), 175; ibid., XXXVII (1 February 1877), 28; ibid., XXXIV (15 June 1878), 96; ibid., XLIII (15 January 1887), 16. Walther, Pieper, and occasionally, Schaller also acknowledged such receipts.

<sup>27</sup>Supra, n. 8. Guenther was definitely the librarian by 1883. Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 119.

a catalogue was published listing the library's holdings.<sup>28</sup> It revealed that there were 4,550 volumes in the library, but only 3,455 titles. How rapidly the holdings increased under Guenther's supervision is difficult to determine. New accessions came through donations and purchases. Periodically Guenther acknowledged donations in the Lutheraner of books and monies for the library.<sup>29</sup> Until 1881 the budget for books was \$50 per year. In that year the Seminary Board of Control reported to the Synodical convention that opportunities to purchase rare and valuable books for the library had to be

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<sup>28</sup>Katalog der Theologischen Bibliothek des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Concordia Collegiums zu St. Louis, Mo. (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874), p. 81. For an analysis of the holdings at that time cf., Meyer, op. cit., p. 377. The question arises, whether Guenther was responsible for compiling the Katalog. The date which coincides with Guenther's arrival, his later duties as librarian, and the type of work involved indicate that Guenther may have been responsible. If so, it would probably indicate that Guenther became librarian almost immediately upon his arrival in 1873.

<sup>29</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXXIII (1 July 1877), 104; ibid., XXXIII (15 August 1877), 128; ibid., (1 December 1877), 183; ibid., XXIV (1 June 1878), 88; ibid., XXXV (1 June 1879), 88; ibid., XXXVI (1 November 1880), 168; ibid., XXXVIII (15 August 1882), 128; ibid., XXXVIII (1 September 1882), 136; ibid., XL (1 June 1884), 80; ibid., XL (1 November 1884), 168; ibid., XLII (15 November 1886), 176; ibid., XLII (15 March 1886), 48; ibid., XLII (15 April 1886), 64; ibid., XLII (15 June 1886), 96; ibid., XLIII (15 October 1887), 164. A notable addition occurred in 1888, over three hundred books from Walther's library, over a hundred pamphlets, and a number of old and new coins, mostly medallions (Denkmuenzer) were donated to the library in accordance with Walther's will; ibid., XLIV (13 March 1888), 46; ibid., XLIV (22 May 1888), 88; ibid., XLIV (3 January 1888), 7; ibid., XLVI (23 September 1890), 164; ibid., XLVI (21 October 1890), 180; ibid., XLVII (7 July 1891), 114; ibid., XLVI (10 November 1891), 186; ibid., XLVII (24 November 1891), 194; ibid., XLVIII (10 May 1892), 84; ibid., XLVIII (27 September 1892), 164; ibid., XLVIII (1 October 1892), 172.

declined because of the small budget. The Board therefore recommended that the library book budget be increased from \$50 per year to \$200 per year. The Synod ratified the proposal.<sup>30</sup>

Perhaps Guenther's acquisitioning policy is reflected in the Board of Control's reference to old and rare books. Guenther's emphasis seems to have been rather strong in gathering the older and more rare books, especially those of older Lutheran theologians. This is reflected in his notes for the course in Encyclopaedia and Methodology, as noted above. The donations for the library which Guenther may have encouraged, reveal the same tendency.<sup>31</sup> A further indication that Guenther concentrated on building a strongly Lutheran library, composed of Lutheran classics from especially the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is disclosed by an interleaved edition of the 1874 catalogue of the library's holdings, with the accessions to the library after 1874 written in by hand (probably Guenther's). This seems to have been the official library acquisition as well as catalogue list. Most of the accessions after 1874, were also books from sixteenth,

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<sup>30</sup> Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten versammelt als Dritte Delegaten Synode zu Fort Wayne, Indiana, im Jahre 1881 (St. Louis: Druckerei des "Lutherischen Concordia-Verlags," 1881), p. 49. Hereafter all such official proceedings will be cited in the following abbreviated form: Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1881, p. 49.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. n. 29.

seventeenth, and eighteenth century writers.<sup>32</sup>

The library seems to have served as a kind of archives during this period; documents pertaining especially to the teaching institutions of the Synod were kept in the library room and stored in an iron strong-box.<sup>33</sup>

The library also seems to have had a policy of occasionally loaning books to pastors; the pastors did not, however, always observe the policy of returning the books. In order to stimulate the practice of the latter policy Guenther placed several urgent requests in the Lutheraner that all books which had been borrowed from the library be returned. Free postage was even guaranteed.<sup>34</sup>

In the overall educational program of the Seminary, the library does not seem to have played a focal role. Discounting the obvious exaggeration, there still must have been more than a kernel of truth in the statement of Julius Friedrich, a student in the mid 1880's:

To most of the students the library was a MARE CL AUSUM and therefore TERRA INCOGNITA. If we had a librarian I never knew it. The very idea

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<sup>32</sup>Katalog der Theologischen Bibliothek des Evangelisch-Lutherischen Concordia Collegiums zu St. Louis, Mo. (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874), passim. This particular copy may be found in the archives section of the Concordia Seminary Library, St. Louis, Missouri.

<sup>33</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1878, p. 22.

<sup>34</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXXIX (15 June 1883), 94; ibid., XXXIV (1 August 1883), 119. The same request appeared in 1887, but without the offer of free postage, ibid., XLIII (15 December 1887), 193.

to take a book from those sacred precincts was preposterous. Most of the time the library was locked.<sup>35</sup>

Guenther's duties as librarian probably were not taxing. The notable exception was in 1883, when the new addition to the Seminary was completed, and all the books which had been placed in storage had to be unpacked and rearranged. For this Guenther had the help of two student assistants.<sup>36</sup> Whatever Guenther's precise role may have been in shaping the policies of the library, a tentative judgment would be that he probably did not expend a great deal of energy in developing the library's holdings of contemporary literature or in encouraging general library use. On the other hand, library use was not especially encouraged by the teaching methods of the day. Furthermore, Guenther may have been instrumental in encouraging the donations to the library. It might also be pointed out that the fact that Concordia Seminary library has at the present time the most extensive collection of sixteenth and seventeenth century Lutheran theological works in the United States is due primarily to the work of Geunther.

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<sup>35</sup> Julius A. Friedrich, "Fifty Years Ago," Alma Mater, XXVII, Commencement Issue (1937), 177.

<sup>36</sup> Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 119.

## Synodical Worker

## English Work

Ludwig Fuerbringer, hitherto Guenther's most extensive biographer, does not note Guenther's interest and involvement in English mission work.<sup>37</sup> Guenther's role in furthering the English cause has been largely unrecognized, even by those who might have noted it. In a brief history of the English District of the Missouri Synod, H. P. Eckhardt only mentions that Guenther was present at the 1879 meetings of the English Conference of Missouri.<sup>38</sup> Nor did the Lutheran Witness, when it noted Guenther's death, mention the fact that he was involved in English work, which seems rather unusual since the Lutheran Witness was publicizing the efforts in the English language.<sup>39</sup> Actually Guenther rendered a considerable service in developing work in the English tongue.

When the English Conference of Missouri was organized in 1872 in Gravelton, Missouri, C. F. W. Walther, F. A. Schmidt, and Pastor E. S. Kleppisch attended, representing the German Missouri Synod. Doctrinal agreement between the two groups was reached on the basis of a set of theses composed for the

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<sup>37</sup>Ibid., pp. 115-121.

<sup>38</sup>H. P. Eckhardt, The English District: A Historical Sketch (Published by the English District of the Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, 1946), p. 14.

<sup>39</sup>Lutheran Witness, XII (7 June 1893), 7.

conference by Walther. Minutes for the meetings of the English Conferences for the years 1873, 1874, and 1875 are not extant. The minutes for 1876, 1877, and 1878, reveal that the Missouri Synod was not represented.<sup>40</sup>

C. L. Janzow writing in the late 1890's on the beginnings of English work in the Missouri Synod, states that he and C. F. Obermeyer were elected delegates by the Missouri Synod to the English Conference.<sup>41</sup> Before the 1879 meeting, however, Obermeyer accepted a call to a different congregation and therefore did not attend the Conference. Writing in the third person Janzow relates his subsequent experiences how he

tried for days to obtain a companion to go to the conference with him and finally, discouraged and embittered, was on the verge of returning to his home, when through the earnest pleadings of Dr. Walther, he decided to go to the conference alone-- and behold, then Prof. (M.) Guenther announced that he would accompany.<sup>42</sup>

Whether Guenther went because of Walther's encouragement or whether he went upon his own initiative cannot be determined. At any rate, from this time on, Guenther did much to foster

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<sup>40</sup>Eckhardt, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>41</sup>C. L. Janzow, "The Beginning of Our English Work," translated by W[illiam] G. P[olack], CHIQ, XXI (April 1948), 28. The election does not seem to be reflected in the Western District Proceedings, however. Proceedings, 1877, passim. The only statement in the 1879 Western District Proceedings is that an English missionary would be commissioned and supported by the District; Missouri Synod, Western District, Proceedings, 1879, p. 122.

<sup>42</sup>Janzow, op. cit., p. 28.



English missions. It was in this area that Guenther perhaps came closest to being a crusader, for work in the English language was not very popular among most in the Missouri Synod at the time, and those who were interested were often ridiculed. William Dallmann relates:

Pastor C. L. Janzow was a member of the English Mission Board, for which he was ridiculed so much that he offered his resignation, and only on the earnest pleas of Walther did he carry on.<sup>43</sup>

In 1879 the English Conference of Mission petitioned the Western District to send delegates to all future English Conference conventions. Perhaps because Guenther had displayed an interest in the English cause, the District in 1880 named him as its official delegate and C. L. Janzow as alternate. At the same time the District established a special English Mission Committee "zur Betreibung der Ausbreitung lutherischer Lehre in englischer Zunge," and named Guenther chairman; C. L. Janzow and the current president of the English Conference completed the committee.<sup>44</sup> Guenther continued to hold the position of official delegate to the Conference as well as the chairmanship of the English Mission Committee until 1887, at which time the Missouri Synod took official responsibility toward the English Conference. At that time the Missouri Synod, however, declined the request of the Conference to be taken into the Missouri Synod as a separate district. The

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<sup>43</sup>William Dallmann, "Memories, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1883-1886," CHIQ, XII (July 1939), 45.

<sup>44</sup>Missouri Synod, Western District, Proceedings, 1880, p. 69.

Synod, did, on the other hand, pledge the English Conference its wholehearted support, and formed a special Missionscommissions fuer englische Mission.<sup>45</sup> The Commission was similar to the one which had previously existed in the Western District. The same persons were elected to the commission, Guenther as chairman, Janzow and C. Lange as treasurer.<sup>46</sup> Guenther retained the chairmanship until his death in 1893. Thus Guenther served as the official liaison between the English Conference (after 1891 the English Synod of Missouri and Other States) and the Missouri Synod from 1880-1893.

The extent to which Guenther influenced Missouri Synod attitudes toward the English Conference, especially the Synod's decision not to incorporate the English Conference as a district, is difficult to determine. Probably the decision was the general concensus of the Synodical Convention and its leaders, with which Guenther concurred. The Convention thought the language differences to be too pronounced to make such an amalgamation practicable.<sup>47</sup> In the early 1880's Guenther and Janzow aware of the general feeling of

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<sup>45</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1887, pp. 69f.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 69. Whether the Missouri Synod was wise in refusing to incorporate the English Conference as a district still seems to be a debated question. The refusal to incorporate has been justified by the conjecture that the German Missouri Synod would not have developed English materials, hymnbooks, catechism, Sunday School literature, etc., as rapidly as the small but deeply concerned English Conference; Eckhardt, op. cit., pp. 16f.

the Germans, "refrained from promising union with the Western District in the immediate future."<sup>48</sup> The first two St. Louis Seminary graduates ever to be assigned to English congregations received their calls in 1885 and 1886. Guenther's roles in this has been acknowledged.<sup>49</sup>

As chairman of the English Mission Commission, Guenther seems to have been primarily responsible for keeping informed about the activities of the English missionaries, supplying them with necessary funds and rendering appropriate advice. Actually the duties of the committee had never been spelled out, neither in 1880 by the Western District, nor in 1887 by the Synod.<sup>50</sup> Correspondence from the Guenther papers in the Concordia Historical Institute substantiates this description of Guenther's duties.<sup>51</sup>

The Proceedings of the English Conference of Missouri state that Guenther did give the Conference much useful advice. He served on a number of advisory committees in 1879,<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Walter Cook, "The Development of English Lutheran Church Activities in the Ozarks prior to 1888,: The Synod Mindedness of Those Pioneers," CHIQ, IX (July 1936), 53.

<sup>49</sup>E. Biegner, "The Rev. C. L. Janzow, 1847-1911," CHIQ, XXI (April 1948), 32.

<sup>50</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1890, 70f.

<sup>51</sup>"J. J. Aschmann to M. Guenther, 17 August 1880;" "F. Kuegele to [Guenther], 20 October 1892;" "J. G. Goodmann to Prof. Guenther, Ch'rm., 24 August 1892;" "J. G. Goodmann to M. Guenther, 27 October 1892;" and "Kuegele to Guenther, 22 August 1892," MSS., C. H. I.

<sup>52</sup>Proceedings of the 8th Annual Convention of the Evang. Luth. English Conference of Missouri. Held in St. Paul's

and in 1882.<sup>53</sup> In 1888, when the Conference was reorganized as a synod (The General English Ev. Luth. Conference of Missouri and Other States), Guenther gave valuable advice, particularly in the formulation of its constitution. The Proceedings for 1888 have only a brief description of the discussion of the new constitution, but they do state:

Prof. M. Guenther, of Concordia Seminary, who is also a member of the Missouri Synod's Board for English Missions, was present in every session, giving useful and sound advice and many welcome explanations.<sup>54</sup>

Guenther utilized his position as editor of the Lutheraner to periodically publicize the cause of the English Conference and of English work in general, either through his own pen or by printing articles and news notes of others.<sup>55</sup>

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Church, Webster Co. Mo., October 10th to 16th, 1879 (St. Louis: Concordia Printing and Publishing House, 1880), pp. 18, 20.

<sup>53</sup>Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the Ev. Luth. Conference of Missouri. Held in Salem Church, Washington County, Ark., Oct. 20-25, A. D. 1882 (St. Louis: n.p., 1883), pp. 29f.

<sup>54</sup>Proceedings of the First Convention of the General English Ev. Luth. Conference of Missouri and Other States. Held at Bethlehem Church, Cor. 19th & Salisbury Sts., St. Louis, Mo., Oct. 19th to 23rd, 1888 (St. Louis: n.p., 1888), p. 10.

<sup>55</sup>G[uenther], "Die englische evang.-luth. Conferenz von Missouri," Der Lutheraner, XXXV (1 November 1879), 165; G[uenther], "Der Westliche District," ibid., XXXVI (1 November 188), 165; G[uenther], "Englisch lutherische Mission," ibid., XXXVIII (1 April 1882), 52; C. L. Janzow, "Englische innere Mission," ibid., XXXVIII (15 April 1882), 61f.; C. [L.] J[anzow], "Un-sere englische Mission," ibid., XXXVIII (1 July 1882), 100f.; "Offener Brief," ibid., XXXVIII (1 October 1882), 148; G[uenther], "Die englische-lutherische Konferenz von Missouri," ibid., XXXVIII (15 November 1882), 172f.; A. Baepler, "Englische Mission," ibid., XXXIX (1 March 1883), 35f.; C. [L.] J[anzow], "Englische Mission," ibid., XL (15 March 1884), 44; G[uenther],

In November 1879, Guenther stated in the Lutheraner that if the cause of English work and its opportunity for

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"Aus der Englisch-lutherischen Conferenz," ibid., XL (1 August 1884), 117; G[uenther], "Die englische Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XLI (1 January 1885), 5; G[uenther], "Aus der englisch-lutherischen Conferenz," ibid., XLI (1 September 1885), 134; C. L. J[anzow], "Die englisch-lutherische Conferenz," ibid., XLI (15 November 1885), 172; A. Meyer, "Aus der englisch-lutherischen Conferenz," ibid.; G[uenther], "Englisch lutherischen Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XLII (15 March 1886), 44; G[uenther], "Aus der englisch lutherischen Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XLII (15 October 1886), 156; C. L. Janzow and M. Guenther, "Englisch Mission," ibid., XLII (1 November 1886), 163; C. J[anzow], "Die Englisch-lutherische Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XLII (1 December 1886), 181; F. Kuegele, "Die Aufnahme eines Englischen District betreffend," ibid., XLIII (15 March 1887), 48f.; C. L. J[anzow], "Ist sie hoffnungslos?" ibid., XLIII (15 June 1887), 96f.; G[uenther], "Die englisch-lutherische Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XLIII (15 October 1887), 160; G[uenther], "Englisch!" ibid., XLIII (15 October 1887), 160; G[uenther], "Englische Mission," ibid., XLIV (3 January 1888), 5; G[uenther], "Englische Mission," ibid., XLIV (19 June 1888), 100f.; "Englische Mission," ibid., XLIV (3 July 1888), 109; G. J. W., "Englische Mission in New Orleans, La.," ibid., XLIV (6 November 1888), 180f.; G[uenther], "Die Allgemeine englisch-lutherische Conferenz von Missouri u. a. Staaten," ibid., XLIV (6 November 1888), 181; "Unter die englischen Lutheranern in den Suedstaaten," ibid., XLIV (20 November 1888), 188; C. L. J[anzow], "Pauli Beispiel eine Ermunterung zur englischen Mission," ibid., XLV (21 May 1889), 83; C. L. J[anzow], "Englische lutherischen Schulen," ibid., XLV (21 May 1889), 84; C. L. J[anzow], "Ueberblick ueber das englische Missionsfeld," ibid., XLV (13 August 1889), 133; "New Orleans," ibid., XLVI (11 March 1890), 50; C. L. J[anzow], "Was sagen 'die Alten' dazu?" ibid., XLVI (17 June 1890), 102f.; "Englische Mission in West-Virginien," ibid., XLVI (17 June 1890), 104; "Englische Mission in St. Louis," ibid., XLVII (6 January 1891), 4; "Eine englische Mission," ibid., XLVII (31 March 1891), 55; C. L. Janzow, "Wird durch die englische Mission etwas erreicht?" ibid., XLVII (26 May 1891), 87; "Die englische evangelisch-lutherische Synode von Missouri und andern Staaten," ibid., XLVII (9 June 1891), 94f.; "Die englische-lutherische Synode von Missouri," ibid., XLVII (7 July 1891), 111; G[uenther], "Vorwort zum neunundvierzigsten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraners,'" ibid., IL (3 January 1893), 2.

building God's Kingdom went unnoticed and ungrasped, there could be no excuse before God. He stated that help must be given, both in word (Rath) and in deed (That). He concluded the article by urging those who had English neighbors to notify the English Conference pastors about such people.<sup>56</sup>

In 1882 Guenther reviewed "Lutheran Hymns: For the Use of English Lutheran Missions." In his review Guenther suggested that German Lutheran congregations also purchase some copies of this little collection of English hymns. They might be used at special occasions, when English services might be held, such as church dedications, New Year festivals, etc.<sup>57</sup>

Guenther even made use of the Lutheran Witness to publicize English work.<sup>58</sup> In 1886 Guenther and C. L. Janzow collaborated in writing a two column history of the English Conference for the Lutheraner in an attempt to promote the English efforts.<sup>59</sup> Guenther used psychology in advancing English work in 1887, when he played on the wide spread admiration and reverence held for the late C. F. W. Walther. The technique

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<sup>56</sup>G[uenther], "Die englische evang.-luth. Conferenz von Missouri," ibid., XXXV (1 November 1879), 165.

<sup>57</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXXVIII (1 April 1882), 56. It might be recalled that at the dedication of the new church in Saginaw in 1869 an English sermon was preached. Supra, p. 34. Guenther himself seems to have occasionally preached in English; "Sermon on Rev. 3:7-13," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>58</sup>The Lutheran Witness, II (7 May 1884), 188; ibid., III (21 June 1884), 20.

<sup>59</sup>C. L. Janzow and M. Guenther, "Englische Mission," Der Lutheraner, XLII (1 November 1886), 163.

was simple. Guenther reported on the meeting of the English Conference held in September 1887. This he followed with a short article entitled, "Englisch!" In this brief paragraph he cited the recognition taken of Walther's work by the Cynosure, an English paper in Chicago, and The Christian Witness, a paper from New Hampshire, to which Guenther concluded:

Aus beiden theilen wir unsern Lesern einen Passus mit, der uns die Nothwendigkeit zeigt, die reine Lehre auch in englischer Sprache zu verbreiten. Derselbe lautet: "Es ist zu bedauern, dass seine (Dr. Walthers) Arbeit nur in deutscher Sprache geschah. Deswegen war er verhaeltnissmaessig wenig bekannt ausserhalb der Kreise seiner Kirche, und die americanischen Kirchen wurden im Allgemeinen nicht beeinflusst durch seine kraeftigen und bededten Vortraege.<sup>60</sup>

Although not foreseeing the termination of German in the Missouri Synod, nor in any way encouraging a change from German to English, Guenther stated the necessity of doing work in English in the Vorwort to volume IL (1893) of the Lutheraner:

Der "Lutheraner" hat wiederholt dazu ermuntert, dass man in unsern deutschen Gemeinden die deutsche Sprache so lang, als moeglich, zu erhalten wueche, und so steht er auch noch heute, und er kann nicht dazu ermuthigen, dass man mit Gewalt auf das Englische losteure und das Deutsche gering achte, moegen die Angloamericaner dazu sagen, was sie wollen. Dabei hat der "Lutheraner" sich auch wiederholt fuer die Nothwendigkeit auch in dieser Sprache dem Naechsten, wie im Irdischen, so auch im Geistlichen, diene koennen. Und wo nun Rath vorhanden ist, wo solche sich finden, die des Deutschen

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<sup>60</sup>[Guenther], "Englisch!" Der Lutheraner, XLIII (15 October 1887), 160.

nich maechtig genug sind, da muessen wir sorgen, dass auch diesen die reine Lehre erhalten bleibe, damit sie nicht in die Haende der falschen Lutheraner und der Secten fallen. Auch haben wir sonst die Pflicht, dass wir in diesem Lande, in welchem die Englische Sprache die herrschende ist, den Schatz, der wir haben, auch in dieser Sprache zeigen und anpreisen. Und darum hat unsere Synode die englische Mission in die Hand genommen.<sup>61</sup>

Although Guenther advocated the continuance of the German language in the Missouri Synod, he nevertheless saw the necessity for the Lutheran Church, especially the Missouri Synod, to do work in the English language. Seeing this need he did much to try to help fill it, through word and deed.

### Synodical Handbook

One of the matters which came up for consideration at the 1884 Synodical convention held in St. Louis, was the revision of the Synodical Handbook (Synodal-Handbuch). The first Synodical Handbook had been prepared by C. A. T. Selle at the request of the Synod in 1873. A second revised edition of the Handbook appeared in 1879, also at the hand of Selle. In 1884 the Synod felt that the time had come for a third, revised edition. To prepare the desired third edition a committee composed of Professors Selle, Guenther, and the President of the Michigan District, Pastor Joseph Schmidt, was appointed. The stated need for the new Handbook was the

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<sup>61</sup>G[uenther], "Vorwort zum neunundvierzigsten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner,'" ibid., II (3 January 1893), 2. For similar thoughts, apparently by Guenther see Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1890, p. 71.



exclusion of no longer relevant resolutions and the inclusion of later pertinent resolutions which had been passed by the Synod and its districts since the last (1879) revision.<sup>62</sup> These resolutions were included in the Handbook in order to support and/or explain the text of the Synod's Constitution.<sup>63</sup>

The Synodical resolution of 1884 prescribed that when the committee had prepared the manuscript, it was to be given to the St. Louis Pastoral Conference, which included the faculty of the Seminary, for final scrutinization. The task of final editing and preparation for printing was assigned to Guenther.<sup>64</sup>

The extent to which Guenther was responsible for the revision is unclear. However, with the three committee members scattered in Saginaw, Michigan, Addison, Illinois, and St. Louis, committee work was probably not easy, and therefore Guenther's role was probably a relatively large one. This seems to be reflected in the 1887 Synodical acknowledgment:

dass Herrn Prof. Guenther fuer die Ausarbeitung des Entwurfs des Synodal-Handbuches, welcher viel Zeit, schwere Muehe und grossen Fleiss gekostet hat, ein herzlicher Dank ausgesprochen werde.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>62</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, p. 82.

<sup>63</sup>In the 1888 third, revised edition, these resolutions appear on pages 29-40. Synodal-Handbuch der deutschen ev. luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St. (Dritte auf Beschluss der Synode revidirte Auflage; St. Louis: Concordia-Verlag, 1888).

<sup>64</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, p. 82.

<sup>65</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1887, p. 85. Neither Selle nor Schmidt were mentioned.

When The Lutheran Witness reviewed the new edition of the Synodical Handbook, it stated that the work was done by Prof. Guenther and a "committee whose names we cannot just now mention."<sup>66</sup> Thus the evidence rather conclusively indicates that Guenther was largely responsible for the third edition. The 1887 Convention resolved that before the final publication of the Handbook Guenther was to include any later relevant resolutions of the Synod. Such further additions were to agree in wording with the original wording of the Synodical Proceedings from which they were taken. At the same time the Synod also authorized Guenther to prepare for publication a copy of the Synodical Constitution.<sup>67</sup> The reason for the separate issuance of the Synodical Constitution was probably to permit its wider dissemination, especially among the laity.

While engaged in the revision of the Synodical Handbook, Guenther also fulfilled another assignment of the 1884 convention. Guenther was to determine whether the examining committee of the Addison teacher's seminary was constitutionally responsible for examining foreign-trained teachers, since

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<sup>66</sup>The Lutheran Witness, VII (21 June 1888), 16. The reason for the cryptic statement about the unnamed committee is difficult to explain. Perhaps the reviewer was trying to say that he didn't know who the other members of the committee had been, or else that Guenther was responsible. At any rate, Guenther was given the primary credit.

<sup>67</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1887, p. 86. The Synodical Handbook also included regulations about the educational institutions, statements on fellowship with orthodox Lutheran synods in America and the Constitution of the Synodical Conference.

previously such examinations had been handled locally by the pastors concerned.<sup>68</sup> Guenther studied the problem historically and concluded that the article in the constitution (Chapter V, A, paragraph 13) was no longer relevant and ought to be changed. At Guenther's suggestion, the Synod officially placed the Addison examining committee in charge of all such examinations, with the provision that pastors could, if necessary, colloquize foreign-trained teachers.<sup>69</sup>

Thus it seems that Guenther was considered the foremost authority on constitutional matters in the 1880's.

### Statistical Yearbook

Among the tasks which Guenther performed for the Synod during his years in St. Louis, was the compiling and editing of the Statistical Yearbook (Statistisches Jahrbuch), from its inception in 1884 until his death in 1893. The Synodical resolutions gave rather explicit instructions:

Beschlossen, dass zu Anfang eines jeden buergerlichen Jahre ein eigenes Pamphlet herausgegeben werde, welches die Jahresbericht der Herren Districtpraesides, die Parochialberichte der Herren Pastoren ueber das verflossene Jahr, districtsweise geordnet, den Katalog ueber unsere vershiedenen Lehranstalten und was sonst noch zur Statistik gehoert, enthaelt. Selbstverstaendlich erscheinen dann genannte Berichte nicht mehr in den eigentlichen Synodalberichten.

Beschlossen, dass gleich nach dem 11 Januar und spaetestens bis zum 31. Januar jeden Jahres genannte Jahresberichte der Praesides und die Parochialberichte der

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<sup>68</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, p. 43.

<sup>69</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1887, pp. 44f.

Pastoren, sowie die Kataloge der Lehranstalten und dergl. an Herrn Prof. M. Guenther, Concordia College, St. Louis, Mo., eingesendet werden sollen, welche letzterer hiermit von der Synode beauftragt wird, die Zusammenstellung und Veröffentlichung dieser Berichte zu besorgen, und zwar in Bezug auf die Parochialberichte in der Weise, dass nach Schluss derselben die Summa der Pastoren, Lehrer, Schulen u. s. w. eines jeden Districts und der Allgemeinen Synode berichtet werden.

Beschlossen, dass der also angefertigte und so schnell also möglich gedruckte Bericht in derselben Weise wie die Synodalberichte und ohne Weitere Unkosten an alle Pastoren und Lehrer unserer Synode versandt werde.<sup>70</sup>

The parochial reports, presidential reports, and other reports had been printed every third year in the Missouri Synod Proceedings. In the two intervening years each district had published its own parochial and presidential reports in its particular district Proceedings. This meant that for two of every three years there were no annual composite statistics of the entire Synod.

In the preface of the first Statistical Yearbook Guenther noted that such an annual report was desirable because it would afford the opportunity to obtain an overview of the growth patterns of the entire Synod in the previous year. The individual district reports, Guenther stated, had two inconvenient features about them; they appeared individually thereby making comparisons difficult and they often appeared only toward the end of the following year.<sup>71</sup> The Synod also

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<sup>70</sup> Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, pp. 81f.

<sup>71</sup> "Da durch Gottes Gnade die Synode vermehrte, hatte die Vertheilung dieser Mittheilungen auf die Berichte der verschiedenen Districte und die Beroeffentlichung derselben zu

made several changes in the classification rubrics in 1884. The changes were to enable a more valid comparison of Missouri Synod statistics with the statistics of other Lutheran groups in America.<sup>72</sup>

To expedite the assembly of uniform statistics a form for the parochial reports was included in the December 1884 issue of Lehre und Wehre. Guenther announced in the Lutheraner that if any pastors did not receive such a form, a postcard sent to him would bring the pastor the desired form in the return mail.<sup>73</sup>

The first Statistical Yearbook took some time to prepare and publish. Guenther apologized for its tardy appearance

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verschiedenen Zeiten manchest Unbequeme. Indem z. B. jeder District sich zunaechst mit der Mission in seinem Gebiete beschaeftigte und darueber in seinem Synodalberichte Mittheilung machte, gewann man keinen Ueberblick ueber das ganze Gebiet. Die Parochialberichte mehrerer Districte vom Jahre 1882 wurden erst in den betreffenden Synodalberichten im Herbst des folgenden Jahres 1883 mitgetheilt," Statistisches Jahrbuch der deutschen evang.-lutherischen Synod von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten fuer das Jahr 1884 (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1885), p. iii. Hereafter this will be cited in the following abbreviated form, Statistical Yearbook, 1884, p. iii.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. iv. The two most important changes were the changing of "Contributing Members" (Beitragende Glieder) to "Communicant Members" (Communicierende). The distinction between indigenous (einheimisch) and non-members (fremde) was to be eliminated wherever these terms had been used in the reports. This latter distinction had been made in the statistics for pupils in the day schools, baptisms, marriages, and burials. Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, p. 81.

<sup>73</sup>Der Lutheraner, XL (December 1884), 184. Guenther also asked that all who were responsible for filing reports send them in complete and on time.

and promised that in the future the Statistical Yearbook would appear earlier.<sup>74</sup> The natural difficulties involved in such a first attempt were probably compounded by the incomplete and tardy reports of the pastors themselves. Tardy and incomplete reports continued to be a problem for some time to come.<sup>75</sup>

The first Statistical Yearbook in 1884 contained sixty-seven pages and included the reports of the district presidents, the parochial reports of the pastors arranged by districts, reports on the various spheres of mission work, church dedications, synodical institutions, charitable institutions, Concordia Publishing House, and periodicals (Missouri Synod, Synodical Conference, and privately published periodicals).

In his review of the first Statistical Yearbook Walther described the contents of the pamphlet and praised the work about as highly as such a mechanical effort can be praised. Walther said that Guenther approached his work with an

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<sup>74</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1884, p. 67.

<sup>75</sup>In the announcement for the 1885 Statistical Yearbook in Der Lutheraner, XLI (15 November 1885), 174, Guenther stated, "Es ergeht daher an alle Betreffenden die freundliche Bitte, ihre Berichte in Zeiten vorzubereiten, vollstaendig auszuarbeiten und rechtzeitig einzusenden." (Underscoring indicates bold faced type in the original notice.) Despite this plea there were still ninety-two reports missing at the end of January 1886; a number of those which had been received by the proper date were incomplete. Statistical Yearbook, 1885, p. 64. Cf. Der Lutheraner, XLIII (15 December 1887), 194. In this article Guenther also noted that forms for the report could be found in the Homiletisches Magazin as well as in Lehre und Wehre.

industriousness found only in one who was accustomed to similar tasks. The price was 20¢.<sup>76</sup>

It is interesting to note that in 1890 Guenther submitted these statistics for use in the official United States census of 1890.<sup>77</sup> Guenther also offered to compile the statistics of the English Lutheran Conference of Missouri for the census and send these statistics to the United States Census Bureau also.<sup>78</sup>

In 1890 the Synod gave Guenther a free hand in arranging the format of the Statistical Yearbook,<sup>79</sup> although the changes which he made were minor.

With the passing of time the Statistical Yearbook has proven itself to be what Guenther, perhaps somewhat apologetically, stated in his preface to the first edition these statistics should be, a helpful tool in telling the history of the Church:

Kirchliche Statistik ist ein nicht unwichtiges Stueck der Kirchengeschichte. So wenig es unrecht ist, die Geschichte eines kirchlichen Koerpers zu schreiben, so wenig ist es unrecht statistisches Material dazu zu sammeln.<sup>80</sup>

Although it did not take a great deal of imagination or

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<sup>76</sup>Der Lutheraner, XLII (15 March 1885), 48.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., XLV (17 December 1889), 207.

<sup>78</sup>The Lutheran Witness, VIII (21 February 1890), 144.

<sup>79</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1890, p. 63.

<sup>80</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1884, p. iii.

creativity, Guenther's tedious work of compiling the Statistical Yearbook for nine years must be considered to be an important piece of work.

Guenther may have also had the task of assembling the Katalogen der Lehranstalten der deutschen evangelisch-lutherische Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St. There is no concrete evidence to substantiate the conjecture, but there does seem to be enough circumstantial evidence to at least warrant raising the question. Catalogues of the Synodical education institutions began appearing regularly in the early 1870's. The first catalogue to contain all of the institutions of the Synod, with consecutively numbered pages was for the academic year 1874-1875.<sup>81</sup> In 1874 the Synod resolved to have the annual reports of each institution published. Each faculty was to prepare a four-page report of its institution and send it to the editorial committee (Redaktionscommittee, this undoubtedly meant the St. Louis faculty), which was to prepare a combined Broschuere.<sup>82</sup> This would place Guenther very much in the running for having had the assignment, especially because of his other literary

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<sup>81</sup>Katalog der Lehranstalten der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St. fuer das Schuljahr 1874-75 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1875).

<sup>82</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1874, p. 52. At this time there were four institutions, the "Theoretical" seminary in St. Louis, the "Practical seminary in St. Louis," the preparatory school in Ft. Wayne, and the teachers seminary in Addison, Illinois.



activities. Furthermore, the 1884 Synodical resolutions assigning the task of compiling the Statistical Yearbook stated that the various catalogues were to be sent to Guenther.<sup>83</sup>

Further evidence might be adduced from the fact that Walther in his review of the Statistical Yearbook for 1884, said it was done by a person who was accustomed to such activity.<sup>84</sup> Walther may have had these catalogues in mind. There is also some evidence that Guenther may have served as registrar of the faculty,<sup>85</sup> and as such would have been the logical person to issue the St. Louis seminary section of the catalogue, and thus be the logical person to compile the entire Katalog der Lutheranstalten. Who was responsible for compiling the catalogues must remain a conjecture, and if a conjecture must be made, a good one would be Guenther.

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<sup>83</sup>Supra, pp. 77f. The sowie in the second cited resolution might be read to mean that Guenther had been receiving these reports in the past, and now was to use them to compile the Statistical Yearbook.

<sup>84</sup>Supra, pp. 80f.

<sup>85</sup>In August 1875, Guenther announced that the school year would begin 1 September 1875. Fort Wayne graduates were instructed to make certain that their qualification certificates were sent to St. Louis by the necessary time. Der Lutheraner, XXXI (15 August 1875), 126. This would suggest that Guenther was the faculty registrar. For a similar notice see ibid., XXXVIII (15 August 1882), 126.

## Pastor

The parish ministry seems always to have been close to Guenther's heart. Guenther was not in St. Louis long before he resumed parish activity. In the fall of 1874 Guenther became pastor of Concordia Evangelical Lutheran Congregation in Kirkwood, Missouri.<sup>86</sup>

The congregation in Kirkwood traces its beginning to 1873, when Peter Bopp, Sr. along with his sons decided to organize a congregation. They had moved to Kirkwood in 1865 from Des Peres, where they had been members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Inconvenience in making the long trip to Des Peres coupled with the fact that there were a number of other unattached Lutherans in the Kirkwood area were reasons enough to form a congregation.<sup>87</sup> On their own initiative the Bopp family built a small chapel which was completed early in 1874.<sup>88</sup> By 21 April 1874 the name had been chosen for the congregation, a constitution adopted, officers elected, and arrangements made for procuring the necessary chancel and altar appointments.<sup>89</sup> On 25 May 1874 the church was dedicated, with Pastors A. Lehmann of Des Peres, and

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<sup>86</sup>Fiftieth Anniversary: Concordia Ev. Luth. Congregation of Kirkwood, Missouri. Sunday, May 18th, 1924. p. 11.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., pp. 7-9.

A. Schuessler of Ellisville, officiating. Pastor Schuessler was extended a call in August; however, he declined it. Nevertheless, Schuessler together with Pastor Buenger, aided the congregation in securing the services of Prof. Guenther, who became pastor in the fall of the same year.<sup>90</sup> The congregational history fondly describes the years during which Guenther served the congregation:

Prof. Guenther served this church for fifteen years very ably and very faithfully. Sunday after Sunday, in summer and winter, this good old man made the trip from the Seminary in South St. Louis to Kirkwood. The trip at that time was not quite so pleasant or so short as it is now. There were no electric cars running to Kirkwood or the Union Station. The train service was not what it is now. But rain or shine Prof. Guenther was here every Sunday to make his congregation lie down in the green pastures of the Word of God, to lead them beside the still waters of heavenly comfort and joy. Sunday after Sunday he instructed the young in Luther's Catechism . . . . The members dwelt together in brotherly love and good will. In consequence the congregation enjoyed profound peace. It was a period singularly free from quarrels and dissensions. There was not much need of discussions or parliamentary procedure . . . .<sup>91</sup> The venerable pastor was a true spiritual father to the souls committed to him, leading them kindly and wisely. In return he was loved and respected by his parishioners. His very conversation was made to serve for Christian edification. When his work on Sunday was done he would visit at the home of some church member where others would also gather. They would converse on some religious subject or turn the light of God's Word on the topics and occurrences of the day. Our older members hold these early years in fond remembrance and love to speak of good Prof. Guenther.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-11.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

The congregation was not without problems, however, and lost several members who had joined secret societies.<sup>93</sup> Despite this loss, the congregation outgrew its worship facilities, and new facilities were dedicated in the spring of 1886.<sup>94</sup>

Statistics on Guenther's work in Kirkwood are not available until 1884, when they were included in the first Statistical Yearbook (1884). In 1884 there were one hundred souls, sixty-three communicant members, and twenty voting members.<sup>95</sup> By 1888 there were 170 souls, ninety-five communicant members, but still only twenty voting members.<sup>96</sup> The congregation was now large enough that the pastoral work could not be done only on Sundays and occasional Saturdays. Not only was a full-time man required, but "Age began to tell on Prof. Guenther. Upon his advice, therefore, the congregation resolved . . . to call a resident pastor . . . ." <sup>97</sup> Guenther installed his successor, William Noll, a recent graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, on 29 September 1889.<sup>98</sup>

After terminating his work with Concordia congregation, Guenther became preaching assistant to Pastor C. L. Janzow of

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<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>95</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1884, p. 19.

<sup>96</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1888, p. 22.

<sup>97</sup>Fiftieth Anniversary: Concordia Ev. Luth. Congregation of Kirkwood, Missouri. Sunday, May 18th, 1924, p. 17.

<sup>98</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1889, p. 4.

Bethlehem congregation.

As pastor and as professor, Guenther took part in the local pastoral conferences. Occasionally he seems to have acted as either secretary or chairman of these local conferences.<sup>99</sup>

#### Private Life and Characterization

For the period from 1873-1893, there is very little information about Guenther's private life. It might be pointed out, however, that it was during the years in St. Louis that his children were growing up and getting married. There are no indications that he was ever seriously ill or experienced any other crises during this period.

Guenther was a man of work, hard work, which often extended late into the night. H. Stein, a student at the seminary in 1889 wrote:

Guenther was a man synonymous with study, unremitting labor. Before we retired for the night, sometimes rather early in the morning, we took a look at Guenther's study window (he had inherited the use of Walther's house); Guenther's study lamp proved him still at work.<sup>100</sup>

Judging from the amount of work which passed over his desk,

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<sup>99</sup>Several announcements for these conferences appeared in the Lutheraner and were signed by Guenther; Der Lutheraner, XXXIV (15 August 1878), 128; ibid., XXXIV (1 October 1878), 151; ibid., XXXIV (15 December 1878), 190; ibid., XXXVII (1 September 1881), 135; ibid., XLVII (17 February 1891), 29.

<sup>100</sup>H. Stein, "In the Good Old Days of Eighty-Nine," Alma Mater, XIX (1 January 1929), 131.

the keeping of late hours must have been true about Guenther. There is little information about Guenther's leisure time activities, if indeed he had any. Ludwig Fuerbringer suggests that Guenther's diversion probably consisted in visiting his publishing friends in downtown St. Louis on Saturday mornings:

On Saturday mornings he regularly went downtown as a sort of recreation, I think, because he spent most of his time in his study and kept late, oftentimes very late, hours, so that even the streetcar conductors sometimes asked us students who was burning the midnight oil. When in the city, he regularly called on two friends, both of them booksellers, Louis Volkening, the publisher of his Populaere Symbolik, and Frederick Dette, the publisher of the Weimarer-Bibel . . .<sup>101</sup>

Like many in this period Guenther probably found his entertainment in his work. The editing of the various periodicals by the faculty seems to have been a not completely unenjoyable task. William Schaller in writing about his professor father, Gottlieb, a colleague of Guenther's, described these meetings:

The aroma of the herb just referred to [tobacco] permeated the house again when there was Lesen, Reading. That was the name given to the evenings on which the faculty met for the purpose of reading with critical acumen articles in manuscript sent in for publication in one or the other synodical periodicals. Time and place for this important work, was, it seems, not agreed upon once for all, but appointed in this way that Dr. Walther passed around by messenger a slip containing the brief notice: "Lesen um acht bei Guenther," or whichever name it happened to be . . . on retiring for the night, who could help hearing the steady voice of the reader without trying

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<sup>101</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 120f.

to catch a word, or who could suppress a chuckle when yonder a hearty laugh broke?<sup>102</sup>

Guenther seems to have enjoyed his visits with his parishioners in Kirkwood, whom he would visit on Sunday afternoons.<sup>103</sup> Guenther also found some enjoyment in following American politics.<sup>104</sup>

There is general agreement among those who knew Guenther that he did not have an especially exuberant or vibrant personality. Rather he seems to have been considerably quiet and introverted. Fuerbringer relates in several places that Guenther was generally very quiet and withdrawing:

Guenther was a rather quiet man, did not say much at conferences, synodical meetings, in social gatherings, and might well have been called, like that famous general, Helmuth von Moltke, "der grosse Schweiger."<sup>105</sup>

Fuerbringer stayed in Guenther's house during the 1882-1883

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<sup>102</sup>William Schaller, "Gottlieb Schaller," CHIQ, XVI (October 1943), 90. Guenther like Walther seems to have been an indefatigable smoker. William Dallmann writes in a somewhat enigmatic style, "'Twas told: Pic-nic; Guenther and Kaehler in a skiff; capsized; came up; 'Kaehler, still have a light?'" William Dallmann, "Memories," CHIQ, XII (July 1940), 45. Martin Sommer relates, "I read my first German sermon to Professor Guenther. While he listened, he smoked a long pipe. When I was through, he told me that I spoke entirely too fast;" op. cit., p. 17.

<sup>103</sup>Supra, p. 85.

<sup>104</sup>Fuerbringer relates when he walked into Guenther's study in 1893, he found a picture of Grover Cleveland on the wall. Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 119.

<sup>105</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118. Peer Stroemme, a Norwegian student during Guenther's time gives a similar description: "Professor Guenther was dry and taciturn--but he was supposed to have stored up in his brain so much knowledge that the boys said of him that he, like General von Moltke, could keep silent in twenty different languages." "Smoking in Class," Alma Mater, XXIV (1 February 1934), 92.

school year and while at the Seminary ate all his dinners in Guenther's home. Fuerbringer gives the following description of Guenther at meal time:

Also at the table he was rather quiet. The members of his family and George Bernthal who lived with me at Guenther's house that year, only heard brief remarks from his lips, and often he simply beckoned for a certain dish on the table.<sup>106</sup>

His students were also unanimous in their characterization of Guenther as a very dry and unexciting teacher.<sup>107</sup> Even the sympathetic Fuerbringer writes that in the classroom his "remarks . . . were not made in a very impressive, rhetorical, forceful way . . ."<sup>108</sup>

Although Walther's impression of Guenther was that Guenther was less exciting than he (Walther) wished,<sup>109</sup> he still seems to have confided in Guenther and "consulted him in difficult and important matters aside from the regular faculty and editorial meetings."<sup>110</sup>

Quiet and retiring as he was, Guenther's kindness and occasional dry humor was never questioned. Pastor H. Speckhard, writing after Guenther's death, eulogized:

Dabei war er in seinem Verkehr mit jederman von grosser Fruendlichkeit. Wer mit ihm in Beruehrung kam, musste sich zu ihm hingezogen fuehle. Der

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<sup>106</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>107</sup>Supra, pp. 59f.

<sup>108</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118.

<sup>109</sup>Supra, p. 52.

<sup>110</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118.



Koestlichen, trockende Humor, mit welchem er eine Unterhaltung zu wuerzen verstant, fehlte Stachel; er war wohl belehrend, aber nicht verletzend.<sup>111</sup>

Fuerbringer also says that, "Everyone knew his good and kind heart, his sincere interest in the affairs and welfare of the Church."<sup>112</sup> Significantly, his funeral sermon was based on Malachi 2:5, 6, "Das Gesetz der Wahrheit war in seinem Munde, und ward kein Boeses in seinen Lippen gefunden."<sup>113</sup> In an earlier section,<sup>114</sup> it was conjectured that one of the reasons Guenther may have been unaggressive was the guilt by association which Guenther felt because of the actions of his sister Louise. Perhaps he was unaggressive for other reasons. This tendency in Guenther was probably more pronounced by very long hours of work. Thus it is perhaps understandable that he said very little at the supper table for example. Guenther's unsociability might be considered a flaw in his personality. On the other hand it meshed well with his capacity for producing large quantities of work.

As a theologian he was markedly "Old Lutheran." His theology was clear, simple, and Confessional. He wanted to be loyal in every way to Luther and the Lutheran Symbols.

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<sup>111</sup>H. Speckhard, Gemeinebuch der evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinde zum heiligen Kreuz, U. A. C. (Saginaw, Michigan: F. & C. Reiter, 1899), p. 30.

<sup>112</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>113</sup>C. C. Schmidt, "Rede gehalten bei dem Leichenbegaengniss des sel. Prof. M. Guenther," Der Lutheraner, IL (4 July 1893), 106f.

<sup>114</sup>Supra, p. 13.

His primary loyalty was to the Scriptures, but the doctrines of Luther and the Lutheran Symbols were the same as those of the Scriptures. Guenther wrote the Vorwort to the 1884 volume (XL) of the Lutheraner in which he gave his theological position. He concluded the article, "Gottes Wort ist Luthers Lehr! so sagen wir freudig und getrost, und weil Gottes Wort nicht vergeht, so rufen wir froehlich Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr Vergeht nun und nimmermehr!"<sup>115</sup> Walther on the basis of previous acquaintance with Guenther and through knowledge of Guenther's Populaere Symbolik, stated in 1873, "Guenther hat aber dazu sehre gut Gaben und steht mit uns voller Harmonie der Lehre und es Geistes."<sup>116</sup> George Stockhardt wrote about Guenther in Lehre und Wehre:

Seine Schueler haben von ihm gelehrt, dass die ungeschminkte Wahrheit wahrlich genug is zum Glauben, zu einem gottseligen Wandel, zum Aufbau der Kirche Gottes und zu einem seligen Sterben, und dass ein Theologe gar wohl ohne Schaden der hohlen Praseologie der modernen Wissenschaft entrathen kann . . . . Mit Allem, was er schrieb, gab er der reinen Lehre Zeugniß, und er hat auch gezeigt, wie die reine Lehre das Leben rein und lauter macht, und dass alle Irrlehre ein sellenverderbliches Gift in sich birgt.<sup>117</sup>

Franz Pieper made a similar evaluation:

Alle seine Artikel und "Vorworte" zielten darauf ab, die alte Lehre Luthers, in der sein eigenes Herz und

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<sup>115</sup> Ibid., XL (15 January 1884), 10. For another good example Guenther's theological position, see G[uenther], "Vorwort," ibid., XLVI (1 January 1890), 1f.

<sup>116</sup> "C. F. W. Walther to P. F. Sievers, 22 May 1873," MS., C. H. I.

<sup>117</sup> G[eorge] St[oeckhardt], "Professor M. Guenther," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (May 1893), 150.

Gewissen gefangen war, un die serselben entsprechende Kirchliche Praxis, auch die alten guten Sitten, Braeuche und Ceremonien unserer Kirche den lutherischen Christen und Gemeinden lieb und werth zu machen und ihnen heiligen Abscheu vor aller falschen Lehre und selbsterwaehlten Froemmigkeit einzufloessen.<sup>118</sup>

In 1876 Guenther moved into the western half of a double faculty residence on the corner of Winnebago Street and Texas Avenue. The residence had been previously occupied by Prof. F. A. Schmidt. Perhaps indicative of Guenther's stature or seniority on the faculty is the fact that he moved into Walther's house after Walther's death in 1887.<sup>119</sup> It was in this house that Guenther died.

Already in 1889 age was beginning to tell on Guenther.<sup>120</sup> Years of hard and ceaseless labor were beginning to take their toll. On Pentecost Monday, 22 May 1893, Guenther preached at Pastor C. L. Janzow's congregation in St. Louis, Bethlehem. When he left the house in the morning to preach he was in a joyful mood, although he had been not in the best health during the previous several weeks. While in the pulpit he felt very weak and had to end his sermon quickly. After the service, however, he felt well enough to go home unaccompanied. During the trip home he was again struck by this weakness

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<sup>118</sup>[Franz Pieper], "Prof. M. Guenther," Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1894 nach der Geburt unsers Herrn Jesu Christi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 24.

<sup>119</sup>Karl Kretzmann, "An Old Lutheran Neighborhood," CHIQ, XVIII (April 1945), 19.

<sup>120</sup>Supra, p. 86.

(Schwaecher). Upon arrival his family was frightened by his appearance, and he complained of great fatigue (Ermattung) and anguish (Beklemmung) in his chest. A nearby doctor was quickly summoned and a sedative administered, whereupon Guenther retired to the sofa in his study and fell asleep. He died a half hour later.<sup>121</sup>

Guenther was buried the following Thursday, 25 May. While lying in state his body reposed on the same Katafalk on which the bodies of Schaller and Walther in 1887, and R. Lange in 1892 had also briefly rested. President of the Seminary, Franz Pieper, preached at the memorial service held in the Seminary aula in the morning of the 25th. In the afternoon another service was held in Holy Cross Church, where Pastor C. C. Schmidt preached. At the graveside in Concordia Cemetery, where Walther, Schaller, and Lange were also buried, Pastor Joseph Schmidt, Guenther's successor in Saginaw, Michigan, gave the committal address. Schmidt had been hastily sent to St. Louis especially for the funeral by the congregation in Saginaw. Pastor C. L. Janzow officiated for the committal liturgy.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>121</sup>A[ugust] G[raebner], "Professor Martin Guenther," Der Lutheraner, IL (6 June 1893), 89. Fuerbringer states the cause of death was a stroke; op. cit., p. 120.

<sup>122</sup>Graebner, op. cit., p. 89. Pieper's memorial sermon appeared in the same issue of the Lutheraner, "Martin Guenther. Gedaechnisrede, gehalten in der Aula des theologischen Seminars von F. Pieper," p. 90. Pastor C. C. Schmidt's sermon was also printed in the Lutheraner, IL (4 July 1893), 106f. Pastor Joseph's Schmidt's graveside address appeared in the same issue, p. 109.

Guenther's wife, Theresa, died two and one half years later, 8 December 1895, and was buried alongside him in Concordia Cemetery.<sup>123</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>"Photograph of Guenther's gravemarker," C. H. I.

## CHAPTER V

### LATER YEARS: LITERARY ACTIVITY, 1873-1893

#### Der Lutheraner

As noted above, one of the most important reasons why Guenther was elected to the faculty in 1873 was his ability to write for and help edit the Lutheraner and Lehre und Wehre.<sup>1</sup> Walther, who was especially anxious to have Guenther, recognized Guenther's literary ability through his secretarial work, his Populaere Symbolik, his doctrinal presentations to the Northern District, and through his contributions to the Lutheraner. As early as 1856 Guenther may have begun writing for the Lutheraner.<sup>2</sup> The first article about which there is

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup>In an open letter to a fictitious Hans, "Dein Martin" wrote nine columns about the need for building a new addition to the Seminary. Der Lutheraner, XII (11 March 1856), 115-118. It is not conclusive that this article is by Guenther, but there is some evidence to indicate that it is. Guenther was a very recent graduate of the Seminary and therefore well aware of the need for more space. Guenther's awareness of the needs of the Seminary and his willingness to help are demonstrated by the receipts which appeared periodically in the Lutheraner. The following are typical of the contributions for the building fund or general seminary support which were sent in by or through (durch) Guenther: \$2.00, ibid., X (14 March 1854), 120; \$5.68 (gathered at Guenther's own wedding), ibid., XI (13 February 1855), 104; \$9.21, ibid., XII (18 December 1855), 72; \$2.00, ibid., XII (22 April 1856), 144; \$23.10, ibid., XIII (4 November 1856), 48; \$13.00 (Guenther himself contributed \$4.60), ibid., XIII (27 January 1857), 96; \$5.03, ibid., XIII (19 May 1857), 159. The signature itself, "Dein Martin," indicates Guenther's authorship. Not only the name, "Martin," but also the phrase, "Dein Martin," fit Guenther. Ludwig

almost no doubt of having come from Guenther's pen appeared in the Lutheraner in 1870.<sup>3</sup> Beginning with 1877 Guenther began contributing rather consistently to the Lutheraner, mostly biographical articles.<sup>4</sup>

Almost immediately upon his arrival in St. Louis, Guenther seems to have taken a strong hand in working with both publications, the Lutheraner and Lehre und Wehre.<sup>5</sup> The precise

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Fuerbringer relates that when Guenther presented Ottomar Fuerbringer with a copy of Populaere Symbolik in 1872, Guenther signed it "Deine M. G." Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 116. Other articles which may have been by Guenther are "Gelieber Bruder!" ibid., XVI (10 July 1860), 185; "Mein lieber Hans," ibid., XVIII (13 November 1861), 49-51; "Mein lieber Gottlieb," ibid., XXIV (1 December 1867), 52-55.

<sup>3</sup>G[uenther], "Ein verlornen und wiedergefundenen Sohn," ibid., XXVII (15 November 1870), 46.

<sup>4</sup>G[uenther], "Lieber Vetter Christian!" ibid., XXVIII (1 December 1871), 35f.; Guenther, "Dr. Johann Gerhard's Leben nach E. Rud. Fischer, Vita J. Gerhards," ibid., XXVIII (15 December 1871), 43-45; ibid., XXVIII (1 January 1872), 48-51; ibid., XXVIII (15 January 1872), 59f.; ibid., XXVIII (1 February 1872), 67f.; ibid., XXVIII (15 February 1872), 77f.; ibid., XXVIII (1 March 1872), 81-83; ibid., XXVIII (15 March 1872), 91f.; Guenther, "Petrus Paulus Vergerius, oder wie ein paebstlicher Nuntius und roemisch-katholischer Bischof zur Erkenntniss der Wahrheit gekommen und in den Dienst der Herrn Jesus getreten ist," ibid., XXVIII (1 April 1872), 97f.; ibid., XXVIII (1 May 1872), 113f.; ibid., XXVIII (15 June 1872), 137f.; ibid., XXVIII (15 July 1872), 156f.; Guenther, "Der Jesuiten-Orden," ibid., XXIX (15 May 1873), 123-126; ibid., XXIX (1 June 1873), 132f.; ibid., XXIX (15 June 1873), 138-140; Guenther, "Ein bekehrter Jesuit," ibid., XXIX (15 July 1873), 157f.; G[uenther], "Nestorianismus in der Zeitschrift des Herrn Pastor Brobst," ibid., XXIX (15 June 1873), 140f.

<sup>5</sup>Guenther's work with Lehre und Wehre is considered on pages 112-116.

amount of responsibility which Guenther had in connection with the Lutheraner is difficult to determine with precision, since there seem to be conflicting opinions. Otto A. Dorn, writing about "Early Printing in the Missouri Synod," states that Walther remained editor of the Lutheraner until 1865, when editorial responsibility was temporarily turned over to the seminary faculty. After Walther's death, Dorn continues, it became permanently edited by the faculty, with Guenther named managing editor.<sup>6</sup> Dorn thus leaves the impression that Guenther was not managing editor of the Lutheraner before 1887. Ludwig Fuerbringer, who knew Guenther as early as 1854 and who himself later became managing editor of the Lutheraner, writes:

Very soon [upon his arrival in St. Louis] he [Guenther] became managing editor of the Lutheraner, which up to that time was chiefly edited by Walther, its founder; and most probably also for this position he was in the minds of the men who were instrumental in electing and calling him to St. Louis. Guenther guided that paper safely and sanely through the turbulent years of the Predestination Controversy . . . . No one paging through these twenty volumes of the Lutheraner . . . .<sup>7</sup>

Fuerbringer leaves the rather unmistakable impression that Guenther was managing editor almost immediately upon joining the faculty. There is some evidence in the Lutheraner itself

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<sup>6</sup>Otto A. Dorn, "Early Printing in the Missouri Synod," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIV (April 1951), 2. Dorn does not cite his sources for his assertion that Guenther was named editor after Walther's death. Hereafter the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly will be abbreviated CHIQ.

<sup>7</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 117.



to substantiate Fuerbringer's statement. For example Guenther wrote the Vorworte to volumes XXX and XXXI (1874 and 1875). After 1875 Guenther and Walther alternated in writing the Vorworte. In January 1874 Walther wrote his son-in-law, Pastor H. Niemann, that Guenther was helping with the editorial work.<sup>8</sup> Notices in the Lutheraner, which seem to indicate managing editorship, point to Guenther's assuming editorship sometime during the year 1874.<sup>9</sup>

Walther, however, continued to exert very important influence on the Lutheraner. Walther not only undoubtedly had a great deal to say about what was published in the Lutheraner, but he also remained a consistent and frequent contributor. Guenther and Walther both wrote numerous articles for the

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<sup>8</sup>"Walther to H. Niemann, 10 January 1874," MS., Concordia Historical Institute. Hereafter Concordia Historical Institute will be abbreviated C. H. I.

<sup>9</sup>In February 1874, Walther asked if all notices and receipts should continue to be published in the Lutheraner, since these were taking up considerable space. Der Lutheraner, XXX (1 February 1874), 22. This might indicate that Walther was still managing editor at this point; however, the Quittung und Dank was a controversial problem and Walther may have signed his name to this in order to take the responsibility for the question, rather than place Guenther in an embarrassing position. In April 1874, Guenther announced that all anonymous contributions to the Lutheraner would not be considered, G[uenther], "An Einsender," ibid., XXX (1 April 1874), 55. In August 1874 Guenther stated that notices about conferences, and other items, which were to appear in a specific issue had to be in the hands of the editor at least eight days before publication, ibid., XXX (1 August 1874), 118. Although this evidence does not put the question entirely beyond doubt, it nevertheless strongly indicates that Guenther took over editorial management at least by 1874.

Lutheraner with Guenther perhaps writing more than Walther.<sup>10</sup>

The two men also shared the task of writing the news notes for the column, Zur kirchlichen Chronik. Walther generally contributed articles to the section on foreign news (Ausland), while Guenther kept his eye on American religious developments (America).<sup>11</sup> Neither person, however, restricted himself to either column. The arrangement was a fortunate one, since Walther had been the official foreign correspondent of the Synod since 1850. Guenther on the other hand was well attuned to the American religious scene due to his work in preparing Populaere Symbolik, a three hundred page volume setting forth the doctrinal differences between the Lutheran Church and the other religious denominations.<sup>12</sup> After Walther's death in 1887, Guenther seems to have contributed primarily to the Ausland section of Zur kirchlichen Chronik, while others, such as F. Pieper and especially A. L. Graebner, concentrated on America.

Besides being managing editor of the Lutheraner Guenther also wrote a large number of feature articles. A rough tabulation of these, counting each installment in a series as one

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<sup>10</sup>No tabulation of these were made by the writer. The conclusion is based upon the general impression gained after paging through volumes XXIX-XLI (1873-1893).

<sup>11</sup>Almost any number between 1873 and 1887 will demonstrate this, but for a few examples see Der Lutheraner, XXIX (15 November 1873); 222-224; ibid., XXXIX (15 November 1883), 172f.

<sup>12</sup>Cf. Chapter VI.

article, reveals that from 1873-1893, Guenther wrote over two hundred and fifty major articles, or an average of one article for every two issues.<sup>13</sup>

Guenther ranged over a wide variety of subjects. Guenther's most noted articles were those which dealt with various persons and movements in the history of the church, especially Lutheran theologians and martyrs from the time of the Reformation.<sup>14</sup> About forty such biographical articles by Guenther appeared between 1873 and 1893. Some of these biographical sketches were published in a four-volume biographical anthology, Ehrendenkmal treuer Zeugen Christi.<sup>15</sup>

Another notable series by Guenther appeared in connection with the new seminary building dedicated in 1883. For the occasion Guenther wrote a brief history of the seminary,<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXIX-XLIX (1873-1893), passim. The longest series which Guenther wrote, probably the longest ever to appear in the Lutheraner, was a biography of Walther which ran for thirty-five consecutive installments between July 1888 and November 1889; infra pp.

<sup>14</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 118; [F. Pieper], "Prof. M. Guenther," Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1894 nach der Geburt unsers Herrn Jesus Christi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 24.

<sup>15</sup>The full title of the work was: Ehrendenkmal treuer Zeugen Christi; Eine Sammlung kurzgefasster christlicher Lebensbilder aus alter und neuer Zeit (Zwickau i. S.: Druck und Verlag von Johannes Herrmann, 1878-1880). Articles by Guenther appeared in volumes II and III.

<sup>16</sup>[Guenther], "Geschichte des Concordia Seminars," Der Lutheraner, XXXVIII (15 October 1882), 155f.; ibid., XXXVIII (15 November 1882), 171; ibid., XXXVIII (15 December 1882), 186; ibid., XXXIX (1 January 1883), 4f.; ibid., XXXIX (15 January 1883), 12; ibid., XXXIX (15 March 1883), 43f.

which until 1944 remained the most complete history of the Seminary's first forty years.<sup>17</sup>

The Roman Catholic Church was repeatedly and severely dealt with by Guenther in the pages of the Lutheraner.<sup>18</sup> Guenther's strong animosity toward the Roman Catholic Church might be explained partially by his great loyalty to and interest in Luther, the Lutheran Reformation, and the Lutheran Confessions. Undoubtedly another factor was the general fear and distrust of the Roman Church which pervaded American Protestantism in the nineteenth century, especially the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 121. Since Fuerbringer wrote in 1944, Roy A. Suelflow has written, "The History of Concordia Seminary, 1847-1865," CHIQ, XXIV (July 1951), 49-68; ibid., XXIV (October 1951), 112-115. In 1954 Carl S. Meyer wrote a history of "Secondary and Higher Education in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1839-1874" (Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954). Dr. Meyer is currently engaged in writing a history of ministerial education in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, with projected publication in 1965.

<sup>18</sup>For examples of this see, G[uenther], "Roms Umtriebe," Der Lutheraner, XXXI (15 May 1875), 77f.; "Eine gemeine und freche Pabstluege," ibid., XXXII (1 January 1876), 4f.; "Des Pabstes Morden," ibid., XXXII (15 November 1876), 169-172; "Stimmen aus dem Pabstthum ueber das Pabstthum, namentlich vor der Reformation," ibid., XXXIII (1 August 1877), 113f.; "Das Pabstthum--nichte anderes, denn eine Welt voll Abgotterei," ibid., XXXIV (10 May 1878), 74-76; ibid., XXXIV (1 June 1878), 82f.; ibid., XXXIV (15 June 1878), 89f.; ibid., XXXIV (1 July 1878), 136f. About twenty more similar articles could be cited. Frequently Guenther used filler items to attack the Roman Catholics. For an example of this see ibid., XLIII (1 July 1887), 106f.

<sup>19</sup>Cf. Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc. c.1960), pp. 32f. Anti-Catholicism reached its zenith between 1840 and 1860, as typified in the "Know-Nothing Party."

Guenther also wrote numerous articles dealing with the distinctive doctrines of the Lutheran Church, such as the Lord's Supper, Baptism, and the Means of Grace.<sup>20</sup> Guenther also wrote occasionally about practical matters, such as the labor union question<sup>21</sup> and the Sunday School question.<sup>22</sup> Also from his pen came articles about the various denominations in the United States.<sup>23</sup>

The Predestination Controversy (Gnadenwahlstreit) was probably the major issue confronting the Missouri Synod during Guenther's years as managing editor of the Lutheraner. Guenther himself wrote very little about the controversy. In fact, the Lutheraner itself, contained surprisingly few articles about the controversy. The longest and most comprehensive treatment of the question in the Lutheraner was a series of eight articles by C. F. W. Walther in 1880, "Was wir von der Gnadenwahl glauben, lehren und bekennen."<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>For examples of this see, "Dass Christi Leib im heiligen Abendmahl sein kann, obgleich er nicht raemlich und greiflich darin gegenwaertig ist," Der Lutheraner, XXXV (15 April 1879), 57-61; "Wiedergeburt durch die heilige Taufe," ibid., XXXV (1 September 1879), 131f.; Vom rechten Gebrauch der Lehre von den Gnadenmitteln," ibid., XLIII (1 October 1887), 149f.

<sup>21</sup>"Zur Arbeiterfrage," ibid., XLII (15 April 1886), 57-59.

<sup>22</sup>"Koennen lutherische Eltern ihre Kinder die Sonntagsschulen der Secten besuchen lassen?" ibid., XLVI (17 June 1890), 101f.

<sup>23</sup>For example, "Methodismus," ibid., XXX (15 November 1874), 171f.; "Wer sind die Sieben-Tags Adventisten und was lehren sie?" ibid., XLV (19 November 1889), 185f.; ibid., XLV (3 December 1889), 195f.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., XXXVI (15 January 1880), 11; ibid., XXXVI (1 February 1880), 19-22; ibid., XXXVI (15 February 1880),

The controversy was taken up much more extensively in the Synod's theological journal, Lehre und Wehre.<sup>25</sup> Guenther, as might be expected, supported Walther in the controversy, although he never wrote extensively in Walther's behalf.<sup>26</sup> It was Fuerbringer's judgment that Guenther had guided the Lutheraner "safely and sanely" through the Predestination Controversy.<sup>27</sup>

Throughout his twenty years of work with the Lutheraner Guenther always kept in mind the original goals and objectives of the Lutheraner, as Walther had stated them in the first number of the periodical in 1844. Walther wrote:

Dasselbe soll nehmlich dazu dienen: 1. mit der Lehre, den Schaetzen und der Geschichte der lutherischen Kirche bekannt zu machen; 2. den Beweis dafuer zu liefern, dass diese Kirche nich in der Reihe der christlichen Secten stehe, und nicht eine neue, sondern die alte wahre Kirche Jesu Christi auf Erden sei, dass sie daher noch keinesweges ausgestorben sei, ja, nicht aussterben koenne, nach Christi verheissung: "Siehe, ich bin bei euch alle Tage bis an der Welt Ende." Unser Blatt soll ferner 3. dazu dienen, zu zeigen, wie ein Mensche als ein wahrer

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25-28; ibid., XXXVI (1 March 1880), 33f.; ibid., XXXVI (15 March 1880), 41-43; ibid., XXXVI (1 April 1880), 52-54; ibid., XXXVI (15 April 1880), 57-60; ibid., XXXVI (1 May 1880), 64-67.

<sup>25</sup>Lehre und Wehre, XXVI, XXVII (1880, 1881). The size of the volume ballooned from 384 pages in 1880 to 596 pages in 1881 because of the literature on the controversy.

<sup>26</sup>For examples of how Guenther defended Walther's position in a more or less casual manner, see, "Die Westliche District," Der Lutheraner, XXXVI (1 November 1880), 164f.; "Review of Prof. Stellhorn Tract on the Controversy concerning Predestination," ibid., XXXVII (1 September 1881), 136.

<sup>27</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 117.

Lutheraner recht glauben, christlich leben, geduldig leiden und selig sterben koenne; und endlich 4. die im Schwange gehenden falschen, verfuehrerischen Lehren zu entdecken, zu widerlegen und davor zu warnern, und insonderheit diejenigen zu entlarven, die sich faelschlich Lutherisch nennen, unter diesem Namen Irrglauben, Unglauben und Schwaermerei verbreiten und daher uebelsten Vorurtheile gegen unsere Kirche in den Gliedern anderer Parteien erwecken.<sup>28</sup>

Not only do the subject matters of articles written by Guenther for the Lutheraner betray close conformity to Walther's original objectives, but Guenther himself explicitly stated on several occasions that the Lutheraner would retain and pursue Walther's original objectives. Perhaps the best example of this appeared in Guenther's Vorwort to volume XLIV (1888), in which Guenther specifically pledged the Lutheraner to the initial tenets set down by Walther in the first issue in 1844, which Guenther quoted verbatim.<sup>29</sup>

Although the Lutheraner was officially edited by the faculty, with Guenther serving as managing editor, the Synod still exercised considerable control over editorial policies and format. One of the most controversial subjects was the Quittung und Dank section, which acknowledged contributions to various official and unofficial Synodical treasuries. As the Synod grew, the number of contributions also grew, so that on occasion the acknowledgements took one-third to one-half of an issue. Walther had raised the question in

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<sup>28</sup>C. F. W. Walther, "Vorbemerkungen ueber Ursache, Zweck und Inhalt des Blattes," ibid., I (7 September 1844), 1. A translation of this by Alex W. Guebert appeared in the Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXII (October 1961), 656f.

<sup>29</sup>"Vorwort," ibid., XLIV (3 January 1888), 1f.

February 1874, whether some of these acknowledgements should still be printed.<sup>30</sup> The Synodical convention in 1874 took up the problem; however, a resolution to publish a monthly or quarterly Beiblatt containing the acknowledgements was rejected.<sup>31</sup> In 1884 the Synod again took up the problem of the Lutheraner. A resolution demanding a complete reorganization (Umgestaltung) of the Lutheraner was rejected. Instead the Synod passed the following resolutions:

Beschlossen, dass die Redaction des "Lutheraners" den Raum fuer Quittungen, Conferenz--und andere Anzeigen soviel als moeglich beschraenke.  
 Beschlossen, dass fortan Quittungen von Privatwohlthaetigkeitsanstalten aus den Spalten des "Lutheraner" ausgeschlossen bleiben sollen.  
 Beschlossen, dass den Privatwohlthaetigkeitsanstalten innerhalb unserer Synode gestattet werde, etwa monatlich ihre Quittung durch eine Beilage zum "Lutheraner" gegen Verguetung von Papier und Satzkosten zu veroeffentlichen.<sup>32</sup>

In 1887 the Synod resolved that the Lutheraner be published bi-weekly instead of twice monthly. The Synod also decided that the Lutheraner should be published on Wednesday, if possible, so that it would be in the hands of its readers by the following Sunday. At the same time the Synod also tabled any further discussion of the problem of the Quittung und Dank

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., XXX (1 February 1874), 22.

<sup>31</sup> Sechszehnter Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Deutschen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, versammelt als Erste Delegaten-Synode zu Fort Wayne, Ind., im Jahre 1874 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1874), p. 76. Hereafter all such official Proceedings will be cited in the following abbreviated form: Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1874, p. 75.

<sup>32</sup> Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1884, p. 81.



sections.<sup>33</sup>

Under Guenther the Lutheraner continued to serve and fulfill the original objectives of Walther and the Missouri Synod, as it reflected and stressed the Missouri Synod's understanding of Lutheran theology and practice. Although there were no editorial policy changes under Guenther, it is unlikely that Guenther could have inaugurated any had he wished to do so because of the influence of Walther, the faculty and the Synod. The era was one of consolidation, self-preservation, and growth, rather than creativity. Toward these ends Guenther's editing of and contributing articles to the Lutheraner must be counted as significant factors in the growth of the Missouri Synod during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

#### Homiletisches Magazin

Writing about the life of the Lutheran pastor in southern Wisconsin during the period from 1850 to 1875, Otto F. Hattsteadt states that in the local pastoral conferences sermon criticism was practiced. Pastors would take turns at these conferences in constructing and presenting sermons, which would then be scrutinized and criticized by fellow pastors. Concerning this practice Hattsteadt concludes:

In this respect the early pastors held an advantage over the present-day pastors. They were to a very

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<sup>33</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1887, p. 55.

large extent "on their own," for there were very few, if any, sources of help such as the Magazine.<sup>34</sup>

This does not, however, seem to have been the feeling of many pastors at the time. At least Guenther along with a number of others did not feel that all parish pastors were better off completely "on their own." In November 1876 Guenther announced in the Lutheraner the publication of a new periodical:<sup>35</sup>

Magazin fuer evangelisch-lutherische Homiletik.  
Herausgegeben von einigen Pastoralconferenzen der deutschen evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri u. In Verbindung mit einer dazu bestellten Commission redigirt von M. Guenther.

Guenther also explained the proposed contents of the new publication:

Diese neue Zeitschrift, die, g. e. G., im Kommenden Jahre erscheinen wird, wird enthalten: Musterpredigten und Reden aus alter und neuer Zeit, Dispositionen und Entwuerfe fuer Predigten ueber die Pericopen und Casualreden, Mittheilungen aus aelteren homiletischen Werken und Originalartikel, Recensionen und Kritiken von Predigten und Predigtsammlungen, homiletischen Werken u.

The annual subscription price would be two dollars. Subscriptions for the publication should be sent to M. Guenther.

In the Vorwort to the first volume which appeared in

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<sup>34</sup>Otto F. Hattstaedt, History of the Southern Wisconsin District of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (Translation by the Wisconsin Historical Records Survey, Division of Community Service Programs, Works Projects Administration. Madison Wisconsin, 1941), pp. 51f.

<sup>35</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXXII (1 November 1876), 168.

January, 1877,<sup>36</sup> Guenther described the task and function of the Homiletisches Magazin. Preaching, he stated, was the most important and the most difficult of all the pastoral duties. Many pastors lived long distances from fellow pastors, many had very large congregations to serve, many were also teaching school, many were living under oppressive conditions and did not have access to a large library. For these reasons, Guenther continued, many pastors had for a long time desired a periodical which would help them in their preaching needs, and it was Guenther's hope that the Homiletisches Magazin would meet these needs.

Homiletical periodicals were not lacking, especially in Germany. These, however, were in Guenther's words:

Tummelplaetze, auf denen Geister aller Art ihre Kueste sehen lassen; sie sind sprechsaele, in denen neben dem Wort der Wahrheit auch der Luege gleiche Berechtigung zugestanden wird. Sie sind darum meist unbrauchbar.<sup>37</sup>

The Homiletisches Magazin was thus to serve also as a companion to Lehre und Wehre in the task of disseminating "die reine Lehre des goettlichen Worts . . ."<sup>38</sup> He stated that it would contain excerpts of old treasures of the literature of the Lutheran church as well as current articles and sermons. The new articles would, however, contain nothing new, at least no

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<sup>36</sup>[Martin] G[uenther], Magazin fuer ev.-luth. Homiletik, I (January [1877]), 1-5, passim.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid.

new doctrines. Guenther promised that books which furthered true preaching would be recommended, while the readers would be warned against those books which were opposed to the truth.

The first number of the Homiletisches Magazin contained a complete New Year's sermon and eleven well-developed sermon outlines based on the Gospel lessons for the Sundays and festivals of the Church Year from New Year to Septuagesima. Of these eleven outlines six were by Guenther.<sup>39</sup> These were followed by a number of outlines for occasional sermons and addresses (Casualpredigten und Reden), of which three were by Guenther. E. A. W. Krauss translated into German Quenstedt's homiletical rules, which were contained in Quenstedt's Ethica pastoralis. A portion of these rules appeared in the first issue of the Homiletisches Magazin, as did a portion of Lucas Osiander's De ratione concionandi. The excerpt from Osiander dealt with the method of selecting sermon texts. The first number concluded with reviews of five sermon books, including Zwoelf Reden von Soeren Kierkegaard. Three of these books were reviewed by Guenther. The format remained the same until after Guenther's death, except for minor variations. For the next sixteen years (1877-1893) Guenther continued to make numerous contributions, especially sermon outlines and book reviews. Guenther was probably the single most important and most extensive contributor during the sixteen-year period.

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-21.

The venture was quickly recognized as very worthwhile. In May 1878, the Missouri Synod adopted the Homiletisches Magazin as one of its official publications. Not an unprofitable publication, one of the conditions under which the Magazin was entrusted to the Synod, was that the profits continue to flow into the Prediger-und-Lehrer-Wittwen-und Waisen-Kasse. The Synod accepted the publication with thanks to its former publishers and immediately entrusted the editorial responsibility to the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.<sup>40</sup>

When the editing of the Homiletisches Magazin was assigned to the faculty, Guenther's work was probably considerably lightened, although he probably remained the managing editor. The basis for this assumption is Guenther's having been the Magazin's first editor and lack of evidence for his having been replaced in this role after 1878. Further reasons for believing that Guenther remained editor are the numerous contributions by Guenther to the Homiletisches Magazin, especially in the areas which seem to indicate editorship, namely, the sermon outline sections and book review sections, where the editor would be likely to supply filler items as needed.

The response to the Homiletisches Magazin seems to have been good, at least in terms of circulation. The circulation figures for the first four years are not available, but by

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<sup>40</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1878, p. 52.

1881 the Magazin, or the Mag as it was popularly called, was being printed in editions of nine hundred. (Lehre und Wehre at the same time was being printed in quantities of twelve hundred.) By 1884 the Homiletisches Magazin was being printed in quantities of fifteen hundred per issue, while Lehre und Wehre had a printing of seventeen hundred per issue. In 1884 there were only 803 pastors in the Missouri Synod. By 1893 the Homiletisches Magazin was being printed in quantities of two thousand, although the pastors of the Synod numbered 1,210 at the time.<sup>41</sup> The picture which develops from these statistics is that the Homiletisches Magazin was very favorably received and used by practically all the pastors in the Missouri Synod and by a considerable number of pastors outside of the Missouri Synod.

Thus the editorial work and the original contributions which Guenther made to the Homiletisches Magazin over a period of sixteen years must be considered to be of great practical significance for the average Missouri Synod pastor during this period.

### Lehre und Wehre

As noted above, one of the main reasons why Guenther was Walther's first choice for the vacant professorship in

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<sup>41</sup>Cf. Table 3. The general discrepancy in figures between the Homiletisches Magazin and Lehre und Wehre might be explained by the more general interest in Lehre und Wehre by those outside the Missouri Synod.

TABLE 3

PRINTING FIGURES OF OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS  
OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD, 1878-1895

Year	<u>Lutheraner</u>	<u>Lehre und Wehre</u>	<u>Magazin</u>	<u>Schulblatt</u>	Page	Mo. Synod Pastors	Page
1878	9,500	1000	---	750	p. 86 <sup>1</sup>	---	
1881	12,800	1200	900	770	p. 96 <sup>2</sup>	---	
1884	17,500	1700	1500	770	p. 67 <sup>3</sup>	803	p. 54 <sup>3</sup>
1885	18,000	1800	1600	700	p. 63	829	p. 49
1886	19,000	1800	1600	800	p. 70	879	p. 54
1887	19,500	1800	1600	700	p. 75	931	p. 58
1888	20,500	2000	1800	800	p. 72	966	p. 63
1889	21,000	2000	1800	700	p. 85	1014	p. 70
1890	22,000	2000	1800	700	p. 80	1062	p. 70
1891	23,200	2200	2200	800	p. 84	1101	p. 74
1892	24,000	2200	2000	800	p. 86	1147	p. 77
1893	28,000	2200	2000	800	p. 93	1210	p. 82
1894	27,200	2500	2350	1150	p. 104	1276	p. 87
1895	28,000	2500	2200	1150	p. 105	1346	p. 90

<sup>1</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1878.

<sup>2</sup>Missouri Synod, Proceedings, 1881.

<sup>3</sup>Statistical Yearbook, 1884-1895.

1873, was Guenther's literary ability. Guenther began writing for Lehre und Wehre almost as soon as he came to St. Louis. From 1873 to about 1878 or 1879, Guenther contributed rather extensively to Lehre und Wehre. By 1880 Guenther, however, had no signed contributions and wrote very little for Lehre und Wehre after this time. Perhaps this is accounted for by the fact that Franz Pieper, who had come to the Seminary in 1878, began writing extensively for Lehre und Wehre.

By arbitrarily denoting an article of two pages or more as major and an article less than two pages as minor, it was discovered that from 1873 to 1879, Guenther had contributed fifteen major articles for a total of ninety-four pages, for an average of about two articles per year. During the same period he contributed 188 minor articles for a total of eighty-seven pages.<sup>42</sup> Almost all of the minor articles and several major ones appeared in the section entitled Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches. In this section consisting of news notes on the contemporary religious scene, both American and foreign (Ausland), Guenther seems to have been primarily responsible for the American scene, while Walther primarily kept his eye on the foreign scene,<sup>43</sup> although neither Walther nor Guenther

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<sup>42</sup>Cf. Table 4. Only those articles signed by Guenther are included. It is likely that he may have written some of the many unsigned short articles.

<sup>43</sup>For examples of this see Lehre und Wehre, XX (January 1874), 19-21, where all the items on the American scene are



TABLE 4

GUENTHER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO LEHRE UND WEHRE

Year	Major Articles		Minor Articles		Totals	
	Number	Pages	Number	Pages	Number	Pages
1873	1	4	6	4	7	8
1874	2	9	48	19	50	28
1875	3	9	26	12	29	21
1876	4	37	37	19	41	56
1877	2	12	39	16	41	28
1878	1	6	24	12	25	18
1879	2	17	8	4	10	21
1880	-	-	-	-	-	-
1881	-	-	6	4	6	4
1882	-	-	3	3	3	3
1883	-	-	-	-	-	-
1884	-	-	-	-	-	-
1885	-	-	1	1	1	1
1886	-	-	-	-	-	-
1887	-	-	-	-	-	-
1888	-	-	1	1	1	1
1889	-	-	-	-	-	-
1890	-	-	-	-	-	-
1891	-	-	-	-	-	-
1892	-	-	-	-	-	-
1893	-	-	-	-	-	-

confined himself exclusively to either area. The arrangement was much the same as existed in the Lutheraner.

Guenther twice wrote the Vorwort to Lehre und Wehre.<sup>44</sup>

### Luther--Vergissmeinnicht

Among Guenther's literary undertakings was a small volume of daily devotions, composed of Scripture passages and short quotations from Luther. The volume appeared anonymously and without publication date. Guenther's responsibility for this volume was not generally recognized, although Ludwig Fuerbringer is certain it is by Guenther.<sup>45</sup>

The title page of the small volume (three and three-quarter inches by four and five-eighths inches) reads: "Luther-Vergissmeinnicht: Worte Gottes und auserlesene Kern- und Kraftsprueche Dr. Martin Luthers, auf all Tage des Jahres." Also appearing on the title page were the same words that

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signed by Guenther; all the foreign, signed items are by Walther, except one by Guenther. In the following issue, ibid., 2 (February 1874), 50-64, one article on the American scene is by Walther, eight by Guenther, and one unsigned. The foreign articles, eleven, are all by Walther.

<sup>44</sup>G[uenther], "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre, XXII (January 1876), 1-10; ibid., XXII (February 1876), 33-40; ibid., XXII (March 1876), 64-77. G[uenther], ibid., XXIV (January 1878), 1-6.

<sup>45</sup>"That he [Guenther] edited a Vergissmeinnicht aus Luthera Schriften anonymously was practically known to no one. I learned of it but recently by conferring with Pastor J. F. Boerger, who after Guenther's death acquired his edition of Luther's Works." Ludwig Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 119. The title Fuerbringer gives here is inaccurate.

appeared on the masthead of Der Lutheraner: "Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr Vergehet nun und nimmermehr." The book was published in St. Louis by F. Dette.

The Vorerinnerung stated that Luther was undoubtedly the greatest teacher since the time of the Apostles; this volume, wrote the author, was not only meant to help perpetuate Luther's memory but also "Die reine apostolische Lehre, die Gott durch ihn uns wieder geschenkt hat . . . ."

The daily selections were meant to strengthen and comfort the reader and to stimulate him to further study of Luther's writings. The quotations from Luther were taken from the Erlangen edition of Luthers Werke.

The format had a blank page apparently for notes, opposite the page containing the devotions. The devotions consisted of a one to three line Scripture passage, followed by an eight to eleven line quotation from Luther. There were two such meditations on each page. It had meditations for 366 days beginning with January 1.

Biographer of C. F. W. Walther

On 7 May 1887 Dr. C. F. W. Walther died. As pastor, churchman, educator, administrator, editor, and theologian, Walther probably rates as the most important American Lutheran churchman of the nineteenth century. So great was Walther's stature, so versatile and influential was his work, that a definitive biography and evaluation of his life has yet to be written. It is completely understandable that

Guenther when asked to write a biography of Walther for the Lutheraner was very reticent to do so. Under pressure, he finally consented. In a footnote to the first installment of "Ehrendenkmal des seligen Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther," Guenther wrote:

Dass Schreiber dieses dem sel. Dr. Walther dies Ehrendenkmal aufbaut, geschicht nicht darum, weil er besonders dazu geeignet erachtete, ein recht wuerdiges Ehrendenkmal zu errichten, sondern, weil er, da andere die Arbeit abgelehnt hatten, der Bitte vieler Brueder--nach laengerem Widerstande--nachgab und dies um so mehr thun zu muessen glaubte, als er dem Seligen als vaeterlichem Freunde, theuren Lehrer und liebevollen Collegen sich zu Dank verpflichtet haelt.<sup>46</sup>

Despite his reluctance to write a biography of Walther, Guenther was probably the best qualified to do so. At the time of Walther's death, Guenther probably had more first hand knowledge of Walther than anyone else. The only other living person who may have known Walther equally as well was Prof. F. A. Craemer, a colleague of Walther in St. Louis until 1875. Craemer, however, was seventy-five years old in 1888. As former pupil and colleague on the faculty and editorial staff, Guenther probably knew Walther very well. How intimately the two men knew each other is difficult to ascertain, although Ludwig Fuerbringer states that Walther often consulted Guenther "on difficult and important matters

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<sup>46</sup>G[uenther], "Ehrendenkmal des seligen Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther," Der Lutheraner, XLIV (17 July 1888), 113. Hereafter the series will be cited "Ehrendenkmal, Walther." In book form, Dr. C. F. W. Walther. Lebensbild (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), a similar statement appears on page iii.

aside from the regular faculty and editorial meetings."<sup>47</sup>

One of the reasons which seems to have prompted Guenther to undertake the task, was to correct a number of errors which had already crept into the current accounts of Walther's life.<sup>48</sup> In order to assure the accurateness of the biography, Guenther did a great deal of research and letter writing to obtain the facts about Walther. In January 1888 the following notice appeared in the Lutheraner:

Biographie des sel. Dr. Walther.  
Alle welche Material fuer eine solche Lebensbeschreibung haben, werden freundlich ersucht, dasselbe der Redaction zur Verfuegung zu stellen.<sup>49</sup>

The request found a good response, for Guenther acknowledged materials forwarded to him by Pastors E. A. Brauer, A. J. Buenger, E. M. Buerger, Prof. F. A. Graemer, Pastors L. Fuerbringer, O. Hanser, C. J. O. Hanser, C. Hochstetter, S. Keyl, F. Lochner, F. Sievers, Sr., G. A. Schieferdecker, C. Strasen, W. Zschoche, C. H. Loeber, A. Niemann, a Mr. Koehn, a C. E. Kuehnert in Chemnitz, Saxony, even Walther's bitter rival in the Gnadenwahlstreit, F. A. Schmidt; and there were others.<sup>50</sup> Ludwig

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<sup>47</sup>Ludwig Fuerbringer, Eighty Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 118.

<sup>48</sup>"In einige bisher erschienene Mittheilungen aus Walther's leben haben sich unrichtige Angaben eingeschlichen, die hier corrigirt werden." G[uenther], "Ehrendenkmal des seligen Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther," loc. cit.

<sup>49</sup>Der Lutheraner, XLIV (31 January 1888), 22. The same notice was repeated, ibid., XLIV (28 February 1888), 38.

<sup>50</sup>G[uenther], "Ehrendenkmal, Walther," ibid., XLIV (17 July 1888), 113. Concerning the contribution of F. A. Schmidt see "Guenther to F. A. Schmidt," 22 March 1888, microfilm, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

Fuerbringer relates that Guenther "repeatedly requested information from my mother, who had a very good memory for details of happenings in bygone days."<sup>51</sup>

Guenther seems to have used almost every source available to him at the time. For not only did Guenther use letters and other materials sent to him by the people mentioned above, but he also used Walther's own biography of J. F. Buenger, Walther's father-in-law.<sup>52</sup> Guenther was permitted use of Walther's diary,<sup>53</sup> as well as some of Walther's personal papers.<sup>54</sup> Besides these sources, Guenther also seems to have scoured Der Lutheraner, Lehre und Wehre, and the various Proceedings of the Missouri Synod.<sup>55</sup> The Protokolle of Trinity congregation in St. Louis, was also made available to him.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>51</sup>Fuerbringer, op. cit., p. 120. Ludwig Fuerbringer's father, Ottomar Fuerbringer, married the widow of C. F. W. Walther's brother, Otto H. Walther, in 1842 and was therefore a prime source.

<sup>52</sup>C. F. W. Walther, Kurzer Lebenslauf des weiland ehre-wuerdigen Pastor Joh. Friedr. Buenger, treuverdienten Pastor der evang.-lutherischen Immanuel-Gemeinde zu St. Louis, Mo., nebst bei seinem feierlichen Begraebniss gehaltenen Reden (St. Louis: Verlag von F. Dette, 1882). This contained numerous autobiographical statements by Walther. Guenther refers to this work a number of times. Guenther, Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild, op. cit., pp. 27f., et. passim.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. iv, 6.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid., pp. 19, 48.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., passim.

<sup>56</sup>G[uenther], "Ehrendenkmal des seligen Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther," loc. cit.

The biography as it appeared in Der Lutheraner was probably the longest serial ever to appear in the periodical. The thirty-five consecutive installments ran from July 1888 to November 1889.<sup>57</sup>

When the series was completed, there was a demand that the biography be published in book form. This was done late in 1890 and entitled Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild. The text of the biography was not significantly changed; however, there were a number of added features, eleven pictures, a number of Walther's letters and poems composed by Walther, some of which were set to music by Walther, in which instances the music was also printed. Some of the letters which Guenther included are no longer available in any other source.

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<sup>57</sup>G[uenther], "Ehrendenkmal des seligen Dr. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther," Der Lutheraner, XLIV (17 July 1888), 113f.; ibid., XLIV (31 July 1888), 121f.; ibid., XLIV (14 August 1888), 129-131; ibid., XLIV (28 August 1888), 137f.; ibid., XLIV (11 September 1888), 145f.; ibid., XLIV (25 September 1888), 153f.; ibid., XLIV (9 October 1888), 161f.; ibid., XLIV (23 October 1888), 169f.; ibid., XLIV (6 November 1888), 177f.; ibid., XLIV (20 November 1888), 187f.; ibid., XLIV (4 December 1888), 194f.; ibid., XLIV (18 December 1888), 202f.; ibid., XLV (1 January 1889), 4f.; ibid., XLV (15 January 1889), 12f.; ibid., XLV (29 January 1889), 17f.; ibid., XLV (12 February 1889), 28f.; ibid., XLV (26 February 1889), 33f.; ibid., XLV (12 March 1889), 43f.; ibid., XLV (26 March 1889), 52f.; ibid., XLV (9 April 1889), 59f.; ibid., XLV (23 April 1889), 66f.; ibid., XLV (7 May 1889), 73f.; ibid., XLV (21 May 1889), 81f.; ibid., XLV (4 June 1889), 89f.; ibid., XLV (18 June 1889), 97f.; ibid., XLV (2 July 1889), 107f.; ibid., XLV (16 July 1889), 116; ibid., XLV (30 July 1889), 119f. [sic]; ibid., XLV (13 August 1889), 131f.; ibid., XLV (27 August 1889), 140f.; ibid., XLV (10 September 1889), 147f.; ibid., XLV (24 September 1889), 155; ibid., XLV (8 October 1889), 163f.; ibid., XLV (22 October 1889), 173; ibid., XLV (5 November 1889), 177f.

Guenther's manner of presentation could almost be considered a "scissors and paste" style. Very often he allows Walther to tell his own story, sometimes through his Tagebuch, mostly through his letters, but also through his writings in the various official publications of the Synod. Guenther also allows those who knew Walther and had contact with him to tell of their own experiences with him. Seldom does Guenther state his own opinion of Walther. Lack of personal opinion by Guenther and lack of general narrative might be considered deficiencies. Really they were not. The biography's readability was not hampered. Furthermore, Guenther's use of the original sources, adequately documented, assured the reader of the reliability of the information presented.<sup>58</sup> Such documentation was rather unusual for its day and shows the hand of a careful writer. At the same time it made Guenther's biography a basic resource for future studies of Walther.

Guenther made no pretensions of writing a definitive biography of Walther. In the Lutheraner he entitled it a "Monument" (Ehrendenkmal). In book form it was called a

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<sup>58</sup>The only historically inaccuracy which the present writer has noted is the contention of Walther O. Forster and Lewis W. Spitz, Sr. that Walther was not originally scheduled to sail on board the Amalia in 1838, but on board the Olbers. The Amalia was apparently lost at sea. Walther O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1953), 195f.; Lewis W. Spitz, Sr., The Life of C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1961), p. 47.



Lebensbild. In the preface to the book he stated that the work, "macht keinen Anspruch darauf, ein vollstaendiges Lebensbild gezeichnet zu haben."<sup>59</sup> Taken on these terms it is everything which Guenther meant it to be.

Guenther sketched Walther's life beginning in Saxony and traced it through his student days, his years as pastor in Saxony, and his immigration to Perry County and St. Louis. It is significant, at least for Guenther, that he covers the Stephan affair in two lines.<sup>60</sup> Most of the remainder of the book is a history of the Missouri Synod, as well as a biography of Walther, for neither really can be treated separately. Interspersed, however, are rather sensitive vignettes of a very human Walther. For example, Guenther portrayed Walther as a very tender-hearted family man, who loved to play with his children and grandchildren,<sup>61</sup> as a man who was very much frightened by preaching,<sup>62</sup> as a man so overburdened with work that he lost his memory temporarily,<sup>63</sup> and as a man who was so gracious and hospitable that he housed and boarded a pastor and his family, wife and two half-grown children, in

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<sup>59</sup>Guenther, Dr. C. F. W. Walther, Lebensbild, op. cit., p. iii. The title page read ". . . entworfen von Martin Guenther," (italics added).

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 155-158.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., pp. 160-163.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 122.

his (Walther's) crowded first floor seminary residence for five full months.<sup>64</sup>

Guenther included a brief appreciation of Walther as a theologian. He pointed out Walther's ability to expound any doctrine, and yet hold no pet doctrine (Lieblingslehre), except Justification, which was both the center and the source of all doctrines.<sup>65</sup> No thorough treatment of Walther as a theologian was necessary in Guenther's biography, since Prof. Franz Pieper was writing a series of articles for Lehre und Wehre on "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe."<sup>66</sup> Guenther concluded his biography by giving a brief appreciation of Walther's work, including the evaluations made by some outside the Missouri Synod.

At the present time Guenther's biography of Walther is still one of the most complete biographies available. D. H. Steffen's treatment of Walther, written in English

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 173f.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 176.

<sup>66</sup>F[ranz] P[ieper], "Dr. C. F. W. Walther als Theologe." Lehre und Wehre, XXXIV (April 1888), 97-101; ibid., XXXIV (May 1888), 129-134; ibid., XXXIV (July and August 1888), 193-204; ibid., XXXIV (September 1888), 264-267; ibid., XXXIV (November and December 1888), 321-329; ibid., XXXV (April 1889), 105-111; ibid., XXXV (May 1889), 137-145; ibid., XXXV (July and August 1889), 220-235; ibid., XXXV (November 1889), 329-333; ibid., XXXV (December 1889), 361-368; ibid., XXXVI (January 1890), 10-14; ibid., XXXVI (February 1890), 42-50; ibid., XXXVI (April 1890), 113-121; ibid., XXXVI (June 1890), 180-185; ibid., XXXVI (August 1890), 243-248; ibid., XXXVI (September 1890), 273-278; ibid., XXXVI (October 1890), 305-317; ibid., XXXVI (November 1890), 347-354; ibid., XXXVI (December 1890), 375-381; ibid., XXXVII (March 1891), 65-73; ibid., XXXVII (May 1891), 129-137.

in 1917, is perhaps more complete (401 pages), but unfortunately it is undocumented. Steffens also relied to a great extent upon Guenther's work:

This little book can hardly be called a biography. It is but an attempt to say in English what has been said so much better in German by Guenther, Koesterling, Hochstetter, and Graebner.<sup>67</sup>

William Polack in his biography of Walther expressed his indebtedness to Guenther's treatment of Walther.<sup>68</sup> Lewis W. Spitz, Sr., also expressed his indebtedness to Guenther by quoting in his preface the previously cited statement of Steffens.<sup>69</sup>

In summary Guenther's biography of Walther seems to be accurate, sensitive, and because of his extensive use of original materials, will continue to remain a basic resource for any study of Walther.

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<sup>67</sup>D. H. Steffens, Doctor Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publication Society, 1917), p. 5.

<sup>68</sup>"Walther's old friend and colleague Prof. M. Guenther, from whose Life of Walther we have frequently quoted . . ."  
W. G. Polack, The Story of C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1955), p. 93.

<sup>69</sup>Spitz, op. cit., p. [i].

## CHAPTER VI

### POPULAERE SYMBOLIK

#### The Need

In 1872 Martin Guenther published what eventually became the first of four editions of Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der amerikanischen Kirchen und religioesen Gesellschaften. The subtitle betrayed the purpose and intimated the need for such a work. It was to be a "Lutheran guide for the examination of the American churches and religious societies."

Guenther's Populaere Symbolik came about because of the American religious situation in the nineteenth century. America was the land of variety. This was true also of the religious climate and geography. For not only had almost all the European varieties of Christianity been transplanted into the New World, but these in turn had often spawned an even greater variety of splinter groups.

Sheer variety presented a great challenge to the Lutheran immigrant who had come to America from countries where Church and State were virtually co-extensive. For the German Lutherans many of the basic American Christian groups were not new. The Reformed and Roman Catholics were especially well-known. Mennonites, Schwenckfelders, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians also had their origins in Europe. On the other hand conflicts and contacts with these groups

were not very great in Germany, where the conservative Lutherans were encountering their strongest opposition in Rationalism and the unionizing attempts of the Prussian state church. For the laymen, at least, such groups were probably only names. The American environment was different; it was almost a botanical garden of religion. Therefore, one of the first needs for the Lutherans was to gather information about the various denominations in the United States. It is significant that at the first convention of the Missouri Synod in 1847, twelve men were appointed to read the various publications of the leading American churches.<sup>1</sup>

There was another factor. Variety in religion was possible in the United States because America was a free society. This meant not only freedom to worship according to one's own conscience but also freedom to proselytize. The Lutherans in the Midwest met their most formidable rivals in the Methodists, and their German counter-part, the Albrechtsleute, the Baptists, and the Presbyterians. A significant factor in the existing competition was the scattered condition of the migrants from the East and the equally scattered immigrants from Europe, who were rapidly filling the forests, plains, and cities of the Midwest. American Protestantism in general was faced with the challenge of gathering these people into

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<sup>1</sup>Erster Synodalbericht der Deutschen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten vom Jahre 1847 (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1847), p. 7.

churches and congregations. In this effort theological precision was often overlooked. Frontier or close to frontier conditions frequently caused denominational lines to be transcended. What was important for the typical immigrant was that the preaching was Protestant and in his native language.

The Methodists were especially energetic in proselytizing immigrant Lutherans, particularly unattached Lutherans. Carl S. Meyer quotes Methodist circuit-rider Peter Cartwright:

Thousands of the Germans can be reached by preachers of their own language, that can never be reached by English preachers. They need our own aid and encouragement. Let us hold them up, and the good they are destined to do, and the hundreds of thousands that may be, and will be, instrumental in bringing to the knowledge of the truth, are far beyond our most sanguine calculations.<sup>2</sup>

Christian Hochstetter in writing the history of the Missouri Synod up to 1884 devotes a section of his book to the Lutheran battle with the Methodists.<sup>3</sup> Some of the people who later became members of Guenther's own congregation in Grafton, Wisconsin, had been approached by Albrechtsleute in 1850.<sup>4</sup> There are numerous references in the Lutheraner to attempts

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<sup>2</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "The Lutheran Immigrant Churches Face the Problems of the Frontier," Church History, XXIX (December 1960), 442.

<sup>3</sup>Chr. Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode in Nord-Amerika, und ihrer Lehrkaempfe von der saechsischen Auswanderung im Jahre 1838 an bis zum Jahre 1884 (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), pp. 142-146.

<sup>4</sup>Supra, p. 20.

by the Methodists to convert Lutheran settlers.<sup>5</sup> Conflicts with such groups presumably continued even after a Lutheran congregation had been organized, although probably on a lesser scale. The conservative Lutherans reacted against the American theological melting pot by stressing their doctrines in a very positive manner. Fred Meuser summarizes this reaction:

Confronted by all this aggressive religious diversity, many Lutherans reacted with understandable dismay. The most obvious bulwark against it was unequivocal adherence to historic Lutheran doctrine. Partly, to avoid being corrupted but also to bear witness against error, they tried to baid any action that might be construed as approval of or indifference to false teaching.<sup>6</sup>

With the variety and the threat of American Protestantism facing the confessional Lutheran community, two remedies were needed. One was adequate pastoral care;<sup>7</sup> the other was information about the different groups, information about their

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<sup>5</sup>To cite just a few instances, W. Lange, "Nachricht aus Kansas," Der Lutheraner, XVIII (2 April 1862), 135; "Reiseprediger-Bericht," ibid., XVIII (30 October 1861), 44f.; ibid., XVIII (8 January 1862), 85f.; ibid., XVIII (22 January 1862), 92-94; H. Schoeneberg, "Kircheweih," ibid., XIX (15 June 1863), 167f.; An interesting account is that of J. Karrer. In Town Richmond, Osceola County, Michigan, the Methodists worked among the Lutheran children, telling them, "Sie muessen Vater und Mutter verlassen und Methodisten werden, wenn Sie selig werde." "Kircheweih und angehaengter Fingerzeig," ibid., XXV (15 February 1869), 95.

<sup>6</sup>Fred W. Meuser, "Pulpit and Altar Fellowship Among Lutherans in America," Church in Fellowship; Pulpit and Altar Fellowship Among Lutherans (Edited by Vilmos Vajta; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c. 1963), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>For one aspect of the attempts to remedy the problem of adequate pastoral care see Karl H. Wyneken, "The Development of Itinerent Ministries in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, 1847-1865" (Unpublished S. T. M. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1863).

backgrounds and about their particular doctrines, especially as the latter clashed with Lutheran doctrines.

The problem of disseminating such information to the Lutheran laymen and clergy was recognized early in the history of the Missouri Synod, in fact even before it was formally organized. In attempting to comprehend and counteract non-Lutheran groups, the pages of the Lutheraner were filled with polemics against the different denominations.<sup>8</sup> The very first volume of the Lutheraner contained an article directed against the Methodists.<sup>9</sup> The most notable series of articles in the Lutheraner dealing with the various denominations was a series in 1864 by H. Baumstark, who was teaching in the proseminary in St. Louis at the time. The series of eight articles was

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<sup>8</sup>The following are just a few of the numerous articles which could be cited: "Die sogenannte deutsch-katholische Kirche," Der Lutheraner, II (24 January 1846), [1f.]; Hermann Fick, "Methodismus," ibid., IX (12 October 1852), 29-31; F[ick], "Die Klopfergeister," ibid., IX (15 March 1853), 90-92; ibid., IX (29 March 1853), 98f.; "Freimaurer," ibid., IX (16 August 1853), 181; "Die Irrthümer der hiesigen deutschen Wiedertäufer oder Baptisten," ibid., X (23 November 1853), 51-53; [C. A. T.] Selle, "Mormonismus," ibid., XI (31 July 1855), 196-198; ibid., XI (14 August 1855), 205-207; "Die Progressiven Quaker," ibid., XIII (23 September 1856), 22; "Warum steht die Mennoniten Gemeinschaft in so vielen Abtheilungen da?" ibid., XIV (20 October 1857), 36f.; B., "Die 'Gewissensfreiheit' des evangelischen Kirchen-Vereins des Westen," ibid., XIX (24 December 1862), 67-69; "Sectengeist," ibid., XXI (15 July 1865), 173f.

<sup>9</sup>G. Schieferdecker, "Angegründer Beweis, dass die Methodisten eine Secte sind," ibid., I (3 May 1845), [1-3]. Schieferdecker wrote another article for the second volume, "Falsche Lehre der Methodisten von Rechtfertigung, nach gewiesen aus ihrer Kirchenordnung," ibid., II (15 November 1845), [3f.]; ibid., II (29 November 1845), [11f.].



entitled, "Kurzer Abriss der Geschichte und Lehre der wichtigsten neuen Secten," and covered the Unitarians, Anabaptists (Mennonites, Free-will Baptists, and Campbellites), Quakers, the United Brethren (Herrnhuter), the Methodists (two installments), the Swedenborgians, the Irvingites, and the Mormons.<sup>10</sup> Tracts were also used both to propagate and to defend the Lutheran doctrines.<sup>11</sup> Other than these tracts and the articles in the Lutheraner there were few resources available in the area of comparative symbolics. The one exception was a small book written by Karl Graul, Director of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission House at Leipzig, which was translated into English as The Distinctive Doctrines of the Different Christian Confessions, in the Light of the Word of God.<sup>12</sup> Graul laid the heaviest stress

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<sup>10</sup>[H.] Baumstarck, "Kurzer Abriss der Geschichte und Lehre der Wichtigsten neuen Secten," ibid., XX(1 July 1864), 161-163; ibid., XX (15 August 1864), 187-189; ibid., XXI (1 September 1864), 4-6; ibid., XXI (1 October 1864), 17-19; ibid., XXI (1 February 1865), 84f.; ibid., XXI (1 March 1865), 97f.; ibid., XXI (15 March 1865), 107-110; ibid., XXI (1 April 1865), 115-117.

<sup>11</sup>For example, cf., "Ein lutherischer Traktat," ibid., XII (12 August 1856), 207; P. Eirich, "Ein lutherisches Traktatunternehmen," ibid., XXIV (15 June 1868), 155-158. The latter article told of an attempt to disseminate tracts about Lutheran doctrines in order to counteract similar tracts distributed by the sects and Schwaermerkirchen.

<sup>12</sup>G. [sic] Graul, The Distinctive Doctrines of the Different Christian Confessions, in the Light of the Word of God (Translated from the fifth German edition by D. M. Martens; Columbus, Ohio: Osgood & Pearce, Printers, 1862). The German title was Die Unterscheidungslehren der verschiedenen christlichen Bekenntnisse im Lichte goettlichen Worts; Nachweis der Bedeutsamkeit reiner Lehre fuer's christliche Leben und einem Abriss der hauptsaechlichsten ungesunden religioesen Richtungen (Fuenfte vermehrte Auflage; Leipzig: Doerffling und Franke, 1857).

on the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Reformed churches. The last portion of the book, pages 99-133, treated the Arminians, Menonites [sic], Baptists, Puritans, Methodists, Quakers, Swedenborgians, Irvingites, Mormons, and Moravian Brethren. As helpful as the book may have been,<sup>13</sup> it was neither exhaustive, nor critical, nor specifically geared to the American scene.

Although not written specifically for the American religious situation, there were a number of more scholarly works which dealt with the various European forms of Christianity available at least to Lutheran pastors in America.<sup>14</sup> The

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<sup>13</sup>F. A. Craemer reviewed the book in Lehre und Wehre and recommended the little book (Buechlein) to his readers; Lehre und Wehre, VIII (July 1862), 216.

<sup>14</sup>In the area of comparative Symbolics Walther in 1856 recommended to pastors the old work by Johann Georg Walch, Historische und theologische Einleitung in die Religionsstreitigkeiten, welche sonderlich ausser der ev.-luther. Kirche entstanden sind (1724). Walch's work covered the basic Christian groups, such as the Roman Catholic, Reformed, Anti-trinitarian, Socinians, Enthusiasts, Fanatics, Anabaptists, Quakers, Inspirationalists, and others; C. F. W. Walther, "Lutherisch-theologische Pfarrers Bibliothek," Lehre und Wehre, II (February 1856), 50f. Walther stated that Walch's work was inadequate, however, for the American pastor: "So vortrefflich der Grundniss ist, welchen Walch in dem zuletzt angezeigten Compendium von der polemischen Theologie gibt, so halten wir doch, dass ein lutherische Prediger namentlich in Amerika noch mehr bedarf, un auf diesem Felde einige Werke zu nennen, welche wider die verschiedenen Gegener die reinen Lehre je ein besonderes Zeughaus darbieten." Ibid., II (April 1856), 122.

Walther also noted the Allgemeine christliche Symbolik of Heinrich Ernst Ferdinand Guericke, Professor of Theology at Halle. The second edition of Guericke's work appeared in 1846 (Leipzig: A. Winter: Karl Franz Koehler's Verlagshandlung). Besides treating the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Reformed churches, Guericke also treated some of the lesser groups, such as the Socinians, Mennonites, Quakers, Swedenborgians,

American Lutheran pastor could only hope that the European groups matched up fairly well with their counterparts in the Western Hemisphere. Thus there was no single comprehensive treatment of the specifically American religious denominations written from the Lutheran point of view. The variety of denominations in the United States and the threat which these groups posed for the doctrinally-minded Lutherans virtually necessitated a Lutheran, American comparative Symbolics. Since there was no such work available, Martin Guenther undertook the task of writing one.

#### First and Second Editions

Guenther recognized the need for a work which would defend the Lutheran doctrines, point for point, and at the same time refute what were considered to be the errors held by other religious groups. It is significant that Guenther undertook this task while he was still a parish pastor, where the need for such a work was probably most acutely felt.

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and the Greek Orthodox Church. After a brief historical introduction and a section on the theology of the Lutherans, Roman Catholics, and Reformed, Guericke compared the positions of all the groups according to loci.

Other works, which were not noted by Walther in this series, but which might have been available to the American pastor were Geo. Bened. Winer, Comparative Darstellung des Lehrebegriffs der Verschiedenen christlichen Kirchenparteien nebst vollstaendigen belegen aus den symbolischen Schriften derselben (Dritte wohlfeile Ausgabe besorgt von F. Freuss; Berlin: Verlag von Gustave Schlawitz, 1866), and Phillippus Marheinecke, Institutiones Symbolicae, doctrinarum Catholicorum, Protestantium, Sociniarum summam et discrimina exhibentes (Berolini, sumptibus liberariae Vossianae, 1825).

Encouraged in his efforts by Ottomar Fuerbringer, Guenther's close colleague in Wisconsin and Michigan for almost twenty years and also his father-in-law,<sup>15</sup> Guenther completed and published the work in 1872.

In accord with the subtitle and the purpose of the volume, Guenther chose as his keynote for the volume 1 John 4:1, which appeared on the title page: "Ihr Lieben, glaubet nicht einem jeglichen Geist, sondern pruefet die Geister, ob sie von Gott sind; denn es sind viel falscher Fropheten ausgegangen in die Welt." In his introduction Guenther elaborated on the purpose of Populaere Symbolik. He began by stating the apologetic purpose of the work:

Viele koennen sich nicht darein finden, dass die treuen Lutheraner so sehr auf Reinheit der Lehre dringen und gegen jede Abweichung davon ihre Stimme so ernstlich erheben, dass sie ihre lutherische Kirche fuer die allein rechtglaeubige halten und alle andere Kirchen als falschglaeubig bekaempfen. Sie erklaren ein solches Verfahren fuer Ueberhebung und Rechthaberei, fuer Verdammungslust und Ketzer-macherei, fuer Lieblosigkeit. Auch diese gegen-waertige Schrift wird man als einen Beweis dafuer ansehen und anfuehren.<sup>16</sup>

Certain that the impartial reader would be convinced of the correctness of the Lutheran position, Guenther maintained that the Lutheran Church was certainly (allerdings) the true visible church on earth, because it confessed the totality

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<sup>15</sup>Supra, pp. 48f.

<sup>16</sup>Martin Guenther, Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der amerikanischen Kirchen und religioesen Gesellschaften (St. Louis: Verlag von L. Volkering, 1872), p. 3.

(Gesammtheit) of God's revelation in the Scriptures. The Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran Symbols were the true summary of God's Word. The Lutheran church was not a sect; it held to the three ecumenical creeds, and therefore was to be considered the true visible Church.<sup>17</sup>

Furthermore, Guenther continued, the Lutheran church cannot call those sister churches, which do not hold the same confession of faith as the Lutheran church. Such doctrinal differences could not be overlooked:

Nur Oberflaechlichkeit kann den grossen Unterschied zwischen der lutherischen Kirche und der andern Gemeinschaften uebersehen. Mann vergleiche doch die reine Lehre der Lutherischen Kirche mit die Lehren der verschiedenen Parteien, wie diese Schrift dazu Anleitung gibt, genau, man sehe doch, wie die Lutherische Kirche fuer alle ihre Lehren die Schrift fuer sich hat, die andern Parteien aber die Schrift gegen sich haben, und man wird bekennen muessen, dass die lutherische Kirche, so weit wir die verschiedenen Kirchenparteien auf der Erde kennen, die einzige rechtglaebige sei.

Among those who denied the truth of God's Word, as embodied in the Lutheran Symbols, Guenther pointed out, were a great number of nominally Lutheran pastors who had become avowed enemies of the Lutheran Symbols, particularly the pastors of the Genral Synod, who in Guenther's opinion were no better

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. Guenther referred the reader to Walther's Die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden: Ein Referat fuer die Verhandlungen der Allgemeinen Evang.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St. bei Gelegenheit der Sitzung desselben zu St. Louis, Mo., den 31. October 1866 und folgende Tage. Auf Beschluss der Synode dem Druck uebergeben von C. F. W. Walther (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch, 1867).

than the Reformed, Methodists, and others.<sup>18</sup>

Although the Lutheran church held the truth, there was no reason for it to boast; rather Lutherans should give all praise to God, for it has the truth only by God's grace. True thankfulness demanded that the Lutheran church respond by making every effort to preserve its precious treasure. For this reason, Guenther said, the Lutheran church is obligated to attack groups which do not hold the truth and must also consider them to be heterodox (falschgläubige) and sects. On the other hand the Lutheran church does not deny that there are among such erring groups also children of God, providing that they hold essential parts of the saving truth. For this very reason, such erring groups which do retain the essential truths of God's Word, should not be left unchallenged. On the contrary, they must be criticized even more zealously and more earnestly that they might be brought to the full realization of the truth.<sup>19</sup>

Populaere Symbolik itself was divided into two major sections. The first section, fifty-two pages, contained brief historical sketches of the different American denominations; the sketches usually included information about each group's

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 5. Guenther did not take up the American Lutheran groups. This was later done by T. Johannes Grosse in Unterscheidungslehren der haupsaechlichsten sich lutherisch nennenden Synoden sowie der namhaftesten Sectenkirchen in der Vereinigten Staaten von Nord-Amerika (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1889).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 6-9.

origin, its confessional writings, its relative size, and the geographical areas in which its strength lay. Guenther noted thirty major groups, which in turn were divided into sixty-nine subgroups. In compiling these sketches Guenther probably utilized books dealing with the various religious groups in the United States, although he did not cite his sources.<sup>20</sup>

The length of the sketches varied according to the size and importance of the group. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, is covered in four pages.<sup>21</sup> The Presbyterian Church and its off-shoots, such as the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, are all covered in four and one-half pages.<sup>22</sup> To aid the reader in identifying the specific groups, most of the names were given in English as well as in German.

The major portion of the book was the second section, which covered 248 pages. Guenther entitled this: "Vergleichende Darstellung der Lehre der evang. lutherischen Kirche und der Lehre der falschgläubigen Kirchen und Gesellschaeften." In this section Guenther compared Lutheran doctrines with

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<sup>20</sup>On page 105, Guenther refers the reader to "Belcher Religious Denominations." Another book, at least available to Guenther was a History of All the Religious Denominations in the United States: Containing Authentic Accounts of the Rise and Progress, Faith and Practice, Localities and Statistics, of the Different Persuasions (Second, improved and Portrait edition; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania: John Winebrenner, 1848).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-14.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 21-25.

the doctrines he regarded as the errors of the other groups. Arranging his material systematically, according to doctrinal topics, Guenther placed his material under thirty-five major headings. Each major section Guenther developed by means of subparagraphs. There were 179 paragraphs; these occasionally were broken down into smaller divisions. The thirty-five main divisions covered the major doctrinal emphases of the Lutheran church, but the extent to which Guenther developed each section depended upon the extent to which the particular doctrine was denied by the American groups. Thus in the first major loci, "Von der Heil. Schrift," the formal principle of the Lutheran Reformation, Guenther used eleven subparagraphs to show the difference between the Lutheran understanding and use of Scripture and the use of Scripture by other groups. Here the Roman Catholic Church received the heaviest rebuttal, but also refuted were other groups which held that there were revelations beyond the Scriptures, such as the Mormons, Quakers, Swedenborgians, and Unitarians.<sup>23</sup>

Another interesting illustration of this are doctrines of Church and Ministry. Reflecting the turmoil through which the Saxons themselves had passed in the early 1840's concerning these doctrines, and their later conflicts with Pastor J. A. A. Grabau and the Buffalo Synod on the same doctrine, as well as the often irresponsible and spontaneous

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., pp. 52-69.



preaching which characterized a significant portion of American Protestantism, Guenther devoted one-eighth of the entire doctrinal section to the doctrines of Church and Ministry.<sup>24</sup> Other major doctrines with which Guenther dealt were Sin, the Person, Work, and Nature of Christ, Faith, Justification, Conversion and Repentance, Salvation and Good Works, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the spheres of the Church and of the State, family life (Hausregiment), and the Last Judgment.

The format which Guenther employed to present his material was simple, almost encyclopedic. Usually each of the 179 paragraphs contained four, sometimes five, parts. The first part was a thetical statement of the "Reine Lehre der evang. lutherischen Kirchen." This was followed by proof of the Lutheran position from the Scriptures, Beweis aus Gottes Wort. Sometimes the proof passages were printed in full; other times only the references were given. The third section was a thetical statement of the Falsche Lehre of other groups. The fourth section contained documentary statements from the official writings of the particular group or groups, sometimes supplemented by later, semi-official writings.<sup>25</sup> When official catechisms or confessions

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 243-275.

<sup>25</sup>For example, at one point Guenther quotes from the Heidelberg Catechism and supplements this with a quotation from Reformed Prof. D. Pareus, ibid., p. 230.

were unavailable, as in the case of anti-creedal groups, such as the Seventh Day Adventists, semi-official writings were cited.<sup>26</sup> Guenther's careful documentation for his assertions of the false teachings of other groups must be considered one of the most valuable aspects of the book. The documentation removed the book from the area of mere diatribe and placed it on the level of serious, theological polemic and apologetic. It was documentation which probably was of great help to both the Lutheran layman and pastor when they engaged in controversy.<sup>27</sup>

Following the documentation of errors, there was often a fifth section, Dagegen sagt Gottes Wort, which cited the Scripture passages which refuted the errant doctrines.

Another helpful feature of the work was the rather extensive cross-referencing of subjects and denominations, especially since the first edition did not contain an index. The book was completed with a four page Inhaltsverzeichnis.

Gottlieb Schaller furnished a pre-publication review of Populaere Symbolik in the Lutheraner in April 1872. Schaller stated that the book would be very much welcomed by many persons, for it justified the cries which the Lutherans

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<sup>26</sup>For example, Guenther quotes the Seventh Day Adventist booklet, "the nature of chr. baptism," ibid., p. 102. Cf. p. 216, where Guenther quotes a sermon, "Das Haus," by Weinbrenner.

<sup>27</sup>Guenther did not give the full bibliographic data for his citations, although this method of quoting was customary at the time.

were raising against the false doctrines of other groups. The book, Schaller noted, would sell for about \$2.25.<sup>28</sup>

The book received a very favorable response; by 1878 the first edition was exhausted and a new edition was being asked for. In a little note tucked in the back pages of an 1878 issue of the Lutheraner Guenther noted, "Allerlei Winke und Rathschlage fuer eine zweite Auflage dieses Buches nimmt dankbar entgegen."<sup>29</sup> Guenther seems to have planned from the beginning to issue a second edition, since he had a special copy with interleaving blank pages printed for himself, for the purpose of inserting new information as he discovered it.<sup>30</sup>

When the second edition appeared in 1881 there were a number of noteworthy changes and improvements, although the format remained the same. The historical sketches were enlarged and several new groups were added so that the historical section was ten pages longer and now treated over seventy-five groups. The number of quotations demonstrating the errors of the various groups was greatly increased. Despite the fact that these quotations were placed in smaller

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<sup>28</sup>S[challer], "Populaere Symbolik," Der Lutheraner, XXVIII (15 April 1872), 112. Populaere Symbolik does not seem to have been reviewed in Lehre und Wehre.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., XXXIV (15 July 1878), 111.

<sup>30</sup>Guenther, Populaere Symbolik, op. cit., Guenther's personal copy, C. H. I.

type in the second edition, the comparative section was increased by fifty-eight pages. Another improvement was the inclusion of references to the Lutheran Symbols when the Lutheran position was given. A seventeen page index which enabled the reader to follow through on all the doctrines of one particular group was added to the second edition, thereby greatly increasing its value and usefulness. The size of the volume increased from 304 pages to 397 pages.

For the second edition Guenther wrote a Vererinnerung, in which he stated the purpose of Populaere Symbolik more specifically than he had in the first. He repeated that it was to be a companion and a true Wegweiser for the Lutheran to test the different denominations. As such it was intended to show that the Lutheran faith was not a blind one; rather it was to enable a person to say, "Komm und siehe!" Guenther emphasized that the book was popular, for use by laymen as well as clergy:

Auch darin ist diese zeite der ersten gleich, dass die Darstellung der Lehre und Gegenlehre, der Beweis und die Widerlegung schlicht und einfach ist und alles Prunken [sic] mit gelehrten Phrasen, Fremdwoertern u. vermieden wurde. Die Lehre ist ja nicht Eigenthum blos der Gelehrten.<sup>31</sup>

Walther gave the second edition a glowing review in

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<sup>31</sup>Martin Guenther, Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der verschiedenen Kirchen und religioesen Gesellschaften (Zweite vermehrte Auflage; St. Louis: Verlag von L. Volkening, 1881), p. iii.

the Lutheraner. Walther stated that the first edition was so quickly exhausted was proof of its superior quality (Vorzueglichkeit) and usefulness (Brauchbarkeit). After noting the additions to the second edition, Walther concluded his review by writing:

Es ist eine Symbolik fuer jedermann und zugleich die beste und einfachste Apologie unserer evang.-lutherischen Kirche, so recht geeignet gerade fuer unser liebes America, diese Land der Secten. Selbst diejenigen, welche das Buch in erster Auflage besitzen, werden daher gut thun, sich nun auch die Zweite, vermehrte anzuschaffen. Der Herr Verfasser, unser theurer Herr College, bedarf unseres geringen Lobes nicht: das Werk selbst lobt den Meister. Der Preis dieses nahezu 400 Seiten in Gross-Octav (und zu einem groesseren Theile in kleinem Druck) umfassenden [sic] Werkes ist, gut und dauerhaft gebunden mit Lederruecken und goldener Titelaufschrift, \$2.50, ein gewiss nicht zu hoher Preis.<sup>32</sup>

### Third and Fourth Editions

The second edition of Populaere Symbolik was exhausted by 1893. Guenther had intended a third edition but died before he could complete the task. Concordia Publishing House purchased the copyright to the saleable (kauflich) volume in 1894<sup>33</sup> and directed Ludwig Fuerbringer to prepare a third edition.<sup>34</sup> This was completed in 1898 and appeared

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<sup>32</sup>W[alther], "Populaere Symbolik," Der Lutheraner, XXXVII (15 November 1881), 176.

<sup>33</sup>Lutheran Witness, XII (21 April 1894), 176.

<sup>34</sup>Martin Guenther, Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der verschiedenen Kirchen und religioesen Gesellschaften (Dritte vermehrte Auflage; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1898), p. v.

additional pages are accounted for by the longer index and a statistical chart of the various denominations.<sup>35</sup>

F. Bente reviewed the third edition for the Lutheraner and stressed the fact that Populaere Symbolik was a practical tool, also for the layman. The book sold for \$2.00.<sup>36</sup>

The fourth edition appeared in 1913, and was again revised by Ludwig Fuerbringer. Exactly when the third edition was exhausted is not certain. At any rate a new edition was being impatiently demanded from all sides.<sup>37</sup> The demand for the new edition was especially being pressed by the educational institutions, where the book seems to have become a standard textbook.<sup>38</sup>

In the fourth edition new groups were added; older ones which had passed out of existence were eliminated. The historical sketches were again brought up to date. The brackets which had indicated Fuerbringer's additions in the third edition were omitted. In the process of revision the book was shortened from 472 pages to 456 pages. The revision for the fourth edition was not as thorough as

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. vf.

<sup>36</sup>F[riedrich] B[ente], "Populaere Symbolik," Der Lutheraner, LIV (23 August 1898), 154.

<sup>37</sup>E. P[ardieck], "Populaere Symbolik," ibid., LXIX (27 May 1913), 175.

<sup>38</sup>Martin Guenther, Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der verschiedenen Kirchen und religioesen Gesellschaften (Vierte, vermehrte Auflage; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913), p. vi.

on the market in the same year.

In preparing the new edition Fuerbringer had a few of Guenther's notes available to him, but most of the credit for the revision must go to Fuerbringer. Fuerbringer made no revisions in the format, which, Fuerbringer stated, had proven itself over the years. The changes which he did make, Fuerbringer wrote, must be considered only as completions or enlargements (Vervollstaendigung) of Guenther's work. The historical sketches of the various groups Fuerbringer brought up to date. Some of the new religious groups which had appeared on the American religious scene were included, such as the Theosophists, Christian Scientists, and the Ethical Society. In the comparative section a number of groups were also introduced for the first time: the Salvation Army, the United Evangelical Church, the Christian Catholic Church, the American Old Catholic, and the Christadelphians. New documentation and citations were inserted, and older, no longer relevant quotations were omitted. The inevitable minor mistakes were corrected. Appropriate changes in Scriptural citations were made. These minor changes were not noted in the text, while the major additions made by Fuerbringer were placed in brackets, so that the reader could discern Guenther's original work. The third edition (472 pages) was seventy-six pages longer than the second. Eighteen pages were added to the first section and forty-five to the second; the remaining thirteen

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. vf.

<sup>36</sup>F[riedrich] B[entel], "Populaere Symbolik," Der Lutheraner, LIV (23 August 1898), 154.

<sup>37</sup>E. P[ardieck], "Populaere Symbolik," ibid., LXIX (27 May 1913), 175.

<sup>38</sup>Martin Guenther, Populaere Symbolik: Lutherischer Wegweiser zur Pruefung der verschiedenen Kirchen und religoesen Gesellschaften (Vierte, vermehrte Auflage; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1913), p. vi.



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Fuerbringer would have liked, because it was necessary to put the new edition on the presses as soon as possible.<sup>39</sup>

### Influence

The attempt to evaluate the influence or importance of a particular book for and in the life of a church body is at best a delicate task. An attempt must be made, however, since there are indications that Populaere Symbolik did play a rather significant role in the life of the Missouri Synod and even American Lutheranism in general.

The need for a book like Guenther's Populaere Symbolik has already been indicated. That the volume went through four different editions, over a period of more than forty years, would seem to indicate that Guenther's work satisfied this need. Furthermore, it was not until 1934, that Guenther's work was supplanted by a new work on the subject, Popular Symbolics, under the general editorship of Theodore Engelder. Even at that time the general value of Guenther's work was still acknowledged.<sup>40</sup> Thus Guenther's Populaere Symbolik

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>"The authors wish to acknowledge their indebtedness to Guenther's classical manual. Particularly the first part of the present volume is to a great extent an elaboration of the thetical material contained in the Populaere Symbolik [sic].--In structure the new book differs completely from Guenther, inasmuch as the earlier book treats the matter under doctrinal heads, cross-sectioning the denominations, while Popular Symbolics treats it by churches. Th. Engelder, et. al., Popular Symbolics: The Doctrines of the Churches of Christendom and of Other Religious Bodies Examined in the Light of Scripture (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934), pp. vi f.

must be considered the basic work in the area of comparative symbolics for the Missouri Synod for over sixty years. As such it must probably also be considered one of the basic sources for the publica doctrina of the Missouri Synod for that period. Its popular nature must rate it as one of the more important influences which fortified and reinforced the doctrinal position of the Missouri Synod. By the same token it was probably one of the basic instruments by which those outside the Lutheran church gained their impressions and understandings of conservative and Confessional Lutheranism, and particularly the Missouri Synod.

Although the printing figures for the various editions are not known, the book was a very good seller. It probably found its place on almost every Missouri Synod pastor's and teacher's reference shelf for almost sixty years. It probably was also found in the libraries of many non-Missouri Synod Lutheran pastors. For when George Stoeckhardt wrote a brief appreciation of Guenther in 1893, he noted that Populaere Symbolik had been disseminated far beyond the boundaries of the Missouri Synod.<sup>41</sup> When the Lutheran Witness noted Guenther's death in 1893, it singled out only his Populaere Symbolik as being that for which Guenther should be remembered:

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<sup>41</sup>"In seiner "Populaeren [sic] Symbolik," welche auch asserhalb unserer Synode weit verbreitet ist . . . ." G[eorge] St[oeckhardt], "Professor M. Guenther," Lehre und Wehre, XXXIX (May 1893), 150.

Prof. M. Guenther was well known among German American Lutherans as the Author of "Popular Symbolics," which we have found mentioned in several Catalogues of Lutheran institutions as a Textbook.<sup>42</sup>

Populaere Symbolik must have had great value for the lay people of the Missouri Synod also. The reviews of the various editions all stressed the popular aspects of the volume. In the Lutheraner it was advertised as an appropriate Christmas gift.<sup>43</sup>

In the development of the strongly Confessional Missouri Synod, and in the general transformation of a liberal nineteenth century American Lutheranism into a more doctrinally and confessionally oriented Lutheran Church, there were, of course, many factors. Populaere Symbolik certainly did not initiate this trend, but it did in its own way help to stabilize and solidify the Confessional movement in American Lutheranism particularly as it confronted a rather theologically amorphous Protestantism, at a time when the latter was threatening to make deep inroads into the Lutheran immigrant community.

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<sup>42</sup>The Lutheran Witness, XI (7 June 1893), 7.

<sup>43</sup>For example, Der Lutheraner, XLI (15 November 1885), [178].

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The objective of this study was to investigate the life and work of Martin Guenther. The need for the study developed out of the suspicion that Guenther's life and work were more significant for a general understanding of the history of The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, than previous treatments, or rather lack of treatments, indicated.

The investigation has revealed that Guenther was an original Saxon immigrant, whose family had rather close ties with the leader of the Saxon group, Martin Stephan, especially through Guenther's step-sister, Louise. Louise's relationship to Stephan may have played a role in shaping Guenther's somewhat withdrawing personality.

Guenther decided to study for the Lutheran ministry. He was enrolled in the Perry County college from 1844-1849. When the college was moved to St. Louis in 1849, Guenther went with it and completed his theological training in 1853, becoming one of the first ten men to graduate from the Seminary, and therefore was among the first of Missouri's indigenously trained clergy.

Beginning his parish ministry in 1853 in Grafton and Cedarburg, Wisconsin, he quickly found several other groups in the vicinity in need of pastoral care and began serving

these groups also. At times the congregations in his charge numbered four and five and perhaps more. In 1857 he accepted a call to Mequon River, Wisconsin, a congregation which he had been serving on a part-time basis since 1853. His work during these years in Wisconsin can be termed missionary. Yet the almost pioneering character of his work did not deter Guenther from thoroughly instructing his parishioners on die reine Lehre of the Lutheran church.

In 1860 Guenther accepted a call to Holy Cross Congregation in Saginaw, Michigan. Under Guenther's ministry the congregation passed through the Civil War and post-Civil War period with a good rate of growth, so that by 1868 a new church had been erected and by the time he left in 1872, the congregation was operating two parochial day schools.

Showing signs of increasing theological ability Guenther was called upon to deliver doctrinal theses to the Northern District conventions in 1858, 1859, 1865, and probably also in 1867. Guenther also served in various secretarial capacities during this period: secretary of the Wisconsin Pastoral Conference in 1859, of the Michigan Pastoral Conference from 1863-1865, of the Northern District from 1865-1869, and of the Missouri Synod's Missionscommission from 1860-1874.

In 1854 Guenther married Theresa Harzdorf, the foster daughter of Ottomar Fuerbringer. There were six daughters born from the marriage.

In 1872 Guenther accepted a call to St. Matthew Congregation in Chicago. Although the congregation experienced tremendous growth under Guenther, he remained only for one year.

In 1873 Guenther was elected to the position of Professor theologiae at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. His major teaching fields were Symbolics, Isagogics, Encyclopaedia and Methodology, Homiletics and Catechetics. Guenther also served as the Seminary librarian. One of the main reasons for his election to the faculty was his ability to write and edit. He soon became managing editor of the Lutheraner, probably in 1874. Guenther also wrote extensively for the Lutheraner. For most of the twenty years that he was on the faculty he was primarily responsible for the news items about the American religious scene in the Zur Kirchliche Chronik section of the Lutheraner. Major articles by Guenther appeared in every other issue of the Lutheraner on an average. These covered a wide range of subjects; the most notable were those dealing with important figures in the history of the church, some of which were later included in a four-volume collection of biographies, Ehrendenkmal treuer Zeugen Christi. Other noteworthy articles were a history of the Seminary up to 1883, articles dealing with Lutheran doctrines and practices, a biography of C. F. W. Walther, which was published in book form in 1890, and articles dealing with various American religious denominations.

Guenther also contributed extensively to Lehre und Wehre, especially from 1873-1879, and may upon occasion have served as editor. Guenther also was the editor of the Homiletisches Magazin at its inception in 1877, and probably remained the managing editor after 1878, when it became officially edited by the Seminary faculty, until his death in 1893. Guenther also made numerous contributions to the very influential Homiletisches Magazin. These contributions were mostly sermon outlines and book reviews. Sometime during his twenty years in St. Louis, the date is not known, he edited a little devotional book, Luther-Vergissmeinnicht. After C. F. W. Walther's death in 1887, Guenther reluctantly accepted the assignment of writing a biography of C. F. W. Walther for the Lutheraner. He was conscientious in his attempt to make the account as accurate as possible and was scrupulous in citing his sources. The Lebensbild of Walther is the best documented biography of Walther to date; because of the extensive quoting of original sources, the biography will remain a basic resource for future studies of C. F. W. Walther.

In 1879 and thereafter Guenther demonstrated a strong interest in mission work among the English-speaking population. The result was that in 1880 he was elected the official delegate of the Western District to the English Conference of Missouri, and was also made chairman of the English Mission Commission of the Western District. When the Synod as a



whole took over responsibility for advancing the work of English missions in 1887, Guenther was named chairman of the Synod's Missionscommissions fuer englische Mission, a position which he held until his death in 1893. He also fostered the cause of English missions by publicizing their activities in the pages of the Lutheraner.

When the third edition of the Synodal-Handbuch appeared in 1888, it was largely the result of Guenther's efforts. In 1884 Guenther was commissioned by the Synod to prepare annual statistical reports of the Synod, thus Guenther became the compiler of the Statistical Yearbook from 1884 until his death in 1893.

Retaining a strong affection for the parish, Guenther served Concordia Congregation in Kirkwood, Missouri, for fifteen years, from 1874-1889. From 1889 to 1893 he was preaching assistant to C. L. Janzow, pastor of Bethlehem Congregation in St. Louis.

In 1872 Guenther published the first edition of his Populaere Symbolik, which went through a second edition under his hand in 1881, and through third (1898) and fourth (1913) editions by Ludwig Fuerbringer. Setting forth the doctrinal differences between the Lutheran church and other religious denominations in America, the book became a standard work in the area of comparative Symbolics for over sixty years, and received widespread usage even beyond the boundaries of the Missouri Synod.

Tending to be socially indifferent and withdrawing,

his quiet personality was geared for long hours of often tedious work, which best characterizes his life. Guenther died rather suddenly of a stroke 22 May 1893, at the age of sixty-one.

As a theologian Guenther was by the standards of the day orthodox and conservative, with no noticeable variations from the publica doctrina of the Missouri Synod in the nineteenth century. He claimed to be a follower of Luther and Walther.

### Conclusions

The immediate purpose of this study was to portray the life and work of Martin Guenther. The ultimate purpose, however, was to ascertain what significance Guenther's work had for the history of the Missouri Synod.

Taken individually any one of Guenther's major activities, with the possible exception of Populaere Symbolik, probably cannot be considered of outstanding significance for the Missouri Synod. On the other hand, if Guenther's work is evaluated cumulatively then he must be rated as one of the more important figures of the Missouri Synod in the nineteenth century. A compilation of his most important accomplishments forms a rather impressive list; secretary of the Northern District, secretary of Synod's Mission Commission, Chairman of the English Mission Commission, Professor and Librarian at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, managing editor of and

profuse contributor to the Lutheraner, contributor to Lehre und Wehre, editor of and contributor to the Homiletisches Magazin, compiler of the Statistical Yearbook, reviser of the Synodical Handbook, author of Luther--Vergissmeinnicht, Populaere Symbolik, and Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild. Any person who produces this much must be considered significant, if for no other reason than sheer volume.

Guenther's work, however, was also significant because it reached a great many persons both within and without the Missouri Synod. The Lutheraner, Homiletisches Magazin, and Populaere Symbolik were all widely read.

There is still one more reason why Guenther's work is significant. All of his efforts were pointed attempts to strengthen the positions, execute the policies, and achieve the goals already accepted and established in the Missouri Synod. Whatever creativity Guenther possessed was used not to formulate new goals and objectives, but to implement those already in existence. There are a number of "firsts" with which Guenther must be credited: first to write a Populaere Symbolik, first editor of the Homiletisches Magazin, and first compiler of the Statistical Yearbook, and the first to write a major biography of C. F. W. Walther. All of these, with the exception of the last, were all aimed at nurturing and preserving Missouri Synod doctrine and practice. Walter A. Baepler in his history of the Missouri Synod, entitled the period from 1872-1897,

"Strengthening the Stakes."<sup>1</sup> This is an almost perfect description of Guenther's work, and Guenther's most important years, 1873-1893, coincide, almost too neatly, with Baepler's scheme. Perhaps the best description of Guenther's work might be gained by using a metaphor from his own time. If the Missouri Synod was building a "Zion on the Mississippi," then Guenther was a wall builder, equipped with trowel and plumbline, making sure that the blueprints of others were being carried out.

This also seems to explain the general lack of previous recognition and appreciation of Guenther's work. The work of preservation and conservation, if done reasonably well, is not generally acknowledged; this is the type of work which Guenther performed. Furthermore, literary activity, especially editing and compiling, is often a thankless and unrecognized effort, but also an extremely important one. This too was Guenther's forte.

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<sup>1</sup>Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace; A History of the Missouri Synod, 1847-1947 (Slightly revised edition; St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963), p. 167.

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