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THE RELATION OF FRIEDRICH BRUNN TO THE  
GERMAN FREE CHURCHES AND THE  
MISSOURI SYNOD, 1846-1876

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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

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This thesis will chiefly attempt to demonstrate the activity of Friedrich August Brunn, Jr., particularly between 1846 and 1876. Brunn was the major representative of the Free Church in the State of Nassau. He was also an important progenitor of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Saxony and Other States. Furthermore, Brunn supplied over 200 teacher and ministerial candidates for the Missouri Synod between 1861 and 1878.

The Breslau Synod in Prussia was the first Free Church in the German States and will be considered only insofar as it relates to Friedrich Brunn. The Immanuel Synod, which amalgamated in the first part of the Twentieth Century, will be considered to the same degree. The several independent Lutheran churches in the other German states are not included in this study.

The time limits of this thesis, namely, 1846 and 1876, are determined by the year Friedrich Brunn left the Landeskirche and the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Saxony and Other States.

The writer has further confined most of his research to the contemporary periodicals of the period. For this reason only a passing acquaintance has been made with the broader ecclesiastical and political figures in the

## Nineteenth Century German states.

The writer wishes that by making this material available in the English language, and in what he hopes is a readable format, more students will appreciate the struggle made for confessional Lutheranism by their spiritual forefathers.

All of the translations are by the author unless otherwise noted.

was initiated in the university city of Halle, Prussia. The Rev. Professor Johann Gottfried Schöbel (1763-1835), pastor of St. Elizabeth Church protested against the joint worship of Reformed and Lutheran Christians. This was in direct opposition to King Friedrich Wilhelm III's declaration for the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. The decree stated that the breaking of the bread and use of the words, "Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'Take and eat this in My Body, etc.'" which is a recognition that the Eucharist was instituted. For his protest against this, Schöbel was suspended for thirteen days. The next year he was deposed.

There was the beginning of a Separated Lutheran movement which in the end resulted in an independent Lutheran church in Prussia. King did not concern for confessional Lutheranism

George Fredrickson, *The Inner American Revolution: The Great Awakening in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 175-176.

George Fredrickson, *The Inner American Revolution: The Great Awakening in the United States* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 175.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH

#### The Prussian Union Decree

The Lutheran Free Church originated in the kingdom of Prussia. The first sustained reaction for confessional Lutheranism was initiated in the university city of Breslau, Prussia. The Rev. Professor Johann Gottfried Scheibel (1783-1843), pastor of St. Elizabeth Church protested against the joint worship of Reformed and Lutheran Christians. This was in direct opposition to King Friedrich William III's declaration for the 300th anniversary of the Augsburg Confession. The decree stated that the breaking of the bread and use of the words, "Our Lord Jesus Christ said: 'Take and eat this is My Body, etc.'" would be a recognition that the Union was accepted.<sup>1</sup> For his abrupt action, Scheibel was suspended for fourteen days. Two years later he was deposed.<sup>2</sup>

This was the beginning of a Separated Lutheran movement which in the end resulted in an independent Lutheran church in Prussia. Why did this concern for confessional Lutheranism

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<sup>1</sup>Herman Theodor Wangemann, Sieben Buecher Preussischer Kirchengeschichte (Berlin: Wilhelm Schultze Verlag, 1859), I, 178-180.

<sup>2</sup>Georg Froboess, Drei Lutheraner an der Universitaet Breslau (Breslau: Evangelische Buchhandlung Gerhard Kaufmann, 1911), p. 29.

come to the surface in Prussia? Furthermore, why did it come up at this time? In order to answer these two essential questions it is necessary to consider the Prussian Union and the political circumstances to which it was so largely indebted.

In general, the German churches operated under the cuius regio, eius religio principle of the Religious Peace of Augsburg, 1555. However, since 1613, the predominately Lutheran lands of Prussia-Brandenburg were ruled by a Reformed sovereign. In that year Elector Sigismund publicly changed his personal confession from Lutheran to Reformed. It was the aim of all his successors to finalize the amalgamation of the Reformed and Lutheran traditions.

The prospects for any kind of union, political or ecclesiastical, looked anything but promising when King Friedrich William III took control of Prussia in 1797, at the age of twenty-seven. Prussia was soon humiliated by Napoleon and the occupation of the French troops signified the shaking of the old order.

The French occupation, however, also bore the seed of German reconstruction. Nationalism was a significant factor in reviving the respectability of Prussia and the German states following their humiliating defeat by Napoleon. Strangely enough the impetus for German nationalism began in France. The liberal and nationalistic ideas of the French occupying forces was contagious in the German



states.<sup>3</sup> The Rhineland territories were immediately effected with this new spirit, but the slower incrustation of nationalism in Prussia had a more enduring effect.

Foremost progenator of German nationalism was Karl Freiherr vom Stein. Originally leader of a small Rhineland principality, he entered the Prussian diplomatic service, and by 1804 was minister of finance. During his short lived Prussian career, serfdom was partially eliminated in 1807 (completed in 1848). Karl von Hardenberg, Stein's successor, continued his reform policies which included the secularization of church property.<sup>4</sup>

The nationalistic German spirit was encouraged in another area by Friedrich Ludwig (Father) Jahn (1778-1852). As a German patriot under the suppression of Napoleon, he organized the physical training of German youths with a strong military accent. He is identified with the Free Corps of 1813, the Turnerschaft and the Burschenschaften (nationalistic student clubs).<sup>5</sup>

In the area of poetry, Ernst Moritz Arndt (1769-1860) emerged as a ready German nationalist. Was Ist des Deutschen

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<sup>3</sup> Marshall Dill, Jr., Germany: A Modern History, in The University of Michigan History of the Modern World (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press), p. 78.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

Vaterland is the most famous of his patriotic songs. He believed the Vaterland existed wherever German was spoken.<sup>6</sup> Presently his monumental figure overlooks the Rhine river in Bonn. The inscription on the frontal plate reads: The Rhine--Germany's river, but not Germany's border.

Reform and nationalistic spirits were encouraged in the University of Berlin under Wilhelm von Humboldt. Johann Gottlieb Fichte also stirred the Germans to remember their noble past in his Addresses to the German Nation, 1807-1808.

The universities stood in the tradition of the Free Corps which fought successfully against Napoleon. After the final defeat of Napoleon, the university students were not willing to lose the new freedoms to indigenous oppressors. The University of Jena was a rallying point for the Burschenschaften. National student solidarity culminated in the Wartburg Festival on October 18, 1817. Its purpose was the commemoration of Luther and the Battle of Leipzig, 1613.<sup>7</sup>

The land was in a fluid state due to war, the rapid unification of the several German states by Napoleon, and the growing spirit of nationalism coupled with political reform. After the battle of Waterloo in 1815, Friedrich William III was faced with the problem of uniting a new and unsettled kingdom. "At the Congress of Vienna, Prussia was

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 95-99.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 90.

awarded more territories than she had lost at the Peace of Tilsit, including large blocks of Roman Catholic areas."<sup>8</sup> During the reconstruction period the primary concern of the government was unification. In this chaotic atmosphere the sacramental presence of Christ seemed to have little significance. The union of the Reformed and Lutherans seemed essential for good government.

Groundwork for Union began in 1798 when Friedrich William III appointed a joint commission to study the possibility of a common liturgy. This work was under the direction of the supernaturalist court-preacher, Dr. Friedrich Samuel Sack.<sup>9</sup> In 1808, the sumus episcopus, Friedrich William III, dissolved the provincial consistory created by Fredrick the Great in 1750. Church affairs were now placed under the ministry of the interior. In 1814, the liturgical commission was revived. The following year the aborted consistory was also restored. A Reformed derived system of presbyteries and synods was introduced into the eastern Lutheran provinces.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> James Hastings Nichols, History of Christianity 1650-1950 (New York: The Ronald Fress Company, 1956), p. 153.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, The Nineteenth Century in Europe: The Protestant and Eastern Churches, in Christianity in a Revolutionary Age. (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1959), II, 83.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.

The groundwork was laid. The stage was perfectly set for a full union of the Reformed and Lutherans. The destruction wrought by Rationalism; the indifference of Pietism; the general desire for a world religion based merely on belief in God, virtue and immortality; coupled with the pressing necessities of the empire determined the timing of Friedrich William III's proclamation of Union on September 27, 1817. The Cabinet's Order declared the Reformed and Lutherans constituted a united and renewed Evangelical Christian Church.

The confessional basis of this church was to be "The principle points in Christianity where both agree" (consensus); the doctrines of disagreement on the other hand, (dissensus) were to be considered as "non-essential" and left to the private conviction and liberty of the individual.<sup>11</sup>

In general, the national reaction against the Union was not extremely volatile in 1817. The Union was declared, but it was more difficult to enforce. After all, in the entire Prussian lands there were only sixteen Reformed congregations (nine in Silesia and seven in East Prussia).<sup>12</sup> The tranquility of the kingdom was broken, however, by the publication of a new liturgy for the military

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<sup>11</sup>J. L. Neve, The Lutherans in the Movements for Church Union (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Publishing House, 1921), p. 117.

<sup>12</sup>"Prussian Union," The Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs and A. W. Haas (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 525.

garrisons in 1821 and for the entire country in 1822. The king himself took an active part in revising the agenda and introduced it in his capacity as supreme bishop.<sup>13</sup>

This imposition on the traditional mode of service aroused sensitive Lutherans to more vocal opposition. The overall issue at stake was the royal right to interfere in the worship service of the church. In this regard, the king's minister of worship, education and medicine, Altenstein, recognized no limits to the royal prerogative.<sup>14</sup>

This explosive situation finally burst in Breslau when the above-described Cabinet's Order was issued in 1830.<sup>15</sup> Prof. J. G. Scheibel was suspended and eventually deposed, but his congregation stood solidly for Lutheran confession-alism. A petition for a separate constitution was promptly denied by the king, and its proponents were labeled as dissenters. For a time the St. Elizabeth congregation was served in the administration of the Sacraments by lay-elders.

In the neighboring Silesian villages of Zuellichau, Juliusburg and Strehlen, the Lutheran congregations themselves revolted without the instigation of their pastors. Decision to revolt was reached during the assembly of lay-prayer meetings. Consequently, on April 4, 1834, three

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<sup>13</sup>Nichols, op. cit., p. 154.

<sup>14</sup>Wangemann, op. cit., p. 179.

<sup>15</sup>Supra, p. 3.

pastors, four theological candidates and laymen laid the foundation for a synod at Breslau which protested the violation of traditional rights granted to the Lutheran Churches in Prussia.<sup>16</sup> The theoretical foundation laid in 1834 became a reality in two separate meetings of the provincial congregations in 1835. The first assembly was held in Breslau February 19, and the second, consisting of the provinces east of the Oder river, on March 2, in the same city. These two assemblies, considered as a unit, are called the first General Synod. This assembly adopted the first Lutheran church constitution independent of state control. The constitution provided for a perpetuation of the Separated Lutheran ministry by declaring ordination valid apart from state authorization.

Furthermore, the working authority for the new synod was in the central committee, which later became the Oberkirchenkollegium.<sup>17</sup> This provision of authority became the divisive issue between the Breslau Synod and the independent Lutherans of the Rhineland.<sup>18</sup>

This surprising resistance resulted in a radical change of complexion for the Union. On the advise of Altenstein, the Union was re-interpreted in 1834, as a Confederation.

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<sup>16</sup> Georg Froboess, "Lutherans, Separate," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by Samuel Macauley, VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950), 81-82.

<sup>17</sup> Wangemann, op. cit., II, 118-134.

<sup>18</sup> Infra, 64.

The proclamation reads:

The Union does not aim at nor does it mean a giving up of existing confessions of faith; neither is the authority annulled which these confessions have hitherto had. The adoption of the Union means only an expression of the spirit of moderation and toleration, which does not anymore make the differences in some points of doctrine to which the other party holds a cause for refusing the outward church fellowship. The adoption of the Union is a matter of free choice, and it is therefore a mistaken idea that the introduction of the renewed order of service involves the adoption of the Union or is thereby indirectly affected.<sup>19</sup>

The Confederation Decree of 1854 did not really satisfy anyone. The strong exponents of an absorptive Union and the so-called mediating theologians Julius Mueller, Isaak August Dorner, Karl Immanuel Nitzsch, Gottfried Christian Luecke and Daniel Schenkel did not think the new order was effective enough. On the other hand, the agenda did not specifically express the Lutheran position on the Sacraments even if it did not contradict it.<sup>20</sup>

For a time the "voluntary" Union quieted the Lutherans who still remained inside the state church. Nevertheless, many emigrated to Australia (August L. Kavel and Gotthold D. Fritzsche) and to the United States (John Andrew Grabau) when the situation permitted.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Neve, op. cit. p. 127.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>21</sup>Froboess, "Lutherans, Separate," op. cit., p. 83.

New suppressive measures were inaugurated by the state against her confessional opponents. Many pastors were imprisoned. No private religious meetings were tolerated. Fines were levied against parents who did not send their children to religious instruction by a Union Church pastor. No ministerial acts were permitted by those not ordained, and all candidates for ordination had to submit in writing their allegiance to the Union.<sup>22</sup>

The persecuted, confessional Lutheran pastors traveled throughout Silesia, Pomerania, Posen, Brandenburg and the Province of Saxony, encouraging the people to defend their Lutheran confessionalism. This action demanded the pastors in this dominantly Lutheran area study their Confessions.<sup>23</sup>

#### B. The Formation of the Breslau Synod

The mantle of confessional leadership fell on George Philip Edward Huschke (1801-1866), professor of jurisprudence at the University of Breslau. He was a colleague of Professors Scheibel and Steffens after 1827. He received his law training at the University of Goettingen, 1817, and later lectured at his alma mater and also at the University of Rostock.

Under Huschke's leadership the Separated Lutherans (also called old-Lutheran because they insisted on the

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<sup>22</sup>Wangemann, op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>23</sup>Neve, op. cit., p. 130.



"old" forms of worship) demanded freedom of worship not only in the local congregation, but also in the entire country. Huschke went so far as to say, "The Lutheran Confessions cannot truly be present where there is not an earnest, visible opposition against the Union."<sup>24</sup>

A new status for confessional Lutheranism began with the ascension of Friedrich William IV to the Prussian kingship in 1840. Separated Lutherans were no longer hunted down by the military and the imprisoned clergy were released from jail by the Cabinet's Order of August 19, 1840.<sup>25</sup>

The Separated churches again appealed to the king for a legal right to function. They made the following requests: (1) recognition by the state apart from membership in the United Evangelical Lutheran congregation; (2) permission to use the 1539 Wittenberg Agenda; (3) permission to bind their clergy by the Unaltered Augsburg Confession.<sup>26</sup> Before this petition received a favorable deposition, the Separated Lutheran pastors publicly organized the Oberkirchenkollegium, free of state control, on September 15, 1841. George Huschke was elected first president of the Separated Lutherans who met in synodical convention every

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<sup>24</sup>Friedrich Uhlhorn, Geschichte der deutsch-lutherischen Kirche (Leipzig: Doerffling and Franke Verlag, 1911), II, 150.

<sup>25</sup>J. G. Scheibel, Archiv fuer historische Entwicklung und neueste Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche (Nuernberg: Verlag der Joh. Phil. Raw'schen Buchhandlung, 1841), p. 243.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

four years.<sup>27</sup> Their constitution was recognized in a measure by the state on July 23, 1845. They no longer paid taxes to the State Church and the official acts of their clergy were given legal right. However, their churches were not recognized as places of worship. The Oberkirchenkollegium received official status August 7, 1847. On this date the Breslau Synod numbered twenty-one congregations with 18,644 members.<sup>28</sup>

The persistent opposition to the Union and its episcopal governing system forced the king to call a General Synod in 1846 to consider church government.<sup>29</sup> "The most generally admired proposal [at this synod] seemed to be that of theologian [K. I.] Nitzsch, which would constitute presbyteries and synods by which the mind of the church might be articulated. The king dreaded nothing more and prorogued the synod."<sup>30</sup> The over-riding theme of the synod was an appeal for toleration in church administration. The same synod also discussed the Union's confessional basis and voted forty-eight to fourteen to accept its present status. "This danger, that the Lutheran Confessions were given value through

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<sup>27</sup>Wangemann, op. cit., II, 388-408.

<sup>28</sup>Froboess, "Lutherans, Separate," op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>29</sup>Wangemann, op. cit., III, 246.

<sup>30</sup>Nichols, op. cit., p. 158.

synodical majority did more than anything else to open the eyes of the Lutherans."<sup>31</sup>

The revolutionary year of 1848 placed the confessional Lutherans in a position to request greater leniency on the part of the government. The Separated Lutherans strengthened their organization by the Wittenberger Saetze, adopted September 10, 1849.

- a. We stand on the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- b. We are convinced that our congregations have never rightly ceased to be Lutheran congregations, and that we are in duty bound to defend their confessional rights with all our might.
- c. The confessional rights of the Lutheran congregations demand for their safeguard a confessional constitution. Accordingly, we ask for recognition and a carrying through of the Evangelical Lutheran Confession in cultus, congregational constitution and government.
- d. As the first aim of our endeavor we mention the liberation of the altar service from all ambiguity and a full expression of our confessions in the entire divine service. Further, we demand a guarantee of our confessional independence in the administration of church government and the preservation of Lutheran principles in our congregational constitution.
- e. These ends we do not wish to accomplish by a leaving of the State Church, because we feel bound in conscience to carry through this fight for the good rights of our Lutheran Church upon her own territory within the State Church.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Uhlhorn, op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>32</sup>Neve, op. cit., pp. 130-131, translated from Wangemann, op. cit., III, 385, q.v.

After the 1848 revolution, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Prussia, commonly called the Breslau Synod, grew rapidly. Pastor A. Wagner of Militsch in Silesia had already left the Landeskirche in 1840.<sup>33</sup> He was followed in 1848 by Franz Wilhelm Julius Diedrich, pastor in Saatzke in the Friegnitz; Pastor Leopold Julius Nagel of Trieglaff; Albert David Hollaz (a descendent of the famous David Hollaz), pastor in Gross-Justin and Schwirsen; Pastor August Ludwig Gaedike of Wollin; Pastor Ernst Phillip Wolf of Techow, Brandenburg; Pastor Carl Senkel of Mertensdorf; Dr. W. F. Besser of Walkow; and Pastor G. Witte of Briest, Passau.<sup>34</sup>

The Separated Lutherans were encouraged in their struggle for confessional Lutheranism by the state Concession of 1852. This was the second significant change in the character of the Prussian Union. This proclamation became known as the itio in patres decree:

The Evangelical Oberkirchenrat [of the Union] consists of members belonging to both churches, and if there is a matter that can be decided only by following the confessions of one of the two churches then the preparatory decision (Vorfrage) is to be reached by a vote of the members belonging to that section, and their decision is then the basis for the vote of the entire body. Therefore, in matters pertaining to the Lutheran Church, only those members of the Oberkirchenrat who belong to that confession shall decide.<sup>35</sup>

Most Lutherans were enthused by this new development but were rightfully curious how it would work out in practice.

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<sup>33</sup>Kirchenblatt fuer die Gemeinden evang.-luth. Bekenntnisses in dem Preussischen Staaten, III (November, 1848), 167.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., III (April, 1848), 52-57.

<sup>35</sup>Neve, op. cit., pp. 131-132.

It was not long before they saw the practical application of this decree in action. On July 12, 1853, the Consistory stated the Lutherans could have free exercise of their confessional policies on the local level, but were forbidden to make public propaganda for their point of view.<sup>36</sup>

### C. Lutherans in Prussian Annexed Territories

The Prussian Union of 1817 triggered off similar movements throughout the Germanies. The Lutherans had patiently, and most times willingly, borne with the civil-controlled church since the Reformation. This situation was tolerable to Lutheran confessional principles as long as they were permitted to worship according to Lutheran rites. The various unions of Reformed and Lutherans, by their very nature, transgressed the letter of the Lutheran Confessions. The lead of Prussia in union matters was eventually followed by all the German states. The State of Nassau formed a union in 1817; the Palatinate (Bavaria west of the Rhine), 1818; Anhalt, 1820; Baden, 1821; and Dessau, 1827.

There was Union opposition in Saxony, Mecklenburg and Hannover, but these did not strictly oppose the idea, only the introduction of it through state power. Only a few opposed Union on the basis that it was a confessional

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

compromise.<sup>37</sup> Most of the confessional opposition was in the eastern Prussian provinces where Lutheranism was the strongest.

There was little opposition in the Rhineland, where the Reformed and Lutherans mingled since the days of the Reformation. Where opposition occurred there was always intense government suppression with the threat of fines and imprisonment. This was also the case in the Grossherzogtum of Hesse. Until the first decade of the 19th century this area was strongly Lutheran. As a result of the boundary changes in 1822, many Reformed churches were acquired. Union was then introduced voluntarily by individual congregations. Official provincial status was given to this Union in 1832.<sup>38</sup>

Confessional Lutheran voices were heard throughout the German states after Claus Harms (1778-1855) of Kiel issued his Ninety-Five Theses against the Prussian Union decree in 1817. Several other confessional Lutherans have been named above, but their impact was largely on the local level. Most earnest and wide-spread opposition erupted after large Prussian territorial annexations began in 1866. Until that time Lutherans generally were indifferent to the meaning of Union. In Schleswig-Holstein, for example, many called for the Union, but after its annexation to Prussia, Union

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<sup>37</sup>Uhlhorn, op. cit., p. 147.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 300.

agitators were noticeably silent. Likewise, the Hanoverians openly opposed and maintained their historic independence from the Landeskirche.<sup>39</sup>

The heated problem of church government for the annexed Prussian lands was settled by Friedrich William IV's decree that agreement was not necessary in all the new member states. Nevertheless, he encouraged a free development toward conformity with the Prussian policy. Forced by political expediency, the Prussian policy of complete submission was changed to the recognition of independent rights in the provincial churches.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid., pp. 282-283.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 285.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE FREE CHURCH DEVELOPMENT IN THE RHINELAND

##### The Establishment of the Free Church in Nassau

Closely allied to the Breslau Synod in Prussia is the work of confessional Lutheran pastors in the Duchy of Nassau. The capital of this small independent state of the Rhine valley was Wiesbaden. In 1867 it was united with Hesse and a joint capital was established in Kassel.<sup>1</sup>

The chief representative of conservative Lutheranism in Nassau was Pastor Friedrich Brunn. He became associated with the leaders of the Breslau Synod when he separated from the Landeskirche in 1846. This separation from the state church widened the circle of acquaintances of this unknown Lutheran pastor in Runkel, Nassau. He became associated with the bright lights of Lutheran confessionalism, such as Gottlieb von Harless and Wilhelm Loehe.

Friedrich Brunn was a very successful pastor in the Runkel and Steeden/Lahn area following his ordination in the winter of 1842. For three years he faithfully and progressively shepherded his people away from the cancer of Rationalism into the Biblical way of salvation. Two successive events occurred in the winter of 1845-46 which

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<sup>1</sup>Karl E. Demandt, Geschichte des Landes Hessen (Kassel: Baerenreiter Verlag, 1959), p. 429.



dramatically changed the course of his life. In that season Brunn's assistant (the former senior pastor in Runkel) died; and he was succeeded by a young, vigorous assistant of the Rationalistic stripe. Brunn was working indefatigably to overcome Rationalism in his parish. Thus he was driven to seek the council of his former university friend, Pastor Karl Graul, mission director in Leipzig. Unsolicited by Brunn, Graul forwarded the request to Gottlieb Christopher Adolph von Harless (1806-79). Von Harless was currently professor at the University of Leipzig and later president of the High Consistory in Munich.

In May, 1846, Brunn received the astonishing opinion from Graul and von Harless that he should leave the Landeskirche.<sup>2</sup> Brunn was shocked by this advice. Such radical action had never occurred to this small village pastor. The penetrating question in his mind was: could he, at the age of twenty-seven, have such unique truth to warrant this drastic action?<sup>3</sup>

Brunn determined to follow the advice of his counselors and began his battle with the Landeskirche on Pentecost Sunday. Shortly after this, he, together with twenty-six families of the Runkel-Steeden congregation separated from

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<sup>2</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben fuer meine Kinder und zu meinem 50 jaehrigen Amtsjubilaeum (Zwickau: Johannes Herrmann, n.d.), p. 57.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 60.

the state church.<sup>4</sup>

### B. Early Influences on Friedrich Brunn

Friedrich Brunn's separation from the Landeskirche was not the rash act of an irresponsible youth. In order to appreciate this judgment it will be helpful to review the development from his childhood, through his university days, and the early years of his ministry.

His father was court-preacher at the castle of the old Duchy of Nassau in Schaumburg on the Lahn river,<sup>5</sup> He received the typical Rationalistic Confirmation instruction which was a mixing of philosophy with Christianity. For example, Moses, Christ and Socrates were equally presented as the three great religious instructors of antiquity.<sup>6</sup>

Brunn attended the Gymnasium in Weilburg for four years. He was expected to follow his father in theology, which he did with little enthusiasm. His uncle, pastor in Woerlitz, invited him to study at the near-by Leipzig University. At Leipzig, Karl Graul (the later mission director of the Dresden

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 61

<sup>5</sup>Friedrich August Brunn, Sr. (September 10, 1773-September 29, 1849) became court-preacher in Schaumburg in 1798. He was also pastor at Cramberg-Habenscheid near Woerlitz, Anhalt, 1823-1849. Alfred Adam, Die Nassauische Union Von 1817 (Darmstadt: Verlag der Kirchengeschichtlichen Vereinigung in Hessen und Nassau, 1949), p. 193.

<sup>6</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 4-7.

Evangelical Lutheran Mission Institute) was Brunn's daily companion. For the first time, Brunn began to think seriously about the meaning of Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

Brunn studied one and one-half years at Leipzig, mostly under Rationalistic professors. Leipzig was also an international trade city. Consequently there was a considerable Jewish population. Among the Jews in Leipzig was Carl Paul Caspari (1814-92) who became an influential friend of Friedrich Brunn. Caspari was later a notable orthodox professor in Oslo, Norway.<sup>8</sup>

After leaving Leipzig, Brunn continued his education at the University of Bonn for one year and then one additional year at the Nassau theological seminary at Herborn. At the former school, Karl Immanuel Nitzsch (1787-1868) was professor of Systematics. Nitzsch was a defender of the Union and later the High Consistory councilor in Berlin. Brunn judged him as mediocre, not in his learning but in his theology. A major defect of his instruction was little emphasis on church history, especially the period of Martin Luther.

Following his seminary training Brunn spent two years of internship with his father. The elder Brunn had little sympathy for his son's struggling conscience. The strong influence of Pietism was attracting Brunn as he eased away

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-13.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

from the unsatisfactory principles of Rationalism. He was forcefully moved to a severe recognition of his sins by daily reading in Hofacker's Sermons.<sup>9</sup>

University life led Brunn to a personal awareness that Christianity had more to offer than he had previously been led to believe. This realization did not result in an immediate religious awakening. The greatest soul-searching period of his life was at the seminary and during his internship.<sup>10</sup>

This soul-searching was continued and intensified during his early ministry at Runkel. He was installed at that congregation on the Fourth Sunday in Advent, 1842, as assistant to the elderly Pastor Preuser.<sup>11</sup> The spiritual condition of the congregation was exemplified by the total of five people who attended the installation. The congregation had been instructed with the Landeskirche catechism which even denied the personal divinity of Christ. Christ was divine only insofar as He could inspire men to greater heights.<sup>12</sup>

In these early years, Brunn, himself, did not have a clear understanding of the distinction between Law and Gospel. He did, however, understand the destructive power of sin and the futility of work righteousness. It was with this conviction that he preached to his congregation and

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 20

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>11</sup>Alfred Adam, Die Nassauische Union, p. 194.

<sup>12</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 23.

continued to grow with them in a fuller appreciation of the Gospel.<sup>13</sup>

The most successful method of Brunn's ministry was his visits to the homes of his members. This was unheard of among the Landeskirchen pastors. In funeral sermons, during those early days, he did not give the survivors "that sweet hope of a blessed reunion in heaven" with the departed loved one who never attended church and would have nothing to do with Christ while alive. This did more than anything to smash the hearts of the unrepentant and indifferent villagers.<sup>14</sup>

Brunn pursued his visitation program into the surrounding area and on Easter, 1843, the Runkel church was filled to capacity. The senior pastor felt overburdened and reversed roles with Brunn. He was now free to edify his people in the manner he felt best. One of his first changes was the introduction of Bible study groups in all of the villages. Materials used were Hofacker's Sermons and several publications by the Norddeutscher Verein, especially, Die enge und weite Pforte and the Fassionsbuch. His preaching was on the basis of the Ten Commandments and the Apostles Creed. The Bible study groups were eminently successful and larger quarters were located in every village.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-31.

The second year of Friedrich Brunn's ministry was a spiritual let-down. The excitement of the first year wore thin and he had more time to mull over his own spiritual convictions. Great doubts over the truth of God's Word plagued him. In the spring of 1845, he contracted for the first time a chronic nervous paralysis of the throat. A remedy called for complete rest for three months.<sup>16</sup>

It was during these formative and active years that Brunn was led to the conviction of the truth of God's Word. In his soul-struggle he turned to the writings of Luther and the Lutheran dogmaticians of the 17th Century. The contemplation of these writings eventually led him to believe in the certainty of God's Word in the Scriptures. The development was slow, but when the counsel of his friend, Mission Director Graul, and Professor von Harless arrived in 1846, he was prepared to take the drastic step and leave the Landeskirche.

### C. Landeskirche Opposition in the Rhineland

The Nassau authorities did not take Brunn's action complacently. On July 6, 1846, Brunn was ordered to report to the minister of state in Wiesbaden within four weeks. Brunn and his members were confident their action would not have serious repercussions. The precedent for independent churches was established by the Methodists and the Baptists in Germany.

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-38.

Therefore, it was surprising that the government did not concern itself with the Runkel congregation's theological reasons for disassociation, but looked upon them as dissenters from a long established order. A short time later a representative of Geheime-Kirchenrat Ludwig W. Wilhelmi, arrived in Runkel and ordered Brunn to leave the district.<sup>17</sup>

Brunn obeyed the order and immediately went to Mission Director Graul, who was attending a mission festival in Dresden. Here for the first time Brunn met George Philip Huschke, the leader of the Breslau Synod and Pastor Johann Georg Wermelskirch (1803-1872) of Erfurt.<sup>18</sup> This was the beginning of the long association between the Free Churches of Prussia and Nassau.

After the mission festival, Brunn spent several days with Wermelskirch in Erfurt, and on his advice returned to Nassau. At home, Brunn demanded recognition of his constitutional rights which granted freedom of religion.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 61-63.

<sup>18</sup> Wermelskirch was a noted preacher. Earlier he served the English Jewish Mission in Warsaw and Posen. In 1834 he sympathized with the confessional movement led by Huschke and established an evangelical Lutheran congregation in Posen. He was deposed by the civil authorities in 1835, and went to Dresden to become the first director of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society. He went to Erfurt in 1844. Kirchliches Handlexikon, edited by Carl Meusel (Leipzig: Verlag von Justus Naumann, 1902), VII, 211-212.

<sup>19</sup> Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 64-65.

The Brunn family moved its home from Runkel to Steeden, and was greeted with a fine and ordered to leave within twenty-four hours. Friedrich Brunn left but returned home secretly at night. For some time he served his members' spiritual needs under cover of darkness.

Meanwhile, a deputation of the Runkel-Steeden congregation appealed to the state minister in Wiesbaden and finally to Duke Albert himself. Brunn also personally received audience and was given written permission to visit his family. Had these appeals failed, Pastor Wermelskirch had already contacted the Braunfels, Prussia parish which was kindly disposed to have Brunn as their pastor. This parish was a member of the Breslau Synod.<sup>20</sup>

The Nassau congregations were permitted to hold public worship by the beginning of the Passion season, 1847. Although the Nassau constitution clearly granted religious freedom, the local authorities, under pressure from Landeskirche pastors, continued to make life difficult for Brunn.<sup>21</sup>

The honeymoon with the government ended again in late 1847. Brunn was once again ordered out of Nassau. Every week during the interim, Brunn appeared before the judge to answer for some alleged crime. His members were harassed and those who would not witness against him were thrown into

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 66-70.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 71.



Jan. 22

This time Brunn traveled to Bavaria and sought the counsel of John Conrad William Loehle (1808-72). Loehle presented a positive Lutheran witness against the dominant Rationalism in Germany. From his training center in Neuen-dettelsau, he encouraged the ministry of the Missouri Synod with men and money. Loehle sympathetically counseled Friedrich Brunn, but advised him to delay any immediate action and make no open transgression of the state law. This was exactly opposite from the advice he received a year earlier in Erfurt under similar circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

Disappointed with Loehle's advice, Brunn visited Pastor Johann Friedrich Wucherer in Noerdlingen, the cities of Fuerth and Nuernbuerg, and finally Erlangen. In the last city he received the counsel of Professors Wilhelm Friedrich Hoefling (1802-53) and Gottfried Thomasius (1802-75), both defenders of the Lutheran Confessions against Rationalism, Romanism and the Union. They advised him to return to the Landes-  
kirche. Confused and disappointed, Brunn made his way to Wiesbaden.

An eleventh hour salvation was offered Brunn by Locher, a lay member of the Breslau Synod in Saarbruecken, and a man of some means. Brunn accepted the offer to live on

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

Locher's estate and moved in with his family on November 1, 1847. This refuge also permitted Brunn to visit the Free Church Lutherans in that area and at the same time to make two secret visits to Steeden over the winter.<sup>24</sup>

By the spring of 1848, Brunn felt he could no longer impose upon the hospitality of his benefactor. The safest avenue of action was to accept the pastorate of a Separated Lutheran church in Prussia. However, religious freedom was guaranteed in Prussia to pastors of the Free Church only if they were Prussian citizens. Brunn did not want to become a Prussian citizen. The only thing left to do was return to an unknown fate in Steeden.

On the return to Steeden via Wiesbaden, the Brunn family stopped at a restaurant in the border town of Bingen/Rhine. Here for the first time he read the news of the March revolution in Nassau. The newspaper report stated there was a "removal of all previous limitations of religious freedom."<sup>25</sup>

At Steeden the joy of the revolution was short lived. Local citizen committees were organized in Runkel and Steeden, which demanded Brunn's departure. Nothing less than a written guarantee from the Duke of Nassau silenced their bitter animosity.<sup>26</sup> Once again there was peace in Runkel and

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-78.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-87.

Steeden. The congregation then built a new church-parsonage which was dedicated on Ascension, 1849.

#### D. Extension of the Free Church in Nassau and Bavaria

The members of Brunn's Steeden congregation were disturbed by the economic upheaval of the Industrial Revolution. The Industrial Revolution throughout the Germanies in the 1840's and 1850's resulted in large population shifts. The population of Nassau in 1845 was over 417,000. Among them were over 190,000 Roman Catholics and more than six and one-half thousand Jews. Slightly less than half of the householders were farmers. "The complete over-balance of the agricultural class . . . and numerous small handworkers explain . . . the political unrest in the late 1840's."<sup>27</sup>

Confessional Lutherans resettling in new areas provided Brunn and his associates with an opportunity to preach the Gospel in an ever-widening circumference. Within a radius of nine hours by foot from Steeden lay the villages of Mensfelden, Kirberg, Bechtheim, Fachingen, Wehrheim, Usingen, and Anspach. The villagers were aroused to action by a pamphlet written by Brunn, bearing on a decision to leave the Landeskirche.<sup>28</sup> In February 1850, the congregations

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<sup>27</sup>Demandt, op. cit., p. 411.

<sup>28</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Kann ein rechtschaffener evangelischer Christ in der Nassauischen evangelischen Landeskirche bleiben? (Frankfort a. Main: H. Zimmer'sche Sortiments-Buchhandlung, 1850), Concordia Historical Institute, microfilm roll 373.

of Schmitten and Arnoldshain determined to leave the state church. Bible study groups were planned in Anspach, Westerfeld and Eschbach.<sup>29</sup>

The Brunn pamphlet also reached the town of Gemuenden in Grafschaft Westerburg (north of Nassau) located in the heart of Roman Catholicism. Brunn visited the town upon request of the church elders on July 20, 1850. Almost the entire town of 300 met with him to discuss the spiritual state of things in Gemuenden. For the most part they were unstable in their doctrinal position. Brunn consented to serve the 153 family congregation and the Landeskirche services permanently ended in Gemuenden.<sup>30</sup>

In spite of the 1848 revolutionary guarantees of religious freedom, the police curtailed Brunn's services for over two months before they were resumed the end of October. During the succeeding two years the congregation was served by Pastor Johannes Fronmueller of Bavaria upon Wilhelm Loehe's recommendation. He was installed on November 3, 1850.

By the summer of 1852, the political reaction to the 1848 revolution was underway. Fronmueller was considered a foreigner and forbidden to preach in the territory.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 93-97.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., pp. 97-105.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., pp. 106-107.

Between 1853 and 1860 all official functions of the Gemuenden congregation were performed clandestinely by Brunn. In the summer they met in the forest and during the winter in a neighboring Catholic village. In September 1860, Brunn, once again received permission to hold public services. Everyone hoped for Pastor Frommueller's return, but this was strictly forbidden. Many of the members eventually transferred to Steeden. The congregation was finally allowed to have their own pastor in the spring of 1864. Pastor Karl H. Mueller was installed.<sup>32</sup>

The Usingen district congregations, served by Pastor Ebert, suffered from the same political reaction in the early 1850's as Gemuenden. Ebert likewise was considered a foreigner and removed to Cologne. Ebert was a Saxon, who had been suggested by Loche at the mission festival held in Steeden, October, 1850. That particular occasion also marked the first conference of Lutheran theologians from Bavaria, Prussia, Hesse and Saxony to discuss the defense of confessional Lutheranism in Hesse-Darmstadt.<sup>33</sup>

Another major activity area of the Free Church in the Rhineland area was the Nordenstadt-Frankfort/Main district.

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<sup>32</sup>Kirchenblatt fuer die Gemeinden evang.-luth. Bekenntnisses in dem Preussischen Staaten, XX (November 1, 1865), 248-251.

<sup>33</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 106.

This was served by Pastor Julius Hein. Hein was pastor of a Landeskirche parish in Nordenstadt until 1853 when he and a part of his congregation left the state church. In the early part of 1855, he and a new parishioner were arrested on trumped-up charges. Mob violence accompanied his arrest and his appeal on constitutional rights was quickly dismissed.<sup>34</sup>

Hein moved to Steeden for six months. His confessional agreement so much concurred with Brunn's that the latter said, "Brother Hein and I were truly two people with one soul."<sup>35</sup> Through the good will of the brethren in Bavaria, Hein was able to take up residence in Frankfurt/Main, in November 1855.<sup>36</sup> However, before this was possible he needed to give proof of support to the local police authorities. A foreign residence permit had to be issued for Hein to live in Frankfurt. At first he had every reason to believe this was only a formality, but during the elapsed time between application and approval the police were informed Hein was an agitator.<sup>37</sup> This was due to the interference of Geheim-Kirchenrat Wilhelmi.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Kirchenblatt, X (June 15, 1855), 145-147.

<sup>35</sup>Brunn, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>36</sup>Kirchenblatt, X (November 15, 1855), 277.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid., X (January 1, 1856), 14-15.

<sup>38</sup>Lehre und Wehre, II (January, 1856), 28.

Consequently, a permit was issued for only one-quarter year.

Frankfort was ideally situated for Hein's operation. It was in the center of Usingen, Wiesbaden, Mainz, Anspach and Nordenstadt congregations. Several members of the Separated Church of Prussia had relocated in this area or were in military service.<sup>39</sup> Hein's spiritual care bore fruit and a new meeting place was dedicated in Anspach in November, 1855, for which Friedrich Brunn preached the dedicatory service.<sup>40</sup>

The work of the Free Church was carried out in relative tranquility through the summer of 1856. Hein's foreign permit was extended and he had no scrapes with the law in most of the towns and cities he served.<sup>41</sup> In the spring of 1857, trouble again broke out in Nordenstadt. This time Hein appealed to the duke himself. His case was investigated but the local officials convinced the duke that all of Hein's counter accusations against them were unfounded. Consequently, Hein's appeal was lost.<sup>42</sup>

The situation was further complicated when the Bavarian financial supporters of Hein announced they would no

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<sup>39</sup> [Julius] Hein, "Bitte an die Hirten 'der evang.-luth. Gemeinden in Preussen,'" Kirchenblatt, X (January 1, 1855), 28.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., X (January 1, 1856), 12-13.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., X (June 15, 1856), 156.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., XI (May 1, 1857), 107-108.

longer assist him.<sup>43</sup> In addition his landlord threatened to raise the rent to 300 Thaler per year because "prayer hours" were periodically held in his quarters.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to civil government blockades, the Free Churches in the Germanies also endured opposition from special interest groups. A new society was formed in Frankfurt/Main, September 30, 1863, called the Protestanten-Verein. This society was dedicated to the dual purpose of undermining Lutheranism and establishing a national evangelical German church. The feelings of this society were not confined to the Frankfurt area, but similar groups and individuals existed throughout the country. Many, such as Ludwig Friedrich Wilhelm von Hoffmann (1806-73) of Berlin, believed the future united Germany needed a single, united German church. Eminent members of the Protestanten-Verein were: Dr. of Theology Daniel Schenckel of Heidelberg, president; Dr. Eltester of Berlin; and Lic. Heinrich Krause, editor of Protestantischen Kirchenzeitung fuer das evangelische Deutschland.<sup>45</sup>

In spite of opposition from civil, church and allied associations, the confessional Free Church movement strengthened its solidarity and gained momentum. The Free Church was legally recognized in Prussia in 1845. By the end of

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., XV (January 1, 1860), 15.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., XV (May 15, 1860), 120.

<sup>45</sup>C. Becker, "Der deutsche Protestanten-Verein," ibid., XV (March 1, 1864), 57-58.



the 1860's Free Churches had established their right to remain in Hesse-Nassau. The beginning of the next decade was to see the entrenchment of the Free Church in still another major German state--Saxony.

The arrival of religious liberty in the Duchy of Nassau was similarly re-enacted in the State of Saxony. Peculiar Lutheran doctrines were not challenged so early, nor so severely by state law in Saxony as in Nassau. However, the unification process of Germany under Prussian leadership finally caught up with the Saxons. But political expediency was not the sole dictator of Saxon policy. Public opinion and pressure from recognized churches and theologians added weight to the government's decision to liberalize the ordinances and allow for union type church services.

The High Church Government of Saxony presented a set of theses on June 28, 1869, which stated the Lutheran Confessions were not violated by permitting Reformed and Union church members to partake of the Sacrament when administered according to the Lutheran rite. Furthermore, the theses stated the blessings of the Sacrament did not depend upon its administration by a particular church, but upon the spiritual quality of the recipient.

<sup>1</sup> *Zeitung des Lutherischen Vereins in Dresden und anderer Orten an sein hohes ecclesiastisches Kirchenregiment in Betreff der Zulassung Reformirter und Union der heiligen Abendmahl.* Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, Friedrich Braun, editor, VI (February, 1871).

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FORMATION OF THE SAXON FREE CHURCH

The travail of religious liberty in the Duchy of Nassau was similarly re-enacted in the State of Saxony. Peculiar Lutheran doctrines were not challenged so early, nor so severely by state law in Saxony as in Nassau. However, the unification process of Germany under Prussian leadership finally caught up with the Saxons. But political expediency was not the sole dictator of Saxon policy. Public opinion and pressure from recognized churchmen and theologians added weight to the government's decision to liberalize the ordination oath and allow for union type church services.

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<sup>1</sup>"Eingabe des Lutheranervereins in Dresden und anderen Orten an ein Hohes saechsisches Kirchenregiment in Betreff der Zulassung Reformirter und Unirter zum heiligen Abendmahl," Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, Friedrich Brunn, editor, VI (February, 1871), 34-35.

The abolition of the former Saxon ordination oath was another log of historic confessional Lutheranism thrown on the pyre of liberalism. This step was another indication that the rationalistic spirit of the age was gaining in momentum. Rationalistic leaders in the state churches previously fought the introduction of private confession and the older liturgy in the 1850's. With the Prussian military victories of the late '60's, the Union was introduced more widely throughout the Germanies. The latest destruction of true Lutheranism was the alteration of the ordination oath in Saxony. This was not localized in Saxony but similar innovations took place in the Hannoverian Landessynode and the Kreissynode in Osnabrueck.<sup>2</sup>

The crux of the Saxon ordination oath lay in that it no longer demanded allegiance to the old Lutheran Symbols, but only to the undefined "Gospel of Christ."<sup>3</sup>

Friedrich Brunn wrote extensive condemnations of this new formula and judged it a compromising, unclear, and double meaning document. He feared the doctrinal discipline of all pastors would completely break down. One example of what may have been a general situation was the case of Pastor Sulze of Osnabrueck.

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<sup>2</sup>"Was fuer eine Bedeutung hat die Abschaffung des alten Ordinationseides in unseren heutigen luth. Landeskirchen?" ibid., VI (November-December, 1871), 181-182.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., VI, 185.

. . . the free thinking Preacher Sulze . . . who a few years earlier turned down a call to Chemnitz, Saxony, because his conscience forbade induction by the old ordination formula, has now accepted the call because the new formula does not interfere with his conscience.<sup>4</sup>

All of the conservative Lutherans in the 1870's did not see the new Saxon Ordination formula as a threat to genuine Lutheranism. Christoph Ernst Luthardt as editor of the Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung wrote that it was a step in the right direction.<sup>5</sup> Dr. Cornelius Carl Muenkel editor of the Neues Zeitblatt fuer die Angelenheiten der lutherischen Kirche also supported the formula as a step forward.<sup>6</sup>

The first concrete action against the new ordination oath was taken by the Lutheranerverein in Dresden, October, 1870. It considered the government's theses of the previous year inconsistent with the historical character of the Lutheran church which did not tolerate public error. Indifference to doctrine was impossible for true Lutherans. Therefore, mixed Communion services could not be tolerated. Any compromise in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper was actually a victory for the Reformed.<sup>7</sup> "The holy Sacrament is a sign

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<sup>4</sup>"Die saechsische Separation," ibid., VII (December, 1872), 175.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., VI (November-December, 1871), 182.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., VII (December, 1872), 176.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., VI (February, 1871), 35.

of the confession of the believers."<sup>8</sup>

The Lutheranerverein was largely composed of members of the Lutheran congregations in Dresden, Planitz and Zwickau. Their protest to the Saxon government finally resulted in a declaration of their independence in October, 1871. The new Free Church was called: Die vom Staate unabhaengigen evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinden in Sachsen. The constitution of this new synod was adopted in Dresden on the festival of the Reformation, 1871, by the congregations of Dresden and Planitz.

The salient points of the constitution placed the administrative authority in the congregation which was to act in accordance with the Word of God and the Lutheran Symbols. The congregation also had the authority to call all preachers and teachers. Furthermore, in the public worship services only pure Lutheran hymns and orders were to be used.<sup>9</sup>

A few months before the adoption of this constitution, these congregations wrote to Professor C. F. W. Walther, in St. Louis, Missouri, requesting him to supply them with a pastor. Walther was at a loss how to act upon this request because he did not know of a suitable man who was able

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

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., Beilage following the January, 1872 number. The pagination is according to the Beilage: pp. 9-11.

to leave his present position. Neither did Walther feel he was sufficiently orientated to the conditions within the Saxon churches. Therefore he requested Brunn, in a letter dated July 29, 1871, to inform him of the situation so that he could properly reach a decision.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, Friedrich Carl Theodore Ruhland (1836-79) was designated as the man for Saxony. He was born in Grohnde, Hannover, and was graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He served parishes in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, Buffalo, New York, and Pleasant Ridge, Illinois.<sup>11</sup> Ruhland settled in Dresden in 1872 and later moved to Niederplanitz.

There was a natural affinity between Ruhland and Brunn because of their common association with the Missouri Synod.<sup>12</sup> Ruhland visited Brunn in Steeden shortly after his arrival to discuss the problems in maintaining two distant congregations. One was located in Dresden and the other near Leipzig. As a result of their frequent association and doctrinal agreement, Brunn paid Ruhland the tribute of being

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<sup>10</sup> [Ludwig] Fuerbringer, editor, Briefe von C. F. W. Walther an seine Freunde, Synodalgemeinden und Familienmitglieder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1916), II, 223.

<sup>11</sup> Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1956), p. 930. Also "Friedrich Carl Theodor Ruhland" Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, VII, (April, 1935), 25ff.

<sup>12</sup> W. Waching, editor, Geschichte der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Freikirche in Sachsen u. a. St., (Zwickau: Verlag des Schriftenvereins, 1925), pp. 49-51.

"a worthy, close friend and brother."<sup>13</sup>

Brunn did not publicly interfere in the affairs of the new Saxon congregations, in order not to lend credence to the rumor that he and Ruhland were agents of the Missouri Synod, which wished to see the Landeskirche destroyed. By 1872 Brunn had developed a reputation as a "party man" for the Missouri Synod.<sup>14</sup> Even his fellow Free Lutheran clergymen said of him: "A nod from St. Louis, a signal from Planitz and (in Steeden) everyone is up in arms."<sup>15</sup>

The work of Ruhland in Saxony met with much success. Reaction to the Saxon government and its liberalizing of confessional Lutheranism mushroomed throughout the countryside. Pastor Emil Lenk of Siebenlehn published a tract in 1872, entitled, Aufruf an alle Christen der saechsischen Landeskirche which called attention to the essential failings of the ordination formula.<sup>16</sup> Congregations in Chemnitz, Frankenberg, Crammitschau and many other places desired closer affiliation with the Dresden-Planitz congregations.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Mission und Kirche, VII (December, 1872), 170.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., VII, 169.

<sup>15</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben fuer meine Kinder und Freunde zu meinem 50 jaehrigen Amtsjubilaem (Zwickau: Johannes Herrmann, n.d.), p. 218.

<sup>16</sup>Mission und Kirche, VII (December, 1872), 169.

<sup>17</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 212.

An unexpected movement was underway that eventually led to the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Free Church of Saxony and other States, in 1876.<sup>18</sup>

Before this union was consummated, however, there were many petty jealousies between the various Free Church pastors that had to be overcome. Brunn sensed future inter-church struggles already in the forepart of 1872, when he appealed for brotherly love and continued unity between Nassau and Dresden during the unforeseen, difficult days ahead.<sup>19</sup>

The prayers of the Rhineland pastors were answered when they finally agreed to form a synodical union. The constitutional assembly of the new synod met on August 16-17, 1876, in Dresden, Saxony. The meeting was attended by Pastors Friedrich Ruhland, George Stoeckhardt, H. Z. Stallmann, Paul Kern and Otto Willkomm. The congregations were represented by E. M. Potzger of Planitz; K. Berthold of Chemnitz; and H. Kretzschmar of Crimmitschau.

During the winter of 1876/77, Pastors Friedrich Brunn, Karl Eikmeier and Julius Hein joined the synod. Friedrich Ruhland was elected the first president and George Stoeckhardt, secretary.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Geschichte der Freikirche, p. 188.

<sup>19</sup> "Ein Wort der Verstaendigung ueber die saechsische Separation," Mission und Kirche, VII (February, 1872), 20.

<sup>20</sup> Geschichte der Freikirche, pp. 188-189. Also E. Biegner, "Karl Georg Stoeckhardt," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXI (January, 1949), 154-166.



## CHAPTER V

### THE FREE CHURCH STRENGTHENS ITS BONDS WITH AMERICA

#### Friedrich Brunn's Contact with the Missouri Synod

The Free Churches of the Rhineland, under the leadership of Friedrich Brunn, were hard pressed to maintain themselves. Between 1845 and 1860, the repeated problems with the civil and judicial authorities focused most of Brunn's attention on the local situation. However, after frequent correspondence with Director Friedrich August Graemer in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and a personal visit by Professor C. F. W. Walther to Nassau, the chords of the German confessional churches were lengthened to embrace the Missouri Synod. Lutheran confessionalism was considerably strengthened on both sides of the Atlantic by the establishment of a preparatory seminary in Steeden, Nassau. From this school German students were gathered and sent to the Missouri Synod. Friedrich Brunn's solicitation of funds and students in every German state brought the Missouri Synod name and doctrines to the attention of the Europeans. Through Brunn's publication of the Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, the history and current opinions of the Missouri Synod became known on the continent. Through this periodical and Brunn's personal appeal, the congregations in Dresden and Planitz recognized the sound confessional status of the Missouri Synod and

eventually called upon her to supply them with a faithful Lutheran pastor.<sup>1</sup>

Brunn's contact with the Missouri Synod began in 1851.<sup>2</sup> In that year a former student of his went to America for reasons of health, and enrolled for two years at the practical seminary at Fort Wayne, Indiana. This student expressed Brunn's interest in the instruction of students to Director Craemer. At this time Brunn's student training was on a parochial basis, without any thought of international student supply work. Craemer, however, immediately wrote Brunn and the two instructors exchanged several letters of explanation.<sup>3</sup> The Missouri Synod was very anxious to find a replacement for the curtailed supply of men and money formerly coming from Wilhelm Loehle. After Missouri's break with Loehle in 1853 over the doctrine of the ministry, the synod found itself in dire need of students from Europe to meet its ever growing demands. The American churchmen continued to look to Germany to supply their manpower because "there was a surplus of ministerial candidates in Germany in 1850."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>There is also a letter from W. Kayl to Brunn dated 1846 in the Concordia Historical Institute, microfilm 373.

<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben fuer meine Kinder und Freunde zu meinem 50 jaehrigen Amtsjubilaeum (Zwickau: Johannes Herrmann, n.d.), p. 125.

<sup>4</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "Lutheran Immigrant Churches Face the Problem of the Frontier," Church History, XXIX (December, 1960), 449.

No further action was taken on the question of supplying students for the Missouri Synod until Professor Walther's visit to Steeden, Nassau in 1860. The personal appeal of the man from Missouri convinced Brunn it was the will of God to establish this school in Steeden. Although convinced of the necessity, Brunn did not perceive the means of so large an undertaking. Steeden was small and the cost of the adventure was enormous.<sup>5</sup>

Practical encouragement soon came in the fall of 1860. Professor Walther already promised limited funds to Brunn, but the first contribution was two and one-half Groschen from a member of the Breslau Free Church at that synod's convention. Publicity for the new school throughout the Germanies was forthcoming from Mission Director Graul in the Leipziger Missionsblatt, also in the Filger aus Sachsen,<sup>6</sup> and in a Breslau Synod periodical, the Kirchliches Zeitblatt edited by Pastor Ludwig Otto Ehlers.<sup>7</sup>

Brunn's decision to operate a pre-seminary training school was based on his conviction that the Lutheran church must be clear on the doctrine of the church and the ministry.<sup>8</sup> Brunn's own conflict with the Breslau Synod over this

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<sup>5</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 155.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>7</sup>Lehre und Wehre, VII (January, 1861), 31.

<sup>8</sup>Der Lutheraner, XVIII (October 16, 1861), 39. Also Karl Elkmeier, "The Lutheran Proseminary in Steeden," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIX (Winter, 1957), 137-153.

very question was just beginning to emerge. The Missouri Synod was thoroughly confessional on the issues which confronted Lutheranism on both sides of the Atlantic. The pre-seminary was in Brunn's opinion, a German contribution to the conservative effort made by the Missouri Synod.<sup>9</sup>

Brunn believed it was the duty of the German Lutherans to support their fellow kingdom workers in North America. Many Germans had emigrated to America and it was the duty of those still in the established fatherland to supply this new synod with adequate spiritual care. This was no mission to foreigners but to flesh and blood. America offered great and challenging opportunities to build the kingdom of God. Every confessional German Lutheran could meet his obligation to reap the harvest by supporting the Steeden school.<sup>10</sup>

Lutherans in Germany and America heard the earnest plea and responded generously. An initial sum of 400 Thaler was needed to prepare facilities at Steeden.<sup>11</sup> Professor Walther sent over 300 Thaler<sup>12</sup> and contributions from individuals and congregations throughout America continued pouring in.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Friedrich Brunn, "Its es unsere Pflicht, die lutherische Kirche Nordamerikas bauen zu helfen?" Der Lutheraner, XVII (July 9, 1862), 187-188.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., XVIII (March 5, 1862), 119.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., XVII (December 11, 1861), 68-69.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., XIX (September 3, 1862), 6.

Before Easter, 1862, 400 Thaler were collected in Germany.<sup>14</sup> Brunn collected funds and carried the influence of the Missouri Synod everywhere in Germany by his annual summer "collection trips." He was received with open hearts and hands in Hannover, Hermansburg, Lauenberg, Hamberg, Berlin, Leipzig and many other cities and villages. His arrival was the announcement of a mission festival. Many people were grateful and pleased with the news he brought of the Missouri Synod's concern for pure doctrine. Pastor Ludwig Otto Ehlers found himself in unity with the Missouri Synod through Brunn's testimony.<sup>15</sup>

The interests of the Steeden school and the Missouri Synod were furthered by a monthly periodical, Die evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche.<sup>16</sup> Since the Missouri Synod was not well known in Germany, several issues were devoted to its history and a description of German emigrant conditions in America.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., XVIII (June 11, 1862), 175.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., XVII (March 5, 1862), 120.

<sup>16</sup>Although it may not be historically traceable to this periodical, it is certain that Landgraff, Kammerherr Otto von Bismarck, knew and approved of Brunn's work through the pro-seminary. A letter dated June 14, 1867, in Bismarck's own handwriting, commends Brunn for sending missionaries to America. Bismarck, further, wishes Brunn the blessing of "the Triune God to whom we both pray." Microfilm 373, ac, Concordia Historical Institute.

<sup>17</sup>"Gottes Werk unter den Missouriern," Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, Friedrich Brunn, editor, I (January, 1866), 3.

In 1871, 700 copies per year were being published.<sup>18</sup>

The Steeden institution was not only an orientation point for prospective ministers and teachers, but it also provided preliminary instruction and acted as a screening place.<sup>19</sup> Most of the students were sent to the Practical seminary in St. Louis, a few went to the teachers college in Addison, Illinois, and after 1870 also to the Gymnasium in Fort Wayne, Indiana.<sup>20</sup> For all students, except the 14-19 year olds, Steeden offered a one year course. The curriculum included Bible and world history, geography, Latin and an introduction to the Symbolical Books.<sup>21</sup>

The students came not only from the Free Lutheran churches, but from the Landeskirchen, Union churches, and even the Pietist Herrenhut congregations.<sup>22</sup> Geographically, the Hannover and Leipzig areas were the greatest suppliers of students,<sup>23</sup> but some came from as far away as Amsterdam and Bessarabia, Russia.<sup>24</sup> Most of them were also very poor.

Two perennial concerns were: (1) will there be enough money? (2) will there be sufficient number of students?

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., VI (February, 1871), 32.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., III (April, 1868), 49.

<sup>20</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 157-158.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 159.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>23</sup>Mission und Kirche, I (March, 1866), 39.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., V (June, 1870), 82.

The former question was always more demanding than the latter.

The saturation point of student accommodations in Steeden was reached in 1863. That year there were ten students. The Brunn parsonage was renovated at a cost of 1486 Thaler in 1865-66, which now provided accommodations for 24-30 students. The complete cost was covered by the Missouri Synod.<sup>25</sup> The alternate plan of an independent building would have cost a few thousand Thaler.<sup>26</sup> Between 1863 and 1878, the Missouri Synod's average contribution was almost \$1,000 per year to the Steeden institution.<sup>27</sup> The average annual income from both German and American sources between 1864 and 1873, was 2,400 Thaler. The high income years were 1865 and 1866 with almost 4,000 Thaler income.<sup>28</sup> The financial security of the school was jeopardized throughout the 1860's by the Prussian wars and the Civil War in the United States. The devaluation of American money after the Civil war made the amount of financial assistance very uncertain. The dollar lost almost one-third of its value in the exchange.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., I (March, 1866), 38-39.

<sup>26</sup>Evangelisch-lutherische Mission, Friedrich Brunn, editor, 1864 (No. 4), pp. 5-7.

<sup>27</sup>Carl S. Meyer, "The Beginnings of Secondary Education Among the Missouri Lutherans in Perry County, 1839-43." Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1954, p. 438, located in the Concordia Historical Institute.

<sup>28</sup>Brunn, Mission und Kirche, passim.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., I (September, 1866), 131.

The periodic Prussian wars also made the maintenance of the school uncertain. During his "collection trip" of 1866, Brunn was caught in the Prussian invasion of Lueneburg on July 15. However, with the kind assistance of a Prussian officer, Brunn made his way to Hannover and from there south via Cologne to his home.<sup>30</sup> In the summer of 1870, all sailing from the German coasts was stopped. The twenty-two students headed for America were delayed four months in Bremerhaven. Half of them left by sailship in July,<sup>31</sup> but the remainder were delayed until November 19.<sup>32</sup>

The second perennial concern was mustering enough students to supply the urgent needs of America. Professor Walther wrote in 1866 that he needed thirty students for the next term, but he could supply only half that number. He counted on Brunn to fill the gap.<sup>33</sup> Military service also depleted the ranks of those young men willing to attend the Steeden institution.<sup>34</sup> In spite of these hardships, the most prosperous years in men and money were the war years. Between 1861 and 1864, over forty students were sent to America.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Der Lutheraner, XVII (August 15, 1866), 185.

<sup>31</sup>Mission und Kirche, V (July, 1870), 97.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., VI (January, 1871), 3.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., I (July, 1866), 104.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., VI (July-August, 1871), 114.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., III (January, 1868), 3.

<sup>36</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXI (October 15, 1864), 30.



When the Steeden school closed in 1878, well over 200 young people had been sent to America.<sup>37</sup>

From the beginning of the school in 1861, Brunn had at least one assistant in his pastoral and teaching ministry. Most of the course instruction was carried on by Brunn. Pastor Julius Hein labored during the original ground work for several months. Brunn maintained the institution single-handed until one of his students, Gustav Hieronymus, returned in 1867 after training in St. Louis.<sup>38</sup> After Hieronymus' death, Henry C. Wyneken (1884-1898) assisted Brunn. Wyneken was later professor in Springfield, Illinois.<sup>39</sup> Walther sent Wyneken, hoping that a theologian would be a crowning addition to the faculty in Steeden.<sup>40</sup> However, he stayed only a short time and returned to America. Candidate Karl Elkmeier was also sent by Walther in the mid 1870's to relieve Brunn in his failing health. The Missouri Synod bore his complete support.<sup>41</sup> Later Pastor C. von Brandt came from America to assist at the school.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 166-167.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., p. 165.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>L[u]dwig Fuerbringer, editor, Briefe von C. F. W. Walther an seine Freunde, Synodalgenossen und Familien-glieder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1916), II, 194.

<sup>41</sup>Mission und Kirche, VII (September, 1872), 135.

<sup>42</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 165.

Another invaluable service was performed by Pastor Hans Heinrich J. P. Ruperti (1833-1899) who arranged all of the passage for Brunn's students going to America.<sup>43</sup> He was pastor of the Emigration House in Bremerhaven from 1856-72; and later pastor of St. Matthew's in New York.<sup>44</sup> In America, Ruperti joined the New York Synod.<sup>45</sup> On the other side of the Atlantic, Pastor Stephanus Keyl of the Emigration Mission in New York saw to the welfare of Brunn's students.<sup>46</sup>

Mutual encouragement in a common work was available in the person of Theodore Harms (d. 1885) in Hermansburg. He was successor to his brother, George Ludwig Harms, at the famed Evangelical Lutheran Mission Society founded there 1849. Brunn visited him on a "collection trip" in the summer of 1866. That year Harms had sent two students to the Missouri Synod. He did not send them more rapidly, because he believed in a thorough training program in Germany.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, he promised to send six to ten students the following year to the Missouri Synod. Harms knew of no other synod in America

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<sup>43</sup>Mission und Kirche, VI (July-August, 1871), 114.

<sup>44</sup>Lutheran Cyclopedia, edited by Erwin Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 931.

<sup>45</sup>Mission und Kirche, X (November, 1875), 168.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., VII (May, 1872), 67-72. Also Theo. S. Keyl, "Stephanus Keyl," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXII, (July, 1949), 65-77.

<sup>47</sup>Mission und Kirche, I (July, 1866), 99.

that stood for pure doctrine like Missouri.<sup>48</sup>

Most of the students from Brunn's institution became faithful pastors in America. However, there were a few exceptions, mostly due to their young age. They ranged from sixteen to twenty-six years. In general the reports on the caliber of students were very favorable.<sup>49</sup> Dr. Walther wrote of Brunn's institution:

Your institution is our shining star across the ocean. Almost all larger church bodies [in America] are concerned with imitating what they see, namely, how advantageous such pre-seminaries are as recruiting bureaus.<sup>50</sup>

The Steeden school continued to grow until 1872, when the number of students enrolling began to decrease. The Missouri Synod also demanded fewer foreign-born candidates to fill her needs so that the Steeden institution officially closed in 1878. It was re-opened again 1881-1886 to instruct a few students for the Separated Lutheran churches in Saxony.

During the most active years of the Steeden institution, Friedrich Brunn was the chief representative of the Missouri Synod in Germany.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Der Lutheraner, XXII (August 15, 1866), 185.

<sup>49</sup>Mission und Kirche, VII (January, 1872), 2.

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., V (August-September, 1870), 113. The pagination is incorrect. This page follows page 114 of the previous issue.

<sup>51</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 166-168.

### B. Reports of German Students in America

Professor Walther could write authoritatively on the value of the Steeden institution for the ministry of the Missouri Synod. Bare numbers and stagnant statistics did not tell the whole story. True, Walther was in a position to see the needs of the church in terms of total manpower, but his report to Brumm of the "shining star on the other side of the ocean" reflected a more intimate acquaintance with the students' character. Reports from America led Brumm to say, "Professor Walther is like a father to his children [the students]. Professor Graemer is well qualified for practical things, which he understands so well, so that within a short time he instills a willing spirit and energy [in the students]." <sup>52</sup>

The students usually arrived in America during August for classes in September, after leaving Steeden during May in the wake of the annual mission festival. The festival service was concluded with Holy Communion, after which the entire congregation accompanied the boys to the Steeden border and bade them farewell. <sup>53</sup>

From Steeden the young travelers went to Bremerhaven to await passage to America. A typical voyage was reported by the dozen students who sailed for six weeks across the Atlantic.

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<sup>52</sup>Mission und Kirche, I (April, 1866), 53.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., I (July, 1866), 98.

The ship's accommodations were far from first class. Hundreds of passengers were pressed together and served food spiced with coal, hair and wood. Needless to say the boys lost their appetites and were happy to arrive in New York. Accommodations in New York were comfortable and the boys were thrilled to see stores with goods from around the world. The glitter of gas lights made New York appear like the garden of paradise.<sup>54</sup>

The last leg of their journey was to Addison, Illinois, for teacher training, or to St. Louis, Missouri.<sup>55</sup> After homiletical training in St. Louis, the young students were permitted to preach their first sermons in the St. Louis area. The Christmas holidays were traditionally the first opportunity to assist a pastor, sometimes forty miles away. One of the most distant stations was Pastor Kleist's parish in Washington, Missouri. Others were as near as Crondelot, Missouri. The thrilling experiences of these neophyte seminarians were

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<sup>54</sup>Evangelisch-lutherische Mission, 1864 (No. 4), pp. 1-2.

<sup>55</sup>The "Practical seminary" was moved from Ft. Wayne in 1861 and operated along side the "Theoretical seminary" in St. Louis until 1875. After 1875 the "Practical seminary" was moved to Springfield, Illinois. In 1861 the preparatory department was moved from St. Louis to Ft. Wayne. "The lack of facilities in St. Louis in 1861, and the prevailing fear of sending younger students to this border state city were the real causes for the transfer of the 'college' (preparatory department) to Ft. Wayne [and not the favorable Missouri military laws]." Carl S. Meyer, "The Beginnings of Secondary Education," p. 286.

reported to Brunn and published in his monthly periodical. Overwhelmingly, the students were grateful and thanked and praised God for the blessing of preaching the saving Word to others.<sup>56</sup>

The candidates from Steeden who completed their course of study at St. Louis were dispatched all over North America. Candidate Johann Karrer went to Minnesota; Julius Friedrich to Wisconsin; Wilhelm Arendt to Canada; August Ebendik to New York; Karl Berner to Kansas; August Fuenkstueck to Illinois and Gottlieb Traub to Indiana. These men served small congregations scattered over several miles. Many of them preached two and three times on Sunday and taught several days a week in the school.<sup>57</sup> Rich fields opened for the Missouri Synod among the un-churched in southeastern Missouri, southern Illinois and northwest Michigan. By 1870 there was even work among the English speaking Americans.<sup>58</sup> All this underscored the extreme importance of Brunn's work in Germany.

Pastor Johann Rupprecht, a former student of Brunn's was sent to an unorganized congregation in Norfolk, Nebraska. This was 650 miles from St. Louis, and the farthest western

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<sup>56</sup> Mission und Kirche, I (April, 1866), 49-54.

<sup>57</sup> Evangelisch-lutherische Mission, 1864 (No. 4), p. 4.

<sup>58</sup> Mission und Kirche, V (November, 1870), 162.

station of the Missouri Synod in 1871.<sup>59</sup> Most of the recently ordained students were sent to small, poor parishes. In the Plains States there was barely enough lumber to build a home. These difficulties were dealt with by Pastor A. W. Frese in Nebraska; Johann Oetjen in Iowa;<sup>60</sup> Jonathan Matthias in Kansas, and L. Osterhus in northern Iowa.<sup>61</sup>

Not only did these fledglings from Germany endure economic hardships, but spiritual stamina was needed to counter-attack the invasion of the enthusiasts and the sectarians. Arcadia, Indiana was plagued with camp meetings by the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Unionists, Albrechts people, Tunkers and Seelenschlaefer.<sup>62</sup> Pastor August Sippel serving the Germans in Minnesota reported similar problems with the enthusiasts, especially the Methodists.<sup>63</sup>

Not all of the Steeden students served the church in a clergy capacity. As noted, a few returned to Germany, many became teachers in the Missouri Synod, some failed their examinations or simply left the seminary, and a few other gave their talents to the church in other ways. A notable example

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., VI (September, 1871), 148.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., VI (July-August, 1871), 124.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., I (September, 1866), 132-135.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., VI (September, 1871), 149.

of the latter, was Pastor Schulz, originally of Barmen, Germany. After a short time in the ministry of the Missouri Synod, he returned to St. Louis and became one of the early progenitors of the Lutheran orphanage in that city.<sup>64</sup>

The value of the Steeden pre-seminary can hardly be over-estimated. In terms of total numbers it was an impressive adventure. In 1847 the Missouri Synod had fifteen pastors in ten congregations. In 1860 there were 166 pastors in over 200 congregations,<sup>65</sup> and by 1870, the total rose to 361 pastors.<sup>66</sup> Over 130 of these were from Steeden. As a result of this institution and the publicity given it by Friedrich Brunn, there grew up a class of "Missourians" in Germany.

The contact of the struggling Nassau congregations with the Missouri Synod served to broaden their evangelical vision to see the work of the Gospel in a world-wide context. The independent churches in Germany were able to picture themselves in the broader panorama of confessional Lutheranism. They no longer worked alone for themselves but also felt an obligation to defend and foster true Lutheranism in distant lands. With the establishment of the pre-seminary in Steeden, an intense exchange of ideas and manpower was initiated between the Missouri Synod and the Nassau congregations. The inter-play of ideas will become even more clear in the succeeding chapters.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., I (July, 1866), 105.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., I (January, 1866), 5.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., V (February, 1870), 23.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE INTER-RELATIONS OF CONSERVATIVE LUTHERANS

#### The Formation of the Immanuel Synod

In the Nineteenth Century there was more than a simple exchange of men and material means between the Free churches of Germany and the Missouri Synod. Men and mail carried contemporary religious thought both directions across the Atlantic. Theological issues in America were also common parlance among the German theologians. The sincere concern to preserve pure Lutheran doctrine led to disharmony and a splintering of the fellowship among the Separated Lutherans in Germany. The doctrine of the church and the ministry was the chief issue upon which the Free churches shattered their unity.

The first open break occurred in 1860 between Franz Wilhelm Julius Diedrich of Jabel and the Oberkirchenkollegium of the Breslau Synod. The second splinter group was lead by Friedrich Brunn, from the Breslau Synod in 1864 and again from the Diedrich company in 1866.

Faint lines of dissent between Diedrich and the leaders of the Breslau Synod began to appear already in 1848. This was the year Diedrich left the Prussian Landeskirche and joined the Separated Lutherans.<sup>1</sup> Diedrich responded to a

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 16.

published letter of Pastor Johann H. L. Schroeder, editor of the Kirchenblatt fuer die Gemeinden evang.-luth. Bekenntnisses in den Preussischen Staaten, in which the latter asserted church government was essential to the nature of the church. It was a peculiar teaching of the Breslau Synod, that because the ministry was established by divine authority, it therefore belonged to the essence of the church. Diedrich saw in this definition of the nature of the church a papistic strain and he objected vehemently in a letter published in the above named periodical. Furthermore, Diedrich did not agree that the Lutheran Church alone was the church of God. "How can you think," he wrote, "that the Lord Christ has established only one church when now there are so many? You know very well the one church is the only so-called invisible one."<sup>2</sup>

Diedrich's latter concern was not seriously contended by the Breslau Synod leaders, but the former issue became the major point of disturbance during the next several decades.

In the summer of 1859, Julius Diedrich wrote Werth und Wesen des Kirchenregiments, in which he strongly attacked the Breslau Synod constitution on the doctrine of the church.<sup>3</sup> The following fall at the sixth convention of the Breslau Synod, the concerns of both parties were aired. Seven pastors

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<sup>2</sup>Kirchenblatt fuer die Gemeinden evang.-luth. Bekenntnisses in dem Preussischen Staaten, III (July, 1848), 100-101.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., XV (June 15, 1860), 142.

clarified their opposition to the general body. They were: Pastors J. Diedrich of Jabel, E. Wolf of Magdeburg, C. Raethjin, Crome of Rade, G. A. Gumlich, Rudolf Lohmann and Ebert of Danzig.<sup>4</sup> The controversy intensified during the next two years and Pastors Max Frommel, F. Frischmuth<sup>5</sup> and Church Councilor Ludwig Otto Ehlers joined the Diedrich led secessionists.<sup>6</sup>

The parochial district of Jabel, which included Magdeburg, Neu-Ruppin, Thorn, Rogasen, Alt-Kranz, Meseratz and Marienwerder, was torn with theological strife. By 1864, the controversy reached such proportions, that the Breslau Oberkirchenkollegium forbade Communion fellowship with the dissenting party. In a counter move, Julius Diedrich, together with twenty-one pastors, superintendents and church counselors (almost half of the Breslau Synod teaching staff) formed the Immanuel Synod on July 21, 1864.<sup>7</sup> The Prussian state concessions did not apply to the Immanuel Synod until 1874.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., XVI (January 15, 1861), 18-22.

<sup>5</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben fuer meine Kinder und Freunde zu meinem 50. jaehrigen Amts-Jubilaem (Zwickau: Johannes Herrman, n.d.), p. 148.

<sup>6</sup>Kirchenblatt, XVII (April 1-15, 1862), 72.

<sup>7</sup>Friedrich Uhlhorn, Geschichte der deutsch-lutherischen Kirche (Leipzig: Doerffling and Franke Verlag, 1911), II, 306-307.

<sup>8</sup>George Froboess, "Lutherans, Separate," Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, edited by Samuel Macauley, VII (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1950), 83. Also supra, p. 14.

## B. Friedrich Brunn Breaks with the Breslau Synod

Friedrich Brunn and the Rhineland pastors were sympathizers of J. Diedrich during the initial discussions with the Breslau Synod. Brunn had misgivings over Diedrich's proper understanding of the doctrine of the ministry, already at this time, but he was grateful for Diedrich's courageous expose' of the Breslau Synod's doctrinal error.<sup>9</sup> Doctrinal differences grew acute and in 1866 the fellowship between the Immanuel Synod and Brunn was broken.<sup>10</sup>

Several pastors of the Rhineland area, many of whom later became associated with the Immanuel Synod, formed the Rhine Pastoral Conference in 1854. Their purpose was to promote the common interests of the Separated Lutherans and to mutually strengthen their own doctrinal convictions. The first meeting was initiated by Crome, Ebert of Cologne and Johannes Fronmueller and held in Cologne, September 12-13. Friedrich Brunn and W. Semm were unable to attend, consequently, in addition to the above, only Karl Eichhorn of Baden and Julius Hein, plus two un-named guests were present. W. Crome was the essayist and presented a paper on the doctrine of the church and church discipline.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 170.

<sup>10</sup>Infra., p. 71.

<sup>11</sup>W. Crome, "Thesen ueber Kirchengzucht mit erlaeuternden und begruendenden Anmerkungen," Kirchenblatt, X (May 1, 1855), 112-114. Crome's theses are printed in successive issues on pages 134ff., 160ff. and 229ff.

The conference met annually and the second meeting on June 13-14, 1855, was also held in Cologne. In addition to those who attended the first meeting, were Pastors Brunn and Ludwig of Freiburg. The conference had an ambitious agenda with discussion on the doctrine of the Gospel, the proper stance in prayer and supplication, the doctrine of Baptism, and the doctrine of the church as it relates to Baptism. Most of the discussion centered on the last item which included an addendum on the visible and invisible church, reprinted from Dr. Ludwig Adolf Petri's Zeitblatt.<sup>12</sup>

The initial meetings of the Rhine Pastoral Conference indicated a common ignorance of pure Lutheran doctrine. Some of the members carried Pietistic ideas, while others entertained Romanizing errors. Unclear thinking by many beclouded the doctrine of the church. One year later, Friedrich Brunn retracted his position on this doctrine and urged his fellow pastors to reconsider their stand. Brunn had used the analogy of a tree to describe the visible side of the church. "The visible Church is truly the body of Christ, and like a tree, part is green and fresh fruit is found on it. Another part is dry and dead, but nevertheless, are still on the tree."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., XI (May 15, 1856), 123-128.

<sup>13</sup>Brunn, "Eine Erklärung in Betreff der Lehre von der Kirche," ibid., XI (September 1, 1856), 209.

Although this description was acceptable to the conference, it indicated to Brunn that more study needed to be done on the doctrine of the church.<sup>14</sup>

Brunn was already in the process of clarifying his position on Lutheran doctrine. From the beginning of his ministry in Runkel and Steeden, Brunn wrestled with the Biblical and Lutheran teachings on the means of Grace, the Sacraments and the doctrine of the church and the ministry.<sup>15</sup> In his desperation he turned to his university friends Carl P. Caspari<sup>16</sup> and Karl Graul.<sup>17</sup> After 1853, Brunn also received re-enforcement on confessional Lutheran doctrine from Director August Craemer and the Fort Wayne, Indiana pastoral conference. Among the several letters exchanged concerning the establishment of a pre-seminary in Steeden, were opinions dealing with modern theological problems. According to Brunn, "These letters opened the door for a proper understanding of the Scriptures."<sup>18</sup>

The Nineteenth Century in Germany was a difficult time for Brunn and his Rhineland compatriots to gain a clear and

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<sup>14</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 124.

<sup>15</sup>Supra, p. 24.

<sup>16</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 121.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

proper understanding of classical Lutheran teaching. The old Lutheran doctrine was virtually unknown in Germany. Little space was given to orthodox Lutheranism on a national basis. An exception to this deplorable situation was Rudelbach's, Reformation, Luthertum und Union.<sup>19</sup>

For his instruction, Brunn turned to the writings of Luther, Chemnitz and Johann Gerhard. C. F. W. Walther's, Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt<sup>20</sup> was also a profound encouragement to him. At the Rhine Pastoral Conference held in Durlach, Baden, 1858, Brunn was certain he understood the Lutheran doctrine on the church and the ministry.<sup>21</sup> For the conference he wrote a tract on that subject and won the approval of Pastor Crome. However, when Wilhelm Loehe heard of it, he wrote the conference: "Pastor Brunn builds his faith on a Lutheran doctrine of men; and that kind of Lutheranism will collapse in the sand." This judgment of a respected Lutheran banner carrier dealt a death blow to Brunn's view and the harmony within the pastoral conference. Brunn wrote to Loehe, but received no answer and the correspondence was terminated.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 49. Andreas Gottlob Rudelbach, Reformation, Luthertum und Union (Leipzig: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1939.)

<sup>20</sup>C. F. W. Walther, Die Stimme unserer Kirche in Frage von Kirche und Amt (Erlangen: A. Deichert, 1852)

<sup>21</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, pp. 125-127.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 134-135.

From his Luther studies and correspondence with the Missouri Synod, Brunn recognized the Breslau Synod's unorthodox Lutheran stand on the doctrine of the church and the ministry. In a meeting of eight to ten pastors, prior to the disastrous 1860 convention of the Breslau Synod, Brunn thought that he alone understood the office of the keys.<sup>23</sup> In the full session of that convention J. Diedrich and others formally protested the Breslau doctrine of the church. Brunn was sympathetic to Diedrich's cause but limited his remarks to private conversations.<sup>24</sup> However, during the next four years the Breslau errors became more evident to him and he formally severed relations with that synod on February 23, 1865.<sup>25</sup> Pressure was put on Brunn from different quarters to return to the synod. A Breslau publication, Kirchenbote, edited by L. Feldner, demanded that Brunn return or lay down his office as the only honorable thing to do.<sup>26</sup> Another periodical, the Breslauer Kirchenblatt, charged that Brunn had separated from "the body of the Lutheran Church."<sup>27</sup>

The doctrinal position of the Breslau Synod was reaffirmed by a twenty-man commission which met prior to that synod's convention in 1864. Their prepared statement was

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 126.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 147.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 151.

<sup>26</sup> Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, Friedrich Brunn, editor, I (March, 1856), 36.

<sup>27</sup> Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 139.



accepted by the convention.

We believe . . . that the church primarily is an invisible kingdom of believers. But we further believe that it is not solely this, but first of all is a visible institution in which the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments administered. . . . [Faith] however, is the principle thing. But this principle thing, namely faith, must be planted in the hearts of men by outward preaching. For faith comes by preaching and not otherwise. When, therefore, Dr. Huschke says, the Church is first of all (not . . . chiefly) institution, he means nothing else than what the Smalcald Art. (3rd section, under Confession) says.<sup>28</sup>

The Breslau doctrine of the church, namely that the body of Christ was visible with a divinely established ministry and government, prompted the Rhinelanders separation from the parent synod.<sup>29</sup> Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802-1869), noted conservative theologian at the University of Berlin, substantiated a charge frequently made by Brunn against the Breslau Synod's constitution. Huschke's "church ideas, concerning 'synodical decision' (Synodalbeschluss), is derived from his juridical foundation. In this matter he has something of the obstinacy of the Romans."<sup>30</sup>

Pastors Brunn, Julius Hein, Max Frommel of Baden, and F. Frischmuth of Saarbruecken formed a close association in 1865. Pastors Rudolf Lohmann and Ebert, who earlier separated

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<sup>28</sup>Kirchenblatt, XIX (August 15, 1864), 186.

<sup>29</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 143.

<sup>30</sup>Evangelische Kirchen-Zeitung, E. W. Hengstenberg, editor, LXII (January 19, 1861), 68.

from Breslau with Diedrich, returned to the Landeskirche because the independent churches were becoming too narrow.<sup>31</sup>

The doctrinal controversies in Germany were reinforced by opinions from American Lutheran churchmen. Pastor Hockstetter of the Buffalo Synod visited the Mecklenburg area and heightened animosity toward Brunn.<sup>32</sup> The Missouri Synod also expressed her feelings to Breslau and maintained that the Uebertragungslehre was clearly taught in the Confessions. The Breslau Synod replied that the Scriptures were the highest authority and this doctrine was not clearly enunciated there.<sup>33</sup> In 1855 the Missouri Synod wrote an open letter to the Leipzig-Fuerth pastoral conference of the Breslau Synod. This was in response to a Breslau charge that Missouri did not properly understand the doctrine of the ministry. The Missouri Synod answer stated:

The office of the ministry is a special divine institution in the congregation (Gemeine); an office which no member of the church, by virtue of his being a Christian has, but rather which the Lord of the church (even though through the mediation of men) clothes whomever He wishes. Willingly, we give the right of election to the congregation, but when a congregation chooses a shepherd, she does not in any way hand over (uebertraegt) its right to the one chosen; rather he receives an office which rests upon a special divine institution. This office

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<sup>31</sup>Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 151.

<sup>32</sup>Der Lutheraner, XX (June 1, 1864), 150.

<sup>33</sup>Kirchenblatt, X (April 1, 1855), 82-83.

he receives at the congregation which has chosen him. At the same time he is clothed with this office, in Christ's stead by those who already are in it. In short, the office of the ministry is a special office, a special activity in the congregation to which not every member in the congregation is called by virtue of the fact that he is a member.<sup>34</sup>

In no sense is the minister closer to Christ than any other Christian because of the office he bears.<sup>35</sup>

Fuel was also added to the doctrinal controversy with Breslau by Dr. C. Carl Muenkel who supported Brunn<sup>36</sup> and the Missouri Synod against Breslau. He charged the Breslau Oberkirchenkollegium was divisive with their doctrine of church government.<sup>37</sup>

#### C. Friedrich Brunn Separates from the Immanuel Synod

Relations between the members of the Immanuel Synod and the Nassau Pastors Brunn and Hein were amiable during the early years of controversy with the Breslau Synod. Brunn supported Diedrich in his opposition of the Breslau Synod's false doctrines on the church and the ministry. Both opposed the teaching that the visible church was the body of Christ; and that the government of the church was essential to its very nature.

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., X (February 1, 1855), 34.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>36</sup>Der Lutheraner, XX (November 15, 1863), 47.

<sup>37</sup>Kirchenblatt, XXI (March 15, 1866), 67-68.

As the controversy continued, it became increasingly clear to Brunn that the Immanuel Synod also entertained a false doctrine of the ministry. They denied the Uebertragungslehre and placed the pastor in a position superior to that which the Scripture allowed. Another area of contention was over the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture. Nevertheless, the chief point of issue was the Uebertragungslehre.<sup>38</sup>

The differences between the Immanuel Synod and the Nassau pastors reached a climax at the former's synodical convention in Magdeburg, 1866. Brunn was extremely disturbed by the failure of the Immanuel Synod pastors to take a solid Symbolical stand on the doctrine of the ministry. As a witness to his displeasure he did not receive Holy Communion at the convention.<sup>39</sup>

The relations were further strained when Professor Gottfried Fritschel of the Iowa Synod was heartily welcomed by the Immanuel Synod during his visit to Germany in 1870. At that time the Iowa Synod was in disagreement with the Missouri Synod over the identical question which separated Immanuel from Brunn--the church and the ministry. The brotherly affinity witnessed between Fritschel and members of the Immanuel Synod caused Brunn to make the final decision and permanently suspend fellowship with Immanuel.<sup>40</sup>

Meanwhile, Professor Walther had kept Brunn informed

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<sup>38</sup> Brunn, Mitteilungen, p. 174.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 172.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p. 173.

of developments between the Missouri Synod and the Iowa Synod.<sup>41</sup> Walther attacked Diedrich for over-emphasizing the role of the pastor in the church. Diedrich had said, "Das eigentlich kirchliche Handeln ist alles beim Pastor."<sup>42</sup> Diedrich also countered with false charges against the Missouri Synod.<sup>43</sup>

After Professor Frischel's visit to Hamburg in 1870, the Immanuel Synod entered the Missouri-Iowa controversy on the side of the Iowa Synod.<sup>44</sup>

Within Germany itself the basic position of the Immanuel Synod was represented by Pastor W. Crome. The defender of the Missouri Synod was Friedrich Brunn. The personal relations between Brunn and Crome always operated in a context of brotherly love and Christian concern. Nevertheless, they were conscience-bound to witness to the truth of God's Word as each saw it.

Crome contended that the pastor possessed the power of the keys directly from Christ, through his Baptism, without the mediation of the congregation. He believed every Christian has the power of the keys, which is given to the whole church through Baptism. Thus the pastor as a Christian by virtue of his Baptism also has the power of the keys and it is not necessary that he first receive this power from other Christians.

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<sup>41</sup>Mission und Kirche, III (February, 1868), 18-19.

<sup>42</sup>Lehre und Wehre, XI (April 4, 1865), 127.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., IX (May 5, 1863), 152.

<sup>44</sup>Mission und Kirche, V (December, 1870), 181.

He possesses this power not as pastor but as a Christian himself.

According to this theory, the congregation must be certain their pastor is a Christian and no hypocrite. If he were masquerading as a Christian pastor, and not truly a member of Christ's body, then he could not validly dispense the power of the keys to the congregation. Consequently, every congregation could never be certain they were receiving the forgiveness of sins from the pastor as from Christ Himself.<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, Pastor Crome asserted, the office of the ministry was independent of the congregation. The office of the ministry was also not carried over from the church to the pastor, because one can not give what he does not possess.

Consequently, since each Christian does not have the public office of the ministry he can not give it over to the pastor. If one asserts, however, that this is true, then he is also forced to say every Christian has the public call into the ministry.<sup>46</sup>

Brunn responded by clarifying what is meant by the public office of the ministry. An individual is selected by the congregation to concern himself with their spiritual welfare on a full time basis. The right of selection has nothing to do with each member's possession of a public call into the ministry.<sup>47</sup> "Pastor Crome rightly said . . . that the Church

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., VI (April, 1871), 67.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 71-72. . . . (December, 1871), 191-192.

possesses the power of the keys and that the office of the ministry is established by God." However, this statement was not enough to satisfy Brunn. For more clarity, Brunn added: "The clerical office holders, in the exercise of the power of the keys, are only servants and organs . . . so that properly speaking, they execute their work through the church."<sup>48</sup>

Crome's stand on the public office of the ministry in 1871, was a departure from the position which he and Brunn held jointly a few years earlier.<sup>49</sup>

Brunn had many personal friends in the Immanuel Synod besides Pastor Crome, and he genuinely desired a re-union of full fellowship between them. Any hope of re-union, however, was complicated by a series of charges and counter-charges by both parties that they were being misrepresented by the other.<sup>50</sup>

The argumentation of Pastor Crome was continued by Pastor Zoeller who maintained the congregation does not have the power of the keys "by virtue of its faith," but the power of the keys is the Word itself.

Zoeller erred by separating the Word from faith. "It is a fundamental statement of Lutheran doctrine that only the Church, that is the congregation of believers, has the power of the keys and no one else." Therefore, the church

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<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 74.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 73

<sup>50</sup>Ibid., VI (November-December, 1871), 191-192.

has its power and rights only by virtue of its faith.<sup>51</sup>

As the controversy continued into 1871, Pastor Crome agreed that the right of calling a pastor lay with the congregation. Every Christian also had a right to witness to Christ. But at the same time, Christ had established the special office of the ministry to which every Christian has not been called.

There was no objection to these sentiments by Brunn. He agreed completely with Crome's statements but he objected that they did not define the matter precisely enough. Every Romanizing Lutheran Church, particularly the Breslau Synod, would agree with these statements also. The Roman Catholic Church itself could underscore them. Therefore, any statement that can be agreed upon by such widely divergent communions has not been sufficiently defined.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of 1874, the convictions of both parties had not altered, and re-union of the Rhinelanders with the Immanuel Synod was even more remote than before.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, efforts for re-union were underway to include an even wider fellowship than the Immanuel Synod and the Rhinelanders. Julius Diedrich now emerged as a promoter of union negotiations. He, together with Consistory Counselor August F. K. Kuehn of Schwarzburg-Sondershausen, called a conference

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<sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 194-195.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., VI (April, 1871), 74.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., IX (November, 1874), 169-175.



at Eisenach, on October 28, 1874. A public invitation appeared in several Lutheran periodicals, and the conference was attended by over thirty people, including Theodore Harms of Hermansburg.<sup>54</sup>

The Rhinelanders, led by Friedrich Brunn, did not attend the Eisenach Conference. Shortly before the conference Diedrich charged them with condemning the entire world to hell, by maintaining narrow Communion fellowship. Diedrich's immediate reference was to their refusal to celebrate the Lord's Supper with the Immanuel Synod. Pastors Friedrich Brunn, Karl Elkmeier, Julius Hein and Friedrich Ruhland understood their action to be a witness that they were not compromising with the publicly taught false doctrine appearing in the Immanuel Synod's resolutions and their official periodicals. Refusing joint altar fellowship did not indicate every individual member of the erring synod was damned to hell.<sup>55</sup>

Differences between the Immanuel Synod and the Rhinelanders were never fully resolved on a synodical wide basis. Even within the midst of civil and state-church oppression, confessionally minded Lutherans would not tolerate the slightest departure from historic Lutheranism even in their own minority.

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid., IX (December, 1874), 177.

<sup>55</sup>"Ueber Abendmahlsgemeinschaft," ibid., IX (April, 1874), 49-56.

## CHAPTER VII

### BRUNN EVALUATES ISSUES CONFRONTING THE FREE CHURCH

The persistent doctrinal issue facing Lutherans in Nineteenth Century Germany, was the question of church union. The broad plan of union, between the Reformed and Lutheran traditions was begun in this century by Fredrick William III and perpetuated to a lesser degree by Fredrich William IV. After the rights of independent Lutherans were established, the next problem was uniting these separate Lutheran organizations. There were independent Lutheran groups in Prussia, Nassau, Hannover, Hesse, Bavaria and Baden which did not maintain fellowship with one another.

What were the issues which kept these claimants to Lutheranism apart? The foremost doctrine under consideration was the interpretation of the church and the ministry. The polar positions were Romanism and Enthusiasm. The question is a simple one to define: What is the inherent authority of the clergy in relation to the right of the congregation? This was, however, not the only doctrine which separated Lutheranism. There was also the doctrine of inspiration and the power of civil authority which complicated all merger negotiations. Nevertheless, the spotlight was focused on the doctrine of the church and the ministry.

Because Friedrich Brunn lived through the greater part

of the Nineteenth Century (1819-1895),<sup>1</sup> he was in a position to evaluate the period. His evaluation was according to these three categories: (1) the Pietistic, (2) the Romanistic, (3) the Modernistic.

He believed the Lutheran Pietistic emphasis on inner feeling and life led to extreme latitude in doctrine. Pietists stressed the individual's awakening, his conversion and the corporate prayer life of the Christian community. The inordinate stress of these factors in the Christian life resulted in cooperation with the Reformed that was not based upon sound doctrine. "When Pietism rules, Lutheranism is undermined."<sup>2</sup>

From the beginning of his ministry in Runkel and Steeden, Brunn was confronted with the in-roads of Pietism. He singles out no individual Pietist for attack, but believed that the movement still lingers on in many areas. His own congregation embraced a Pietistic element. Pietism was especially dangerous because its adherents were not aware they were departing from

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<sup>1</sup>Friedrich August Brunn, Jr. was born February 15, 1819, died March 27, 1895, and was buried March 31, 1895. See Die Evangelisch-lutherische Freikirche, XX (April 21, 1895), 75. The Lutheran Cyclopedia, Erwin Lueker, editor, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 144, and John Theodore Mueller, "Translating Dr. Walther's 'Pastorale' into English," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXII (January, 1955), 186, give Brunn's death as 1894.

<sup>2</sup>"Die falschen Geistesrichtungen auf dem Gebiet der lutherische Kirche Deutschland," Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche, V (August, 1870), 128-131.

genuine Lutheran doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, Brunn asserted the Romanizing Lutherans emphasized the external, visible church authority, contrary to article eight of the Augsburg Confession and article four of the Apology, which state that all authority is centered in the congregation of true believers. Romanizing Lutherans also maintained the body of Christ equals the visible church. Furthermore, they asserted that church government was divinely instituted according to an episcopal constitution. This position then led to placing the power of the keys directly in the hands of the clergy.

Many of the Romanizing Lutherans also placed liturgy and church art in a highly favored position. According to Brunn's evaluation the older Lutheran fathers never did this to the extent that Nineteenth Century Lutherans did. The service (Gottesdienst) for them was simply pure doctrine and the preaching of the Gospel. Brunn insisted that in the Nineteenth Century some Lutherans praised liturgy and church art as the chief means to win the unchurched for Christianity. Furthermore, men like Wilhelm Loehc greatly admired the Roman Church for its pre-eminence in the field of church art and liturgy.

Furthermore, according to Brunn, Romanizing Lutherans

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<sup>3</sup>Friedrich Brunn, Mitteilungen aus meinem Leben fuer Meine Kinder und Freunde zu meinem 50 Jaehrigen Amtsjubilaecum (Zwickau: Johannes Herrmann, n.d.), pp. 39-40.

undermined the authority of Scripture by continually insisting on "open questions" in every doctrinal discussion. They constantly exclaimed that "the church has not decided on this" or "the church has had no teaching consensus on this matter." However, this kind of principle makes the church decide what is correct Biblical teaching.<sup>4</sup>

Brunn specifically mentioned Loehle as one who over-emphasized the liturgy in the Lutheran service. Loehle is well known for his work on the service agenda and his interest in promoting the liturgical service. Brunn believed Loehle gave too much credit to the liturgy and church art as a medium to attract the un-churched. The best method of communicating the Gospel cannot be settled at this place. Nevertheless, Brunn is entitled to his evaluation of Loehle's work no matter how severe. Brunn did not impugn Loehle's motives, but his manner of communicating the Gospel.

The other Lutherans that Brunn included in his second category are those who over-emphasized the role of the visible church and the power of the clerical office. He was referring to the Breslau Synod,<sup>5</sup> the Immanuel Synod<sup>6</sup> and the Vilmarians in Hesse.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Mission und Kirche, V (August, 1870), 131-140.

<sup>5</sup>Supra, pp. 68-69

<sup>6</sup>Supra, pp. 72-75

<sup>7</sup>Infra, pp. 84-85

The third group evaluated by Brunn were the Modernist Lutherans. These teachers allowed science and reason to influence them. Everything must be "scientific" and demonstrable. The Modernists did not believe in the full inspiration of Scripture. Second Timothy 3:16 did not square with "scientific" measures for truth. They said the Bible contained the Word of God and reason must decide what that Word is. Serious problems confronted them over the two natures of Christ. The old Lutheran fathers were content to leave the kenosis a mystery. Finally, the Modernist Lutherans moved off center the doctrine of justification by giving too much place to the free will of man.<sup>8</sup>

These doctrinal aberrations were able to raise their heads among Lutherans because they were more concerned with the so-called practical ministry, than solid study in the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. In 1872, Friedrich Brunn commented that most of the Christian periodicals were filled

not with questions of doctrine, but almost exclusively with the present conditions of life, reports of historical events, institutions and the work . . . [of the church] in purely practical matters. Questions of this variety are the dominant themes of all pastoral conferences and other Christian assemblies in Germany.

Out of this lack of consideration for the pure doctrine of the Word of God quite naturally follows also little desire and effort . . . to read and study writings dealing with [the Word of God].<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Mission und Kirche, V (October, 1870), 151-159.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., VII (September, 1872), 125-127.

An example of this indifference to doctrinal study was Wilhelm Loehe who devoted himself to the service of the Germans, but mainly in the practical office of works and charity. He left a genuine Lutheran position and is consequently remembered chiefly for his acts of mercy to the destitute.

In conclusion, Brunn believed concentration on the external functions of the church resulted in weak confessional Lutheranism throughout Germany.

Most of the Landeskirchen Lutherans are either moved by Romanising ideas of our time, which so over-value the external institutions, that the purity and unity of doctrine is entirely forgotten; or they follow more or less the learned university theologians as their predecessors did. A wide circle was influenced for decades by Professor Hengstenberg in Berlin, Vilmar in Marburg and presently Professor Luthardt . . . in Leipzig and the Erlangen theologians in Bavaria. . . . The place of doctrine among these our beloved German theologians is a far cry from our old Lutheran church.<sup>10</sup>

Many Lutherans opposed the Union of Reformed and Lutherans because they feared the increased authority of the state or hesitated to relinquish their cherished independence. Few actually opposed the Union because the Reformed entertained false doctrine. The two traditions were considered "sister churches," each with its own character and quality which contributed to the full glory

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<sup>10</sup>"Einiges von den wichtigsten Zeitirrtümern auf dem Gebiet unsrer luth. Kirche," ibid., p. 131

of God. These were the sentiments of Consistory Counselor Johann Gerhard W. Uhlhorn as well as Karl Friedrich A. Kahnis who said, "The Prussian Union looks to me like an unfortunate marriage of two people who can live in friendship, but were never meant for marriage."<sup>11</sup>

The contagious Roman Catholic doctrine of church government was attacked by Friedrich Brunn in many quarters. His witness to the Breslau and Immanuel Synods on this issue was discussed in the preceding chapter. In addition, he experienced first hand, similar problems in the neighboring state of Hesse. The views of A. F. C. Vilmar prevailed in this state. Vilmar taught that the power of the keys was given to the clergy and was not in the possession of the congregation. Their clergy were responsible only to God and never to the congregation.<sup>12</sup> He also taught the laying on of hands in Ordination and Confirmation was a Sacramental Handlung.<sup>13</sup> The Kurhessen Renitenten, an independent Lutheran group, strongly followed the Vilmarian teaching.<sup>14</sup>

Brunn became more involved with the Free Church in the Dukedom of Hesse after his native Nassau and Hesse were united following the Prussian conquest in 1866. Brunn had greater contact with both the state and Free Hessian churches during

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., VII (November, 1872), 159.

<sup>12</sup>"Das romanisirende Lutherthum," ibid., IX (February, 1874), 17-19.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., VII (June, 1872), 83.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., X (February, 1875), 30.



the 1870's. This is reflected in the greater space he gave the Hessian situation in the Evangelisch-lutherische Mission und Kirche during the seventh decade. The issue of church government in Hesse was similar to the one that existed between Brunn and the Breslau Synod. Therefore, he similarly attacked this harmful doctrine when it appeared in his immediate working area.

Central authority in church government was even stronger in the Hessian Landeskirche than it was among the Hessian Renitenten. The Union constitution of Hesse-Darmstadt, in 1874, called for an evangelical church in the Grossherzogtum which would in turn join the fellowship of the proposed evangelical church of all Germany.<sup>15</sup> The former constitution of 1832, stated, "Every clergyman was bound to the confessional stand of his own congregation." This was now replaced by a liberal ordination oath.<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, in the Darmstadt Consistory jurisdiction of 1832, the Union of the Reformed and Lutherans was effected voluntarily in seven locations. However, in the early 1870's the theological climate had so changed that when Pastor Hofmann of Giedern (on the advice of Brunn) refused the Reformed Holy Communion, he was suspended from office.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., IX (March, 1874), 41.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-37.

Within a year of the new Hesse church constitution proclamation, over fifteen pastors reported to the Upper Consistory that they could not accept it. The most notable objector was Pastor Dieffenbach of Schlitz.<sup>18</sup> Later, Pastors Gross of Wetter near Marburg, and Rohnert of Steinbach-Hallenberg near Schmalkalden, joined the Breslau Synod.<sup>19</sup>

The ecclesiastical problems which Brunn evaluated were not confined to churches operating on the periphery of German church life. The issues he presented were the issues in the mainstream of German theological thought. These problems were discussed in the universities and became very practical concerns for Brunn and his fellow laborers in Nassau, Hesse, Saxony, Baden, Prussia and Bavaria.

Doctrinal issues confronting Lutherans in Nineteenth Century Germany were fundamental questions bearing on her very integrity. However, when state and Union pressures grew more severe, confessional Lutheranism recoiled against them. The scattered fellowship of Lutherans, particularly in the small villages, maintained confessional Lutheranism in the wake of influential theologians in the universities and the pressure of national and state governments.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., IX (June, 1874), 93-94.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., X (February, 1875), 30.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONCLUSION

The enforcement of the Prussian Union decree, by King Friedrich William III, was the final factor which awakened confessional Lutheran consciences to revolt. The death of Friedrich William III and his chief minister, Baron von Altenstein, in 1840, freed many confessional pastors from prison and strengthened their cause.

The economic upheaval in 1848, gave impetus to the Free Church movement in every German state. The solid, legal establishment of the Free Churches in a united Germany, came when Bismarck failed to give priority rights to the state and union churches.

Apart from the political and economical struggles of the Nineteenth Century, the German Free Churches undertook a severe re-evaluation of their theology. Lutheran confessionalism was revived and became a force that every churchman had to consider. Clergymen trained in Rationalism became strong defenders of confessional Lutheranism by once again studying Luther and the Lutheran fathers.

This confessionalism was reinforced by numerous pamphlets and correspondence from America. Doctrinal problems facing the German churches were simultaneously the ones dealt with by the Lutheran churches in America. Consequently, theological opinions on one side of the Atlantic were

reprinted on the other side in order to reinforce an editor's own point of view. The Missouri Synod's principle contact in Germany between 1860 and 1875 was Friedrich Brunn. Through his effort in the pro-seminary, the Missouri Synod became better known in the German states. The work of this institution also broadened the Gospel outlook of the Free Churches in the Rhineland. Finally the Steeden institution assisted Missouri through a severe period of manpower shortage.

An unfortunate result of the Free Church movement was its own splintering into small, disunited groups. Consciences became severely sensitive to any doctrinal aberration. The separation of the fellowship, in most cases was carried on in sincere concern for the spiritual welfare of the erring brother. Any present judgment of these motives must take into consideration the depreciated state of church life in high places and the enthusiasm of discovery which the Free Church leaders experienced. These men endured the oppression of the state, the ridicule of eminent theologians and endangered their very lives for the defense of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

The large number of small villages that joined the Free Church movement seems to indicate that confessional Lutheranism never died in many areas on the grass roots level. Most historical works deal with the famous men of state and university, but it is this writers hope that this thesis may shine a little light on the common man who was caught-up in the spectacular Nineteenth Century.

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