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PRAYER FELLOWSHIP IN THE FIRST HALF
OF SYNOD'S HISTORY

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

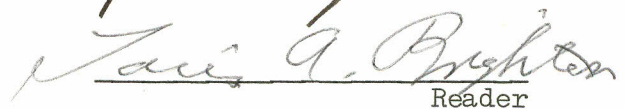
by

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Prayer Fellowship in the First Half
of Synod's History

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S.T.M. Degree

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PREFACE

The title of an article which appeared in the very first issue of the Ohio Synod's Columbus Theological Magazine¹ may well describe the question of Missouri Synod fellowship. It has been "The Burning Question" since its very inception and even before its organization as a synod. The present study on fellowship is not the first attempt to deal with the question. It certainly won't be the last. This thesis is an attempt to look at fellowship in the Missouri Synod historically and theologically, assemble material which may be helpful to others who research the subject, and draw some conclusions from the assembled material.

The problems connected with a study of Missouri Synod fellowship are many. Just the volume of researchable material is imposing. It is scattered throughout letters, journals, periodicals, biographies, autobiographies, and district and synodical proceedings which cover many years. The controversy with Buffalo, for example, which is part of any study of Missouri Synod fellowship, covers a period of research of more than twenty-five years. It began with the Grabau Hirtenbrief in 1840, broke out into full-scale, often bitter, controversy in 1843 and continued unabated until the colloquy with Buffalo in 1866. The controversy with Iowa, which grew out of the Buffalo-Missouri controversy, is another example of material scattered throughout many different sources. The argument on "open ques-

¹Prof. M. Loy started this official publication of the Ohio Synod at the time of the election controversy (1872-1881).

tions" was carried on in journals, letters, periodicals, and at conferences and conventions.

A second problem involves insufficient research. The tendency to make conclusions on insufficient evidence which might otherwise be revised with additional research makes a lot of fellowship material suspect, and the researcher has to run down almost all the researched material to check it out for fairness and accuracy. The companion problem to insufficient research is the bias and the prejudices the researcher encounters in which "the evidence is made to fit the crime."

The fact that so much of the fellowship material is in German is a third and, probably, the most serious problem. Too few can handle the German today and this makes extensive, exhaustive research virtually impossible. The German is tough theological German and one simply cannot get through it with a conversational grasp of the language. Translation is another factor since words used in an earlier time may not carry the translation we want to give them today. The word "spaltungen," for example, may be given the meaning today of "sects." More closely allied to the term is the translation "schismatics." The translator has the burden of trying to decide whether the term "sect" or "schismatic" in their original use are synonymous, interchangeable words, or whether they are used in different senses.

Unfortunately, so little of the German material has been translated into English that one simply cannot do a thorough investigative study on the basis of the scanty English translations. Fortunately, some good material is appearing with the publication of a six-volume English translation of selective material on G. F. W. Walther's writings, but the amount of

available translated material only covers the tip of the iceberg.

One helpful tool available is an index to Walther's writings at the Concordia Historical Institute in Saint Louis, Missouri, which makes it possible to get into Lehre und Wehre and Der Lutheraner in a more organized manner. This helps considerably in at least knowing what is available and where one has to go in order to find it.

The topic, "Prayer Fellowship in the First Half of Synod's History," has been both broadened and lengthened in this study. It has been broadened beyond the rather limited scope of prayer fellowship, which now becomes a part of the wider fellowship question. It has been lengthened to allow some comment about the present. Even more specifically, much of the material will deal with the period before and after the election controversy, with only the conclusion used to bring in the present in a rather cursory way. Some brief comments will be made regarding the Missouri Synod troubles in 1974 and, in the writer's opinion, the almost full-scale return of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches and the new Lutheran Church (1988) to the General Synod kind of Lutheranism against which the Missouri Synod protested so vigorously in its infancy and even before.

The writer would like to think that he has overcome some of the problems outlined earlier and that he has approached the subject in an unprejudicial and impartial way. Because of the nature of the study and the question imposed upon it (Introduction), he believes he has succeeded.

No research project, of course, is possible without the help and support which goes along with it from other people. The writer would like to give special thanks to Dr. August R. Suelflow, Adjunct Professor at

Concordia Seminary in Historical Theology and Director of Concordia Historical Institute in Saint Louis, Missouri, who served the writer as professor, friend, and advisor. The author has long admired Dr. Suelflow and considers him to be one of the leading historians on Lutheranism in America. The sainted Dr. Roy Suelflow helped the author in his demand for excellence. He insisted on competent research and demanded it from his students. The biggest credit, however, must go to my wife and children. When I started out in graduate work some twenty years ago, it was common talk around the house that any degree would be "our" degree, since I had to be absent so much for classes and study. To my family, therefore, must go the credit for this present project.

INTRODUCTION

The history of the Lutheran Church in America has been the history of a fragmented church. In spite of its atomistic composition, however, very strong efforts have been made to bring Lutherans together into a single body. While groupings and regroupings have reduced the number of groups, no single group has been able to pull all the Lutherans together.

The formation of a new Lutheran Church, scheduled to begin operating on January 1, 1988, will bring the largest number of Lutherans ever into one body.¹ Even this new church, however, will leave a large number of Lutheran groups outside of it. It may, in fact, even drive a wedge deeper between itself and other Lutherans and in the end leave a more shattered Lutheran Church after its organization than before.²

¹The new Lutheran Church, which will be composed of the American Lutheran Church (1960), The Lutheran Church in America (1962), and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches (1976), will include about 5.4 millions or sixty-three percent of North American Lutherans. These figures are taken from the statistics supplied by Dr. Samuel H. Nafzger in "Report on the Emerging New Lutheran Church," Concordia Journal 10 (September 1984):164.

²The role of Scripture and the doctrine of church and ministry will still be divisive after the organization of the new Lutheran Church. The writer concurs with Nafzger's comments in the Concordia Journal: "To make matters worse, as the bishop of one of the participating churches has put it, our churches are on divergent courses. My observations of the proceedings of the CNLC (Commission for a New Lutheran Church) confirms that this conclusion applies also to the LCMS and the direction apparently being taken by the emerging new church. There are deep and serious differences between the doctrinal stance of the LCMS and that which apparently informs the position of the emerging church. Doctrinally speaking, Lutherans in this century are farther apart than at any time in this century," p. 170.

While the role of the Missouri Synod in the discussions leading up to the formation of the new Lutheran Church is only that of an observer, it has a stake in the overall effort to unify Lutherans. It shares with all Lutherans the desire for a single Lutheran Church and has pursued that goal since 1847. In so doing, it practiced fellowship with other Lutherans (Chapter II) and entered into the fellowship of the Synodical Conference in 1872.

In 1881, however, it passed a resolution on prayer fellowship (Chapter III), which was very critical to its interaction with other Lutherans. It was this resolution which led to this study, and particularly to these questions: Has Missouri's position on fellowship been consistently the same throughout its history? Or, have there been two positions, one before the election controversy in 1881, and another after it?

To answer these questions, books were consulted which had something to say about Missouri's approach to fellowship.³ Then the primary material was researched, which included Convention Proceedings, Lehre und Wehre, Der Lutheraner, translated and untranslated letters of C. F. W. Walther, autobiographies of people who had something to say about fellowship, such as Prof. M. Loy's Story of My Life, and descriptions and accounts of some of the people who were on the scene during some of the periods of Missouri's history, such as Ernst Moritz Buerger's Memoirs of

³Jack Treon Robinson, "The Spirit of Triumphalism in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: The Role of 'A Statement' of 1945 in the Missouri Synod," (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972); F. Dean Lueking, Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise Among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846-1963 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964); John H. Tietjen, Which Way to Lutheran Unity? A History of Efforts to Unite the Lutherans in America (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1975) are three examples.

Ernst Moritz Buerger. Footnotes in secondary sources were invaluable, since they led to other books and additional primary sources.

The best place to start historically seemed to be with the Saxons in Saxony. Several pages in Chapter I are devoted to tracing historically what went on with the Saxons up to 1847. Several additional pages are devoted to the differences which existed between Missouri and J. A. A. Grabau and Wilhelm Loehe. The value of this background material is that it puts the question of Missouri's fellowship practice within a historical context. It did not seem appropriate to look at Missouri Synod fellowship apart from the history which helped to shape it.

Most of the terms used in the study are self-explanatory. Since the subject was Missouri Synod fellowship, the writer avoided the temptation to get into other issues which surfaced along the way. Practically nothing is said about "unionism," since the research dealt with Missouri's relationship with other Lutherans. Suffice it to say that it did not regard the fellowship it practiced with other Lutherans, who were not in fellowship with it, as unionistic. This fellowship will appear in Chapter II as "prayer fellowship"⁴ and "altar and pulpit fellowship."⁵ Even while it practiced such fellowship with other Lutherans, the goal was always agreement between synods which would finally lead to the one Lutheran Church in America.

Several things stand out in the writer's mind after researching the subject of Missouri Synod fellowship. Probably the one thing that impressed him the most was how far the Missouri Synod was willing to go to

⁴Prayers and hymns at meetings.

⁵Preaching and communing with other Lutherans.

maintain the fellowship it had with other Lutherans. Throughout the election controversy, for example, Missouri went to great lengths to keep the Conference together. Even though it regarded those who disagreed with its own position as synergists, it did not regard this as sufficient reason to break fellowship. It was only when the charge of calvinism was raised against it that the Conference began to crumble. Short of that term it is hard to think of anything that would have disrupted the fellowship it enjoyed with those who left the Conference.

It has been the writer's experience to observe that passions can run very high in discussions of the Missouri Synod, especially when they concern Missouri interaction, or lack of it, with other Lutherans. The writer feels he has uncovered some interesting information from the sources he consulted, which the reader will find illuminating. For one thing, the reader will have the opportunity to look at a lot of good primary material, perhaps for the first time.

CHAPTER I

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND DIFFERENCES

WITH OTHER LUTHERANS

The arrival of the Saxon Lutherans in 1839 may seem like one of the most tragic chapters in the history of Lutheranism in America. Shortly after they arrived they became embroiled in inner turmoil and soon thereafter with the Buffalo Synod. Other controversies followed and they found themselves at odds with the General Synod, Iowa Synod, General Council and other Lutherans on both sides of the Atlantic. Some of the controversies were simultaneous.

Following the election controversy in 1881, the Missouri Synod stood virtually alone. Other synods moved on without it to form new church bodies. The General Synod, General Council and United Synod of the South became the United Lutheran Church in 1918. In 1930, the Ohio Synod, Iowa Synod and Buffalo Synod formed the American Lutheran Church. Missouri's isolation, however, should not hide the significant role it had in the whole fellowship movement. Its very presence on American soil helped to smoke out the "American Lutherans" who wanted to "protestantize" confessional Lutheranism with the watered-down Definite Platform of American Lutheranism and challenged Lutheranism to re-examine itself and decide where it stood and with whom it stood. Its call for free conferences in 1856 was an effort to unite Lutherans and indirectly led to the formation of the General Council. Even the election controversy, which disrupted

the Synodical Conference and led to the withdrawal of the Ohio Synod, brought about closer ties between the Ohio Synod and Iowa Synod, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the American Lutheran Church.

The Saxon Lutherans arrived here in the winter of 1839. It is simplest to say that they came here as a reaction against both rationalism and the Prussian Union of 1817.

While this view is an oversimplification of a complex subject, it is nevertheless true that the religious cast of the movement serves as the most suitable starting point of departure in considering its history, for the group represented a conservative minority in the Saxon State Church.¹

It is beyond the scope of this study to analyze all the factors which may have been involved in the emigration, but within the context of the developments as they occurred and which led to the emigration, confessional Lutheranism was indeed struggling for survival against both rationalism which wanted to undermine the Scriptures and the Prussian Union and its attack upon the church.

The leader of the Saxon emigration was Martin Stephan. He was born in Stramberg, Moravia, on August 13, 1777, and educated at Halle (1804-1806) and at Leipzig (1806-1809). He served as pastor for one year at Haber, Bohemia. From 1810 until shortly before the emigration he was pastor at St. John's in Dresden. His Dresden days were sprinkled with run-ins with the local authorities who objected to his non-religious nightly activities. Rumors also circulated about his private life and alleged moral indiscretions. When he continued to defy the local authorities and refused to cooperate with them, he was suspended from his office

¹Walter O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri 1839-1841 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), p. 2.

in 1837.

Emigration to America had been contemplated for some time. It now took on feverish proportions. Stephan's "worsening position"² made emigration his only viable option. While his motives for the emigration may be suspect, there seems to be little doubt that the Saxons themselves, who viewed Stephan as "the champion of orthodoxy, the defender of the faith,"³ were reacting against rationalism and the attempt of the Prussian Union to deprive Lutherans of their strongly confessional character.

The Saxon Lutherans who came to America were much more confessional than the Lutherans who had arrived at an earlier time. Those who were already here had been Americanized and had not gone through anything like the Prussian Union. While some confessional movement was evident, the arrival of the Saxon Lutherans had a definite impact on the whole Lutheran confessional development.

They left Germany on board five ships in November of 1838.⁴ Among those who accompanied Stephan were five other pastors and ten candidates for the ministry.⁵ The most prominent of them would be Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther. He was born October 25, 1811, the eighth child and the fourth son in a family of twelve, in Langenchursdorf, a village in Saxony. His father, Gottlieb Walther, was a pastor before him, as were his grandfather and great-grandfather. Until he was eight, he was educated by his

²Ibid., p. 137. ³Ibid., p. 63.

⁴Forster (p. 200) puts the number of those who left Germany at 665. The five ships were the Olbers, Amalia, Republik, Johann Georg, and Copernicus. The Amalia, with a passenger list of 58, was lost at sea. Death also visited the other ships along the way.

⁵Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 110.

father. In 1819 he attended school in Hohenstein, near Chemnitz, where he remained until 1821. He entered Schneeberg, in the Saxon Erzgebirge, in 1821, and was there until September 1829. In October of 1829 he entered Leipzig, where he encountered rationalism. Here he joined a group of students which met for edification through prayer, Scripture reading and discussion. This saved him from rationalism but gave him his pietistic tendencies, which "left its mark on Walther, too, for good or for ill."⁶ He was ordained January 15, 1837, and became pastor at Braeunsdorf. In 1838, he preached his farewell sermon and sailed with the other Saxon Lutherans for America.

Two people who played a significant role in Walther's life in Germany were Mrs. F. W. Barthel, whose husband later became the first treasurer of the Missouri Synod, and Martin Stephan. Mrs. Barthel, whose funeral sermon Walther was later to preach in America, opened her home to him during the difficult days at Leipzig. Stephan, whom he later helped to depose as bishop in America, helped him at a time when he was very pessimistic about his faith. He had written Stephan a letter and received in response a letter which greatly strengthened him. This response not only soothed him but put him into Stephan's debt, whom he greatly admired. Whether Walther believed any of those things about Stephan which appeared in print and which were part of neighborhood gossip, or whether he even suspected some of the seemingly dictatorial aspirations Stephan had in mind for himself, is beyond the scope of this study.

⁶C. F. W. Walther, Selected Sermons, trans. Henry J. Eggold, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 10.

The event which thrust Walther into a leadership role⁷ was the Altenburg Debate. It was this debate which gave birth to his doctrine of church and ministry which would play such an important role in the controversy with the Buffalo and Iowa synods and which ultimately led to a parting of the ways with Wilhelm Loehe. Walther's doctrine of the church can also be said to have been influential in the formation of the Iowa Synod, since it came into existence only after the doctrine of the church led to irreconcilable differences between Loehe and the Missouri Synod.

The leadership role which came to Walther in the aftermath of the Altenburg Debate also thrust him into a prominent role in the organization of the Missouri Synod and in its history and development until his death in 1887. In fact, from the time of its beginnings as a synod in 1847, the names of Walther and Missouri can hardly be separated. When Walther spoke, Missouri spoke. When Missouri spoke, it reflected Walther's thinking. It is indeed true that "to write the life of Walther is to write the history of the Missouri Synod."⁸

Walther has been both admired and criticized. His admirers are legion. He is called "God's chosen human instrument,"⁹ "a spiritual father" . . . to whom "a very particular mission to the Lutheran Church

⁷It is important to note that Walther did not seek the leadership role he was given among the Saxons and later in the Missouri Synod. When he argued effectively in the Altenburg Debate that the church did indeed exist among the Saxons after Stephan, he simply became the leader who led until his death.

⁸W. H. T. Dau, Ebenezer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 22.

⁹F. Pfotenhauer, Foreword to Walther and the Church by Wm. Dallman, W. H. T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938). p. vi.

had been entrusted by God,"¹⁰ "the most eminent theologian of the Lutheran Church in the nineteenth century,"¹¹ and "one of God's exceptionally precious gifts to the church."¹² It is said of him that "in a whole sierra of Lutheran confessors he stands out like a Mount Whitney or Mount Shasta."¹³ Even folklore has developed around him which makes him even bigger than life.

He has to change his passage on the Amalia, for which he is booked, to the Johann Georg because the ship is ready to sail, and one of the passengers is willing to let Walther take his place and sail under his name. The Amalia is lost at sea.¹⁴

Walther had his critics, too. A different view of him is given by Prof. M. Loy, president of the Ohio Synod. Reflecting on Walther in his autobiography, he describes him as one who was aware of his status and hated to be contradicted or challenged.

I do not think that he was an arrogant or domineering disposition, but his experience was such that his demeanor not unseldom assumed that appearance. He was accustomed to have his doctrinal statements accepted as indisputably correct and his judgment assented to as decisive and final. He could brook no public contradiction when he had spoken. He had become a dictator by habit, without claiming to be this or to have any authority for it. This had the effect of inducing men to be silent when they should have spoken, preferring not to ex-

¹⁰"Rede gehalten bei der Ueberführung der Leiche des sel. Dr. Walther aus dem Seminargebäude in die Dreieinigkeitskirche," Der Lutheraner 43 (June 1, 1887):85.

¹¹C. L. Janzow, Life of Rev. Prof. C. F. W. Walther, D.D. (Pittsburg: American Lutheran Publication Board, 1899), p. 9.

¹²J. W. Behnken, "Foreward," Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (October 1961):581.

¹³Wm. Dallman, W. H. T. Dau, and Th. Engelder, Walther and the Church, p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 2. See Forster's Zion on the Mississippi, p. 196, for the probable historical reality.

press their dissent when this might be followed by unpleasant situations.¹⁵

One needs to be careful in assessing Walther to look at all the available information about him. Depending on the source of the information, he can be more, or less, than he was. Carl S. Meyer probably says it best of all.

In the perspective of history, we learn that he was less great than some of his uncritical followers regarded him and more appreciated than some of his detractors would allow.¹⁶

If any one single event could be selected which did more than anything else to prepare Walther for the position he was to occupy among the Saxons following the Stephan fiasco and his role as leader in the organization and development of the Missouri Synod, it would be the sickness which interrupted his studies during the winter term of 1831-1832 at Leipzig. He would be sick again in 1841 and this period of his life, too, would be a time of growing in his appreciation of Luther and the Lutheran Confessions, but the sickness of 1831-1832 gave him his first real opportunity to study the works of Martin Luther which he found in his father's library.

Throughout his life Walther would quote extensively from outstanding Lutheran theologians of the past. He has been criticized for this and called a "citation theologian (Zitatentheolog)." No less a scholar than Carl S. Meyer finds this methodology of Walther permeating the thinking of the Missouri Synod for two generations and the practice of citing

¹⁵Prof. M. Loy, Story of My Life (Columbus: Lutheran Book Concern, 1905), pp. 355-56. Loy would also call an "unpleasant situation" the silence he said would come over Walther when he was challenged which, in effect, is to say that he would pout or brood.

¹⁶C. F. W. Walther, Letters of C. F. W. Walther: A Selection, trans. and ed. Carl S. Meyer (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969) p. 2.

sources outside the Scriptures being carried over into the ministry for a generation, which Meyer calls "an unpleasant outcome of the work done at Concordia Seminary."¹⁷ Meyer's criticism, as well as that of others, is unfair.

Critics have failed to understand why Walther quoted so extensively from outstanding Lutheran theologians of the past, and have called him a "citation theologian." This is unfortunate. Walther was a firm believer that the faith once delivered to the saints was unchanged and unchanging, revealed in the Word of God. Thus he sought continuity of belief throughout history. Nowhere did Walther attempt to "prove" doctrine with quotations from Luther to Gerhard. His greatest joy was to point to the harmony and continuity which existed between the Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the Lutheran Church fathers.¹⁸

Walther himself said that "Lutheran doctrine has never been determined by the church fathers. But what the fathers teach on the basis of Scripture, that we accept."¹⁹ For Walther, God's truth abides. The fact that he believed the faith to be unchanged and unchanging would be a factor in the controversy with the Iowa Synod over "open questions."

The situation among the Saxon Lutherans began to deteriorate shortly after they arrived in America. Martin Stephan was deposed and they went through two years of inner struggle and controversy. This controversy led to the Altenburg Debate and the formulation of the thesis on the doctrine of the church which were to play an important role in Missouri's quest for fellowship with other Lutherans.

¹⁷Carl S. Meyer, Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary during One Hundred and Twenty-five Years towards a More Excellent Ministry (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), p. 78.

¹⁸C. F. W. Walther, Convention Essays, trans. August R. Suelflow, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 8-9.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 36.

Stephan sought and received investiture as bishop (January 14, 1839) on board the Olbers shortly before it docked in Saint Louis. This investiture was ratified by the whole company in Saint Louis on February 24, 1839, and was given to him on February 26.

Stephan's bishopric was short-lived. Already on board the Olbers he exhibited dictatorial and erratic behavior. He wanted to be pampered, expected special privileges which enabled him to live a cut above the other people on board, and often complained to them. When he preached, which was infrequent, he chastized them. This autocratic and erratic pattern continued in Saint Louis, where he lived lavishly and without any real regard for the dwindling treasury which he abused and squandered on himself.²⁰

When Stephan's downfall came, it came quickly. Any support he might have expected from the clergy appears to have been eroded by his autocratic ways. J. Frederick Winter²¹ gives an account of the downfall, but he was so personally involved in the situation that he may be less than objective and fair. According to his account, a sermon preached on May 5, 1839, by Pastor G. H. Loeber²² was the actual spark which ignited

²⁰There are a number of good accounts of the whole Stephan debacle. The most thorough and detailed is the one by Walter O. Forster, Zion on the Mississippi. This material should be read to see how it was that the Saxons could recoil so quickly from the kind of church government favored by Grabau and the Buffalo Synod. A more detailed account of Stephan is not given in this study, since it goes beyond the scope of it. By the same token, one can hardly understand Missouri Synod fellowship without some knowledge of the Stephan situation and the resultant Missouri Synod position on church and ministry.

²¹J. Frederick Winter was a school teacher, age 30, from Planena, who sailed to America on board the Republik.

²²Gottlieb Heinrich Loeber (1797-1849), pastor at Bibra, near Kahla, came to America in 1839. He was pastor at Altenburg, Mo. He attended the

the removal procedures against Stephan. Two women who heard the sermon are said to have come forth independently to admit sexual indiscretions with Stephan.²³ Others subsequently are supposed to have come forth to also admit their sexual involvement with him. On May 31, 1839, just a little more than three months after his ratification as bishop, the axe fell. Stephan was put on a boat, rowed across the Mississippi to the Illinois side and put ashore. There he lived in banishment from the people he had led and seems to have abused.

The next two years were difficult years for the Saxons as they wrestled with the question of church and ministry. During this time J. A. Grabau's Hirtenbrief²⁴ also arrived, which ignited the Buffalo-Missouri controversy. Ernst Moritz Buerger,²⁵ who later was to irritate Grabau by assuming the pastorate over a group of Silesians who had been excommunicated by him, and whose removal was initially included by Grabau as a pre-

1846 meetings in St. Louis, Mo., and Fort Wayne, Ind., preliminary to organization of the Missouri Synod, and helped to organize it as an advisory member.

²³J. Frederick Winter, "Mr. J. Frederick Winter's Account of the Saxon Emigration," trans. by Paul H. Burgdorf, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 12 (January 1940):88. "Through the preaching of the Word in St. Louis on Rogate Sunday--Pastor Loeber preached at that time--the Holy Ghost touched the heart of those women with whom Stephan had been sinfully intimate and they came to Pastor Loeber at once with great contrition of heart and revealed all that Stephan had done. Now this fearful hypocrite, who had so long gone about in sheep's clothing and yet inwardly was a ravening wolf, stood unmasked."

²⁴Pastoral letter.

²⁵One of the Saxon pioneers (1809-1890) who joined the Saxon emigration under Stephan. He was a charter member of the Missouri Synod and held pastorates in Buffalo, New York; West Seneca, New York; Washington, D.C.; and Winona, Minnesota.

condition²⁶ for fellowship, recalls the confusion which existed among the Saxons following Stephan's removal.

Doubts began to be expressed concerning the legitimacy of our emigration. The question arose: What are we? Did our pastors rightfully resign their offices in Germany? Do they have a proper call? Are they not seducers who have enticed us to this man, and helped toward tearing asunder family ties, so that children forsook their parents and spouses their mates? Are we to be designated a Lutheran congregation, and is the Lutheran Church in our midst, the Lutheran ministry, the rightful administration of the Sacraments?²⁷

Walther expresses similar concerns in a letter to his brother, Otto Herman Walther. Pouring out his own anguish of heart, he refers to the emigration as "an abominable undertaking."²⁸ He speaks about faithlessness to former congregations which were abandoned in opposition to the will of God and of violating oaths which they had made to them, questions whether there should even have been an emigration, and draws a distinction between the Prussian Union, where to remain may have resulted in apostasy, and the Saxon emigration where no such situation existed.²⁹ He raises questions he himself would answer at Altenburg.

The main questions being treated are now these: Are our congregations truly Lutheran congregations? Or are they mobs? Sects? Do they have the authority to call and to excommunicate? Are we pastors or not? Are our calls valid? Do we still belong to Germany? What about Pastor Loeber who did not even receive a (written) dismissal from his office by the government? Could we possibly have been divinely called here, since we abandoned our divine calls in Germany and ran away from them, following our wrong consciences? Should not the congregations depose us now, since now for the first time they realize with us how great an offense we have given? Wouldn't it be better if the congre-

²⁶Grabau called Buerger a Rottenprediger (rabble preacher).

²⁷Ernst Moritz Buerger, Memoirs of Ernst Moritz Buerger, trans. Edgar Joachim Buerger (Lincoln, NE: Martin Julian Buerger, 1953), p. 48.

²⁸G. F. W. Walther, Letters, "To the Rev. Otto Herman Walther," p. 34.

²⁹Ibid., p. 34.

gations would at least release us, try for a time to maintain themselves by the spiritual exercise of the spiritual priesthood, and then either call the old pastors or new ones?³⁰

One of the positive things to come out of all the confusion and turmoil was the searching which went on in Luther's writings. Walther wrote to Wilhelm Sihler³¹ on January 2, 1845:

Through the discovery of the Stephanite deception we were driven into the writings of Luther, and we believe that through the guiding of the Holy Spirit by means of this incomparable treasury we have now first come to proper clarity. We had become suspicious of all our misunderstanding; thus everything was subjected to the strictest examination.³²

Walther also wrote to his brother that "Marbach³³ is studying Luther with great diligence at the present time."³⁴ Franz Adolph Marbach was Walther's opponent in the Altenburg Debate.

A number of events occurred in the period following Stephan's removal and the debate at Altenburg in April of 1841. Carl Eduard Vehse (1802-1870)³⁵ drew up six theses which dealt with the office of the ministry. They were against an episcopal form of church government and dealt with the rights of congregations. When nothing developed from these theses, he quit the Saxon movement on December 6, 1839, and returned to

³⁰Ibid., pp. 37-38.

³¹Wilhelm Sihler (1801-1885) came to America in 1843 and was ordained (1844) by the Ohio Synod. He withdrew from the Ohio Synod in 1845 and with Walther helped to organize the Missouri Synod.

³²C. F. W. Walther, Selected Letters, trans. Roy A. Suelflow, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 89.

³³Franz Adolph Marbach (1798?-1860) was a lawyer at Dresden, Germany, who became a lay leader in the Saxon emigration.

³⁴Walther, Letters, p. 48.

³⁵A scholar and historian, who was also curator of the Saxon State archives. He came to America as part of the Saxon emigration.

Germany. Buerger meanwhile vacillated from position to position on the question of church and ministry and resigned from his congregation several times. Sides also were formed. Marbach, who took the position that the emigration was wrong, was joined by Buerger and Friedrich Barthel.³⁶ Ernst Keyl,³⁷ Theodor Gruber,³⁸ and Loeber generally took the other side. The matter came to a head early in 1841 when Walther debated Marbach on April 15 and 21. Walther defended his position on the basis of eight theses,³⁹ for which he also was indebted to Vehse. He successfully satisfied both sides of the issue and brought peace of conscience to the Saxon community. Winter's account testifies to the agreement that was reached.

The evidence was so clear and convincing that, after the conclusion of the first disputation, Marbach declared himself in agreement with the five paragraphs which had been debated and testified to this by subscribing the record of proceedings which was kept. After the second disputation had been ended, in which the sixth paragraph was discussed, Marbach could not, as it seemed to me, fully come to a decision how to declare his position with regard to the paragraph. But on the following day, when Walther was about to depart for St. Louis to assume the pastorate of the congregation there (his brother having died in January of that year), Marbach calmly expressed himself as follows: 1) I acknowledge that the Christian Church is present here; 2) I have been extricated from my fundamental errors; 3) the true Lord's Supper is present here; 4) there only remains for me the question whether I can take part in it. Pastor Walther immediately instructed him re-

³⁶Friedrich Wilhelm Barthel (1791-1857) emigrated with Martin Stephan in 1838. He was elected the first treasurer of the Missouri Synod.

³⁷Ernst Gerhard Wilhelm Keyl (1795-1858) also came to America with Stephan. He held a number of pastorates in the United States.

³⁸Theodor Carl Friedrich Gruber (1795-1858), also associated with Stephan, was pastor in Paitzdorf (now Uniontown), Missouri, from 1840-1858. Along with G. A. Schieferdecker, he became involved in the chiliastic controversy and resigned from the ministry.

³⁹The Altenburg Theses are printed in the Lutheran Cyclopedia, ed. Erwin L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954; 2nd ed. 1975), p. 22.

garding this last point, which instruction was accepted in a kindly manner.⁴⁰

Following the Altenburg Debate, Marbach returned to Germany. He remained a friend of Walther and was the recipient of several of his letters. Buerger, who was still not convinced by Walther's presentation, was dismissed by his congregation and became pastor of the Silesians in New York who had been excommunicated by Grabau (page 14). Walther, who was "a follower, not a leader when he emigrated to the United States,"⁴¹ became the leader of the Saxon Lutherans and soon found himself embroiled in controversy with the Buffalo Synod and in the organization of the Missouri Synod.

The "in house" problems⁴² of the Saxons, which occupied them for their first two years in America, kept them out of touch with other Lutherans. Once these problems were settled, and they were ready for contact, they found themselves to be out of tune confessionally with Lutherans who were already here. Except for the name, these Lutherans had little in common with the Saxons who came out of the background of the Prussian Union which sought to make the dissimilar⁴³ similar by erasing differences through a common liturgy and common words of institution,⁴⁴ and who wanted to keep the Lutheran Church distinctively Lutheran. Until the Lutherans emigrated from Saxony and Prussia, Lutherans who arrived here somewhat

⁴⁰ Winter, p. 126. ⁴¹ Behnken, "Foreward," p. 581.

⁴² The problem with Stephan and the confusion over the doctrine of church and ministry.

⁴³ Lutheran and Reformed.

⁴⁴ "Jesus says, This is . . . ," etc., which the Lutherans regarded as Reformed.

earlier tended to associate with already existing Lutheran groups. All that changed in 1839 when the Saxons and Prussians found themselves more confessional than the most confessional existing Lutheran groups. This was certainly true with regard to the General Synod, which had hoped to bring all Lutherans together under one umbrella.⁴⁵

The General Synod, which Loy refers to as ". . . the unionistic General Synod,"⁴⁶ was organized in Hagerstown, Maryland on October 22, 1820 by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania, the North Carolina Synod, the Maryland and Virginia Synod. It survived the withdrawal of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1823 and by the year 1860 consisted of about two-thirds of the Lutherans in America.⁴⁷

What proved to be unfortunate for the later Lutherans, even for those who withdrew to organize the General Council in 1867, was the General Synod's lack of a confessional position.⁴⁸ Organized without requiring subscription to any confession and without mentioning the Bible, it was "too general" for the later Lutherans. Its only identifying Lutheran mark was that the synods which comprised it called themselves Lutheran. Constitutionally, there wasn't any hope that things would get better,

⁴⁵The umbrella of the General Synod.

⁴⁶Loy, Story of My Life, p. 233.

⁴⁷Wentz, Lutheranism in America, p. 140. Wentz says that the General Synod numbered 864 of the 1,313 ministers and 160,000 of the 245,000 communicants in America in 1860.

⁴⁸Proceedings of the Fifth General Synod of the Ev. Luth. Church in the United States (Gettysburg: Theological Seminary Press, 1829), pp. 41-44. These pages of the Fifth General Synod at Hagerstown, Maryland, held in October 1829, contain the constitution, which has no confessional section.

since the General Synod denied itself the right to "introduce such alterations in matters pertaining to faith,"⁴⁹ and could only give its "opinion"⁵⁰ in disputes of doctrine and discipline. This "opinion" was not based on Scripture, but "according to the best insight of right, equity, brotherly love and truth."⁵¹ When such disputes were referred to the General Synod for settlement, they were decided by "vote."⁵² Walther certainly had the General Synod in mind when he wrote in his "Vorwort" in 1846:

What was the situation here a few years ago and what is it now? Very few of those who called themselves Lutheran knew the true Lutheran doctrine and still fewer accepted and defended it. The name of the Book of Concord, which contains the public confessions of the church, was hardly known here, to say nothing of its content. Only very few had any of Luther's writings. Most of the pastors who called themselves Lutherans espoused Zwinglian-Reformed errors (e.g., on the Lord's Supper, on Holy Baptism, on absolution, on original sin, etc.) and, at least, a large number of them had accepted Methodistic practices on New Measures."⁵³

One of the groups of Lutherans the Saxons hoped to enter into fellowship with was the Buffalo Synod. Grabau's Hirtenbrief shattered those hopes and fellowship was delayed until 1866. Unfortunately, the Buffalo-Missouri controversy will be treated with a lot more brevity than it deserves, even though the long controversy is one of the saddest chapters in the history of Lutheranism in America.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 42. ⁵⁰Ibid., p. 43. ⁵¹Ibid. ⁵²Ibid.

⁵³C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort," Der Lutheraner 3 (September 5, 1846): 1. The translation is by E. L. Lueker, "Doctrinal Emphasis in the Missouri Synod," Concordia Theological Monthly 43 (April 1972):200-201.

⁵⁴Because a lot of the history of the Buffalo Synod is no longer extant, the material by Roy A. Suelflow is extremely useful and valuable. The three works by Suelflow are: A Plan for Survival (Greenwich, NY: Book Publishers, 1965); "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," (STM Thesis, Concordia Seminary St. Louis 1945) [also under same title in Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 27 (April

Historically, the organization of the Buffalo Synod parallels that of the Missouri Synod. A group of Prussians and Silesians left Germany shortly after the Saxons and arrived here about eight months after they had landed. They settled in Buffalo, New York, and in Wisconsin. J. A. A. Grabau led the Prussians and L. F. E. Krause⁵⁵ the Silesians.

John Andreas Augustus Grabau (1804-1879), pastor of St. Andrew's Lutheran Church in Erfurt, emigrated to America because of his troubles with the authorities. He refused to use the new liturgy through which Frederick Wilhelm III of Prussia hoped to unite the Lutherans and Reformed in a common order of worship. When he continued to perform his pastoral acts according to the old Saxon Kirchenordnung, he was suspended from his office and imprisoned for more than a year. Convinced that it would not be possible for Lutherans to worship independently of the liturgy proposed by Frederick Wilhelm III, he asked for, and was granted, permission to emigrate with his followers to America.⁵⁶ He was released from prison in the summer of 1839 and set sail for America with about 1000 followers⁵⁷ from Prussia and Silecia.

The controversy with the Saxons began quite innocently. Krause returned to Germany almost immediately after arriving here, leaving the

1954)]; "The History of the Missouri Synod during the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence 1872-1897" (Th.D. Thesis, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri 1946).

⁵⁵Leberecht Friedrich Ehregott Krause was pastor of a group of Lutherans from the vicinity of Breslau.

⁵⁶Roy. A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod up to 1866," p. 47.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 245. This is the number given by Krause in the Chronicle he kept, which numbered 61 pages. Suelflow includes the original and translation in an appendage to his thesis.

group of people in Wisconsin without a pastor. They appointed a layman to conduct services and contacted Grabau about the propriety of a layman performing pastoral acts. His negative reply in his pastoral letter (Hirtenbrief) brought to light the differences that existed with the Saxons over the doctrine of church and ministry.

Grabau held the view that the one holy Christian Church is a visible one which does not exist in communion with error; nor is communion with the invisible church sufficient for salvation. One must be a member of the visible church to be saved. The Saxons said that the one holy Christian Church is invisible, whose members, while scattered, were spiritually united. With regard to the ministry, Grabau held that it was conveyed by God. Missouri held that the ministry was conveyed by God through the congregation. Grabau said that the Office of the Keys was conveyed by the clergy and that the people should obey the clergy in everything. The Saxons stressed that the Office of the Keys was given to the congregation.

These differences surfaced when Grabau sent the Saxons a copy of the Hirtenbrief dated December 1, 1840. The timing could not have been worse, since they were wrestling with the same kind of concerns the Wisconsin people had directed to Grabau. To make matters even worse, he was offended when the Saxons, after a long silence, were critical of some of his positions. The reply he received included the following: 1. He attributed more to the office of the ministry than it deserved; 2. Stressed the idea of the priesthood of all believers; 3. Noted that it was contrary to Scripture to give total control to the pastor and to make the congregation responsible to him in everything; 4. Said that ordination was good, but not absolutely essential for the work of the ministry.

The Hirtenbrief raised in the minds of the Saxons the spectre of Stephan and they were not interested at this point in anything that looked "Stephanic," or hierarchical. To them, Grabau looked like a "reconstituted" Martin Stephan, and Walther even calls him "the second unimproved edition of Stephan" ("die zweite unverbesserte Auflage Stephans").⁵⁸ The Hirtenbrief had a frightening effect.

As we read the Hirtenbrief, we became not a little afraid. For we found in it the same incorrect tenets whose destructive consequences we had but recently experienced, and from which only the overwhelming grace and patience of God saved us. If this Hirtenbrief had come to us at that time when we still embraced the tenets of Stephan, we would no doubt have immediately subscribed to it, and on this basis have achieved a union with the author (Grabau) and his congregation. But now, after God had mightily opened our eyes, this was not possible. We read here what we had but recently recognized in ourselves as abominable errors, having prayed to God for forgiveness with tears⁵⁹ of repentance, and having openly recanted before the whole church.

It wasn't only the difference with regard to church and ministry which delayed fellowship for twenty-five years between Missouri and Buffalo. Grabau also refused to meet with Missouri until the Rottenprediger were removed and Missouri recognize the Buffalo Synod as a truly Lutheran

⁵⁸C. F. W. Walther, "Letter to F. A. Marbach" (4 January 1854), trans. Ludwig Fuerbringer, in Briefe von C. F. W. Walther, 2 vols. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 1:88.

⁵⁹Roy A. Suelflow, "The Relations of the Missouri Synod with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866," p. 10. "Als wir diesem 'Hirtenbrief' lasen, erschraaken wir nicht wenig; denn wir fanden darin die Irrthümer vorgelegt, von deren verderblichen Folgen wir eben vor kurzem nur zu traurige Erfahrungen gemacht hatten und daraus wir eben erst durch Gottes überschwengliche Gnade und Geduld erettet werden waren. Wäre uns jener 'Hirtenbrief' zugekommen in der Zeit, in welcher wir noch stephanistischen Grundsätzen huldigten, so würden wir ihn freilich ohne weiteres unterschrieben und auf Grund desselben sogleich eine innige kirchliche Verbindung mit dem Verfasser und seinen Gemeinden angeknüpft haben; aber jetzt, nachdem uns Gott fast gewaltsam die Augen geöffnet hatte, war dies nicht möglich. Wir lasen hier, was wir kurz zuvor an uns selbst also gräulichen Irrthum erkannt, Gott heimlich mit Tränen der Reue abgebeten und öffentlich vor der ganzen Kirche demüthig widerrufen hatten."

synod. He later dropped his demand about the Rottenprediger, but continued to refuse to meet until Missouri confessed its guilt for sending them out.

During the next quarter century, Missouri and Buffalo continued to attack each other in print. Der Lutheraner (1844) and Lehre und Wehre (1855) were the vehicles used by Missouri. Buffalo responded through the pages of Kirchliches Informatorium.

When the differences were finally resolved in the colloquy of 1866, it was in spite of Grabau and not because of him. The Buffalo Synod found him guilty of false doctrine at its ministerium in 1866 and asked him to repent. He refused and did not participate in the dialog with Missouri.⁶⁰ The final resolution of the Buffalo Synod was that it divided into three groups. The majority joined the Missouri Synod. A small group later joined the Wisconsin Synod. A few who were loyal to Grabau continued the old Buffalo Synod with him.

One of the casualties of the Missouri-Buffalo controversy was Wilhelm Loehe (1808-1872) of Neuendettelsau, Bavaria, whose importance to the Missouri Synod cannot be overstated. He helped train the men who became the backbone of Missouri. By the time of its organization in 1847, he had already trained and sent twenty-three emergency men to America. When he broke off fraternal relations in 1853, he had sent more than eighty candidates of theology, emergency men, and students for the Fort Wayne Seminary to America, most of whom became part of the Missouri Synod.

⁶⁰Der Lutheraner reported that "Grabau hatte sich selbst aus der Buffalo-Synod ausgeschlossen." This information is reported in "Das Buffaloer Colloquium," Der Lutheraner 23 (December 15, 1866):57-58.

James A. Schaaf quite correctly calls him a "co-founder"⁶¹ of the Missouri Synod. While Walther gave it its structure, it was the Loehe men who made the contacts which led to its formation.

Loehe's differences with Missouri centered in the doctrine of church and ministry. He was sympathetic to Grabau's position that the pastoral office comes directly from God and not through the congregation. He favored clergy dominance and opposed any prominent role of the laity in ecclesiastical matters. In spite of his sympathies, he tried to occupy a mediating role in the dialog between Buffalo and Missouri and was hopeful that the two sides could affect some kind of workable relationship.

Jack Treon Robinson is incorrect in his assessment of the Loehe-Missouri relationship.

The Missouri Synod Geist could not hold Loehe in the same respect and honor as C. F. W. Walther because it believed that Loehe had deviated from what it considered true doctrine, and deviation from this norm warned of defeatism, not triumphalism.⁶²

Missouri lived with its differences with Loehe for many years and made strong efforts to strengthen the fraternal bond it enjoyed with him. It held him in high regard, and it was only later that the relationship became strained and tense. When he could not come to America in response to Missouri's invitation in 1850, it sent Walther and Wyneken⁶³ to Germany to

⁶¹James A. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 45 (May 1972):54.

⁶²Jack Treon Robinson, "The Spirit of Triumphalism in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod: The Role of 'A Statement' of 1945 in the Missouri Synod," (Ph.D. dissertation, Vanderbilt University, 1972), p. 25.

⁶³Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken (1810-1876) came here in 1838. He is noted for his Notruf ("The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America") and the people he secured for America to serve them. He made contact with the Saxons through the Lutheraner and was present at the

strengthen its ties with him. While the differences were not resolved, some progress was made. Walther wrote to his wife on October 11, 1851:

Pastor Loehe received us heartily and fraternally. We very soon got to serious discussions on the prevailing differences between us. As to the outcome of this, I can only say this much at the present time: Many mutual reservations have been eliminated, and Loehe has now stated his position better than hitherto on several significant points; but we have not come to a complete understanding. Whether we will ever get to that, God only knows; my hope is rather weak in this respect.⁶⁴

Walther was obviously pleased with this meeting and wrote Loehe in June of 1852.

Great was the joy here upon the report of the result of our journey and of the peaceful accord reached with you, most honored pastor. Certainly countless prayers of righteous Christians received the assurance that they were answered. Also from other sources, such as the Ohio Synod, we have received unsolicited testimony of the wholesome impression which the news evoked when it was made known that we had not broken with you but rather had tied the ties more firmly, so that I dare hope that the most recent controversy with this and similar synods which want to be confessional here have been fought through and this will be the last. After the close of our next synodical convention, Wyneken and I are thinking of journeying to Columbus to pave the way for unity, not an outward one but a unity expressed by a mutual fraternal spiritual exchange between us.⁶⁵

But what seemed so promising in 1852 collapsed under the weight of Graubau's trip to Germany in 1853. A visit supposedly to help raise funds for the Buffalo Synod also included dialog with Loehe and the theological faculties of Germany, which had a damaging effect upon the fraternal ties which had been strengthened as a result of the trip by Walther and Wyneken.

Cleveland meetings where preliminary plans for the Missouri Synod were drawn up. He joined the Synod at its second convocation and served as its second president.

⁶⁴Walther, Selected Letters, p. 21. The account of this journey is also in Der Lutheraner 8, Nos. 13-21 [C. F. W. Walther, "Reisebericht des Redakteurs," Der Lutheraner 8 (17 February 1852):97-102; (2 March 1852):105-08; (16 March 1852):113-15; (13 April 1852):132-34; (27 April 1852):137-38; (11 May 1852):145-47; (25 May 1852):153-57; (8 June 1852):161-65.]

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 103-04.

Relations cooled rapidly to the point where each went in different directions. Schaaf says that Loehe pulled away from Missouri "because of what might most charitably be described as a 'lover's quarrel,'"⁶⁶ but Walther puts things in proper perspective.

To many a person, if they had heard the discussions,⁶⁷ it would have seemed if all the differences were mere subtleties; but anyone who could look deeper would soon see that Loehe has a thoroughly different viewpoint on church and ministry in his total outlook compared to us, that is, to our Lutheran Church.⁶⁸

It was from his differences with Missouri that the Iowa Synod was born. Meuser calls Loehe "the father of the Iowa Synod,"⁶⁹ but some credit must also go to Grabau. It was his trip to Germany which helped to unravel the accord which Walther and Wyneken had effected with Loehe. However the credit, or blame, is finally parceled out, the Iowa Synod became the vehicle through which Loehe was able to maintain his interest in the Lutheran Church in America.

The apparatus for assembling the Iowa Synod was already here when Loehe's break with Missouri occurred. George Grossman,⁷⁰ who arrived from Neuendettelsau in 1852 to take charge of the training school at Saginaw, Michigan, joined the Missouri Synod congregation. Because he clung to Loehe's position on church and ministry, he was excommunicated. He along

⁶⁶Schaaf, "Loehe and the Missouri Synod," p. 53.

⁶⁷The discussions which were held between Loehe, Walther and Wyneken.

⁶⁸Walther, Selected Letters, p. 21.

⁶⁹Fred W. Meuser, The Formation of the American Lutheran Church (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1958), p. 22.

⁷⁰Georg Martin Grossman (1823-1897) became the first president of the Iowa Synod and served from 1854-1893.

with John Deindorfer⁷¹ of Frankenhilf and twenty lay people, went to Iowa in 1853. They were joined there by two other pastors from Neuendettelsau, one of whom was Sigmund Fritschel,⁷² who was to play a prominent role in the controversy with Missouri in the 1860s. These four pastors organized the Iowa Synod on August 24, 1854. In assessing historically the formation of the Iowa Synod, it should be noted that the differences with Missouri were brought to America by those who formed the Iowa Synod, since they received their early training and theology from Loehe.

The controversy with Iowa is remembered chiefly for the debate over "open questions." Walther defined "open questions" as "those questions of doctrine . . . which a teacher may either affirm or deny without losing his orthodox standing in the church."⁷³ Iowa's definition was much broader. It treated as "open" whatever had not been formulated into a confessional-theological document of the church. By contrast, Missouri held the position that the Scriptures are binding whether the church has adopted a position, or not. Iowa looked to the theologically-adopted statement to "close" a question, while Missouri held that the Scriptures, because they are sole rule and norm of faith and life, have already

⁷¹Johannes A. Deindorfer (1828-1907) also received his training from Loehe and came here in 1851. He joined the Missouri Synod in 1852, but left it because of the differences he had with it. He succeeded Grossman as president of the Iowa Synod (1893-1904).

⁷²Conrad Sigmund Fritschel (1833-1900) was one of two brothers involved in the controversy with the Missouri Synod. He taught as professor at the Wartburg Seminary (1858-1900). Both brothers were considered leading theologians of the Iowa Synod.

⁷³C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre 14 (January 1868). Trans. Alex Wm. C. Guebert, Concordia Theological Monthly 16 (July 1946): 485.

"closed" the question.⁷⁴

Missouri was willing to grant the existence of "open questions," but limited them to theological problems "which force themselves upon the student as he studies the Christian articles of faith, but for which there is no solution in Scripture"⁷⁵ and "everything that is of a problematical nature."⁷⁶ Iowa wanted to add to these two categories matters which Missouri considered to be "indisputably decided by the Word of God."⁷⁷ Such

⁷⁴August R. Suelflow, "Remembering Zion," Concordia Journal 1 (October 1975):162-63.

⁷⁵C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort," p. 485. Such open questions included the following: "(a) Did Mary give birth to other children besides Christ, or did she continue to be a virgin? (b) Is the soul transmitted to the child by the parents, through natural propagation as a flame from flame (per traducem, traducianism), or is each soul the result of a new creative act (creationism)? (c) Will the visible world be destroyed on Judgment Day according to its essence and substance, or only according to its characteristics and quality? (d) In which season of the year was the world created? (e) In which year and on which day was Christ born? (f) What will be the size of the bodies of those who died as children when they rise from the dead? (g) Are there according to Gen. 1:6 bodies of water above the firmament? (h) Where is the Paradise in which Enoch and Elijah are now? (i) On which day of creation week were the angels created? (j) What was the sin by which some of the angels fell away from God? Etc." (pp. 485-86).

⁷⁶Ibid., p. 488. Such were the following: "(a) the solutions of academic and secondary questions which admit of improvement without militating against faith; (b) the solution of difficult questions of casuistry and cases where opinions differ; (c) interpretations of difficult passages of Scripture which may not fully reproduce the true sense of the passages in question and yet do not clash with the analogy of faith; (d) technical terms, drawn partly from the field of philosophy, which are used to express certain theological concepts with greater precision, but which, since they have not been prescribed by Scripture, nor necessarily flow from Scripture, cannot be bound absolutely on any man's conscience; (e) presentations of, and proofs for, certain doctrines of faith of which the one may be more accurate and more profound than the other, although neither one may contradict the Word of God; (f) in short, everything that belongs to the tropos Paideias, or the mere method of teachings, etc.," (pp. 488-89).

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 497.

additions were regarded as "syncretistic, unionistic, indifferentistic, and violate the majesty of God."⁷⁸

At the invitation of the Iowa Synod, a colloquy was held November 13-19, 1867, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The differences between the two synods were not resolved and the tensions continued. Sihler's comment reveals the depths of those tensions: "she [Iowa] is and remains a stereotype of Loehe's later false perceptions."⁷⁹

The problems Missouri encountered with Grabau, Loehe, Iowa, and Buffalo may indeed seem to give credence to Robinson's theory that it came here with the wrong spirit--the "spirit of triumphalism."

The term spirit of triumphalism . . . refers to that deep and motivating force, unarticulated, but coloring the life of the Lutheran Church --Missouri Synod through more than 100 years of its history. It is the spirit which looked for the final conquest of all opponents. It is a spirit which required perfect harmony among those who would conquer. It is the spirit of "Manifest Destiny" with spiritual connotations and with a name to distinguish it from the political implications which have come to be associated with "Manifest Destiny."⁸⁰

According to Robinson's theory, Missouri Synod Lutherans "believed it to be their sacred duty to protect the doctrinal heritage and to convert others to their position."⁸¹ This position "allowed no possibility of admitting error or of speaking of open questions in the area of Christian doctrine. The doctrinal system was complete and closed; not subject to change."⁸² Robinson is convinced that the spirit which ran through Mis-

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 494.

⁷⁹W. Sihler, Lebenslauf von W. Sihler, 2 vols. (New York: Lutherischen Verlags-Verein, 1880), 2:219. "Sie ist und bleibt Abklatsch von Löhe's späteren irrigen Anschauen."

⁸⁰Robinson, The Spirit of Triumphalism, p. 18.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 29. ⁸²Ibid., pp. 29-30.

souri "was [his emphasis] the spirit of triumphalism."⁸³

While it may appear to Robinson from his very selective choice of material⁸⁴ that Missouri came at fellowship with an overpowering spirit of conquest, the fact is that Missouri was quite aware of its shortcomings.

We indeed do not herewith wish to imply, that we belong to those who are of the opinion that their understanding requires no development or understanding. It is rather always our earnest endeavor to make progress in the recognition of the truth (in Erkenntniss der Wahrheit fortzuschreiten) and more and more with the help of God to free ourselves from the errors which cling to us.⁸⁵

This admission of 1856 merely affirmed what Missouri and Walther said all along.

Nor do we intend to parade ourselves as persons who alone are Lutherans and who alone possess the truth; but we merely desire to testify that God has done great things for us, and has guided us in the living-knowledge of the above saving truth.⁸⁶

Robinson is so taken in by his theory of triumphalism that he confuses Missouri's attitude on open questions with an attitude that it alone possessed the truth. Missouri argued that the Scriptures themselves, not it, had already closed what others wanted to leave open. Beyond that, it was willing to be instructed to see whether the position it held on a particu-

⁸³Ibid., p. iv.

⁸⁴Robinson is guilty of the type of research (Preface, page v) which comes at research only to find material to support his presuppositions. This biased approach not only enables him to fit presuppositions and conclusions snugly together, but causes him to ignore material which might get in the way of his conclusions, or even cause him to alter them. He also fails to investigate a lot of primary material; in fact, the material he uses is, to a large extent, secondary and post-1900.

⁸⁵C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort der Redaktion," Der Lutheraner 13 (26 August 1856):1.

⁸⁶C. F. W. Walther, "Vorbemerkungen über Ursache, Zweck und Inhalt des Blattes," Der Lutheraner 1 (1 September 1844):1.

lar doctrine was indeed the correct one.

Far from a desire to overwhelm and conquer, Missouri desired to be conquered. It was never its intention to set up an organization controlled by a spiritually-connotated "Manifest Destiny" into which it could draw all men unto itself. It was rather Missouri's desire to become part of one united Lutheran Church in America. The willingness of the Saxon Lutherans to become part of the Missouri Synod⁸⁷ and the willingness of the Missouri Synod to become a state synod of the Synodical Conference indicates just how far Missouri was willing to go in this regard.

It is true that Missouri came at fellowship with a measuring stick. It had its own idea of what was Lutheran and what was not. This measuring stick was fashioned from the background of the Prussian Union, its own in-house turmoil, and its conflicts with the synods and individuals already cited. But it was not the only synod to approach fellowship with a measuring stick. Even the weak General Synod measured the Pennsylvania Ministerium and used some nifty parliamentary moves to drum it out of the General Body when it protested the admission of the Franckean Synod. The Pennsylvania Ministerium, too, used a measuring stick to measure the Franckean Synod and to find it wanting. When the Ohio Synod did not join the General Council "as long as it refused to give a Lutheran answer to questions which it regarded as vital,"⁸⁸ it was measuring the General Council. The very organization of the General Council indicates that it, too, had measured the General Synod and found it to be confessionally

⁸⁷It should be remembered that the Missouri Synod was not just comprised of Saxon Lutherans.

⁸⁸Loy, Story of My Life, p. 304.

lacking. All Lutherans used measuring sticks to measure other Lutherans. The only question was how high or low the bars of fellowship should be set. Missouri just happened to set the bars higher than others, but others set them, too.

There isn't any question that Missouri desired to be in fellowship with other Lutherans. It dedicated itself to this task and worked hard to achieve it. The history of Missouri may well be described as a history of working toward that one Lutheran Church in America.

CHAPTER II

INTERACTION AND FELLOWSHIP WITH OTHER LUTHERANS

The fellowship Missouri sought, and worked to achieve, was with other Lutherans. It did not, as many Lutherans today, seek it with non-Lutheran bodies, which it regarded as sects.¹ This was left to S. S. Schmucker,² who spent his lifetime trying to bring about a Pan-Protestant kind of fellowship. The fact that Missouri did not seek fellowship with non-Lutherans did not mean that it regarded those who belonged to sects as being outside the kingdom of God. Walther made it very clear that the invisible kingdom of God "does not consist solely of those who call themselves Lutheran."³

The Lutheran Church . . . is not limited to those who have borne this name from youth, or assumed it later. We extend our hand to any person who submits without guile, to the entire written Word of God, cherishes it in his heart, and professes before men the true faith in our dear Lord Jesus Christ. We regard such a person as our fellow believer in Christ, a member of our Church and a Lutheran, regardless of what sect he may be concealed in or kept a prisoner.⁴

¹A sect was a church which taught doctrinal errors.

²Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799-1873) was born in Hagerstown, Maryland. Licensed by the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and ordained by the new Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia, he was elected the first president of the Gettysburg Seminary in 1826, where he served until his retirement in 1864. He was by far the most influential member of the General Synod and it owes its origin and survival to him.

³C. F. W. Walther, "Von den Namen 'Lutheraner,'" Der Lutheraner 1 (23 September 1844):5. For trans. see "Why the Name Lutheran," Theological Monthly 1 (August-September 1921):250.

⁴Ibid.

While, in Missouri's view, one could be a Lutheran as a member of a sect, this was possible only as long as those involved in those sects were unaware of doctrinal errors. Once such errors became known, those in sects were obligated to leave them.

Missouri's view on sects was bound up together with its view that the Lutheran Church alone is the true visible church because its doctrines give all glory to God. This view did not originate in self-pride; it occupied this position solely by the grace of God. By all this, it did not say that the visible church did not exist before the advent of the Lutheran Church, but only that it bore the name Lutheran from that time forth.

There were a number of ways through which Missouri sought fellowship. One of the ways was through Der Lutheraner, which originated among the Saxons in 1844. Carl Mauelshagen makes the point that this publication was extremely important because "the cause of confessional Lutheranism seemed almost hopeless previous to the appearance of Der Lutheraner."⁵ Walther, in fact, looking back fifteen years to the appearance of this publication, spoke of several articles on Luther's doctrine of justification of the poor sinner through faith in Jesus Christ as "being the first stone which it contributed toward the re-erection of the fallen walls of Jerusalem."⁶ The sad condition of the Lutheran Church in America gener-

⁵Carl Mauelshagen, American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936), p. 35.

⁶C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort der Redaktion zum sechzehnten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner,'" Der Lutheraner 16 (23 August 1859):1: "da war der erste Stein, den er zum Wiederaufbau der verfallenen Mauern Jerusalems herbeibrug."

ally suggested to Walther and the Saxons that it needed to be rebuilt, and its new publication became its contribution toward its restoration. The purpose of the publication was to bring about "church union." But it was not to be a union like the General Synod,⁷ which was held together only by a name.⁸ Der Lutheraner was to call together those "who are correct in the faith."⁹

The effect of Der Lutheraner on some of the Lutherans who were here was almost immediate. Friedrich Lochner¹⁰ gives the reaction of the five Loehe men¹¹ who left Germany in April of 1845 with instructions to enter church fellowship with all those who adhered to the Lutheran Book of Concord.

We felt ourselves at one with them through Der Lutheraner, then in its second volume, the issues of which we awaited longingly, and we looked up to them with deep respect as pillars of Lutheranism in this land of sects and unionism. Some of their expressions in Der Lutheraner, showing their attitude toward us, gave us courage to make an approach toward a close union.¹²

Another who received and read the pages of Der Lutheraner with great joy

⁷Information on the General Synod was given in Chapter I, pages 19-20.

⁸Lutheran.

⁹Walther wanted to re-establish a confessional Lutheran Church and his "correct in faith" must be understood in the light of what has already been said.

¹⁰Friedrich Johann Carl Lochner (1822-1902) was one of the Loehe men who came to America. He became part of the Ohio Synod. He was in on the organization of the Missouri Synod.

¹¹Friedrich August Craemer, Philipp Jakob Trautmann, John Adam Detzer, C. Romanovsky, and Lochner.

¹²Friedrich Johann Carl Lochner, "Rev. F. Lochner's Report on His First Contacts with the Saxons," trans. R. Ruhland, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 7 (October 1934):78.

was Wilhelm Sihler. He indicated in his memoirs that the first issue of the Lutheraner brought him "great joy,"¹³ and that he didn't hesitate at all to recommend the paper to his congregation and to circulate it among them.¹⁴

The efforts of the Saxons through the pages of the Lutheraner bore fruit. Some did respond. Walther was contacted early in 1844 by Sihler and John Adam Ernst about the possibility of establishing a synod with brethren in the east. Walther wrote back on January 2, 1845.

I hold this to be not only possible but also most desirable, and extremely promising for our common good. In fact I hold it to be unavoidable for conscience' sake, if a union can in any way be attained . . . I, for my person, am prepared to make every possible sacrifice in order to bring about church union. Just for this purpose I dared (in spite of my great lack of the necessary gifts for this) in God's name to send into the world such a leaflet as the Lutheraner is and to present it to the church in America, to do at least my little part to call together those who are correct in faith.¹⁵

Walther's idea of Lutheran fellowship originally was not a new synod (page 32). He hoped to become a part of, not something new. But he also indicates to Sihler that "a Lutheran is heartbroken when he sees how Satan has barred almost all doors."¹⁶ He sighs for fellowship¹⁷ and indicates to

¹³W. Sihler, Lebenslauf von W. Sihler, 2 vols. (New York: Lutherischen Verlags-Verein, 1860), 2:39-40. He says: "Eine grosse Freude im Jahr 1844 war es für mich, als die erste Nummer des 'Lutheraners' in St. Louis erschien" and ". . . es erfüllte mich grosse Freude, als ich die erste Nummer des 'Lutheraners' empfang."

¹⁴Ibid., p. 40. ". . . säunte ich nicht, die Blatt meinen Gemeinden zu empfehlen und in ihnen auszubreiten."

¹⁵C. F. W. Walther, Selected Letters, trans. Roy A. Suelflow, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 90: "To Wm. Sihler" (2 January 1845).

¹⁶Ibid., p. 91.

¹⁷Ibid. "Oh, that it would soon, soon come into existence through Jesus' help!"

Sihler that the Saxon approach to fellowship has undergone change.

Up to now our goal was a thorough reformation in doctrine and practice,¹⁸ but that was what we believed we had to pursue. But we do not want to follow a false spiritual tendency. We see vividly that without an outward uniting of the orthodox Lutheran pastors and their congregations, the unity of the Spirit and thereby the unity of doctrine cannot be preserved, and much less will anyone's talents be used for the common good. I can therefore answer your question¹⁹ by saying that we are working towards a common church government.²⁰

Another way, then, through which the Saxons sought fellowship was by participating with others in the organization of the Missouri Synod. Three meetings were held for this purpose. The first one, which was held in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1845, involved the Loehe people who wanted to separate from the Ohio Synod because it would not retract the words, "Jesus says," as a preface to Christ's words, "Take, eat, this is my body," which they regarded as Reformed. They also wanted to preserve the German language, which they felt was being slighted by the Ohio Synod. The Cleveland gathering sent three men to confer with the Saxons. At this meeting, which was held in St. Louis in May 1846, the constitution for the new synod was drafted by Walther. The proposed draft was studied additionally in Fort Wayne in 1846 and adopted in Chicago in 1847 at the organizational meeting of the Missouri Synod.²¹ It emphasized "the preservation and furthering of the unity of pure confession,"²² and states that strangers can-

¹⁸The General Synod was completely unacceptable.

¹⁹Sihler's question was: "With whom do the Saxon pastors comprise a synod, or are they alone by themselves?"

²⁰Walther, "To Wm. Sihler," p. 90.

²¹The Saxons will now be referred to as the Missouri Synod, of which they are now a part.

²²W. G. Polack and Roy Suelflow, "Our First Synodical Constitution," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 16 (April 1943):4.

not become members of Synod unless they can prove themselves to be thoroughly orthodox in respect to doctrine and life."²³ In so stating the kind of Lutheran Church it would be, the Missouri Synod also indicated the kind of fellowship it would seek.

The main purpose of the synod is just this, to join together in the calling back of straying Lutherans (abgewichenen Lutheraner) to their church and her pure doctrine (reinen Lehre) and unite them under the banner of the never antiquated confessions (nie veraltenden Bekenntnisse).²⁴

It might appear from these statements that Missouri was so inflexible and entrenched in its concept of purity of doctrine and confession-alism that it closed the door on all fellowship. While officially, for the record, it did adopt a confessional position on fellowship, it unofficially had a much more relaxed approach in which it showed great flexibility in its relations with others. Walther so intimates in a letter to Pastor F. W. Steimle that such is the case.

You express concern that our synod is stuck on defense of pure doctrine rather than the exercise of true godliness and the planting of real concern for the welfare of souls. It may appear to you that way if you only see what we do in the area of polemics. But if you would become acquainted with our congregations, you would see that we do not only by God's grace wield the sword but also with heartfelt faithfulness work with the trowel and constantly seek to live in true repentance from a whole heart and also seek to lead to this in all faithfulness and zeal those who are entrusted to us. . . . My dear brother, one must not judge people according to their appearances. Many a person may seem unbending when he speaks up publicly, although in his

²³Ibid., p. 8.

²⁴C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort des Redacteurs zum vierten Jahrgang des Lutheraner," Der Lutheraner 4 (8 September 1847):1: ". . . der Hauptzweck dieser Synode ist vielmehr gerade dieser, gemeinschaftlich dahin zu wirken, dass die abgewichenen Lutheraner wieder zu ihre Kirche und ihrer reinen Lehre zurückzurufen und um Panier ihrer nie altenden Bekenntnisse vereinigt werden."

own prayer chamber and in his own heart he engages in constant fervent spiritual striving and a fervent prayer life.²⁵

The flexibility of Missouri comes through very clearly in the fellowship it practiced with those who were not members of the Missouri Synod. Arthur Repp quite correctly points out that it was involved in prayer fellowship with other Lutherans.

In the early days of the Synod there was little hesitation to pray publicly with other Lutherans who accepted the Lutheran Confessions. Walther and his contemporaries did not regard such practices as unionistic, even though they knew there were points of differences among the various Lutheran bodies.²⁶

It practiced other forms of fellowship, too.²⁷ This, then, became a third way through which Missouri sought fellowship with other Lutherans. It participated in fellowship with them.

Periodicals and journals which deal with the history of the Missouri Synod document case after case of such fellowship. They began with the Saxons and continued after the synod was organized. Lochner, for example, reports that the Saxons did not withdraw the hand of fellowship when they discovered that we²⁸ were unclear on points of doctrine, "because they saw we were honest and upright in our attitude toward the Lord's Word and the church."²⁹ He also mentions almost parenthetically that "we three

²⁵Walther, Selected Letters, p. 113, "To Pastor F. W. T. Steimle."

²⁶Arthur Repp, "Changes in the Missouri Synod," Concordia Theological Monthly 38 (July-August 1967):468.

²⁷Altar and Pulpit Fellowship.

²⁸Sihler, Ernst, and Lochner were the three who were sent to St. Louis by the Cleveland gathering to confer with the Saxons about a new synod.

²⁹Lochner, "Rev. F. Lochner's Report," p. 80.

were asked to preach as a testimony to the unity of faith."³⁰

When Wyneken and Walther went to Germany in 1851, there were serious differences between Loehe and the Missouri Synod over the doctrine of church and ministry. This did not prevent Wyneken from preaching in Neuendettelsau, as Walther notes in a letter to his wife: "Wyneken has returned from Schwabach to Neuendettelsau to preach there tomorrow."³¹ At the Missouri Synod convention in Fort Wayne in 1857, delegates H. C. Schwan, C. J. A. Strasen, and J. P. Beyer preached at the English Lutheran Church, which was associated with either the Ohio Synod or General Synod.³² The free conferences of 1856-1859 included worship. The conference at Fort Wayne, July 14-20, 1859, for example, opened with "Gesang, Vorlesung, und Gebet"³³ and closed with "Gebet und Segen."³⁴ When the colloquy was held with the Buffalo Synod in 1866, each of the sessions began with an opening devotion by the local pastor, Christian Hochstetter, and closed with prayer.³⁵

Walther was unable to attend the Reading Colloquy in 1866, which led to the formation of the General Council in 1867. To do so would have

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Walther, Selected Letters, "To His Wife," p. 23.

³²Research did not uncover which synod.

³³C. F. W. Walther, "Auszeug aus den Verhandlungen der freien evang.-lutherischen Konferenz in Fort Wayne, Ind., vom 14. bis 20. Juli 1859," Der Lutheraner 16 (6 September 1859):10.

³⁴Der Lutheraner 16 (18 October 1859):37.

³⁵C. F. T. Ruhland, Chr. Hochstetter, and M. C. Barthel, "Das Buffaloer Colloquum," Der Lutheraner 23 (15 December 1866):57-58.

required him to remain in the east after the Buffalo Colloquy for an additional week, and "we firmly believe that it was more important that we show our good will rather than hope for any possible wholesome results."³⁶ While he expresses "something like shame"³⁷ that he did not attend, he also expresses "a secret joy" that he did not have "to sit with those smart aleck Iowans,³⁸ those worldly wise mockers."³⁹ Johann Mueller,⁴⁰ however, attended from Missouri and participated in the worship. Prof. M. Loy of the Ohio Synod preached the sermon⁴¹ and Rev. G. F. Krotel of the Pennsylvania Ministerium conducted the liturgical service.⁴² The colloquy closed with a hymn.⁴³

Walther didn't have much heart for the colloquy with Iowa, Novem-

³⁶Walther, Selected Letters, "To Prof. F. A. Schmidt," pp. 121-22.

³⁷Ibid., p. 122.

³⁸President George Grossman and Prof. Gottfried Fritschel were the Iowa Synod representatives ["Convention ev.-lutherischer Synoden zu Reading, Pa., vom 11. bis 13. December 1866," Lehre und Wehre 13 (January 1867)].

³⁹Walther, Selected Letters, "To Prof. F. A. Schmidt," p. 122.

⁴⁰Johann Andreas Friedrich Wilhelm Mueller (1825-1900) was the first graduate of the Log Cabin Seminary and pastor in Pittsburg, Pa.

⁴¹Lehre und Wehre 13 (January 1867):15, "Die Eröffnungspredigt hielt Prof. M. Loy über 1 Cor. 1,10: Die Bedingungen einer christlichen Vereinigung."

⁴²S. E. Ochsenford, Documentary History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia: General Council Publication House, 1912), p. 131.

⁴³Ibid., p. 145. "The most beautiful harmony prevailed on all the fundamental questions of doctrine and confession. With grateful and rejoicing hearts the convention sang: 'Now Thank We All Our God.'"

ber 13-19, 1867, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.⁴⁴ He says that they⁴⁵ are "dishonest, hypocritical, untrustworthy, and basically do not desire a unity of doctrine."⁴⁶ He considered the colloquy as just another attempt by the Iowa Synod to "give themselves the appearance of being lovers of peace."⁴⁷ Yet in spite of these strong feelings, which were molded and inflamed over the long years of controversy of the 1850s and 1860s, Missouri attended the colloquy and again participated in the devotions. Lochner, as host pastor, conducted the liturgical services.⁴⁸

An entry in the manuscript of the faculty minutes of the Lutheran Seminary at Philadelphia reveals intercommunion between members of the Pennsylvania Ministerium and the Missouri Synod. Reporting on the events which led to the withdrawal of the Pennsylvania delegates from the General Synod, faculty secretary G. F. Krotel inserted an entry before the minutes for May 28, 1866, regarding the contact the Pennsylvania delegates had with the Missouri Synod.

⁴⁴C. F. W. Walther, Briefe von C. F. W. Walther (geboren 25. Oktober 1811, gestorben 7. Mai 1887) an seine Freunde, Synodalgenossen und Familienglieder, 2 vols. ed. L. Fuerbringer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915-1916), "To Pastor F. Lochner," 2:112: "Ich muss gestehen, dass ich keine Funktion in kirchlichen Angelegenheiten unlieber übernehme, als die eines Kolloquenten mit diesen Herren."

⁴⁵"Diesen Herren." See above.

⁴⁶Walther, "Lochner," p. 112.

⁴⁷Ibid. ". . . und haben offenbar das Kolloquium angetragen nur, um sich den Schein Friedenliebe zu geben."

⁴⁸J. P. Beyer, Stenographisch aufgezeichnetes Colloquium der Vertreter der Synode von Iowa und der von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St., gehalten vom 13-19 Nov. in Milwaukee, Wis. (Chicago: Gedruckt in der Office der Chicago Union, 1868), p. 1. "Begonnen wurde mit einem liturgischen Gottesdienste, den Pastor F. Lochner, als pastor loci leitete, auf welche Weise auch alle folgenden Sitzungen geöffnet wurden."

On Wednesday, 20 May, the three professors above mentioned⁴⁹ attended the Confessional and Communion Service of Dr. Sihler's Church (of the Missouri Synod) at Fort Wayne and with his cordial consent united with the congregation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, thus, presenting the first practical, fraternal contact of the Mother Synod with the brethren of the Missouri Synod.⁵⁰

Interestingly, this action by Sihler was on the congregational level, as was also the action of Prof. Adolf Biewend⁵¹ who, while a teacher at the Fort Wayne Seminary in 1849-1850, preached every two weeks in the Lutheran Church in Fort Wayne,⁵² which was associated with either the Ohio Synod or the General Synod.⁵³

The formation of the English District of the Missouri Synod can be traced to a conference in Gravelton, Missouri, August 16-20, 1872, which involved Missouri with pastors from the Tennessee, Holston, and Norwegian synods. Delegates from Missouri were C. S. Kleppisch of Belleville, Illinois, and C. F. W. Walther, both of whom were involved in preaching during the course of the meetings. Kleppisch preached in English and Walther in German. Andrew Rader of the Holston Synod also preached in English.⁵⁴

⁴⁹Charles Porterfield Krauth, Charles W. Schaeffer, and Gottlob F. Krotel of the Philadelphia Seminary.

⁵⁰Theodore G. Tappert, "Intercommunion in 1866," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 40 (April 1967):42.

⁵¹Adolph Friedrich Theodor Biewend (1816-1858) came to this country as a result of Wyneken's appeal for pastors for the immigrant German Lutherans. Originally a member of the Pennsylvania Ministerium, he became a teacher at Fort Wayne (1849-1850) and at St. Louis Seminary (1850-1858).

⁵²The action is referred to as being on the congregation level in the sense that it was a personal decision.

⁵³Research did not reveal which synod.

⁵⁴C. F. W. Walther, "Eine freie Conferenz englischer und deutscher Lutheraner in Missouri," Der Lutheraner 28 (1 September 1872):182-83: "Am 12. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, welcher in die Conference=Tage frei, predigte früh in einem für die wenige Deutschen der Gegend angestellten deutschen

S. L. Harkey, a member of the West Pennsylvania Synod of the General Synod, is lavish in his praise of Walther for his cooperation in an unsuccessful attempt to establish English congregations in St. Louis. Harkey's comments⁵⁵ reveal Walther's flexibility and how he, too, could work with other Lutherans. It is interesting to note that Walther arranged for this General Synod pastor to preach in the German-speaking congregations in St. Louis.

Walther's flexibility is evident in his dealings with Grabau.

Gottesdienst Prof. Walther eine Predigt in deutscher Sprache über Apost. 16:20-34. Pastor Kleppisch am Nachmittag in einem englischen Gottesdienst eine englische Predigt über 1 John 1,7. Im Schlussgottesdienst am 20. Aug. predigte Pastor Rader über Ephes. 2,19.20 wieder in englischer Sprache."

⁵⁵S. L. Harkey, "Personal Reflections of C. F. W. Walther," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 17 (October 1944):92-93. "In reference to the formation of English Lutheran Churches, Prof. Walther was far in advance of his brethren of the Missouri Synod. He was at one time very enthusiastic upon the subject. But he found some difficulties in the way, and instead of exercising his usual indomitable perseverance and unflinching determination, in this matter as he did in all other matters, he allowed himself to be halted and turned aside, waiting for a more convenient season. This, however, must here be recorded as a matter of history, that he made the first effort toward the establishment of an English Lutheran Church in St. Louis. His effort was rather feeble, it is true, and failed of success. But it still remains true that he thought of the matter and that it gave him great anxiety. He corresponded with me upon this subject before anyone else did anything, and actually made the attempt to bring it into speedy materialization by calling me to his aid before the General Synod had as yet said or done anything toward entering upon this work. It was with this object in view that I visited St. Louis and preached for the young people of the German churches. Prof. Walther himself arranged all the preliminaries. He rented the hall of the Sanitary Commission for the purpose and paid for it, published the matter in all the German and English papers of the city, had it announced in all the German churches of the synod in St. Louis, took his own carriage and conducted me to see some of the people privately who were supposed to be favorable to the enterprise, and finally accompanied me to the hall, taking me in his own private conveyance to the place of meeting. He went so far as to appoint a meeting on Monday night in one of their school houses for the purpose of definite action in the organization of an English church."

Even though Missouri was not in fellowship with the Buffalo Synod, Walther shared with Hochstetter⁵⁶ the time he stopped over in Buffalo to attend services at Grabau's church. He knelt to receive the absolution Grabau pronounced, even though Grabau, alerted to Walther's presence, used his sermon to continue his attack upon Missouri.⁵⁷ When the Ohio Synod in 1856 urged Missouri and Buffalo to make sincere efforts to establish brotherly relations, Walther received the admonition with sincere gratitude and made an offer of peace to the Buffalo Synod.

If, however, in the event that doctrinal agreement cannot be reached at present, the Buffalo Synod will refrain from anathematizing our doctrine and, as to what has been done on our side in consequence thereof, will let bygones be bygones, and thus accept our offer of reconciliation, we would consider it our sacred duty to maintain frat-

⁵⁶Christian Friedrich Hochstetter (1828-1905) came to the United States in 1853. He served Ohio Synod congregations in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and Toledo, Ohio, before joining the Buffalo Synod in 1857. He was present on the side of the Buffalo Synod at the colloquy in 1866, but joined Missouri in 1867.

⁵⁷Martin Günther. Dr. C. F. W. Walther: Lebensbild (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), p. 97. "Herr Pastor Hochstetter schreibt: Er (Walther) erzählte mir bei der ersten Zusammenkunft im Herbst 1866 Folgendes: Aber er, begleitet von Student Hugo Hanser, nach Rainham, Ontario, reiste, um den dortigen Pastor für eine Arbeit zu gewinnen (in Winter 1855 bis 1866), hielt er sich den Sonntag über in Buffalo auf und liess sich von einem befreundeten Gemeindeglied, Peter Schulz, Morgens in Pastor Grabau's Kirche führen. Kaum hatten die Beiden auf der Emporkirche Platz genommen, so sah man einen Grabau'schen Kirchenvorsteher zu Pastor Grabau in die Sacristei gehen; weshab P. Schulz zu Prof. Walther sagte: 'Sie sind schon bei Pas. Grabau angemeldet.' Pastor Grabau predigte über Joh. 8,46-59. 'Ich wunderte mich,' sagte Walther, 'wie langsam und matt Pastor Grabau zu predigen anfang, als ob er zu schwach sei, die Predigt zu Ende bringen. Mit einem Male aber schrie er: Sind sie schon todt, die welche Steine aufheben gegen die Buffalo-Synode? Sie sind nicht weit von hier, die Erzfeinde und Rottenbeschützer! - Nach dem Schluss dieser Predigt aber,' so erzählte Walther weiter, 'folgte die offenliche Beichte und Absolution. Da kniete Ich mich auch mir den anderen Zuhörer nieder und dachte, während Grabau die Absolution sprach: Nun sieh, mein alter Grabau, jetzt musst du mir doch die Absolution meiner Sünder sprechen, wenn du mich schon für den Rottenbeschützer hältst."

ernal relations, even though our doctrinal differences be not yet removed.⁵⁸

This willingness to enter into fraternal relations while differences in doctrine remained unresolved does not seem to be inconsistent with what could be considered his normal practice. A few years after his offer to enter into fraternal relations with the Buffalo Synod, he was attacked by a Dr. H. Seiss in the Lutheran and Missionary. Seiss asked the question whether the Missouri Synod was ready to condemn all the church fathers who ever taught error in one point or another. Walther's reply sheds additional light on why he could maintain fraternal relations with those with whom he differed.

It is true that anyone who would condemn and exclude from church fellowship all who err in one or the other article of faith, he would be guilty of what Dr. Seiss speaks of in the foregoing. Such zealots would have to condemn practically the whole church since apostolic times, for where is the teacher of the church who has not, in those works of his still extant, taught errors? What great errors do we not find in the writings of a Thomas Aquinas, a Gerson, a Bernard, a Gregory the Great, yes, even in the writings of the church fathers of an earlier and a better day.⁵⁹

Walther's desire for Lutheran union was so strong that he was willing to stay out of discussions leading to it. He knew he was "considered to be contentious"⁶⁰ although he did not see himself that way.

⁵⁸C. F. W. Walther, "Vermischte Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lehre und Wehre 2 (December 1856):380. "Sollte aber vor der Hand zwar eine Einegang in der Lehre aufgegeben und, was in der Vorgangenheit um deswillen von unserer Seite geschen, auf sich beruhen gelassen und so die Hand zur Versöhnung, die wir bieten, angenommen werden: so würden wir uns dazu für heilig verpflichtet ansehen, trotz der noch nicht ausgeglichenen Lehrdifferenz ein brüderliches Verhältniss zwischen uns und denen von der Buffalo-Synode zu wahren."

⁵⁹W. G. Polack, "Walther's Attitude Toward Lutheran Unity and His Part in the First Free Conference," American Lutheran 32 (July 1949):6.

⁶⁰Walther, Briefe, "Letter to Pastor St. Keyl," p. 135: "Man hält mich für streitsüchtig."

If anyone really knew me, he would see that far from being contentious, I rather shun contention and only God's command moves me to remain under arms.⁶¹

This last statement of Walther is significant, because he indicated that he was so often "tired of the battle and am greatly tempted to bury my sword and shield . . . and spend my life . . . at the Bethlehem crib, like Jerome, meditando."⁶² The "Vorwort" to the 1881 Lehre und Wehre indicated that this was not possible.

If we wanted to ask our flesh we would not fight. Moreover if we remained silent in order indeed in all events to maintain peace and unity, so would, so must God remove his hand from us, Hos. 4,6.⁶³

In view of all the above, Walther was very sensitive to the criticism of the Eastern District of the Ohio Synod that Missouri had excluded the Buffalo Synod from the free conferences, and he used strong language to express his feelings. He knew that isolation can only lead to new sects and that true union can never be achieved if Missouri despised outward ties with those who made the same confession before the world, when such union was possible.

Far from remaining aloof from the rest of the Lutheran Church, Missouri interacted with other Lutherans on a personal, congregational,

⁶¹Ibid. ". . . konnte an mir recht, so würde man bald sehen, dass ich viel mehr streutflüchtig bin, und das mich nur Gottes Befehl unter den Waffen zu bleiben bewegt."

⁶²Ibid., pp. 154-55. "Ich bein des Kampfes namenlich oft so müde, dass ich in grosser Versuchung bin, mein Schwert und Schild, wenn es niemand mag, zu vergraben und mein Leben wie Hieronymus an der bethlehemischen Krippe meditando hinzubringen, soviel mir etwa der Herr über Leben und Tod noch gewählen mag."

⁶³Franz Pieper, "Vorwort," Lehre und Wehre 27 (February 1881):43-44. "Wenn wir unser Fleisch fragen wollen, würden wir nicht kämpfen. Schwiegen wir dazu, um ja unter alle Umständen Friede und Einigkeit zu erhalten, so würde, so müsste Gott seine Hand von uns abziehen,, Hos.4,6."

and synodical level in many ways. Numerous examples have already been cited, but the exchange of delegates with the Tennessee may be one of the best examples of how far the Missouri Synod was willing to go in interacting with other Lutherans. The exchange first surfaces at the Thirty-Third Session of the Tennessee Synod, which met at Sullivan County, Tennessee, in 1853.

No. 10 is a letter of Rev. A. Biewend, a member of the Missouri Synod, in which he informs us that he was appointed a delegate to this body, but that, owing to intervening circumstances, he was prevented attending. He also expresses the hope and desire that a more intimate acquaintance may be formed between the two bodies.

Your committee would recommend the following for adoption:

Resolved 1. That we duly appreciate the kind regard of the Missouri Synod, and that we also desire a more intimate acquaintance with them, and that we appoint Rev. J. R. Moser a delegate to the next session of that synod.⁶⁴

Rev. Theodore Brohm⁶⁵ attended the Thirty-Fourth Session of the Tennessee Synod in 1854, which is also noted in the Missouri Proceedings of 1854. The same Proceedings indicate that Missouri desired to establish "heartfelt brotherly Union" with Tennessee.⁶⁶

Delegates were reappointed by the Tennessee Synod in 1855, 1856, 1857, 1858, and 1859. After 1859 such appointments no longer appear in Tennessee Synod Proceedings and evidently the exchange of delegates was discontinued. One can only conjecture as to why the exchange stopped,

⁶⁴Socrates Henkel, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod (New Market, TN: Henkel & Co., Printers and Publishers, 1890), p. 137.

⁶⁵Brohm (1808-1891) was pastor in New York City and was the delegate from New York to the Missouri Synod Convention when he was appointed.

⁶⁶Achter Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.=Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1854 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1876), p. 291.

since there doesn't seem to be any definitive answer for its discontinuation. It may simply be that the Civil War intervened, which caused travel problems, and that after the war the exchange was not reintroduced. That friendly relations continued between the two synods, however, is evident from the 1872 minutes of the Tennessee Synod.

The committee consisting of Revs. S. Henkel and I. Comder, appointed to reply to the communications of Rev. P. C. Henkel and J. R. Moser, of Missouri, to this Synod, submitted the following:

Whereas, We learn from the communications of these brethren, that the prospects for building up the Church in the west are favorable, and that these brethren, in connection with others, have taken preliminary steps for the organization of the evangelical Lutheran Synod of the State of Missouri;⁶⁷ be it, therefore,

- Resolved 1, That we hail with pleasure this information.
2. That their efforts put forth for the organization of a Synod, meet our approbation.
3. That, in order to aid them in publishing the proceedings of their conference and the proposed constitution in connection with their discussion of "Doctrinal Theses selected from the Symbols of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, showing the principal distinction between the Lutheran Church and other ecclesiastical Communions," we request our ministers at once to bring the matter before their respective congregations and secure subscriptions to said work . . .⁶⁸

The implications of this delegate exchange are very important. These were voting delegates, which means that each synod participated in the life and work of the other. Short of an actual declaration of fellowship, this was as close to full fellowship as possible without actually declaring it.

The interaction Missouri had with other Lutherans seemed to be spontaneous and commonplace, rather than sporadic and out of the ordinary;

⁶⁷This evidently refers to the organization of the State Synods in conjunction with the organization of the Synodical Conference, which the Missouri Synod approved at its 1872 Convention. Fünfzehnter Synodal-Bericht der allgemeinen deutschen Evang.=Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1872 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1872), p. 92.

⁶⁸Henkel, Tennessee Synod, p. 195.

the rule rather than the exception. No resolutions were passed permitting it; it was just part of the synod. Missouri had a stake in the Lutheran Church in America and worked hard to expand fellowship even beyond the limited one⁶⁹ it practiced with other Lutherans.

A fourth way through which Missouri sought fellowship was the free conferences of 1856-1859. They were "free" in the sense that pastors, teachers, and others who attended them had no official status, or representation of any kind and came only as private individuals. It was the anonymous appearance of a document from the American sector of the Lutheran Church in America, known as the Definite Synodical Platform, or Recension of the Augsburg Confession, which some credit with triggering these conferences. These "American Lutherans,"⁷⁰ who were led by Samuel Simon Schmucker,⁷¹ head of the Gettysburg Seminary, and Benjamin Kurtz, editor of the Lutheran Observer, wanted "to divest the Lutheran Church of its foreign heritage and make it conform to the average American type of religion."⁷² They hoped to do this by eliminating five alleged errors from the Augsburg Confession: 1. The Approval of the Ceremonies of the Mass; 2. Private Confession and Absolution; 3. Denial of the divine obligation of the Christian Sabbath; 4. Baptismal regeneration; and 5. the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper.

Schmucker, who was the author of the Definite Synodical Platform,

⁶⁹Limited rather than full, complete.

⁷⁰As opposed to "old Lutherans," like the Buffalo and Missouri synods.

⁷¹See footnote 2 for biographical information.

⁷²James Lewis Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relation to the American Church," (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Heidelberg, 1961), p. 51.

is a very interesting figure in the history of the Lutheran Church. He was the most influential member of the General Synod and it owed its organization and survival to him. Not only did he help to organize it, but he also single-handedly rescued it when the Pennsylvania Ministerium pulled out in 1823. He was also the driving force which brought the Gettysburg Seminary into being. Wentz ranks him "as one of the three or four most influential personalities ever produced by the Lutheran Church in America."⁷³ He was more Lutheran in 1823 than many, if not most of his contemporaries, but less Lutheran in 1855 than most.

To understand Schmucker, one needs to understand his goals and objectives for the Lutheran Church in America.

Clearly young Schmucker was primarily concerned about recovering the evangelical character of the Lutheran Church in America as a whole and to that end he believed the confessional subscription ought to be restored by the synods and that the Augsburg Confession in a general way should be the distinguishing mark in the faith of Lutheran ministers. In this way he was thoroughly consistent from first to last, and beyond this he never went.⁷⁴

The key to Schmucker's confessionalism was the words "in a general way." It was always his intention to work the Lutheran Church into the fabric of the American Church. In this he was thoroughly consistent. "Throughout his life Schmucker stood by his early theological position."⁷⁵ The kind of Lutheranism he wanted is spelled out in Fraternal Appeal, which he issued in three editions in 1838, 1839, and 1870. It was a Pan-

⁷³Abdel Ross Wentz, "The Work of Samuel Simon Schmucker," The Lutheran Quarterly 57 (January 1927):61.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 76.

⁷⁵Samuel Simon Schmucker, Fraternal Appeal to the American Lutheran Church, ed. Frederick K. Wentz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 13.

Protestant union, in which the Lutheran Church would be a part.

Schmucker presented his "New Plan of Apostolic Protestant Union" to the General Synod, which appointed a committee to examine the document and report back to the Synod. At the 1839 convention, the committee recommended that the "[General] Synod approve of the several features of the Plan of Union"⁷⁶ and that "this synod recommend said plan to the serious consideration of the several Synods connected with this body, and the Churches at large."⁷⁷

It is important to understand Schmucker's plan of action for the Lutheran Church to understand why the appearance of the Definite Synodical Platform⁷⁸ caused such concern on the part of the Missouri Synod. The Platform wanted to put Walther and Missouri back into the same kind of situation⁷⁹ they had left in Germany. Fortunately the document received only modest support. Only a few small synods⁸⁰ came out in support of it, and the dream Schmucker had of a Lutheran Church more in tune with the American church went to the grave with him.⁸¹

⁷⁶Proceedings of the Tenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, Convened at Chambersburg, Pa., June, 1839 (Gettysburg: H. C. Neinstedt, 1839), p. 19.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸The chief object of this document was to eliminate the influence of confessional Lutheranism. See page 51.

⁷⁹The Prussian Union, which attempted to unify the Lutheran and Reformed churches through a common Agenda.

⁸⁰The Wittenberg Synod, Olive-Branch Synod, and the English Synod of Ohio responded initially [C. F. W. Walther, "Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856," Lehre und Wehre 2 (January 1856):3]. All were associated with the General Synod.

⁸¹Wentz says in his introductory remarks [Samuel Simon Schmucker, Fraternal Appeal to the American Lutheran Churches, ed. Frederick K. Wentz

Walther considered the appearance of the Definite Synodical Platform to be a negative development in the Lutheran Church in America. He said that "it seemed as though a destructive storm was gathering and threatening to strike the Lutheran Church of our new Fatherland."⁸² Lueker and Meyer see the Platform as the "immediate cause"⁸³ and "immediate occasion"⁸⁴ of the free conferences of 1856-1859. It definitely seemed like an appropriate time to call the Lutheran synods together.⁸⁵

Our laborers in the Word have an evident and wholesome influence on the people here and on the total formation of the church, which I say only to the honor of God, who has made something out of nothing. We also seem to be just now in an interesting epoch in the development of our church here, and on this assumption I will issue an invitation in our theological periodical in the first issue for the next year for a general conference in which we would be able to discuss the ways and means to lead to a unification of all Lutherans from the synods here. If this would meet favorable response, I would hope for much success for a healing of our fragmentation, and I see in your coming here a good omen for our present endeavor.⁸⁶

(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965), p. 13]: "Schmucker found himself in an unpopular minority even in his own seminary." This is one of the reasons why he resigned his position in 1864. Nevertheless, he vigorously defended his position [Abdel Ross Wentz, "The Work of Samuel Simon Schmucker," The Lutheran Quarterly 57 (January 1927):58], and continued to defend and promote his theological position until his death in 1873.

⁸²Walther, "Vorwort," p. 3: "da schien über der lutherischen Kirche unseres neuen Vaterlandes ein schweres unheilschwangeres Gewitter."

⁸³E. L. Lueker, "Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859," Concordia Theological Monthly 15 (August 1944):529.

⁸⁴Carl S. Meyer, "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" Concordia Theological Monthly 32 (August 1961):468.

⁸⁵It is not my opinion that the Definite Synodical Platform was the "immediate occasion" in the sense that it caused panic and pushed Walther into calling for the free conferences. Rather they were the occasion in the sense that Walther saw the very limited response ("Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856," p. 3) and the drift of the Lutheran Church toward a more confessional position. This made the time seem ripe for such conferences.

⁸⁶Walther, Selected Letters, "To Prof. Gustavus Seyffarth," p. 145.

The design of the conferences was, therefore, clearly the final realization of one united Lutheran Church in America.

Walther did not want to dictate the terms for the conferences, so he invited people to suggest how the conferences might be conducted. He received a number of responses, some of which he shared in the pages of Lehre und Wehre.

A German Lutheran out of the northern region writes us under date of Feb. 5 as follows: ". . . In regard to this matter I would suggest that the Augsburg Confession be read beforehand and that concerning the articles controversial ones be dealt with as the questions of the day. In this connection we would have a safer basis for our discussion, which each could accept without reservation, than if theses were drawn up which could easily widen the gap or lead to the suspicion of arbitrariness or party interest."⁸⁷

An "A.B." suggested that "participants in the conference should be those who without reservation subscribe to the Book of Concord of 1580."⁸⁸

Walther opposed the suggestion that theses be drawn up in advance of the conference. He also did not want to restrict participation to only those who subscribed to the entire Book of Concord.

There may well be many a genuine Lutheran who is loyal from the heart to the Augsburg Confession and yet does not have the clear knowledge rightly to subscribe to the whole Concordia.⁸⁹

⁸⁷"Antworten auf den im Januarhefte zu einer allgemeinen Lutherischen Conferenz gemachten Vorschlag," Lehre und Wehre 2 (March 1856):88. "In Betreff des Gegenstandes wäre ich dafür, dass die augsburgische Confession vorgelesen würde, und im Anschluss an die betreffenden Artikel die controversen Tagesfragen vorgenommen würden. Auf diese Weise gewinnen wir für unsere Verhandlungen eine sichere Basis, welcher jeder ohne Bedenken annehmen kann, während, wenn Theses aufgestellt werden, wie leicht auf zu Entferntes gerathen, oder in den Verdacht der Willkürlichkeit oder eines Partheiinteresses kommen könnten."

⁸⁸C. F. W. Walther, "Eine Freie Conferenz," Lehre und Wehre 2 (March 1856):85.

⁸⁹Ibid., p. 86.

Such also were "our brethren."⁹⁰ To exclude them "would give the impression of not being willing or able to extend the hand of brotherhood to all upright, honest Lutherans who hold that general confession with us."⁹¹ This attitude of Walther is consistent with the one already cited (pages 39-50), whereby Missouri could practice a fellowship on less than total agreement. It should not be lost on the reader that Walther calls such Lutherans who did not subscribe to the whole Book of Concord "our brethren."

For all of Walther's hopes, however, the desired union did not materialize. Four such conferences were held: Columbus, Ohio, October 1-7, 1856; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 29-November 4, 1857; Cleveland,

⁹⁰ Ibid. The entire context of the quotation is given here to show Walther's attitude both about the Confessions and about those who subscribed only to the Augsburg Confession. "There is no doubt that the person who without reservation subscribes to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession cannot reject one single phrase in the other Confessions, inasmuch as these are nothing else than a further development and apology of that which is contained in the Augustana. Nevertheless, as church conditions have been in the last decades and to some extent still are, there may well be many a genuine Lutheran who is loyal from the heart to the Augsburg Confession, yet does not have the clear knowledge rightly to subscribe to the whole Concordia. Also such Lutherans are, without a doubt, our brethren. For that reason the free general conference should not adopt a basis by which it would give the impression of not being willing or able to extend the hand of brotherhood to all upright, honest Lutherans who hold that general confession with us; nor should they, we feel, despair of the blessing which could easily come if their basis would make room for those Lutherans who, with all firmness for the teachings of our basic Confession, still have scruples concerning the capstone of our confessional structure, the Formula Concordiae. We believe one of the most important duties of the conference would be just this, to remove the uncertainties from the minds of those brethren who still harbor scruples against the consequent unfolding of the doctrine confessed at Augsburg and, by the grace of God, to lead them to the blessed, happy conviction that the other symbols of the church are implicite contained in the Augustana which all accept.

⁹¹ Ibid.

Ohio, August 5-11, 1858; and, Fort Wayne, Indiana, July 14-20, 1859. A fifth conference was scheduled⁹² to begin on June 7, 1860, in Cleveland, Ohio, but it was never held. Lueker credits Walther's absence from the fourth conference and the sickness which prevented him from attending a fifth,⁹³ along with Ohio's reluctance to continue,⁹⁴ with being the reasons why the conferences ended. Fred W. Meuser makes the point that the free conferences drew Ohio and Missouri closer together than ever before,⁹⁵ but that before anything tangible could develop from this friendship, severe conflicts intervened. This explanation would certainly explain Ohio's reluctance to continue the conferences.

Missouri received into its ministerium a pastor who had accused President Lehmann of Ohio of a lax attitude in regard to secret societies. Ohio accepted a pastor who had difficulties in the Missouri Synod. Shortly after the fourth and last of the free conferences was held, antagonism had reached the point where the Lutheran Standard could write: "There are some good Lutherans who would covet no greater honor than to be abused by the Lutheraner. . . . Perhaps it would be as well anyhow for the Missourians to resign the assumed supervisory generalship of all the other Lutheran synods and attend better to their own concerns."⁹⁶

When the free conferences ended, Missouri had already been on the

⁹²Notices were published in Der Lutheraner 16 (3 April 1860):136, and were repeated (1 May 1860):151, and (15 May 1860):158.

⁹³Lueker, "Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859," p. 562.

⁹⁴Ibid., p. 563.

⁹⁵Polack says that "the Ohio Synod with which Missouri had no official fraternal relations actively worked together with Walther in arranging these conferences." W. G. Polack, "Walther Attitude Toward Lutheran Unity and His Part in the First Free Conference," p. 7.

⁹⁶Fred W. Meuser, The Formation of the American Lutheran Church (Columbus: The Wartburg Press, 1958), p. 52. The quotation is from "The Lutheraner - Our Respects," Lutheran Standard 19 (November 11, 1859);3.

American scene for more than a decade.⁹⁷ It seemed to have little to show for its efforts toward fellowship. The situation with Grabau was still tense; Loehe had already been lost to Missouri. Nevertheless, the free conferences were an extremely important contribution to the Lutheran Church in America. Because of geographical locations and difficult modes of travel, a lot of the dialog between synods was carried on through the printed page. Conference tables, where face to face discussions were held, would have clarified a lot of positions. This is why the free conferences were so important, and why the whole of Lutheranism benefited because of them. They enabled individuals to sit across the table, articulate and clarify synodical positions, and eliminate a lot of confusion and misunderstanding.

They helped to strengthen Lutheran confessionalism and in that way served to bring together some of the synods that met in Fort Wayne in 1867 to organize the General Council.⁹⁸

The Missouri Synod, too, benefited greatly from these conferences, since they ultimately helped to pave the way for the organization of the Synodical Conference, which Lueker says "may safely be listed among the fruits of these endeavors."⁹⁹

The General Council¹⁰⁰ was the intermediate step to the Synodical

⁹⁷The Saxon portion for two decades.

⁹⁸Carl S. Meyer, "The Historical Background of 'A Brief Statement,'" p. 468.

⁹⁹Lueker, "Walther and the Free Conferences of 1856-1859," p. 563.

¹⁰⁰The General Council was formed as a result of incidents which occurred within the General Synod. The Pennsylvania Ministerium protested the admission of the Franckean Synod in 1864 and withdrew from the sessions of the General Synod. When the General Synod refused to seat the delegates of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1866, it withdrew. This led to the organization of the General Council at Fort Wayne, Indiana, in 1867.

Conference. Its failure to adopt a strong position on the four points¹⁰¹ led a number of midwestern synods to conclude "that there might be a greater degree of unity among them than there was between them and the General Council."¹⁰² Some¹⁰³ of these did not join the General Council when it organized because of the Council's position; others¹⁰⁴ withdrew later.

Already in November of 1867, Walther received an overture from the Ohio Synod, which he presented to the convention of the Missouri Synod in 1869. Ohio had been interested in the General Council, but did not join because it found it less orthodox than it had hoped. A colloquy with Ohio was held in Columbus, Ohio, March 4-6, 1869.¹⁰⁵ This colloquy led to fraternal relations between the two synods.

The synods recognized each other as orthodox. They agreed to establish harmonious relationships on the local level. They sought to prevent the infiltration of error into either body.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹The four points were: chiliasm, mixed communion, exchange of pulpits with sectarians, and secret or unchurchly societies.

¹⁰²Richard C. Wolf, Documents of Lutheran Unity in America (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1966), p. 180.

¹⁰³Ohio and Norwegian synods.

¹⁰⁴Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota synods.

¹⁰⁵Vierzehnter Synodal-Bericht der allgemeinen deutschen Evang.= Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, abgehalten zu Fort Wayne, Ind. im Jahre 1869 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1869), p. 28. For a translation of this material see "Documents Regarding Church Affiliation and Organic Union in the Lutheran Church in America," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 4 (October 1931); reprinted in Carl S. Meyer, ed., Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 262-64.

¹⁰⁶Meyer, Moving Frontiers, p. 263.

At the same convention of the Missouri Synod in 1869, Walther reported that he had received correspondence from the Wisconsin Synod during the sessions of the Northern District of the Synod in Milwaukee in June of 1868, suggesting that delegates from the two synods meet to work out any disagreements and reach an agreement which would serve as a basis for regulating the friendship between the synods for the future.¹⁰⁷ This correspondence resulted from the Wisconsin Synod's disenchantment with the General Council, which it had joined in 1867, because of the Council's failure to clarify its position on the four points (footnote 101). It withdrew from that body in 1869. The meeting with the Missouri Synod, which was held in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 21-22, 1868, led to an agreement of fraternal relations between the two synods. This agreement included altar and pulpit fellowship, as well as the exchange of synodical delegates between them.¹⁰⁸

In June of 1869 the Synod of Illinois also made overtures to Missouri.¹⁰⁹ Organized in 1846, it was one of two synods¹¹⁰ which went the full cycle of all the major general bodies. It started out in the General Synod (1848) and withdrew to join the General Council (1869), only to withdraw again in 1871 over the issue of the four points. A colloquy, which resulted in fraternal relations, was held with Missouri August 4-5,

¹⁰⁷Vierzehnter Synodal-Bericht, p. 28.

¹⁰⁸Richard G. Wolf, Documents of Lutheran Unity in America, p. 181.

¹⁰⁹Vierzehnter Synodal-Bericht, p. 29.

¹¹⁰The Minnesota Synod was the other. It was organized in 1860 and joined the General Synod in 1864. It withdrew from that body to join the General Council in 1867. When the General Council did not satisfy it with regard to the four points, it withdrew in 1871.

1869, in St. Louis.

The stage was now set for the creation of the third major grouping¹¹¹ of synods, which would be "Lutheran in doctrine and practice."¹¹² Thus the Synodical Conference became a fifth way through which Missouri sought fellowship with other Lutherans. Representatives from the Missouri, Norwegian, Ohio, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois synods met January 11-13, 1871, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to lay the groundwork for the constituting convention of the Synodical Conference, which was held July 10-16, 1872, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Its confessional character was stated in Article II of its constitution.

The Synodical Conference accepts the canonical writings of the Old and New Testaments as God's Word and accepts the Confession of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of 1580, called the "Concordia," as its own.¹¹³

The organization of the Synodical Conference was not to be an end in itself. One of its objectives, which is stated in Article III, was to work for "the union of all Lutheran synods in America in an orthodox American Lutheran Church."¹¹⁴ This coincided with Walther's own personal ob-

¹¹¹The General Synod, the General Council, and the Synodical Conference. A fourth grouping, very small, was created in 1863 when four southern synods (South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, and Southwestern Virginia) withdrew from the General Synod because of the Civil War and formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Confederate States of America.

¹¹²C. F. W. Walther, "Synodalconferenz," Der Lutheraner 28 (1 December 1872):36: ". . . die lutherisch in Lehre und Praxis sein will."

¹¹³Fünftehnter Synodal-Bericht, p. 90.

¹¹⁴Ibid. "Vereinigung aller lutherischen Synoden Amerika's zu Einer rechtgläubigen amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche." This objective, which Walther shared with the other synods of the Synodical Conference, is in direct contrast to the one Samuel Simon Schmucker had (p. 52), namely, the union of the Lutheran Church in a Pan-Protestant American Church.

jective, which he labored all his life to achieve.

Thus the picture seemed bright in 1872, as Missouri could list as one of its blessings "the brotherly harmony and cooperation of four like-minded synods."¹¹⁵ The Conference was especially gratifying to Walther, which is evident from his correspondence with the president of the Wisconsin Synod in 1871. He felt that "if the Synodical Conference could be organized on a firm basis, then he would consider the last great assignment of his life completed."¹¹⁶

While the Conference was a confederation of synods, not a merger, it was Walther's hope that it could be reconstructed into state synods.¹¹⁷ Congregations in each state would organize into state synods, whose boundaries would be the same as those of the state. The Synodical Conference would then be composed of these state synods. Because the Wisconsin Synod feared it would be swallowed up by the larger Missouri Synod and lose its own identity, however, the plan did not materialize.¹¹⁸ A second plan

¹¹⁵Fünftehnten Synodal-Bericht, p. 45: "Brüderliche Harmonie und Zusammenwirken mit vier gleichgesinnten lutherischen Synoden." The Minnesota Synod does not seem to be included in this statement; thus, the reference to four synods.

¹¹⁶Roy A. Suelflow, "The History of the Missouri Synod During the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence," (Th.D. dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1946), p. 41. President Johann Heinrich Sieker wrote Walther on July 5, 1871, and Walther answered on July 13, 1871. Both letters are on file at the Concordia Historical Institute in St. Louis, Mo.

¹¹⁷When the plan for state synods was presented to the delegates of the Missouri Synod in the 1872 convention, the question was merely asked whether, for example, the Missouri Synod's churches in Ohio would become part of the Ohio Synod. When the question was answered affirmatively, the plan was adopted (Fünftehnter Synodal-Bericht, p. 92).

¹¹⁸Erwin E. Kowalke, You and Your Synod (Milwaukee: The Northwestern Publishing House, 1972), p. 22. "The Synodical Conference had hardly been organized when, in 1875, it was proposed that each state form a Synod

called for the state synods to organize into three larger synods, East, Northwest, and Southwest, but nothing came of it. Missouri's willingness to participate in those plans and give up its own identity showed how much it wanted the one Lutheran Church and the measures it was willing to take to achieve it.

So it was, then, that in 1872 the Missouri Synod was finally in an official relationship with other Lutheran synods through the Synodical Conference. This relationship came about thirty-three years after the arrival of the Saxons in 1839 and twenty-five years after the organization of the Missouri Synod. Throughout those years great effort was put forth to achieve Lutheran union without compromising principles for fellowship which it considered to be consistent with the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions. While it remained firm in its position on fellowship, it was flexible enough to fellowship with other Lutherans generally, and with those Lutheran synods particularly who, with it, formed the Synodical Conference. The bottom line of all of its fellowship activity was that it finally belonged together with other Lutheran synods, which is what it wanted, and worked to achieve, from the very beginning.

within the Conference. According to that plan the Missouri Synod congregations and all the Wisconsin Synod congregations in Wisconsin would form one single Synod, whose boundaries would be the boundaries of the state. This arrangement was to be applied also in the other states. The Wisconsin Synod opposed the plan, not because it objected in principle to the idea of state synods, but because it feared, with reason, that under this plan it would lose its identity and disappear from the scene, swallowed up by the larger Missouri Synod."

CHAPTER III

CONTROVERSY AND NEW DIRECTION

Following the formation of the Synodical Conference, Missouri's fellowship activities with those outside the Conference diminished. Missouri still desired the one orthodox Lutheran Church in America, as did the other members of the Conference,¹ but the climate was now different. For one thing, Missouri agreed by its membership in the Conference not to enter into any official church relations with other church bodies bilaterally, without the agreement of the other Conference members.² Then, too, the parameters for fellowship were fairly well established by this time (1872), so that there was not the feverish kind of fellowship zeal of an earlier and more confessionally unsettled day. It is true that there were still irons in the fire and that fellowship activity was still going on as, for example, the kind of activity that would finally lead to the United Lutheran Church in 1918. These, however, were more or less twigs from the same branch which together were falling into place. The General Synod, the General Council, and the United Synod of the South had a common

¹The Synodical Conference had as one of its objectives the one orthodox Lutheran Church in America (Chapter II, p. 61).

²Fünfzehnter Synodal-Bericht der allgemeinen deutschen Evang.=Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten vom Jahre 1872 (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und anderen Staaten, 1872), p. 90. ". . . ohne Zustimmung sämtlicher in der Synodalconferenz vertretenen Synoden kann keine derselben kirchenrechtliche Verbindungen mit anderen kirchlichen Körpern eingehen.

affinity. All were together at one time. The Civil War separated the General Synod and the United Synod of the South and the admission of the Franckean Synod into the General Synod led to the formation of the General Council. As the General Synod and the United Synod of the South grew closer together and the General Synod became in tune with the confession of the General Council, the barriers which separated them were removed.

The fellowship Missouri enjoyed in the Synodical Conference was to be short-lived, however, and new divisions were to spring from the fallout. In fact, unknown to those who organized it, the storm clouds were already beginning to form which would strike the whole of Lutheranism and splinter the Synodical Conference. The storm was the controversy on election, which was to become the single, most disruptive factor in the history of the Lutheran Church in America. Missouri was involved in controversy from 1847 on,³ but never in the magnitude of the election controversy. For sheer disaster, it was to rival the controversy which disrupted the General Synod by the withdrawal of the Pennsylvania Ministerium in 1866, and even surpass the disruptive effects of Schmucker's attempt to overthrow the Augsburg Confession in 1855.

Certainly the long and bitter controversy on predestination did more to split up Lutheranism in America than all the issues raised in an earlier generation by the ill-fated "American Lutheranism."⁴

Abdel Wentz calls the earlier Missouri debates with Iowa, Buffalo, and others "merely skirmishes," but the predestination controversy he la-

³The two major controversies were with the Buffalo Synod up to 1866 and with the Iowa Synod throughout the 1850s and 1860s.

⁴Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), p. 212. See the same quote in the revised edition on p. 205.

bels "a raging controversy."⁵ William J. Schmelder says that the controversy "determined the divisions within American Lutheranism."⁶ While the actual controversy was carried on bitterly for only a few years,⁷ its effects continued for decades. Those most intimately involved in the controversy from Missouri were C. F. W. Walther, Franz August Pieper,⁸ and Karl Stoeckhardt.⁹ They were actively opposed by Prof. M. Loy, Friedrich A. Schmidt,¹⁰ and Frederich W. Stellhorn.¹¹ These were the most vocal, but there were others, too.

The origin of the controversy predates the organization of the Synodical Conference. An essay by J. A. Huegli,¹² entitled "The Doctrine

⁵Ibid.

⁶William J. Schmelder, "The Predestination Controversy: Review and Reflection," Concordia Journal 1 (January 1975):27.

⁷The appearance of Altes und Neues, which was published by Schmidt in 1880, is used as the beginning point of the controversy. While it was smoldering before this time, it broke loose in all its fury when the controversy went public.

⁸Franz August Otto Pieper (1852-1931) was a professor at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, from 1878-1931, serving as president of that institution from 1887-1931. He was president of the synod from 1899-1911.

⁹Karl Georg Stoeckhardt (1842-1913) began to teach exegesis at the St. Louis Seminary in 1878. He became a part-time professor in 1881 and a full professor in 1887.

¹⁰Friedrich August Schmidt (1837-1928) was an 1857 graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. He held the Norwegian Chair at St. Louis from 1872-1876, and later became a faculty member of the Luther Seminary at Madison, Wisconsin.

¹¹Frederich William Stellhorn (1841-1919) was a professor at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind., from 1874-1881. Following the predestination controversy, he went to Capital University, Columbus, Ohio, where he served as professor from 1881-1919. From 1894-1900 he served as president of Capital University.

¹²Johann Adam Huegli (1831-1904) held pastorates in Illinois and Michigan. He helped found the Lutheran School for the Deaf in Detroit and

of Good Works in Respect to the Doctrine of Free Will, of Election, and Justification," which he delivered at the 1868-1871 conventions of the Northern District of the Missouri Synod, triggered the controversy, in so far as it did not escape the watchful eye of the Fritschel brothers of the Iowa Synod and was attacked by them. The attack had a snowballing effect and grew bigger, as it involved more and more people. Loy makes the interesting point that some strange views on election were published by some Missouri Synod pastors¹³ even before the formation of the Synodical Conference, but indicates that these were not disruptive, as long as they were private views, and did not appear in the official organs of the synod. He blames Walther for the controversy.¹⁴

The controversy took on all-devisive proportions when, at the Western District Convention of the Missouri Synod in 1877, an essay which Walther had been delivering for a number of conventions, entitled "The Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God," dealt with the subject of conversion. In his presentation, Walther said:

Following the lead of Luther, we have asserted that it is God alone who prepares man for salvation and finally brings him to salvation; that the free will of man is not active in this; that man is undeserving of the gift of salvation from God, and he does nothing for which

served as the president of the Northern District of the Missouri Synod from 1872-1875.

¹³ Obviously a reference to Huegli, among others.

¹⁴ Prof. M. Loy, Story of My Life (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1905), p. 313. "The troubles that came were of a doctrinal sort. Even before the formation of the Conference, some views of predestination had been published by Missourian pastors which had a Calvinistic taint. But this was not in their official organs. But in 1877, Dr. Walther began to advocate a theory which excited doubt and suspicion. It was a confused discussion of a different subject, and little notice had been taken of it until it was made the subject of inquiries among the Missourians themselves.

our good God accepts him into heaven; that from eternity God sees nothing in man whereby He is induced to assert: I foresee that this man will be thus and so, and therefore I will especially choose him.¹⁵

The doctrine of conversion intensified the controversy, which here-to-fore had been carried on in print between Missouri and Iowa, and which now spilled over into the Synodical Conference. It was to reshape Missouri's fellowship practices and determine its approach to fellowship for generations to come.

The controversy widened beyond the "print war" between Missouri and Iowa when Schmidt attacked Walther. The Fritschel brothers had called Missouri's position on election "a great insult to the Lutheran Church,"¹⁶ labeling it calvinistic. Schmidt picked up on this charge and called Missouri crypto-calvinists. Unfortunately, he made the charge in print. Walther personally felt that Schmidt had not followed the procedures outlined in Matthew 18. He was also stung by his charge of crypto-calvinism.¹⁷

Controversies usually gave birth to new periodicals; the election controversy was no exception. Out of it came Altes und Neues, which was published by Schmidt in 1880 to serve as a warning device against the crypto-calvinism he found expressed in the Synodical Report of the Western District in 1877, and the Columbus Theological Magazine, which Prof. M.

¹⁵C. F. W. Walther, Convention Essays, trans. August R. Suelflow, Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), p. 37: "Western District Convention, 1873."

¹⁶"Zur Lehre von der Prädestination von Prof. Gottlieb Fritschel," Theologische Monatshefte 5 (Januar 1872), herausgegeben von Pastor G. R. Probst. (Allentown: In selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1872), p. 29.

¹⁷C. F. W. Walther, "Letter to Rev. G. A. Barth" (May 9, 1880), trans. Carl S. Meyer, Letters of C. F. W. Walther: A Selection (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 133-34.

Loy of the Ohio Synod frankly admitted was the child of the new controversy.¹⁸

Almost immediately the controversy raged out of hand. It not only changed the complexion of the whole of Lutheranism, but divided the Synodical Conference. Walther prepared thirteen theses on the doctrine of election,¹⁹ which the Missouri Synod officially adopted in Fort Wayne, Indiana, May 11-21, 1881. The convention was significant both for its strong show of solidarity behind Walther²⁰ and for the way it dealt with those who dissented from the majority position. It showed that Missouri could be loving, brotherly, and patient with those who disagreed with it.²¹

The question of how to deal with the dissenting brethren came up at the convention. Because it was not its desire to victimize consciences, it decided to deal patiently with them in the hope that they would be led to see and to accept the majority position. Unity was the goal, not factions; but this unity should be realized through brotherly, loving means.²² The dissenters should not be cast aside for the sake of theological uniformity. This action is consistent with its willingness on other

¹⁸Prof. M. Loy, "The Burning Question," Columbus Theological Magazine 1 (February 1881):1: "The COLUMBUS THEOLOGICAL MAGAZINE starts upon its mission in troublous times. To the circumstances which make the trouble, it, in a large measure, owes its existence."

¹⁹The thirteen theses may be found in Lutheran Cyclopedia, ed. E. L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954; 2nd ed., 1975). pp. 766-67.

²⁰There were six negative votes.

²¹It was Jack Treon Robinson's view that the Missouri Synod could not tolerate deviation from its official position. See Chapter I, p. 25.

²²Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht der allgemeinen deutschen Evang.=Luth. Synode, abgehalten zu Fort Wayne von 11ten bis 21sten Mai, 1881 (St. Louis: Druckerei des "Lutherischen Concordia Verlags," 1881), pp. 35-36.

occasions²³ to maintain fraternal relations with those who disagreed with it. While it took stronger action against members of the Synodical Conference with its resolution on prayer fellowship in 1881, it was not due to theological unreasonableness but to the charges of calvinism which were made against it.

Once Schmidt attacked Missouri, the die was cast theologically. Once charges appeared in print, they needed to be answered. Charges gave birth to counter-charges; accusations to defense against accusations. It is sad that the controversy was allowed to progress to the point of disrupting the gains already made in an earlier day. It is even more unfortunate because those who fought one another were not only Synodical Conference brothers, but brothers who could also claim the same theological affiliation.²⁴

Walther's position on election has already been briefly given (pages 67-68).²⁵ The controversy centered in the phrase "in view of faith," which Walther and Missouri rejected, but which Loy, Schmidt, and

²³The reference is to the Buffalo Synod and to Wilhelm Loehe.

²⁴Walther, Stelhorn, Schmidt, Stoeckhardt, and Pieper were all members of the Missouri Synod.

²⁵Walther's position is stated in The Controversy Concerning Predestination, That is, a plain, trustworthy advice for pious Christians that would like to know whose doctrine in the present controversy concerning predestination is Lutheran, and whose is not, trans Aug. Crull (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1881). See also William J. Schmelder, "The Predestination Controversy: Review and Reflection," Concordia Journal 1 (January 1975):21-33. For the position of those who held to the "in view of faith" position, see F. W. Stelhorn, Worum handelt es sich eigentlich in dem gegenwartigen Lehrstreit uber die Gnadenwahl (Columbus: Ohio Synod Druckerei: J. L. Trauger, Agent, 1881), found in translated form in C. H. L. Schuette, Pamphlets Predestination (Columbus: J. L. Trauger, Agent, Printer, 1881); M. Loy, "The Burning Question," "Missouri Retractions," Columbus Theological Magazine 1 (February 1881) and Story of My Life.

Stellhorn accepted. Walther acknowledged that God's foreknowledge extended to all creatures, but said that His eternal election pertained only to the children of God who had been elected to life, even before the foundations of the world were laid.²⁶ This was his first principal. His second principal was that God's eternal election not only foresees and foreknows the salvation of the elect, but is the cause which makes it possible through His gracious will and good pleasure in Christ Jesus.²⁷

The two principle sentences, which we have quoted from the Formula of Concord, like two strict wardens stand before the entrance of the doctrine concerning predestination and admit no one that seeks to put a different construction upon the doctrine.²⁸

Loy's position, on the other hand, is representative of those who favored eternal predestination "in view of the faith" which God foresaw.

Believers are elected to sonship and salvation; but as God knew from eternity who would be believers, He from eternity elected them in foresight of their faith; as it is written, "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son."²⁹

Loy called "foreknowledge the eye of election, without which it would be blind."³⁰

Walther summed up the controverted point, as he and Missouri saw it, in the following way:

It consists simply in the following twofold question: 1st, whether God from eternity, before the foundations of the world were laid, out of pure mercy and only for the sake of the most holy merit of Christ, elected and ordained the chosen children of God to salvation, and whatever pertains to it, consequently also to faith, repentance and conversion; - 2nd, whether in His election God took into consideration anything good in man, namely the foreseen conduct of man, the foreseen

²⁶Walther, The Controversy Concerning Predestination, pp. 6-7.

²⁷Ibid., p. 6. ²⁸Ibid., p. 12.

²⁹Loy, "The Burning Question," p. 6.

³⁰Walther, The Controversy Concerning Predestination, p. 4.

non-resistance, and the foreseen persevering faith, and thus elected certain persons to salvation in consideration of, with respect to, on account of, or in consequence of their conduct, their non-resistance, and their faith. The first of these questions we affirm, while our opponents deny it, but the second question we deny, while our opponents affirm it.³¹

He goes on to say that Missouri's opponents try to support their doctrine "by quoting private writings of the fathers of the church, published subsequent to the Formula of Concord,"³² which he finds unacceptable, since in private writings a church father may fall into error. It is to the public confession which the church must look to support its doctrine, since the public confessions record for all time what the church believes, teaches, and confesses.³³ Loy did not find that the Formula supported Missouri at all³⁴ and called its position a "new theory,"³⁵ which departed from Lutheran teaching and introduced into it "Calvinistic elements."³⁶ Not only did Loy feel that the Formula was a poor witness to Walther's position, but that this "new theory," "so far as history exhibits the facts, virtually never had any Lutheran Confessors."³⁷

Two elements of note occurred during the controversy. One is that Walther partially retracted some of the language he had used and apologized for some of the remarks which may have been personal and directed at individuals; however, this retraction did not extend to any of his views on election. Loy regarded these retractions as only complicating the issue, because they made more dense "the mist hanging around the matter."³⁸

³¹Ibid., p. 5. ³²Ibid. ³³Ibid., p. 6.

³⁴Loy, "The Burning Question," p. 4.

³⁵Ibid. ³⁶Ibid., p. 25. ³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Loy, "Missouri Retractions," p. 31.

Those who look at mere words may be reconciled, but the error, not merely the words in which it is couched, is what offended those who stand in awe of God's Word. And that error is not abandoned. It stands out as boldly after the retraction as before.³⁹

Loy's comment not only shows the degree to which the dispute had grown, but also tells us something about the participants. "The concern in the controversy was about being faithful to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions."⁴⁰ Both sides claimed to have both on their side.

The other noteworthy event is that Walther wanted to end the controversy both before and after the attack by Schmidt in Altes und Neues in 1881. Two of his letters show his desire to bring matters to an amicable conclusion. One addressed to Rev. J. A. Ottenson on April 12, 1879 speaks of Walther's desire to meet personally with Schmidt, preferably in St. Louis, where "we could confer as long as is necessary in all quietness without causing any sensation and without any disturbance;"⁴¹ however, Walther states that he is willing to go any place for such a meeting. His hope was reconciliation.

Perhaps God will give us grace so that we may be in fraternal agreement once more, as we were before. . . . For that matter I am ready for a conference at any time that suits you . . .⁴²

Walther's second letter, directed to Pastor J. G. Sauer on March 23, 1881, expressed the hope that Frederick William Stellhorn might serve as mediator between himself and Prof. Loy of the Ohio Synod. Stellhorn, who was married to Walther's niece, was a professor at Fort Wayne, Indiana.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 30-31.

⁴⁰Schmelder, "The Predestination Controversy," p. 22.

⁴¹Walther, Letters, "To the Rev. J. A. Ottenson," p. 127.

⁴²Ibid.

He had sided with Loy and Schmidt and had attacked Walther in the February 1881 issue of the Columbus Theological Magazine. Even though the attack predated his letter, Walther still hoped to use him as an emissary.

Oh, how I would rejoice and how I would thank God on my knees, if Professor Stelhorn would rather assume the office of a mediator and if God would bless his mediation so that Prof. Loy, who opened his attack in such an intransigent manner, would again pull himself in and yield to the possibility of a reconciliation.⁴³

Walther lamented the fact that "Professor Loy has attacked us with such a lack of restraint,"⁴⁴ and said that this "compelled Missouri to counter more forcefully,"⁴⁵ although he still hoped to avoid a permanent schism, which could not be healed.⁴⁶ The use of the word "intransigent" to describe Loy's attack seems to suggest that Walther was willing to do more than Loy, and that his intransigence stood in the way of reconciliation. The choice of the word "intransigent" may also have some bearing on the material which follows and whether personal factors entered the controversy and got in the way of any kind of settlement.

We can only speculate as to what the outcome of such meetings might have been, since they were not held. It seems reasonable to assume that Walther would have dealt with Schmidt and Loy in the same way he offered to deal with Grabau and the Buffalo Synod in an earlier day.

If, however, in the event that doctrinal agreement cannot be reached at present, (they)⁴⁷ will refrain from anathematizing our doctrine and, as to what has been done on our side in consequence thereof, will let bygones be bygones, and thus accept our offer of reconciliation,

⁴³G. F. W. Walther, Selected Letters, trans. Roy A. Suelflow, Selected Writings of G. F. W. Walther Series, ed. August R. Suelflow, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), pp. 141-42: "To Pastor J. G. Sauer."

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 142. ⁴⁵Ibid. ⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Loy and Schmidt.

we would consider it our sacred duty to maintain fraternal relations, even though our doctrinal differences be not yet removed.⁴⁸

This would seem to have been the logical consequence of the unheld meetings, and the controversy, had Loy and Schmidt accepted, would have ended there. The shape of the Lutheran Church, both then and now, would then have been different.

Two questions emerge from the controversy. The one has to do with Schmidt and whether his attack on Walther was purely for confessional reasons, or whether there were personal factors involved in it. If Missouri's doctrine of predestination was already shared by Huegli in 1868 (Chapter III, pages 66-67), why did Schmidt wait so long to attack it, especially since Walther was already involved in the doctrine of predestination against the Fritschel brothers of the Iowa Synod?

C. F. Hochstetter sees a direct relation between a personal pique Schmidt had against Walther and his attack on Walther's doctrine of predestination. He calls attention to a postcard Schmidt wrote on May 7, 1879 to District President S _____ W _____, a member of the election committee, expressing interest in a Saint Louis professorship. It was Schmidt's understanding that he would be recommended for a call to Columbus, which he would find hard to refuse. He did not want Missouri to withhold a call to him out of consideration for the Norwegian Synod, with the result that he would end up at Columbus.⁴⁹ Hochstetter maintained

⁴⁸C. F. W. Walther, "Vermischte Kirchliche Nachrichten," Lehre und Wehre 2 (December 1856):380. See Chapter II, pp. 46-47 for the full context of this statement. It came in response to the Ohio Synod's desire for fraternal relations between the Buffalo and Missouri synods.

⁴⁹Chr. Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode und ihrer Lehrkämpfe von der Sächsischen Auswanderung im

that Schmidt had already read the Western District Proceedings of 1877 and had not protested with a single word.⁵⁰ He also said it was only later, when he felt that he had been slighted by Walther, that he attacked him and called his doctrine of predestination "cryptocalvinism."⁵¹ The call to the English Chair Schmidt wanted was given to Prof. M. Loy of the Ohio Synod.⁵² When he declined, C. H. R. Lange⁵³ was called.⁵⁴

The point Hochstetter seems to make is that for a professorship Schmidt would have remained silent. He did admit that he had been disturbed by the fact that he was not considered eligible for the candidacy for the English Chair at Saint Louis and attributed it to the fact that he disagreed with Walther on the question of usury,⁵⁵ but it seems unlikely that he would devote the remainder of his life (1879-1928) in pursuit of a personal vendetta. Hochstetter, of course, was a biased participant in

Jahre 1838 an bis zum Jahre 1884 (Dresden: Verlag von Heinrich J. Naumann, 1885), pp. 354-55.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 355. "Er protestierte aber damals noch mit keinem Worte gegen diesen Synodalbericht."

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Siebzehnter Synodal-Bericht der allgemeinen deutschen Evang.=Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, abgehalten zu St. Louis in Jahre 1878 (St. Louis: Druckerei der "Lutherischen Concordia-Verlags," 1878), p. 20.

⁵³Carl Heinrich Rudolf Lange (1825-1892), a graduate of the Seminary at Perry County, Mo., taught at Concordia Seminary in 1858 and at Fort Wayne, Ind. in 1861. He served as professor of theology and philosophy until his death in 1892.

⁵⁴Schmelder, "The Predestination Controversy," p. 23.

⁵⁵Roy Arthur Suelflow, "The History of the Missouri Synod During the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence" (Doctoral dissertation, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 1946), p. 118. From Altes und Neues, Vol. 2, p. 104.

the controversy and the case he made may be more circumstantial than substantive, and it may be only coincidental that the circumstances surrounding the professorship at Saint Louis, whatever they may have been, occurred within the time frame of the predestination controversy. Nevertheless the question of Schmidt's feelings needs to be raised, especially in the light of his bitter attitude toward Missouri and the extent to which he carried on the controversy.⁵⁶ Hochstetter said that he "had become the bitterest enemy of the Missouri Synod,"⁵⁷ and that he wanted to see it smashed to smithereens.⁵⁸

The other question which needs to be raised is whether Schmidt and Loy would have reacted as vigorously if someone besides Walther, or a synod other than Missouri, had taken Walther's position within the Synodical Conference and defended it at a Synodical Convention, as Walther had done at the Western District Convention of the Missouri Synod. The Ohio Synod reacted very decisively against the General Council when it failed to clarify its position on the four points (Chapter II, page 60). Did the reaction against Walther stem from the same desire for confessional integrity, or was the reaction also, or even solely, against Walther? Loy described the whole issue as being of a doctrinal nature. He said that it seemed improbable to him that a man like Walther would be caught up in the

⁵⁶He broke away from the Norwegian Synod to form the Anti-Missourian Brotherhood.

⁵⁷Chr. Hochstetter, Die Geschichte der Evangelisch-lutherischen Missouri-Synode, p. 354. ". . . der bittereste Feind der Missourisynode geworden."

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 358. "Schmidt hatte auch schon in seinem Oppositionsblatt ausgerufen: Lieber möge der Koloss (colossus) der Missourisynode in tausend Stücke gehen."

"snare of calvinism"⁵⁹ and that there must be some mistake about the controversy. He indicated that he waited for a long time before speaking out in the hope that "Missouri would yet retrieve its honored Lutheran Character,"⁶⁰ and only accused them of "calvinistic opinions"⁶¹ when it became obvious that their "offensive statements were not slips of their tongues and pens, but were expressions of false doctrine."⁶² Loy also said that the Missourians were not the "darlings"⁶³ of the Synodical Conference, and he had some very critical things to say about Walther.⁶⁴ It is interest-

⁵⁹Loy, Story of My Life, p. 370.

⁶⁰Ibid. ⁶¹Ibid. ⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid., p. 355. "The Missourians were conscious of their superiority, and some were manifestly proud of it. Among them were not lacking weak brethren who manifested this in ways bordering on insolence, as though they would say, We are the people, but who are you?"

"Some of our ministers do not like the supercilious ways of some of the Missourians, and were not as cordial as might be wished even with some of the Missourian leaders. The Wisconsin and Minnesota men were even less enthusiastic in the admiration of Missourians, and occasionally something akin to apathy was shown towards some of them, who sometimes conducted themselves as if they were not adverse to being regarded as the princes of the court and the others their retinue."

⁶⁴Ibid. "He was not accustomed to any dissent from his teaching among his own people, and was never inclined to yield a point when any of them ventured publicly to express a doubt, which as a rule was done, if done at all, in the way of a humble request" (p. 314).

"I do not think that he was of an arrogant and domineering disposition, but his experience was such that his demeanor not unseldom assumed that appearance. He was accustomed to have his doctrinal statements accepted as indisputably correct and his judgment assented to as decisive and final. He could brook no public contradiction when he had spoken. He had become a dictator by habit, without claiming to be this or to have any authority for it. This had the effect of inducing men to be silent, when they should have spoken, preferring not to express their dissent when this might be followed by unpleasant situations" (pp. 355-56).

"To my astonishment Dr. Walther was seriously offended at my remarking, as an excuse for what might seem presumption on my part, the fact that he was not infallible. He took it as an insinuation that he nursed the delusion of his own infallibility. He declined to take any further part in the discussion of the topic and finally withdrew the part of his paper which had been the subject of my attack, while the theses itself was

ing to compare the way in which Loy perceived Walther and the way Walther perceived himself. He called himself only an "emergency church worker."⁶⁵ In a land of church workers, he said that he could see himself as being helpful, but that he could accept the title of theologian only with some embarrassment and, even then, would be "at the lowest place among them."⁶⁶ He spoke of his office as president of Concordia Seminary, Saint Louis, as "an office which alone surpasses my talents."⁶⁷ In his letters, Walther comes through warm, friendly, compassionate, and humble, a man who did not utilize his talents for personal gain.

For filthy lucre's sake he never worked. He refused compensation for his literary products. He declined large gifts. He accepted the doctor's title under a sort of moral compulsion.⁶⁸

W. H. T. Dau said that "Walther died a poor man."⁶⁹

Even though he described himself in very humble terms, Walther was extremely gifted. He not only was a good organizer, who wrote the constitution of the Missouri Synod (Chapter II, page 38), but also a very logical and gifted theologian who would have much to contribute at any meeting.

adopted. But for several sessions a pall hung over our deliberations, which was removed only after mutual friends arranged for a private meeting among us, that explanations might be made and misunderstanding removed" (p. 357).

⁶⁵C. F. W. Walther, Selected Letters, "Perhaps to Pastor Johann Kilian," p. 109.

⁶⁶Ibid., "To the Dean of the Theological Faculty, Goettingen, Germany," p. 143.

⁶⁷Ibid., "Perhaps to Pastor Johann Kilian," p. 109.

⁶⁸Wm. Daumann, W. H. T. Dau, and Th. Engelder (ed.), Walther and the Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 6.

⁶⁹W. H. T. Dau, Ebenezer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 37.

Loy called him "the one master mind which dominated the Missouri Synod."⁷⁰
 "Other synods had men of ability that rendered them the equals of the
 Missourians, with the exception of Dr. Walther, who towered above them
 all."⁷¹

As this "towering" theologian, Walther obviously occupied a leadership role among those in the Synodical Conference who were not his theological equals. It is not unlikely that he could be short with those in the Conference he felt were not at the point where he was theologically. It is also not unlikely that others in the Conference only begrudgingly and resentfully accorded him the role of "towering" theologian.

The size of Missouri also had to be a negative factor in relations with other members of the Synodical Conference. As the biggest synod, it could dominate and control the Conference. It may be that it sent out attitudinal signals which, rightly or wrongly, were interpreted as being arrogant and rude. The "weak brethren" of the synod, as Loy called them (footnote 63) may also have assumed too much, just because they were aware of their size and control. On the other hand, the smaller members of the Conference may have had a prejudged view of these men, just because they were Missourians. One can only speculate as to whether the kinds of feelings Loy and others had about the Missouri Synod were generated by Missouri, or whether the feelings were rooted in jealousy, resentment, or feelings of repression because of Walther's genius and Missouri's size.

It would seem that a stronger case could be made for the second question, which asked whether the fact that Walther and Missouri were the

⁷⁰Loy, Story of My Life, p. 355.

⁷¹Ibid.

offenders in the Predestination Controversy caused others to react in a more vigorous way, than for the first one which asked to what extent, if any, personal factors contributed to Schmidt's attack. Whichever, if either of these two possibilities is applicable, or both, however, the fact remains that controversy set in and worsened; resentment, jealousy, and/or feelings of repression may have been some of the pieces of wood which fueled the fire.

Even if a case could be made for some personal pique on Schmidt's part and/or negative reactions against Walther and Missouri which either triggered the controversy, or caused it to worsen, we dare not lose sight of the theological differences which were involved. William H. Cooper says that the controversy was "first between professors, then synodical, but not purely personal nor synodical, but theological."⁷² Yet even the theological differences were not the factors which finally led to the withdrawal of Schmidt, Loy, and the Ohio Synod⁷³ from the Synodical Conference, as though the Conference had reached a theological impasse which sent the various synods scurrying off in different directions. It was the charge of calvinism made against Missouri which unraveled the Conference.

Already at the Western District Convention in Schaumburg, Illinois in 1873, when Walther first began to take up his essay "The Doctrine of the Lutheran Church Alone Gives All Glory to God, an Irrefutable Proof That Its Doctrine Alone is True," he had responded to the Fritschel charge that the Missouri position on election was calvinistic.

⁷²William H. Cooper, "C. F. W. Walther's Pen," The Lutheran 20 (6 October 1937):13.

⁷³The Norwegian Synod withdrew for other reasons.

They lie when they label us Calvinists. We hate Calvinism as the teaching of the devil, since it deprives the poor sinner of his greatest comfort, namely that the entire world is saved and he can count himself among the people. We separate ourselves from this ghastly teaching; and then these Iowans appear claiming, since we adhere to the teaching of the eternal and free mercy of God and therefore remove everything from man, "You also are Calvinists."⁷⁴

In view of Missouri's strong reaction against Iowa and its obvious displeasure that the name of Calvinism should be associated with its doctrine, the choice of the term by members and synods of the Synodical Conference as the chief label for Missouri's position was indeed unfortunate. It was one thing to hold to a different position, but to throw them into the Reformed Camp was odious to both Walther and Missouri.

H. C. Schwan⁷⁵ alludes to the pain Missouri felt over the charge of Calvinism by reiterating Missouri's displeasure in his presidential address at the 1881 convention of the Synod.⁷⁶ What hurt even more, however, was that the charge was made by brothers within the Synodical Conference.

It isn't just the old enemy who has abused and slandered us, but also such who stood with us in the sacred bond of brotherhood, who were flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones who have not only accused us of false doctrine but have branded us apostates; yes, and have sounded the alarm against us as falsifiers of the everlasting Gospel.⁷⁷

⁷⁴Walther, Convention Essays, p. 41.

⁷⁵Heinrich Christian Schwan (1819-1905) joined the Missouri Synod in 1850. He served as president of the Central District (1860-1878) and as president of the Missouri Synod (1878-1899).

⁷⁶Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht, 1881, p. 52. "Er (Gott) weiss, dass wir den Calvinismus hassen."

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 12. "Nicht etwa die Alten Feinde, die uns je und je geschmähet und gelästert haben, sondern Solche, die mit uns in heiligen Bruderbunde standen, ja die Fleisch von unserm Fleische und Bein von unserm Beine sind, haben uns nicht allein falscher Lehre beseichtigt, sondern auch vor der ganzen Christenheit also Abgefallene gebrandmarkt, ja wider uns als Verfälscher des ewigen Evangelii die Sturmlocke geläutet."

It was the charge of Calvinism which also brought about the change in Missouri's position on fellowship. The writer has tried to lay out, as carefully and in as much detail as possible what he found Missouri's fellowship practice to be prior to the 1879 charges by Schmidt. Missouri could pray with, commune with, and fellowship in many ways with disagreeing Lutherans who were struggling and wrestling with doctrinal differences. All that changed at the 1881 convention of the Missouri Synod and the change had profound and far-reaching effects and implications.

We say to anyone who teaches another doctrine among us, even though he appeals to the confessions of the Lutheran Church, openly and honestly: We no longer belong together and we must go our separate ways. By this we do not say that we charge our opponents with heresy and condemn them. We do not even say that against the Evangelicals and Reformed. We only say this: We can no longer walk together. Nor can we any longer pray together. For you will pray for our conversion and we will pray for yours. Such praying together is an outrage before God. If your conscience will not permit you to believe as we believe, we can do nothing about that--for the gift of faith does not stand in the hands of men--but what we can, will, and must do, that we declare to you--from here on we must go our separate ways.⁷⁸

The change in Missouri's fellowship practice went into effect with the resolution it now passed at the 1881 convention.⁷⁹ This resolution

⁷⁸Ibid., pp. 30-31. "Auch wir sagen jedem, der eine andere Lehre unter uns führt, trotzdem er sich auf das Bekenntnis der lutherischen Kirche beruft, offen und ehrlich: Wir gehören nicht zusammen und müssen daher getrennte Wege gehen. Damit ist nicht gesagt, dass wir unsere Gegner verkern und verdammen. Wir thun das ja auch nicht Unirten und Reformirten gegenüber. Wir sagen nur dies damit: Wir können nicht mehr zusammen gehen. So können wir auch nicht mehr mit einander beten. Denn ihr werdet um unsere und wir werden um eure Bekehrung beten. Solches zusammenbeten aber ist ein Greuel vor Gott. Könnt ihr nach eurem Gewissen nicht glauben, was wir glauben, so vermögen wir das nicht zu ändern--denn Schenkung des Glaubens stehet in keine Menschen Macht--aber das können, wollen, und müssen wir, das wir euch erklären: Unsere Wege gehen fortan auseinander."

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 45. "Beschlossen, das die von den einzelnen Districten unserer Synode erwählten Delegaten für die Synodalconferenz hiermit folgende instructionen erhalten:

1. Ihr sitzt mit keiner Person in kirchlicher Berathung zusammen, die uns

stated that elected district delegates to the Synodical Conference were not to sit in deliberations with, nor pray with, those who had accused Missouri of Calvinism. While the intent of the resolution was to give specific instructions to delegates within the Synodical Conference the effect of the resolution was that it established a guideline for fellowship that was to go beyond its original intent.

The first major test of the 1881 resolution came at the Synodical Conference Convention at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, October 4-10, 1881. Immediately after the roll call was taken, Pastor O. Hanser, delegate from the Western District of the Missouri Synod, challenged the credentials of F. A. Schmidt, delegate from the Norwegian Synod. Delegates from the other synods also challenged his credentials. This protest centered in the first Resolve of Missouri's 1881 resolution. The second Resolve was also tested at Milwaukee.

The sessions of the Milwaukee colloquy had always been opened and closed with prayer, but at the last session, one of the Missouri Synod men refused to pray with the "heretics," and therefore the meeting was closed with silent prayer. This is probably the first time in the history of the Missouri Synod that a member of the Synod refused prayer fellowship to another Lutheran with whom he was discussing theological problems.⁸⁰

To all extents and purposes, it would seem that the 1881 Missouri resolution doomed the Synodical Conference, as it then existed. Ohio vo-

öffentlich des Calvinismus beschuldigt hat.

2. Ihr erkennt keine Synode als Glied der Synodalconferenz an, die, als solche, gegen uns die Beschuldigung des Calvinismus erhebt."

⁸⁰ Roy Arthur Suelflow, The History of the Missouri Synod During the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence, p. 158.

ted to withdraw in 1881 and blamed Missouri for its withdrawal.⁸¹ The Norwegian Synod also withdrew two years later, but its withdrawal was related to "in house" problems within its own ranks. While it continued cordial relations with Missouri until 1912, "she ultimately chose a different way to unity."⁸²

A final word needs to be said about the charge of Calvinism made against Missouri, however, because of its impact upon the 1881 Missouri resolution. The synods of the Synodical Conference subscribed to the Galesburg Rule,⁸³ which prescribed who could commune at Lutheran altars and who could preach from Lutheran pulpits. The Rule stated that "Lutheran pulpits are for Lutheran pastors--Lutheran altars are for Lutheran Christians only." It was the General Council's failure to clarify these two

⁸¹C. V. Sheatsley, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1919), p. 181: "Resolved, 1. That the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States, much as it regrets this step, herewith separates itself from the Synodical Conference of North America, because the honorable Synod of Missouri, which, as is known represents the great majority of the Synodical Conference, has 1. Set forth and definitely adopted a doctrine concerning election which we cannot accept; and 2. Has definitely declared that it cannot confer with the majority of delegates our districts have elected this year, because they felt it to be their duty to publicly declare that the above-mentioned doctrine is Calvinizing."

⁸²Schmelder, "The Predestination Controversy," p. 27.

⁸³The Galesburg Rule was originally a statement by the president of the General Council, Charles Potterfield Krauth, made at Akron, Ohio in 1872. There was a good deal of controversy over points 2 and 3 of the statement, which said, "2. The exceptions to the rule belong to the sphere of privilege and not of right. 3. The determination of the exceptions is to be made in consonance with these principles by the conscientious judgment of pastors, as the cases arise" (Abdul Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America, p. 234). At Galesburg in 1875, the first clause of the Akron Statement was reaffirmed, with the clause inserted to read "The Rule, which accords with the Word of God and with the Confession of our Church, is," (Ibid., p. 235).

points⁸⁴ initially which was a contributing factor in the formation of the Synodical Conference.⁸⁵

To call a synod calvinistic was to say that it was not Lutheran. Once this charge was made against Missouri, those who made it were in the horns of a dilemma. To remain in fellowship with those they said were not Lutherans was hardly consistent with the Galesburg Rule, whose very purpose was to preclude altar and pulpit fellowship with non-Lutherans. It was not Missouri's 1881 resolution which drove those who left out of the Conference, but Missouri's doctrine of election which, as Ohio said in its own resolution of 1881, it "could not agree with,"⁸⁶ because it regarded it as calvinistic, that is, un-Lutheran. Missouri's resolution of 1881 was given as a second reason by the Ohio Synod for its withdrawal from the Conference. These two reasons, however--Missouri's doctrine and Missouri's resolution--were not of equal weight. Even if Missouri had not passed its 1881 resolution, or had rescinded it after it had passed it, the doctrine of election "it could not agree with" was not rescinded. The only alternatives open to Ohio, Schmidt, and others was to withdraw the charge of calvinism, or leave the Conference. They could not, or would not, withdraw the charge; therefore, they left the Conference.

So ended, then, what only a decade earlier had looked so promising.

⁸⁴These two points were among the Four Points (Chapter II, page 59) which the General Council failed to articulate to the satisfaction of those who either left it, or remained out of it. The other two points were chiliasm and secret societies.

⁸⁵Several of the synods which felt that the General Council had not articulated clearly on the Four Points contacted the Missouri Synod about closer ties. This information was given in Chapter II, pp. 58-63.

⁸⁶C. V. Sheatsley, History of the Evangelical Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States, p. 181.

Any hope that the Synodical Conference would unify the Lutheran Church in America ended with the fragmentation which resulted from the controversy. While the Conference did not dissolve with the withdrawal of those who left, Missouri's statement at the 1881 convention took effect, namely, that "we must go our separate ways."⁸⁷ The Synodical Conference still attracted some, but it was small by comparison with what went on outside the Conference, and far below its expectations of a generation earlier. The Norwegian Synod went on to unify its own people. Ohio, which drew closer to the Iowa Synod after it withdrew from the Conference, worked with the Iowa and Buffalo synods to form the American Lutheran Church in 1930. The General Council, General Synod, and General Synod of the South became the United Lutheran Church in 1918. Missouri continued in the remaining Synodical Conference which, because it was a federation and not a merger, would not last. The day would come when Missouri would go full cycle and again walk alone. This was not by design, but by circumstances. Missouri never wished to walk alone.

⁸⁷Achtzehnter Synodal-Bericht, 1881, p. 31.

CONCLUSION

The biggest loss in the election controversy may have been the fellowship Missouri practiced with other Lutherans who were not in fellowship with it (Chapter II). Until the 1881 resolution, Missouri showed great flexibility in its relationship with Lutherans, as it worked to bring about agreement in doctrine and practice which would lead to the one Lutheran Church in America. After 1881, it became less flexible and fellowship began to hinge on agreements which could be worked out before such fellowship could happen. The year 1881, therefore, is the dividing point between these two positions.

There were other losses, too. Synods, which had stood side by side, no longer walked together, and new alignments sprang up within the Lutheran family. Far removed from the controversy, we can only speculate about what might have happened, had the controversy not occurred. Two possibilities would seem plausible.

One possibility is that the major divisions within the Lutheran family¹ would have continued as they were into the twentieth century, in which case the United Lutheran Church would have been formed in 1918 and the American Lutheran Church in 1930, with one exception. The Ohio Synod would have remained in the Synodical Conference, which would have meant that the American Lutheran Church would have included only the Iowa and Buffalo synods.

¹The General Synod, General Council, and Synodical Conference.

The other possibility is that some movement would have occurred theologically among individual synods, or divisions, which would have altered considerably the face of the Lutheran Church. Again, two possibilities seem plausible. One is that with some pressure from the Ohio Synod, similar to the pressure it exerted in 1856 (Chapter II, page 46), differences between Iowa and Missouri might have been settled, which would have brought Missouri into the American Lutheran Church in 1930. The other possibility is that some movement would have occurred between the General Council and the Synodical Conference and/or Missouri. In this case, Missouri would have ended up in the United Lutheran Church in 1918.

All speculation, of course, is only an idle exercise, since the controversy did occur. Therefore we can never know how the church might have gone under different circumstances; we can only see it as it developed. Perhaps it may be found at some future point in time that the election controversy did not mortally wound total Lutheran unification, but only delayed it by a century, or more.

The fact that Missouri did practice fellowship with other Lutherans before 1881 may be reason enough for Missouri to review its position on fellowship to see where, and in what ways, it can interact with other Lutherans again. The CTCR (Commission on Theology and Church Relations) of the synod has this now as one of its projects. It may be found that Missouri can find ways and means to interact with other Lutherans in fellowship forms apart from unification, without sacrificing any of its confessional Lutheran integrity or posture. Such a study should include Missouri's pre-1881 history.

Unfortunately, the situation within the Lutheran family has now

been complicated by a new problem which has been interjected into Lutheran relations which threatens to dwarf even the election controversy for its impact upon the Lutheran Church. This is the debate which has arisen concerning the "Word of God," which August R. Suelflow calls "the main valve" of the Lutheran Church.

When the synod was faced with doctrinal and theological questions and concerns in the past, it could go to an intermediate valve--Scripture and the Confessions--in order to provide the necessary formulations. Unfortunately such repairs are not possible today. The main valve itself--the Word of God--is under debate. Nothing short of God's power, grace and mercy will effect a change. The day of the "do-it-yourselfer" is over. In the past, the Lutheran Church has been wrestling with the problems through its formulations dealing with the sola gratia and sola fide. Today it is wrestling with the third principle of the Reformation, sola Scriptura.²

This new wrinkle in the fabric of Lutheranism is at the heart of the differences within the Lutheran family today, even as it was in the controversy which developed within the Missouri Synod.³

Today in the church there is confusion and controversy concerning many doctrinal matters, including the doctrine of Holy Scripture itself. If we are to be faithful to our Confessions, our church needs to confess its faith on these matters with clarity and with conviction that what we are saying is based on the Word of God.⁴

This controversy came to a head in 1974 and has resulted in the formation of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches.

The debate over the Word of God has produced several changes within the Lutheran family. One of them is that a united Missouri Synod, which

²August R. Suelflow, "Remembering Zion," Concordia Journal 1 (October 1975):165.

³The controversy centered initially in the faculty at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and led to a walkout of the majority of faculty and students into self-proclaimed exile.

⁴"The President's Report," Convention Proceedings: 49th Regular Convention, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Milwaukee, July 9-16, 1971 (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), p. 52.

formerly struggled against other Lutherans and their formulations, now found itself disunited and struggling with itself and its own formulations. A second change has to do with the direction of the Lutheran Church. After the rejection of the "American Lutheranism" of Samuel Simon Schmucker, the Lutheran Church turned toward itself and worked to unify itself into a single Lutheran Church. This is no longer the case. Today segments of the Lutheran family are again looking in the direction of "American Lutheranism,"⁵ and Lutheran union is no longer necessarily a primary Lutheran goal. A third change involves intercommunion with non-Lutherans. The General Synod of 1845 blurred the distinction between Lutheran and Reformed communion with its recommendation that there be intercommunion between the synods of the General Synod and the Presbyterian Church.⁶ The movement toward Eucharist sharing today is in the direction of the 1845 General Synod recommendation and away from the 1875

⁵The "American Lutheranism" of Schmucker had to let go of some of the Lutheran confessional principles through a revision of the Augsburg Confession to bring the Lutheran Church into line with the American Church. It is in that sense that the term is used here. The danger is still that confessional principles must be sacrificed in the interest of Eucharist and/or other sharing with non-Lutherans.

⁶Proceedings of the Thirteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, convened in Philadelphia May 16, 1845 (Baltimore: Printed in the Publication Room of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, No. 7 South Liberty Street), p. 30. "3. That this Synod cordially approve of the practice, which has hitherto prevailed in our churches and those of the Presbyterian Church, of mutually inviting the ministry to sit as advisory members in ecclesiastical bodies; of inviting communicants in regular standing in either church, to partake of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the other, and of the dismissal of church members, at their own request, from the churches of the one, to those of the other denomination.

2. That it be recommended to our district Synods, that ministers in good standing, desiring to pass from one of those bodies to the other, shall upon application to the proper body, receive a certificate of ministerial standing."

Galesburg principle of "Lutheran altars for Lutheran Christians only."

It is in the best tradition of the Lutheran Church that the new Lutheran Church will be formed in 1988. The present drift toward "American Lutheranism," however, is not the direction the Lutheran Church decided to walk after it had rejected Schmucker's Definite Synodical Platform in 1855. Schmucker, therefore, stands to gain more from the present direction than a Luther, Walther, or Charles Porterfield Krauth,⁷ and he may yet gain a place in history as the father of the Lutheran Church, a distinction he failed to obtain in the nineteenth century.

Missouri meanwhile occupies a position similar to the one it has occupied throughout much of its history. Just as it remained outside the fellowship movements which resulted in the formation of new Lutheran bodies in the 1900s, so it again stands outside the formation of the new Lutheran Church. David Preus, Bishop of the American Lutheran Church, feels that Missouri will become part of the new Lutheran structure in the next 25 to 50 years,⁸ but his projection may be overly optimistic. The present drift of the organizing bodies may delay unification far beyond this optimistic time-frame. If anything, the gulf which has existed between Missouri and the organizing churches has widened considerably because of the present

⁷Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883), professor at Lutheran Theological Seminary (1864-1883), opposed the theology of the Definite Synodical Platform and was one of the organizers of the General Council. Walther described him as "without doubt the most eminent man in the English Lutheran Church of this country, a man of unusual learning, at home in modern as well as old theology, and, what is most important, heartily devoted to the pure doctrine of [the Lutheran] Church." This quote is found on page 451 of Lutheran Cyclopedia, ed. E. L. Lueker (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954; 2nd ed., 1975), and is taken from "Todesnachricht," Lehre und Wehre 29 (January 1883):32.

⁸"LCMS Will Eventually JOIN New Body, ALC Bishop Says," Missouri in Perspective 9 (June 28, 1982):1.

trend. If Missouri were to enter into the new Lutheran Church within the foreseeable future, it would have to repudiate much of its history.⁹ It would seem much more likely, therefore, that Missouri would practice some kind of unofficial fellowship, which would be consistent with its own pre-1881 history, while continuing to dialog regarding differences which may be more destructive to Lutheran fellowship than the election controversy of the nineteenth century.

It may be, too, that Missouri will once more occupy a role similar to the "old Lutheran" role it occupied before and after the Definite Synodical Platform and its revisions of the Augsburg Confession. The situation today is very similar to the one in 1855. In the early to mid-1800s, the General Synod was held together more by the Name (Lutheran) than by any confessional formulations.¹⁰ Additionally there were the close relationships many Lutheran synods had with the Reformed. The Pennsylvania Ministerium even chose its association with the Reformed over its kinship with other Lutherans and quit the General Synod in 1823. Its departure left the General Synod in shreds and almost destroyed it before it ever developed. Today the trend is in the same direction and it is almost like "history repeating itself."

The Missouri Synod, while it had only and finally the Synodical Conference to show for its efforts to unify the Lutheran Church, was a leaven for the whole Lutheran Church and was helpful in bringing Luther-

⁹The Saxons left Saxony to get out of what they considered to be unionistic fellowship with the Reformed and were not involved in fellowship dialog with Protestants in America. They also regarded the General Synod as being unionistic for its fellowship with other Protestants.

¹⁰This information on the General Synod was covered in Chapter I, pages 18-20.

anism in this country to a more confessional basis. It may be that this can be a function it can perform again. At stake in the mid-1800s was the very Lutheran Church itself. Dr. Robert Preus says in his "Fellowship Concerns," delivered at the first convention of the Missouri District in Saint Louis, that this may be the case today.

Dr. Herman Sasse has said somewhere, "The most important question facing the Lutheran Church today is: Do we want to remain Lutheran?" This is a vital and highly relevant question today for us in the Missouri Synod . . .¹¹

This is the question the whole of Lutheranism will need to ask.

¹¹Robert D. Preus, "Fellowship Concerns," Missouri District Proceedings: First Convention, St. Louis (June 24-28, 1968), p. 43.

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