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### A Brief History of the Slovak Lutheran Synod of the United States

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of the  
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APPENDIX

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## A SUMMARY OF THE HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN SLOVAKIA

### REFORMATION

The soil for the Reformation had been prepared by Hus and his followers after him, so that not long after Luther had begun his work in Germany, it was known in Slovakia and followed with great interest. That Luther's influence was felt in Slovakia quite early we can readily see from this, that already in 1521 the bull against Luther was published in all churches and all followers of Luther were condemned as heretics. The first congregation seems to have been established in Nove Mesto, Nitrianska Stolica, in 1522. How Luther's doctrine was brought to Slovakia cannot be definitely decided. But we do know this, that many young men attended the University of Wittenberg and thus would bring back Luther's views. In addition, merchants and travelers, who had been to Germany during that period brought back with them stories of Luther and his work. The movement spread so rapidly that all the princes but three became Lutherans, and their subjects followed suit. Names most prominent at this time were Jan Silvan, Andrej Jakobei, Gaspar Kolarik and Leonhard Stöckel. The latter was especially active among the German inhabitants of Spiš and Šariš.

### COUNTER-REFORMATION

In 1523, at the Diet at Bidapest, the law was passed that all Lutherans were to lose title to their property and to be executed. In 1525 it was affirmed and the addition made that all Lutherans were to be exterminated. The persecution was carried on especially

during the Thrity Years' War. The moving spirit behind the persecution were the Jesuits, who did all they could to break the hold that the Lutheran movement was obtaining on the country. Perhaps the greatest persecution was that under Leopold I (1657-1705). During his reign the Jesuits had practically a free hand. They, with the aid of the army, went throughout the country, murdering and terrorizing the Lutherans. Wherever there were Lutheran ministers, they were banished, and Jesuits were placed there. Where they were unable to destroy the church they accused the ministers and teachers of conspiracy against the government and condemned them either to death or to be sold as galley-slaves. Churches were seized and given to the Catholics. In this manner the Lutherans lost over eight hundred churches during the ten-year period of persecution from 1671 to 1681. The greatest atrocity committed during this period was the so-called Presov Slaughter (Presovska Jatka). The inquisition was held under the Italian general Karaffa and occurred in 1687. Lutherans were accused of having conspired against the government. They were hailed before a court composed of foreigners, and no mercy was shown them. In this manner twenty-four influential men of the country were condemned and executed. In the same year this court was disbanded by the king and the Lutherans enjoyed peace for a while. They were, however, permitted to have services only in so-called articulate Churches. From then on persecutions arose from time to time; but they were not so severe, and gradually the Lutherans began to obtain their rights.

### LUTHERANS OBTAIN CERTAIN PRIVILEGES

During the reign of Maria Theresa the Jesuits were driven out of the country. The Lutherans now could breathe more freely. Soon after the death of Queen Maria Theresa, her son, Joseph II, gave the "Patent of Tolerance," in 1781. It embodied the following points:

1. Wherever there were one hundred Lutheran families who were able to support a church, they were allowed to build a church, without a tower and without bells, and were permitted to call a pastor and organist.
2. No one was to be punished because of his creed.
3. Lutheran ministers were freed from the jurisdiction of the Catholic bishops.
4. So that Lutherans also would be enabled to hold office, it was decreed that all office-holders were to take the oath according to their creed.

In a short time there were about two hundred Lutheran congregations. In spite of these privileges the church did not enjoy peace. Therefore in 1848 the diet granted equal rights to all creeds. But due to internal strife in the country this was not carried out. However, in 1868 the law was reaffirmed and equal rights were granted to all religions.

### RATIONALISM

Although the Lutherans were now enjoying the freedom granted them by the government, another danger soon raised its head and threatened the life of the Church. This was the movement of Rationalism which held sway in the eighteenth century. Its baneful effects were

noticeable in the books which were at that time issued for the people. Chief among these was the hymnal Spevník, issued in 1842, which is full of rationalistic views and denials, or else remains silent on, some of the cardinal doctrines of the Church. Sad to say, this hymnal is used also to-day in many of the churches there. Another direct result of Rationalism was the movement for union of the Lutherans with the Reformed (Calvinists). The moving factor behind this tendency was the desire of the Magyar government to foist the Magyar language on the Slovaks at all costs. Since most of the Magyars were Calvinists, they felt that a union between the two church-bodies would suit their plan quite well. Men were sent to serve the congregations without any examination as to their doctrinal stand, but only as to their ability to handle the Magyar language. All appeals of the congregations were in vain, as they were soon denounced as Panslavs and disturbers. The man who finally tried to carry out the idea of church union was Count Karl Zay, who was elevated to the position of General Inspector in 1840. His motto, contained in the Társalkodo (Gesellschaft) was: "We are neither Lutherans nor Calvinists, neither Orthodox nor Roman Catholics, neither Christians nor Jews, but we are Magyars." Every effort was now made to bring about this union. But against this movement arose Dr. Joseph Miloslav Hurban, who by writing and preaching ably defended the Church and prevented this union. Thus the Lutheran cause was saved in Slovakia, though it now suffered persecution from the Magyar government. The Church never regained her entire freedom again until after the World War, when the Republic of Czechoslovakia was established. But the seed of indif-

ferentism that was sown during the past century has not been rooted out, and the Church in Czechoslovakia is not pure. It has a decidedly unionistic spirit and in places has formed unions with sectarians, giving them permission to preach in their churches and holding services with them.

#### THE FIRST ATTEMPTS AT SOME OUTWARD ORGANIZATION

We cannot accurately determine the arrival of the first Slovak Lutherans here in America, as their history is somewhat obscure. But, according to the sources before us, it seems that they began to drift here about the late 70's. They were forced to leave their homeland due to the tyrannical treatment they were receiving at the hands of the Magyar government, which attempted to stifle the Slovak language and all love for it. Many would not submit to the unjust demands of the Magyar government, but rather left their home. Another cause of their leaving were the conditions in their country, which were not always prosperous. Thus many came to America not only for the purpose of enjoying the freedom of speech and education that it offered, but also for the wonderful opportunities of making a livelihood. To them America was the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey.

These early Slovaks settled primarily in the Eastern States. But we also find them in the States of Minnesota and Illinois. As there were no pastors among these early settlers, their spiritual life suffered. Many attended sectarian churches, others drifted from the faith entirely. For this neglect their mother church in Czechoslovakia

(at that time a part of Austria Hungary) must certainly take the blame, as it took no steps to care for the needy and dear souls here in America. It seemed that unless proper steps were taken immediately, these precious souls would either be assimilated by the sectarians or else lost to the Church entirely. And, indeed, as a result of the lack of spiritual care the daily life of these early settlers was not very exemplary, though we must say that there were many exceptions. Still, though things looked black, God saw to it that these souls should not perish, but that they should be preserved for his kingdom.

Since their mother church in Czechoslovakia made no attempt to take care of these souls here, we read of attempts made by the Germans to take care of these people. The first of that kind that we find recorded were those by the German Pennsylvania Synod. Its mission board sent an appeal to "Senior" K. E. Lany, pastor at Černilov, Bohemia, asking him that he should send over some ministers or, if that were impossible, at least teachers who would to mission-work here among the Slovaks. "Senior" Lany placed this plea before the ministers and teachers of his district, but, sad to say, it was without result. Only one young man volunteered who was at that time studying at the Teacher's College "Kommet zu Jesu" in Prussian Silesia. This young man was Karol Horák. He finished his studies at this institution in the year 1882 and received a call to be teacher in the city of Holič. This he did not accept for he had his mind set on helping his brethren in America. The same year he departed for this

country, to do mission-work. Arriving here, he stayed at the home of Reverend L. A. Dewald, of New Brunswick, N. J., where he prepared himself for that noble work that had brought him to America. However, urgent pleas came from Pennsylvania that at least one man should be sent there immediately. Karol Horák responded and immediately took up his work in the anthracite regions. He did not neglect his studies, however, but diligently applied himself to the study of theology. In his mission-work he was under the supervision of Pastor Ea. A. Brauer, of Hazleton, Penn. In 1883 he took his examination at Muehlenberg College, Allentown, Penn., which he passed successfully, and on the 16th of October, 1883, he was ordained as minister of the Gospel by Dr. Rath, Professor Speaker, and Dr. Sattler. He was now ready to take up fully the work awaiting him. His field was great, for it comprised of the following cities: Freeland, Hazleton, Mahoney City, Mount Carmel, Wilkes-Barre, Scranton, Plymouth, and Nanticoke. His salary was paid by the German Pennsylvania Synod. Of the towns mentioned here Freeland and Nanticoke were the first to organize congregations, although they were not the first in America. This honor falls to the Streator, Ill., congregation, whose history we shall treat of later. This is all that we can determine as to the activity of the first Slovak missionary here in America. We shall now proceed to the history of the first organized congregation in America, partly also because it is connected with our Synod.

THE FIRST ORGANIZED CONGREGATION IN AMERICA

While the other cities were satisfied to mark time and wait until something was done for them, we meet with an entirely different attitude in Streator, Ill. In this city there were by 1883 over forty families and many young folks. Not satisfied with waiting until their mother church in Europe would realize their straits here or until some other Lutheran body would help them out, this band of Lutherans decided to organize a congregation and to call their own pastor. Since there were no Slovak pastors here at that time,--for Horak was not ordained until the latter part of 1883,--they decided to call a pastor from their homeland, Czechoslovakia. It seems they had already sent a call to Cyrill Droppa before the summer of 1882, for he writes: "In the summer of 1882 I received a letter from my former parishioner and friend John Kozlej, who, though removed bodily, was close in spirit and remembered me. I also received letters from the then unknown pastor of the German Lutheran congregation of Streator, Ill., Mr. John Hossfeld. In all these letters is expressed the desire and the wish, especially of the Slovaks, that I should come to America as early as possible and should as a minister and preacher of the Word take charge of the church at Streator, Ill." Thus we see the zeal of these early settlers; they did all they could to bring the Gospel to themselves and their dear ones. They realized that if they continued without spiritual care, they and their dear ones would perish. Thus they seemed to be mindful of our Lord's warning, "For what is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Matt. 16, 26, and again, "Seek ye first the

kingdom of God," Matt. 6, 33. Their labors and prayers were not in vain, for Rev. Droppa heeded the call of his far-away brethren and prepared to leave for America. He arrived at Streator, Ill., on March 26, 1884. On the 30th of that month he held the first service in that congregation, which was well attended. After the service a meeting of the congregation was held. At this meeting they formally organized, elected their pastor and the other officers of the congregation, and also chose a name. The following year they built and dedicated their church. However, Rev. Droppa did not stay long at Streator, Ill., as due to an unchristian life he was forced to leave the congregation in 1887.

The organization of other churches soon followed, chief among which were Freeland, Penn., Minneapolis, Minn., and Nanticoke, Penn. The pastors who were active during this period of American Slovak Lutheranism were Cyrill Droppa, Karol Horák, Karol Hauser, C. L. Orbach, and D. Z. Lauček. (The writer has been unable to procure any definite data on the last three mentioned).

#### FIRST ATTEMPTS AT SOME OUTWARD ORGANIZATION

Although by now there was a fairly large number of pastors here in America, we do not see any attempt at unity of the spirit or desire to carry on the work of preaching the Gospel systematically among them. It seems that everybody lived only for his own daily needs and did not care to cultivate a spirit of brotherly love to, or to become better acquainted with, others. Sad to say, these men were

more active in social work for their race than for the propagation of the Gospel, that sweet message of God's love, the only message that could keep the Slovaks in the service of their Master. How much harm the indifference of the early leaders of the Slovaks did will be seen later, when attempts were made to bring the Church back to its original purity. That was the one lack at this time: the Slovaks had no capable leaders, no Walthers, who would lead them on to the fountain of the living waters and who would weld them into an organization that should exist for the glory of God and the welfare of man.

Such an organization was above all necessary, at this time. The field was great, comprising about six States; and in these six States we find only six or seven ministers and the influx from Europe becoming greater and greater. Many, since they could not obtain spiritual food from their own Church, sought it in other folds. Thus many attended sectarian churches, where was sown the spirit of indifferentism and unionism, which later on placed obstacles in the way of a true spiritual union of the Slovak Lutherans in America. As those who had just come from Europe, where the state church was on the decline and where there was no clear-cut stand on the question of unionism, were not very much interested in churches, they sought the social side of the Slovak life and worked to form a national organization, in which was fostered, not the love of Christ, but the love of their language and where, instead of the vicarious atonement of Christ, was proclaimed the brotherhood of man--good deeds. This work was carried on not only by the laymen, but, sad to say, also by the pastors, who

should have directed the energy of the laymen to spiritual things and who should have so directed the organization as to make it rebound to the glory of God and the benefit of Slovak Lutheranism. Instead they helped to form an organization that later opposed all their efforts to bring the Slovak Lutherans back to the pure doctrine of the Bible. Thus the laymen became organized into an organization that paraded under the name *Cirkevná Jdenota* (Church Union), but did more harm than good to the Church; for it continually mixed its affairs with those of the church and always endeavored to be a big power in the governing of the church. But we shall treat more fully of this under a different head.

Though the pastors of their own initiative made no move to form any organization, proposals for such an organization were heard from time to time, coming mainly from the laymen. These proposals culminated in the national convention of the S.E.J. (Slovak Evangelical Union) held at Mahanoy City, Penn., on the 4th of June, 1894, when a resolution was passed that a so-called Seniorat should be formed. Whether this movement proceeded from a true desire for a spiritual union whereby the Slovak Lutheran Church would be benefited is doubtful. It seems to us that this movement flowed more from a desire to weld the Slovaks into a powerful organization in which the S.E.J. would play a prominent part. But be this as it will, an attempt was made to unite the churches, and that is what interests us most.

Of this event we read in the Pamatnik of the S.E.J., written by J. Ferienčik, the following: "Since at this convention there were

present also many pastors, it was proposed that they should agree among themselves and that on the following day they should give a report of their decision. And so it came to pass. On the following day (June 5) the pastors gave their report that they had agreed that they would organize a Slovak Seniorat, that is, an ecclesiastical body. The delegates elected the Senior and other officers of the Seniorat, and it came to pass that Rev. K. Hauser was elected Senior, Rev. D. Kvačala recorder, Rev. C. L. Orbach editor of the Church-paper, and Rev. L. Novomesky associate editor." The official organ was to be the so-called Cirkevné Listy, which was issued in Liptovský Sv. Miluláš, Czechoslovakia. It seems that no other pastors were present, as the above-named are the only ones mentioned. At least these were the only ones who took any active part in forming this Seniorat. Besides these pastors there were also present men from secular life. Of these the following are mentioned: Andrej Ferenc, Michal Čerlák, Michal Lukáč, Gustav Schneider, Pavel Gula, Juraj Korečko, and Pavel Junáš.

This is as far as the Seniorat progressed. Every one was in favor of it while they were together. But after the meeting was dismissed, the Seniorat and the wonderful resolutions to unite the Slovak Lutherans into one body were soon forgotten. And thus this first attempt died a natural death of neglect, for we hear nothing more mentioned of it after this preliminary meeting.

What are some of the causes that were instrumental in stifling this organization at its birth? If we closely analyze the situation,

we are forced to admit that a union at this time was well-nigh impossible. In the first place, the whole procedure was not carried out in the proper spirit. There was not a desire for a true spiritual union, but for an outward secular union for the sake of peace. That there could indeed be no true spiritual union, we can also see from the following facts. The pastors that were present were all from different theological schools, holding different opinions on some of the cardinal doctrines of the Lutheran Church. Where there is no true unity in doctrine, there also cannot be true outward unity. Just to give some examples. One of the pastors present had administered Communion to Calvinists, giving as his excuse that he understood the Magyar language and that thus, when they came to him, he could not very well refuse. Another stated that it would not be a sin if at some time or another the people would dance. Again, when we study the purpose of this meeting, we ask, What brought these pastors to this meeting of the S.E.J.? Was it spiritual matters that brought them there? Indeed not. It was purely secular matters. It was an effort on their part to be leaders of their people in patriotic endeavors, an attempt to appear as great nationalists and lovers of the Slovak language. It was a seeking of their own glory and not the glory of the kingdom of God. Such circumstances certainly boded no good for the cause of Slovak Lutheranism in America. And later, when the Synod was formed, these very men, with the exception of Rev. Hauser, left this Synod because the glory and praise of this world was more precious to them than the cross of Christ.

In addition, we may say that we can already here notice the great influence that the S.E.J. played in the formation of the early Slovak Lutheran Church. And we may say that if at this time that influence had been directed into proper channels and if a clear-cut distinction had been made between its affairs and the affairs of the Church, much of the trouble that came later on would have been prevented here, at its genesis. But those who were the leaders of the Church failed most miserably in the discharge of their duties.

#### FURTHER EFFORTS AT FORMING AN ORGANIZATION

The following period can be divided into two sections: a) the first three preliminary meetings; b) the final meeting, at which the Synod was formally organized.

##### a) The first three preliminary meetings.

The first of these meetings was held at Wilkes-Barre, Penn., on June 9, 1889. It was also held during the national convention of the S.E.J. At this meeting the question of organizing was again broached. The pastors held their conference on the date mentioned above, and at this conference they drew up the four points which were thereafter known as the "Four Wilkes-Barre Points." This declaration of theirs reads as follows:-

1. "We, the undersigned Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Ministers, by this declare that in doctrine we stand on the foundation of the Gospel of Christ and all the Symbolical Books of our dear Evangelical Lutheran Church;
2. "That we are engaged among the Slovaks of America for the spreading of the kingdom of God. On the basis of this we promise:

- a) that we shall propagate this Gospel of Christ both by pure Evangelical teaching and by a blameless life;
  - b) that we shall cultivate amongst ourselves brotherly love, harmony, and concord.
3. "That in the discharging of our office we shall not knowingly administer the Lord's Supper to adherents of the Helvetic Confession.
  4. "We furthermore declare that we condemn and are determined by our influence to curtail the holding of picnics and balls (dances) for the benefit of the Slovak Evangelical Augsburg Confession Churches. We also declare that we shall seek our livelihood by attending to spiritual things only."

These four points give us an insight into the conditions existing at that time better than any comments that we could write. Among the pastors themselves there was a lack of true brotherly love, and some of them led a life that was anything but exemplary. But it seems that they were realizing that if the Slovak Lutheran Church in America was to continue, they must come to some agreement and that they must do away with these irregularities of Christian life. These four points became the cardinal topics of all discussions at subsequent meetings and paved the way for a true understanding and union. At this meeting, D. Z. Lauček presided, and D. Kvačala recorded the minutes. Besides these two, there were present K. Hauser, M. Tomáška, L. Novomeský, and L. Havel.

The second preliminary meeting was held at Braddock, on the 16th and 17th of January, 1900. Since the last meeting much had been said and written about this coming meeting, and everywhere joy was expressed that finally the pastors would come to some sort of an understanding and that the long-sought union would finally be realized.

Rev. Lauček had sent out invitations to other pastors who had not been present at the Wilkes-Barre meeting. L. Boor and J. S. Mičatek were the new pastors who attended this meeting. At this meeting the "Four Wilkes-Barre Points" were discussed and expanded. Those assembled also gave themselves the following name: "A Fraternization of the American Slovak Lutheran Churches of the Evangelical Augsburg Confession of the United States of America." A somewhat lengthy name for such a small body; but, to say the least, they were not even entitled to this name, as the congregations were not represented and as yet were not members of that organization.

The third preliminary meeting was held on June 4, 1902, at Braddock. Thus two and a half years had elapsed since the last meeting held at Braddock. At this meeting those present were asked to state their opinion concerning the intended organization. To judge from the remarks found in the original minutes, all were in favor of it. The question was then broached as to how the congregations viewed this effort at union. Again the answer was favorable; yea, it was expressed that the congregations desired such a union. One noteworthy thing may be mentioned, namely, that out of the nine pastors present only Boor and Bella, who were members of the Missouri Synod, requested that the congregations should be represented at the next meeting if there was to be any true union and if there was to be organized an independent Slovak Synod. Their suggestion was accepted, and it was decided to hold the next meeting at Connellsville, Pa., on the 2nd of September, 1902, and each congregation was to be represented. Things were now moving fast, and the

union so long desired was finally to become a reality. The minutes of this meeting were printed and sent to each of the local organizations of the S.E.J. Again a mixing of the affairs of the S.E.J. and those of the Church.

b) The final meeting, at which the Synod was formally organized.

This meeting, from which we date the founding of our synod, was held in Connellsville, Pa., from the 2nd to the 4th of September, 1902. It was held in St. Peter's Church, of which Rev. M. Tomaska was pastor. At this meeting there were present not only the pastors, but also representatives of the congregations, according to the resolution of the last meeting held at Braddock, Pa., June 4, 1902. Thus the following congregations were represented either by their pastor or by a lay member: Freeland, Hazleton, Braddock, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; Passaic (Garfield), N. J.; Cleveland, O.; New York, Yonkers, Guttenberg, N. Y.; Charleroi, Pa.; Raritan, Newark, N. J.; Lansford, Peckville (now in Dickson City), and Connellsville, Pa.--a total of fifteen congregations. Also the following pastors were present: D. Z. Lauček, D. Kvačala, M. Tomáška, L. A. Engler, K. Hauser, J. Jurčo, L. Novomeský, L. Boor, D. Bella, and J. S. Mičatek--a total of ten. At this meeting everything seemed to go along smoothly. Every one was in favor of this union, and everywhere comments were heard that finally the Slovaks would come to some agreement. The meeting progressed smoothly and every one was in fine spirits. A sketch of the by-laws, prepared by the Revs. Lauček and Kvačala, was read and, with some corrections, adopted. However, these by-laws were fair, but entirely too legalistic and gave entirely too much power

to the individual officers of the synod, dictatorship." (O Synode, by Vojtko). They were therefore later amended. The official name given the synod was Slovenská Evanjelická Augšburského Vyznania Celocirkev v Spojených Štatoch Amerických. Rev. D. Z. Lauček was elected president and Rev. D. Kvačala secretary. The seal was then chosen, and the president was instructed to take out a charter for the synod at Wilkes-Barre, Penn. At this meeting the following resolution was also passed: "Synod declares that in doctrine and practise it is one in conviction and faith with the Missouri Synod." But, sad to say, many of the pastors, in fact all but two, Hauser and Bella, later repudiated this resolution and drifted away from the true doctrine.

But, as usual, the resolutions proposed so eagerly at the meeting were not carried out as eagerly after the meeting was adjourned and after the wave of enthusiasm had subsided. It was one thing to promise, but an entirely different thing to carry out that promise. The religious life of the Church was so intermingled with the social life and the work of the S.E. J., that it became hard to make a clear-cut distinction between the two. This was felt especially by the pastors when the duty devolved upon them to practise church discipline or to warn against worldliness. They realized that if they would follow strictly the resolutions of the Synod, they would raise up antagonism against themselves, not only in their congregations, but also among the Slovaks in general. Many therefore, being weak in spirit, felt that it would be better for them not to say anything than to stir up trouble. Thus for the sake of peace they sacrificed true Christian doctrine and practise.

CONTROVERSY WITH THE NARODNÝ SPOLOK

The Narodný Spolok was a national benefit organization, accepting into membership any one of Slav nationality. The trouble came about when it issued an Obradník, a ritual, which was to be used in all its local organizations. This ritual was patterned after the rituals of the secret societies of the day. Since many of our Lutherans belonged to this organization, a protest was raised against it from our circles. The battle was waged chiefly by the Synod's first president, Rev. Lauček, ably assisted by Revs. Kvačala, Pelikán, and Engler. The controversy was quite bitter, and our synod was accused of harboring false opinions and of forming a union with the magyars. The battle was to some extent successful, although not all the evils in that society were eradicated.

CONTROVERSY ON ANNOUNCEMENT vs. OPEN COMMUNION

The controversy on announcement was the most bitter and the longest drawn out of all the controversies that were waged by the synod, and it seemed that by it the synod would be disrupted. But thanks to God, though some left the synod because of its true stand in this matter, others remained true to the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions and carried on the fight to the finish.

The synod, at its annual meeting in Sharon, Penn., in 1905, passed the following resolution: "Every pastor is to endeavor to introduce into his congregation such a custom in connection with the Lord's Supper that every one who wishes to partake of it, must first

announce himself with th pastor." This resolution was caused by the terrible conditions that existed in some of the congregations in the administration of the Lord's Supper where open communion was practised. However, it was one thing to pass a resolution and another to carry it out. For as soon as the resolution was made public, it created a great stir in the Slovak Lutheran circles. Many laymen opposed this measure strenuously, raising the old cry that we were drifting to Catholicism and that we were demanding of our members to confess their sins in the manner of the Catholic auricular confession. Synod was accused of hierarchical tendencies, of endeavoring to ride over the congregations roughshod. But those gentlemen evidently forgot that each congregation was, or should have been, represented at that meeting by a lay-member and that the resolution was in strict accordance with Scripture.

The first serious break came about in th Chicago congregation, Sts. Peter and Paul), where Rev. John Pelikan was pastor. He had first instructed his congregation carefully, proving the necessity of announcement for Communion and also its scriptural basis. When the subject was brought up at a regular meeting, it was approved by the voting members unanimously. This was on the 14th of January, 1906. However, the joy was short-lived; for on the 25th of February of the same year, when, during the dedication of the new edifice, Pastor Pelikan again announced the resolution of the congregational meeting, a disturbance was caused in the church by some who were open scoffers of the Bible and professed the Lutheran name only for the sake of show. When on the following Sunday Lord's Supper was to

be administered, it was found that some purposely came to Communion without first announcing their intention to do so to the pastor. On March 11 the matter came to a head, and at a special meeting the pastor was asked to retract his former statements in regard to announcement. The opposition was so well represented that those members who favored this practise had no opportunity to defend their pastor. He, however, when asked to retract, took the opportunity further to elucidate the matter. He so ably defended his position from Scripture and from the Confessions that all were forced to admit that his stand was correct. But though they admitted the correctness of his stand, they still demanded that the resolution must be abolished. The pastor, seeing that enmity was increasing and that the final outcome would be a split, for the sake of peace made the following concessions:

1. That only non-members were to announce their intention of partaking of the Lord's Supper;
2. that members were to use their own judgment in this respect.

His intention was to further instruct his members on the correctness and advisibility of announcement for Communion. But his hopes were shattered, for matters came to such a pass that he was forced to resign; and many members who favored his stand on open communion left with him.

The matter then came before the meeting of the synod, held at Allegheny, Penn., on October 2-4, 1906. The synod upheld the stand of Rev. Pelikan and condemned the action that his former congregation took. Now the battle began in earnest. The opposition was aided in

its work by the Slovenský Hlasník, official paper of the S.E.J., and by the officers of that organization. These branded the synod as un-Lutheran, sectarian, etc. Some pastors also left the synod, and these were hailed by the opposition as true servants of Jesus Christ whereas they were nothing more than mercenary servants, who condemned the Lutheran practise of closed communion because it curtailed the income they received in conjunction with Communion. However, this controversy was not in vain; for, though some left the synod, it was only for the best of the organization, for in this way it was rid of men and congregations who were detrimental to its progress. On the other hand, congregations who were not members of the synod, recognized our correct stand and joined us. Congregations who were members, seeing the evil effects of open communion, introduced closed communion. Thus the controversy in the end turned out to be a blessing. God grant that this principle, for which our forefathers fought so strenuously, be truly practised in all of our churches and that it may not dwindle down to a mere recording of names.

#### OUR RELATION WITH THE SLOVENSKÁ EVANJELICKÁ JEDNOTA

This organization was formally organized at Freeland, Penn., on the 5th of June, 1893, although its actual history goes back much further. Before this date many so-called benefit church societies had been formed in many cities where there were Slovak Lutherans. These had finally come to the realization that in union there is strength, and with this in mind, they organized the above society. Its original intentions were to aid the Slovak Lutherans and also

aid mission-work by contributing financially. But these original plans miscarried, as the organization got into the hands of unscrupulous men, who, though professing to be Lutherans, were, were nothing less than infidels. And thus this organization, which was to help the Church, became its worst enemy. In its circles was propagated the rankest liberalism, which was paraded under the cloak of intellectualism. Any one who did not agree with their principles was soon classed as old-fashioned and narrow-minded.

This organization especially hindered our work of bringing the Church to a true, biblical stand and our attempt to eradicate from our circles unchristian practice and life. Its work of destruction was carried out by its official paper, Slovenský Hlasník, which heralded forth unchristian views and condemned the true, biblical stand of our synod. Just to give some quotations. "Our good people opened their eyes and saw that every one must earn his own salvation." (Sl. Hl., June 15, 1916). "Christ died only for the just." (Sl. Hl., March 28, 1918). "Who educates himself only with religious books and sermons is indeed left far behind the advancement of people and remains sitting in the dark." (Sl. Hl., May 23, 1918). "Every intelligent person will acknowledge that to such a poor widow with five children even a million Bibles will be of no help, but a thousand dollars will." (Sl. Hl., May 23, 1918). And recently this paper gave utterance to the following view on the Lord's Supper: "that in the Lord's Supper we receive the Holy Ghost," "that the unworthy do not receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ," and "that the eating is only spiritual...and that Calvin was probably right." (Sl. Hl.,

April 1929). We give recent quotations to show that this organization has not changed and still stands on the side of Satan and aids him in his destructive work. Quotations could be multiplied, but the above will suffice to show the antichristian spirit of this organization.

When our synod raised a voice of protest against the antichristian utterances, they were branded as sectarians and narrow-minded, and the people were warned against that "Missouri Synod, which will take away all of their liberties."

Another thing which the synod opposed was the worldliness that was rampant in the organization. It had in its name the word Evangelical, but it certainly was anything but evangelical in its conduct. Instead of leading its members to church, where they might serve God, it led them to picnics and dances, which were usually held on Sunday. In addition, it tried to imitate the secret societies in having its members march in regalia at the funeral of a member, holding orations at the grave, etc. In short, this organization was drifting more and more to a religion of work-righteousness.

The synod warned its members not to take part in the antichristian practises and urged that they should strive to remove them. But the warning was not heeded. Instead matters grew worse. The ministers who had left the synod for one cause or another took the part of the S.E.J. and thus confirmed them in their evil practises. Among these was the synod's first president, Rev. Lauček, who had left the synod because it would not conform to his hierarchical

demands. The battle-line was now clearly drawn. If the synod would remain silent it would deny that for which it stood, pure Lutheran doctrine. But there were men who recognized the danger by which the synod was now threatened, and they began to witness boldly against the S.E.J. Chief among these was Rev. Pelikan, who ably pointed out the following faults of the S.E.J.:

1. This organization sponsors unionism;
2. It considers itself a religious organization;
3. It promulgates false teaching;
4. It opposes pure, Scriptural doctrine;
5. It sponsors worldliness.

That his charges were not false we clearly see from what was said above. The synod realized that it must take a concerted action against this organization, and thus in September, 1908, it passed a resolution condemning the S.E.J. This brought forth a storm of protests from all directions, from both laymen and pastors. Many left our churches, and opposition congregations were set up. There was hardly a congregation where the matter did not come to a head and which, as a result, did not lose members. But this only made the synod more determined in its fight. And the fight was not in vain. There has been improvement, although even to-day the S.E.J. is not entirely free of the spirit of indifferentism and unionism; it still tolerates men who are only professedly Lutherans. The synod, though it lost in membership, by no means lost spiritually, for the controversy unified the synod more than anything else could have done and

welded it into a solid body. Daily we see the blessings of the struggle which our men carried on so valiantly. We have congregations rid of the influence of the S.E.J., although in many it still exists. But no longer does the organization wield the power that it formerly wielded. At present the enmity has somewhat abated; but we may expect it to flare up again, although, perhaps, not with the former bitterness.

#### CONTROVERSY ON THE CATECHISM

In the year 1911, the synod issued a translation of Schwan's exposition of Luther's Small Catechism. In this the part treating of the Office of the Keys was named the Fifth Part, and thus the Catechism contained six parts. Again a protest was raised, chiefly in the Slovensky Hlasnik, by men who were not members of the synod, claiming that in Luther's Catechism there were not six parts. The synod ably defended its position and the Catechism was accepted and is now being used in our circles.

These, in short, are the controversies that were waged by our synod, during its existence of twenty-eight years. After viewing all, we must admit that the grace of God was ever present with us, and that we ought to be thankful to him for preserving us in the truth.

SOME ADDITIONAL REMARKS

Young men who prepared for work in the Church received their instruction at Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Ill. We certainly should be grateful to the Missouri Synod for being willing to instruct our men free of charge, a favor we shall never be able to repay them. The Missouri Synod, in fact, wanted our men to be fully prepared to serve in the Slovak field, and therefore asked our synod to have a man at Springfield who would teach our men their mother tongue. For this office, Synod elected Rev. Tuhý, who was formally installed into his new duties on the 24th of November, 1909. However, he did not remain long, as he received a call to a congregation and accepted it. Since then the men who went to Springfield were obliged to study the Slovak language on their own initiative. At present, however, we have no one studying at Springfield, as the synod deemed it best that all her young men should first prepare at one of the preparatory schools of the Missouri Synod. To this end it placed Rev. T. Bakařár as instructor at Concordia College, Fort Wayne, Ind., who taught there from 1921 to 1925. He was forced to resign because of failing health. His place was then filled by Rev. Vojtko, who is at present our instructor at Fort Wayne. After having graduated, the young men finish their training at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., where at present we have two young men preparing for the Lord's work. The synod also has one missionary in Canada and one in Slovakia.

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