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The Loehe Colonies in Michigan

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by

Ronald H. Goodsman

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A- You have done an interesting and useful study of an important topic. I hope you will some day take the opportunity to tell the story more completely and on the basis of the many untouched sources. Good work! RHB

Ralph A. Bohlmann
Advisor

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CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF A DREAM

As one looks at the history of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, he is apt to think of its history in terms of places like Saxony and Perry County, of cities like Altenburg, Dresden, Frohna and St. Louis, and of men like C. F. W. Walther, Martin Stephen, Ottomar Fuerbringer, J. F. Buenger, and Theodore Julius Brohm.

In the minds of many people, The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod had its origins only in terms and names similar to those above. There is, however, another side to the beginning of Synodical history. Here we think of places like Bavaria and Michigan, of cities like Frankenmuth, Frankentrost, Frankenlust, and Frankenhilf, of men like Wilhelm Loehe, Friedrich August Craemer, Edward Baierlein, and Ferdinand Sievers. This is a chapter out of the history of American Lutheranism which is very important to us in the Missouri Synod.

If one will look at the beginning of The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod correctly, he will see that it really started in different places at approximately the same time, in the middle eighteen hundreds. The one group which was led by Martin Stephen and C. F. W. Walther began their work in the state of Missouri, particularly in Perry County and in the city of Saint Louis. The other group which was supervised by Wilhelm Loehe and led by Pastor Friedrich August Craemer

made their way to the rich Saginaw Valley in Michigan. The two groups began their work serving the Lord independently of each other, and both prospered, but they soon joined hands to further advance the kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Working together, they built a great church and gave a mighty witness to the truths of God's Word which abide forever.

The purpose of this paper is to describe the beginnings of the colonies which Loehe and Craemer founded in the Saginaw Valley in Michigan. The paper does not propose to give an exhaustive account of the history involved, as that is beyond its scope and beyond the limitations of the author. Rather, the purpose of the paper is to give a general overview of some of the reasons behind the founding of the Saginaw Valley colonies and a very brief sketch of their earliest beginnings.

The vast bulk of material on this subject is in the German language. However, there are a few books pertaining to the subject, and a number of books with reference to the subject, which are written in English. The author attempted to use all the English works that he could locate in the research for this paper and supplemented it with some of the German works. The fact that more German books and sources were not used is due solely to the limitations of the author, rather than the availability of the material, for there is an abundance of material in German.

1970 was the one hundred and twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Saginaw Valley colonies, particularly of Frankenmuth. In 1972 The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod will celebrate the same anniversary. In the light of these facts, the story of the Saginaw Valley assumes new importance. As we retrace the history of our church, this time we will have to give greater importance to the role of Wilhelm Loehe and his Bavarian missioners.

The Loehe colonies were founded with high and lofty ideals. Even today, one hundred and twenty-five years later, a visitor in Frankenmuth can still see that the same progress, zeal, and determination which motivated the early settlers still inspire the residents there today. The One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Book of Saint Lorenz Lutheran Congregation at Frankenmuth expresses this so well when it says:

> St. Lorenz has a wonderful story to tell of its past one hundred and twenty-five years of Christian community life. As members of this congregation today recall that honorable past, they join hearts and hands with their forefathers, and in the hymn and harmony of Christ's ageless community sing of tomorrow:
>
> God's Word is our great heritage
> And shall be ours forever;
> To spread its light from age to age
> Shall be our chief endeavor.
> Through life it guides our way,
> In death it is our stay.
> Lord grant while worlds endure,
> We keep its teachings pure
> Throughout all generations.[1]
>
> As you read the words of this great hymn and compare it

with the motivating ideals behind the founding of the Saginaw Valley colonies, you can see very clearly that the two are synonymous.

CHAPTER II

THE DREAM BECOMES A REALITY

Germany at the turn of the nineteenth century was engulfed by rationalism. Germany, the birthplace of the Reformation, had become a country which was governed and dominated by a theology of reason. Theodore Graebner describes the rationalistic condition at this time when he says:

> In that early part of the nineteenth century, the preaching of the Gospel had disappeared from most of the Protestant pulpits in Germany, and there seemed little hope for the future, since the doctrines of the Reformation were considered entirely out of date. Luther's Catechism was at best mechanically studied in preparation for confirmation, but rationalism ruled the day. By this was meant the teaching that our reason is the safe guide in all matters of life, also in religion. The Bible was treated as an ancient Jewish record. All miracles were denied. The doctrines of the Lutheran Confessions had been scrapped. They were no longer taught in the theological seminaries. In this age of rationalism, Loehe was one of the few men who clung to the teachings of the Lutheran Church, who accepted the Bible as the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions as a summary of saving doctrine.[1]

A good, brief definition of rationalism is to be found in the New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge which says:

> Rationalism connotes in philosophy the tendency of thought that lays special stress, not on the matter of experience, but on the products of human reason, whether these consist of innate ideas or a priori concepts.
>
> Over and against this is a Christianity which says that doctrines to be proclaimed for human salvation are unattainable by reason of itself; they must be authenticated by miracles and prophecies, and handed down by divinely originated Scriptures. This revelation demands

> an unconditional recognition of its authority. Rationalism, on the contrary, is convinced that man is pointed also, in satisfying his longing for God, to the use of reason, which, if rightly employed, affords the knowledge of God in His omnipotent creation, mefciful preservation, and just dispensation of reward and punishment.[2]

Rationalism doesn't dispute the truth and value of revelation per se, but only its claim to absolute authority.[3]

> Rationalism rejected the Gospel as defined in the Lutheran Confessions. The confessional oath was not taken seriously. Lessing publicly demanded a new rationalistic religion as the completion of the Reformation.[4]

In reaction to rationalism, we see a movement in Germany which is called the Erweckungsbewegung. This was an awakening of confessional Lutheranism which reacted not only against rationalism, but also against the order creating the Evangelical Church of Prussia, which was a union of Reformed and Lutheran Churches.[5]

> The widespread influence of rationalist and idealist theology helped prepare the basis for the unification of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in Protestant territories in one United Evangelical Church. Schliermacher was the theologian of the Union, Hegel its philosopher, and Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia its statesman.[6]

One of the men who became very active in the Erweckungsbewegung in its early years was Claus Harms. Harms was born on May 25, 1778, in Fahrstedt, Holstein. He held the reputation for being "orthodox in the confessional meaning of the word, an enemy of the rationalism which was still rampant."[7] In 1817, which was the three hundredth anniversary of the Reformation, he issued Luther's Ninety-Five Theses plus

ninety-five of his own in which he rejected the rationalistic religion which was based on reason and conscience. One of the men influenced by Claus Harms and men like him was Wilhelm Loehe.

Wilhelm Loehe was born on February 21, 1808, in Fuerth, near Nuernberg. His father, a successful merchant, died when Loehe was three, and so it was his mother who influenced him and encouraged him to enter into the ministry. He studied at the Gymnasium in Nuernberg, and studied theology in Erlangen and Berlin. In 1837 he became pastor at Neuendettelsau.[8] About Neuendettelsau he wrote: "Neuendettelsau itself has no attractions for me. But the Lord has called me to this place, and that makes it attractive for me."[9] He remained here until his death on January 2, 1872.

It is an interesting fact that the congregation that Wilhelm Loehe served in Neuendettelsau, Germany, was dedicated to Saint Nicholas of Myra. Tradition tells us that Saint Nicholas was a benefactor of the poor and a guardian of children. So it was here that Loehe began his great mission work which was to begin the colonization of the Saginaw Valley in Michigan.[10]

The accomplishments of Wilhelm Loehe are many. In 1854 he organized a deaconess home in his parish. He founded a home for the unfortunates in 1862, a home for the mentally retarded in 1864, a Magdalen home in 1865, a hospital for men in 1867, and a hospital for women in 1869. He was also

a writer, and his books show a tendency to build up the spiritual life of the common man. His most lasting contribution to the church, however, was his great missionary zeal.

On July 25, 1831, in Ansbach, Germany, Loehe committed himself to Lutheranism. He wrote this at his ordination:

> Since in our time there are no lack of candidates who are completely devoid of evangelical faith and life but still desire ordination and want to bear the name of Evangelical Lutheran ministers, I cannot help but desire that I definitely do not want to be included in this group. The Augsburg Confession, if such an unworthy one as I may be permitted to say so, is also my confession, and the rest of the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, agreeing with the Augsburg Confession, are also norma normata for me. Those persons who are opposed to this faith of ours, I do not hate, but I earnestly pray with Saint Augustine: "Oh, if Thou wouldest slay them with a two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), that they be not its enemies! For thus do I love, that they should be slain unto themselves that they may live unto Thee."[11] Certainly I hate no one, but from the bottom of my heart I do hate all the pernicious doctrines of men and condemn what the Augsburg Confession rejects. By God's help I shall preach the true doctrine and not be silent until the Lord Himself takes me, his peace-loving soldier, out of the church militant into the blessed quietude of the church triumphant.[12]

Loehe emphasized the oneness of the church. He would not give up the Lutheran Confessions for anything, and he spoke out very clearly against the rationalistic and unionistic tendencies of his time.[13] Loehe fearlessly bore testimony against the rationalizing of his time and against the lax position of the state church in regard to this.[14]

As Loehe continued the fight against rationalism, his missionary zeal increased. The more he saw what rationalism was doing to the church and to the spiritual well-being of countless numbers of souls, the more determined he became that

the Word of God should be taught and preached in its truth and purity. He began to become very mission conscious. He once said:

> The church of the New Testament is no longer a territorial church, but a church of all people, a church which has its children in all lands and gathers them from every nation. It is the one flock of the one Shepherd, called out of many folds (John 10:16), the universal - the truly catholic - church which flows into all time and into which all people pour. This is the thought which must permeate the mission of the church or it will not know what it is or what it should do. For mission is nothing but the one church of God in motion.[15]

At the same time that Wilhelm Loehe was carrying on his struggle against the forces of Rationalism so that the truth and purity of God's Word might be once again loudly proclaimed in Germany, another man was doing the Lord's work thousands of miles away in America. This man's name was Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken.

The Reverend Friedrich C. D. Wyneken came to America in 1838 from Germany. He was the pastor of the Lutheran congregations at Friedheim and Fort Wayne, Indiana. While here, he served these two congregations and did a great deal of mission work in Northern Indiana and in parts of Michigan and Ohio. He made mission reports to the mission board of the Pennsylvania Synod.[16]

There were also other missionaries in the area: David Henkel of North Carolina who also did work in Kentucky, Indiana, and Missouri; Andrew and Charles Henkel in Ohio; and F. Schmidt in Michigan. Of all these, however, only Wyneken

was able to interest others in the work among Germans in the "West."[17]

In The Story of Our Church in America, Theodore Graebner writes about Pastor Wyneken:

> Among the pioneer missionaries who preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of the early Western settlements, none deserves more grateful remembrance than Friedrich Wyneken. He was a man of powerful frame, well-educated, fiery, and energetic, filled with a burning desire to carry the Gospel to his countrymen in the Western solitudes, of whose difficulties he had learned through missionary magazines in Germany. He came to Baltimore in 1838. Soon we find him laboring in Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan, traveling the forests and prairies on horseback, in fair and in foul weather, by day and by night. Everywhere he sought out the German Lutherans, who were fast becoming heathens through lack of preachers.[18]

The more Wyneken traveled through these areas preaching the Gospel, the more alarmed he became at what he found. Vast numbers of German Lutheran immigrants were losing their faith because there were not enough pastors and preachers to serve them.

Wyneken wrote a powerful tract in 1840 entitled Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerika, "The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America." This tract began to circulate widely, and everywhere people were stirred by Wyneken's descriptions of what he found on his missionary journies. He writes about the immigrants in the cities:

> You will find thousands of our people who, either forced by bodily want or lured on by the prospects of carnal liberty and outward comfort which the Prince of Darkness held out to them, have here made their homes. Many, who even in their old German home had sunk into the filth of an immoral life, here give free reign to their beastly inclinations. They have not any reverence for sacred

> things; the restraint of outward decency means nothing to them. Horror and dismay fill me even now, while writing these lines, when I remember the shamelessness wherewith vice, not hidden in the darkness of night, but in the broadest daylight, struts about in the streets of a seaport, and how I there found the grossest indecency and the most disgusting vice conducted by Germans. Others, happy to have cast off the fetters of the church, as well as of the state, do indeed live in outward decency, yet without the church, without hope, alas! even without any desire for anything higher.[19]

Also in the tract, he goes on to describe the conditions which the immigrants who lived in the forests and upon the prairies found themselves in:

> No difference is made between Sunday and weekday, especially since no church bells call them to God's house, and no neighbor in his Sunday outfit arrives to call for a friend.... Alas, Bible and hymnal also in many cases have been left in the old country, as the people, under the influence of rationalism, had lost their taste for them. No preacher arrives to rouse them from their carnal thoughts and pursuits, and the sweet voice of the Gospel has not been heard for a long time.
> Picture to yourself thousands of families scattered over these extended tracts of land. The parents die without hearing the Word of God, no one arouses them and admonishes them, and no one comforts them. Now, behold, young and old are lying on their deathbeds, their soul perhaps does not know or as much give a thought to preparation for the solemn Judgment; but a servant of the Lord would be able to direct the lost one to the holy God, who outside of Christ is a consuming fire, but in Christ a reconciled father; he might, by the grace of God and the power of the Word, lead the heart to repentance and faith, the dying soul being saved.... How many thousands go forth unprepared and uncomforted into eternity![20]

Wyneken kept on writing and sent out emergency calls to Germany for help for the brethren in America. These were called <u>Notruf</u> or appeals. Groups were formed, as a result, in Bremen and Stade to help out. The group at Stade published Wyneken's tract in 1840, in which they not only talked about

his plea, but urged others to help and respond. It was through this that Loehe became interested in doing mission work in America.[21]

In 1841 Wyneken returned to Germany. In Germany he went to Erlangen where he gained the support of Professor Karl von Raumer. In April of 1842 he organized a mission society in Dresden called Verein zur kirchlichen Unterstuetzung der Deutschen in Amerika. He started another one in Leipzig. With the support of Loehe and Professor von Raumer, "The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America" was published and gained even wider support.[22]

Loehe had first received the Stade tract from Professor von Raumer. He, as were many people, was distressed when he read it, and particularly about the sentence: "Their parents, who are of German birth are themselves heathen, unbaptized; consider that - German heathen!"[23] Upon reading this, Loehe, who was filled with a zeal in missions for God's Word because he had seen the effects of rationalism, decided to tell as many people as he could about Wyneken's Notruf. He wrote an article for the Sonntagsblatt of the city of Noerdlingen entitled: "The Lutheran Emigrants to North America - An Address to the Readers."[24] On account of this article, he received two hundred and fifty dollars which was to be used for the mission work.

Number Two of the 1841 volume of the Sonntagsblatt contained the following words of Loehe:

Thousands of families, your brethren in the faith, pos-

> sibly your brothers and sisters according to the flesh are hungry for the strengthening meat of the Gospel. They cry out and implore you: Oh, help us! Give us preachers to strengthen us with the Bread of Life and to instruct our children in the teachings of Jesus Christ! Oh, help us, or we are undone! Why do you not assist us? Consider the words: "What you have done for the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me." Why do you not help us? Is that your love of Jesus? Is it thus you keep His commandment? It is literally true that many of our brethren, German brethren, thus complain. Besides, in many places there has arisen a new danger. In no other country are there so many sects as in America. Some have even now directed their attention to the settlements of our German brethren and fellow Lutherans. Strange laborers would harvest where the Lord would call his own. Shall our brethren no longer worship in the Church of their fathers, filled with the breath of the Lord, and instead recline in the lazarettos of the sects? Shall German piety decay in the New World under the influence of human measures? I beg of you, for Jesus' sake, take hold, organize speedily, do not waste time in consultations! Hasten, hasten! The salvation of immortal souls is at stake![25]

Loehe began to raise money and recruit men, who were called Sendlinge, to send to North America. He was to be the one to support them from Germany and would also supervise the mission field.

In 1843, in order to continue his work, and in order to interest more people in the vital mission work that he was carrying on, Loehe began to publish his own periodical which was called Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika.[26] People read Loehe's articles and began to support his work.

In one of the early issues of Kirchliche Mittheilungen, Loehe said:

> We do not intend to withhold any aid from the heathen, we shall do for them all that lies within our power.

> Help the heathen, help them with all your resources, but do not forget the "especially" of the apostle which he accords to those of the household of faith. Do not forget that many North American Christians are actually lapsing into paganism, unless they receive aid from the fatherland.[27]

Loehe established his own mission society at Neuendettelsau to sponsor the work in North America. Another group, the Innere Missions Gesellschaft of Nuernberg, held a conference in Nuernberg on December 4, 1844. Here they approved the idea to send pastors and colonists to America and said that they would help with the mission activities among the Indians.[28]

Loehe was an excellent churchman who showed a great love for heathen missions. He was filled with a sense of urgency to carry out our Lord's command to preach the Gospel to all men, and so he set out to strengthen and build up mission societies to assist him in his work among the heathen.[29]

Loehe had always been very enthusiastic about doing mission work. In fact he once said that he wanted to make every Lutheran mission the example of all others.[30] So, Loehe now went about devising ways to communicate the good news of salvation.

Loehe's plan was not to send out individual missioners, but rather to establish German Lutheran congregations in the immediate vicinity of the Indian villages. The pastors were then to serve as missionaries to the Indians. The congregations were then to serve as the focal point from which the work would be carried out.[31] Loehe believed that it is "best

if mission work can be done out of existing congregations. Such congregations are mission colonies which afford the missionary advantages over being alone."[32]

Loehe was not only interested in evangelizing the Indians, but also wanted to make it possible for Christians emigrating to America to have congregations where they could be sure of having the pure Gospel preached to them and the sacraments rightly administered.[33]

In the fall of 1844, Friedrich August Craemer went to Neuendettelsau to talk to Loehe. He had heard of Loehe's work through Professor Karl von Raumer at Erlangen, and he wanted to learn more about it.

Craemer was thirty-two when he decided to study theology. Formerly he was in the field of languages. He had taught in Saxony and England, serving for a time as the tutor to Lord Byron's grandchildren. He was also connected with Oxford University where he taught German literature.

> In Friedrich August Craemer, Loehe found his Timothy, his pastoral emissary - a courageous man of commanding worth, a competent leader of the Bavarian mission colony. He was ready to venture to the unknown wilderness of Michigan where deer, wolves, and bears still roamed freely. Loehe sensed the urgency of initiating a streamlined education for the missionaries from various walks of life, heralds of the Gospel, builders of Christ's kingdom around the shores of the Michigan peninsula.[34]

Craemer was commissioned to be a missionary with these words: "Steh auf und isz: denn du hast einen groszen Weg vor dir!" "Arise and eat for you have a great journey before you." (1 Kings 19:7).[35]

Loehe now saw America as an example where Indians might see "how wonderful and good it is to be with Jesus."[36] Loehe further believed that the state of Michigan was an ideal spot to which other Lutherans who wished to emigrate from Germany might be directed. He hoped to establish a thoroughly Lutheran neighborhood, rather than have the Lutherans scattered all over America.[37]

As Loehe surveyed the mission scene in North America, he was not at first drawn to Michigan. However, the Lutheran congregation at Monroe, Michigan, extended a call to Pastor W. Hattstaedt, a Loehe Sendling, because it could not get a candidate from the Lutheran seminary at Columbus, Ohio. While in Monroe, Hattstaedt looked the territory over and made a report of it to Loehe. The Michigan Synod, at this time, was sponsoring the work of Missionary Auch who was serving the Indians there. Wilhelm Loehe rejoiced to hear this, and the Dresden Mission Society was also very interested in it. As a result, Loehe wrote to Pastor Schmidt of the Michigan Synod offering his full support.

During the winter of 1844-1845, the small group of colonists that Loehe had gathered came together each Saturday and Sunday in Neuendettelsau to discuss the establishing of the mission in Michigan, doctrine, and liturgy. In addition, at these meetings they drew up and studied eighty-eight paragraphs of "Church Ordinances of the German Lutheran Mission in Frankenmuth."

On Sunday April 20, 1845, a small group of colonists from the neighborhood of Nuernberg, Germany, emigrated to North America. They were led by their pastor, the Reverend Friedrich August Craemer from Kleinlangheim in Lower Franconia, who was ordained at Mecklenburg.[38] A group of fifteen persons formed the first colony. In this group were six couples, two men, and a boy five years old.[39]

With regard to these colonists, Loehe said:

> They left homes dear to them. It was not want that moved them to go; they were dedicated to a beautiful idea which they hoped to turn into a reality by God's grace. Their pastor intended to serve as a missionary to the red Indians in these regions. His people wished to secure for him a home base and a sure start; and in order to further his mission work, they founded a mission colony whose worship and Christian life were to demonstrate to the heathen the benefit and beauty of being with Jesus Christ.[40]

Loehe wrote further about the colonists in his Nachrichten:

> Not poverty is the cause of their emigration from the home country; they have, every one of them, been favored with good fortune in their homeland; some, indeed, have been prosperous. Nothing prompts them but the thought - at once humble and sublime - of founding in the wilderness of the New World a starting point, a point for mission work among the heathen.[41]

Craemer and his small congregation left Bremerhaven, sailing on the "Carolina" toward America. On board Pastor Craemer asked Miss Dorothea Benthien to be his wife, and they were married in St. Matthew's Church in New York City on June 10, 1845.[42]

Loehe had sent an established congregation to America, which by its Christian activities and daily life witnessed to the

Indians in an attempt to convert them to the saving Gospel of Christianity. To the lay members of the colony, Wilhelm Loehe said: "You are my letter to the heathen. From your way of life and your piety the heathen are to realize how pleasant it is to have fellowship with Jesus."[43]

When the colonists left Germany, they took bells with them. Loehe wrote about them:

> On one of these bells is a picture of the holy martyr Laurentius, in memory of a dear St. Laurentius Church in the homeland and in memory of the first person who grasped the idea of a missionary colony and decided to help carry it out, Lorenz Loesel. Under the picture, around the rim of the bell, are the words - Concordia (1580) res parvae crescunt - that is, "through harmony small things become large." The date 1580 next to the word Concordia, or harmony, is in a sense a pun on the word Concordia, for since the word Concordia means harmony, it indicates that which should be the fountain of all harmony among the Frankenmuthers, namely the book of confessions of the Lutheran Church which bears the name Concordia.[44]

Here in the new world, Loehe wanted the best of all mission colonies. Here Lutherans would have God's Word preached to them, free from the rationalism of the fatherland.

On June 12, 1845, the immigrants took a boat for Albany, New York, and there caught a train for Monroe, Michigan. At Monroe they were met by Pastor Hattstaedt and his congregation. They traveled up Lake Erie, Lake Saint Clair, and Lake Huron, and overland until they came to the Saginaw Valley. The trip took a week. Here they were met by Missionary Auch.[45]

Reverend Friedrich Schmidt of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and a graduate of the mission school in Basel, who also spoke the language of the Indians, had recommended a number of sites to

Loehe here in the Saginaw Valley. The Franconians, together with Missionary Auch, looked over the sites, and they finally decided to make their settlement on the Cass River. They bought 680 acres of land at what is now Frankenmuth. Of these, seventy were set aside as mission property. Seventeen hundred dollars was paid for the land.[46] The settlement was called "Frankenmuth," which means "courage of the Franconians."[47]

When the colonists arrived at Frankenmuth, they constructed two buildings. One was the church which also served as the parsonage, and the other one was for the people. Pastor Adam Ernst visited them and urged them to build their own houses on their own property as was the American custom.[48]

Now the mission settlers began the difficult process of carving homes out of the wilderness. One of the settlers wrote:

> No one can have an adequate conception of the appearance of a North American landscape. No path through the forest. Through brush and extensive morasses, over fallen trees, which form the only passageway through the swampy land, the path leads to the settlement. A dead silence reigns in the woods, broken only now and then by the weird screeching of the owls, the barking of the squirrels, or the cry of wild four-footed beasts. After one has waded, climbed, stumbled almost to exhaustion, one comes in view of the colony. And the settlement - what a doleful sight! A cleared space, surrounded by a rough rail-hewn fence. In the center of it a miserable cabin, built of rough-hewn logs. The most poverty-stricken village in Germany contains palaces compared with this.[49]

The plans for the Saginaw Valley in Loehe's mind and in that of the Dresden Mission Society were to call for only a mission colony and for the conversion of the Indians. As more and more people were coming from Germany, Loehe decided

to make this a big settlement for German Lutherans in Michigan.

At Frankenmuth we see a well-ordered community. People were required to work for the community two days per year at least. The Community Regulations also say that "no one, of course, can be a member of our community who does not accept the Lutheran Confessions, or who has been excommunicated."[50] Once again we see a desire to keep the forces of rationalism out. Frankenmuth enjoyed its substantial growth due partly to its location, partly to its leadership, but mostly to the community character of the congregation.[51]

As the months went on, more and more emigrants were leaving Germany and arriving in America and settling here in Michigan. Many of these were friends and relatives of the original settlers at Frankenmuth. Under Loehe's influence, one colony after another was established. All of these colonies had descriptive names: "Frankenmuth," "courage of the Franconians"; "Frankenlust," "joy of the Franconians"; Frankentrost," "consolation of the Franconians"; and"Frankenhilf," "help of the Franconians."[52]

In the spring of 1846, plans were made in Germany to strengthen the colony. Nearly one hundred people left for Michigan. They arrived in June of the same year. In order to accommodate them, a second colony was established. Land in Frankenmuth was expensive, so the colony leaders decided to build the second colony near Frankenmuth where the

price of land was cheaper than that which was bought by the early settlers of the area.

In 1847, a group of Franconians led by Pastor Johann Heinrich Philipp Graebner of Burghaig, near Kulmbach, arrived in the Saginaw Valley.[53] They settled northwest of Frankenmuth in a settlement which they called Frankentrost. Twenty families settled there. They established their village like the Dorf of Germany. This was to prove to be so beautiful that one visitor remarked, "Frankenmuth is lovely, but Frankentrost is lovelier."[54]

In 1847, G. E. F. Ferdinand Sievers from Hanover, Germany, who was the assistant pastor at Husum, near Nienburg, decided to do mission work in North America. He traveled to the Saginaw Valley where he talked about the situation there with Pastor Craemer. As a result, he founded the settlement at Frankenlust. In 1848 a group of Franconians joined him there.[55]

In 1848, Frankenmuth had a congregation of one hundred and seventy-five souls. There were forty-eight houses, a saw mill, flour mill, a store, post office, and it had a doctor living there for a time. Things were growing and prospering.[56]

In 1847, Candidate Ernst Ottomar came to America and became the pastor of the settlement at Saginaw. He also began to make plans to establish a congregation at Frankenhilf. In 1851 twenty families established the settlement at Frankenhilf. At first they were served by Pastor Sievers of Franken-

lust and Pastor Graebner of Frankentrost. However, the settlers at Frankenhilf wanted a pastor of their own, so they wrote to Loehe. Loehe sent them Pastor Johannes Deindoerfer who served them until 1853. As the time went on, the congregation at Frankenhilf, with the exception of Frankenmuth, grew to be the largest of the Franconian settlements.[57]

The Amelith colony was planned by Friedrich C. L. Koch who visited his daughter and son-in-law, the Reverend and Mrs. Ferdinand Sievers in Frankenlust. On his return to Germany, Koch published a guide for German immigrants to Michigan. The book contains descriptions of the Bavarian settlements in the Saginaw Valley.[58]

In 1850, Loehe erected what he termed a Pilgerhaus in Saginaw, which was a combination of many things, including a temporary home for colonists, a hospital, and a theological seminary for Michigan. This Pilgerhaus was to be governed by a liturgical rule which would make it kind of a "Protestant cloister." To head this, Loehe chose Gottlieb Schaller, a young graduate of the University of Erlangen. Schaller came to America, got to know C. F. W. Walther, and left Loehe. The Pilgerhaus was opened in 1852, but it was soon moved to Iowa.[59]

As was said before, Loehe had originally planned for the work in Michigan to be concerned, not with colonization, but rather with mission work among the Indians. Pastor and Mrs. Craemer of Frankenmuth did a great deal of work and also

organized three mission stations in a distance of about seventy miles. Craemer won the confidence of the Indians and soon thirty children were being instructed and taken care of by Craemer and his wife. Craemer also translated Luther's Small Catechism and some of the best Lutheran hymns into the Ojibwa language.[60]

On Christmas Day, 1846, the "first fruits were gathered in." Three children were baptized. On Pentecost, 1848, Craemer baptized the nineteenth Indian child.[61] Some of the names appearing in the baptismal section of the church book of Pastor Craemer include:

> Peter Shaekonaeobae, sixteen years old
> Paulus Shingoak, eight years old
> Lucas Makatebnesce, two years old
> Maria Misotno-oquae, ten years old
> Anna Kabaekiohiko-oquae, five years old.[62]

When Pastor Craemer began to feel the strain of his work, he decided to ask for an assistant. He sent a request for help to Loehe, and in 1847 Edward Raimund Baierlein was sent.

Baierlein came to Frankenmuth on June 10, 1847, with Pastor Graebner, in response to a deepfelt need on the part of Craemer and the young mission colony which was established there. There was just too much for Craemer to do with a growing congregation, mission work among the Indians, the parish school, and the job of translating.[63]

Baierlein knew that if he was really to be of service, he would need to master the Chippewa language.[64] He studied the language, and helped Craemer a great deal by translating

and preparing a speller and a reader in the Chippewa language.[65]

Baierlein and Craemer worked together very successfully. On July 8, 1847, three Indian children were baptized, and on July 26 of the same year, an Indian boy and girl came to be instructed in the Christian faith.[66]

Baierlein traveled around establishing contact with the Indians, and he also established the mission station at Bethany. Baierlein named the mission outpost "Bethany" because it meant: "dwelling of the poor." A biennial report of Bethany's mission expenses showed the following:

Board and clothing for boys	-	$100.00
For missionary's trips	-	30.00
Wages for a maid	-	12.00
Personal needs	-	100.00
Total		$242.00[67]

In 1853 Edward Baierlein was called as a missionary to India, and so he left the Saginaw Valley. Baierlein had worked for six years among the Chippewa Indians in Michigan, five of which were spent at Bethany. When he left, there were fifty-eight souls, a church, and a school.[68] Baierlein continued to serve in the mission field in India. He retired at Clarens Montreaux, France, where he died on October 12, 1901, at the age of eighty-two.[69]

Baierlein had been assisted by a man named Ernst Gustav Hermann Miessler who was born in Silesia. When Baierlein accepted the call to India, Miessler served on and continued the work. Finally, the Indians were moved by the govern-

ment to a reservation in Isabella County, Michigan. The mission stations in the Saginaw Valley were disbanded. Miessler did not want to quit his work among the Indians, so he went to Isabella County with them. The mission board, however, did not feel that the work in Isabella County was producing the results that it should, so Miessler was advised in 1868 to give it up.[70]

In regard to the work among the Indians, See His Banner Forward Go, a book put out by The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod at its centennial in 1947, tells us that

> the Indian cemetery of the old Bethany mission near St. Louis, Michigan, with its twenty graves of Indian Christians here laid to rest, still testifies of the zeal to win the natives of our country for Christ and His church.[71]

Prior to the moving of the Indians, the work had been going very well in the mission stations. In a report of the Board of Heathen Missions in 1848, the work at Frankenmuth was shown to have become "firmly established and even spread out." The report continues:

> The school, more stable than at other times, always numbers from twenty to twenty-four pupils, of whom a few, by virtue of the constant repetition on the part of the teacher, have memorized Luther's Catechism in the Indian translation.[72]

In 1847 Pastor Craemer wrote to the Missouri Synod:

> The most purposeful way to do work among the Indians is through mission colonies. We think of it in this way: a missionary who is properly certified by a recognized orthodox church body makes it known that with God's help he intends to establish a mission colony among the Indians. Men and youth of the Lutheran Confessions gather around him and call him as their pastor. They then go forth, and at a designated place establish

> a colony. The missionary preaches the Word of God to the heathen while the colonists contribute their part by the example of a Christian life in order to accustom the Indians to an ordered way of living.[73]

In 1849 the colonies in the Saginaw Valley were transferred to the Missouri Synod by Loehe and the Collegium of the Evangelical Lutheran Mission at Leipzig.

Craemer was called by the Missouri Synod to be a professor at Fort Wayne in 1850. Loehe wrote concerning Craemer's election:

> The Synod knows real well what it is doing by the election of Craemer, and one must confess that it could have hardly chosen a more sincere representative of its convictions and practice than him.[74]

Craemer served this institution until he died. His work here was exceptional, as can be testified by the Reverend H. Ruhland in his article in the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly entitled: "Friedrich Carl Theodor Ruhland," which is a biography of his father. "God preserved his [F. C. T. Ruhland's] eagerness for the theological studies which were blessed under the untiring and faithful teachers Dr. Wilhelm Sihler and Professor August Craemer."[75]

In writing about Pastor August Craemer, Professor W. Gustave Polack in his article in the 1936 Concordia Theological Monthly says:

> Much praise has been given to F. C. D. Wyneken for his unselfish labors in behalf of the spiritual and temporal needs of the scattered Germans in Northern Indiana, Western Ohio, and Southern Michigan, and we would not detract one iota from the credit that belongs to Wyneken, by the grace of God, but the task that confronted Craemer was a greater one. To organize a colony in the forest

> primeval of the Saginaw Valley, a colony composed of young Bavarian men and women who had no conception of what confronted them, whose first and natural reaction was an intense homesickness for the fatherland and a longing to return when they found themselves forced to construct the rudest, most primitive huts for shelter, and to hew down the giants of the forest for clearings on which to raise a few vegetables for food, when they fell a prey to thirst and fever for lack of proper food and water, when they suffered from the bitter cold of a Michigan winter and other privations - that was a task of no mean proportions.[76]

In looking at the work in the Saginaw Valley, we must also consider for a moment the great work of Pastor Ferdinand Sievers. The Gemeindebuch der evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinde zum heiligen Kreuz zu Saginaw, Michigan, shows the great work that Pastor Sievers did in bringing Christianity to this region.[77] Dr. Ludwig Fuerbringer says that "he stands almost on an even plane with Wyneken among the fathers of the church" as a missionary.[78] Not only did he serve Frankenlust, but he also served Amelith, Saginaw, and later Bay City, or "Lower Saginaw" as it was called at that time. He also founded congregations at Monitor and at Town Beaver. In addition, he traveled widely for the Synod, going to Ohio in 1850, Northern Michigan in 1851, Minnesota in 1856, Northern Michigan again in 1865, to name just a few.[79] From looking at all the records, we truly have to say that the work in the Saginaw Valley prospered through the labors of men such as these that we have seen.

CHAPTER III

THE DREAM TODAY

The motto of the founders of Frankenmuth, which was on the original seal of the church, shows the faith of the fathers and also serves as a witness to the present and future generations: "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man may take thy crown." (Revelation 2:10).[1]

Yes, these settlers left prosperous lives in Germany because of an idea, a beautiful, noble idea - to preach the Gospel to the heathen, one untouched by the rationalistic theology of their homeland. What was their reward? We can go to the very words of Wilhelm Loehe for an answer. "My reward is this: that I have the privilege of serving!"[2]

As was pointed out earlier by Professor Polack, life was not easy for these settlers. They had problems on all sides. One problem in doing mission work in Frankenmuth came from an unexpected source - the Methodists. They were used to doing mission work among the Indians and resented very much the Frankenmuth settlers. "They had been accustomed to staging revivals and merely trying to educate the Indians to white men's ways, that the patient instruction of Craemer angered them."[3]

In addition to this, the settlers had to go through a great many more problems and hardships. It took the early ones fifty days to cross the Atlantic, and another month from

New York to the Saginaw Valley. Here was an area that was totally uncivilized, and so they had to make a place to live in the wilderness. They did all this, not because they were in search of wealth or an easy life, but because they wanted to do the work of the Lord. As we see their lives, we see that they took very seriously the Christian faith. This can be shown by their coming in the first place, by their churches and schools, and by the great number of young people that they have sent into full-time service in the church.

God richly blessed the work in the Saginaw Valley. Loehe's dream succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. Today the area is flourishing, both spiritually ~~and~~ materially. Some of the best farm land in the Midwest is in the Saginaw Valley. The largest Lutheran parochial school in the country is at Frankenmuth, and some of the finest congregations in The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod are in this valley. One of the very best pictures to be drawn of the Saginaw Valley today is to be found in the newest Statistical Yearbook of the Missouri Synod. Here we see that there are over 24,000 baptized souls in the churches there. These kinds of figures speak for themselves.[4]

All of this started because one man had a dream, a dream of bringing Christ to the many heathen who were perishing in their ignorance. The great accomplishments in the Saginaw Valley stand as one more accomplishment and monument in Christendom to the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER I

[1]One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Book of St. Lorenz Lutheran Church (South Hackensack: Ecclesiastical Color Publishers, 1970), p. 32.

CHAPTER II

[1]Theodore Graebner, Church Bells in the Forest (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), p. 17.

[2]The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1911), IX, 393.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Carl S. Meyer, Moving Frontiers (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 47-48.

[5]Concordia Cyclopedia, ed. Ludwig Fuerbringer, Theodore Engelder, and P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 54.

[6]Meyer, p. 55.

[7]William F. Arndt, "Some Notes on Claus Harms," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXVI (July, 1955), 541.

[8]Concordia Cyclopedia, p. 413.

[9]Graebner, p. 18.

[10]The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed. Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1911), VIII, 165.

[11]Augustine, Confessions, XIII, 14, quoted according to A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, First Series, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Co., 1886-1890), I, 180.

[12]Wilhelm Loehe, Three Books About the Church, trans. James L. Schaaf (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 6-7.

[13]Ibid., p. 107.

[14]Concordia Cyclopedia, p. 413.

[15]Loehe, p. 59.

[16]Graebner, p. 8.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Theodore Graebner, The Story of Our Church in America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), p. 8.

[19]Friedrich Wyneken, Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerika (Germany, 1840).

[20]Ibid.

[21] Herman Zehnder, Teach My People The Truth (Bay City, 1970), p. 13.

[22]G. E. Hageman, Friedrich Conrad Dietrich Wyneken (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1926), p. 39.

[23]Wyneken.

[24]Zehnder, p. 14.

[25]W. H. T. Dau, Ebenezer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1922), pp. 80-81.

[26]Meyer, p. 97.

[27]W. G. Polack, Building a Great Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 49.

[28]Zehnder, p. 21.

[29]Hans Kretsel, Wilhelm Loehe der Missionsmann und Diakonissenvater (Erlangen, 1936), p. 44.

[30]Theodore Schaefer, Wilhelm Loehe (Germany, 1909), p. 52.

[31]Dau, p. 87.

[32]Wilhelm Loehe, Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und ueber Nordamerika (Germany, 1843), I.

[33]Martin Schmidt, Wort Gottes und Fremdlingschaft: Die Kirche vor dem Auswanderangsproblem des 19. Jahrhunderts (Erlangen: Martin Luther, 1953), p. 57.

[34]One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Book, p. 5.

[35]Ibid., p. 8.

[36]J. Deinzer, Wilhelm Loehe's Leben (Germany, 1935), III, 41.

[37]H. O. A. Keinath, My Church (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 36.

[38]R. W. Heintze, "Something About the German Lutheran Colonies in Saginaw County, Michigan," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly (hereafter referred to as CHIQ), IV (April, 1931), 18.

[39]Charles F. Luckhard, Faith in the Forest (Sebewaing: Charles Luckhard, 1952), p. 48.

[40]W. G. Polack, Fathers and Founders (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1938), p. 61.

[41]Dau, p. 88.

[42]John H. C. Fritz, "The One Hundredth Anniversary of the Franconian Settlements in Michigan, 1845-1945," Concordia Theological Monthly (hereafter referred to as CTM), XV (February, 1944), 97.

[43]Deinzer, III, 41.

[44]Zehnder, p. 22.

[45]Fritz, p. 97.

[46]E. A. Mayer, Geschichte der evangelisch-lutherischen St. Lorenz-Gemeinde (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), p. 27.

[47]Heintze, p. 19.

[48]W. W. Florer, Early Michigan Settlements (Ann Arbor: W. W. Florer, 1941), p. 21.

[49]Dau, p. 89.

[50]"Community Regulations for the Community of Frankenmuth," II.

[51]Florer, p. 23.

[52]Luckhard, p. 51.

[53]Heintze, p. 19.

[54]Fritz, p. 98.

[55]Heintze, p. 20.

[56]Fritz, p. 98.

[57]Ibid., p. 100.

[58]Friedrich C. L. Koch, Die Deutschen Colonien in der Naehe des Saginaw-Flusses (Braunschwieg, 1851).

[59]A. L. Graebner, Half a Century of Sound Lutheranism in America (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1893) pp. 22-23.

[60]Polack, Building, p. 53.

[61]Dau, p. 90.

[62]Keinath, p. 68.

[63]Walter P. Schoenfuhs, "Edward Raimund Baierlein: Lutheran Missionary to the Indians in America and Asia," CHIQ, XXVII (January, 1955), 145.

[64]Missionsnachrichten, Lutheraner, IV (September 20, 1847), 15.

[65]Fritz, p. 101.

[66]Schoenfuhs, p. 146.

[67]Luckhard, p. 62.

[68]Schoenfuhs, p. 159.

[69]Luckhard, p. 63.

[70]Fritz, p. 101.

[71]Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, See His Banner Forward Go (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 10-11.

[72]P. E. Kretzmann, "Documents and Resolutions Pertaining to the Lutheran Missions among the Indians in Michigan, 1844-1869," CHIQ, II (January, 1930), 100.

[73]One Hundred Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Book, p. 5.

[74]Walter A. Baepler, A Century of Grace (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 123.

[75]H. Ruhland, "Friedrich Carl Theodor Ruhland," CHIQ, VIII (April, 1935), 30.

[76]W. G. Polack, "Frederick August Craemer," CTM, VII (September, 1936), 707.

[77]Gemeindebuch der evangelisch-lutherischen Gemeinde zum heiligen Kreuz zu Saginaw, Michigan (Saginaw: Reitler, 1899) p. 13.

[78]Ludwig Ernst Fuerbringer, Persons and Events (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), p. 53.

[79]Ibid., pp. 54-55.

CHAPTER III

[1]E. A. Mayer, Geschichte der evangelisch-lutherischen St. Lorenz Gemeinde (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), p. 8.

[2]J. Deinzer, Wilhelm Loehe's Leben (Germany, 1935), III, 179.

[3]Albert Huegli, Jr., "The Loehe Colonies in Saginaw County, Michigan, 1845-1854," (Unpublished B. D. Thesis), p. 20.

[4]Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, Statistical Yearbook (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), pp. 137-145.

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