ABSTRACT

Making Their Own Faith:
Lutheranism and American Culture in the Civil War Era

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From 1830 to 1900, the American Lutheran church grew from less than 50,000 members to more than 1,600,000—five times the growth rate of the U.S. population—and became the nation's fourth largest religious denomination. Along with this tremendous growth came dramatic changes in theological and cultural outlook. In the antebellum era, the majority of Lutherans believed that their church was on its way to becoming part of the American Protestant mainstream. By increasing intra-Lutheran unity, cooperating with Anglo-evangelicals, and modifying certain traditional doctrines considered to be too Catholic, they hoped to raise their denomination's level of respectability and influence. Yet by the end of the nineteenth century, the opposite had occurred. Divided into numerous competing church bodies, wary of and often hostile toward other Protestants, and ardently committed to their church's historic confessions, the vast majority of Lutherans stood as conservative outsiders in American religious life.

The fulcrum of this change was the Civil War. In 1860, Lutherans stood more institutionally united than ever before and the majority supported the project of making

their church an integral part of mainstream evangelical Protestantism. Six years later, the church was fractured by sectional divisions and, even more significantly, theological disputes shaped in large part by debates over liberty, slavery, the Union, and religious nationalism. Following the schisms of the Civil War years, Lutheranism turned inward. Though divided institutionally, most Lutherans in the postbellum era embraced a form of the faith that comprised four components: theological confessionalism, ecclesiastical separatism, political and social conservatism, and American exceptionalism.

Previous histories have stressed the role of immigration from Germany and Scandinavia in the formation of American Lutheranism's conservatism and outsiderhood. While these new arrivals from Europe undoubtedly increased the size of the church, the intellectual transformation of U.S. Lutheranism was driven primarily by native-born Americans and immigrants who formed their ideas in the context of the nation's religion and culture. Rather than an importation from Europe then, the confessional and separatist identity of Lutheranism in the United States was a distinctively American creation.

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Lutheranism and American Culture in the Civil War Era

by

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A Dissertation

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I am now serving as a professor of history at Martin Luther College, my alma mater. I'm thankful for the numerous colleagues who have guided my first year of full-time teaching, especially my three associates in the history department: Paul Koelpin, my former teacher and still mentor; Pete Baganz, my tolerant office mate and our new department chair; and Kari Muente, fellow newbie and great listener. I have been privileged to have thoughtful, hard-working students in my courses. I look forward to more in the years ahead.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction: The Shaping of an American Lutheranism

In the late 1920s, two writers identified the central issue for understanding the history of Lutheranism in the nineteenth-century United States. The first was H. Richard Niebuhr, the renowned American church historian and professor at Union Theological Seminary. In his *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, Niebuhr drew attention to what he called "an anomalous fact," namely "that the Lutheran churches of America should be so much more conservative in their doctrine than are the Lutheran churches of Germany from which they took their rise."[1] The second writer, Olaf Edvard Moe, a Norwegian Lutheran clergyman and professor at the University of Oslo, made the same point with even greater specificity. In an article on the distinguishing characteristics of the three branches of Lutheranism throughout the world, Moe noted that "the peculiarity of American Lutheranism, compared with that of Germany and the Scandinavian lands, lies chiefly in its confessional firmness, its zeal for pure Lutheran doctrine."[2]

That Niebuhr and Moe noticed a divergence between European and American Lutheranism is unsurprising. Observers of religion in the United States from Alexis de Tocqueville to Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as well as many modern scholars, have examined the "Atlantic divide" that developed over the course of the nineteenth century. Every religious tradition transplanted from the Old World to the New was shaped by its

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[1] H. Richard. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), 232.

[2] Ole Edvard Moe, "The European Characterization of the Three Branches of the Lutheran Church," trans. Abdel Ross Wentz, *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 1 (July 1928): 310.

interaction with the politics and culture of the United States.[3] In particular, the voluntary nature of American religious life shaped nineteenth-century immigrant churches. "[E]thnic denominations," observed historian Timothy Smith in a landmark article, "were not transplants of traditional institutions but communities of commitment and, therefore, arenas of change."[4] Because of those factors, it is hardly remarkable that Lutherans also developed their own distinctively American identity.

What is surprising is the content of that identity. In 1830, the Lutheran church in the United States totaled less than 50,000 members, mostly descendants of German-speaking immigrants to the British colonies. Voices both inside and outside the denomination believed that the best way to become American was by adapting Lutheranism to the nation's form of Christianity, evangelical Protestantism. By the end of the nineteenth century, that situation had changed significantly. Large-scale immigration from Germany and Scandinavia dramatically increased the size of the church. In seventy years, it grew at five times the rate of the U.S population, numbering more than 1,600,000 members by 1900.[5] But just as consequential was American Lutheranism's intellectual transformation. Rather than transplanting a European form of the faith to the

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[3] For a perceptive analysis of this divergence, see Thomas Albert Howard, *God and the Atlantic: America, Europe and the Religious Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). See also Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002); and Elisabeth Glaser and Hermann Wellenreuther, eds., *Bridging the Atlantic: The Question of American Exceptionalism in Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), esp. 69-108.

[4] Timothy L. Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America," *American Historical Review* 83 (December 1978): 1179. See also J. C. K. Preus, "From Norwegian State Church to American Free Church," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 25 (1972): 186-224; and Philip J. Anderson, "From Compulsion to Persuasion: Voluntary Religion and the Swedish Immigrant Experience," *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 66 (January 2015): 3-23.

[5] For the statistics in this paragraph, see "Statistics of the Lutheran Church for 1830," *Lutheran Observer*, September 1, 1831, 44; and Grace E. Sheeleigh, ed., *The Lutheran Almanac for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1901* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1901), 84-85.

New World or assimilating into the Anglo-Protestant mainstream, Lutherans in the United States created a new version of the faith made up of both distinctively Lutheran and quintessentially American ideas. That creation was a synthesis of four components: theological confessionalism, ecclesiastical separatism, political and social conservatism, and American exceptionalism.

As Niebuhr and Moe noted, the first and most noticeable characteristic of Lutheranism in the United States was its theological confessionalism. A defining feature of most American Protestant theology in the nineteenth century—both in the antebellum era dominated by evangelicalism and in the postbellum decades when that evangelical consensus began to fragment—was the insistence on the right and duty of Christians to interpret the Bible for themselves apart from the creeds of the past. Lutherans, though sharing many of the biblicist assumptions of other American Protestants, differed in the weight they placed on their church's historic teachings.[6] For Lutherans, those teachings were contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, which contained the three ecumenical creeds, as well as seven Lutheran confessions, or symbols. By the end of the nineteenth century, the vast majority of American Lutherans agreed that modern believers were bound to pledge themselves to those three-hundred-year-old documents, particularly the Augsburg Confession of 1530. For most mainstream Protestants in the United States,

[6] On nineteenth-century American biblicism, see Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and Mark A. Noll, "The Bible, Minority Faiths, and the American Protestant Mainstream, 1860-1925," in Jonathan D. Sarna, ed., *Minority Faiths and the American Protestant Mainstream* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 191-231. On the marginalization of confessionalism in American Christianity, see D. G. Hart, *The Lost Soul of American Protestantism* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002); and Douglas A. Sweeney and Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, eds., *Holding on to the Faith: Confessional Traditions in American Christianity* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008).

such a requirement militated against the ideas of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) and liberty of conscience.

Buttressing American Lutherans' insistence on confessional purity was a hesitation, and often outright refusal, to collaborate with other Christians. The majority of Protestants in the United States regarded doctrinal differences as important, but they also believed that such disagreements posed little barrier toward either partnering in missions, education, and social reform, or sharing each other's pulpits and altars.[7] By the end of the nineteenth century, most Lutherans rejected this American vision of denominationalism. Instead, they argued that, in order for members of two churches to work with each other, they must first be in complete, or nearly complete, theological agreement. In fact, some extended this principle to their co-religionists, refusing to work with other Lutherans who differed with them on a certain points of doctrine. While the most influential Protestants in the nineteenth-century United States viewed themselves as joint laborers in a "righteous empire," the majority of Lutherans either rejected or distanced themselves from this ecumenical outlook.[8]

Along with doctrinal confessionalism and ecclesiastical separatism came a conservative view of politics and society. Though hardly united on every issue, in the final decades of the nineteenth century the majority of Lutherans criticized a host of ideas which they deemed either radical or revolutionary. In particular, most opposed the attempts led by Anglo-Protestant reformers to "Christianize society," such as temperance

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[7] For example, see Robert Baird, *Religion in the United States of America: Or An Account of the Origin, Progress, Relations to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States with Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), 267-69.

[8] Martin E. Marty, *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986).

legislation or the various efforts collectively known as the Social Gospel. Lutherans, of course, were hardly alone among American Christians, both Protestant and Catholic, in their political and social conservatism. But more so than most other believers in the nineteenth-century United States, Lutherans disavowed the project of imposing their moral and religious views on American society through the political process.[9] Instead, most advocated not only a strict separation of church and state, but a sharp division between religion and politics.

Lutherans, however, were not complete quietists; instead, most trumpeted a paradoxical form of American exceptionalism. Once again, they were not alone among Christians in viewing the United States and its free institutions as uniquely favored and blessed by God. Yet, whereas mainstream Protestants viewed the nation's providential role in history through the lens of a presumed Anglo-Saxon supremacy, most Lutherans grounded their view of American exceptionalism in the nation's religious liberty.[10] Specifically, they argued that the freedom of the church from the state granted them the opportunity to establish the Lutheran church in its purest form. Additionally, Lutherans argued that the American idea of the separation of church and state derived from Martin Luther. Consequently, they believed that Lutherans best exemplified the proper understanding of American freedom. As one prominent leader wrote in 1902,

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[9] See Gaines M. Foster, *Moral Reconstruction: Christian Lobbyists and the Federal Legislation of Morality, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[10] The most famous exposition of this Anglo-Saxon Protestant version of American exceptionalism in the nineteenth century is Josiah Strong, *Our Country: Its Possible Future and Its Present Crisis* (New York: Baker and Taylor, 1885).

"Lutheranism and Americanism dwell in perfect harmony, and, other things being equal, a Lutheran makes the best American: the consistent representative of American liberty."[11]

Though each of those four individual components could find parallels and resemblances in other Christian groups on both sides of the Atlantic, taken together, they comprised a religious identity that differentiated American Lutherans not only from their co-religionists in Europe, but also from other Protestants in the United States.

Argument

The central thesis of this dissertation is that Lutherans in the United States forged that synthesis of ideas through their interactions with the religious, political, and social developments of the Civil War era. Though many of the denomination's intellectual quarrels were long-standing and had deep roots in the Lutheran tradition, the changes within Lutheranism in the nineteenth-century United States were not the product of solely theological disputes. Instead, the conservative transformation of American Lutheranism was shaped by the era's debates over liberty, slavery, the Union, and religious nationalism. And though new arrivals from Germany and Scandinavia altered the church's size and ethnic composition, American Lutheranism's distinctive identity was not an importation from Europe. Rather, the synthesis of theological confessionalism, ecclesiastical separatism, political and social conservatism, and American exceptionalism that came to prevail among Lutherans in the nineteenth-century United States was American-made.

[11] [G.] F[riedrich] Bente, "Lutherthum und Americanerthum," *Lehre und Wehre* 48 (November 1902): 325. For a translation, see "Lutheranism and Americanism," *Theological Quarterly* 8 (January 1904): 55-63.

In the antebellum United States, the majority of Lutherans held to a different vision of what an American version of their faith should look like. Rather than an unwavering commitment to the church's confessions, many believed that several of Lutheranism's historic teachings, particularly those concerning the sacraments, were relics of medieval Catholic error and that Lutherans should adopt doctrines and practices more in line with Anglo-evangelicalism. Most advocated inter-denominational cooperation with other American Protestants and supported intra-Lutheran union based on the toleration of different doctrinal views. The majority of antebellum Lutherans also considered themselves neither quietists nor reactionaries in the realms of politics and society. Though hesitant to address the central issue of slavery, many promoted various evangelical causes, most notably temperance. On the eve of the Civil War, most Lutherans aspired to become members of the American Protestant establishment.

The war changed this situation drastically. As the fundamental tensions within the nation led to a clash of armies, Lutherans experienced their own internal civil war. In the 1860s, Lutherans erupted in series of controversies over the issues of confessional subscription and church unity, leading ultimately to schism. Framing and shaping their doctrinal and ecclesiastical debates were the political and religious questions surrounding the national conflict. By the end of the war, most Lutherans adopted a stricter attitude toward both confessional subscription and inter-church cooperation. This conservative transformation in the realm of theology coincided with a conservative turn in their views toward politics and society. The patriotic zealotry of mainstream Christians during the Civil War led many Lutherans to distance themselves from mainstream Protestantism and to renounce all forms of what they deemed as political and social radicalism.

In the decades following the Civil War, most Lutherans withdrew to their own parochial enclaves. Yet they viewed their strategic retreat not as a disavowal of their American identity but as a way to demonstrate a better religious option. Before the war, most Lutherans contended that they should "Americanize" by assimilating into the nation's Anglo-Protestant majority. In the postbellum era, most argued that Lutheranism's route to Americanization lay in emphasizing their confessional distinctiveness. By the end of the nineteenth century, Lutherans occupied a paradoxical position: they viewed themselves as both critical outsiders of mainstream American religion and the exemplars of what it meant to be truly American.

The course of Lutheranism in the nineteenth-century United States bears some resemblance to the paths taken by several other American religious traditions. The most notable comparison is with Roman Catholicism. Nineteenth-century Lutherans mirrored Catholics in their internal division between self-proclaimed "Americanizers" and a conservative opposition. Additionally, as with Catholics, the Civil War was a crucial event in shaping Lutherans' conceptions of their place in American politics and culture.[12] Parallels also can be found in Christian groups whose Old World origins, like those of Lutherans, lay outside of Great Britain, most notably the Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, and Mennonites. Like their fellow continental Protestants, many Lutherans differentiated themselves from the Anglo-Protestant mainstream by emphasizing their ethnic distinctiveness.[13] Finally, nineteenth-century Lutherans resembled not only other

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[12] For a useful effort at comparing these two traditions, see Mel Piehl, "American Catholicism and American Lutheranism: Toward a Comparative Perspective," in Aug. R. Suelflow, ed., *The Lutheran Historical Conference: Essays and Reports, 1982* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1984), 52-67.

[13] On the shared role of ethnic outsiderhood in these non-British Protestant traditions, see James D. Bratt, "Protestant Immigrants and the Protestant Mainstream," in Sarna, ed., *Minority Faiths*, 110-35. On the relationship of religion and ethnicity in American history, see Martin E. Marty, "Ethnicity: The

Christian traditions, but also nineteenth-century Jews in the tensions between native-born Americans whose heritage traced back to the decades preceding the nation's founding and their newly arrived immigrant co-religionists.[14]

Yet an examination of those parallel religious groups also reveals the uniqueness of Lutheranism's status in the religious history of the nineteenth-century United States. Though sometimes disparaged as less than Protestant, American Lutherans never experienced anything resembling the antagonism faced by Roman Catholics, much less Jews and other non-Christian groups. Their status as outsiders was largely self-chosen, rather than forced upon them by prejudice. Additionally, Lutheranism became a principally immigrant religion much less suddenly than Catholicism or Judaism. At least into the 1870s, the majority of Lutherans in the United States were native-born English-speakers. Finally, unlike American Catholics, Lutherans maintained few institutional ties to churches in Europe.[15]

The comparison between Lutherans and other continental Protestants likewise reveals more dissimilarities than similarities. The Dutch and German Reformed shared with Lutherans a sense of ethnic outsiderhood, but their Calvinistic heritage provided a theological point of contact between themselves and many Anglo-Protestants that Lutherans never could match. Even Mennonites, whose positions on pacifism and church

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Skeleton in Religion in America," *Church History* 41 (March 1972): 5-21; Harry S. Stout, "Ethnicity: The Vital Center of Religion in America." *Ethnicity* 2 (June 1975): 204-24; Smith, "Religion and Ethnicity in America;" and James D. Bratt, "Religion and Ethnicity in America: A Critique of Timothy L. Smith," *Fides et Historia* 12 (Spring 1980): 8-17.

[14] On these tensions, see Jonathan D. Sarna, *American Judaism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004), 135-207.

[15] On the vast network of connections between Catholics in the United States and Europe, particularly Italy, see Peter R. D'Agostino, *Rome in America: Transnational Catholic Ideology from the Risorgimento to Fascism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

discipline distanced themselves from most mainstream Protestants, shared a set of convictions about the sacraments and conversion that aligned them more closely with American evangelicalism than did the historic teachings of the Lutheran church. Perhaps most significantly, the number of Lutherans dwarfed that of other American Protestants of non-British origin. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Lutheran church was three times the size of the Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, and Mennonite churches combined.[16]

Thus, the story of Lutheranism in the nineteenth century, while resembling that of other religious groups in the United States, was in many ways exceptional. Other churches were shaped by the Civil War era and shared many of the traits that came to characterize American Lutheranism. Yet in no other denomination did the era's events and conflicts produce quite the same result: a synthesis of confessionalism in doctrine, isolation in church affairs, conservatism on political and social issues, and the paradoxical posture of being both critical outsiders and proud Americans. Over the course of the Civil War era then, Lutherans in the United States forged their own version of the faith, distinctive in the context of nineteenth-century American religion but also informed and shaped by the very political, cultural, and religious forces they were arrayed against.

Historiographical Significance

Since the story of American Lutheranism's nineteenth-century transformation traverses over a hundred years of historical developments and touches on an array of

[16] Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 107-9, 124, 151.

political and cultural issues, this study speaks to a wide range of historical fields and subfields. Consequently, a comprehensive review of the pertinent scholarly literature is impracticable. Instead, most of the various historiographical conversations with which this study intersects will be discussed as they arise in individual chapters. However, three areas of scholarship bear mentioning at the outset.

The first is the growing body of research surrounding religion and the long Civil War era. The initial renascence of Civil War religious history, inaugurated with the 1998 collection of essays, *Religion and American Civil War*, and culminating in George Rable's 2010 synthesis, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, focused almost exclusively on the four years from Fort Sumter to Appomattox.[17] More recently, scholars have extended the chronological scope of their studies, showing the broad sweep of religious changes from the antebellum era through Reconstruction. Three recent studies epitomize this approach. Molly Oshatz's *Slavery and Sin* demonstrates how antebellum debates about the morality of the peculiar institution, which culminated in the Civil War, paved the way for the development of postbellum liberal Protestantism. In *Religion, Race, and the Making of Confederate Kentucky*, Luke Harlow traces the rise of moderate antislavery views among evangelicals in Kentucky and shows how, after the war ended the debate over slavery, these same conservative Protestants made common cause with their former proslavery opponents to establish a regime of white supremacy. A final example comes from April Holm's *Kingdom Divided*, which examines the influence of border-state Baptists,

[17] Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); and George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). A more in-depth treatment of this historiography is found in Chapter Four.

Methodists, and Presbyterians on evangelical political theology.[18] This dissertation resembles those works in viewing the Civil War as the pivotal point in a larger religious story.

Another scholarly conversation to which this dissertation speaks is the long-standing debate over how the Civil War affected ethnic and religious minorities. Classic studies by Ella Lonn and William Burton, as well as a several recent works, have argued that the war was an assimilating force for many immigrant groups.[19] Conversely, scholars such as Walter Kamphoefner, Christian Keller, and Susannah Ural have emphasized the ethnic separateness of German and Irish Americans during and after the war.[20] In a

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[18] Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Luke E. Harlow, *Religion, Race and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and April Holm, *A Kingdom Divided: Evangelicals, Loyalty, and Sectionalism in the Civil War Era* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2017). See also William B. Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union: How the Civil War Created a Separate Catholic America* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); and Lucas Volkman, *Houses Divided: Evangelical Schisms and the Crisis of the Union in Missouri* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018).

[19] Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Union Army and Navy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951); William L. Burton, *Melting Pot Soldiers: The Union's Ethnic Regiments* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1988); Martin W. Öfele, *True Sons of the Republic: European Immigrants in the Union Army* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2008); Christian G. Samito, *Becoming American Under Fire: Irish Americans, African Americans, and the Politics of Citizenship during the Civil War Era* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); Stephen D. Engle, "Yankee Dutchmen: Germans, the Union, and Wartime Identity," in Susannah J. Ural, ed., *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in America's Bloodiest Conflict* (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 11-56; Mischa Honeck, *We Are the Revolutionists: German-Speaking Immigrants and American Abolitionists after 1848* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); and Anders Bo Rasmussen, "'Drawn Together in a Blood Brotherhood': Civic Nationalism amongst Scandinavian Immigrants in the American Civil War Crucible," *American Studies in Scandinavia* 48, no. 2 (2016): 7-31.

[20] Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, eds., *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home*, trans. Susan Carter Vogel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1-34; Christian B. Keller, *Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007); and Susannah Ural Bruce, *The Harp and the Eagle: Irish-American Volunteers and the Union Army, 1861-1865* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). Another important study of ethnic identity and the Civil War emphasizes that most Irish American were more loyal to their local American communities than an imagined pan-ethnic identity: Ryan W. Keating, *Shades of Green: Irish Regiments, American Soldiers, and Local Communities in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017). For a recent overview of the historiography of European immigrants and the Civil War, see Christian B. Keller, "New Perspectives in Civil War Ethnic History and Their Implications for Twenty-First-Century Scholarship," in Andrew L. Slap and Michael Thomas Smith,

similar vein, John McGreevy and William Kurtz have demonstrated how the war hastened the trend among American Catholics, already present before the conflict, toward institutional and ideological isolation.[21] Similar trends could be found among other religious outsiders, the Mormons and the Mennonites.[22]

However, as several scholars of ethnic and religious minorities have shown, the debate between assimilation and separation rests on a false binary. Steven Nolt and others have highlighted the paradoxical process of "ethnicization-as-Americanization," in which "ethnicity is derived from and stated in terms of the American experience."[23] Stressing one's German, Polish, Mexican, or some other ethnic identity not only is compatible with American national identity, but the two identities are also mutually reinforcing. Similarly, R. Laurence Moore has argued that the construction of religious "outsiderhood" is a form of Americanization. According to Moore, groups who stood apart from the Anglo-

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eds., *This Distracted and Anarchical People: New Answers for Old Questions about the Civil War-Era North* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 123-41.

[21] John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 7-126; and Kurtz, *Excommunicated from the Union*.

[22] E. B. Long, *The Saints and the Union: Utah Territory during the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981); and James O. Lehman and Steven M. Nolt, *Mennonites, Amish, and the American Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

[23] Steven M. Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land: Pennsylvania Germans and the Early Republic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 5. For other works that exemplify this approach, see Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Kathleen Neils Conzen, David A. Gerber, Ewa Morawska, George E. Pozzetta, and Rudolph J. Vecoli, "The Invention of Ethnicity: A Perspective from the U.S.A.," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 12 (Fall 1992): 3-41; George J. Sánchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); Orm Øverland, *Immigrant Minds, American Identities: Making the United States Home, 1870-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000); June Granatir Alexander, *Ethnic Pride, American Patriotism: Slovaks and Other New Immigrants in the Interwar Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004); Dag Blanck, *The Creation of an Ethnic Identity: Being Swedish American in the Augustana Synod, 1860-1917* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2006); April R. Schultz, *Ethnicity on Parade: Inventing the Norwegian American through Celebration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2009); Michael J. Douma, *How Dutch Americans Stayed Dutch: An Historical Perspective on Ethnic Identities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

Protestant mainstream "had to become Americans by insisting on differences which separated them from other Americans."[24] This dissertation draws on the insights of these latter scholars to argue that Lutherans in the Civil War era developed their own unique combination of separation and assimilation, what I call "confessionalization-as-Americanization." Lutheran outsiderhood was not incompatible with American identity. In fact, by becoming more rigorous Lutherans, they believed they were becoming better Americans.

A final area of scholarship with which this dissertation necessarily interacts is Lutheran church history. Because the nineteenth century is the setting for the origin story of the majority of American Lutheranism's various branches, the corpus of Lutheran denomination history about this era is sizeable. Collectively, however, these studies are deficient in two respects. First, while Lutheran church historians have produced numerous studies on individual synods (i.e. church bodies), ethnic groups, and prominent leaders, few have attempted to tie together the story of nineteenth-century American Lutheranism into a coherent narrative. Second, most have failed to situate their studies in the context of American politics and culture. The reason for these two deficiencies is the same. Because the institutional development of Lutheranism in the United States is so complex and fully accounting for the myriad synods divided by ethnicity, geography, and doctrine is such an unwieldy task, denominational historians have focused on explicating the intricate details of intra-Lutheran divisions at the expense of examining the broader

[24] R. Laurence Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 68.

contexts in which those developments took place.[25] This dissertation seeks to shift American Lutheran church history away from this myopic parochialism, while also remaining mindful that, as historian Laurie Maffly-Kipp recently observed, "the antiquated intricacies of denominations… mattered to nineteenth century [believers]." In short, I aim to show how the internal development of Lutheranism in the United States was shaped by the debates, movements, and rhetoric of the Civil War era.[26]

Yet this dissertation does not merely seek to explicate a more comprehensive and contextualized denominational history of Lutheranism in the nineteenth-century United States. It also aims to demonstrate that the development and growth of Lutheranism should be viewed as a central component of American religious history and the history of the Civil War era. Currently, in both historical fields, this is not the case. Since the 1972 publication of *A Religious History of the American People* by Sydney Ahlstrom, himself a Lutheran, the space devoted to Lutheranism in the various surveys of American

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[25] Though various histories of Lutheranism in the United States will be cited throughout the dissertation, several of the most important works bear mention at the outset. First are the standard general histories that cover the broad sweep of American Lutheranism from its colonial beginnings to the present: Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964); E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); and Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). The second group consists of the most widely cited works on the transformation of nineteenth-century American Lutheranism: Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism* (New York: Century, 1927); Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America, 1840-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988); and David A. Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993).

[26] Laurie F. Maffly-Kipp, "The Burdens of Church History," *Church History* 82 (June 2013): 355. For other recent defenses of the centrality of denominations to American religious history, see John F. Wilson, "A New Denominational Historiography?" *Religion and American Culture* 5 (Summer 1995): 249-63; James H. Moorhead, "New Views of American History: Does Denominational History Have a Place?" *Journal of Presbyterian History* 76 (Fall 1998): 233-43; Keith Harper, ed., *American Denominational History: Perspectives on the Past, Prospects for the Future* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008); and Robert Bruce Mullin and Russell E. Richey, eds., *Reimagining Denominationalism: Interpretive Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

religious history has shrunk considerably.[27] In the scholarship on the Civil War era, Lutherans have rarely been present at all, even in those subfields where one would expect to find them: immigration and ethnicity, Midwest and Mid-Atlantic regionalism, or religion and politics.[28] A few rare exceptions aside, in recent historical scholarship Lutherans and Lutheranism are either conspicuously underrepresented or absent together.

This lack of inclusion can be attributed to the declining number of dissertations and scholarly monographs about Lutheranism since the 1970s. Over the course of the last forty years Evangelicals, Catholics, Mormons, and others have produced a vast quantity of quality scholarship on their respective traditions. Consequently, scholars from different backgrounds have also begun to examine those religious groups. Lutherans meanwhile have largely remained on the historiographical sidelines. Much of the blame rests on the intrinsic difficulties of writing American Lutheran history. Historian Christa Klein has written eloquently about these structural barriers:

> The graduate study of religion is no easy place in which to learn about the… history of Lutherans. The Lutheran narrative is not part of the discourse, does not fit the standard chronologies or measures or power, [and] demands more than the usual facility in foreign languages…. [Students] must seek self-education, which has its limitations, since professors will have had scant exposure to the primary sources or the dogmatic and cultural complexity of Lutheranism. Such experience is likely to fan the suspicion either that specialization in [Lutheran] history holds few possibilities for publishing or employment or that it consigns one to being a

[27] Cf. Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972) and recent histories, such as Catherine A. Brekus and W. Clark Gilpin, eds., *American Christianities: A History of Dominance and Diversity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); and Christopher Hodge Evans, *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013).

[28] See for example, the absence or near absence of Lutherans in Alison Clark Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Ginette Aley and J. L. Anderson, eds., *Union Heartland: The Midwestern Home Front during the Civil War* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2013); and Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

> major player in a smaller, more parochial world. Thus the cycle of Lutheran absence in the public study of American religion gets perpetuated.[29]

Klein does not mention several other impediments: Lutheran archives are housed at small, widely dispersed institutions that do not have the funds for travel grants and other scholarships; many nineteenth-century Lutheran periodicals are not digitized and several can only be accessed in print form; and no university press has a publication series devoted American Lutheranism.[30] Both the lack of initiative on the part of those interested in the subject and the inherent difficulties surrounding research, writing, and publication have produced a situation in which Lutherans and Lutheranism are absent from many of the historiographical conversations of which they should be a part.

Yet the only way to break to this cycle of exclusion is make the argument that Lutheran history is an essential component of American history. Jon Gjerde, the eminent historian of immigration and ethnicity, may have overstated the case when he wrote that "Lutheranism changed the United States just as the United States transformed American Lutheranism."[31] Gjerde's assertion, however, is not too wide of the mark. The story of Lutheranism is indispensable to understanding religion in the long Civil War era for no less than three reasons.

Most basically, Lutheranism matters because Lutherans were numerous. As the predominant faith of every Scandinavian nation and many parts of Germany, as a

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[29] Christa R. Klein, "Denominational History as Public History: The Lutheran Case," in Mullin and Richey, eds., *Reimagining Denominationalism*, 313.

[30] To cite just a few examples, the University of Illinois Press has published series on Anglicans and Mormons, the Johns Hopkins University Press publishes a series on Mennonite history and Jewish history, and Cornell University Press publishes a series on American Catholicism.

[31] Jon Gjerde and Peter Franson, "'Still the Inwardly Beautiful Bride of Christ': The Development of Lutheranism in the United States," in Hans Medick and Peer Schmidt, eds., *Luther zwischen den Kulturen: Zeitgenossenschaft – Weltwirkung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004), 191.

minority religion in other European nations and the United States, and as a missionary endeavor in parts of Africa, India, and the Americas, Lutheranism was the largest and most diverse branch of Protestantism in the nineteenth-century world. In the United States, the Lutheran church, as stated previously, totaled over 1,600,000 members by 1900. Yet this sizable figure is misleadingly small. It excludes unconfirmed children, whose addition brings the total closer to 2,500,000. It also fails to count other church bodies that, while not Lutheran in name, historically grew out of Lutheranism, such as the Moravian Church, the German Evangelical Synod, and the Swedish free church traditions. Finally and most significantly, it does not calculate adherents, or those who attended Lutheran churches periodically and generally assented to their teachings but did not meet the requirements of church membership. Historians of American religion have typically calculated that the inclusion of these non-members increases the constituency of a nineteenth-century church by a factor of three or four. In sum, at the dawn of the twentieth century, Lutheranism was at least the nominal faith of an estimated 7,500,000 people, or nearly one out of every ten Americans.[32]

Just as important as their vast numbers was a second factor: Lutheranism's liminal position in the American religious landscape. Throughout the nineteenth century, Lutheranism was the nation's largest Protestant tradition with origins outside the Anglosphere. As a stream of the Reformation mostly separate from the Reformed, Anglican, and Radical tributaries that flowed into American evangelicalism, Lutherans often drew from a wellspring of thinkers and traditions largely unknown to other

[32] On the "one-to-three" ratio, see Timothy L. Wesley, *The Politics of Faith during the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 32-33. On the Lutheran situation specifically, see *The Lutheran Almanac for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1861* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1861), 32; and George L. Kieffer, "The Difference between European and American Methods of Calculating Church Membership," *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 1 (July 1928): 314-19.

Protestants in the United States. Because of this, they were deemed by Anglo-evangelicals to "occupy a position apart… [from] the current of Protestant life" and even resemble "the Romish church."[33] Nevertheless, Lutherans' shared Reformation heritage ensured that they would never encounter the religious bigotry endured by Catholics, Mormons, and non-Christian religions. Additionally, while their German and Nordic origins placed them below Anglo-Saxons in the ethnic and racial ordering of nineteenth-century American society, Lutherans rarely experienced the overt prejudice faced by Southern and Eastern Europeans and, even more so, African Americans and non-Europeans.[34] Their "whiteness," a concept invariably bound up with religion in the United States, was rarely in question. [35] Lutheranism was therefore, in Gjerde's apt description, "neither part of the American Protestant center nor the Catholic 'other'."

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[33] H. K. Carroll, "American Lutherans and Their Divisions," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 64 (July 1882): 427; and Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary, Containing Definitions of All Religious Terms; a Comprehensive View of Every Article in the System of Divinity; an Impartial Account of All the Principal Denominations which have Subsisted in the Religious World from the Birth of Christ to the Present Day: Together with an Accurate Statement of the Most Remarkable Transactions and Events Recorded in Ecclesiastical History* (Philadelphia: James Kay, June and Company, 1830), 246

[34] As John Higham has shown, in the years after the Civil War it was not until the 1880s, when more and more "new immigrants" began arriving from countries besides those in Northern Europe, that nativism began to surge among old-stock Americans. Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2002).

[35] On Northern Europeans and American "whiteness," see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), 39-90; Jon Gjerde, "'Here in America There Is Neither King nor Tyrant': European Encounters with Race, 'Freedom,' and Their European Pasts," *Journal of the Early Republic* 19 (Winter 1999): 673-90; Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004); Jørn Brøndal, "'The Fairest among the So-Called White Races': Portrayals of Scandinavian Americans in the Filiopietistic and Nativist Literature of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33 (Spring 2014): 5-36; and Dag Blanck, "'A Mixture of People with Different Roots': Swedish Immigrants in the American Ethno-Racial Hierarchies," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 33 (Spring 2014): 37-54. On the centrality of "whiteness" to the ordering of American religion, see Edward J. Blum, Tracy Fessenden, Prema Kurien, and Judith Weisenfeld, "Forum: American Religion and 'Whiteness'," *Religion and American Culture* 19 (Winter 2009): 1-35; and Philipp Gollner, "Good White Christians: How Religion Created Race and Ethnic Privilege for Immigrants in America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2016).

Their position of "in-betweenness" illuminates the porous boundaries between "mainstream" and "outsider" religion in the nineteenth-century United States.[36]

Thirdly, scholars cannot fully understand the history of certain regions of the United States where Lutherans have made up a significant segment of the population without understanding the internal development of American Lutheranism. The Lutheran church became the central social institution for many German and Nordic immigrants, shaping not only the religion of the Mid-Atlantic, Upper Midwest, and Great Plains, but also those regions' politics and culture.[37] In short, the story of Lutheranism in the long Civil War era not only impacts the narrative of the religious history of the United States, but also has significance for the development of American political and cultural history.

While impacting the nineteenth-century United States in a variety of ways, the subjects of this study are ultimately important for their own sake. Despite American historians' commitment to giving space to numerous voices, some movements, ideas, and people are still considered less important than others. Historian Martin Marty exposes the "instincts that become prejudices" in this sardonic observation: "New England men have histories; Minnesota women do not. Southern generals deserve notice, northern homemakers and schoolteachers do not. Congregationalist religion matters, Lutheran piety does not."[38] In the end, the development of Lutheranism in the Civil War era

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[36] Gjerde and Franson, "'Still the Inwardly Beautiful Bride of Christ'," 191.

[37] See especially Robert C. Ostergren, "The Immigrant Church as a Symbol of Community and Place in the Upper Midwest," *Great Plains Quarterly* 1 (Fall 1981): 224-38; as well as Eugene L. Fevold, "The Norwegian Immigrant and His Church," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 23 (1967): 3-16; and Robert P. Swierenga, "The Settlement of the Old Northwest: Ethnic Pluralism in a Featureless Plain," *Journal of the Early Republic* 9 (Spring 1989): 73-105.

[38] Martin E. Marty, "Editor's Preface," in L. DeAne Lagerquist, *In America the Men Milk the Cows: Gender, Ethnicity, and Religion in the Americanization of Norwegian-American Lutheran Women* (Brooklyn: Carlson, 1991), xiii.

matters to the study of American history because it shaped the lives and beliefs of many nineteenth-century men and women and continues to shape the lives and beliefs of the many people in the twenty-first century—over 6,000,000—who are both American and Lutheran.

Scope of the Study

Because this dissertation purports to explain the transformation of American Lutheranism over the course of nearly a century of history, those with even a passing familiarity of this subject's complexity may worry that this study will overlook certain nuances and neglect certain events and developments. Those worries are not unfounded. A study covering such a wide terrain, even of a single religious tradition, cannot come anywhere near comprehensiveness. The subtitle of this dissertation indicates its scope: "Lutheranism and American Culture in the Civil War Era." Yet each of those three somewhat vague terms merits a more complete definition in order to give the reader a better sense of what this study is and, perhaps more importantly, what it is not.

I have chosen the term "Lutheranism," as opposed to "Lutherans," to indicate that this dissertation is primarily concerned with the ideas propounded by church leaders—pastors, professors, and editors. Such a focus comes at the expense of the thoughts and lived experiences of laypeople. Additionally, since the people in these positions were exclusively men, it obscures the role of women, who were for the most part locked out of official debates about doctrine and church affairs. This is not to suggest that Lutheran women were uninterested in those matters and did not exert considerable influence in church life. They helped to shape local congregations and, by the end of the century,

national organizations, particularly mission societies.[39] Yet, by and large, denominational meetings, church periodicals (save for the "family circle" section on the back page of some newspapers), and theological disputes were considered to be male spheres.

In fact, it seems that Lutheran women were marginalized in the arenas of publishing and church leadership even more than their sisters in other Protestant denominations. In the early to mid-nineteenth century, there were no female writers in American Lutheranism comparable, even on a much lesser scale, to the Congregationalist Harriet Beecher Stowe, the Episcopalian Sarah Josepha Hale, or the Quaker Sarah Grimké.[40] Though some evangelical churches occasionally welcomed female preachers and exhorters, Lutherans, even those trying to emulate Anglo-evangelicalism, never adopted the practice.[41] Additionally, in another divergence from other American Protestants, Lutheran church membership did not have the nearly the same imbalanced female-to-male ratio as other denominations. Whereas the percentage of women members in Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian congregations was usually more than sixty

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[39] Scholarship on Lutheran women is sparse, particularly in the nineteenth century. For a few examples, see James W. Albers, "Perspectives on the History of Women in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod during the Nineteenth Century," in Aug. R. Suelflow, ed., *The Lutheran Historical Conference: Essays and Reports* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1982), 137-83; L. DeAne Lagerquist, *From our Mothers' Arms: A History of Women in the American Lutheran Church* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1987); and Carol K. Coburn, *Life at Four Corners: Religion, Gender, and Education in a German-Lutheran Community, 1868-1945* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1992).

[40] For example, of the seventy-one people mentioned in L. Deane Lagerquist's "Biographical Dictionary of Lutheran Leaders," only twelve are women, most of whom lived in the twentieth century. The four women mentioned whose careers helped to shape nineteenth-century Lutheranism—deaconess Tonette Elisabeth Fedde, medical missionary Anna Sarah Kugler, musician Harriet Reynolds Krauth Spaeth, and missionary association leader Emmy Carlsson Evald—all made their largest impact in the 1880s and 1890s, decades covered only cursorily in this study. See Lagerquist, *Lutherans*, 161-242.

[41] Catherine Brekus lists nearly one hundred known women preachers and exhorters in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mostly Baptists and Methodists. None of them were Lutherans. Brekus, *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 343-45.

percent, in Lutheran churches the figure was closer to fifty percent.[42] The extent to which the church's conservative transformation in the nineteenth century was the product of this maleness is a subject that merits further exploration.

Though aware of these limitations and unanswered questions, this dissertation focuses on "elite"—and consequently male—opinion for two reasons. First, the dearth of serious study on American Lutheranism forces prioritization. Before historians can more fully explore how Lutheran laywomen and laymen agreed with, dissented from, or altered the opinions of clerical leaders, scholars first must understand more clearly what those leaders thought. The second and more fundamental reason for this study's focus is the conviction that supposedly "elite" opinion mattered to "ordinary" nineteenth-century believers. As historian Mark Noll writes, "many nonpublishing citizens read, pondered, and considered themselves part of the circles of debate created by… published theology."[43] For the most part, the American religious "marketplace" not only allowed laypeople to choose their congregational and denominational affiliations, but also compelled preachers and writers to address their message in such a way as to win prospective members.[44] Thus, even though the "Lutheran public" is mostly silent in the narrative, their presence has affected the selection of sources. For the most part, this study focuses on materials intended for their hearing and reading—sermons and

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[42] Bureau of the Census, *Religious Bodies: 1906, Part I: Summary and General Tables* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office), 30-31.

[43] Noll, *America's God*, 18.

[44] On the importance of "choice" in nineteenth-century American religion, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy, 1776-2005* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005); and Lincoln Mullen, *The Chance of Salvation: A History of Conversion in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017).

addresses, newspapers and other periodicals, books and tracts, and published denominational proceedings.

Though primarily a history of religious ideas, this study does not take the term "Lutheranism" precisely to mean "Lutheran theology." Certainly, disputes over doctrine play a central role in the narrative. Particularly important are debates over the historic confessions, or symbols, of the Lutheran church, especially the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Yet in no way is this dissertation a comprehensive survey of American Lutheran theology in the nineteenth century. There are a host of issues in doctrine and practice that this study either glosses over or ignores completely—from discussions about Christology, ecclesiology, and eschatology, to debates about proper forms of liturgy and methods of preaching. Instead, by "Lutheranism" I mean something akin to "Lutheran identity." Along with theological concerns, this definition includes an outlook on politics and culture and an understanding of one's place in nation and society.

Unsurprisingly, what constitutes "Lutheranism" has been contested since Martin Luther launched his protest against the Roman Catholic Church over five hundred years ago. One of the first intra-Lutheran parties to emerge after Luther's death styled themselves the Gnesios, from the Greek for "authentic." From the sixteenth century to the present, those who call themselves Lutheran have struggled to define what encompasses "true Lutheranism." Is Lutheranism a reform movement within the church catholic or a new form of Christianity? Is it a church, a movement, a denomination, or a series of doctrinal propositions? Is it confined to national or ethnic boundaries or is it a global faith? Is it closer to Roman Catholicism or to other forms of Protestantism? Is it "radical," "conservative," or "moderate?" Is it ecumenical or separatist? Which of its

teachings are fundamental and which are non-essential? What even are its teachings?[45] Though I am a Lutheran myself with deeply held convictions about what does and does not constitute "authentic" Lutheran doctrine and practice, I make no attempt to adjudicate which of the various movements, institutions, and persons discussed in this study advanced the "truest" expression of Lutheranism. Instead, my dissertation seeks to explain how a particular form of Lutheranism became predominant in the nineteenth-century United States.

In order to do so, I trace Lutheranism's intersection with "American culture," the second term in my subtitle. Since George Marsden's landmark *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, many historians of Christianity in the United States have used this phrase or similar ones to distinguish their task from those of "church historians" or "denominational historians," who tend to examine religious ideas or institutions apart from the cross-currents of their historical context. Though both ideas and institutions are central to this study, my focus is on how believers were shaped by the surrounding "culture," which Marsden describes, in a definition resembling the classical formulation of anthropologist Clifford Geertz, as "the collection of beliefs, values, assumptions, commitments, and ideals expressed in a society through popular literary and artistic forms and embodied in its political, educational, and other institutions."[46] Such an approach does not treat the religious beliefs of historical actors as props for more deeply seated economic, political, gendered, or ethnic interests. Rather, again following

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[45] For the most comprehensive overview, see Eric W. Gritsch, *A History of Lutheranism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010).

[46] George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), vii. See also Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

Marsden, it endeavors to assess how believers, both intellectually and institutionally, "responded to and were influenced by the social, intellectual, and religious crises of their time."[47] This dissertation emulates the many other studies which have examined the changing ideas of a particular Christian tradition in the context of American culture.[48]

The cultural crises to which Lutherans were responding took place during the "Civil War era," the final phrase in my subtitle. Following recent histories by Orville Vernon Burton, David Goldfield, and Steven Hahn, I use this term in the broadest of senses. Those historians, though varying considerably in their interpretations of the era, have demonstrated how a comprehensive understanding of the conflicts over slavery, race, and nationalism must take a much a longer view than the typical periodization: from the conclusion of the War against Mexico in 1848 to the Compromise of 1877.[49] Though

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[47] Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. 3. For his fuller interpretation of the relationship between Christianity and culture in United States history, see George M. Marsden, *Religion and American Culture* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990).

[48] These studies include, but are not limited to, James D. Bratt, *Dutch Calvinism in Modern America: A History of a Conservative Subculture* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1984); Robert Bruce Mullin, *Episcopal Vision/American Reality: High Church Theology and Social Thought in Evangelical America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986); Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Edith L Blumhofer, *Restoring the Faith: The Assemblies of God, Pentecostalism, and American Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Allen C. Guelzo, *For the Union of Evangelical Christendom: The Irony of Reformed Episcopalians* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Diana Butler Bass, *Standing Against the Whirlwind: Evangelical Episcopalians in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); John Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Ann Lee Bressler, *The Universalist Movement in America, 1770-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); Josh McMullen, *Under the Big Top: Big Tent Revivalism and American Culture, 1885-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015): Joshua Guthman, *Strangers Below: Primitive Baptists and American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015); and Thomas S. Kidd and Barry Hankins, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[49] Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2007); David Goldfield, *America Aflame: How the Civil War Created a Nation* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2011); and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States and Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (New York: Penguin, 2017).

the balance of the narrative centers on the Civil War and the decades immediately preceding and following it, this study covers developments from about 1830 to 1900. This chronological scope roughly corresponds to the five decades that Sydney Ahlstrom in a seminal essay labeled as American Lutheranism's "Age of Definition."[50] Most Lutheran historians have agreed with Ahlstrom that these years represented a pivotal period and have highlighted the dramatic transformations in theology, massive growth in membership, and unprecedented scale in institution building. Yet, they have failed to connect these changes to the era's political crises, social upheaval, and war—or ignored this context altogether.[51] This dissertation seeks to remedy that neglect, by showing how a peculiarly American form of Lutheranism developed in response to American culture in the long Civil War era.

Shape of the Study

The subsequent five chapters follow a roughly chronological outline. After narrating a brief overview of American Lutheranism's colonial origins and its development during the early republic, Chapter Two sketches the place of Lutheranism in the religious culture of the antebellum United States. This chapter utilizes the taxonomy delineated by the church historian Philip Schaff to describe the three chief schools of thought that emerged within American Lutheranism by the early 1850s. New Lutherans, the most numerous and influential group, sought to incorporate their church into the

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[50] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, "The Lutheran Church and American Culture: A Tercentenary Retrospect," *Lutheran Quarterly* 9 (November 1957): 331.

[51] For an important example, made especially surprising by this scholar's important work in Civil War-era religious history, see Mark A. Noll, "American Lutherans Yesterday and Today," in Richard Cimino, ed., *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 9-12. A full accounting of Lutheran historians' failure to integrate the Civil War into their studies is found in Chapter Four.

nation's "evangelical empire" by modifying historic doctrines and cooperating with other Protestants. Opposing them were the Old Lutherans, by far the smallest of the three parties, who fiercely resisted assimilation into the Protestant mainstream and instead insisted that every doctrine in the Lutheran confessions was a non-negotiable prerequisite for inter-church cooperation. The faction in the middle, Moderate Lutheranism, was cautious about theological innovation and hesitant to form alliances with Anglo-evangelicals, but was also put off by the shrillness and exclusiveness of the Old Lutherans. Because of this, though they expressed mild discomfort with the program of the New Lutherans, the majority of Moderate Lutherans chose to align with them.

The 1850s produced not only crises in the American nation, but also controversies in the Lutheran church. Chapter Three traces the issues that emerged during this decade that in turn would shape intra-Lutheran disputes during future years. The first was immigration, particularly the extent to which native-born Lutherans should attempt to "Americanize" the newly arrived Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia. The second was a set of interrelated theological questions: To what extent must Lutherans adhere to the church's historic confessions and what should be the basis of church unity? The debates surrounding these issues prompted the founding of a fourth school in American Lutheranism, a confessional movement which sought to reform New Lutheranism from within. The final area of controversy concerned the morality of slavery and the involvement of the church in politics. Yet, unlike the American states, whose fundamental disputes over slavery and sectionalism brought about secession and war, most Lutheran churches reached a compromise on their points of disagreement, both doctrinal and political. The majority of New, Moderate, and confessional Lutherans

rallied around the General Synod, a national church body designed to hold together the denomination's various factions. By 1860, American Lutheranism, with the exception of the Old Lutherans, stood more united than ever before.

This unity began to fracture with the onset of the Civil War. Chapter Four narrates the various debates over nationalism, political preaching, and slavery during the first years of the conflict and their effect on Lutheran unity. For the most part, Lutherans' responses to secession, war, and emancipation mirrored the opinions of other people in the states where they lived. Because New Lutherans were spread across both slave and free states and Moderate and confessional Lutherans lived almost exclusively in the North, their political disagreements exacerbated the divisions within the General Synod. Old Lutherans, meanwhile, embraced a reactionary view of the war, condemning what they saw as political radicalism and formulating a biblical defense of slavery. The first years of the conflict brought about the first reversal of American Lutheranism's growing unity, when the Southern churches, which made up about ten percent of the General Synod, withdrew to form their own church body in 1863.

Yet an even greater schism was looming, not a sectional division but a theological one. In 1866, the General Synod split in two over the questions of confessional subscription and church unity, the very problems that had been supposedly resolved in the 1850s. Chapter Five argues that the issues and debates surrounding the Civil War, both directly and indirectly, brought about this separation. Over the course of war, the antebellum factions within the General Synod—New, Moderate, and confessional—realigned into two competing parties: New School and Old School. The former sought to preserve the compromise reached in the 1850s, while the latter sought to push the

General Synod to adopt a stricter adherence to Lutheranism's historic confessions. Despite their disagreements, both groups initially concurred that the Lutheran church must reject the "sectarianism" of the Old Lutherans and remain united. Yet, drawing on the lessons they learned from the Civil War, Old School Lutherans came to reject their previous tolerance of doctrinal differences. The war, they believed, had demonstrated that making concessions to error was immoral. New School Lutherans, for their part, argued that the national conflict was precisely about the inability of differing parties to reach a compromise. When the heated rhetoric of war reignited the flames of doctrinal controversy, the two parties could not resolve their differences. After withdrawing from the General Synod, Old School Lutherans formed their own church body in 1867, the General Council.

The changes already initiated during the Civil War were intensified by the issues and debates of Reconstruction and the Gilded Age. Chapter Six describes how religious changes, national politics, racial tensions, and mass immigration created a Lutheranism much more conservative than had existed before the war. Old Lutheranism, a tiny minority in the 1850s, became the predominant form of Lutheranism in the postbellum United States. Old School Lutherans became more and more stringent on the questions of confessionalism and church unity, and increasingly reactionary in the realms of politics and society. Even New School Lutherans adopted theological, political, and social positions much more conservative than those they had advanced before the war. Though postbellum Lutherans divided into numerous competing church bodies, they had become, apart from a few notable exceptions, more ideologically unified than ever before.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most Lutherans in the United States stood outside the Protestant mainstream. Yet, as Chapter Seven argues, they also believed paradoxically that they embodied American ideals. In particular, they argued that the nation's religious liberty had allowed the Lutheran church the opportunity to reach its fullest potential. Some even went further, contending that, because Lutherans grasped the true meaning of ordered liberty, they alone understood what it meant to be truly American. As they entered the twentieth century then, Lutherans in the United States had created their own distinctive religious world, defined by the synthesis of theological confessionalism, ecclesiastical separatism, political and social conservatism, and American exceptionalism. Though they stood as outsiders in the nation's religious life, they considered themselves to exemplify the ideals of the country they called home.

The title of this dissertation, "Making Their Own Faith," attempts to encapsulate how Lutherans in the United States came to embrace this distinctive religious outlook. Its inspiration comes from Kathleen Conzen's influential essay, *Making Their Own America*, which describes how German Catholics in Stearns County, Minnesota drew upon "local materials structured by traditional patterns of meaning" to create their own American "world."[52] In a similar vein, I aim to show how Lutherans in the long Civil War era filtered historic Lutheranism through the sieve of the nation's culture to form their own quintessentially American form of Christianity.

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[52] Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Making Their Own America: Assimilation Theory and the German Peasant Pioneer* (New York: Berg, 1990), 31.

CHAPTER TWO

Lutheranism in Evangelical America

In March 1854, the Swiss American theologian Philip Schaff (1819-1893) lectured before the Berlin Evangelical Society on the "Political, Social, and Religious Character" of America. The resulting book, titled simply *America*, is still widely considered to be among the most perceptive analyses of the nineteenth-century United States.[1] Yet often overlooked by American historians is that nearly half of the book's first edition, published in German not English, was devoted to explaining the situation of "the German Churches in America," that is, those denominations in the United States whose origins stemmed from the Protestant Reformation in Germany. Despite belonging to the German Reformed Church, Schaff devoted the longest chapter in this section to examining Lutheranism, the most numerous of these "German Churches." A sympathetic outsider, he believed that "the Lutheran Church has an important calling in the New World." But he also pinpointed the central issue facing Lutheranism in the United States. The American Lutheran church "cannot fulfill its calling," he wrote, unless it "faithfully

[1] Perry Miller, for example, called the lectures "a measured, judicious, and intelligent analysis, which by its objectivity and affectionate power is as fine a tribute to America as any immigrant has ever paid." Miller, "Editor's Introduction," in Schaff, *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), xxxv. R. Laurence Moore calls Schaff "probably the most learned Protestant theologian and scholar who worked in the United States during the nineteenth century." Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 7. For other treatments of Schaff's perceptiveness and erudition, see Stephen Ray Graham, *Cosmos in the Chaos: Philip Schaff's Interpretation of Nineteenth-Century American Religion* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1995), esp. 28-34; and Thomas Albert Howard, *God and the Atlantic: America, Europe and the Religious Divide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 136-58.

preserves its gifts and powers and at the same time engages in wise and cordial accommodation to the conditions of a new land and people."[2]

Schaff identified "three main schools" in the Lutheran church of the United States: the New Lutherans, the Old Lutherans, and the Moderate Lutherans. "The New Lutheran party," Schaff began, "is an amalgamation of Lutheranism with American Puritanical and Methodistic elements. It consists chiefly of native Americans of German descent, and hence prides itself on being emphatically the American Lutheran Church." The Old Lutherans, he continued, "are still strangers and misfits in the new world." He described how they stood in opposition to the innovations of the New Lutherans, but were also "extremely exclusive and narrow-minded." Finally, Schaff turned to the "Moderate Lutheran school," the group for which he had the most affinity. In his typical Hegelian style, he saw this party's "true mission" as "to mediate not only between the churchly Old Lutheranism and the puritanical New Lutheranism but also between the European-German and American interests."[3]

Schaff's assessment was largely accurate and has been widely cited by denominational historians.[4] He correctly identified the main schools of American

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[2] Philip Schaff, *Amerika: Die politischen, socialen und kirchlich-religiösen Zustände der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben, 1854), 236. The first English edition, published as *America: A Sketch of Its Political, Social, and Religious Character* (New York: C Scribner, 1855), abridged the section "Die deutschen Kirchen in Amerika" to about one-fourth of its original size "to give the work its due proportion for the general American reader" (176n). A second German edition, featuring two additional essays, was published in 1858. All quotations come from the 1854 edition, of which a partial translation can be found in August Suelflow, ed., "Nietzsche and Schaff on American Lutheranism," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 23 (January 1951): 145-58.

[3] Schaff, *Amerika*, 221, 223, 225-26. On Schaff's use of Hegelian thought, see James Hastings Nichols, *Romanticism in American Theology: Nevin and Schaff at Mercersburg* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961), 116-117; and Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 172-76.

[4] See, for example, August R. Suelflow and E. Clifford Nelson, "Following the Frontier, 1840-1875," in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 211-15; David A. Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic*

Lutheran thought and he astutely observed the primary challenge facing Lutherans in the early nineteenth-century United States: how to be both fully Lutheran and fully American. Yet he erred in assuming that the chief difference between these three competing factions was their differing level of accommodation to American ideas. Each school—New, Old, and Moderate—had been shaped by the nation's religion, politics, and culture.

Lutheranism and Liberty in the Early Republic

The tripartite division that Schaff described in 1854 differed greatly from the situation of U.S. Lutheranism just twenty-five years before. In the first forty years of the American Republic, Lutherans were a mostly homogenous group of religious outsiders. As of 1830, most could still trace their heritage back to the migrations of German-speakers to the British colonies in the mid-eighteenth century. (Swedish and Dutch Lutheranism, already a tiny minority in the eighteenth century, had all but disappeared by the early nineteenth century.) About eighty percent of those colonial immigrants had arrived through the port of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania would remain the cultural and intellectual center of American Lutheranism well into the nineteenth century.[5] Before the Revolution, many of these immigrants and their descendants had migrated southward into Maryland, the Shenandoah Valley, and the Carolina Piedmont, all of which encompassed

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(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), 28-29; and L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 72-73.

[5] For statistics of the migration of German-speakers to colonial America, see Aaron Fogleman, "Migration to the Thirteen British North American Colonies, 1700-1775: New Estimates" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 22 (Spring 1992): 700-4; and Marianne S. Wokeck, *Trade in Strangers: The Beginnings of Mass Migration to North America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 45-46.

what some scholars have called "Greater Pennsylvania."[6] After the Revolution, Pennsylvania Germans spread west into the Northwest Territory, settling in what would become the states of Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. Settlements of German American Lutherans could also be found in New York, South Carolina, and Georgia, whose ports of entry were New York City, Charleston, and Savannah, respectively. Overall, German Americans, of whom the primary religious identification was Lutheran, numbered just under ten percent of the white population of the United States in 1790, making them the largest non-British European ethnic group in the new nation.[7]

Though scattered congregations had existed in the North American colonies since the mid-seventeenth century, Lutherans did not establish an organized presence until the arrival of Heinrich Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787), often dubbed the "patriarch of American Lutheranism," in 1742. Six years later, under Muhlenberg's leadership, German immigrants established the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States, the first American Lutheran church body. Muhlenberg's theological and cultural outlooks—or at least how these outlooks were interpreted by his supporters and successors—shaped the American Lutheran church well beyond his death in 1787.

Most accurately described as an "orthodox pietist," Muhlenberg crafted his Lutheran identity from the "complex interaction of orthodoxy, Pietism and

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[6] Steven M. Nolt defines "Greater Pennsylvania" as encompassing "southern and eastern Pennsylvania, western Maryland, and the backcountry of Virginia and North Carolina." Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land: Pennsylvania Germans and the Early Republic* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002), 13. Charles H. Glatfelter uses the term "Pennsylvania Field" and defines it as including southern New York, New Jersey, Maryland and northern Virginia. Glatfelter, *Pastors and People: German Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Pennsylvania Field, 1717-1793, Volume I: Pastors and Congregations* (Breinigsville: Pennsylvania German Society, 1980), 5. See also John B. Frantz, "The Religious Development of the Early German Settlers in 'Greater Pennsylvania': The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia" *Pennsylvania History* 68 (Winter 2001): 66-100.

[7] Farley Ward Grubb, *German Immigration and Servitude in America, 1709-1920* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 2.

Enlightenment" in mid-eighteenth century Germany.[8] The most pronounced of these influences on Muhlenberg and other leaders of the Pennsylvania Ministerium was the Lutheran pietism associated with the University of Halle. Churchly, ecumenical, and experiential, Halle Pietism emphasized an activist faith and heartfelt piety, while eschewing the disorder and enthusiastic excesses of radical pietists such as the Moravians. German Lutheran pietists developed relationships with their British Methodist and American New Light counterparts, yet also kept them at arm's length. During the Great Awakening in the North American colonies, most Lutheran leaders welcomed the heartfelt piety of the revivalists, while at the same time balking at their more extreme outbursts and anti-sacramental theology.[9] Thus, despite some affinities with Anglo-Protestant evangelicalism, prominent American Lutherans were more likely to convert to Anglicanism (or, after the Revolution, Episcopalianism), as Muhlenberg's son Peter did.

In the sphere of politics and culture, Lutherans were less hesitant to accommodate themselves to Anglo-American norms. By the time of the Revolution, German Americans had adjusted to British-American notions of liberty, largely thanks to the mediation of

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[8] A. G. Roeber, "Henry Melchior Muhlenberg: Orthodox Pietist," in John W. Kleiner, ed., *Henry Melchior Muhlenberg—The Roots of 250 Years of Organized Lutheranism in North America: Essays in Memory of Helmut T. Lehmann* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 1. E. Brooks Holifield calls Muhlenberg a "confessional pietist." Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2003), 400. Paul P. Kuenning uses the label "churchly pietist." Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 37.

[9] The literature on Halle Pietism in North America is vast. For an introduction, see Hans-Jürgen Grabbe, ed. *Halle Pietism, Colonial North America, and the Young United States* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2008); Jonathan Strom, Hartmut Lehmann, and James Van Horn Melton, eds., *Pietism in Germany and North America 1680-1820* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); and Jonathan Strom, ed., *Pietism and Community in Europe and North America, 1650-1850* (Boston: Brill, 2010). On American Lutheran reactions to the Moravians and the Great Awakening, see Aaron Spencer Fogleman, *Jesus Is Female: Moravians and Radical Religion in Early America*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 135-216; and Patricia U. Bonomi, "'Watchful against the Sects': Religious Renewal in Pennsylvania's German Congregations, 1720-1750" *Pennsylvania History* 50 (October 1983): 273-83.

"cultural brokers," the most prominent of whom were Lutheran pastors.[10] Many embraced the patriot cause, others tacitly accepted it, and a few remained loyalists. After the ratification of the Constitution, German Lutherans were mostly at home in the new democratic republic. Two of Muhlenberg's sons represented Pennsylvania in the United States House of Representatives. (Frederick was the nation's first Speaker of the House.) According to historian Hermann Wellenreuther, most German Lutherans "were, if they must be categorized, a cross-breed between Jeffersonian egalitarianism and Andrew Jackson's common man, with the sincere piety of John Adams thrown in."[11]

J. H. C. Helmuth (1745-1825), Muhlenberg's successor as pastor of St. Michael's and Zion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia, embodied this embrace of American liberty. After the Revolution, he celebrated freedom from British tyranny as ordained by God. In 1793, he praised the Lord for "the spirit of civil freedom [that] has now and again spread much happiness." Yet in the same publication, Helmuth also expressed wariness that this same liberty might erode Lutheran distinctiveness and allow any person to read "his whims and fantasies into [the Bible]."[12] In short, before, during and after the American

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[10] The most important study on this subject is A. G. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property: German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998). See also Wolfgang Splitter, *Pastors, People, Politics: German Lutherans in Pennsylvania, 1740-1790* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1998); and Hermann Wellenreuther, *Citizens in a Strange Land: A Study of German-American Broadsides and their Meaning for Germans in North America, 1730-1830* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 194-247.

[11] Wellenreuther, *Citizens in a Strange Land*, 247.

[12] J. H. C. Helmuth, *Betrachtung der Evangelischen Lehre von der Heiligen Schrift und Taufe; samt einigen Gedanken von den gegenwärtigen Zeiten* (Germantown, Pa., 1793), 311, 67, quoted in Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 71, 410. On Helmuth, see A. G. Roeber, "J. H. C. Helmuth, Evangelical Charity, and the Public Sphere in Pennsylvania, 1793-1800" *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 121 (January-April, 1997): 77-100.

founding, most Lutherans remained committed to the orthodox pietism inherited from the Old World, even as they were assimilating the cultural and political ideas of New World.

In view of this, the most important development in the first forty years of Lutheranism in the early American republic was the church's almost complete separation from Europe. Already in the 1760s the migratory flow from the disparate German states and principalities to North America had begun to ebb. After the Revolutionary War and until the 1830s, German immigration, as with American immigration in general, slowed to a trickle.[13] Additionally, Lutherans in America lost all but the loosest of ties to Halle and other institutions that had supplied pastors, publications, and other forms of support. An 1831 essay summarizing the position of the American Lutheran church put the matter simply: "The Lutheran Church in the United States has no connexion [sic] with the Lutheran church in Germany." Though some Lutherans maintained a "fraternal correspondence with the distinguished brethren in Germany," the majority of Lutheran clergy and laity were born and raised in the United States, and their ideas and experiences were shaped by the political, cultural, and religious milieu of the young nation.[14]

That milieu was characterized by religious disestablishment, democratic republicanism, an emphasis on reason, and the growth of evangelical denominationalism. As historian Mark Noll has argued, out of these elements—particularly evangelicalism,

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[13] For statistics on German immigrants in particular, see Grubb, *German Immigration*, 28, 343-45; and Wolfgang Köllman and Peter Marschalck, "German Emigration to the United States" *Perspectives in American History* (1973): 518. For American immigration statistics in general, see United States Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 105-9.

[14] "Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Prepared for Buck's Theological Dictionary by Rev. C. P. Krauth, of Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, October 15, 1831, 87. See also Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 110. On the "hiatus" of Halle's publishing ventures during the early republic, see A. G. Roeber, "Creating Order with Two Orders of Creation? Halle Pietism and Orthodox Lutherans in the Early American Republic," in Grabbe, ed., *Halle Pietism*, 289.

republicanism, and common-sense reasoning—came a distinctively American theological outlook that "defined the boundaries for a vast quantity of American thought, while also providing an ethical framework, a moral compass, and a vocabulary of suasion for much of the nation's public life."[15] A related effect of this early American environment is what historian Nathan Hatch coined "the democratization of American Christianity," wherein "popular religious movements… in the half-century after independence did more to Christianize American society than anything before or since."[16] Though various scholars have offered nuances and challenges to the interpretations of Hatch and Noll, the overwhelming picture of religious life in the early republic was an intellectual and cultural atmosphere shaped by Anglo-Protestant revivalism and American conceptions of liberty.[17]

Lutherans did not escape the assumptions of this emerging religious and political culture, even as they attempted to maintain their separate identity. They fully embraced the rhetoric of American chosenness and the idea that the nation's free institutions safeguarded true religion. Additionally, in a trope that would be repeated frequently throughout the nineteenth century, they argued that Martin Luther was the progenitor of

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[15] Noll, *America's God*, 9. For a similar argument, but one that distinguishes sharply frontier revivalism and the bourgeois Protestantism of Eastern cities, see Sam Haselby, *The Origins of American Religious Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015). Holifield in *Theology in America*, offers important contrasts with Noll, but mostly agrees with him on the centrality of reason in American theological discourse. On the "hegemony" of Anglo-evangelicalism in antebellum America, see Paul K. Conkin, *The Uneasy Center: Reformed Christianity in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995), 114-46.

[16] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 3.

[17] Several scholars have critiqued the extent to which religion in the early republic was truly "democratic." Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), 225-88; Amanda Porterfield, *Conceived in Doubt: Religion and Politics in the New American Nation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); and Eric R. Schlereth, *An Age of Infidels: The Politics of Religious Controversy in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).

American civil and religious liberty.[18] Yet despite their wholehearted embrace of American nationality, most Lutherans still clung proudly to their German heritage. The two identities, however, were not mutually exclusive. As historian Steven Nolt has shown, Pennsylvania Germans, including Lutherans, constructed their own identity over against "the religious competition, popular revivalism, and evangelical reformism that imbued the period," even as they were proclaiming themselves loyal and true Americans.[19]

Unsurprisingly then, Lutherans assiduously defined the boundaries of their German-cum-American identity. On the one hand, this meant guarding zealously against the encroachment of English ways into religious life. The most dramatic example of this was the lawsuit and trial in 1816 surrounding the attempted introduction of the English language at Helmuth's St. Michael's and Zion congregations in Philadelphia.[20] On the other hand, this meant pursuing closer ecclesiastical relations with the German Reformed Church. In the early republic, Lutherans and the Reformed collaborated in joint educational ventures, publication projects, mission work, and even in some cases congregations. Though these projects paralleled the Prussian Union of Frederick Wilhelm III, which united the two communions into one Evangelical church in 1817, the ad hoc cooperation of the German American churches was shaped by the exigencies of the new nation rather than patterned after European edicts. Denominational historians have generally lamented this ecumenism as part of a larger trend toward the eroding of a

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[18] Paul A. Baglyos, "In This Land of Liberty: American Lutherans and the Young Republic, 1787-1837" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago Divinity School, 1997), esp. 60-91.

[19] Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 5.

[20] See Friederike Baer, *The Trial of Frederick Eberle: Language, Patriotism and Citizenship in Philadelphia's German Community, 1790-1830* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

distinctively Lutheran identity. For example, in 1792, the Pennsylvania Ministerium dropped all references to the historic confessions of the Lutheran church in its constitution.[21] Yet ultimately, Lutheran-Reformed rapprochement was more a means to retain ethnic solidarity than an end unto itself.[22]

Several historians of American Lutheranism have attributed the decline in confessional particularity during the first decades after the American Revolution to a pervasive "spirit of rationalism."[23] The figure of Frederick H. Quitman (1760-1832) is often cited as emblematic of this tendency. Quitman, a graduate of Halle in the late eighteenth century when its faculty had moved to a "theologically rationalist" position, immigrated to the United States in 1796. Eleven years later he became the president of the New York Ministerium, which had been established in 1792 as the nation's second Lutheran church body. Yet despite being a "mild rationalist" and one of the few American Lutherans to publish somewhat extensively in the first decades of the nineteenth century, Quitman's outlook was not widely shared by his co-religionists.[24] The characterization of the first years of American republic as an era of "rationalism" derives

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[21] Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 69.

[22] Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 115; and Baglyos, "In This Land of Liberty," 39-40. Arthur C. Repp offers a typical negative assessment, when he writes, "Too often German Lutherans were first German and then only Lutheran." Repp, *Luther's Catechism Comes to America: Theological Effects on the Issues of the Small Catechism Prepared in or for America Prior to 1850* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1982), 217.

[23] For example, see Wentz, *Basic History*, 69-72; and Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 41-46.

[24] The most extensive treatment of Quitman is in Raymond Bost, "The Reverend John Bachman and the Development of Southern Lutheranism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1963), 18-60. See also H. George Anderson, "The Early National Period," in Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America*, 105-6; and Holifield, *Theology in America*, 401-2.

from the writings of the Lutherans in the second half of the nineteenth century, who sought to portray the developments of this period in this way for apologetic purposes.[25]

The most conspicuous aspect of Lutheran theological development in the young United States was neither its ethnically based ecumenism with the Reformed nor its scattered instances of "rationalism," but its lack of sustained and serious intellectual inquiry. Fifty years after the Declaration of Independence, the church supported only two institutions of higher education: Franklin College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, a joint Reformed-Lutheran school founded in 1787, and Hartwick Seminary, a Lutheran institution begun in 1797 but not permanently located in Ostego County, New York, until 1815. Both schools struggled with financial stability and attracting students.[26] In the realm of publications, the only widely circulated periodical, the joint Lutheran-Reformed venture *Das Evangelisches Magazin*, lasted briefly from 1811 to 1817. And while various German printers published scattered Lutheran sermons, treatises, and books, the only press dedicated to producing Lutheran theological writings was that of the Henkel family in New Market, Virginia. Though the Henkels' theological conservatism would play a small role in the transformation of American Lutheranism during the Civil War era, their publishing ventures had little impact beyond Virginia, the Carolina Piedmont, and

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[25] The most prominent expression of this interpretation comes in one of the first comprehensive histories of Lutheranism, written by the conservative churchman Henry Eyster Jacobs. He describes the first thirty years after the ratification of the Constitution as an era of "deterioration," characterized by "rationalism and indifferentism." See Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1893), 307-26.

[26] On Franklin College, see Joseph Henry Dubbs, *History of Franklin and Marshall College* (Lancaster, PA: Franklin and Marshall College Alumni Association, 1903), esp. 80-114. On Hartwick Seminary, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States and of the United Lutheran Church in America, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1826-1926* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1926), 64-73.

Eastern Tennessee during the early nineteenth-century.[27] In both higher education and publishing then, American Lutheran intellectual life lagged behind not only the more established Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians, but also the upstart Methodists and Baptists who, during the first decades of the nineteenth century, became the most numerous denominations in the new nation.

Lutherans in the young republic were not only theologically unsophisticated, but also lacked a central organization. By 1830, with a total membership of less than 50,000 (though probably four times that many adherents), the Lutheran church was divided into nine autonomous church bodies, or synods. In some ways, this fragmentation was the product of the "fiery furnace of democracy," described by Gordon Wood, which allowed numerous sects divided by theological particulars to thrive.[28] Yet rather than doctrinal disagreements, it was primarily fears of centralization and losing local control that kept Lutherans separated. When in 1820 a group of church leaders met to form the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in North America, the new body nearly went defunct at its first meeting largely due to those who feared that an unwieldy national organization would infringe on their "liberties."[29] The General Synod survived but barely. Ten years later, only three of the nine regional synods—the North Carolina, the Maryland and

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[27] Alton R. Koenning, "Henkel Press: A Force for Conservative Lutheran Theology in Pre-Civil War Southeastern America" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1972); Albert Sydney Edmonds, "The Henkels, Early Printers in New Market, Virginia, with a Bibliography" *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 18 (April 1938): 174-95; and Richard H. Baur, "Paul Henkel: Pioneer Lutheran Missionary" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1968).

[28] As Wood writes, "There were not just Presbyterians, but Old and New School Presbyterians, Cumberland Presbyterians, Springfield Presbyterians, Reformed Presbyterians, and Associated Presbyterians; not just Baptists, but General Baptists, Regular Baptists, Free Will Baptists, Separate Baptists, Dutch River Baptists, Permanent Baptists, and Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Baptists." Gordon S. Wood, *Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 332-33.

[29] Baglyos, "In This Land of Liberty," 47.

Virginia, and the West Pennsylvania—and less than thirty percent of the membership of the Lutheran church in the United States belonged to this national federation.[30]

By 1830, Lutheranism in the United States was marked by ecclesiastical disorganization, a paucity of literary and educational institutions, and ethnic insularity. Yet the theological fragmentation described by Schaff had not yet come to pass. Instead, most Lutherans shared a heritage rooted in the mid-eighteenth-century colonial migrations, the orthodox pietism of Halle, and the experience of the American Revolution. They were, in Nolt's phrase, "foreigners in their own land." Disconnected from the Anglo-evangelical establishment yet enthusiastic about their nation's freedoms, Lutherans were simultaneously at home and outsiders in the young nation.

New Lutheranism

Samuel Simon Schmucker (1799-1873) was a proud Lutheran, but troubled by his church's lack of intellectual rigor and cultural influence in the United States. The son of a Lutheran minister in Pennsylvania, Schmucker's desire to move beyond his parochial upbringing was already evident when he chose to attend Princeton Theological Seminary. (He studied there for eighteen months, but never graduated.) Yet instead of seeking influence by switching to a more prestigious Anglo-Protestant church, as had several prominent Lutherans before him, Schmucker hoped to make his own tradition into a more respectable American evangelical denomination.[31] In one of his first published works, he

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[30] For the statistics in this paragraph, see "Statistics of the Lutheran Church for 1830," *Lutheran Observer*, September 1, 1831, 44; Robert Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery, 1830-60," *Journal of Religion* 13 (January 1933): 72; and Edmund Jacob Wolf, *The Lutherans in America: A Story of Struggle, Progress, Influence, and Marvelous Growth* (New York: J. A. Hill, 1889), 338.

[31] For a few examples of Lutherans switching to more culturally powerful churches, see Bost, "John Bachman," 67-68.

noted the "intellectual greatness" of Lutheranism in Germany, but lamented that he could not "point… to some Wittenberg, to some Helmstadt, among us." If only Lutherans in America could build up better institutions, he believed, "then, also, should we see more of our men high in the offices of our country, guiding the civil and political destinies of our land."[32] According to his biographer, Abdel Ross Wentz, shortly after he had finished his studies at Princeton in 1820, Schmucker identified four "great needs for Lutherans in America": an organized system of church government, an academically demanding seminary, a similarly rigorous college, and theological works in English.[33]

In less than fifteen years, Schmucker had accomplished all four goals. In 1823, the talented young pastor "came to the rescue of the General Synod," saving the fledgling organization from dissolution.[34] He was also the chief architect of the *Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, formally adopted by the General Synod in 1829, which outlined its polity and constitution.[35] Over the next twenty years, Schmucker helped to grow the General Synod from three member synods to

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[32] S. S. Schmucker, *The Intellectual and Moral Glories of the Christian Temple: Illustrated from the History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: A Synodical Discourse* (Baltimore: Wm. Woody, 1824), 14.

[33] Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 78. Wentz's biography is still the most comprehensive account of Schmucker's life. For other significant works on Schmucker, see James L. Haney, "The Religious Heritage and Education of Samuel Simon Schmucker: A Study in the Rise of American Lutheranism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1968); Leigh D. Jordahl, "Schmucker and Walther: A Study of Christian Response to American Culture," in Philip J. Hefner, ed., *The Future of the American Church* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 71-90; Nancy Koester, "Schmucker's Benevolence, from Republican Ideals to Civil War Realities," *Lutheran Quarterly* 9 (Spring 1995): 57-78; Paul A. Baglyos, "One Nation Under God? Schmucker's Theology of the American Republic," *Seminary Ridge Review* 1 (Summer 1999): 28-39; and Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, *Luthertum und Demokratie: Deutsche und amerikanische Theologen des 19. Jahrhunderts zu Staat, Gesellschaft, und Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 115-86.

[34] Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 57. Wentz writes that his "heroic efforts succeeded in saving the life of the General Synod." Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 113.

[35] Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 80.

sixteen, so that by 1850 the federation encompassed nearly half of all Lutherans in the United States.[36] In 1826 Schmucker helped to found Gettysburg Theological Seminary, sponsored primarily by the General Synod but also by synods not associated with it, and was named the school's first professor.[37] The following year he established a classical academy as a preparatory school for the seminary. In 1832 the institution was chartered as Pennsylvania College, with Schmucker managing its affairs until a full-time president was appointed two years later.[38] Amidst his manifold administrative and pedagogical duties, Schmucker also published several lengthy works, including his *Elements of Popular Theology* in 1834, the first textbook of Lutheran theology written in English.[39] At the age of thirty-five, he had established himself as the ecclesiastical, educational, and theological leader of American Lutheranism.

Yet Schmucker did not merely direct his organizational and intellectual gifts toward strengthening what he saw as his denomination's institutional and academic deficiencies. He also sought to build up relations with non-German Protestants by advancing Anglo-evangelical causes. He worked with the American Bible Society, American Sunday School Union, American Tract Society, and American Home Missionary Society.[40] In 1838 Schmucker pressed his desire for Lutheran inclusion in

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[36] *The Lutheran Almanac for the Year of Our Lord 1851* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1851), 45.

[37] Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 95-96.

[38] Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 136-39.

[39] S. S. Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX* (Andover, MA: Gould and Newman, 1834).

[40] Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 253, 262. See also S. S. Schmucker, *The Happy Adaptation of the Sabbath-School System to the Peculiar Wants of Our Age and Country: A Sermon, Preached at the Request of the Board of Mangagers of the American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia, May 20th, 1839*

American Protestantism even further by publishing a "Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union, on Apostolic Principles" in the *American Biblical Repository*. Later published as a book, the *Fraternal Appeal*, as the work was commonly known, did not propose a merger of Protestants into a single unified church, as its title implied.[41] "[T]his method," Schmucker wrote, "violates the inalienable rights and obligations of Christians." Instead he argued that individual denominations should unite around one "Apostolic, Protestant Confession," participate in "sacramental, ecclesiastical, and ministerial communion," engage in cooperative mission efforts, and refer to each other not as separate churches but as "branches" of the one "Apostolic, Protestant Church."[42] Schmucker's proposal for inter-church cooperation was a bold step beyond the Lutheran-Reformed partnership of Pennsylvania Germans. Instead of an ecumenism based primarily on ethnic heritage, Schmucker was advocating that American Lutherans not only embrace a broader Protestant identity but also play a leading role in evangelical unity.[43]

(Philadelphia: American Sunday School Union, 1839); and S. S. Schmucker, *Appeal in behalf of the Christian Sabbath* (New York: American Tract Society, [1845]).

[41] The work was published over two issues: S. S. Schmucker, "Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union, on Apostolic Principles," *American Biblical Repository* 9 (January 1838): 86-131; (April 1838): 363-415. The title of the first book edition was shortened: S. S. Schmucker, *Appeal to the Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union* (New York: Gould and Newman: 1838). The second and enlarged edition, adopted the old title: S. S. Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches, with a Plan for Catholic Union, on Apostolic Principles* (New York: Gould and Newman: 1839). A modern reprint of the second edition that contains a helpful introduction but omits some of the original work's front matter is S. S. Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches: With a Plan for Catholic Union on Apostolic Principles*, ed. Frederick K. Wentz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1965). All quotations come from the original second edition.

[42] Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal*, 89, 107, 117, 125, 127.

[43] Nolt, *Foreigners in Their Own Land*, 115-20. For a useful analysis of the reaction of other Protestants to Schmucker's proposal, see Dennis A. Norlin, "The Response in Religious Journals to Samuel Schmucker's *Fraternal Appeal*," *Lutheran Quarterly* 25 (February 1973): 78-90.

Schmucker was not alone in promoting what Schaff labeled as "New Lutheranism" and he and his allies would come to call "American Lutheranism" or "New School Lutheranism."[44] The most significant collaborator in his cause of enlarging Lutheranism's profile and expanding its role in the United States was the *Lutheran Observer*, a religious paper first published in 1831. After the two-year editorship of John G. Morris (1803-1895), a former student of Schmucker,[45] the periodical came under the control of Benjamin Kurtz (1795-1865). An early advocate of the General Synod, Kurtz in 1826 and 1827 had visited Germany to solicit funds for the newly founded seminary at Gettysburg. In 1833, after serving various pastorates in Maryland and Pennsylvania, he became the part owner and full-time editor of the paper, a position he would retain for over twenty-five years.[46] The paper quickly became the principal English-language Lutheran publication in the United States.[47] Based in Baltimore, Maryland, by 1839 the *Lutheran Observer* gained a nationwide audience of over 3000 subscribers and at least five times that many readers.[48] By 1847 the paper had editorial departments in Pittsburgh,

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[44] S. S. Schmucker, *American Lutheranism Vindicated; or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1856), 10.

[45] On Morris's life and work, see Michael J. Kurtz, *John Gottlieb Morris: Man of God, Man of Science* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1997); and John G. Morris, *Fifty Years in the Lutheran Ministry* (Baltimore: James Young, 1878).

[46] No modern biography of Kurtz exists. For treatments of his life and work see E. W. Hutter, *Eulogy on the Life and Character of Rev. Benjamin Kurtz, D.D., LL.D., Delivered Before the Professors and Students of the Missionary Institute, and a Large Concourse of Citizens and Visiters* [sic]*, at Selinsgrove, Pa., Monday Evening, May 28th, 1866* (Philadelphia: H. G. Leisenring, 1866); [John Gottlieb] Morris, "Benjamin Kurtz, D.D., LL.D.," in J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies, or Historical Notices of Over Three Hundred and Fifty Leading Men of the American Lutheran Church, from its Establishment to the Year 1890* (Milwaukee, WI: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 445-46; and Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 129-32.

[47] Predecessor English-language periodicals included the *Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer* (1826-1831) and the *Lutheran Magazine* (1827-1831).

[48] "Lutheran Observer," *Lutheran Observer*, April 19, 1839, 3. Two years earlier, Kurtz estimated 16,000 weekly readers, though he did not cite any specific method for his calculation. "The Lutheran Observer," *Lutheran Observer*, January 27, 1837, 91.

Pennsylvania; Dayton, Ohio; and Ebenezer, Georgia.[49] Like Schmucker, the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* not only advanced the cause of the General Synod and the Gettysburg seminary, but also sought to bring about a convergence with other American Protestants. They did this by heralding various evangelical causes and three in particular: revivalism, temperance, and anti-Catholicism.

The most prominent of these was revivalism. While several scholars have argued that many American religious leaders in the late 1830s and early 1840s were beginning to doubt the efficacy of revivals, the *Lutheran Observer* appears not to have gotten the message.[50] During its first twenty years and beyond, scarcely an issue in the paper appeared that failed to promote the progress, theology, and practice of revivalism. One study of the *Lutheran Observer* during the 1840s documents 180 different Lutheran congregations throughout the United States, as far west as Illinois and as far south as Alabama, that reported to have experienced revivals.[51] In 1842, the New Lutheran pastor Simeon Harkey (1811-1889) published a 170-page book which sought to show that

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[49] The Pittsburgh and Dayton editorial departments began in the August 8, 1845, issue; the Ebenezer department on February 12, 1847.

[50] James D. Bratt, "Religious Anti-Revivalism in Antebellum America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 24 (Spring 2004): 68. See also Curtis D. Johnson, "The Protracted Meeting Myth: Awakenings, Revivals, and New York State Baptists," *Journal of the Early Republic* 34 (Fall 2014): 349-84. For works that assume the success of antebellum revivalism, see William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: Ronald Press, 1959); Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978); Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); and Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*.

[51] John E. Groh, "Revivalism Among Lutherans in America in the 1840s," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 43 (May 1970): 64.

"*constant* revivals are possible, and that is the duty of christians to labor and pray for them."[52]

What the New Lutherans exactly meant by revivals is somewhat ambiguous. Rarely did they refer to the energetic "camp meetings" characteristic of the Second Great Awakening on the western frontier. Instead, the *Lutheran Observer* frequently described how Lutheran revivals "were conducted in the greatest order and solemnity, without noise or confusion of any kind."[53] In addition, the revivals advocated by the paper were performed in the context of congregational life, rather than in nondenominational gatherings.[54] Lutherans like Kurtz and Harkey were advocating something closer to the professional revivalism of Charles Finney than the frontier revivalism promoted by itinerants like Lorenzo Dow. No "jerking" or "barking" was reported.[55]

Most often New Lutherans discussed revivalism in terms of "new measures," but this designation evoked ambiguity as well. In his defense of these practices, David F. Bittle (1811-1876), an ally of the *Lutheran Observer* in Virginia, defined "new measures" as variously as "Protracted Meetings, Revivals, Anxious-Seats, Prayer Meetings and

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[52] Simeon W. Harkey, *The Church's Best State; or Constant Revivals of Religion* (Baltimore: Publication Rooms, 1842), 159. For information on Harkey, see S. L. Harkey, "Rev. Simeon W. Harkey, D.D." in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 96-100.

[53] "Translation of letter from the German Lutheran Magazine of Feb. 1," *Lutheran Observer*, March 1, 1832, 232. Kurtz wrote that revivals should be "employed under proper circumstances and with Christian prudence." "Defining Our Position," *Lutheran Observer*, July 9, 1841, 3.

[54] See Harkey's chapter, "How to conduct revials," in *The Church's Best State*, 138-55.

[55] The *Lutheran Observer* called Finney a "gentleman whose labors in the ministry have been so signally honored by God." "Rev. Mr. Finney." *Lutheran Observer, and Weekly Religious Visitor*, November 30, 1833, 111. On Finney, see Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1996). On these radical manifestations of the religious enthusiasm, epitomized at the revival at Cane Ridge, see John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), ix.

Voluntary Societies."[56] Bittle, Kurtz, and Harkey admitted that these practices were "new"—just as "improvements" in technology were new—but they argued that "their spirit and design" were "old and venerable."[57] They cited "the authority of the apostles" as well as historical figures, both Lutheran pietists such as Johann Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener, and August Hermann Francke and Anglo-evangelicals, such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and John Wesley.[58] In sum, the "new measures" that those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* endorsed were common, but hardly radical, antebellum American revivalist practices. Adopted primarily to save souls, they had the ancillary effect of drawing many Lutherans into the democratic culture of American evangelicalism.[59]

While revivalism brought New Lutherans like Kurtz closer to American evangelical theology, temperance advocacy aligned them with Anglo-Protestant reformism. In the early republic, alcohol consumption increased at a rate that shocked the sensibilities of religious leaders and led to the formation of the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance in 1826. Unsatisfied with merely advocating restraint, many

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[56] D. F. Bittle, *Remarks on New Measures* (Staunton, VA: Kenton Harper, 1839), 4. A copy of the tract is found in David F. Bittle Papers, Roanoke College Archives, Virginia. On Bittle, see Robert Benne, "David Bittle (1811-1876): The Americanist Founder of Roanoke College," *Lutheran Quarterly* 27 (Autumn 2013): 321-43.

[57] Bittle, *Remarks on New Measures*, 4; "Defining Our Position," 3.

[58] "REVIVAL PREACHERS: Arndt, Spener, Franke—A Glorious Trio," *Lutheran Observer*, May 29, 1840, 1; "'THE ANXIOUS BENCH, BY J. W. NEVIN, D. D.' Contrasted with 'Edwards on Revivals': No. IX," *Lutheran Observer*, January 5, 1844, 2-3; Bittle, *Remarks on New Measures*, 6-8; and Harkey, *Church's Best State*, 111.

[59] On the democratic nature of the "new measures," see Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*; and Ted A. Smith, *The New Measures: A Theological History of Democratic Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

antebellum evangelicals soon began to argue for total abstinence.[60] The *Lutheran Observer* came out firmly on the side of "teetotalism," arguing that, though the use of alcoholic beverages is "lawful," the Apostle Paul taught that it is not "expedient." Thus "we believe the day has arrived" to refrain from all "intoxicating liquors."[61] Other Lutherans echoed the views of the *Lutheran Observer* by participating in inter-denominational temperance rallies and societies.[62] Like their advocacy of new measures, Kurtz and other Lutherans' participation in the temperance cause and other reform movements had sincere motives, but it also had strategic value. It allied them with the "benevolent empire" of antebellum evangelical Protestantism, which, as Richard Carwardine notes, was "the largest, and most formidable, subculture in American society."[63]

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[60] W. J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic: An American Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Ian R. Tyrrell, *Sobering Up: From Temperance to Prohibition in Antebellum America, 1800-1860* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978); Thomas E. Pegram, *Battling Demon Rum: The Struggle for a Dry America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 3-42. On antebellum evangelical reform more generally, see Ronald G. Walters, *American Reformers, 1815-1860* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978); Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*; Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); John W. Quist, *Restless Visionaries: The Social Roots of Antebellum Reform in Alabama and Michigan* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); and Leo P. Hirrel, *Children of Wrath: New School Calvinism and Antebellum Reform* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

[61] "Defining Our Position," 3.

[62] J. A. Seiss, *The Ravages of Intemperance: An Address Delivered at the Grand Temperance Rally in Shepherdstown, Va., February 22, 1845* (Baltimore: Publication Rooms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1845); J[ohn] Bachman, *An Address Delivered before the Washington Total Abstinence Society of Charleston, S.C., on Wednesday Evening, July 27th, 1842* (Charleston, SC: Burges and James, 1842); C[harles] P[hilip] Krauth, *Address Delivered on the Anniversary of Washington's Birth-day, at the Request of the Union Abstinence Society of Gettysburg* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1846); John J. Reimensnyder, *Address on Temperance, Delivered February the 22nd, 1843: In the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Woodsboro', Maryland* (Baltimore: Publication Rooms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1843), which was "Published by a Committee of the Woodsboro' Temperance Society"; and J. F. Campbell, *The Throne of Iniquity: A Discourse Delivered in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Cumberland, MD., on Sabbath Morning, January 8, 1854* (Cumberland, MD: Cary and Hoover, 1854).

[63] Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 44. See also Kyle G. Volk, *Moral Minorities and the Making of American Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 11-36.

Because of their alignment with evangelical activism and reformism, New Lutherans tended to support the Whig Party.[64] Leading figures argued that ministers and the church had a role to play in the nation's political life. Schmucker wrote that, though a minister should avoid "*mere party politics*," he believed that "the Christian pulpit has an important work to perform in preserving and promoting the moral purity of our political institutions." For Schmucker, this included preaching against "all immoral, unequal and oppressive laws" and "offensive war in general, and that… with Mexico in particular."[65] Kurtz's *Lutheran Observer* agreed, proclaiming "it to be the duty of every Christian to take a decided and active part in all the great moral movements of the day and age."[66] As with many antebellum American evangelicals, proponents of New Lutheranism saw little distinction between religion and politics.

Perhaps the most important component of New Lutherans' quest to align themselves with Anglo-Protestants was their effort to refute the widely held assumption that some of their church's teachings resembled those taught by Roman Catholicism. The 1830 edition of Charles Buck's *Theological Dictionary*, to cite one example, asserted that "of all Protestants," Lutherans "differ least from the Romish church." Buck's claim

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[64] Robert P. Swierenga, "Ethnoreligious Political Behavior in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Voting, Values, Cultures," in Mark A. Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 155-56. See also the speeches given by Lutheran ministers to commemorate the death of prominent Whig politicians: Chas. Adam Smith, *The Ground of National Consolation and Hope: A Sermon Occasioned by the Death of Zachary Taylor, Late President of the United States, Delivered in the Third Lutheran Church of Rhinebeck, Sabbath Morning, July 21, 1850* (Albany, NY: J. Munsell, 1850); and F. R. Anspach, *A Discourse Pronounced on Sabbath Evening, July 4, 1852, in the Lutheran Church of Hagerstown, on the Death of Henry Clay* (Hagerstown, MD: Mittag and Sneary, 1852)

[65] S. S. Schmucker, *The Christian Pulpit, the Rightful Guardian of Morals, in Political No Less than in Private Life: A Discourse Delivered at Gettysburg, Oct. 26, the Day Appointed by the Governor, for Public Humiliation, Thanksgiving and Prayer* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1846), 8, 26, 29-30.

[66] K., "Christians and Politics," *Lutheran Observer*, September 22, 1848, 152. See also "Religious Men Should Take Part in Politics," *Lutheran Observer*, December 13, 1844, 1; and "Religion and Politics, or National Prosperity and Destruction," *Lutheran Observer*, May 13, 1853, 78.

focused on sacramental theology, particularly the doctrines of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper and baptismal regeneration, taught in the confessions of the Lutheran church.[67] In the thirty years after its first edition in 1802, the dictionary had become, according to Matthew Bowman and Samuel Brown, a "brand name" and "standard work" among American evangelicals.[68] Because of this, New Lutherans worked tirelessly to refute the widespread notion that their church was not fully Protestant.

In doing so, they insisted that that American Lutheran church had rejected those "Romish" doctrines. When a Presbyterian paper in Indiana repeated Buck's assertion, Kurtz argued in the *Lutheran Observer* that most Lutherans in the United States no longer held to the views of the sacraments taught by Luther and other Lutherans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. "[T]he Lutheran churches of the present day," he concluded, "are just as far from the Romish church as any other denomination of Protestants."[69] Other Lutherans went even further. John Bachman (1790-1874), pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina and chief spokesman for New Lutheranism in the South, argued that those "doctrines are unscriptural, and… are not contained in the articles of our Church or in the writings of the Reformers." Moreover, he asserted, "her doctrines and her principles have formed the ground work of the creeds and

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[67] Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary, Containing Definitions of All Religious Terms; a Comprehensive View of Every Article in the System of Divinity; an Impartial Account of All the Principal Denominations which have Subsisted in the Religious World from the Birth of Christ to the Present Day: Together with an Accurate Statement of the Most Remarkable Transactions and Events Recorded in Ecclesiastical History* (Philadelphia: James Kay, June and Company, 1830), 246.

[68] Matthew Bowman and Samuel Brown, "Reverend Buck's Theological Dictionary and the Struggle to Define American Evangelicalism, 1802-1851," *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Fall 2009): 442.

[69] "'The Lutherans, of all Protestants, Differ Least from the Romish Church'," *Lutheran Observer*, January 30, 1835, 91.

sentiments which govern our brethren of other denominations." Lutheranism not only is fully evangelical, Bachman contended, "but is the mother of Protestants."[70]

The accusation of resembling Catholicism entailed more than a theological critique. Most American Protestants viewed "papism" as incompatible with republicanism and church-state separation.[71] New Lutheran leaders sought to quell any close association with Catholicism on this front as well. In a lengthy treatise, Schmucker argued that the Lutheran Reformation was the wellspring of both "liberty of conscience" and "civil liberty," formed in explicit contrast to "popery," which "is not less a political than religious system."[72] In his widely circulated *Why Are You a Lutheran?*, an expansion of a series of articles in the *Lutheran Observer*, Kurtz argued that many aspects of the American Lutheran church mirrored the nation's republican principles. A liturgy is "recommended" to congregations, he wrote, "but they are at liberty to use it or not." In ecclesiastical polity Lutherans avoid the hierarchical tendencies of the Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians. On the matter of church discipline, the power lies with the congregation, not the "preacher-in-charge." In sum, he asserted, "all is in lovely harmony

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[70] John Bachman, *A Sermon on the Doctrines and Disciplines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Preached at Charleston, S.C., November 12th, 1837* (Charleston, SC: J. S. Burges, 1837), 14, 31. For details on Bachman's biography and theology, see Bost, "John Bachman." While other works treat Bachman's views on science and race, Bost's study is the most extensive treatment of his religious life.

[71] Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 17-42; Philip Hamburger, *Separation of Church and State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 193-251; William M. Shea, *The Lion and the Lamb: Evangelicals and Catholics in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); W. Jason Wallace, *Catholics, Slaveholders, and the Dilemma of American Evangelicalism, 1835-1860* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010); Jon Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping Nineteenth-Century America*, ed. S. Deborah Kang (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Maura Jane Farrely, *Anti-Catholicism in America, 1620-1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 134-89.

[72] S. S. Schmucker, *A Discourse in Commemoration at the Glorious Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, with a Reference to the Relation between the Principles of Popery and our Republican Institutions: Delivered Before the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of West Pennsylvania* (New York: Gould and Newman, 1838), 66, 96, 130. See also Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology*, 274.

with the principles of our liberal and republican government… [and] the primitive church."[73]

Along with defending their church against charges of crypto-Catholicism, New Lutherans also went on the offensive against "Romanism." Particularly effective was the testimony of Luigi Giustiniani, a former Catholic priest who became an American Lutheran pastor. His book *Papal Rome As It Is*, which went through four editions, argued that his former church was founded upon "1st. *Ambition*. 2nd. *Usurpation*. 3rd. *Avarice*, and 4th. *Moral corruption*."[74] The *Lutheran Observer* also sought to show Catholicism's sinister nature, faithfully reporting the "awful disclosures" of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery as "no doubt" true, as well as other "papist" scandals and conspiracies.[75] During the public school controversy in New York City, Kurtz warned: "The Catholics would rule the nation and subject it to the darkness of popery, if their power equaled their designs."[76] One correspondent summed up the paper's stance, describing Roman Catholics as "ANTI-AMERICAN—yes ANTI-AMERICAN."[77] By espousing a virulent and conspiratorial anti-Catholicism, Schmucker, Kurtz, and other proponents of New Lutheranism were establishing their bona fides as both evangelicals and Americans.

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[73] B. Kurtz, *Why Are You a Lutheran? or a Series of Dissertations, Explanatory of the Doctrines, Government, Discipline, Liturgical Economy, Distinctive Traits, &c., of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (Baltimore: Publication Rooms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1843), 66-67, 112, 132, 138. The book sold out of its initial printing of 2,500 in just a few weeks. "Why Are You a Lutheran?" *Lutheran Observer*, December 8, 1843, 2. The book went through thirteen editions, the last of which was published in 1869.

[74] L. Giustiniani, *Papal Rome, As It Is, by a Roman* (Philadelphia: James M. Campbell, 1845), 174.

[75] "Hotel Dieu Nunnery," *Lutheran Observer*, January 27, 1837, 90. On the prominence of this and other stories in antebellum discourse, see Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-Century Fiction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 27-61.

[76] "The Whole Truth in a Nutshell," *Lutheran Observer*, December 3, 1841, 2.

[77] *Lutheran Observer*, February 3, 1837, 95.

Of course, antebellum American evangelicalism was never monolithic and the leaders of the General Synod sought some alliances more than others. Schmucker shifted his allegiances away from Princeton after his alma mater moved from the evangelical Calvinism of his mentor Archibald Alexander to the sterner old-school orthodoxy of Charles Hodge. Instead, he aligned himself with the more ecumenically-minded Andover Theology Seminary, where his first two major works were published.[78] He also cultivated relationships with other Protestants through his *Fraternal Appeal*. The publication's second edition printed a list of "Witnesses for the Unity of the Savior's Body," which contained over forty endorsements of his work. Among the signatories were Absalom Peters, New School Presbyterian editor of the *American Biblical Repository*, Romeo Elton of Baptist Brown University, and the entire faculty of Andover.[79] The *Lutheran Observer* likewise strove to chart a strategic course through the confusing waters of antebellum evangelicalism. In the debate between Calvinism and Arminianism, Kurtz took the side of the latter, claiming that the Lutherans were closest to those churches that "teach the doctrines of free and unrestricted graces," such as the "Methodists, Cumberland Presbyterians, Free Will Baptists, &c."[80] Yet while favoring some associations more than others, Schmucker and Kurtz did not want to draw boundaries too starkly. Their goal was to foster relationships across the variegated landscape of

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[78] Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 112. These works were the first edition of his *Elements of Popular Theology*, and *Elementary Course in Biblical Theology*, a translation of a work the German theologians, Gottlieb Christian Storr and Johann Christian Flatt. On Princeton's conservatism and its antagonism with Andover, see Paul C. Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge: Guardian of American Orthodoxy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[79] Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal*, v, vii, xii.

[80] "Arminian Revew," *Lutheran Observer*, December 27, 1844, 2.

antebellum Protestantism and to assimilate American Lutheranism into Anglo-evangelicalism.

In their boldest attempt to do so, Schmucker, Kurtz, and Morris, and two other Lutherans traveled to London in the summer of 1846 to participate in the meeting of the World Evangelical Alliance. The organization attempted to bring about church unity among Britons, Americans, and a few Continental Europeans along much the same lines that Schmucker had outlined in his *Fraternal Appeal*. Denominational historians have not exaggerated the leading role of Schmucker in the American delegation, which included such luminaries as Lyman Beecher and Samuel H. Cox.[81] As historian Ernest Sandeen notes, the New Lutheran professor was "the most significant ecumenical leader among American evangelicals."[82] The build-up to the trip received extensive coverage in the *Lutheran Observer*, where Kurtz evinced high hopes for the meeting and trumpeted Lutherans' leading role: "[I]n the common efforts to break down the high partition walls which bigotry had erected, Lutheran ministers and churches have ever delighted in being

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[81] A complete list of the delegates is found in The Evangelical Alliance's *Report of the Proceedings of the Conference, Held at Freemasons' Hall, London, August 19th to September 2nd Inclusive, 1846* (London: Partridge and Oakey, 1847), lxxvii-xcvii. John Abernathy Smith essentially attacks a strawman when he claims that Schmucker was neither the "father" of the alliance nor "the most important participant in the affair," since both of the historians whom he criticizes—Frederick Wentz and Abdel Ross Wentz—argue that Schmucker was the most significant *American* ecumenical leader. Smith, "The Schmucker Myth and the Evangelical Alliance" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 47 (Spring 1974): 8; Wentz, "Introduction," in Schmucker, *Fraternal Appeal*, 23-24; and Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 285-92.

[82] Ernest R. Sandeen "The Distinctiveness of American Denominationalism: A Case Study of the 1846 Evangelical Alliance," *Church History* 45 (June 1976): 226 n.14. Other historians of the alliance agree. Ian Randall and David Hilborn write, "[R]epresentatives from the United States [were] led in particular by Samuel Schmucker." Randall and Hilborn, *One Body in Christ: The History and Significance of the Evangelical Alliance* (Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster Press, 2001), 56. Philip D. Jordan agrees, "Samuel Simon Schmucker led this movement." Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance for the United States of America, 1847-1900: Ecumenism, Identity, and the Religion of the Republic* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 34.

the first and most zealous."[83] The Alliance would fail to bring about a united worldwide evangelicalism, largely because British evangelicals, who represented about eighty-five percent of the delegates, insisted that the organization exclude slaveholders. Instead, the meeting resulted in separate British and American organizations. (The American branch would disband in 1850.) Despite the London meeting's failure, the participation of these Lutherans marked a new highpoint in their efforts to become part of the American Protestant mainstream.

That they were pursuing ecumenical relationships with American and British evangelicals also signaled the New Lutherans' growing ambivalence toward Protestantism in Germany. Though they considered certain theologians, such Ernst Hengstenberg of Berlin and August Tholuck of Halle and, to be truly "evangelical" and prayed for a "religious revival" in Germany, most expressed grave misgivings about religious developments on the continent. Articles in the *Lutheran Observer* railed against the "formalism" of the state churches and especially the "neology" of the universities.[84] As Kurtz wrote, "It is well known that there has been a general and most melancholy religious apostacy in the land of our fathers, that many of the plain and wholesome doctrines of the gospel have been repudiated, and a wretched, barren, hopeless, unphilosophical philosophy substituted in their stead…."[85] New Lutherans were still fond of their ethnic heritage and considered their church to be the obvious home for any new

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[83] "The Union Meeting to be Held in London in June Next," *Lutheran Observer*, January 30, 1846, 90.

[84] For examples, see "Rev. Dr. Tholuck," *Lutheran Observer*, March 31, 1837, 125-26; "Rev. E. Hengstenberg on the Germans of N. America: First Article," *Lutheran Observer*, December 10, 1847, 57; "Revival of Religion in Germany," *Lutheran Observer, and Weekly Religious Visitor*, August 24, 1833, 2-3; "Extracts of Letters to the Editor," *Lutheran Observer*, March 1, 1832, 238; and "The Characteristics of Neology," *Lutheran Observer*, May 15, 1846, 150-51.

[85] "The German Seminary," *Lutheran Observer*, January 11, 1839, 2.

German immigrants to the United States. But these newcomers would have to be Americanized. As one correspondent to the *Lutheran Observer* wrote, we "have views and feelings, customs and manners, materially different from those of our transatlantic brethren."[86]

Perhaps the greatest reflection of New Lutherans' Americanization was their conflicted views on slavery. On this issue, they mirrored other white evangelicals. In 1837, the Presbyterian Church split into New School and Old School factions. Though officially over the issues of revivalism and inter-denominational cooperation, regional differences over slavery also played a significant role in the schism. The New School with its greatest strength in New York and Ohio represented antislavery and abolitionist sentiment, while the opinions of the more numerous Old School, primarily located in the lower Northern states of Pennsylvania and New Jersey and in the South, ranged from gradual emancipationism to proslavery ideology. The 1844 and 1845 schisms of Methodists and Baptists were more clear-cut. Unlike the Presbyterians, they split explicitly over the slavery issue and along sectional lines.[87] For American evangelicals in both sections, a shared biblicist hermeneutic and mutual commitment to revivalism and

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[86] "To the Editor of the Lutheran Observer," *Lutheran Observer*, September 1, 1832, 17. See also "German Emigrants," *Lutheran Observer*, July 2, 1841, 2-3; and "To the Directors of the Theological Seminary at Columbus," *Lutheran Observer*, November 24, 1843, 2.

[87] C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985), esp. 65-107. On the Presbyterian schism, see also Gutjahr, *Charles Hodge*, 168-85; Peter J. Wallace, "The Bond of Union: The Old School Presbyterian Church and the American Nation, 1837-1861" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004), 48-114; and George Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1970), 59-103. On the Methodists and Baptists, see also John R. McKivigan, "The Sectional Division of the Methodist and Baptist Denominations as Measures of Northern Antislavery Sentiment," in McKivigan and Mitchel Snay, eds., *Religion and the Antebellum Debate over Slavery* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 343-63.

social reform could not thwart the overwhelming influence of culture. In the antebellum slavery debates, geography mattered more than theology.[88]

Though Lutherans never split denominationally on the issue prior to the Civil War, their opinions on slavery and race also were divided primarily along regional lines rather than strictly doctrinal ones.[89] The *Lutheran Observer*, based in the slave state of Maryland, attempted to chart a moderate course, expressing support for the American Colonization Society.[90] On the subject of "Abolition," however, Kurtz declared an editorial policy of "neutrality," since in his view the question was "*not essential* and… we know a conflict of opinion to prevail in the Lutheran Church."[91] As some readers

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[88] John Patrick Daly writes, "The South and North drew different practical conclusions from the same evangelical moral premises." Daly, *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), 2. On the shared theology among evangelicals in both sections, see also Samuel S. Hill, *The South and North in American Religion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 46-89; Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics*, 133-74; and Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). This is not to discount distinctive theological emphases in the sections. See E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentlemen Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1978); Mitchell Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separatism in the Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class: History and Faith in the Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005); John R. McKivigan, *The War against Proslavery Religion: Abolitionism and the Northern Churches, 1830-1865* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009); and several of the essays in McKivigian and Snay, *Religion and the Antebellum Debate over Slavery*.

[89] No monograph on American Lutheranism and slavery has been published. The most comprehensive survey is an unpublished manuscript by Robert Fortenbaugh: "The Lutheran Church in America and Slavery," Robert Burns Fortenbaugh Papers, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Archives, A. R. Wentz Library, Pennsylvania. This work was expansion on two articles he wrote on subject: Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery," 72-92; and Fortenbaugh, "The Representative Lutheran Periodical Press and Slavery, 1831-1860." *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 8 (April 1935): 151-72. For shorter studies that also aim at comprehensiveness, see Joel Torstenson, "The Attitude of the Lutheran Church towards Slavery" (M.A. thesis, University of Minnesota, 1940); Douglas C. Stange, "The Lutheran Church Confronts the Negro Slave: Representative Attitudes in American Lutheranism Toward Slavery" (Th.M. thesis, Harvard University, 1966); and Maria Erling, "American Lutherans and Slavery," *Seminary Ridge Review* 16 (Autumn 2013): 22-37.

[90] "COLONIZATION: Important Project," *Lutheran Observer*, April 21, 1837, 138; "Colonization—Fourth July Celebration," *Lutheran Observer*, June 23, 1837, 175. See Douglas C. Stange, "Lutheran Involvement in the American Colonization Society," *Mid-America* 49 (April 1967): 140-51.

[91] "Neutrality," *Lutheran Observer*, July 28, 1837, 195.

pressured him to take a more definitive stance, Kurtz resolved in 1837 that "the question of Abolition shall not even be mentioned in our columns in any connection whatever."[92] The editor's conservatism on the slavery issue represented sentiments widely shared in "Greater Pennsylvania," where most Lutherans resided.[93]

Schmucker took a stronger antislavery position than the *Lutheran Observer*, but was also sympathetic to the situation in the South. As a young pastor, he served parishes in Virginia with members who owned slaves. When he remarried after the death of his first wife, he became a slaveholder himself through the estate of his second wife.[94] In the 1834 edition of his *Popular Theology*, the Gettysburg professor wrote that he was "convinced that those who advocate entire, immediate abolition, do not understand the subject" and instead supported both colonization and the "*gradual* and *entire* abolition by legislative provision of the several States."[95] As slavery continued to expand and prosper, however, he dropped the rhetoric of gradualism in the 1846 edition of his theological textbook. Yet he still cautiously supported colonization and argued that complete abolition "has difficulties more formidable than some Christians in non-slaveholding

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[92] "Abolition," *Lutheran Observer*, August 4, 1837, 199.

[93] For the most comprehensive analysis of the *Lutheran Observer* and slavery, see Douglas C. Stange, "Editor Benjamin Kurtz of the *Lutheran Observer* and the Slavery Crisis," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 62 (September 1967): 285-299. On support for colonization and antislavery in Maryland and Pennsylvania, see Penelope Campbell, *Maryland in Africa: The Maryland State Colonization Society, 1831-1857* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1971); Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Eric Burin, *Slavery and the Peculiar Solution: A History of the American Colonization Society* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005); Stanley Harrold, *Border War: Fighting over Slavery before the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Beverly C. Tomek, *Colonization and Its Discontents: Emancipation, Emigration, and Antislavery in Antebellum Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); and Richard Newman and James Mueller, eds., *Antislavery and Abolition in Philadelphia: Emancipation and the Long Struggle for Racial Justice in the City of Brotherly Love* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011).

[94] Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 111-16.

[95] Schmucker, *Popular Theology* (1834), 277-78.

states suppose."[96] Unlike Kurtz and the *Lutheran Observer*, Schmucker was not hesitant to claim that those who "fail sincerely to desire and faithfully to labour for [slavery's] extinction are… guilty of sin." Yet he also distinguished between "voluntary" slaveholding, which was always sinful, and "involuntary" slaveholding, which (conveniently) excused situations like his own.[97] Because Schmucker never advocated immediacy and refused to join the Anti-Slavery Society, due to what he regarded as its "indiscriminate denunciation, and occasionally exaggerated statements," it is imprecise to characterize his views as "abolitionist," as several denominational historians have.[98] Nevertheless, he stood firmly on the side of antislavery, resembling the position of antebellum moderates like Francis Wayland and Leonard Bacon.[99]

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[96] S. S. Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX* (Philadelphia: S. S. Miles, 1846), 333.

[97] S. S. Schmucker, "Lecture on Slavery Delivered to the Senior Class of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary, August 1845," in Douglas C. Stange, ed., "Dr. Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Inculcation of Moderate Abolitionism," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 40 (July 1967): 79, 81. Schmucker had presented a slightly different version of this lecture as early as 1840 and also presented it before the West Pennsylvania Synod in 1845. Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 320-22. For a transcription of the 1840 lecture, see Mark Oldenburg, ed., "Schmucker's Propositions on Slavery," *Seminary Ridge Review* 1 (Summer 1999): 5-11.

[98] Quoted in Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 321. On the importance of immediacy to the abolitionist cause, see Lawrence J. Friedman, *Gregarious Saints: Self and Community in American Abolitionism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982); James Brewer Stewart, *Holy Warriors: The Abolitionists and American Slavery* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1997); Douglas M. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics: Abolitionism and the Religious Tensions of American Democracy* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1999); Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Fighting Slavery in the Early Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Frederick J. Blue, *No Taint of Compromise: Crusaders in Antislavery Politics* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation*. (New York: Knopf, 2014), 167-225.

[99] Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, refers to Schmucker as an "Abolitionist Leader." Others use the oxymoronic terms "moderate abolitionist" or "pragmatic abolitionist." For the former, see Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 317; and Stange, "Schmucker and Moderate Abolitionism." For the latter, see Stephen L. Longenecker, *Gettysburg Religion: Refinement, Diversity, and Race in the Antebellum and Civil War Border North* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 107. On antislavery moderates, see Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

If Kurtz and Schmucker represented the center of New Lutheran opinion on slavery, the leaders of the Franckean Synod and the South Carolina Synod represented the peripheries. The former was organized in 1837 by four pastors in upstate New York dissatisfied with the insufficient response to slavery by their fellow Lutherans in that state. The Franckeans, who took their name after the eighteenth-century German Lutheran pietist leader August Hermann Francke, made opposition to slavery a central feature of their synodical platform and were among the few antebellum Lutherans who could be labeled accurately as "abolitionists."[100] In addition to combatting slavery, the Franckeans embraced interracial cooperation. In 1839 the synod ordained Daniel Alexander Payne (1811-1893), who had grown up a free African American in Charleston, South Carolina, and studied under Schmucker at Gettysburg. Payne would switch his ecclesial allegiance to the American Methodist Episcopal Church but not before leading a synodical proposition that condemned slavery in unambiguous terms: "American Slavery brutalizes man—destroys his moral agency, and subverts the moral government of God."[101] Three years later the Franckean Synod issued "A Fraternal Appeal… to the several Ev. Lutheran Synods in the United States on the subject of American Slavery." It argued: "[T]he God of love, grace, purity and immutable justice sternly demands

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[100] On the Franckean Synod, see Douglas C. Stange, *Radicalism for Humanity: A Study in Lutheran Abolitionism* (St. Louis: Oliver Slave, 1970); Milton Sernett, "Lutheran Abolitionism in New York State: A Problem in Historical Explication," in Aug. R. Suelflow, *The Lutheran Historical Conference: Essays and Reports, 1982* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1984), 16-37; Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 179-219; and Clinton Daggan, "The New York Lutheran Churches and the Question of Slavery," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 78 (Spring 2005): 28-45.

[101] Douglas C. Stange, ed., "Document: Bishop Daniel Alexander Payne's Protestation of American Slavery." *Journal of Negro History* 52 (January 1967): 60. On Payne's life and work, see Thomas R. Noon, "Daniel Payne and the Lutherans," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 53 (Summer 1980): 51-69; and Nelson T. Strobert, *Daniel Alexander Payne: The Venerable Preceptor of the African Methodist Episcopal Church* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2012).

uncompromising ACTION against every abomination of the land."[102] The Franckeans earned plaudits from William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*, who praised them as "the only Lutheran ecclesiastic association that has taken as decisive action in relation to the abolition of slavery."[103] But the response of their fellow Lutherans remained, in the words of one historian, "indifferent or hostile."[104] Deemed too radical, the General Synod barred the synod from its membership.[105]

In stark contrast to the Franckean Synod, the South Carolina Synod, under the leadership of Bachman, condemned abolitionists "as enemies of our beloved country" and argued that their antislavery agitation is "contrary to the precepts of our blessed savior, who commanded servants to be obedient to their masters."[106] Though the South Carolinians were the most explicitly proslavery of the various Lutheran synods, they also were the most active in evangelizing blacks. Both Payne and Jehu Jones (1786-1852), the first African American Lutheran minister and pastor of the first black Lutheran church in Philadelphia, came to Lutheranism at Bachman's church in Charleston.[107] By 1850

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[102] "A Fraternal Appeal Addressed by the Frankean Evangelic-Lutheran Synod, to the several Ev. Lutheran Synods on the subject of Slavery," in Douglas C. Stange, ed., "The One Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of a Fraternal Appeal," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 40 (April 1967): 47.

[103] "The Right Ground," *Liberator*, March 31, 1843, 13.

[104] Stange, ed., "Anniversary of Fraternal Appeal," 43.

[105] Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 198-209.

[106] *Minutes of the South Carolina Synod* (1835), quoted in Bost, "John Bachman," 406-7.

[107] On Jones, see Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 130-37; and Karl E. Johnson, Jr., and Joseph A. Romeo, "Jehu Jones (1786-1852): The First African American Lutheran Minister," *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 (Winter 1996): 425-44.

African Americans, most of whom were slaves, accounted for about one-sixth of the South Carolina Synod's members.[108]

Like the moderate positions of Schmucker and Kurtz, the South Carolinian and the Franckean views reflected the politics and culture of their respective regions: the former mirrored the racial paternalism of Southern proslavery evangelicalism; the latter emulated the activist revivalism of upstate New York's "Burned-over District."[109] Though the two synods were small and relatively insignificant minorities—in 1840 neither numbered more than 2000 members—they demonstrated the wide range of opinion possible among Lutherans who shared a common desire to bring their church in line with American evangelical culture.[110]

By the mid-1840s, Lutherans like Schmucker, Kurtz, and Bachman were becoming respectable insiders in the minds of the Anglo-evangelicals who shaped antebellum American politics and society. In 1844 Robert Baird (Schmucker's roommate at Princeton) surveyed the landscape of religion in the United States and separated the "evangelical churches" from the "unevangelical" ones. He placed the Lutheran church in the former category, noting its "rapid progress… since the Revolution" and declaring it to be "much more sound than it once was." In particular, he praised the Lutherans of the

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[108] Johnson, *Black Christians*, 125, 127.

[109] On the interaction of whites and blacks in Southern churches, see Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008). On upstate New York, see Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982); Michael Barkun, *Crucible of the Millennium: The Burned-over District of New York in the 1840s* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1986); Curtis D. Johnson, *Islands of Holiness: Rural Religion in Upstate New York, 1790-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Milton C. Sernett, *North Star Country: Upstate New York and the Crusade for African American Freedom* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2002).

[110] *Lutheran Almanac for the Year of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 1842* (Baltimore: Publication Rooms of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1842), 27.

General Synod for "abolish[ing] the remains of papal superstition" and making a "systematic adjustment in its doctrine."[111] Such recognition was precisely what proponents of New Lutheranism were working towards. Yet in his short summary, Baird overlooked the other factions of Lutheranism in the antebellum United States who had a much different idea about what it meant to be both Lutheran and American.

Old Lutheranism

In November 1838, five ships embarked from the German port of Bremerhaven carrying 665 Lutheran emigrants from Saxony. The voyagers were known as the Stephanites. Named after their charismatic leader Martin Stephan (1777-1846), this separatist community was immigrating to America to establish what historian Walter Forster called a "semiautonomous theocratic community."[112] Zealous adherents of what they considered to be "the old, pure, Lutheran faith," they had become convinced of the "impossibility, humanly speaking, of retaining this faith in their present homeland."[113] After four of the ships arrived in New Orleans in January 1839 (the fifth was lost at sea), the Stephanite clergy invested their "spiritual father" with the office of bishop and soon after pledged to submit themselves to him in "both ecclesiastical and community

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[111] Robert Baird, *Religion in the United States of America: Or An Account of the Origin, Progress, Relations to the State, and Present Condition of the Evangelical Churches in the United States with Notices of the Unevangelical Denominations* (Glasgow: Blackie and Son, 1844), 586, 588-89. On the significance of Baird's work, see Moore, *Religious Outsiders*, 5-7. On Baird and Schmucker, see Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 30.

[112] Walter O. Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi: The Settlement of the Saxon Lutherans in Missouri, 1839-1841* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1953), 135. On the number of voyagers, see Forster, 199-200. Forster's work, which includes translations of several key primary documents, remains the most complete history of the Stephanite movement. Other important works, which draw heavily Forster's research, include E. Theodore Bachmann, "The Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago Divinity School, 1946), 70-148; Carl S. Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), 17-108; and Mary Todd, *Authority Vested: A Story of Identity and Change in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 17-63.

[113] "The Codes," in Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 566-67.

affairs."[114] After traveling by steamboat up the Mississippi River, the immigrants founded a colony of four congregations in Perry County, Missouri, as well as a congregation in St. Louis about eighty miles to the north. The Saxons' holy experiment quickly began to unravel. According to Forster, Stephan's "autocratic leadership" soon antagonized his followers. Also troubling was his profligate spending on an extravagant episcopal residence and costly "vestments and accompanying paraphernalia," including a gold-plated staff and a $100 golden chain. The final straw occurred when two women confessed that they had engaged in adultery with the bishop and several others claimed that he had "unsuccessfully attempted to seduce" them. In May 1839, less than five months after their arrival in America, the Stephanites banished their leader from the colony, exiling him across the Mississippi River to Illinois.[115] Despite their inauspicious beginnings, over the course of the nineteenth century this radical sect would drastically alter the development of Lutheranism in the United States.

The Stephanites' emphasis on doctrinal purity and communal autonomy has drawn interesting comparisons to other American religious movements in the nineteenth century, including restorationism, socialist utopian communities, and, quite persuasively, primitivist groups, including the Mormons.[116] But perhaps the most fitting comparison is

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[114] "Stephan's Investiture" and "Pledge of Subjection to Stephan," in Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 288, 294.

[115] Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 353, 356, 392, 422. For a sympathetic treatment of Stephan, see Philip G. Stephan, *In Pursuit of Religious Freedom: Bishop Martin Stephan's Journey* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008).

[116] The restorationism comparison is found in James D. Bratt, "The Reorientation of American Protestantism, 1835-1845," *Church History* 67 (March 1998): 76; the utopian community comparison in Linda Schelbitzki Pickle, *Contented Among Strangers: Rural German-Speaking Women and Their Families in the Nineteenth-Century Midwest* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), 131-80; and the primitivist/Mormon comparison in Adam S. Brasich, "A Mighty Fortress: American Religion and the Construction of Confessional Lutheranism" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 2017), 79-132. See Richard T. Hughes, ed., *The American Quest for the Primitive Church* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press,

one quite familiar to students of American history and found not in the nineteenth century but in the seventeenth: the Plymouth Separatists. The Stephanites, like the Mayflower pilgrims over two hundred years before, were the separatist fringe of a broader reform movement in their homeland.[117] In seventeenth-century England, that movement was Puritanism, which sought to purify the Anglican Church but not separate from it. In nineteenth-century Germany, reform came from the *Erweckungsbewegung* ("Awakening Movement"), or simply *Erweckung*.

An ideologically complex movement that defies precise definition and periodization, the *Erweckung* at its most basic was a reaction against the rationalism of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment. Following the upheavals of the Napoleonic Wars, German Protestants sought to reform and revive the state churches through mission work, social action, parish renewal, and orthodox doctrine. The movement, which drew from elements of pietism, romanticism, and confessionalism, was hardly united. Proponents of the *Erweckung* supported both the emerging liberalism that culminated in the 1848/49 revolutions and the throne-and-altar conservatism that squelched those democratic uprisings. Some advocated Reformed-Lutheran ecumenism, while others emphasized confessional particularism. The common denominator of the *Erweckung* was its emphasis on individual salvation and heartfelt piety. In this, the German movement paralleled the rise of evangelicalism in the English-speaking world.[118]

1988); and Richard T. Hughes and C. Leonard Allen, *Illusions of Innocence: Protestant Primitivism in America, 1630-1875* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

[117] Mary Todd makes this comparison in *Authority Vested*, 32.

[118] This history is drawn from Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815-1866* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 27-96; Nicholas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 354-99; Ulrich Gäbler, ed., *Geschichte des Pietismus, Band 3: Der Pietismus in neunzehnten und*

The particular strand of the *Erweckung* which the Stephanites most resembled was the *Altlutheraner* ("Old Lutherans"), a movement shaped by its opposition to the Union Church of Prussia and similar Lutheran-Reformed churches in other German states. What distinguished the Old Lutherans from other confessional movements in Germany was their insistence not only that the Union Church was misguided, but also that faithful Lutherans could not conscientiously participate in such a church. The movement took concrete shape in the Prussian provinces of Silesia and Pomerania, where Old Lutherans defied the Prussian authorities by establishing an independent and, at the time, illegal Lutheran church. By 1841, when Frederick William IV (the son of the Prussian Union's architect) granted religious toleration to the separatist church, there were approximately 10,000 Old Lutherans in Prussia and an additional 2000 who had emigrated to the United States and Australia.[119]

The Stephanites were not *Altlutheraner* in the strict sense as there was no Union Church in Saxony from which to separate. Instead, they were shaped primarily by their idiosyncratic leader. Stephan had attended the universities of Halle and Leipzig, but had graduated from neither. Nevertheless, in 1810, he became a pastor in Dresden, where he would serve for almost twenty-eight years. Combining a biblicist pietism with a strict adherence to the Lutheran confessions, he gained a loyal following not only in his congregation but also among several young pastors. As his influence grew, Stephan

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zwanzigsten Jahrhundert (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000); and David L. Ellis, *Politics and Piety: The Protestant Awakening in Prussia, 1816-1856* (Boston: Brill, 2017).

[119] Ellis, *Politics and Piety*, 16; Conser, *Church and Confession*, 13-27; Lieselotte Clemens, *Old Lutheran Emigration from Pomerania to the U.S.A.: History and Motivation, 1839-1843*, trans. James Laming (Kiel, Germany: Pomeranian Foundation, 1976); and David A. Gerber, "The Pathos of Exile: Old Lutheran Refugees in the United States and South Australia" *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26 (July 1984): 498-522.

attracted the attention of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, particularly for his unusual practice of holding "nocturnal meetings" with both male and female followers. In November 1837 he was placed under house-arrest and lost his pastoral position. As his self-described "persecution by powerful enemies" mounted, Stephan became convinced that the Prussian Union was "a preview of what was about to occur in Saxony" and that his only course of action was to emigrate.[120] He and his followers chose to settle in the United States, "a land… where complete religious and civil liberty prevails."[121]

Yet following the tumultuous events of their first months in the New World, the Stephanites' dream of "transplant[ing] the Lutheran Church from Germany to the United States" was turning into a nightmare. The immigrants had considered Stephan to be "the last, unshakeable pillar on the ruins of the now devastated Lutheran Church."[122] Now with the "bishop" of the "true Church" revealed to be a fraud, many of the colonists were beginning to question the legitimacy of their congregations, the validity of their pastors' authority, and whether their emigration had been a sinful act.[123] Several laypeople returned to Germany and many clergy resigned their positions. Amidst this upheaval and uncertainty, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811-1887) emerged as the new leader of the community.

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[120] Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 91, 94, 110.

[121] "The Codes," in Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 567.

[122] "Stephan's Investiture," in Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 289.

[123] For important firsthand accounts of the turmoil, see Edgar J. Buerger, trans., *Memoirs of Ernst Moritz Buerger* (Lincoln, MA: Martin Julian Buerger, 1953), 48-49; and Carl Eduard Vehse, *The Stephanite Emigration to America: With Documentation*, trans. Rudolph Fiehler (Tuscon, AZ: M. R. Winkler, 1975).

The son of a Lutheran pastor in Saxony, Walther was a graduate of the University of Leipzig.[124] While a student, he came under the mentorship of Stephan, who helped him resolve a set of spiritual crises. After serving for less than two years as a pastor at a small parish, Walther resigned his position to join the Stephanite migration. The youngest clergyman in the group, Walther took the lead in exposing and deposing Stephan. Yet following his spiritual mentor's banishment from the community, Walther once again entered a period of deep distress. In a letter to his brother in May 1840, he called the emigration "an abominable undertaking" and asked: "Are our congregations truly Lutheran congregations? Or are they mobs? Sects?... Are we pastors or not? Are our calls valid? Do we still belong in Germany?"[125]

Walther's breakthrough came the following year, after an intense period of study. In what would become known as the Altenburg Debate, on April 15 and 21, Walther laid out eight theses on the nature of the church. The young pastor's argument convinced the majority of the community's clergy and laity that their congregations and pastors, despite the actions of Stephan, were still members of "the true Church" and should remain in the United States. The key component of Walther's argument was that "the orthodox church is chiefly to be judged by the common, orthodox, public confession," rather than the

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[124] The literature on Walther is vast, yet no definitive critical biography has been written. For the most comprehensive biography, see August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word – The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000). For secondary works, besides those works on the Stephanites cited above, that situate Walther in his American context, see Jordahl, "Schmucker and Walther," 71-90; Arthur H. Drevlow, John M. Drickamer, and Glenn E. Reichwald, eds., *C. F. W. Walther, the American Luther: Essays in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of Carl Walther's Death* (Mankato, MN: Walther Press, 1987); Dörfler-Dierken *Luthertum und Demokratie*, 259-334; and Christoph Barnbrock, et al., *C. F. W. Walther: Churchman and Theologian* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011).

[125] Walther to Otto Herman Walther, May 4, 1840, in Carl S. Meyer, ed. and trans., *Letters of C. F. W. Walther: A Selection* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969), 34, 38.

faithfulness of its leaders or members.[126] Besides resolving the community's inner turmoil, the Altenburg Debate had two lasting implications: it established Walther as the unquestioned leader of the remaining Stephanites and it confirmed "pure doctrine" as the defining emphasis of their type of Lutheranism.

After the debate, Walther moved to St. Louis to pastor the city's Saxon congregation. With his newfound theological certainty, the young churchman began to seek out a wider fellowship of similarly minded Lutherans. His principal means of doing so was his fortnightly periodical, *Der Lutheraner* ("The Lutheran") founded in 1844. In its second issue, Walther offered this invitation: "Everyone who without lying submits to the whole written Word of God and bears the true faith of our dear Lord Jesus Christ in his heart and confesses it before the world, to him we extend a hand, consider him as part of our family of faith, as our brother in Christ, as a member of our church, as a Lutheran, amongst whatever sect he may be hidden and may be taken prisoner."[127]

The key for Walther was what constituted the "true faith." Rather than the common denominator of all branches of Protestantism, like the evangelical ecumenism of Schmucker and the New Lutherans, every particularity of historic Lutheran teaching was a non-negotiable. As the young pastor wrote, "A true Lutheran and a true Christian, the Lutheran Church and the Christian church, God's Word and Luther's Doctrine, all of this is… one and the same for us." Yet despite this exclusivism, Walther was insistent that the Lutheranism was not a "sect." In a view similar to the Landmark Baptists, who would

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[126] The theses are printed in Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 523-25.

[127] "Von dem Namen 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, September 23, 1844, 5. For a useful translation of the first three volumes of the periodical, see Joel R. Baseley, ed. and trans., *C.F.W. Walther's Original Der Lutheraner: Volumes One through Three (1844-'47)* (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2012). Apart from a few slight modifications, I have used Baseley's translation. All citations, however, are from the original publication.

also arise in the milieu of mid-nineteenth century America, Walther wrote: "So long as there has been an orthodox church on earth, there has also been the Lutheran Church. She is (as strange as that sounds) as old as the world, for she has no other doctrine than the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles…."[128]

Just as important for Walther as inviting other "true Lutherans" to come out of the shadows was his paper's emphasis on identifying "heresy." No communion was spared condemnation, but two in particular received his greatest scorn. The first were the German Union churches. As German migration to the United States began to increase in the 1830s and 1840s, some immigrants sought to transplant the spirit of the Prussian Union on American soil. The result was the formation of the *Kirchenverein des Westens* in 1840 and other German Evangelical church bodies ("Evangelical" meaning joint Lutheran-Reformed).[129] Such union churches, Walther wrote, bring together people who "hold completely different beliefs in the most significant articles of Christian doctrine." He believed that these churches were a fulfillment of the "last times… when the holy Scriptures predict that people 'would not receive a love for truth' (2 Thess. 2:10)." For these reasons, he concluded, "we regard it as our duty to bear witness with due diligence against the intention to extend, even here [in America], the unionizing, so-called Evangelical Church."[130]

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[128] "Von dem Namen 'Lutheraner'," 5-6.

[129] The most comprehensive study of German Evangelical churches in nineteenth century America is Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West* (Saint Louis: Eden Publishing, 1939). See also David Dunn, et. al., *A History of the Evangelical and Reformed Church* (Philadelphia: Christian Education Press, 1961).

[130] "'Die evangelische Kirche in Nord-America'," *Lutheraner*, January 25, 1845, 45-46. See also Walther's lengthy refutation of the German American Evangelical theologian E. M. Nollau's tract, *Ein Wort für die gute Sache der Union: Vertheidigung gegen die Angriffe des 'Lutheraner' auf die Evangelische Kirche* (St. Louis: Weber and Olshausen, 1845): "Antwort auf die neueste Vertheidigung der Union," *Lutheraner*, May 31, 1845, 78-80; June 18, 1845, 82-84; June 28, 1845, 86-88; July 26, 1845, 95-96;

If the *Lutheraner* regarded the German Evangelicals as a threat imported from Europe, the Methodists represented a menace endemic to America. He was especially critical of William Nast (1807-1899), who emigrated from Württemberg, converted to Methodism, and became the leader of the German Methodist church.[131] Walther accused Nast and others of seducing unwary immigrants away from the Lutheran church with "their enthusiastic and illiterate efforts and manner."[132] Even more so than their tactics, Walther was critical of the Methodists' theology. He believed that they represented everything wrong with religion in United States: revivalism, anti-sacramentalism, and "build[ing] practically all of their Christianity… upon their uncertain, changing emotions."[133]

Walther soon acquired the reputation for rhetorical extremism and easily wounded pride. Such a reputation was largely warranted. For example, Walther called Nast "a Methodistic pope" and accused him of following "the principle of the Mohammedan," yet simultaneously faulted Nast for "judg[ing] and condemn[ing] a whole churchly fellowship," namely his own.[134] Other examples of this cognitive dissonance abound.[135]

August 9, 1845, 97-100; October 4, 1845, 11-12; November 29, 1845, 26-28; February 7, 1846, 47-48; and February 21, 1846, 51-52.

[131] On Nast and German Methodism, see Carl Frederick Wittke, *William Nast: Patriarch of German Methodism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1959); and Paul F. Douglass, *The Story of German Methodism: The Biography of an Immigrant Soul* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1939).

[132] "'Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerica'," *Lutheraner*, December 14, 1844, 31.

[133] "Von dem Namen 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, October 5, 1844, 11. For another bleak assessment of the Methodists, see Pastor Schieferdecker, "Abgedrungener Beweis, das die Methodisten eine Secte sind," *Lutheraner*, May 3, 1845, 69.

[134] "Methodismus," *Lutheraner*, August 8, 1846, 100.

[135] For instance, see "'Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerica'," *Lutheraner*, December 14, 1844, 31-32. Here Walther engages in spiteful polemics against the Methodists and then accuses them of "lovelessness."

Unsurprisingly, several historians have concluded that the young pastor renounced Stephan only to assume his mentor's exclusivism, authoritarianism, and paranoid style.[136] The key to understanding Walther, however, is his unwavering conviction that the mark of the true church was the confession of pure doctrine.

However absolutist, the position of Walther's *Lutheraner* resonated with other German Lutherans in the United States. One was Friedrich Wyneken (1810-1876). Wyneken had studied theology at the universities of Göttingen and Halle. Especially at the latter school, he was influenced by the mission emphasis of the *Erweckung* and the pietism of his mentor August Tholuck. He came to America in 1838 under the auspices of the Stade Mission and Bible Society, an affiliate of the joint Lutheran-Reformed venture, the Bremen Mission Society. Shortly after he arrived, Wyneken became connected with the Pennsylvania Ministerium which, in partnership with the American Home Missionary Society, commissioned the young pastor as a missionary to the German immigrants in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Upon his arrival, the missionary was scandalized by religious life on the American frontier. After three years, he fell ill and moved back to Germany.[137]

Upon his return, Wyneken toured Europe promoting a tract that he had composed during his time in Indiana, *Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerika* ("*The*

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[136] For example, see Todd, *Authority Vested*, 61; and Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 147-48.

[137] Biographical information on Wyneken is drawn from Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 41-69; J. C. W. Lindemann, *Fredrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken: An Evangelist Among the Lutherans of North America*, ed. Adriane Dorn, Marvin Huggins, and Robert E. Smith, trans. Sieghart Reim (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 2010); and Norman J. Threinen, "F. C. D. Wyneken: Motivator for the Mission," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 60 (January-April 1996): 19-45.

Distress of the German Lutherans in North America").[138] His broadside painted a bleak picture of religious life in the United States. Along with the "morass of vulgarity" and "gross indifference" among the immigrants, Wyneken also saw numerous "dangerous enemies" facing the American Lutheran church. The first were the "swarming pests" of Methodists and other "sects," who disrupt congregations "with noise, screaming, and howling." The second was the Catholic Church, which was formidable due to "its close unity,… its internal strength, [and] its external power." Wyneken considered the final foe, the New Lutherans of the General Synod, to be the most pernicious, because, though "enthusiastic about the name 'Lutheran,' they most shamelessly and impertinently attack the teachings of our church… chiefly with regard to Baptism and Communion." Wyneken laid much of the blame for this situation on "the complete freedom in religious matters granted by the American Constitution." He argued that "the misleading interpretation of freedom" which leads to "an arbitrary interpretation of the Bible… has broken out in America in brilliant flames." He warned: "If the struggle is not settled in America… the flood will soon enough flow across the Atlantic toward our German

[138] The publication history of this work is somewhat convoluted. Threinen claims that the Wyneken began working on this publication as early as 1839 and that a version of it was published as early as 1840 in the periodical of the Stade Mission Society. Threinen, "F. C. D. Wyneken," 22. Bachmann finds the earliest version of this work in German periodicals of 1841. Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism,' 49. It was not until 1843, however, when this work was published as a stand-alone publication: Fr. Wyneken, *Die Noth der deutschen Lutheraner in Nordamerika: Ihren Glaubensgenossen in der Heimat ans Herz gelegt* (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1843). The following year, the work was published in the United States, first as a series of articles in the *Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung*, based in Pittsburgh, and then in the form of tract by the publishing company of the same periodical. All quotations come Friedrich Wyneken, *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America: Laid upon the Hearts of the Brethren in the Faith in the Home Country*, ed. R. F. Rehmer, trans. S. Edgar Schmidt (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1986), a translation of the 1843 edition from Erlangen. An abbreviated translation can be found in James D. Bratt, ed., *Antirevivalism in Antebellum America: A Collection of Religious Voices* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006), 109-20.

fatherland."[139] He urged orthodox Lutheran pastors to immigrate to the United States to stem the tide of heresy. In 1843, he took his own advice and returned to America.

Before re-immigrating, Wyneken became affiliated with various conservative Lutheran leaders in Germany. The first of these was Wilhelm Löhe (1808-1872). Löhe, a graduate of the University of Erlangen, pastored a church in the Bavarian village of Neuendettelsau. Along with figures such as August Vilmar, Theodor Kliefoth, and Franz Delitzsch, Löhe was a leader of German Neo-Lutheranism.[140] This sub-movement of the *Erweckung* was not at all related to the American New Lutheranism of Schmucker, Kurtz, and Bachman. Indeed, many of its tenets were the direct opposite. According to Walter Conser, Neo-Lutherans like Löhe "strongly opposed proposals for church union… emphasized the need for spiritual rebirth… developed a theology focused on the Word and the creed… [and] heavily emphasized the church."[141] After reading Wyneken's characterization of the challenges facing Lutheranism in America, Löhe discovered another Lutheran who saw things his way. The two pastors met in 1841.

Löhe was already interested in sending missionaries to America, even before reading Wyneken's lurid description of religious life in the United States. What Wyneken's arguments did was convince the Bavarian pastor to found his own mission society in order to ensure that only conservative Lutheran pastors would be sent to the

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[139] Wyneken, *The Distress of the German Lutherans in North America*, 18, 25, 29, 32-33, 41, 47, 46, 49-50.

[140] On Neo-Lutheranism in Germany, see Conser, *Church and Confession*, 55-96. For works on Löhe, see Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe 1808-1872*, trans. Wolf Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010); Erich H. Heintzen, "William Loehe and the Missouri Synod, 1841-1853" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1964); and James L. Schaaf, "Wilhelm Löhe's Relationship to the American Lutheran Church: A Study in the History of Lutheran Missions" (Th.D. diss., Reprecht-Karl University of Heidelberg, 1961).

[141] Conser, *Church and Confession*, 56.

New World. To spur his missionary work, he began publishing in 1843 a monthly periodical entitled *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und über Nordamerika* ("Church News from and for North America").[142] The periodical's emphases resembled those of Wyneken. "In no land of the world are there so many Christian sects, as in North America," lamented one editorial.[143] Like Wyneken, the Bavarian pastor saw the Lutheranism of the General Synod as woefully deficient. He laid much of the blame for their doctrinal deviance on their adoption of "the English language and way of thinking."[144] Because of this, he encouraged the Lutheran churches of America to hold fast not only to their historical confessions but also to the German language, so as not to "lose the fundamental understanding of the true church of God."[145] Löhe's message paid dividends. By 1853, his Neuendettelsau Mission Society had sent eighty-two missionaries to the United States.[146]

The second critical figure influenced by Wyneken was Wilhelm Sihler (1801-1885). Sihler had taken a different route to Lutheran conservatism than Löhe. After a brief career in the Prussian military, he enrolled in the University of Berlin where he studied under Friedrich Schleiermacher. He earned a doctorate from the University of Jena in 1828. Two years later, while serving as an instructor at a boarding school in Dresden, Sihler underwent what he called a "conversion… similar to that of Saul" from

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[142] His associate Johann Friedrich Wucherer was the periodical's co-editor.

[143] "Wenn Gott was will, so muß sich's schicken," *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und über Nordamerika* 1, no. 1 (1843): 1.

[144] "Das Jahr 1845 und die nordamerikanisch-kirchlichle Sache," *Kirchliche Mittheilungen aus und über Nordamerika* 3, no. 2 (1845): 1.

[145] Wilhelm Löhe, *Zuruf aus der Heimat an die deutsch-lutherische Kirche Nordamericas* (Stuttgart: S. G. Liesching, 1845), 30.

[146] Heintzen, "Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod," 78.

the romantic rationalism of his mentor Schleiermacher to an experiential Lutheran orthodoxy. He soon became affiliated with leaders of confessional wing of the *Erweckung*, including A. G. Rudelbach, an influential pastor in Saxony, and Johann Gottfried Scheibel, the leader of the Old Lutherans in nearby Silesia. In the spring of 1843, now serving as private tutor in the Baltic region, Sihler read Wyneken's pamphlet. "It struck me like lightning to my soul," he later recalled. Believing that he had received a Macedonian call, he soon secured funding from the Dresden Missionary Society to serve as a missionary in America. After visiting Löhe in Bavaria and receiving pastoral credentials from Rudelbach, he departed for America in September.[147]

Upon their arrival in the United States, Wyneken, the Löhe missionaries, and Sihler all found no satisfactory Lutheran synods with which to affiliate. After a brief return to his old church in Fort Wayne, Wyneken became pastor of a congregation in Baltimore. Both churches were members of synods connected with the New Lutherans of the General Synod, whose doctrinal outlook Wyneken disdained.[148] Sihler and the Löhe missionaries spread throughout Ohio, Michigan, and Indiana. At first, many joined the Ohio Synod, a Moderate Lutheran church body, but soon severed their connections because they deemed the synod insufficiently orthodox.[149] As these conservative missionaries struggled to find similarly minded Lutherans in the United States, Walther's *Lutheraner* offered just the answer to the wider fellowship they were searching for. When

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[147] On Sihler's life, see Lewis W. Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds: Biography of William Sihler* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), as well as Sihler's two-part autobiography: *Lebenslauf von W. Sihler bis zu seiner Ankunft in New York* (St. Louis: Lutherischen Concordia-Verlags, 1879); and *Lebenslauf von W. Sihler als Lutherischer Pastor u. s. w.* (New York: Lutherischen Verlags-Verein, 1880). Quotations come from Sihler, *Lebenslauf* (1879), 82, 142.

[148] Lindemann, *Fredrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken*, 26

[149] Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 186-90.

Wyneken saw his first issue, he reportedly commented, "God be praised! There are still more Lutherans here in America."[150] Both Wyneken and Sihler quickly became frequent contributors to the *Lutheraner*, and it quickly transformed from Walther's personal paper to the mouthpiece of a movement.

As the movement surrounding the *Lutheraner* grew, its principal polemical targets became the New Lutherans of the General Synod. For the paper's writers, New Lutherans like Schmucker and Kurtz were especially dangerous because they combined the errors of the Union Churches and Methodists under the guise of the name "Lutheran." As one correspondent wrote, by rejecting doctrines such as baptismal regeneration and the real presence in the Lord's Supper, these "pseudo-Lutherans" were sowing "soul destroying weeds."[151] Wyneken accused New Lutherans of "pursuing… whoredom with the sects," because they "smuggle in… Reformed-Methodist inventions."[152] Walther summarized his and his colleagues' accusations: in the General Synod, "apostasy… is being propped up and praised as progress."[153]

New Lutherans soon responded in kind. Ironically, Kurtz and the *Lutheran Observer* had initially welcomed the Saxon immigrants to the New World. Kurtz had met Stephan during his trip to Germany in 1826 and 1827 and expressed sympathy for the Dresden pastor's battle against "the awful progress that neology and infidelity and looseness of morals had made among the clergy of Germany." In 1833 the two ministers

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[150] Lindemann, *Fredrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken*, 21.

[151] Ein unsindirter Laie, "Die (Pseudo) Lutherische Hirtenstime," *Lutheraner*, November 17, 1846, 32.

[152] F. Wyneken, "Wie unsere deutschen Lutheraner sich fangen lassen; oder die Füchse in Weinberge des Herrn," *Lutheraner*, May 30, 1846, 79.

[153] "Vorwort des Herausgebers zum dritten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, September 5, 1846, 1.

corresponded about the viability of immigration to the "land of perfect religious freedom." When the Saxons arrived six years later, Kurtz expressed confidence that "christians of every orthodox denomination, who are properly acquainted with this people, will join us in welcoming the 'STEPHANITES' to 'the asylum of the oppressed of all nations."[154] Yet after Kurtz himself became more "properly acquainted" with these immigrants' style of Lutheranism, his praise turned into criticism. The editor of the *Lutheran Observer* labeled their claim to be "the true sons of the church" as "a mistake which has been quite common from the days of the first Pope to the modern Pusey."[155] Pointed attacks also came from the *Hirtenstimme*, a German-language paper affiliated with the General Synod, published by Charles G. Weyl, Schmucker's brother-in-law.[156]

In their criticism of the *Lutheraner*, Kurtz and the New Lutherans labeled their opponents as "Old Lutherans." At first, Walther and his allies pushed back against this name. For them, the term *Altlutheraner* represented both a specific faction of conservative Lutheranism in Germany and, even more so, a specific group in America. Led by Johannes A. A. Grabau (1804-1879), several Old Lutherans from Prussia had immigrated to the United States around the same time as them. Equally punctilious about doctrinal exactitude, Grabau's sect had become embroiled with Walther and his followers in a heated dispute over church polity, and founded their own church body, the Buffalo

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[154] "The Reverend Mr. Stephan and His Congregation," *Lutheran Observer*, March 8, 1839, 2. For background, see Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 84-88.

[155] "Old Lutherans of the West," *Lutheran Observer*, November 28, 1845, 54.

[156] Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 300. Lindemann mistakenly identified Weyl as Schmucker's son-in-law. Lindemann, *Fredrich Konrad Dietrich Wyneken*, 25.

Synod, in 1845.[157] Yet most fundamentally, those associated with the *Lutheraner* rejected the term, because true Lutheranism, in Sihler's words, "remains above the temporal distinctions of old and new."[158] Blaming the rise of this "oxymoronic designation" on the "Schmuckerites [and] Kurtzites," Sihler argued that "there are not any Old or New Lutherans, but rather only Lutherans, that is orthodox, and un-Lutheran, that is heretical."[159] Yet soon those associated with the *Lutheraner* came to accept the label.[160] Like many other religious movements throughout history, the Old Lutherans were named by their opponents.

If the theological outlook of the Old Lutherans was becoming more pronounced, their political views remained mostly muted. In part, this was due to their suspicion about the German American political press, dominated in the early 1840s by the *Dreissiger*, liberal and mildly anticlerical intellectuals who left Germany in the 1830s. (The more radical forty-eighters would succeed them as the most prominent German American political leaders during the 1850s and 1860s.) The St. Louis-based *Anzeiger des Westens*, the leading German language newspaper in the antebellum Midwest, mocked the Stephanites' theocratic pretensions during their first years in Missouri and later accused

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[157] On the emigration and early years in America of Grabau and fellow *Altlutheraner*, see Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 149-74; William Schumacher, ed. and trans., "Grabau's *Hirtenbrief* and the Saxon Reply," in *Soli Deo Gloria: Essays on C.F.W. Walther in Memory of August R. Suelflow* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 2000), 133-76; and Joh. A. Grabau, *Lebenslauf des Ehrwürdigen J. An. A. Grabau* (Buffalo, NY: Volksblatt Publishing Company, 1879).

[158] W. Sihler, "Gibt es Alt- und Neu-Lutheraner?" *Lutheraner*, May 16, 1846, 76.

[159] W. Sihler, "Gibt es Alt- und Neu-Lutheraner?" *Lutheraner*, May 30, 1846, 77-78. See also F. Buenger, "Protestation gegen die Beneunung 'Altlutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, July 12, 1845, 91.

[160] For example, in a lengthy series of articles in the *Lutheraner*, titled "Führt das alte Lutherthum nach Rom?," ("Does Old Lutheranism Lead to Rome"), Walther never disputed the designation. The articles appeared in the following issues: October 17, 1846; October 31, 1846; November 17, 1846; December 1, 1846; December 15, 1846; January 12, 1847; March 9, 1847; March 23, 1847; and July 27, 1847.

Walther of harboring undemocratic political views.[161] In 1844, his congregation wrote a letter to paper, defending their minister: "We can assure you that Pastor Walther has never made a political public address and that in private conservation he has not declared himself for or against any party. He believes that such political activities are not in keeping with the dignity of his ministerial office."[162] Despite these conflicts, Walther and his congregants remained regular readers of the *Anzeiger des Westens* and the young pastor even published a sermon with the newspaper's printing house.[163]

As the letter from Walther's congregation indicates, Old Lutherans' political ambivalence stemmed not only from their estrangement from German American political leaders, but also from a principled opposition to mixing religion and politics. As Walther wrote in 1849, "[O]ur church teaches according to God's Word that temporal and spiritual powers are to be strictly divided."[164] Because of this, Walther and his associates avoided endorsing particular parties or candidates and steered clear of the contentious issues of American political culture in the 1840s, especially slavery.

Yet the Old Lutherans were not complete political quietists. Writers in the *Lutheraner* paid frequent homage to the blessings of "this wondrous land of political and

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[161] Walter D. Kamphoefner, "Dreissiger and Forty-eighter: The Political Influence of Two Generations of German Political Exiles," in Hans L. Trefousse, ed., *Germany and America: Essays on Problems of International Relations and Immigration* (New York: Brooklyn College Press, 1980), 89-102; Forster, *Zion on the Mississippi*, 240-44, 458-59; and Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 149, 207-8.

[162] Quoted in Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 208 n.19.

[163] Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 207-8; and C. F. W. Walther, *Neujahrs-Predigt: gehalten am 1. Januar 1849 vor der deutschen ev. luth Gemeinde in St. Louis, Mo.* (St. Louis: Schnellpresse des Anzeiger des Westens, 1849).

[164] C. F. W. Walther, "Bußtagspredigt über Jer. 18, 1—11," in Walther, *Casual-Predigten und -Reden* (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1889), 155. This collection is translated and published as C. F. W. Walther, *Occasional Sermons and Addresses*, trans. Joel R. Baseley (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008).

religious freedom."[165] And despite their reservations about mixing faith and politics, Old Lutherans enthusiastically participated in the rituals of American civil religion, celebrating the Fourth of July and joining in national days of thanksgiving and repentance. In an 1849 sermon, Walther praised the United States' founding as ordained by God: "[W]ho was it that gave the framers of the Constitution of our free states of North America the wisdom to invent such a thing? Is it not the Lord… from whom comes all wisdom? Who gave victory in the War for Independence? Is it not… the Lord of Hosts, who is the true warrior…."[166] In the 1850s, Old Lutherans would expand their political opinions.

The common thread tying together Old Lutheran political thought was an unwavering commitment to religious freedom. While some, such as Wyneken, had criticized American liberty, for Walther and his fellow Saxons, the freedom to practice "true Lutheranism" had been the raison d'être for their immigration to the United States. Under Walther's guidance, the idea that the American doctrine of the separation of church and state reflected the Lutheran teaching of the two kingdoms became standard Old Lutheran teaching. In a Fourth of July lecture, Walther addressed those who wondered how "the perpetuation of religious freedom [is] any different than sanctioning heresy and sin." He answered: "As the church must not be a state, so also, the state must not be a church." While he granted that freedom is often misused, he argued that religious

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[165] "Predigt gehalten am Reformationsfeßt, den 31. October 1847 in der Dreieinigkeitskirche der deutschen ev.-luth. Gemeinde Ungänderter Augsburgischer Confession zu St. Louis, Mo," *Lutheraner*, November 16, 1847, 42. See also "Aufruf zur Mission unter den heidnischen Indianern," *Lutheraner*, November 4, 1847, 36; Löber, "Erinnerung an die Gedächtnißfeier des vor zwei hundert Jahren geschlassenen Westphälischen Friedens," *Lutheraner*, January 25, 1848, 86; and "Kirchliche Nachrichten auß Hannover und Preußen," *Lutheraner*, March 7, 1848, 112.

[166] Walther, "Bußtagspredigt über Jer. 18, 1—11," 159.

liberty allows for the flourishing of "true religion," which most people would otherwise seek to suppress. He called upon "citizens of this land" to "diligently work and courageously battle, and, when necessary, gladly shed our blood, that this land not only remain a free land, but above all retain the golden crown of its freedom, that is, its religious liberty." Walther concluded: "Hail to you, America! Hail!! Hail!!"[167] The remnant of the Stephanites had not only birthed a religious movement, but embraced American national identity.

In 1847, the movement became an organization. The idea of forming an Old Lutheran synod had been discussed for some time in private correspondence and informal meetings.[168] In September 1846, the *Lutheraner* published a proposed constitution for a new Lutheran church body signed by twenty-two clergymen. Walther conceived of the proposal in grand terms: "A wholesome movement has arisen…. We obviously stand at the portals of a most significant and… most decisive time for our Church." For Walther, the new synod was to be a stern rebuke against the "Schmuckerites, that is, the so-called Lutheran General Synod that has… openly declared their apostasy."[169] Seven months later, representatives of twelve congregations from Missouri, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and New York convened in Chicago. Walther was elected the first president of the new synod and the *Lutheraner* was designated its official publication. They chose for church body

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[167] C. F. W. Walther, "Rede am 4. Juli gehalten vor einem christlichen Jünglingsverein," in *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden, seit 1847 theils Pamphletform, theils in Zeitschriften bereits erschienen, in Sammelband aufs Neue dargeboten* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, 1876), 364, 369. This collection is translated and published as C. F. W. Walther, *From Our Master's Table*, trans. by Joel R. Baseley (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008). See also Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 280-82.

[168] Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod*, 163-98; Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 199-224.

[169] "Vorwort des Herausgebers zum dritten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," 1-2; and "Synodalverfassung," *Lutheraner*, September 5, 1847, 2.

the unwieldy name, The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, but it quickly became known as simply the Missouri Synod.

The new synod was distinctively American. Though "German" was in the church body's official name, this word was meant to contrast with "English" not "American." Leaders of the Missouri Synod frequently referred to themselves as proponents of the "American Lutheranism" and "our Lutheran Church in America." Commentators at the time recognized the new synod's Americanness. As one contributor to the *Lutheran Observer* noted, "They transact and record their business pretty much as we Americans do… In the Fatherland, this sort of synod is wholly unknown."[170] The *Lutheran Standard*, a paper which will be discussed below, offered a similar observation a year later. The Missouri Synod's constitution, the editors wrote, "is "truly scriptural and eminently American. The Synod claims no authority over the churches…. This is true American Lutheran doctrine, and we are glad that the German brethren have so soon adopted it."[171] Less sanguine about the new church body's identity was its chief ally in Germany, Wilhelm Löhe. The Bavarian pastor believed that the founders of the Missouri Synod were forming their ideas "not out of Christian concern, but an American desire and inclination for worldly freedom in churchly things."[172]

The chief source of Löhe's criticism (and fellow American Lutherans' praise) was the Missouri Synod's embrace of congregational polity. In the wake of the scandal

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[170] Hermann, "A new German Synod—The German Evang. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States—Innovations—New Measures unknown to our church, &c, &c," *Lutheran Observer*, September 3, 1847, 1.

[171] "The Missouri (Old Lutheran) Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, November 8, 1848, 2.

[172] Quoted in William R. Wangelin, "Loehe's Lens: Wilhelm Loehe's Critique of Democratic Principles in the Missouri Synod during the Revolutions of 1848/49." *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 86 (Summer 2013): 37. See also Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 234-35; and Todd, *Authority Vested*, 79-80.

surrounding Stephan, the Saxon immigrants had emphasized the rights of laymen as a safeguard against the potential abuse of clerical power. Walther's congregation in St. Louis had adopted this form of governance in its church constitution of 1843. The other constituents of the Old Lutheran movement—Wyneken, Sihler, and the Löhe missionaries—had expressed skepticism toward the practice, believing that it yielded too much to the spirit of American freedom. However, after discussions with Walther, their suspicions subsided.[173] Congregational autonomy would be upheld, but in order for individual churches to join the synod, they would have to pledge themselves to the tenets of the Old Lutheran faith and separate from any churches or mission projects deemed "heretical" or "unorthodox." And against those who feared that democratic whim would determine theology, the constitution stipulated that "matters of doctrine and of conscience will be decided by the Word of God alone."[174]

Denominational historians have long debated to what extent this form of ecclesiastical governance was influenced by the democratic environment of the immigrants' new home.[175] Undoubtedly, it played a role. Even the act of writing a church constitution was indebted to American conceptions of republicanism and religious liberty.[176] Yet many of these historians err in supposing that congregationalism was the

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[173] Bachmann, "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 206-14.

[174] W. G. Polack, trans., "Our First Synodical Constitution," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16, (April 1943): 4.

[175] Mundinger, *Government in the Missouri Synod*; John C. Wohlrabe, Jr., "The Americanization of Walther's Doctrine of the Church," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 52 (January 1988): 1-27; and Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., "Demagoguery or Democracy? The Saxon Emigration and American Culture," *Concordia Theological Quarterly* 63 (October 1999): 247-68.

[176] Bachmann makes a similar point in "Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'," 234.

chief way in which Walther and his followers engaged in Americanization.[177] For many other denominations—Episcopalians, Methodists, Presbyterians—alternative forms of polity fit just as well into the nation's democratic milieu. The more genuinely "American" aspects of Old Lutheranism were its biblicism, its emphasis on church-state separation, and, more broadly, its ability to craft a unique identity in the nation's religious marketplace. Like other "American originals" and "religious outsiders," this novel form of Lutheranism would blossom in the land of churchly freedom.[178]

Of course, the Old Lutherans did not consider their views to be "unique" or "novel." Rather, they believed that they had recovered the pure doctrine of authentic Lutheranism. Like their New Lutheran rivals, they had established a national church body with a church paper circulated throughout the country. By the end of the 1840s, they had also established rival educational institutions: Concordia College in St. Louis, headed by Walther, and a "practical seminary" headed by Sihler in Fort Wayne.[179] Yet despite their grand designs, Old Lutheranism was a minority movement. In 1850, the Missouri Synod numbered about 5000 members, less than five percent of all Lutherans in the United States. Nevertheless, Walther expressed confidence in the Old Lutherans' divine calling:

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[177] For example, Kathyrn Franzen Wood writes: "[T]he most problematic aspect of Missouri Synod organization grew from its original, fundamental concession to American culture: the extreme congregationalism of its polity." Wood, "Reluctantly American: The Schism in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1969-1976" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2004), 14.

[178] See Paul K. Conkin, *American Originals: Homemade Varieties of Christianity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); and Moore, *Religious Outsiders*. On how distinctive and demanding theologies have succeeded in the marketplace of American religion, see Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy, 1776-2005* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2005).

[179] For a succinct history of these two institutions, see Martin R. Noland, "A Tale of Two Seminaries," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 81 (Summer 2008): 120-26. The most complete histories of each individual institution are Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years toward a More Excellent Ministry 1839-1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); and Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary, 1846-1976* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989).

"Compared to those they battle, those who fight now for the re-establishment of the Lutheran church in her original form… are still just a drop in the bucket…. [Yet] the Lord has arisen to aid his church once more."[180]

Moderate Lutheranism

Unlike New Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism, the Moderate Lutheranism described by Schaff was not an organized movement. (Indeed, he described the former two schools as a "party" or "faction" and the latter as a "tendency.") Instead, the term described those Lutherans who shared a discomfort with the modifications of the New Lutherans and an aversion to the rigidity of the Old Lutherans. Most Moderate Lutheran pastors, Schaff wrote, "have few firm convictions, are poorly educated, stagnant,… [and] follow almost blindly a few leading intellectuals." Yet he also saw in this group "many promising young theologians" and believed that this tendency "has the oldest American Lutheran tradition on its side."[181]

Schaff noted that the synods most closely associated with Moderate Lutheranism were the Pennsylvania Synod (as the Pennsylvania Ministerium was commonly known), and the Joint Synod of Ohio (usually called the Ohio Synod). Lutherans had been migrating to Ohio even before the territory achieved statehood in 1803. After being served by preachers mostly from the Pennsylvania Synod, the Ohio congregations and ministers organized their own synod in 1818. The ties between the two synods persisted. Soon after the Ohio Synod founded its own seminary in Columbus in 1830, the Pennsylvania Synod chose to support this institution, rather than the General Synod's

[180] "Vorwort des Herausgebers zum dritten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," 2.

[181] Schaff, *Amerika*, 225-26.

school in Gettysburg.[182] When Lutherans of the Ohio Synod established their own paper, the *Lutheran Standard*, twelve years later, the new venture also received an endorsement from their counterpart in Pennsylvania. Though it failed to match the circulation of the *Lutheran Observer*, by 1854 the paper had grown large enough for Schaff to label it as the "organ" of Moderate Lutheranism.[183]

In the inaugural issue, its first editor Emmanuel Greenwald (1811-1885) cited the two issues on which the *Lutheran Standard* differed from its New Lutheran counterpart.[184] The first centered on the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the oldest of the Lutheran confessions, or symbols. Unlike those associated with the *Lutheran Observer*, Greenwald believed that everything contained in the Augsburg Confession, including its teachings about the sacraments, was "preeminently biblical." "To explain and meekly to defend those doctrines," he wrote, "will be our business and our pleasure." The editor cited "new measures" as the second point of disagreement. He believed that these revivalist practices were causing "most of the evils of division and strife, that now unhappily afflict the Lutheran Church." Yet despite his criticisms, Greenwald claimed

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[182] On the early history of the Ohio Synod, see Willard D. Allbeck, *A Century of Lutherans in Ohio* (Yellow Springs, OH: The Antioch Press, 1966), esp. 61-67, and 111-17; C. V. Sheatsley, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States from the Earliest Beginnings to 1919* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1919), 1-108; and Donald L. Huber, *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio, 1830-1980: A History of Trinity Lutheran Seminary and Its Predecessors* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989), 1-46.

[183] Schaff, *Amerika*, 225. The Pennsylvania Synod officially recommended the periodical in 1851. Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism* (New York: Century, 1927), 145.

[184] On Greenwald, see W. K. F., "Rev. Emanuel Greenwald, D.D.," in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 273-75; and C. Elvin Haupt, *Emanuel Greenwald, Pastor and Doctor of Divinity: Footprints of His Life, Together with His Earliest Extant and Latest Discourses* (Lancaster, PA: G. L. Fon Dersmith, 1889).

that "we are determined to have no controversy on the subject." Instead he hoped that by raising this issue, "we may still be enabled to journey on harmoniously together."[185]

Kurtz at the *Lutheran Observer* also initially tried to strike a cordial tone. After praising the new paper's first issue, he commented on Greenwald's editorial: "In essentials we entirely *agree* with him; in non-essentials we most cheerfully award to him the same *liberty* we claim for ourselves; and in all things we desire to exercise *charity*." Yet after a few more articles in the *Lutheran Standard* directed against the New Lutherans' doctrine and practice, Kurtz began to criticize the periodical for "evincing… a spirit of jealously and a want of manly candor." "If we must have an opponent," he complained, "we prefer that he should be an open, above-board, courageous and honorable one."[186] Throughout the 1840s, the papers oscillated between friendly disagreement and outright hostility.

Inflaming the controversy between the two Lutheran papers was their divergent reactions to the publication of *The Anxious Bench* in 1843 by John Williamson Nevin (1803-1886). Nevin had grown up in a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian home in the Cumberland Valley and been educated in the Old School theology of Princeton Theological Seminary under Charles Hodge. After ten years at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, in 1840 he accepted a professorship at the German Reformed Seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. Influenced by the writings of European thinkers, especially the Berlin University church historian August Neander, Nevin sought to incorporate modern German theology into the American Reformed church. He was joined in this endeavor by

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[185] "Introductory," *Lutheran Standard*, September 21, 1842, 2. On the formation of the *Lutheran Standard*, see Huber, *Educating Lutheran Pastors in Ohio*, 46.

[186] "'Lutheran Standard'," *Lutheran Observer*, October 7, 1842, 3; and "Unhandsome Innuendoes," *Lutheran Observer*, December 16, 1842, 2.

Schaff, who became his colleague at the seminary four years later. Together, the two pioneered the Mercersburg Theology.[187]

The Anxious Bench was Nevin's first major work.[188] The book has been hailed by many scholars of nineteenth-century American religion as an incisive critique of the Finneyite revival system. Yet many of these same writers overlook that the principle target of Nevin's polemic was more specific—the advance of revivalist practices into "the German Churches." Nevin singled out the *Lutheran Observer* as the chief object of his criticism. He believed that "the Anxious Bench, after having enjoyed a brief reputation, has fallen into discredit," but that Kurtz and other New Lutherans were breathing "new life" into the "system of New Measures." After scrutinizing the emotionalism, superficiality, and disorder of revivalism, he urged German churches to rededicate themselves to "the system of the *Catechism*." "Happy for our German Zion," the Scotch-Irish American professor concluded, "if such might be the system that should prevail, to the exclusion of every other, within her borders!"[189]

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[187] For biographical details on Nevin, I have drawn principally on D. G. Hart, *John Williamson Nevin: High Church Calvinist* (Philipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2005). See also Nichols, *Romanticism in American Theology*; Sam Hamstra, Jr., and Arie J. Griffioen, eds., *Reformed Confessionalism in Nineteenth-Century America: Essays on the Thought of John Williamson Nevin* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1995); and Richard E. Wentz, *John Williamson Nevin: American Theologian* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

[188] J. W. Nevin, *The Anxious Bench* (Chambersburg, PA: Weekly Messenger, 1843). A revised and enlarged edition was published the following year as John W. Nevin, *The Anxious Bench* (Chambersburg, PA: Publication Office of the German Reformed Church, 1844). All quotations are from the first edition.

[189] Nevin, *Anxious Bench*, 4-5, 55. For examinations of *The Anxious Bench* that downplay or ignore the book's original context, see Bratt, "Religious Anti-Revivalism in Antebellum America," 96-99; Conser, *Church and Confession*, 283-84; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 468; and Charles Yrigoyen, Jr., "Nevin and Methodism," in Hamstra, Jr., and Griffioen, eds., *Reformed Confessionalism in Nineteenth-Century America*, 209-231. For works that situate Nevin's publication in the context of German churches, see Lawrence R. Rast, "The Influence of John Williamson Nevin on American Lutheranism to 1849" (M.Div. thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary—Fort Wayne, 1990), esp. 24-36; and John B. Frantz, "Revivalism in the German Reformed Synod in America to 1850, with Emphasis on the Eastern Synod" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1961), 178-231.

Both the *Lutheran Observer* and the *Lutheran Standard* responded to Nevin's diatribe. Unsurprisingly, Kurtz criticized the book as "erroneous and in some instances glaringly so." Though meant to do good, the New Lutheran editor claimed that its "effect will be evil, only evil, and disastrous to the salvation of many immortal souls."[190] Over the course of four months, Kurtz wrote a measured, thirteen-part rebuttal to the 56-page tract, using the same arguments for Lutheran revivalism that he had been promoting for the last ten years.[191] Even more irksome to Kurtz was that Greenwald and the *Lutheran Standard* endorsed Nevin's views. The Moderate Lutheran paper praised the Reformed professor's "Correct Sentiments" and printed excerpts from his pamphlet.[192] Another Ohio Synod pastor published a complete German translation.[193] The *Lutheran Standard* printed several letters that took aim at Kurtz and the *Lutheran Observer*, with one accusing New Lutherans of viewing new measures as "the sine qua non for the existence of the church" and alleging that "the anxious bench with all its accompaniments operated like a magic charm upon their imagination and feelings."[194]

Besides driving a sharper wedge between the two periodicals, the controversy over Nevin's publication also signaled an important realignment in American Lutheran

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[190] "'The Anxious Bench. By the Rev. J. W. Nevin, D. D., Prof of Theology in the Seminary of the German Reformed Church. Published in Cambersburg, Pa.'," *Lutheran Observer*, October 27, 1843, 3.

[191] The first appeared in the November 10, 1843 issue; the final on March 22, 1844. For another New Lutheran defense of the practice of revivals, see R[euben] Weiser, *The Mourner's Bench: or, an Humble Attempt to Vindicate New Measures* (N.p: 1844).

[192] "Correct Sentiments," *Lutheran Standard*, November 3, 1843, 2; and Rev. Dr. Nevin, "The Anxious Bench," *Lutheran Standard*, November 10, 1843 2.

[193] J. W. Nevin, *Die Angstbank*, trans. A. B. Bierdemann (Canton, OH: Druckerei des Väterlandsfreunds, 1844).

[194] Beta, "Mr. Editor," *Lutheran Standard*, January 12, 1844, 2. See also Alpha, "Mr. Editor," *Lutheran Standard*, December 22, 1843, 2-3; and Alpha, "Mr. Editor!" *Lutheran Standard*, February 16, 1844, 3.

ecumenism. Lutherans in the early republic had collaborated with the Reformed out of a shared commitment to Pennsylvanian German culture. Now for most Lutherans, theological issues were beginning to supersede ethnic concerns.[195] Schmucker, Kurtz, and the New Lutherans rejected the anti-revivalism of Nevin, Schaff, and other German Reformed leaders. Instead, they sought alliances with more theologically revivalist (and more culturally and politically connected) Protestants. Moderate Lutherans, particularly those associated with the Pennsylvania Synod, would hold on to their ethnic solidarity with the German Reformed for a longer time, particularly in their opposition to the certain aspects of the common-school system.[196] Yet as confessional particularity became more important to their sense of Lutheran identity, the alliance began to fade, save for a shared antipathy toward revivalism.

Further widening the rift between the factions represented by the *Lutheran Standard* and the *Lutheran Observer* was the former publication's overtures to the Tennessee Synod. In 1820 six pastors and their congregations had split off from the North Carolina Synod over the proposed General Synod and founded their own church body. The group was led by David Henkel (1795-1831), whose family ran the aforementioned Henkel Press. Like other critics of the General Synod, Henkel couched his opposition in terms of liberty, expressing fears of centralized authority. However, he saw an even more sinister plot afoot: the establishment of "popery among Protestants"

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[195] See Abdel Ross Wentz, "Relations Between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Lutheran Church Quarterly* 6 (July 1933): 300-327.

[196] See William W. Donner, "'Neither Germans Nor Englishmen, but Americans': Education, Assimilation, and Ethnicity among Nineteenth-Century Pennsylvania Germans," *Pennsylvania History* 75 (Spring 2008): 197-226; and Donald Scott McPherson, "The Fight Against Free Schools in Pennsylvania: Popular Opposition to the Common School System, 1834-1874" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1977), esp. 194-232.

through a "National Synod" that would unite all denominations and subvert the ability of believers to practice religion as they see fit. "O, free born Americans," he warned, "be watchful over your blessed constitution lest it may be undermined before ye are aware of it."[197] Along with offering these dire predictions, Henkel insisted that the Augsburg Confession alone should be the marker of Lutheran unity. Other Lutherans throughout the South rallied to Henkel's cause, so that the new synod comprised members from not only Tennessee, but also Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. By 1860, about one-sixth of Southern Lutherans belonged to this church body.[198]

As the first Lutheran synod to organize for explicitly theological reasons, yet very much shaped by the particularities of its Southern context and the personalities of the Henkel family, the Tennessee Synod defies easy categorization as either Old or Moderate Lutheran. (Indeed, Schaff did not mention this church body in his analysis of Lutheranism in the United States.) In many ways, their pugnacious style and doctrinal obstinacy mirrored that of the Old Lutherans. Yet they never made common cause with

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[197] David Henkel, *Carolinian Herald of Liberty, Religious and Political* (Salisbury, NC: Krider and Bingham, 1821), 1, 18-19.

[198] The literature on the small Tennessee Synod is surprisingly extensive. Besides those works on the Henkels, cited above, see Lawrence R. Rast, Jr., "Cultivating the Holy Religion of Jesus: The Ministry and Ministries according to David Henkel and the Tennessee Synod," in Raymond M. Bost, ed., *Lutheranism… with a Southern Accent: Essays and Reports, 1994, The Lutheran Historical Conference* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1998), 101-22; and Robert C. Carpenter, "Augsburg Confession War: Lutheran Confessional Beliefs, Rev. David Henkel, and Creation of the Tennessee Synod," in Russell C. Kleckley, ed., *Lutheran Identity and Regional Distinctiveness: Essays and Reports, 2006, Lutheran Historical Conference* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 2010), 110-45. The Tennessee Synod also figures prominently in more general accounts of antebellum Southern Lutheranism. See H. George Anderson, *Lutheranism in the Southeastern States, 1860-1886: A Social History* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 9-48; Raymond M. Bost and Jeff L. Norris, *All One Body: The Story of the North Carolina Synod, 1803-1993* (Salisbury: North Carolina Synod, 1994), 45-109; and Susan Wilds McArver, "'A Spiritual Wayside Inn:' Lutherans, the New South and Cultural Change in South Carolina, 1886-1918" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1995), 17-50; and Lauren K. Baines-Walsh, "Adapting to Dixie: The Southernization of Nineteenth-Century Lutherans in the North Carolina Piedmont" (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 2011). Statistics are derived from *Lutheran Almanac for 1842*, 45; and *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1861* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1861), 32-33.

Walther and the Missouri Synod. Because of this, it seems best to categorize the Tennessee Synod as the conservative end of Moderate Lutheranism.

In either case, the new church body drew considerable ire, especially from Southern New Lutherans such as John Bachman. For Bachman, the Tennessee Synod worked directly against the image he and his colleagues were trying to cultivate among other Protestants. The South Carolinian pastor labeled Henkel as "a weak and illiterate man" who wrote "crude, visionary, and inflammatory publications." Issues of class, ethnicity, and culture certainly played a role in Bachman's derision. The members of the Tennessee Synod were poorer and more insistent on maintaining the German American culture of the "Dutch Fork" of the Shenandoah Valley and Carolina Piedmont. The Tennesseans also offered mild criticism of the institution of chattel slavery, while Bachman became the greatest pro-slavery apologist of Lutheranism in the South. Yet the heart of Bachman's critique was doctrinal. For him, Henkel's insistence on baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper was "directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ" and "unscriptural." Such "sentiments," Bachman asserted, put the "Hinkelites" outside the bounds of true Lutheranism: "No Synod in our country has ever acknowledged, or given countenance, to this sect."[199] Kurtz and the *Lutheran Observer* agreed with Bachman's assessment: Though "claiming to be Lutheran," he

[199] Bachman, *Sermon on the Doctrines and Disciplines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 12. For the Tennessee Synod's reply, see A[bel] J. Brown and A[dam] Miller, *Vindication of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod: Reply to a Sermon, Delivered by the Rev. John Bachman, D.D. on the Doctrine and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Published by Request of the Tennessee Synod, at Her Session in September 1838* (Salem, NC: Blum and Son, 1838). On the class and ethnic issues between the Tennessee Synod and other Southern Lutherans, see McArver, "A Spiritual Wayside Inn," 44; and Rast, "Cultivating the Holy Religion of Jesus." On the Tennessee Synod and slavery, see Baines-Walsh, "Adapting to Dixie," 217-18; and C. O. Smith, "The Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod's Attitude Toward the Negro Both as Slave and as Freedman," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21 (January 1949): 145-49.

wrote, the Tennessee Synod is "not admitted to be so by many who are better acquainted with its members than we profess to be."[200]

This high level of animus explains why in 1846 the *Lutheran Standard*, now under the editorship of Christian Spielmann (1810-1895), received such a harsh response when it innocuously referred to the Tennessee Synod as an "Ev. Lutheran body." One reader wrote to cancel his subscription, asserting that "every person that is acquainted with [the Tennessee Synod], knows it to be a disgrace to the cause of Christianity."[201] Several other letter writers chimed in. Among the charges leveled against the church body were its "divisive spirit, moral laxity, and refusal to participate in Sabbath Schools, Bible, Tract, Missionary and Temperance Societies."[202] Another writer, less hostile to the Tennessee Synod, described them as "contend[ing] for the *old doctrines, rules, and customs* of the Church; while the other [Southern Lutherans] allowed members, customs, and practices of other denominations to mingle and commingle with them."[203] After a few months of controversy, Spielmann decided to drop the subject in the interest of "peace, harmony, and love."[204]

Yet over the next few years, as Moderate Lutherans, particularly those in the Ohio Synod, became more acquainted with the Tennessee Synod's positions (and as the Tennessee Synod mollified its polemical rhetoric), the two groups grew closer

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[200] "'Evangelic Lutheran Tennessee Synod'," *Lutheran Observer*, February 22, 1839, 2.

[201] "Ev. Luth. Synod of Tennessee," *Lutheran Standard*, August 5, 1846, 2. On Spielmann, see "Rev. Christian Spielmann," in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 741-43.

[202] "'The Tennessee Synod'," *Lutheran Standard*, September 30, 1846, 2. Bachman also made similar accusations in his *Sermon on the Doctrines and Disciplines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, 13.

[203] Letter from "Amicus," *Lutheran Standard*, October 28, 1846, 2.

[204] "The Tennessee Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, December 23, 1846, 2.

together.[205] In 1852, the *Lutheran Standard* began publishing the opinions of this church body in its "Tennessee Department," an act unthinkable a decade before.[206] Over the course of the 1850s, the two synods became de facto partners, with the Tennessee Synod regarding the *Lutheran Standard* as its "organ."[207] Such collaboration drove a further wedge between the Moderate Lutherans and the New Lutherans.

Ultimately, their chief locus of dispute was the General Synod itself. The Moderate Lutherans of the Pennsylvania Synod and Ohio Synod initially balked at joining this national federation out of fears of centralization and qualms about partnering with the theology of Schmucker, Kurtz, and other New Lutherans. Tensions surrounding the General Synod persisted. Over the course of the 1830s and 1840s, several congregations broke away from the Pennsylvania and Ohio synods in order to form new church bodies, such as the East Pennsylvania Synod and East Ohio Synod, for the purpose of becoming members of the General Synod.[208]

From its inception, the *Lutheran Standard* was critical of the General Synod. Yet the paper's criticism differed from that of the *Lutheraner*. Whereas the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod accused the General Synod of being "pseudo-Lutheran," the Moderate Lutherans of the Ohio Synod criticized this federation of synods for being

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[205] See especially the series entitled "Friendly Letters to the Tennessee Synod," which appeared in the following issues of the *Lutheran Standard*: December 3, 1851; December 17, 1851; December 31, 1851; January 14, 1852; January 28, 1852; February 11, 1852; February 25, 1852; March 10, 1852; March 24, 1852; April 7, 1852; April 21, 1852; and May 5, 1852.

[206] "Tennessee Department," *Lutheran Standard*, August 11, 1852, 1.

[207] *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, Held in St. John's Church, Lexington District, S. C., November 9—14, A. D. 1861* (Greensborough, NC: M. S. Sherwood, 1861), 6.

[208] The most complete source on the various divisions and mergers of Lutheran synods in the United States is Robert C. Wiederaenders, *Historical Guide to Lutheran Church Bodies of North America* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1998).

"pseudo-General," that is presuming to speak for all Lutherans in the United States. For example, when the New School Presbyterian minister Benjamin J. Wallace spoke before the General Synod in 1845 about the need for Protestant unity, the Moderate Lutheran paper praised "our Presbyterian brethren… for having taken the initiatory step towards the formation of such a union." Rather than the content of his proposal, what annoyed the *Lutheran Standard* was Wallace's description of the General Synod as "an assembly of the whole Lutheran church in America." The "so called Gen. Synod," the Moderate Lutheran paper complained, "has… both covertly and publicly stigmatized the large portion of our church, embracing many of our oldest, most intellectual, pious and self-sacrificing ministers, who could not and *cannot* affiliate with it."[209]

Criticism of the General Synod stemmed from more than just wounded pride. At issue was to what extent members of a Lutheran church must pledge their loyalty to the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession. New Lutherans contended that only a "substantial agreement" on its teachings was required.[210] As Schmucker argued in his theology textbook, "The Lutheran Church in the United States… has indeed always regarded the Augsburg Confession as the authorized summary of her doctrine, but has not required any oath of obligation to all its contents."[211] The Moderate Lutherans represented by the *Lutheran Standard* regarded this as inadequate. As one correspondent wrote: "The term

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[209] "Rev. M. Wallace's Address before the Pseudo-General Synod of the Lutheran Church in the United States," *Lutheran Standard*, June 18, 1845, 2. See also "American Lutheran Church," *Lutheran Standard*, July 9, 1845, 2.

[210] "The 'General Synod,' and its Doctrines," *Lutheran Standard*, April 15, 1846, 3. This phrasing had been used in the first issue of the *Lutheran Observer*: John G. Morris, "To Our Readers," *Lutheran Observer*, 1-2.

[211] Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology* (1834), 41. Candidates for ordination were asked: "Do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the word of God, are taught in a manner substantially correct, in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?"

Lutheran means the same thing now that it did 300 years ago…. It designated those who held all the doctrines of the Augsburg confession." Denying the confession's teachings, including the controverted doctrines of baptismal regeneration and Christ's bodily presence in the Lord's Supper, he wrote, amounted to "apostasy."[212]

Yet while sometimes sharply critical of the New Lutherans' doctrinal laxity, the *Lutheran Standard*, which in 1848 came under the editorship of a committee Ohio Synod pastors, was not willing to declare them outside the bounds of Lutheranism. Therein lay the other chief difference between the Moderate Lutherans and the Old Lutherans. The editors of the *Lutheran Standard* regarded the writings of Walther and other Missouri Synod leaders to be "valuable" and occasionally reprinted articles from the *Lutheraner*.[213] Yet while "commend[ing] their orthodoxy and respect[ing] their piety," they did "not like their exclusiveness." One of their critiques of New Lutheranism was their tendency to claim "all the truth and all the piety that exist in the church" and to "anathematize… all who do not sympathize with [them]." The *Lutheran Standard* saw in the Old Lutherans "the same unlovely trait of character."[214] Unlike Walther and the Old Lutherans, the Moderate Lutherans, though often critical of the New Lutherans in General Synod, did not consider them to be a lost cause. "Although some diversity exists as to doctrines and measures," wrote one Ohio Synod clergymen, "we are one church."[215]

Even more cordial toward New Lutheranism were the Lutherans of the Pennsylvania Synod. The opposition of this Moderate Lutheran church body to the

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[212] "The 'General Synod,' and its Doctrines," 3.

[213] "Our Confessions," *Lutheran Standard*, February 14, 1849, 3.

[214] "'Der Lutheraner'," *Lutheran Standard*, January 17, 1849, 2.

[215] "The General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, October 11, 1848, 2.

General Synod had even less to do with doctrinal disagreements than the Ohio Synod. Instead, their differences centered on culture and institutions. Whereas New Lutherans were rebelling against the provincialism of the German American culture of Greater Pennsylvania, the members of the Pennsylvania Synod were seeking to preserve and promulgate their Pennsylvania Dutch heritage. Whereas Schmucker and Kurtz were founding institutions and launching publications to place Lutheranism on par with Anglo-Protestant denominations, the pastors of the Pennsylvania Synod were, in the words of Schaff, "much more concerned about building programs and politics than theology and church affairs."[216] Despite being the oldest and largest Lutheran church body in the United States, by 1848 (its hundredth anniversary) the synod published no church newspaper or periodical, and had founded no seminary or college.

During the 1830s and 1840s, the Pennsylvania Synod also possessed almost no theologians or churchmen of note. The exception that proved this rule was Karl Rudolph Demme (1795-1863). Educated at Göttingen and Halle, Demme immigrated to the United States in 1818. In 1822, he became pastor of the prestigious St. Michael's and Zion parish in Philadelphia, where he served until his death. Schaff considered him the "most influential man" in the effort to develop a "deeper spiritual life and a church consciousness" in the synod. The Philadelphia pastor was an intellectual, a translator of the works of Josephus and a member of the American Philosophical Society; yet he wrote no major books or articles on Lutheran theology. He was also a churchman, who helped develop the synod's liturgy and hymnbook and educated prospective pastors in his parish;

[216] Schaff, *Amerika*, 225.

but he held no post at a seminary or college.[217] While Schmucker, Kurtz, Bachman, and other New Lutherans were attempting to expand their influence in the evangelical culture of antebellum America, Demme was largely content in the subculture of Pennsylvania Germans.

Despite their differences, the boundaries between the Moderate Lutheran synods and the synods associated with the General Synod were often fluid. Since its founding in 1826, several members of the Gettysburg seminary's Board of Directors were clergymen from the Pennsylvania Synod. In 1848, the synod voted to sponsor a professor at the seminary, an arrangement which failed to materialize when Demme, their chosen candidate, declined the position.[218] Clergymen frequently changed synodical affiliations with little friction. William Reynolds (1812-1876) was ordained by the Pennsylvania Synod, but became an instructor at the General Synod's Pennsylvania College. Charles F. Schaeffer (1807-1879) studied under Demme in Philadelphia, was ordained by the Synod of Maryland and Virginia (an affiliate of the General Synod), became a professor at the Ohio Synod's seminary in Columbus, and eventually became a professor at Pennsylvania College.[219] Both of these leaders had Moderate Lutheran leanings, but collaborating with the General Synod was not seen as a contradiction.

Further evidence of this cooperative spirit was the establishment of the *Evangelical Review*, the first Lutheran theological quarterly in the United States. With

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[217] Schaff, *Amerika*, 226; Sprague, "Rev. Chas. D. Demme, D.D.," in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 159; and Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 174.

[218] Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 95, 172.

[219] For biographical information on these figures, see H. E. Jacobs, "William Morton Reynolds," in E. S. Breidenbaugh, ed., *The Pennsylvania College Book, 1832-1882* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society), 161-62; and B. M. Schmucker, "Rev. Charles F. Schaeffer, D.D.," in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 648-54.

Reynolds serving as editor and other critics of New Lutheranism, including Greenwald and Schaeffer, serving as assistant editors, the periodical had a decidedly Moderate Lutheran bent. Yet the journal was hardly launched as a conservative counteroffensive, as some denominational historians have claimed.[220] In his inaugural editorial, Reynolds acknowledged that "a very considerable diversity of views both as regards doctrine and practice prevails among us." Yet he believed that "the church is still essentially one." He envisioned the *Evangelical Review* as a "remedy," where "all parts of the church should meet each other as upon neutral ground." In a retrospectively prophetic analogy to the political realm, the editor wrote: "In civil life the collision of opposite parties, in our national legislature… does not tend to the destruction of our national union. On the contrary, the first step towards disunion or civil war would be the separation of the different parties into different conventions." Reynolds insisted that the journal "belongs to no particular school or party in the Lutheran church." He also expressed his view of other denominations: While "adher[ing] to the church with which we are connected, we do not wish to be understood as occupying a hostile position toward any other part of Christendom."[221] Conservative dogmatism this was not.

In general, New Lutherans reacted favorably to the journal. Kurtz enthusiastically promoted the buildup to its publication in the *Lutheran Observer* and published an article in the first issue.[222] Another prominent New Lutheran, John G. Morris, was on the new

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[220] For example, Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 177; and Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 117. For a history of the periodical, see Victor Edward Gimmestad, "A History of the *Evangelical Review*" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin—Madision, 1950).

[221] [William M.] R[eynolds], "Introduction—The Objects and Position of the Evangelical Review," *Evangelical Review* 1 (July 1849): 15, 17-18.

[222] "'Evangelical Review'," *Lutheran Observer*, July 7, 1848, 106; and "The Evangelical Review," *Lutheran Observer*, September 15, 1848, 147.

periodical's editorial staff and wrote an essay for its first two numbers. Correspondents to the *Lutheran Observer* praised the inaugural issue's "genuine church spirit," "moderate tone," "sound orthodoxy," "dignified style," and "conciliatory temper."[223] Even Schmucker, the intellectual head of New Lutheranism, offered tempered approval in a two-part review of the new periodical. Though he felt the new journal's target audience was too narrow and that the initial editorial placed too great of weight on the historic confessions of the church, he welcomed its claim that doctrine should be judged by the Bible alone. He expressed confidence that "the future numbers of the Review will equal the first in intellectual and scientific excellence…. By the exclusion of all illiberality of spirit, and by adherence to the editor's excellent motto, [it will] prove itself suited to the times, and worthy of general patronage."[224] Over the course of the 1850s, New Lutherans, including Schmucker, published several articles in the new periodical.

As an open forum for the various factions within American Lutheranism to air out their differences, the *Evangelical Review* produced not only cooperation but also contention. A particularly tendentious exchange, one which previewed the theological debates of the 1850s, occurred between Reynolds and Schmucker during the final months of 1849. At issue was whether Lutherans in the United States had ever required subscription to the sixteenth-century confessions of the church and the present status of the question. Schmucker insisted that the Augsburg Confession had never been binding

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[223] L., "The Evangelical Review," *Lutheran Observer*, July 27, 1849, 118. See also J., "The Evangelical Review," *Lutheran Observer*, August 3, 1849, 121-22.

[224] S[amuel] S[imon] S[chmucker], "Evangelical Review: No. 1," *Lutheran Observer*, August 31, 1849, 138; and S[amuel] S[imon] S[chmucker], "Evangelical Review: No. 2," *Lutheran Observer*, September 7, 1849, 142. The quotation is from the second article. To his son, he wrote, "With the Ev. Mag. of Mr. R. I am in general pleased, & if I can find time, I will occasionally write for it." Samuel Simon Schmucker to Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, July 30, 1849, Papers of Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Schmucker Family, Series 1, Folder 5, Musselman Library Special Collections, Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania.

and should not be; Reynolds argued the opposite case. Their protracted dispute ended in a stalemate. Yet despite this exchange and other occasional wars of words, the tensions between Moderate and New Lutherans were relatively restrained. In the same series of articles between himself and Schmucker, Reynolds insisted that he had no "love of controversy" and expressed his desire that the different parties would "cordially unite to their mutual edification."[225] Schmucker's allies at the *Lutheran Observer* continued to extol the *Evangelical Review* and express their hope that the periodical would help to "harmonize and consolidate our church."[226]

A large step in this direction came in 1853 when the largest group of Moderate Lutherans, the Pennsylvania Synod, joined the General Synod. By doing so, they affirmed that they agreed with the New Lutherans on what counted as "the essential or fundamental doctrines of our beloved church." In the *Lutheran Observer*, Schmucker praised the decision. Though he acknowledged that doctrinal disagreements existed, he considered those differences to be "non-essential" and believed that such a union would work because "they are willing to concede to us the same liberty which we extend to them."[227] As they prepared to align with the General Synod, the leaders of the Pennsylvania Synod asked their fellow Moderate Lutherans in the Ohio Synod to join them.[228] But the delegates to its 1853 convention refused, because they regarded the General Synod's doctrinal position as inadequate. Nevertheless, the Lutherans of the

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[225] W[illiam] M. R[eynolds], "Memoranda upon the Historical and Doctrinal Basis of the American Luth. Church: No. II," *Lutheran Observer*, September 28, 1849, 157.

[226] Candor, "THE EVANGELICAL REVIEW," *Lutheran Observer*, February 8, 1850, 230.

[227] S. S. Schmucker, "Synod of Penn. and the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, March 4, 1853, 37.

[228] "Union of the Synod of Pennsylvania with the General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, April 20, 1853, 3.

Ohio Synod still expressed their "hope that, the Gen. Synod may, ere long, place itself in such a position as that we may be able to co-operate with it in the important work of uniting the church."[229] Shortly after the Pennsylvania Synod's decision, the *Evangelical Review* voiced the sentiments of the vast majority of American Lutherans: "[T]he day is not far distant, when the whole Evangelical Lutheran church of this country… will labor together to extend the reign of *peace on earth and good will to men*."[230]

Conclusion

Also optimistic about the future prospects of Lutheranism was Philip Schaff. He saw the Pennsylvania Synod's union with the General Synod as an important step in allowing Moderate Lutherans to accomplish what he believed was their mission: to "consolidate the different elements in the Lutheran Church of America." Schaff was convinced that a moderate and irenic position would emerge as the primary form of Lutheranism in the United States. A truly American Lutheranism, he argued, would be true to its "heritage and history" and its "dogmatic and religious identity," but also would work with other denominations in shaping the "entire development of Anglo-American Christianity."[231]

Over the course of the nineteenth century, Schaff's prognostication would prove to be inaccurate. Less than twenty years after his lectures in Berlin, the principal type of Lutheranism in the United States would be inward-looking and polemical, rather than

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[229] "MEETING OF THE JOINT SYNOD," *Lutheran Standard*, May 4, 1853, 2.

[230] "Our General Synod," *Evangelical Review* 5 (October 1853): 280.

[231] Schaff, *Amerika*, 226-27, 236. On Schaff's shared ecumenical vision with the Lutherans of the General Synod, see Frederick K. Wentz, "Samuel Simon Schmucker and Philip Schaff: Nineteenth Century Ecumenical Pioneers," *Currents in Theology and Missions* 15 (December 1988): 574-88.

outward-looking and ecumenical. Schaff, however, should be forgiven for getting it wrong. When he forecasted the future of the Lutheran church in America, the only one insisting on dogmatism and separatism were the Old Lutherans, still a tiny minority. By the early 1850s, the vast majority of Lutherans were at home in the nation's religious environment shaped by Anglo-evangelicalism and confident that a more united Lutheranism would contribute to the shaping of American culture.

CHAPTER THREE

The Repressible Conflict in American Lutheranism

Addressing members of various evangelical denominations at First Presbyterian Church in Springfield, Illinois in 1852, the New Lutheran minister Simeon Harkey asserted: "I believe that the Lutheran Church has a special mission and a distinct work in this country." For Harkey, Lutheranism's American errand was two-pronged. The first duty was to evangelize and educate the "immense multitudes" of German and Scandinavian immigrants. He argued that, among all denominations in the United States, the Lutheran church, because of its European roots and its growing size and prestige, was best suited to this task. Lutheranism's second purpose, Harkey continued, was "in reference to the Theology of this country." He compared the Augsburg Confession, which established "the supremacy of the Bible" and the "right of private judgment," to the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution, the "mothers" of political liberty. Lutheranism, he contended, "set the great Protestant ball in motion… [and] has directly and indirectly been giving light and liberty to the world." Lutheranism's mission then was to serve as a mediator in American Protestant disputes. The key to realizing this vision, he believed, was for the Lutheran church in the United States to remain united. Though he admitted we "occasionally have a man among us" who insists on complete agreement in "non-essential" matters, most Lutherans regard such a person as an "intolerant bigot," who subverts "the great principle which lies at the foundation of Protestantism," liberty of conscience. Most American Lutherans, according to Harkey,

recognized that "'in union there is strength" and that "all our interests are one, whether in the north, south, east or west."[1]

Harkey's ideas about his church's mission highlighted the three chief issues facing Lutherans during the 1850s: large-scale immigration from Northern Europe, quarrels over the boundaries of true Lutheranism and church unity, and, somewhat obliquely, disagreements over slavery and sectionalism. In many ways, these debates reflected the disputes that strained and reconfigured the American political system during this decade. Like U.S. political parties, Lutheran synods responded to the unprecedented numbers of Northern European immigrants both with nativism and by seizing the opportunity for increasing their constituents. Additionally, the heated rhetoric of national politics mirrored the impassioned theological and ecclesiastical quarrels within American Lutheranism. Finally, as in the rest of the nation, the conflicts over slavery strained the sectional unity of Lutherans, about one-sixth of whom lived in slave states.

Yet despite these parallels, the American nation and the Lutheran church were on different trajectories. By 1860, the central issue of slavery would lead the republic to the brink of disunion. American Lutheranism, meanwhile, save for a few holdouts like the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, stood more unified than ever before. Contrary to other historical accounts, the 1850s was not a decade of escalating intra-Lutheran tensions leading inexorably to theological conflict. Instead, by 1860, most Lutherans had united around the institution of the General Synod, liberty of conscience in matters of non-essential doctrines, and the vision of making their denomination a respectable branch

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[1] Simeon W. Harkey, *The Mission of the Lutheran Church in America: Being an Address Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church of Springfield, Illinois, on Sabbath Evening, November 14th, 1852, Upon the Occasion of the Inauguration of the Author as Professor of Theology in "Illinois State University"* (Springfield: Illinois Journal Office, 1853), 3, 6, 13-16, 18, 28.

of the American evangelical establishment. Rather than dreading the prospect of an ecclesiastical house divided, on the eve of the Civil War most Lutherans, like Harkey, were boundlessly optimistic of their church's future.

Antebellum Immigration

Beginning in the late 1840s, the United States experienced its first waves of large-scale European immigration. Nearly 3.5 million migrants crossed the Atlantic between 1846 and 1860, altering the nation's political parties, ethnic composition, and religious structure. In no other fifteen year period in American history have immigrants made up a higher percentage of the nation's population. Most of these new arrivals were either Irish (about 1.5 million) or German (about 1.25 million). Though the 1790 Immigration Naturalization Act had provided a relatively easy path to citizenship for "free white persons," most native-born Americans still regarded the new arrivals as less than fit for the nation's republican culture. Many Anglo-Protestants were also deeply suspicious of the new immigrants' religious faith. Nearly all of the Irish and sizeable numbers of German immigrants were Catholic. By 1850 Roman Catholicism was the largest denomination in the United States. A nativist backlash led to the creation of the Know-Nothing Party, largely comprised of former Whigs. Democrats, on the other hand, successfully courted many immigrants, especially Catholics. By the late 1850s, the Whig party had collapsed and with it the second party system. But the issues surrounding immigration persisted. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, one of the key

indicators of voting behavior in the new third party system of Republicans and Democrats was ethno-religious affiliation.[2]

German immigrants reacted to American politics and culture in diverse ways, reflecting the variety of experiences that led them to emigrate. The most prominent were the forty-eighters, ideological refugees of the revolutions of 1848/49 that unsuccessfully sought to bring about democratic reforms and unite the various German states into a single nation. These intellectuals dominated the German American press and became prominent political leaders. However, the vast majority of German immigrants were ordinary people pushed away from Europe by social, economic, and political changes and pulled to America by the promise of freedom and opportunity. In the pre-Civil War years, most settled in urban areas, transforming the working class of cities such as Milwaukee, Chicago, St. Louis, Buffalo, and New York. Largely due to the influence of the forty-

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[2] For statistics, see United States Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 105-9. On immigrant naturalization, see Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), esp. 13-90; and Ronald Schultz, "'Allegiance and land go together': Automatic Naturalization and the Changing Nature of Immigration in Nineteenth-Century America." *American Nineteenth Century History* 12 (June 2011): 149-76. On the size and scope of Catholic immigration, see James Hennesey, *American Catholics: A History of the Roman Catholic Community in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 126; and Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1992), 127-31. On nativism and the Know-Nothings, see William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850's* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Katie Oxx, *The Nativist Movement in America: Religious Conflict in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Routledge, 2013). On the ethnic and religious component of the third-party system, see especially Robert P. Swierenga, "Ethnoreligious Political Behavior in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Voting, Values, Cultures," in Mark A. Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 145-68. See also Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892: Parties, Voters, and Political Cultures* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979); Richard Carwardine, *Evangelicals and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993); and Ronald P. Formisano, "The Invention of the Ethnocultural Interpretation," *American Historical Review* 99 (April 1994): 453-77.

eighters, Protestant German immigrants acquired the reputation of "freedom-loving" and became an important constituency of the newly formed Republican Party.[3]

Few immigrants from Germany came to the United States for explicitly religious reasons, as the Stephanites and other radical groups had. Nevertheless, religion played a crucial role in the German American community. While a handful of elite forty-eighters were aggressively anti-religious and about thirty percent were Catholic,[4] most German immigrants arrived as adherents to the form of Protestantism represented by the religion of their state or principality: Lutheran, Reformed, or Evangelical (United Protestant). Yet these state churches did little to provide institutional support for those who moved to the United States. Instead, German Protestant immigrants were served by a combination of independent mission societies from Europe and the church bodies already established in America.

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[3] For important works on German emigration to the antebellum United States, see Mack Walker, *Germany and the Emigration, 1816-1885* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964); Wolfgang Köllman, and Peter Marschalck. "German Emigration to the United States," *Perspectives in American History* (1973): 499-544; Walter D. Kamphoefner, *The Westfalians: From Germany to Missouri* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Jochen Krebber, *Württemberger in Nordamerika: Migration von der Schwäbischen Alb im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014). On the formation of German immigrant communities before the Civil War, see Kathleen Neils Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); Audrey L. Olson, *St. Louis Germans, 1850-1920: The Nature of an Immigrant Community and its Relation to the Assimilation Process* (New York: Arno Press, 1980); David A. Gerber, *The Making of an American Pluralism: Buffalo, New York, 1825-1860* (Urbana: University Of Illinois Press, 1989); Stanley Nadel, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845-80* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990); and Bruce Levine, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflicts, and the Coming of the Civil War* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). On the forty-eighters and the presumed "freedom-loving" nature of antebellum German Americans, see Charlotte Brancaforte, ed., *The German Forty-Eighters in the United States* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989); Mischa Honeck, *We Are the Revolutionists: German-Speaking Immigrants and American Abolitionists after 1848* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011); Alison Efford, *German Immigrants, Race, and Citizenship in the Civil War Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 53-85; and Kristen Layne Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 18-79.

[4] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 130.

In the Middle West, due to its high concentration of German Americans and lack of established Lutheran churches, new synods arose that were led mostly by immigrants. These new church bodies, served primarily by clergy from joint Lutheran-Reformed European mission societies, were characterized by their ecumenism. Some, such as the Church Union of the West, later renamed the Evangelical Synod of the West, sought to replicate the model of the United Protestant churches in Germany. Ironically, despite their ecumenical principles, these churches forged few relationships with other American denominations. Though mostly Lutheran in its theology, the Evangelical Synod stands largely outside the story of Lutheranism's American development.[5]

Other immigrant-led synods, including the Wisconsin Synod and the Texas Synod, while open to inter-church cooperation, conceived of their new church bodies as Lutheran, not Evangelical (United Protestant). In the schema of Philip Schaff, these new synods are best categorized as Moderate Lutheran. William Julius Mann (1819-1892), a friend and former classmate of Schaff who moved from Calvinism to Lutheranism after immigrating to America, described them as belonging to the "centre" of American Lutheranism. Both were, in his view, "not strictly Symbolical" and held "both in theory and practice to the principle of Evangelical liberty." The leaders of each synod rejected the "exclusivism" of the Old Lutherans and cooperated with Christians of various denominations, but were skeptical of some of the revivalist practices of the New Lutherans. The Texas Synod followed the example of the Pennsylvania Synod and

[5] See Carl E. Schneider, *The German Church on the American Frontier: A Study in the Rise of Religion among the Germans of the West* (St. Louis: Eden Publishing, 1939); and Hugo Kamphausen, *The Story of the Religious Life in the Evangelical Synod of North America*, trans. John W. Flucke (Webster Groves, MO: Eden Theological Seminary, 2005).

affiliated the General Synod, while the Wisconsin Synod followed the example of Ohio Synod and declined to join.[6]

For the most part, antebellum European Lutheran immigrants, if they joined a church, attached themselves to already extant denominations. Throughout the late 1840s and 1850s, American Lutheran writers published numerous petitions, urging ministers to establish congregations for these new immigrants. Like Harkey, they saw their church as the natural home for incoming Germans and Scandinavians. However, many New, Moderate, and Old Lutherans also saw this influx of nominal Protestants as a potential menace that needed to be domesticated. Like the rest of the American nation, those Lutherans already present in the United States approached immigrants with a mixture of hospitality and trepidation.

Unsurprisingly, New Lutherans were the most ambivalent about the new arrivals. Harkey, in his exposition of the Lutheran church's mission, saw Protestant immigrants from Germany and Scandinavia as "the most hopeful class of foreigners that come to this country." Yet he also warned that they "must be *Americanized*, must be educated in the principles of our government and laws, and be brought under the influence of the religion of the Bible, or they will most assuredly destroy us."[7] The *Lutheran Observer* in equal parts pleaded for missionaries to the new immigrants and warned of their lawlessness,

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[6] W. J. Mann, *Lutheranism in America: An Essay on the Present Condition of the Lutheran Church in the United States* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1857), 93-94. On the Wisconsin Synod, see John P. Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, ed. and trans. Karl Koehler and Leign Jordahl (St. Cloud, MN: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970); and Mark E. Braun, "Wisconsin's 'Turn to the Right'," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 75 (Spring 2002): 31-48, (Summer 2002): 80-100. On the Texas Synod, see Russell Alan Vardell, "Striving to Gather the Scattered: The Texas-Louisiana Synod and its Predecessor Bodies, 1851-1987" (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 1992), 1-28; and Carl F. Wolf and Lenora Stoll Wolf, eds., *Mission to Frontier Texas: Biographies of the St. Chrischona Missionaries to German Lutheran Immigrants* (Seguin, TX: ELCA Region IV-South Archives, 2002).

[7] Harkey, *Mission of the Lutheran Church in America*, 6, 8.

infidelity, and religious indifference.[8] General Synod pastors who served the German immigrant population commented on their lack of response to revivals and their lax morals in terms of alcohol.[9] Yet they also praised those "enlightened" immigrants who, in the words of Samuel Schmucker, "have not only learned to love the freedom and wisdom of our well-balanced civil institutions; but have also attained a consciousness of the fact, that one grand part of the vocation of the American churches is, to throw off the shackles of traditionary, patristic, and symbolic servitude."[10] For New Lutherans, German immigrants were to be both Americanized, which meant embracing the nation's culture and institutions, and evangelized, which meant accepting the beliefs and practices of Anglo-evangelicalism.

Moderate Lutherans saw more promise in German Protestant immigrants, as long as they were of the right sort. For these Lutherans, many of whom were still clinging to their Pennsylvania German origins, churchmen from Germany commanded a certain level of respectability and German theology, so long as it was sufficiently orthodox, possessed a sizeable amount of cachet. Professorial appointments at the Ohio Synod's seminary and pastoral positions at the Pennsylvania Synod's most prestigious churches were often held by immigrants from Germany. Many Moderate Lutheran intellectuals translated articles by conservative German theologians for their readership's edification

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[8] For examples of the former, see "The Germans Totally Uncared For," *Lutheran Observer*, November 8, 1850, 382; and "Help! Help!! Brethren," *Lutheran Observer*, July 11, 1851, 522. For examples of the latter, see "Germans in this Country," *Lutheran Observer*, May 26, 1854, 86; and "German Population in the U. States," *Lutheran Observer*, August 19, 1853, 152.

[9] Journal of Elias Schwartz, November 6, 1857, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Archives, A. R. Wentz Library, Pennsylvania; and J. H. W. Stuckenberg to "Brother," February 26, 1859, Box 1, Folder 2, John Henry Wilbrand Stuckenberg Papers, Gettysburg College, Special Collections, Musselman Library, Pennsylvania.

[10] S. S. Schmucker, "Vocation of the American Lutheran Church," *Evangelical Review* 2 (January 1851): 491.

and criticized New Lutherans for not doing so.[11] Like the *Lutheran Observer*, the Moderate *Lutheran Standard* called for missions to the immigrant population. But instead of merely regarding them as a foreign people needing to be assimilated, they also expressed hope that these new arrivals would help in the "diffusion of the German spirit and culture" in America.[12] As long as German immigrants were ministered to by pastors "of the right kind"—meaning both pious and theologically sound—Moderate Lutherans believed that these new American Lutherans would contribute to the building up of both the church and the nation.[13] Judging by synodical statistics, Moderate Lutherans were the most successful in attracting these new immigrants.

The Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, despite being German immigrants themselves, forged few bonds with the new arrivals from Europe, who they deemed insufficiently orthodox. In addition to the Evangelical (United Protestant) churches, C. F. W. Walther and the *Lutheraner* began to attack the "unionistic" immigrant Lutheran churches, such as the Wisconsin Synod.[14] Old Lutherans' criticism extended even to the newly arrived immigrants who joined their own church body. Friedrich Wyneken, who became president of the Missouri Synod in 1850, hoped to oversee an increase in his church's membership. But he also worried that "the state of general ignorance and lack of discipline renders our path of building congregations a slow and difficult one."[15] Still, the

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[11] See, for example, the translator's preface to G. Thomasius, "A Contribution to the Christology of the Church" *Evangelical Review* 4 (July 1852): 83-85.

[12] "Germans in America," *Lutheran Standard*, September 24, 1851, 2.

[13] R., "What Shall We Do for Our German Population?" *Lutheran Standard*, April 19, 1854, 2. See also R., "Our German Population," *Lutheran Standard*, April 5, 1854, 2.

[14] Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 76-86.

[15] Friedrich Wyneken, "On the Priesthood and the Office of the Ministry: 'We Will Not Tolerate Any Little Lutheran Pope,' 1852 Synodical Address," trans. Matthew C. Harrison, in Harrison, ed., *At*

church body grew at a fairly rapid pace, from 5,000 at its inception in 1847 to 25,000 in 1860.

In addition to their reluctance to connect with other immigrants, the Missouri Synod was also becoming alienated from Lutherans in Germany, including their chief supporter Wilhelm Löhe. At issue was the extent to which Lutheran churches should accommodate themselves to American liberty, specifically in the area of ecclesiastical governance. In 1851, Walther and Wyneken traveled to Germany to heal the division with Löhe. In Walther's telling, Löhe believed that, by embracing congregationalism, "our Synod had succumbed to the rampant deception of liberty." The Missouri Synod ministers, for their part, believed that Löhe had "embraced hierarchical principles and begun to Romanize his teachings."[16] The two parties reached a temporary accord, but soon the breach between them reopened. In 1852, Walther published his first book, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt* ("The Position of our Church on the Question of Church and Ministry"), which formalized his church body's views on congregational polity.[17] Two years later, Löhe officially renounced the Missouri Synod and sent missionaries to found a new church body, the Iowa Synod. Led by the brothers Sigmund Fritschel (1833-1900) and Gottried Fritschel (1836-1889), the new synod, because of the unique circumstances of its founding, remained more closely connected to

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Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 361.

[16] "Reisebericht des Redakteurs," *Lutheraner*, February 17, 1852, 97. For a complete translation of this travelogue, see Rachel Mumme, trans., "The Trip Report of the Visit of Walther and Wyneken to Germany in 1851," in Harrison, ed., *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, 19-106.

[17] C. F. W. Walther, *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt: Eine Sammlung von Zeugnissen über diese Frage aus den Bekenntnißschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche und aus den Privatschriften rechtläubiger Lehrer derselben* (Erlangen: C.A. Ph. Th. Bläsing, 1852). For the best translation, see Walther, *The Church and the Office of the Ministry*, ed. Matthew C. Harrison, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2012).

Europe than any other Lutheran church body in the United States.[18] By the mid-1850s, the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod stood almost completely isolated from other Lutherans, both in America and in Europe.[19]

Compared to the large waves of German and Irish immigrants, Scandinavians were a drop in the ocean. Between 1845 and 1860, less than 40,000 Swedes, Norwegians, and Danes migrated to the United States, about three percent of the total number of Germans.[20] Large-scale immigration from these nations, particularly from Norway and Sweden, would not come until after the Civil War. Nevertheless, the ecclesiastical institutions formed and the theological decisions made by the first generation of Scandinavian American Lutherans would have a critical impact on future developments. Like their German counterparts, Scandinavian immigrants were mostly devoid of

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[18] For the most comprehensive history of the first fifty years of the Iowa Synod, including information on the Fritschels, see Gerhard Sigmund Ottersberg, "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States, 1854-1904" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1949). See also Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America, 1840-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 33-35; and Albert Llewellyn Hock, *The Pilgrim Colony: The Saint Sebald Colony, the Two Wartburgs, and the Synods of Iowa and Missouri* (Minneapolis: Lutheran University Press, 2004). Well into the twentieth century, one writer in the Missouri Synod recognized the Iowa Synod as the "most German of all the German Lutheran Synods in America." "Church News and Comment," *Lutheran Witness*, August 31, 1911, 141.

[19] E. Theodore Bachmann, "The Rise of 'Missouri Lutheranism'" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago Divinity School, 1946), 319-20.

[20] United States Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States*, 106. For a helpful comparative account of immigration from various Scandinavian countries, see Hans Norman and Harald Runblom. *Transatlantic Connections: Nordic Emigration to the New World after 1800* (Oxford, Eng.: Oxford University Press, 1988). On early Swedish immigration, see Robert C. Ostergren, *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experience of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); and H. Arnold Barton, *A Folk Divided: Homeland Swedes and Swedish Americans, 1840-1940* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1994). On early Norwegian immigration, see Theodore C. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America: 1825-1860* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1931); Ingrid Semmingsen, *Norway to America: A History of the Migration*, trans. Einar Haugen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1978); Odd S. Lovoll, *The Promise of America: A History of the Norwegian-American People* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); and Jon Gjerde, *From Peasants to Farmers: The Migration from Balestrand, Norway, to the Upper Middle West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

institutional support from their state churches, which had been Lutheran since the sixteenth century. Consequently, like other Lutherans in the United States, their churches were shaped by the assumptions and circumstances of their new homeland. Largely due to key intellectual leaders, Swedish and Norwegian Lutherans quickly sorted themselves into the American categories of New, Moderate, and Old Lutheran.

Swedish Lutherans, led by such figures as Lars Paul Esbjörn (1808-1870), Tufve Nilsson Hasselquist (1816-1891), and Erland Carlsson (1822-1893) initially made connections with the New Lutherans of the General Synod. These first Swedish ministers immigrated largely against the wishes of state church authorities who considered emigration to be sinful. Influenced by the pietist awakenings sweeping Scandinavia in the early nineteenth century, these early Swedish immigrants' beliefs about revivalist preaching, temperance, and freedom of conscience resembled those of both New Lutheranism specifically and American evangelicalism more generally. This shared outlook produced partnerships. Esbjörn and Hasselquist received funding from the evangelical American Home Missionary Association, and the Swedish Lutherans partnered with English-speaking New Lutherans to form the Synod of Northern Illinois in 1851 and Illinois State University in 1852, both affiliated with the General Synod.[21]

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[21] The literature on early Swedish Lutheranism is vast. Specific details in this paragraph come from Gunnar Westin, "Emigration and Scandinavian Church Life," *Swedish-American Pioneer Quarterly* 8 (April 1957): 41; and Maria Erling and Mark Granquist, *The Augustana Story: Shaping Lutheran Identity in North America* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2008), 9, 13, 22. For other important works, see George M. Stephenson, *The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850-1860* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1927); George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration: A Study of Immigrant Churches* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932); O. Fritiof Ander and Oscar L. Nordstrom, eds., *The American Origin of the Augustana Synod: From Contemporary Lutheran Periodicals, 1851-1860: A Collection of Source Material* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1942); Oscar N. Olson, *The Augustana Lutheran Church in America: Pioneer Period 1846-1860* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1950); and Emmet E. Eklund, "The Mosaic of Augstana's Swedish Lutheran Origins" in Raymond Jarvi, ed., *Aspects of Augustana and Swedish America: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff on His 100th Year* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1995), 8-24. See also the individual biographies of key leaders: Sam Rönnegård, *Prairie Shepherd: Lars Paul Esbjorn and*

Unlike their mixed reviews of German immigrants, the *Lutheran Observer* praised the Swedish immigrants without equivocation. Not only will they "increase the Protestantism of the land," trumpeted one article, but they "will soon become good Americans."[22]

Despite their initial affiliation with New Lutheranism, Swedish Lutherans came to adopt a more confessional theological position over the course the 1850s, demonstrating how the American experience often made immigrants more self-consciously Lutheran. In a letter to his protégé Erik Norelius (1833-1916), Esbjörn wrote that he had found "it necessary to once more read through the symbolical books, due to the many meetings and conflicts here [in America]." Once eager to partner with the General Synod, now Esbjörn lamented "the loose, unsymbolic spirit" of the "New-Lutherans."[23] Rather than the Gettysburg seminary, he encouraged Norelius to enroll in the Ohio Synod's seminary in Columbus. Rather than the *Lutheran Observer*, he recommended the *Lutheran Standard* and *Evangelical Review* to him.[24] Other Swedish Lutherans followed a similar trajectory. By the end of the 1850s, the Swedes of the Northern Illinois Synod represented a small portion of the growing number of Moderate Lutherans within the General Synod, who sought to reform the federation from within.[25]

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the Beginnings of the Augustana Lutheran Church, trans. G. Everett Arden (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1952); O. Fritiof Ander, *T. N. Hasselquist: The Career and Influence of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist and Educator* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1931); and Emory Lindquist, *Shepherd of an Immigrant People: The Story of Erland Carlsson* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1978).

[22] "Swedish Church in Illinois: A Call for Help," *Lutheran Observer*, July 26, 1850, 323.

[23] Esbjörn to Norelius, May 12, 1853, Box 1, Folder 1, Erik Norelius Papers, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives, Elk Grove Village, Illinois [hereafter Norelius papers]. On Norelius, see Eemory Johnson, *Eric Norelius: Pioneer Midwest Pastor and Churchman* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Historical Society, 1954).

[24] Esbjörn to Norelius, August 14, 1852, Box 1, Folder 1, Norelius Papers.

[25] Esbjörn to Norelius, March 5, 1855, Box 1, Folder 2, Norelius Papers.

Most Norwegian Lutheran immigrants, guided by leaders such as Herman Amberg Preus (1825-1894), Ulrik Vilhelm Koren (1826-1910), and Peter Laurentius Larsen (1833-1915), adopted an even more conservative posture than that of their Swedish co-religionists and became affiliated with the Old Lutherans.[26] Though a minority tried to transplant in America the Haugean revivalism that swept through Norway in the early nineteenth century and a few others joined with their fellow Scandinavians in the Northern Illinois Synod, the majority came together to form the Norwegian Synod in 1853. Nearly all of its founding ministers had been trained at the University of Oslo and many were influenced by one of its professors Gisle Johnson (1822-1894), whose biblicism, confessionalism, and pietism resembled many of the *Erweckung* theologians in Germany.[27] While more connected theologically to their homeland than their Swedish counterparts, Norwegian Lutheran immigrants were still largely on their own institutionally. Because of this, they sought to partner with other conservative American Lutherans, especially in the realm of education. In 1857, the synod commissioned a pair of ministers to scout the seminaries of the Missouri Synod, the Ohio Synod, and the Buffalo Synod. The pair recommended the Missouri Synod's

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[26] The most important studies of early Norwegian American Lutheranism include John Magnus Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872* (New York: Macmillan, 1926); Karen Larsen, *Laur. Larsen: Pioneer College President* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936); Gerhard L. Belgum, "The Old Norwegian Synod in America, 1853-1890" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1957); E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: Volume I, 1825-1890* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961); Nicholas Tavuchis, *Pastors and Immigrants: The Role of a Religious Elite in the Absorption of Norwegian Immigrants* (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1963); and Todd W. Nichol, *Crossings: Norwegian-American Lutheranism as a Transatlantic Tradition* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2003).

[27] On Johnson, see Trygve R. Skarsten, "Gisle Johnson: A Study of the Interaction of Confessionalism and Pietism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1968); and Nelson and Fevold, *Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans*, 32-45.

seminary in St. Louis both for its doctrinal rigor and for its heartfelt piety.[28] The following year, the two church bodies formalized the relationship by establishing a Norwegian professorship at the seminary. The Norwegian Synod then was the exception to the Missouri Synod's ecclesiastical isolation.

Despite the immense numbers of Northern European immigrants and the expressed desire of Lutherans in the United States to bring them into their churches, the large-scale immigration of the late 1840s and the 1850s did not transform American Lutheranism as much as many had anticipated. The membership in Lutheran churches doubled from about 125,000 in 1850 to about 250,000 in 1860.[29] Yet compared to the approximately 1,000,000 German and Scandinavian immigrants during this period, this growth was quite small. (The much larger increase would come in the final three decades of the nineteenth century.) The majority of Lutherans remained native-born and the principal language in Lutheran publications remained English. Rather than demographic or linguistic changes, the more significant effects on American Lutheranism during the 1850s were theological and political.

Confessional Subscription and Church Unity

Two interrelated questions animated intra-Lutheran theological debates during the 1850s. First, to what extent were American ministers and churches bound to the historic confessions, or symbols, of the Lutheran church contained in the Book of Concord, particularly the Augsburg Confession of 1530? Second, on what principles should

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[28] "Indberetning fra Pastorerne Ottesen og Brandt om deres Reise til St. Louis, Missouri; Columbus, Ohio; og Buffalo, New York," *Kirkelig Maanedstidende* 1 (October 1857): 476-89.

[29] *The Lutheran Almanac for the Year of Our Lord Saviour Jesus Christ 1851* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1851), 45; and *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1861* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1861), 32-33.

Lutheran churches unite with each other and cooperate with other denominations? Both questions were intrinsically important to American Lutherans, but they also had broader ramifications. How one regarded the authority of the Lutheran confessions and the basis of intra-Lutheran unity and inter-Protestant cooperation crystallized how one viewed the church's mission in the United States.[30]

By the early 1850s the positions of the New, Old, and Moderate Lutherans were mostly defined. The New Lutheran view had remained consistent since the 1820s, when Schmucker helped to devise the General Synod's founding documents. Though the constitution of the General Synod required no confessional subscription, the recommended *Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* asked all Lutheran ministers to affirm that "the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession." Schmucker expounded on the meaning of this formula in his 1851 book *The American Lutheran Church*: Ministers must confess their "fundamental agreement with the Augsburg Confession," but were allowed "liberty of difference on minor points." According to Schmucker, this "doctrinal basis" balanced "unalienable rights" with "unalienable duties." The New Lutheran leader was prepared to extend the hand of fellowship to strict confessionalists, as long as they were "willing to regard their peculiarities as non-essential." But if they insist on complete subscription to "books… which contain numerous errors and Romish superstitions," he warned, "we desire no ecclesiastical communion with them." Schmucker believed that his principles represented

[30] The most complete treatments of these questions are John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity? A History of Efforts to Unite the Lutherans of America* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1966); and Charles P. Arand, *Testing the Boundaries: Windows to Lutheran Identity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995).

a truly "American Lutheranism," which "grew out of the Lutheran predilections of our forefathers, the unrestricted liberty of following the scriptures…, and the influence of our free civil institutions."[31]

Old Lutherans greatly differed in their understanding of these issues. The Missouri Synod's constitution, ratified in 1847 and reaffirmed in 1854, stipulated the "conditions under which a congregation may join Synod and remain a member." This included the "acceptance of all symbolical books [i.e. the entire Book of Concord, not just the Augsburg Confession]… as the pure, unadulterated explanation and presentation of the Word of God." It also meant not "taking part in the service and Sacraments of heretical or mixed congregations [or]… any heretical tract distribution and mission projects."[32] However, as Walther argued in his first presidential address, these stipulations were not antithetical to American liberty. It would be a mistake, he argued, to place "any restriction on the liberty of the congregations, especially in a republic such as ours." Individual congregations were free to assent to the membership requirements of the Missouri Synod or to leave their church body. Walther trusted that by asking "nothing unconditionally of our congregations except submission to the Word," they would "*use* this power properly" and come to embrace "the pure doctrine of our dear Evangelical

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[31] S. S. Schmucker, *The American Lutheran Church, Historically, Doctrinally, and Practically Delineated, in Several Occasional Discourses* (Springfield, OH: Harbaugh and Butler, 1851), 157-58, 244-45. The book, which went through six editions, contained six discourses, all of which were previously published in some form. Quotations in this paragraph are from the fifth and longest discourse, "The Doctrinal Basis and Ecclesiastical Position of the Lutheran Church." This essay was a condensed version of an eight-part series of articles in the *Lutheran Observer*, published between January 11 and March 15 in 1850, originally entitled "Vindication of American Lutheranism."

[32] Quotations are from the 1847 constitution: W. G. Polack, trans., "Our First Synodical Constitution." *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 16 (April 1943): 3. Cf. the 1854 constitution in Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 149-50.

Lutheran Church."[33] For Old Lutherans, American liberty allowed for the establishment of a pure church, unified around a strict interpretation of the Lutheran confessions.

Moderate Lutherans mostly agreed among themselves on the nature of confessional subscription but differed on that subscription's implications for church unity. Many members of the Pennsylvania and Ohio synods shared a belief in the complete truthfulness of the Augsburg Confession, though their constitutions did not impose a stringent test like that of the Missouri Synod.[34] However, as narrated in Chapter Two, the former church body joined the General Synod in 1853, whereas the latter refused. The leaders of the Pennsylvania Synod regarded the General Synod "merely as an association of Lutheran Synods entertaining the same views in regard to the principal doctrines of our church." By becoming a member, it would still retain its "rights to manage its own internal affairs," including "in regard to church doctrine."[35] Those in the Ohio Synod believed that the General Synod's "confessional basis" was too ambiguous. Though not ruling out a future union, the editors of the *Lutheran Standard* first wanted the General Synod to consider itself "an association of Lutheran Synods entertaining similar views in regard to the doctrines set forth in [the Augsburg] Confession."[36] Both groups of Moderate Lutherans cherished their liberty to set their own doctrinal standards,

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[33] Quotations are from the following translation of the original 1848 address: Walther, "The Synod Has No Power But the Word of God: 1848 Synodical Address," trans. Paul F. Koehneke, in Harrison, ed., *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, 8-9. For the original address, see C. F. W. Walther, "Synodalrede vom Jahre 1848," in Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden, seit 1847 theils Pamphletform, theils in Zeitschriften bereits erschienen, in Sammelband aufs Neue dargeboten* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, 1876), 517-27.

[34] See Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism* (New York: Century, 1927), 144-48.

[35] "Union of the Synod of Pennsylvania with the General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, April 20, 1853, 3.

[36] "The Synod of Pennsylvania and the Symbolical Books," *Lutheran Standard*, June 1, 1853, 2. See also "Union with the General Synod—Basis of that Body," *Lutheran Standard*, December 15, 1852, 3.

but they disagreed as to whether those rights could be maintained within the General Synod.

The issues of confessional subscription and church unity had been simmering for many years and briefly reached a boiling point in September 1855, when the pastors of the General Synod were mailed an anonymous tract titled *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods*. The publication's anonymity and means of delivery almost guaranteed that it would provoke contentiousness. (Recipients were even asked to send a contribution of 25 cents if they wished to keep the unsolicited mailing.) But it was the content of the 42-page booklet that occasioned the most consternation. The *Definite Platform* purported to give "a more specific expression of the General Synod's doctrinal basis." Its most audacious proposal was for each of the federation's member synods to adopt an "American Recension to the Augsburg Confession," which removed certain passages from the confession that "have long since been regarded by the great mass of our churches as unscriptural, and as remnants of Romish error."[37] The controversial tract occasioned one of the most misunderstood episodes in American Lutheran history.

Contrary to the impression given by many scholars, the *Definite Platform* did not advance any novel theological arguments.[38] The "Romish errors" that the "American

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[37] *Definite Platform, Doctrinal and Disciplinarian, for Evangelical Lutheran District Synods; Construed in Accordance with the Principles of the General Synod* (Philadelphia: Miller and Burlock, 1855), 2, 5. When writing about the pamphlet, American Lutherans often referred to it as the "Definite Synodical Platform."

[38] Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 192; Carl Mauelshagen, *American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism* (Athens: University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936), 184-85; and August R. Suelflow and E. Clifford Nelson, "Following the Frontier, 1840-1875," in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 233-34. This claim is made explicitly in E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press. 2003), 411.

Recension" sought to purge from the Augsburg Confession, including "baptismal regeneration" and "the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist," had been rejected by New Lutherans for decades.[39] Because of this, most readers correctly assumed that Schmucker was one of the anonymous document's writers. Two other prominent New Lutherans, Samuel Sprecher (1810-1906), a professor in Ohio and Benjamin Kurtz, the editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, also aided in its composition. Rather than its theology, what made the *Definite Platform* so contentious was its threat to disrupt American Lutheranism's growing unity.[40]

The reaction against the *Definite Platform* was swift and decisively negative. The tract's most controversial passage was the proposed resolution to "not receive into our [General] Synod any minister who will not adopt this Platform."[41] For both Moderate and New Lutherans such a proposal contradicted the General Synod's long-standing position of liberty of conscience. In the most sustained critique of the *Definite Platform*, William Mann of the Pennsylvania Synod defended the complete truthfulness of the Augsburg Confession. But he criticized first and foremost its authors' "illiberal and improper" attempt to "unlutheranize every one who could not or would not coincide with their views." Rather than preserving "rest and peace" in the church, the resolution would

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[39] *Definite Platform*, 5.

[40] On the history and occasion of the document's composition, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 195-215; and Cheryl M. Peterson, "Why Did He Do It? S. S. Schmucker and the Definite Platform," in Marvin A. Huggins, ed., *Re-examining Conflict and Cooperation: Implications for Current Understandings of American Lutheranism: Essays and Reports, 2002, Lutheran Historical Conference* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 2006), 27-44. On Sprecher, see P. G. Bell, *A Portraiture of the Life of Samuel Sprecher D. D., LL. D.* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1907); and Ray Frankin Kibler III, "Samuel Sprecher: An American Lutheran Theologian" (Th.M. thesis, Luther Northwestern Theological Seminary, 1982). For perhaps the best summary of the debates surrounding the Definite Platform and the problems that most General Synod Lutherans had with it, see Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?*, 28-30.

[41] *Definite Platform*, 6.

"produce contention and strife."[42] Lutherans more sympathetic to the theological views of the tract's authors also took issue with their proposals. The West Pennsylvania Synod, Schmucker's ecclesiastical home, declined to accept the "American Recension," and issued a "protest against bringing in any new issues and tests of church fellowship, as inimical to the peace and harmony of the church, and as unnecessarily burdening the consciences of the brethren."[43] Kurtz's Maryland Synod took a similar stance. In the end, only three synods adopted the "American Recension," though others made modifications to their constitutions based on its suggestions.[44] Yet the widespread rejection of it by General Synod Lutherans did not represent an avowal of the complete truthfulness of the Augsburg Confession, but an affirmation of the right of private judgment and the importance of the preserving peace and unity.

Less than six months after the tract's publication, Kurtz and Schmucker acknowledged that they had overreached. Along with thirty-nine "friends and… opponents of said Platform," they signed a "Pacific Overture," which was published in the *Lutheran Observer*. The statement asserted that the quarrel over the *Definite Platform* was distracting the American Lutheran church "from the great and urgent enterprises of christian benevolence, the cause of Missions, of Education, of Church extension, and from other efforts for the promotion of genuine piety." Since "the points of difference… are non-essential," the signatories agreed to return to the General Synod's long-standing

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[42] W. J. Mann, *A Plea for the Augsburg Confession, in Answer to the Objections of the Definite Platform: An Address to All Ministers and Laymen of the Evangelical Church of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1856), 6, 47. For another tract against the *Definite Platform*, see John N. Hoffman, *The Broken Platform: or, A Brief Defence of Our Symbolical Books against Recent Charges of Alleged Errors* (Philadelphia: Lindsay and Blakiston, 1856).

[43] Quoted in Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 243.

[44] Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 331-32.

position that "fundamental agreement with the Augsburg Confession" was "a sufficient ground for harmonious co-operation."[45]

This settlement, however, proved temporary. Two weeks after signing the "Pacific Overture," Kurtz and Schmucker withdrew their endorsements.[46] Kurtz resumed promoting the *Definite Platform* in the pages of the *Lutheran Observer*, appealing to the laity to make up their own minds.[47] Frustrated by the Maryland Synod's decision not to accept it, in 1857 Kurtz convinced two-fifths of its members to form a separate synod, the Melanchthon Synod of Maryland, in order to advocate for "American Lutheranism." Two years later, this new church body joined the General Synod.[48] Schmucker, meanwhile, responded to Mann's pamphlet with a lengthy book, which argued that *Definite Platform* was a defensive measure caused by "symbolic agitation, continual, progressive, and aggressive."[49] Eventually, Schmucker, Kurtz, and other "American Lutherans" came to reaffirm the General Synod's original formula for confessional subscription, but they remained unrepentant about their actions.

Though provoking intense debate and proving a convenient rallying cry for conservatives in future decades, the controversy over the *Definite Platform* actually changed very little in the General Synod during the late 1850s. Its doctrinal basis and constitution remained the same as before and no synods withdrew due to the controversy. Because of this, the publication of the *Definite Platform* and the subsequent fallout was

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[45] "Pacific Overture," *Lutheran Observer*, February 15, 1856, 3.

[46] "Pacific Overture." *Lutheran Observer*, February 29, 1856, 3.

[47] "The Platform Controversy," *Lutheran Observer*, March 7, 1856.

[48] Statistics from *Lutheran Almanac for 1861*, 32.

[49] S. S. Schmucker, *American Lutheranism Vindicated; or, Examination of the Lutheran Symbols, on Certain Disputed Topics* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1856).

hardly the "last stand" of New Lutheranism, as several historians have claimed.[50] New Lutherans still retained control of the church's educational institutions, including the flagship seminary at Gettysburg, and its most widely circulated periodical, the *Lutheran Observer*. Moreover, historians who prematurely judge the New Lutherans' demise overlook that ignore that this movement's theological project entailed much more than a rejection of certain historical Lutheran doctrines. Aided by the Great Revival of 1857-1858, Schmucker, Kurtz, and other "American Lutherans" continued with renewed vigor to promote revivalism, social reform, anti-Catholicism, and cooperation with Anglo-evangelicals.[51] Promoters of the *Definite Platform* may have overplayed their hand, but they continued to believe, with quite a bit of justification, that their version of Lutheranism was the American church's future.[52]

This is not to say that the publication of the *Definite Platform* did not have long-term ramifications. Not only did it sow seeds of distrust between New and Moderate Lutherans, but it also catalyzed a nascent confessional movement within the General Synod. The four leaders of this movement were William Passavant (1821-1894), Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883), Joseph Seiss (1823-1904), and Beale Schmucker (1827-1888). Each was born in the German American culture of Greater Pennsylvania, reared in

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[50] Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1964), 136. Other historians who make essentially the same claim include Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 190; and Suelflow and Nelson, "Following the Frontier," 226-27.

[51] For example, see "Revivals," *Lutheran Observer*, March 6, 1857, 2-3; "Questions and Answers Respecting Revivals," *Lutheran Observer*, October 2, 1857, 2-3; and "The Temperance Question," *Lutheran Observer*, January 22, 1858, 1. On the broader American context, see Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); and Kathryn Long, *The Revival of 1857-58: Interpreting an American Religious Awakening* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[52] Nearly six years after the publication of the *Definite Platform*, the *Lutheran Observer* claimed that "by far the largest number of Lutherans in America" held to the New Lutheran understanding of the Augsburg Confession. "Intolerance," *Lutheran Observer*, June 5, 1861, 2.

the milieu of New Lutheranism, and educated at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. By the end of the 1850s, this quadrumvirate of young Lutheran intellectuals had come to question several tenets of their spiritual fathers'—and, in the case of Schmucker, his actual father's—theology.

William Alfred Passavant was the son of well-to-do immigrants from Frankfurt-am-Main. His hometown of Zelienople, Pennsylvania was founded by his maternal grandfather in 1802 and named after his mother. His father, a successful merchant, was the city's "most influential citizen."[53] As their family letters indicate, the Passavants raised their children as English-speaking Americans. At the age of fifteen, William enrolled at the Presbyterian-run Jefferson College in Canonsburg, Pennsylvania. There he participated in revivals and developed an interest in missions. He also became acquainted with and developed a deep admiration for the *Lutheran Observer*, calling the paper "invaluable."[54] In 1840, he began his studies at Gettysburg under Schmucker. In a letter to his sister, he described the professor as "a profound thinker," though he was also put off by his demeanor "in the lecture room" where he has "a vinegar and repulsive aspect."[55] Two years into his studies, Kurtz persuaded him to cut his seminary education short in order to accept a position as assistant editor for the *Lutheran Observer*. After being licensed and ordained by the Maryland Synod and serving a congregation on the outskirts of Baltimore, Passavant accepted a call in 1844 to First English Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh. The city would serve as his home base for the rest of his life.

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[53] G. H. Gerberding, *The Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D.* (Greenville, PA: Young Lutheran, 1906), 22. Biographical details on Passavant are drawn from Gerberding's study.

[54] W. A. P. to Emma [his sister], June 16, 1840, William Alfred Passavant Letters, Zelienople Historical Society [here after Passavant Letters].

[55] W. A. P. to Emma [his sister], January 25, 1841, Passavant Letters.

When precisely Passavant began to move away from New Lutheranism is difficult to determine. His biographer, George Gerberding saw three events in the late 1840s as turning points: his leadership in forming the new Pittsburg Synod in 1845 which stood separate from the General Synod until 1853, his trip to England and Germany in 1846, and especially the founding of a new church paper, the *Missionary*, in 1848. Yet there is little documentary evidence that any of these episodes represented a major shift in his outlook. For example, in the inaugural issue of the *Missionary*, which his mentor Kurtz commended, Passavant printed the minutes of a special meeting of the Pittsburg Synod, which stated that the Augsburg Confession "possesses in itself no confessional authority."[56] Because the chief mission of the paper was to promote inner, home, and foreign missions, it lacked a polemical tone and drew support not only from New Lutherans but from Moderate Lutherans as well.[57] But in its theological content, Passavant's paper initially did not differ from that of Kurtz's *Lutheran Observer*.

Over the course of the 1850s, however, the position of the *Missionary* slowly changed. In December 1851 and January 1852, the two former partners engaged in their first public squabble. Kurtz leveled the accusation that the new paper was expressing insufficiently New Lutheran sentiments. In response, Passavant asserted that his paper "is the organ of no party, school, or section of the Church."[58] But it was not until the controversy over the *Definite Platform* that the tone and contents of Passavant's paper

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[56] "Proceedings of an Extra Session of the Pittsburg Synod of the Evang. Lutheran Church Held on the 14th of October, 1847, and Following Days," *Missionary* 1 (January 1848): 2. For Kurtz's commendation, see "'The Missionary'," *Lutheran Observer*, February 4, 1848.

[57] "Approval of the New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio Synods," *Missionary* 3 (January 1850): 4.

[58] "The New Volume," *Missionary* 5 (January 1852): 4. The dispute took place in the following articles: "How We Are Misrepresented," *Missionary* 4 (December 1851): 92; "How We Are Misrepresented," *Lutheran Observer*, December 19, 1851, 615; "How We Are Misrepresented," *Missionary* 5 (January 1852): 8; "The Missionary," *Lutheran Observer*, January 30, 1852, 638.

began to shift decidedly. In October, 1855 he printed the resolutions of the East Pennsylvania Synod, which stated their "most unqualified disapprobation of this most dangerous attempt to change the doctrinal basis, and revolutionize the existing character of the Lutheran churches now united in the General Synod." Passavant called the resolutions "a manly and timely rebuke."[59] The following year, he turned the *Missionary* from a monthly into a weekly publication and pledged to "not shrink from confessing, explaining, and defending the faith of our Church."[60] Kurtz lamented the change: "We would, indeed, have preferred that he should have ranged himself among the American Lutherans, and become a coadjutor of the Lutheran Observer."[61] Another contributor to the *Lutheran Observer* was even more surprised: "I knew [Passavant] once as an ultra new measure man, but… he is now at the opposite pole…. The reader will find in [his paper]… the most decided and ultra symbolists."[62]

One of the contributors to the new series of the *Missionary* was Charles Porterfield Krauth, the son of Charles Philip Krauth (1797-1867). His father, after being ordained by the Pennsylvania Synod and serving congregations in Pennsylvania and northern Virginia, spent the majority of his career teaching in Gettysburg, at both Pennsylvania College and the seminary. Several historians have characterized the elder Krauth as a leader of the mid-nineteenth century turn in American Lutheranism toward

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[59] "Action of the East Pennsylvania Synod," *Missionary* 8 (October 1855): 76.

[60] "To Our Readers," *Missionary*, January 3, 1856, 2.

[61] "The Missionary," *Lutheran Observer*, January 18, 1856, 12.

[62] Samuel, "What Does It Mean?" *Lutheran Observer*, March 7, 1856, 40.

confessionalism.[63] Yet from his published writings, including those in the *Evangelical Review*, which he co-edited from 1850 to 1861, he displayed all of the hallmarks of a conventional Moderate Lutheran.[64] According to Adolph Spaeth, Charles Porterfield's son-in-law and biographer, Charles Philip was "a man of peace" and "adverse to controversy" and thus claimed by "both parties" in the struggle between "American Lutheranism and Symbolism."[65]

The younger Krauth entered Pennsylvania College as a student the same year that his father assumed the institution's presidency. After graduation, he enrolled at Gettysburg Theological Seminary, where the elder Krauth also taught classes. Yet despite their close paternal relationship, Charles Porterfield's early views were closer to his father's colleague, Schmucker. While serving a church in Baltimore from 1842 to 1847, he wrote to his father about holding "protracted meetings" and preaching at the Presbyterian and Methodist churches.[66] Krauth also became a close associate of Kurtz. In 1846, he served as the guest editor of the *Lutheran Observer* while the General Synod's delegation to the Evangelical Alliance traveled to London for the organization's first

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[63] Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815-1866* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 264-73; and Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 190-92.

[64] See especially his inaugural editorial for the journal: C[harles] P[hilip] Krauth, "The Lutheran Church in the United States," *Evangelical Review* 2 (July 1850): 1-16.

[65] Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth: Volume I, 1823-1859* (New York: Christian Literature, 1898), 18-19. Biographical details for both Krauths are drawn from Spaeth's work. For other overviews of Krauth's life and work, see Mark A. Trechock, "Orthodoxy for a Critical Period: Five Case studies in American Protestant Theology *circa* 1870" (Th.D. diss., Iliff School of Theology, 1987), 63-96; Jerald C. Brauer, "Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883)," in Mark G. Toulouse and James O. Duke., eds., *Makers of Christian Theology in America* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997), 218-21; and Mark Oldenburg, "Charles Porterfield Krauth (1823-1883)," in Matthew L. Becker, ed., *Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Theologians* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2016), 295-308.

[66] See especially the letters of February 14, 1843, March 26, 1843, and February 18, 1845, in Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 1: 89-90, 91-92, and 101-2.

meeting. In his early years, Krauth exhibited all the characteristics of a typical New Lutheran.

In the late 1840s, while pastoring congregations in northern Virginia, Krauth slowly began to move away from this position. The key issue on which his theological development turned was the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper. As a young pastor, Krauth read deeply and widely in the Lutheran tradition and slowly became convinced of the Augsburg Confession's teaching that "the Body and Blood of Christ are truly present, and are distributed to those who eat the Supper of the Lord." In June 1849, he published an article in the *Lutheran Observer* under the pseudonym Simon Schneeweiss and contended that this doctrine was just as "fundamental" to the Augsburg Confession as any other.[67] A few months later, in an article for the *Evangelical Review*, he criticized New Lutherans' anti-creedalism and disputed their characterization of strict confessional subscription as "Romanism." He wrote: "While [the Reformation] established broadly and deeply the right of private judgment, it did not make that abuse of it which has since been so common…. [The Reformers] allowed no *authority* save to the word of God, but they listened respectfully to the witness of believers of all time."[68]

By the early 1850s, Krauth was acquiring the reputation as the intellectual leader of a growing confessional movement within the General Synod.[69] He published numerous

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[67] Simon Schneeweiss, "The View of the Lutheran Church in Regard to the Sacramental Presence of Christ," *Lutheran Observer*, June 29, 1849, 102. On Krauth's authorship of this article, see Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 1: 161.

[68] Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, "The Relation of Our Confessions to the Reformation, and the Importance of Their Study, with an Outline of the Early History of the Augsburg Confession," *Evangelical Review* 1 (October 1849): 236. For a discussion of how Krauth read the Lutheran confessions, see Timothy J. Wengert, "The Tale of a 1580 Book of Concord, Annotated from the Principality of Ansbach to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran Quarterly* 17 (Winter 2003): 400-6.

[69] Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant*, 165-72.

articles in the *Evangelical Review*, as well as sermons and essays as stand-alone publications. In 1855, he accepted a call to a congregation in Pittsburgh, where he became a frequent contributor to Passavant's *Missionary*. Five years later, he became the pastor of a church in Philadelphia, where he would remain the rest of his life. Shortly after his arrival, Krauth helped to establish a semi-monthly paper entitled the *Lutheran and Home Journal*.[70]

Krauth's co-editor of the new periodical and perhaps his closest friend was Joseph A. Seiss.[71] Seiss grew up in northern Maryland and was confirmed in the Moravian church.[72] He made his way to Lutheranism through the influence of Ezra Keller (1812-1848), a prominent New Lutheran who pastored congregations near Seiss's hometown and would later found Wittenberg College in Springfield, Ohio.[73] At Keller's urging, Seiss enrolled at Pennsylvania College in 1839. After a year of study, in which he also attended Schmucker's lectures at the Gettysburg seminary, he abruptly dropped out of school and returned to Maryland. After two years of teaching at a local school, he was licensed to preach by the Virginia Synod and ordained by the same body two years later. After serving churches in Virginia and Maryland for fifteen years, Seiss moved to Philadelphia in 1858, where he would remain the rest of his life.

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[70] On the founding of this paper, see Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth: Volume II, 1859-1883* (New York: Christian Literature, 1909), 28-29.

[71] Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 1: 161.

[72] For biographical details on Seiss, see Joseph A. Seiss, *Notes of My Life*, ed. Henry E. Horn and William M. Horn (Huntingdon, PA: Church Management Service, 1982); Samuel R. Zeiser, "Joseph Augustus Seiss: Popular Nineteenth-Century Lutheran Pastor and Premillenialist" (Ph.D. diss., Drew University, 2001); and especially Lawrence R. Rast, "Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2003).

[73] M. Diehl, *Biography of Rev. Ezra Keller, D.D., Founder and First President of Wittenberg College*. (Springfield, OH: Ruralist Publishing Company, 1859), 83.

Seiss's theological development followed a similar trajectory as that of Passavant and Krauth. After being a proponent of "new measures" in his first years as a pastor, Seiss published a critique of the practice on January 3, 1845. As with Krauth's first printed criticism on the subject, Seiss wrote pseudonymously. In his three-part article, "A Virginian" critiqued Simeon Harkey's popular book *The Church's Best State: Constant Revivals of Religion*. Mirroring many of the arguments of John Williamson Nevin's *Anxious Bench*, Seiss argued that an overemphasis on revivals resulted in a neglect of catechesis.[74] Seiss also became a proponent of the importance of creeds and confessions. In 1852, he published an article in the *Evangelical Review* that defended the practice of confessional subscription.[75] Like Krauth, Seiss was prolific, publishing numerous articles as well as standalone sermons and essays, many of which sought to push Lutheranism in a more confessional direction.

Perhaps the most symbolically significant figure of this confessional movement was Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, the son of New Lutheranism's founding father.[76] Schmucker grew up in Gettysburg with Charles Porterfield Krauth and the two remained life-long friends and correspondents. Both shared a deep interest in exploring the "glorious old Lutheran books." In 1849, Schmucker wrote Krauth that he wished the

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[74] A Virginian, "The Church's Best State; or Constant Revivals of Religion, by Rev. S. W. Harkey, Frederick, Md.," *Lutheran Observer*, January 1, 1845; January 8, 1845; and January 15, 1845.

[75] J. A. Seiss, "The Necessity and Obligation of Confessions of Faith: *Ueber die Nothwendigkeit und Verbindlichkeit der kirchlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse, von Dr. Ernst Sartorius, Generalsuperindentent der Provinz Preusen. Stuttgart: Verlag von S. G. Liesching*, *1845*…," *Evangelical Review* 5 (July 1853): 1-17.

[76] Little was written by Schmucker and little has been written about him. For the most complete biographical portrait, see A[dolph] Spaeth, "Beale Melanchthon Schmucker," in J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies, or Historical Notices of Over Three Hundred and Fifty Leading Men of the American Lutheran Church, from its Establishment to the Year 1890* (Milwaukee, WI: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 685-90.

seminary "would appoint me librarian." Rather than the "new books printed by steam," Schmucker preferred the "books of the olden time… whose mighty ponderous piles of thought bind earth and heaven together."[77] His father, however, expressed concern at his son's penchant for reading the "older divines" of Lutheranism. Their "spirit," he counseled, "is rather too polemic and intolerant."[78] Instead of a librarian, Schmucker became a pastor, serving churches in northern Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Unlike his friends, Passavant, Krauth, and Seiss, Schmucker published very little, so determining the precise course of his theological journey is difficult. The best evidence comes from his father's letters to him. Already in 1849, the elder Schmucker was warning his son about "falling into the tide of Puseyism and Romanism."[79] When his father was debating with William Reynolds about confessional subscription, the younger Schmucker evidently took the side of Reynolds, which prompted the elder Schmucker to write a lengthy rebuttal to his son's views.[80] Despite being on different sides of the theological issues facing the Lutheran church, the father and son never became estranged and corresponded throughout their life. Still, the fact that the son of Samuel Schmucker had moved away from New Lutheranism lent additional clout to the nascent confessional movement.

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[77] B. M. S. to Chas. P. Krauth, in *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 1: 189-90.

[78] Samuel Simon Schmucker to Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, March 5, 1849, Series 1, Folder 5, Papers of Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Schmucker Family, Gettysburg College, Special Collections, Musselman Library, Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as Schmucker Family Papers].

[79] Samuel Simon Schmucker to Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, November 7, 1849, Series 1, Folder 5, Schmucker Family Papers.

[80] Samuel Simon Schmucker to Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, March 17, 1850, Series 1, Folder 5, Schmucker Family Papers.

Historians of Lutheranism in the United States have rightly identified the emergence of this confessional movement as a key development. Yet as with their analysis of other aspects of the theological debates of the 1850s, many of them have misinterpreted the movement's origin and aims. In his classic book on the subject, Vergilius Ferm framed the controversy over confessional subscription as a dualistic conflict between "American Lutheranism" and "Old Lutheranism," or "a developing *American* Lutheran theology," on the one hand, and "an inherited European Lutheran theology," on the other.[81] Most scholars have followed Ferm's model, attributing the growth of confessionalism to the influx of European immigrants and ideas.[82] Many also, like Ferm, have lumped together all opponents of the *Definite Platform* and New Lutheranism into the same camp.[83] Both interpretations are mistaken.

First, the confessional movement that developed within the General Synod was not an importation from Europe but the product of particularly American circumstances. None of the movement's intellectual leaders studied in Europe, and only Passavant visited there before 1860. Conversely, prominent New Lutherans like John Bachman, Charles A. Hay (1821-1893), and John H. W. Stuckenberg (1835-1903) studied in Germany and others like Kurtz traveled multiple times to Europe. To be sure, confessionalists sometimes positively referenced German writers or church news. Krauth

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[81] Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 344.

[82] Key works that make this claim include Wentz, *Basic History*, 108-30; Tappert, ed., *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America*; Conser, *Church and Confession*; and Mark A. Noll, "American Lutherans Yesterday and Today," in Richard Cimino, ed., *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003) , 3-25.

[83] See especially Mauelshagen, *American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism*; Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 163-75; and David A. Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic*, 104-20.

and Seiss reviewed and translated German theological writings which they deemed valuable.[84] Passavant, throughout the 1850s, expressed confidence that a genuine revival of "evangelical religion" was taking place in Germany.[85] Yet the same selective appropriation of German theology and cautious hope for the German church can be found in writings of New Lutherans. While defending his proposal for a distinctively American form of Lutheranism, Schmucker referenced numerous theologians from Germany to bolster his claims.[86] The *Lutheran Observer*, despite its frequent condemnations of German infidelity and high-churchism, still defended the genuine piety of many Lutherans there.[87] For English-speaking Lutherans of all persuasions, German theology and church affairs functioned as a convenient quiver of arrows to sling occasionally at opponents, but were hardly formative in their theological thought.

Indeed, confessionalists like Krauth and Seiss went to great lengths to demonstrate that their understanding of Lutheranism was just as "American" as that of Kurtz and Schmucker. When Krauth first went public with his criticism of New Lutheranism, he argued that adherence to the Augsburg Confession was the truly "American Lutheran" position and that confessional subscription and American identity

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[84] C. Porterfield Krauth, "Review of *Dr. Martin Luther der Deutsche Reformator. In bildischen Darstellungen von Gustav König. In geschichtlichen Umrissen von Heinrich Gelzer…*," *Evangelical Review* 4 (April 1852): 451-91; C. Porterfield Krauth, "The Church, as Set Forth in the Confessions of Christendom: Translated from the Allgemeine Christliche Symbolik of H. E. F. Guericke. Second Edit. Leipzig--1846," *Evangelical Review* 5 (July 1853): 17-34; August Tholuck, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, trans. Charles P. Krauth (Philadelphia: Smith, English and Company, 1859); and Seiss, "The Necessity and Obligation of Confessions of Faith," 1-17.

[85] "Religion in Germany," *Missionary* 7 (April 1854): 27; and "Progress of Evangelical Religion in Germany," *Missionary* 8 (December 1855): 92.

[86] Schmucker, *American Lutheranism Vindicated*, 57-63.

[87] "'Anglo-Sax and J. H. A. B.' or German Theology in America," *Lutheran Observer*, February 8, 1856, 25; and "To the Evangelical Church Diet to be held in Stuttgart, Germany, from the 21st to the 25th of September, 1857," *Lutheran Observer*, September 11, 1857, 1-2.

"excite no conflict but blend harmoniously together."[88] More than a decade later, he echoed the same themes: "Lutheranism in this country… must be American, bringing hither its priceless experiences in the old world, to apply them to the living present in the now."[89] In Krauth's view, New Lutherans misunderstood how Christian liberty should operate in the American context. Rather than individuals, congregations, or synods being able to do as they pleased, he believed that liberty needed to be "regulated" by a higher authority. In this, he saw parallels between the Lutheran church and the American Union: "We are free citizens of free States, which are bound together as a free country. The individual has liberty, the State has liberty, and our whole land has liberty; but, this liberty is regulated by one general principle—and that is the whole is greater than a part. The individual liberty is limited by the liberty of the State; that of the State by the liberty of the nation."[90] For Krauth, the unity of Lutheranism in the United States depended upon a distinctively American conception of ordered liberty.

The second error of many historians is their conflation of this confessional movement and Old Lutheranism. This mistaken view is the product of two sources. The first source is the New Lutherans, who indiscriminately hurled the labels "Old Lutheran" and "symbolist" against any who dissented from their views.[91] The other is the retrospective interpretations of this period by the confessionalists and their heirs. After

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[88] Schneeweiss [Krauth], "The View of the Lutheran Church in Regard to the Sacramental Presence of Christ," 102; and Krauth, "Relation of Our Confessions to the Reformation," 240.

[89] "Where Do We Stand?," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2.

[90] Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, *Christian Liberty in its Relation to the Usages of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: The Substance of Two Sermons Delivered in St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, Sunday, March 25th, 1860* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1860), 13-14, 28.

[91] For example, "Symbolical Lutheranism: A Symbolist under Oath, States the Doctrines of his Party," *Lutheran Observer*, April 20, 1860, 2; and "'The Old Lutherans'," *Lutheran Observer*, August 28, 1857, 2-3

the postbellum schism within the General Synod (see Chapter Five), conservative Lutherans sought to cast their antebellum positions as consistently as possible.[92]

Yet during the 1850s, these confessionalists insisted that their ideas starkly contrasted with those of the Old Lutherans. When Seiss approvingly translated the argument of the German churchman Ernst Sartorius about the importance of confessional subscription, he made sure to offer the following qualifier: "[H]is conclusions should have the more weight with the members of our Church in this country, inasmuch as they proceed from one who cannot be denounced as '*a bigoted Old Lutheran*.'"[93] In the *Missionary*, Passavant commended the Missouri Synod for its growth but denounced its "exclusiveness, which prevents them from associating or co-operating with the other Synods of our Church in this country."[94] As late as 1861, Krauth condemned Old Lutheranism in unequivocal terms: "If there be a Lutheranism which is exclusive, harsh, and repellent… if there be a fossil Lutheranism, which… would die rather than submit to any adaptation, that is not our Lutheranism…."[95] Just as the confessional movement within the General Synod was not of European origin, it also was not associated with Old Lutheranism.

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[92] This is particularly the case in Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1893), 351-442; Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*; and Gerberding, *Life and Times of W. A. Passavant*.

[93] Seiss, "The Necessity and Obligation of Confessions of Faith," 1-2.

[94] "The 'Alte Lutheraner' (Old Lutherans) of the United States," *Missionary* 8 (April 1855): 26. See also "Our German Church Papers," *Missionary* 2 (February 1849): 9; and "The German Synod of Missouri and adjacent States," *Missionary* 3 (January 1850): 6-7.

[95] "Where Do We Stand?," 2.

The confessional movement within the General Synod also differed from Moderate Lutheranism.[96] Though they shared an insistence that the entirety of the Augsburg Confession was correct, they had different conceptions of Lutheranism's place in American culture. The confessionalists had no patience for the "fanaticism" of those who clung to the German language or were content to exist in the Pennsylvania German subculture. Instead, like the New Lutheranism from which they originated, they were seeking to improve the quality and quantity of English-language Lutheran literature and create a unified national church: truly Lutheran and truly American.[97] Rather than a subset of Moderate Lutheranism, Passavant, Krauth, Seiss, and other like-mind confessionalists were forming their own distinctive movement.

A final distinction between the confessional movement and both the Old Lutherans and some Moderate Lutherans was the former's full-throated support of the General Synod and its principles of church unity, even after the controversy over the *Definite Platform*. In 1856, Passavant wrote in the *Missionary* that, "while in the Lutheran church in this country… diversity confessedly exists, there exists a unity in diversity that justifies the fraternal declaration, 'We be brethren.'"[98] Krauth in 1857 called the General Synod "the hope of our church in this country" and insisted that any discussion of "schism" should be viewed as beyond the pale: "It would be to our church

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[96] In his commentary on the new leadership within Moderate Lutheranism, Philip Schaff did not mention Passavant, Krauth, Seiss, or any other young confessionalists: Schaff, *Amerika: Die politischen, socialen und kirchlich-religiösen Zustände der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben, 1854), 225-27.

[97] Krauth, "Relation of Our Confessions to the Reformation," 242. See also Rast, "Joseph A. Seiss," 37-39; Gerberding, *Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant*, 59.

[98] "'We be Brethren," *Missionary*, February 7, 1856, 6.

what a separation of the States would be to our Union."[99] In the inaugural issue of the *Lutheran and Home Journal*, he and Seiss pledged to represent "the interests of our church, within the bounds of the General Synod… and to rise above every species of partisanship."[100]

The reason for their advocacy for the General Synod was that, despite their shift in theological outlook, those in the nascent confessional movement remained comfortable with much of New Lutheranism's theological and cultural program. As Krauth wrote in 1861, "we propose no sectarian hedge to our pulpits, no bar to our communion tables or abnegation of the sweet bonds of Christian fellowship…."[101] Throughout the 1850s, Seiss, Krauth, and Passavant not only advocated inter-church cooperation, but also promoted temperance and even cautiously endorsed revivals.[102] Though the controversy over the *Definite Platform* had bolstered the confessional movement, its members still shared with their New Lutheran counterparts the conviction that the General Synod should serve as an instrument for advancing Lutheran unity and raising the church's level of intellectual respectability and cultural clout.

The *Definite Platform* also affected Lutherans outside the General Synod. For the Moderate Lutherans of the Ohio Synod, the publication confirmed that their decision not

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[99] C. P. K., "The General Synod," *Missionary*, April 30, 1857, 54. See also C. P. K., "Coming up from the Wilderness: An Imaginary Colloquy," *Missionary*, February 7, 1856, 6.

[100] "An Apology for Our Existence," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, July 6, 1860, 4.

[101] "Where Do We Stand?," 2.

[102] Joseph A. Seiss, *The Claims of Sabbath Schools: An Address Delivered in the M. E. Church to the Sunday School Union Society of Cumberland, on the Evening of January 21st, 1850* (Cumberland, MD: Civilian Office, 1850); Joseph A. Seiss, *The Sigh of Humanity, Interpreted and Directed: A Sermon, Preached in the Protestant Episcopal Church, of Dayton, Ohio, June 17, 1855* (Baltimore: James Young, 1855); Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, *Poverty: Three Essays for the Season* (Pittsburgh, PA: W. S. Haven, 1858); "Temperance and the Church," *Missionary*, February 10, 1859, 9; and "Protracted Meetings," *Missionary*, February 17, 1859, 13-14.

to join the federation had been the correct one. The editors of the *Lutheran Standard* called attention to the fact that two synods could remain in the General Synod despite holding completely different views on the Augsburg Confession. This, they believed, was why the federation was doomed to failure. They also vehemently denied that the "American Recension" was truly American, labeling its proponents as "self-styled American Lutherans." The editors castigated the promoters of the *Definite Platform* for attempting to "shut us out of their American Lutheran Church" and in turn claimed that "they, by this very act, shut themselves out of the Lutheran Church in America."[103] At the synod's meeting in 1856, they responded to the *Definite Platform* by resolving to "consider only the proceedings of such synods [that] at least avow the unaltered Augsburg Confession in the spirit and sense of the collected symbolical creeds of the Evangelical Lutheran Church."[104] The conflict over the "American Recension" pushed the Moderate Ohio Synod closer to the position of Old Lutheranism.

For Walther and the Missouri Synod, the controversy gave them hope that the situation in the American Lutheran church was perhaps not as dire as he had thought. In January 1855, Walther founded *Lehre und Wehre* ("Doctrine and Defense"), a monthly theological journal. The title alone indicated that this periodical did not share the same ecumenical purpose as the *Evangelical Review*. In the *Lutheraner*, Walther explained that the journal would not be a "playground" for those who attack the "true-believing church." Instead, "the Holy Scriptures and the Book of Concord will be the norm of all its

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[103] "'American Recension of the Augsburg Confession'," *Lutheran Standard*, October 19, 1855, 2-3

[104] Quoted in Willard D. Allbeck, *A Century of Lutherans in Ohio* (Yellow Springs, OH: Antioch Press, 1966), 198.

recorded essays."[105] Yet in the wake of the controversy surrounding the *Definite Platform*, Walther penned an editorial in *Lehre und Wehre* expressing his surprise at the nearly unanimous rejection of the proposed "American Recension." He commented: "It has become evident from this that the number of those who have not bowed, or will no longer bow, their knees to the Baal of the so-called progress and so-called higher enlightenment of the nineteenth century is undoubtedly greater than our weak faith and faintheartedness had imagined." Walther proposed a "free conference" dedicated to "the endeavor of ultimately achieving one Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America" and invited all "members of the various synods… that acknowledge and confess without reservation the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of 1530."[106] This was a stunning transformation. Not only had Walther became more open to intra-Lutheran dialogue, but he was willing to hold discussions on the basis of the Augsburg Confession, rather than the entire Book of Concord.

Walther's call went largely unheeded. Though a few clergymen from Pennsylvania and New York attended, no member synod of the General Synod sent an official delegation. Instead, the conference that took place in October 1856 in Columbus, Ohio, was principally a discussion between the Missouri and Ohio synods. Despite the poor turnout, Walther emerged from the first meeting confident that, "in spite of all enemy *machinations* against it," the conference had "clear[ed] the way for the eventual formation of an Evangelical Lutheran Church of North America united in faith, doctrine,

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[105] "Die neue theologische Zeitschrift," *Lutheraner*, January 16, 1855, 86.

[106] "Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1856," *Lehre und Wehre* 2 (January 1856): 4-5. For a translation of this article, see Herbert J. A. Bouman, trans., "Foreword to the 1856 Volume," in Aug. R. Suelflow, ed., *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther: Editorials from "Lehre und Wehre"* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981): 11-14.

and confession."[107] The editors of the *Lutheran Standard* likewise declared this meeting of "true Lutherans" to be "a rich blessing."[108] Subsequent conferences were held in October and November 1857 in Pittsburgh, in August 1858 in Cleveland, and in July 1859 in Fort Wayne, Indiana.[109]

Yet these high hopes soon foundered. Leaders of the Ohio Synod found the Missouri Synod's views to be "extreme," particularly those surrounding the question of congregational polity.[110] The enthusiasm for the meetings soon began to fizzle. Only two Ohio Synod pastors attended the fourth conference and Walther missed it due to illness. The final nail in the coffin of this dialogue was a heated dispute between the *Lutheran Standard* and the *Lutheraner* over the case of a Missouri Synod pastor who transferred his membership to the Ohio Synod. The editors of the *Lutheran Standard* saw in the Missouri Synod a judgmental and "Pharisaical" spirit. They admonished the "Missourians to resign [their] assumed supervisory generalship of all other Lutheran Synods, and attend better to their own concerns."[111] The next conference, scheduled for the summer of 1860, never occurred.

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[107] "Vorwort zu Jahrgang 1857," *Lehre und Wehre* 3 (January 1857): 1-2. For a translation, see Bouman, trans., "Foreword to the 1857 Volume," in Suelflow, ed., *Editorials from "Lehre und Wehre"*, 39-42.

[108] "The General Conference," *Lutheran Standard*, October 16, 1856, 2.

[109] The most complete account of these conferences is Erwin L. Lueker, "Walther and the Free Lutheran Conferences of 1856-1859" *Concordia Theological Monthly* 15 (August 1944): 529-63. The minutes of the first three conferences were printed as *Auszug aus den Verhandlungen der freien, ev.-lutherischen Konferenz* (New York: H. Ludwig, 1858). See also Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity?*, 59-62; Allbeck, *Lutherans in Ohio*, 211-12; and August R. Suelflow, *Servant of the Word: The Life and Ministry of C.F.W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2000), 195-99.

[110] "Historiches Zeitblatt und Lutheranischer Anzeiger," *Lutheran Standard*, December 10, 1856, 3.

[111] "'The Lutheraner'—Our Respects," *Lutheran Standard*, November 11, 1859, 3. For the entire course of the dispute, see "Abstract of the Proceedings of the Western District Synod, at the Session in Wapankonetta, June 19th to the 23rd," *Lutheran Standard*, June 8, 1859, 2-3; J. H. Werfelmann, "Der

The Old Lutherans' failure to capitalize on the fallout from the *Definite Platform* further illustrates how the controversy over the document was not the watershed moment that many denominational histories have portrayed it to be. The debate over the tract's proposals was not the "climax" of the struggle over confessional subscription and church unity, nor was the issue "settled" and New Lutheranism "definitely defeated."[112] Instead, the ideas raised by the *Definite Platform* and the larger theological project of Schmucker and Kurtz continued to persist, almost as strongly as before. Though a confessional movement was developing, made up of former New Lutherans, these intellectuals stood firmly behind the General Synod's project of Lutheran union. The only Lutherans to withdraw from the General Synod on account of the theology promoted in the *Definite Platform* were the Swedes and Norwegians of the Northern Illinois Synod, a division that had as much to do with ethnic identity as doctrinal disagreements. In 1860, they formed the Scandinavian Augustana Synod.[113] In the years following the publication of the *Definite Platform*, the General Synod weathered the storm of theological controversy and emerged more united and numerous than ever before.

Walther, meanwhile, was burned out. Pastoring a church, teaching at the Missouri Synod's seminary, and editing both a weekly church paper and monthly theological journal had taken a toll on his health. At the urging of his colleagues and with the blessing of his parishioners, Walther departed in February 1860 for a six-month-long trip

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'Lutheran Standard'," *Lutheraner*, August 9, 1859, 203-4; and "The Western District Synod—The 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheran Standard*, September 2, 1859, 3.

[112] Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 174; Wentz, *Basic History*, 144; and Suelflow and Nelson, "Following the Frontier," 227. These views derive from Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 322-344.

[113] See Stephenson, *The Founding of the Augustana Synod, 1850-1860*, esp. 130-52.

to Europe.[114] Before his departure, he penned a letter to his congregation, asking them to pray that God "grant that I again become strong to undertake His ministry for our poor American Zion, which is bleeding from a thousand wounds."[115] Undoubtedly, he was referring to the ruptures between his church body and other Lutherans in both Germany and the United States.

The trip reinvigorated Walther. Before traveling back to the United States, he penned an open letter to Rudolph Lange (1825-1892), the interim editor of *Lehre und Wehre*, giving a full-throated defense of "the unity of doctrine and faith in which our synod in America stands." He wrote that in Europe "this treasure seems to have been lost entirely." He contrasted the "mandated unity of the state church," the "Roman-papistic unity… of a church ruler," and other "mere phantoms of church unity" with the "unity of our synod." He confidently declared: "We have come to the clear knowledge and living conviction that our dear Evangelical Lutheran Church, as she has set forth her doctrine in her Confessions, agreeing in all points with the Word of God, is the continuation of the old, apostolic church; in short, at the present time the only orthodox church."[116] When Walther returned, his Missouri Synod comprised about 10 percent of the Lutheran population in the United States and stood almost completely isolated from other churches

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[114] For background on the trip, see Carl S. Meyer, trans. and ed., "Walther's Letter from Zurich: A Defense of Missouri's Unity and Confessionalism," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 32 (October 1961): 642-48.

[115] C. F. W. Walther to "die deutsche ev.-luth. Gesamtgemeinde Ungeänderter Augsburgischer Konfession zu St. Louis," February 3, 1860, in L[udwig] Führbringer, ed., *Briefe von C. F. W. Walther an seine Freunde, Synodalgenossen und Familienglieder: Erster Band: Briefe aus den Jahren 1841—1865* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), 135. For a translation see Matthew C. Harrison, trans., "Walther's Breakdown to the German Evangelical Gesamtgemeinde of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in St. Louis 1860," in Harrison, ed., *At Home in the House of My Fathers*, 142-45.

[116] C. F. W. Walther, "Editorielle Correspondenz," *Lehre und Wehre* 6 (July 1860): 194-95. For a translation of this letter, see Meyer, trans. and ed., "Walther's Letter from Zurich," 648-55.

in both America and Europe. Remarkably, in less than fifteen years, his understanding of confessional subscription and church unity would be the predominant view among Lutherans in the United States.

Slavery and Politics

American Lutherans in the 1850s were conflicted about more than theology. The increasingly irrepressible political and sectional divisions over slavery and its expansion were part and parcel of Lutheran discourse as well. The various theological schools of Lutheranism approached the slavery question in different ways. Yet as with their debates over confessional subscription, Lutherans' disputes over the peculiar institution did not pose an existential crisis to church unity.

As discussed in Chapter Two, New Lutherans' attitudes toward slavery—like most American evangelicals—were shaped by their local contexts rather than by their theology. This geographically-based diversity persisted in the 1850s. Though most General Synod Lutherans lived in the "border-north" states of Pennsylvania and Ohio, a significant number—just below twenty percent—lived in slave states.[117] As the nation's sectional differences became more divisive over the course of the 1850s, this regional diversity within the General Synod became more pronounced.

The mouthpiece of New Lutheranism, the *Lutheran Observer*, based in Baltimore, reflected the state of Maryland's conflicted views on slavery.[118] Kurtz, though committed to an editorial stance of "neutrality" on the issue of abolition, at times broke with this policy. Sometimes he found himself defending slaveowners. He maintained that many of

[117] For statistics, see *Lutheran Almanac for 1851*, 45; and *Lutheran Almanac for 1861*, 32.

[118] See Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

"the cruelties said to be practiced on the slaves in the South… [contain] a vast amount of falsehood and slander" and countered: "[H]ow seldom do we hear of the religious and other advantages enjoyed by the slaves…."[119] Yet he also criticized some biblical defenses of slavery. He wrote that the institution's morality cannot be determined simply by looking at the actions of biblical figures. This "false logic," he contended, leads to "dangerous results," such as the Mormons' practice of polygamy. Though he would not "hazard a word here for or against slavery," he argued that the "practices of former times… have precious little to do with the settlement of these questions in the present day."[120] Throughout the 1850s, he continued to promote Liberian colonization as a solution to the problem of American slavery.[121] Yet for the most part, Kurtz made good on his promise "not to allow the Observer to be used either in opposition or in vindication of *slavery*." For him, "to take part in this 'vexed question'" would distract from the paper's "*high and holy mission*."[122] This policy of "neutrality" remained even after Kurtz retired from the editorship of the *Lutheran Observer* in February 1859.

Even New Lutherans who held antislavery opinions conspicuously avoided the subject. The only substantive publication about slavery by a New Lutheran during this decade was a single article on the history of the African slave trade, published in the *Evangelical Review* in 1857. The author, Morris Officer (1823-1874), had served for three years as a missionary in Africa sponsored by the inter-denominational American

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[119] "Slavery," *Lutheran Observer*, August 23, 1850, 339.

[120] "The Authority of the Bible Misapplied: Polygamy—Slavery," *Lutheran Observer*, September 21, 1855, 158.

[121] See, for example, "For Liberia," *Lutheran Observer*, August 8, 1851, 539; and "Religion in Liberia," *Lutheran Observer*, September 28, 1855, 160.

[122] "Reply to a 'Member'," *Lutheran Observer*, November 13, 1857, 3.

Missionary Association, the explicitly antislavery counterpart to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. In his article, Officer condemned the "giant evil" of the transatlantic slave trade. He proposed that one way for "redressing the wrongs of the slave-trade" would be "introducing the gospel and civilization into Africa," a calling he undertook three years later, when he traveled to Liberia to begin the first American Lutheran mission in Africa. But in his article, he said nothing about the immorality of slavery as then currently practiced in the United States.[123] Synodical proceedings also reveal a dearth of discussion about the slavery issue. Only one member synod of the General Synod, the Wittenberg Synod, published a condemnation of slavery.[124] Even Schmucker, perhaps the most prominent New Lutheran supporter of emancipation during the 1830s and 1840s, wrote nothing new on the subject in the decade before the war. His only public mention of slavery came in the ninth and final edition of his *Elements of Popular Theology*, published in 1860, which advocated the same moderate antislavery position of his 1846 edition.[125]

The exception that proved the rule was the continued abolitionist advocacy of the tiny Franckean Synod, which numbered around 3,000 members. At their meetings during the 1850s, the Franckeans took every opportunity afforded by the nation's political

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[123] Morris Officer, "The African Slave Trade," *Evangelical Review* 9 (July 1857): 42, 47. On Officer and the Liberian mission, see Alex J. Imhoff, *The Life of Rev. Morris Officer, A. M.* (Dayton, OH: United Brethren Publishing House, 1876); and Timothy D. Grundmeier, "'The Elements of Africa's Redemption': The Beginning of the American Lutheran Mission to Liberia," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 89 (Summer 2016): 9-28.

[124] Robert Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery, 1830-60," *Journal of Religion* 13 (January 1933): 86-87.

[125] Cf. Schmucker, S. S. *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX* (Philadelphia: S. S. Miles, 1846), 330-36; and S. S. Schmucker, *Elements of Popular Theology, with Special Reference to the Doctrines of the Reformation, as Avowed before the Diet at Augsburg, in MDXXX* (Philadelphia: Smith, English, and Company, 1860), 330-36.

events—the Compromise of 1850, the Kansas-Nebraska Act, and *Dred Scott v. Sandford*—to condemn slavery and demand immediate emancipation.[126] When in 1857 the members of the General Synod decided to allow the synod to re-apply for membership, the Franckeans refused, because of the General Synod's twin toleration of "symbolism and slavery."[127] Apart from the principled abolitionism of this tiny church body, the most noticeable aspect of Northern New Lutherans' commentary on slavery during the decade preceding the Civil War was their silence.

Most confessional and Moderate Lutherans, both those inside and outside the General Synod, resembled the New Lutherans in their ambivalence toward slavery. The members of the Pennsylvania Synod and the Ohio Synod passed no resolution on the issue at their meetings.[128] The *Lutheran Standard* remained largely muted on the subject in the 1850s, save for a few mildly critical articles.[129] In view of this, historian Paul Kuenning's contention that opposition to New Lutheranism's theological program stemmed, in part, from antagonism toward Schmucker's views on slavery is unfounded. As Kuenning himself admits, "hard evidence or documented proof is lacking."[130] In fact, confessional and Moderate Lutherans were almost a mirror image of Schmucker and other Northern New Lutherans in their reluctance to address the issue.

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[126] Douglas C. Stange, *Radicalism for Humanity: A Study in Lutheran Abolitionism* (St. Louis: Oliver Slave, 1970), 33-40.

[127] Quoted in Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 213.

[128] Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery," 74.

[129] "Slavery in New Orleans," *Lutheran Standard*, April 21, 1852, 2; "End of the Slave Trade," *Lutheran Standard*, August 25, 1852, 3; and "Modification of the Slave Law," *Lutheran Standard*, February 8, 1854, 3.

[130] Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 175.

One of the few exceptions to this trend was William Passavant, whose moderate antislavery views resembled those of Schmucker. One of the reasons that Passavant's church body, the Pittsburg Synod, initially refused to join the General Synod was that, according to the minutes of its 1852 meeting, it would "become implicated in the sin of slavery."[131] Like Schmucker, Passavant and other members of his synod suppressed their personal convictions and joined the General Synod the next year. In the early years of the *Missionary*, Passavant's habit of avoiding the topic of slavery mirrored the official policy of the *Lutheran Observer*. In October 1857, however, he changed this practice and printed a set of antislavery resolutions adopted by the Middle Conference of the Pittsburg Synod. The conference declared that "slavery, as it exists in this country,… [is] sinful" and asserted that "Christians are solemnly bound to make their influence tell against this evil," not only in the "ballot-box," but even, since it is a "moral question," in the "pulpit."[132] Passavant defended his decision. He admitted that "the language employed was not sufficiently discriminating," but argued that "the religious press must enter into the strife and by the power of Christian truth must overcome the selfish materialism of the times." Though he confessed that "the question of slavery… is one of the most difficult of all problems to solve," he concluded that "if the Church will not speak,

[131] Quoted in Fortenbaugh, "American Lutheran Synods and Slavery," 86.

[132] "Abstract of the Proceedings of the Middle Conference of the Pittsburg Synod," *Missionary*, October 1, 1857.

Slavery will."[133] Over the next three years, Passavant made frequent comments on the subject in his paper from a moderately antislavery point of view.[134]

Passavant's decision to open his paper up as a forum to discuss slavery prompted a Southern Lutheran rejoinder. In December 1857, John Bachman responded to the Resolutions of the Pittsburg Synod's Middle Conference with an article printed in the *Missionary*. The Charleston minister had long been recognized as the leader of New Lutheranism in the South. During the 1840s and 1850s, Bachman also became one of the most prominent figures in the Southern scientific community. A student of Alexander von Humboldt in Berlin, a collaborator with John James Audubon, and friend of Louis Agassiz, he was undoubtedly one the most educated and accomplished Lutherans in the antebellum United States. In the 1850s, he wrote on subjects as varied as the monogenesis of the human race, Luther and Reformation, and viviparous quadrupeds.[135] In the pages of the *Missionary*, he used his intellectual talents to make the most comprehensive defense of American slavery by an antebellum Lutheran.

Bachman began by expressing his reluctance to comment, since the resolutions were adopted by a conference of six pastors and three laymen rather than an entire synod.

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[133] "Free Speech," *Missionary*, December 10, 1857.

[134] For example, see "The Slave Trade," *Missionary*, March 3, 1859, 23; "Colonization," *Missionary*, March 3, 1859, 120; "Washington and Slavery," *Missionary*, March 29, 1860, 40; and "The Slave Trade as It Is," *Missionary*, July 5, 1860, 96.

[135] John Bachman, *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Human Race Examined on the Principles of Science* (Charleston, SC: C. Canning, 1850); John Bachman, *A Defense of Luther and the Reformation* (Charleston, SC: William Y. Patton, 1853); and John James Audubon and John Bachman, *The Viviparous Quadrupeds of North America* (New York: V. G. Audubon, 1847-1854). On Bachman the scientist and racial theorist, see Jay Shuler, *Had I the Wings: The Friendship of Bachman and Audubon* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995); Lester D. Stephens, *Science, Race, and Religion in the American South: John Bachman and the Charleston Circle of Naturalists, 1815-1895* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Gene Waddell, ed., *John Bachman: Selected Writings on Science, Race and Religion* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2011).

Yet he felt the need to show how they were "in a remarkable degree uninformed." He argued that slaves "were originally brought to this country by the ships of our Northern brethren and of England," asserted that "Southern clergymen and Southern masters" had raised Africans up "from a state of the lowest barbarism… and from all the abominations of paganism," and contended that the slaves' spiritual care was better than the "whites of the laboring classes in the Northern States." Bachman viewed the Southern slaves' "state of mild servitude" as necessitated by the racial inferiority "marked on them by their Creator." He compared the relationship of "master and servant" to that of a parent and child and claimed that "the bond of attachment… is very strong." He also expressed surprise that those "who read the same Bible" could argue that slavery was sinful, when the Scriptures clearly sanctioned and even at times "enjoined" the practice. While he condemned all "abuses," he claimed that these "instances" were exceedingly rare.[136] Bachman's paternalistic defense of slavery exemplified the pervasive attitudes of slave-owning Southern Protestants.[137]

While his proslavery argument was unremarkable, his subsequent commentary on the slavery question's pertinence to the current situation in American Lutheranism was distinctive. After contrasting the unity in the General Synod with the divisions in other denominations, Bachman warned, like Kurtz, that antagonizing the Southern synods

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[136] John Bachman, "Strictures on Resolutions of the Middle Conference," *Missionary*, December 10, 1857, 181.

[137] See, for example, Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981); Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); John Patrick Daly, *When Slavery Was Called Freedom: Evangelicalism, Proslavery, and the Causes of the Civil War* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002); Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008); and Eugene Genovese and Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

would distract from the Lutheran church's "high and holy mission." Like Harkey, he saw part of that mission as gathering in immigrants from Germany and Scandinavia. Bachman believed that Southern Lutherans' role in this enterprise was to keep producing "cotton, rice, and sugar" to supply the "raw materials" for Northern labor which would continue to attract these "nominally Lutheran" immigrants to American shores and, ultimately, Lutheran congregations. The other part of the church's mission was to model respect for laws and national unity. "Luther was to the Church what Washington was to this republic," he wrote. So also the "venerable Church of the Reformation," by remaining united, would help in "preserving that blessed Union of States which should be dear to every American heart."[138]

One week later, Passavant responded. He began by defending his decision to print Bachman's letter: "Thinking men in the North are anxious to know the views of good men in the South on this great subject." But he expressed his regret that Bachman had avowed "the inherent rightfulness of American slavery" and had defended "it from the Scriptures of God." Passavant argued that "the system itself, which unmakes the man and turns him into a chattel and a slave, is the greatest conceivable abuse of human power." American slavery, he asserted, differed from the "mild and humane servitude" of the Old Testament. He further argued that the "apostolic directions… in the New Testament" were "no more an approval… of Roman slavery" than the call to obey the imperial government was "an approval of the tyranny of the Neroes." Above all, he contended, a loving God could not endorse such as system. Passavant even made a tentative defense of racial equality, denying the inherent inferiority of African Americans. While he believed

[138] Bachman, "Strictures on Resolutions of the Middle Conference," 181.

that there were "a few worthless negroes" in the North, he considered the free blacks of Pittsburgh to be "incomparably above the thousands of low Irish." But "even if it were admitted" that "the Anglo-Saxon race" was superior, he argued, they would not "have the right to enslave two-thirds of the globe."[139] Like Bachman's proslavery apology, Passavant's views on slavery and race were hardly extraordinary, reflecting those of many moderately antislavery Northerners.[140]

What is surprising is that Bachman and Passavant were having this "fraternal discussion" in the first place. Historian Mark Noll has written that the 1844 exchange between Richard Fuller and Francis Wayland in the *Christian Reflector* was "one of the United States' last serious one-on-one debates where advocates for and against slavery engaged each other directly, with reasonable restraint, and with evident intent to hear out the opponent to the extent possible."[141] Yet thirteen years after these Baptists' debate, two Lutherans were engaging in a similarly measured exchange of arguments. Despite Bachman's veiled threats of the Southern synods withdrawing in reaction to antislavery agitation, the articles in the *Missionary* actually demonstrated the surprising strength of the General Synod's unity. While Fuller's and Wayland's denomination split the year after their debate, Bachman's and Passavant's church remained united. If a schism over slavery was to happen in the General Synod, it would be precipitated by external events rather than internal disagreements.

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[139] "Freedom better than Bondage," *Missionary*, December 17, 1857, 186.

[140] For comparisons, see Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); and Luke E. Harlow, *Religion, Race and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), esp. 76-107.

[141] Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 36-37.

Immigrant Lutherans were less circumspect about addressing slavery and other political questions. Over the course of the 1850s, Scandinavian Americans, almost all of whom settled in the Upper Midwest, adopted the practice of publishing two types of newspapers, religious and political. Norwegian-speaking Americans were the most prolific, founding four different papers in 1851 alone. Both types of publications were usually edited by Lutheran clergymen. For example, in 1851 Claus Lauritz Clausen (1820-1892), a Dane by birth, helped to found the *Maanedstidende for den Norsk-evangelisk-luthersk kirke i Amerika* ("Monthly News for the Norwegian Evangelical Church in America"). A year later he founded the *Emigranten* ("Immigrant"), a paper exclusively devoted to political issues based in Wisconsin. In 1855, Tufve Hasselquist founded the first Swedish American newspaper, *Hemlandet Det Gamla Och Det Nya* ("Homeland, the Old and the New") in Rock Island, Illinois. A year later, he began the *Rätta Hemlandet* ("True Homeland") as the explicitly religious counterpart to his other paper.[142]

Over the course of the 1850s, Scandinavian Americans moved from a general loyalty to the pro-immigrant Democrats to a nearly unanimous support of the newly formed Republican Party.[143] A key reason was their opposition to slavery. The *Emigranten*, now under the editorship of the laymen Carl F. Solberg (1833-1924)

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[142] Jorn Brøndal, *Ethnic Leadership and Midwestern Politics: Scandinavian Americans and the Progressive Movement in Wisconsin, 1890-1914* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2004), 46-48.

[143] O. Fritiof Ander, "Swedish-American Newspapers and the Republican Party, 1855-1875," in O. Fritiof Ander, ed., *Augustana Historical Society Publications, Number 2* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1933), 64-78; William C. Beyer, "Active but Critical Non-Partisanship: A Swedish-American Newspaper Editor and the Political Realignment of the 1850s," *Swedish-American Pioneer Quarterly* 31 (September 1980): 242-56; Harold M. Tolo, "The Political Position of *Emigranten* in the Election of 1852: A Documentary Article," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 8 (1934): 92-111; and Arlow W. Andersen, *The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1953), 10-33.

opposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the *Dred Scott v. Sandford* decision and promoted black suffrage in the North.[144] Swedish Lutherans were even more explicitly antislavery. In the inaugural issue of the *Hemlandet*, Hasselquist declared slavery to be "ungodly in its very foundation" and unable to "stand the test of Christianity."[145] Yet, Scandinavian Lutheran opposition was more the product of their American circumstances, rather than the result of "freedom-loving" principles brought with them from Norway and Sweden. The few Scandinavians that immigrated to the state of Texas came to defend slavery just as quickly as their Northern counterparts embraced emancipation.[146]

The only Lutherans whose geographical location was not predictive of their views toward slavery were the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod. Despite its name, this church body was a national organization, with the majority of its German immigrant members living in the free states of Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois. Those who resided in the slave state of Missouri were too poor to afford slaves. In spite of those circumstances, most Old Lutherans would come to view slavery as, in and of itself, not a sinful institution.

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[144] Andersen, *Immigrant Takes His Stand*, 65-67. On Solberg, see Carl Fredrik Solberg, "Reminiscences of a Pioneer Editor," ed. Albert O. Barton, *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 1 (1926): 110-25.

[145] Quoted in Ander, *T. N. Hasselquist*, 153. Andersen notes the divisions among the Norwegians and calls the opposition to slavery among Swedes "nearly unanimous." *Immigrant Takes His Stand*, 69.

[146] Carl T. Widen, "Texas Swedish Pioneers and the Confederacy," *Swedish-American Pioneer Quarterly* 12 (July 1961): 104; and Knudt Olson Hastvedt, "Recollections of a Norwegian Pioneer in Texas," trans. and ed. C. A. Clausen, *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 12 (1941): 101-2. For a defense not of slavery itself, but of the humane treatment of slaves, see Clarence A. Clausen, ed. and trans., "A Texas Manifesto: A Letter from Mrs. Elise Wærenskjold," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 20 (1959): 40.

Before the Civil War, however, few Missouri Synod Lutherans commented on the issue. Their leader, C. F. W. Walther, wrote no word on the subject in the 1850s.[147] The most comprehensive treatment came from August Biewend (1816-1858), Walther's colleague at the seminary in St. Louis. In a *Lehre und Wehre* article, which Walther published only reluctantly, Biewend contended that slavery was compatible with the Bible. His argument resembled the defense of slavery by other conservative Christians, such as Old School Presbyterians and Roman Catholics: the institution itself was neither inherently good nor sinful; instead, its morality hinged on how masters treated their slaves. In his article, Biewend claimed to address slavery from a biblical standpoint, not a political one. Yet, as with other American intellectuals, the Old Lutheran professor could not conceptualize slavery apart from its racialized practice in the United States.[148]

Biewend's limiting of his discussion of slavery to purely moral considerations reflected Old Lutherans' hesitation to mix religion and politics overtly, a view shared by many other Lutherans and some other American Protestants.[149] This reluctance derived

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[147] A one-page long article containing two lengthy quotations from sixteenth-century Lutherans on the subject may have been complied by him, however: "Melanchthon und Luther über Sclaverei," *Lehre und Wehre* 2 (November 1856): 352.

[148] A[ugust] B[iewend], "Die Sclaverei und die Bibel" *Lehre und Wehre* 2 (August 1856): 225-33. Biewend briefly reiterated his views in A. B., "Welthändel," *Lutheraner*, January 27, 1857, 94. For similar defenses of slavery by both Protestants and Catholics, see Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*, esp. 39-40, 51-52, and 126-32; David Torbett, *Theology and Slavery: Charles Hodge and Horace Bushnell* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006), 55-114; Allen C. Guelzo, "Charles Hodge's Antislavery Moment," in John W. Stewart and James H. Moorhead, eds., *Charles Hodge Revisited: A Critical Appraisal of His Life and Work* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 299-326; John T. McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2003), 43-60; Michael Hochgeschwender, *Wahrheit, Einheit, Ordnung: Die Sklavenfrage und der amerikanische Katholizismus, 1835-1870* (Paderborn, Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2006); and W. Jason Wallace, *Catholics, Slaveholders, and the Dilemma of American Evangelicalism, 1835-1860* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

[149] See, for example, Mark Y. Hanley, *Beyond a Christian Commonwealth: The Protestant Quarrel with the American Republic, 1830-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and Timothy L. Wesley, *The Politics of Faith during the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 8-31.

from their belief in a strict separation of church and state—a belief informed by the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms. Yet Old Lutherans were hardly apolitical. Walther himself, while proclaiming church and state to be "divided from one another by a gap as wide as heaven," believed that religious believers also had a responsibility as "citizens."[150] Throughout the 1850s, he and other members of the Missouri Synod were fierce critics of German American political leaders, particularly Heinrich Börnstein, the new forty-eighter editor of the *Anzeiger des Westen*. Though the Old Lutherans' relationship with this paper already had been tenuous, the appointment in 1850 of the openly anti-clerical Börnstein convinced several Missouri Synod leaders of their need to counteract, what Walther called, "the German satanic press."[151] For a brief period, they believed the solution lay in allying with the *Saint Louiser Volksblatt* ("Saint Louis People's Paper"), a Democratic daily, which declared itself to be "neither irreligious nor unchristian."[152] The *Lutheraner* endorsed the paper and Walther even recruited a Missouri Synod pastor be its editor.[153] Yet in 1857, the paper fell on hard times and into the hands of Walther's nemesis, Börnstein. The *Lutheraner* promptly retracted its endorsement.[154]

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[150] C. F. W. Walther, "Zehnte Predigt zur Eröfferung der Synode," in Walther, *Lutherische Brosamen*, 499-500.

[151] "Freiheit oder Freckheit," *Lutheraner*, January 17, 1854, 86. On Börnstein and the *Anzeiger des Westens*, see Heinrich Börnstein, *Memoirs of a Nobody: The Missouri Years of an Austrian Radical, 1849-1866*, trans. Steven Rowan (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society Press, 1997).

[152] "'Saint Louiser Volksblatt'," *Lutheraner*, May 22, 1854, 158.

[153] "Das 'St. Louiser Volksblatt'," *Lutheraner*, May 6, 1856, 147-50.

[154] "'St. Louiser Volksblatt," *Lutheraner*, September 22, 1857, 22. For background on *Volksblatt* and the Missouri Synod's connection to it, see Suelflow, *Servant of the Word*, 75-78; Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri*, 17, 77-78; Brent O. Peterson, *Popular Narratives and Ethnic Identity: Literature and Community in Die Abendschule* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 103-4; and Karl J. R. Arndt and May E. Olson, *German-American Newspapers and Periodicals, 1732-1955: History and Bibliography* (Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer, 1961), 272.

A more successful Old Lutheran enterprise for addressing the realm of politics was the *Illustrirte Abend-Schule* ("Illustrated Evening School").[155] Founded in Buffalo in 1854 and relocated to St. Louis in 1856, the bi-weekly paper's mission was to educate the German American public on a wide variety of subjects: history, law, geography, nature, culture, and politics. Though edited by various Missouri Synod clergymen, the *Illustrirte Abend-Schule* sought to appeal to a broadly Christian audience as an alternative to the publications of irreligious or anti-religious forty-eighters. Given this mission, the paper both deemphasized confessional particulars and steered clear of overt party politics. For example, during the run-up to the election of 1856, the paper endorsed no candidate and urged its readers to vote their conscience, even though the *Saint Louiser Volksblatt* had endorsed the National Democrats.[156] The paper also largely avoided the issue of slavery, except for a few descriptive accounts of its abuses.[157] Rather, its highest goal was to make its readers better citizens of their new homeland. In the words of the paper's prospectus, which Walther heartily endorsed, "We do not want to be American Germans, but Americans, German Americans."[158]

Despite the *Abendschule*'s moderate stance, most members in the German American intellectual class regarded Old Lutherans as on par with Roman Catholics, because of their justification of slavery and support for the Democratic Party. One forty-eighter in Michigan wrote home to Germany in 1856 that the Democrats' constituency

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[155] For information on this periodical, see Peterson, *Popular Narratives and Ethnic Identity*, esp. 97-108.

[156] "Etwas über Präsidentenwahlen," *Illustrirte Abend-Schule*, September 20, 1856, 134-35. On the *Volkblatt*'s endorsement, see Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri*, 77.

[157] "Sklaverei," *Illustrirte Abend-Schule*, June 10, 1854, 1-2; and "Der Sklavenmarkt in New-Orleans," *Illustrirte Abend-Schule*, April 19, 1856, 38-39.

[158] "Prospectus der Illustrirten Abendschule," *Lutheraner*, February 14, 1854, 103.

consisted of "the bulk of the German riffraff, certainly all the Catholics, and everyone who is entangled in the Bible," including "the Old Lutherans (the mere word is a disgrace)."[159] In reality, Old Lutherans, like Roman Catholics, were not politically monolithic, save for their unwavering dedication to preserving their "precious churchly freedom."[160] For example, Francis Arnold Hoffman (1822-1903), one of the first clergymen to join the Missouri Synod, resigned his pastorate near Chicago in the early 1850s and became a lawyer. An opponent of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Hoffman became a prominent member of the newly formed Republican Party. In 1860, he was elected Lieutenant Governor of Illinois.[161] Though more likely to defend slavery and vote Democratic, Old Lutherans shared with other American Lutherans an aversion to sowing division in the church over politics.

Conclusion

Like the demographic changes brought on by immigration and the intra-Lutheran disputes surrounding the Augsburg Confession, disagreements over slavery and politics caused no major ruptures in the American Lutheran church. Unlike the Presbyterians, the Lutherans of the General Synod had not split into competing New School and Old School church bodies. And unlike the Baptists and Methodists, Northern and Southern Lutherans remained united. In fact, in a striking divergence from many other American Protestant

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[159] Dietrich Gerstein to "Dear sister," September 10, 1856, in Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, eds., *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home*, trans. Susan Carter Vogel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 277.

[160] Walther, "Zehnte Predigt zur Eröfferung der Synode," 505.

[161] On Hoffmann, see J. H. A. Lacher, "Francis A. Hoffmann of Illinois and Hans Buschbauer of Wisconsin." *Wisconsin Magazine of History* 13 (June 1930): 327-55; and Karl Kretzmann, "Francis Arnold Hoffmann: Cofounder of the Missouri Synod, Financier, Cofounder of the Republican Party, Acting Governor of Illinois During the Civil War, Agricultural Expert, Journalist," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 18 (July 1945): 37-54.

denominations, Lutheran unity was increasing. By 1860, more than two-thirds of Lutherans in the United States belonged to the General Synod, whereas ten years before the figure stood at less than fifty percent.[162] Those who did not participate in the General Synod, such as the Missouri and Ohio Synods, had long stood on the periphery of American Lutheranism, just as splinter groups like the Primitive Baptists, Reformed Methodists, and Cumberland Presbyterians had disassociated themselves from the mainstream of their respective denominations. Most Lutherans, by contrast, believed that a more unified church would aid in allowing their denomination to becoming members of the Anglo-Protestant mainstream.

In 1859, Simeon Harkey once again took to the podium to discuss the American Lutheran church's mission, this time before a joint meeting of the General Synod. Though the occasion was different than his 1852 address, Harkey's optimistic vision remained the same. The New Lutheran minister noted the growth in numbers and brotherly love within the General Synod and believed that the different nationalities and parties within the Lutheran church would become even more unified. Though he acknowledged "great and exciting questions of doctrine, discipline, policy and morals," Harkey believed that this union would be preserved by a commitment to "liberty of conscience" and the "fundamentals" of the Augsburg Confession. He urged the General Synod to continue to "evangelize and Americanize the larger foreign Lutheran population of this country" and to build up its institutions, benevolent work, and missions. Harkey

[162] *Lutheran Almanac for 1851*, 45; and *Lutheran Almanac for 1861*, 32.

concluded: in the United States, where "she is free," the Lutheran church is "ready for her great mission."[163]

Other Lutherans agreed. The Moderate Lutheran editors of the *Evangelical Review*, like Harkey, saw "substantial agreement in faith and practice" and "freedom of thinking and inquiry" as sufficient for Lutheran unity. In an 1858 editorial, they condemned the Old Lutherans, who "discard from fellowship all who do not receive every jot and tittle of the symbols" and praised the position of the General Synod as "alone adapted to hold together the elements, somewhat discordant, of our Lutheran Zion." They believed that "hope predominates over apprehension" and expressed certainty that "our union, like the great union of our country, notwithstanding diversity of views, [would] be preserved."[164] The leaders of the confessional movement, Krauth and Seiss, expressed similar sentiments in 1860 editorial in the *Lutheran and Home Journal*: "A calm review of the history of our church in this country up to this hour, impresses us with a deeper conviction that she is a daughter of God, and destined to do much for his glory in this modern world."[165]

To be sure, lurking beneath this optimism were not only doubts about the future of intra-Lutheran unity, but also an inferiority complex when it came to Lutherans' relationship with mainstream American Protestants. In a lengthy series of articles in the *Lutheran Observer*, one pseudonymous writer boasted that "the Lutheran church is just as

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[163] Simeon W. Harkey, *The Mission of the General Synod: A Sermon Delivered in the English Evangelical Lutheran Church, Pittsburg, Pa., May 19, 1859, at the Opening of the Nineteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1859), 8, 10, 12, 17, 28-29.

[164] "The Review: The Church," *Evangelical Review* 10 (July 1858): 12-13, 15.

[165] "The Position of Our Church," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, September 7, 1860, 37.

rich in mental, moral, and pecuniary resources as any other church in America," but worried that other Protestants were not taking notice because American Lutherans lacked "uniformity in *belief*, in *experience*, and in *practice*."[166] Another correspondent lamented: "Although the Lutheran Church in America has, during the last fifty years, rapidly and widely extended her borders and largely increased her membership… [she] has often been treated by some journals of sister denominations… as *almost a non-entity*."[167]

Yet most Lutherans repressed such worries and anxieties. At the General Synod's convention in 1859, twenty-six leaders from the church body's various factions submitted a joint statement on "the State of the Church." They cheerfully reported that American Lutherans are "becoming more intelligently united than at any former time." While they acknowledged that "the slavery question, the church or symbolic question, and other very delicate points were extensively debated at this meeting," these discussions were done "in the very best spirit." They expressed "our decided conviction that at no former period of her history has [the American Lutheran church] been so fully and so generally aroused to her great mission and work as at the present."[168] On the eve of the Civil War, Lutherans stood more united and confident of their place in American culture than ever before.

And then the war came.

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[166] Pacificator, "The Lutheran Church—No. 2," *Lutheran Observer*, June 8, 1860, 1; and Pacificator, "The Lutheran Church—No. 3," *Lutheran Observer*, June 15, 1860, 1. This series of articles continued through July 27, 1860.

[167] "Lutheran Churches at York, PA," *Lutheran Observer*, March 8, 1861, 1.

[168] *Proceedings of the Nineteenth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Assembled in Pittsburg, Pa. From the 19th to the 26th of May, 1859* (Gettysburg, PA: Henry C. Neinstedt, 1859), 59.

CHAPTER FOUR

The American Lutheran Civil War

On October 31, 1861, Charles Porterfield Krauth and William Passavant published the first issue of a new weekly church paper. Appearing on the anniversary of the Protestant Reformation and during the first year of the Civil War, the *Lutheran and Missionary* advanced the dual goals of preserving Lutheran unity and saving the American Union. In church affairs, the editors promised "to rise above every species of partisanship… earnestly labor for the purity and true peace of Zion… [and] heartily sustain the General Synod in all its efforts to unite and strengthen our beloved Church."[1] In the civil realm, the editors saw no room for compromise. "This war, like every truly great war, is a war of ideas," they asserted. "Nothing but the maintenance unconditionally of the Constitution, and of the Union, could justify this war, and on this issue our government must stand, or by it must fall." They called on their fellow Lutherans not to abandon "the ship of our human freedom… in this fearful tempest," but to defeat those who would overthrow the American nation.[2] Five years later, the editors' latter goal was realized. The Union stood victorious over the Confederacy in a war that claimed an estimated 750,000 lives.[3] But the unity of the American Lutheran church stood in disarray, divided by debates over politics, slavery, and theology.

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[1] "The Lutheran and Missionary," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2.

[2] "Don't Give Up the Ship," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2.

[3] J. David Hacker, "A Census-Based Count of the Civil War Dead," *Civil War History* 57 (December 2011): 307-48.

In the last twenty years, historical scholarship on religion and the Civil War has grown in size and sophistication. This body of literature has identified the war as a crucial turning point in the nation's religious history, just as much as it was the fulcrum of change in politics, economics, and race. Among the many religious developments noted by scholars are the collapse of providential confidence and millennial optimism, the strengthening of civil religion and religious nationalism, a shift in how Americans viewed death and heaven, and a "theological crisis" precipitated by the inability of a commonsense reading of the Bible to resolve the central moral issue of slavery. As historian James McPherson has written in one of the pioneering studies on the subject, "Religion was central to the meaning of the Civil War."[4]

Despite being the fifth largest religious group in the United States by 1860, Lutherans are almost completely absent from this burgeoning corpus of historiography. The more sizable Catholics, Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians have received extensive coverage, as have numerically smaller but culturally more powerful traditions such as Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Unitarians, and Quakers.[5] Even among

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[4] James M. McPherson, "Afterword," in Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 412. For some of the most important recent works, see George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); Terrie Dopp Aamodt, *Righteous Armies, Holy Cause: Apocalyptic Imagery and the Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002); Sean A. Scott, *A Visitation of God: Northern Civilians Interpret the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Ben Wright and Zachary W. Dresser, eds., *Apocalypse and Millennium in the American Civil War Era* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006); Timothy L. Wesley, *The Politics of Faith during the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013); Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008); Mark S. Schantz, *Awaiting the Heavenly Country: The Civil War and America's Culture of Death* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); and Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[5] The absence of Lutherans is especially conspicuous in works such as Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*; Scott, *Visitation of God*; Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*; and Stout, *Upon the Altar of a Nation*. For a brief, but notable, exception, see Mark A. Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in Miller, Stout, and Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War*, 56-58.

Lutheran denominational histories, the Civil War has played a minor role. Most of these works treat the conflict as either extraneous or unimportant to intra-Lutheran developments.[6] The only book on Lutherans and the Civil War is nearly one hundred years old.[7]

This negligence obscures the crucial role played by the war in shaping Lutheran identity and, more broadly, what the Lutheran story reveals about the power of American ideas such as liberty and Union. The political, moral, and theological debates surrounding the conflict exacerbated and magnified the tensions that American Lutheranism had repressed during the 1850s. Disagreements over nationalism and political preaching convinced different factions that they were on the side of both true Lutheranism and true Americanism. The war also forced Lutherans to cease their circumvention of the issue of slavery, which drove and exposed further divisions. Finally, as Chapter Five will demonstrate, different parties drew divergent lessons from the meaning of the American Union, which they applied to the church's increasingly heated theological conflicts. On the eve of the Civil War, the Lutheran church in the United States stood more united than

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[6] This is the case in histories of the conflicts over Lutheran confessionalism in the mid-nineteenth century United States, namely Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism* (New York: Century, 1927); Carl Mauelshagen, *American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism* (Athens: University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936); and David A. Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993). It also occurs in general histories of American Lutheranism, such as Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1964); E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999); and Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015). An important, but flawed exception to neglect of political and cultural context in treatments of mid-nineteenth century Lutheranism is Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism: The Rejection of an Activist Heritage* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988).

[7] Charles William Heathcote, *The Lutheran Church and the Civil War* (New York: Revell, 1919). For shorter treatments, see the various articles in the November 1962 issue of the *Lutheran Quarterly*; and Joel Loren Pless, "American Lutheranism and the Civil War" (S.T.M. thesis, Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, 1993).

ever before. By the summer of 1866, the General Synod had fragmented, paving the way for the rise of conservative confessionalism.

The Nation and the Church

The election of Abraham Lincoln as the sixteenth president of the United States on November 6, 1860, set the nation, already fundamentally divided over slavery, on the course toward civil war. Who Lutherans supported in the four-way electoral contest and how they voted is difficult to determine. With the exception of the Scandinavian American press, which almost uniformly supported Lincoln and the Republicans, no Lutheran paper of any school—New, confessional, Moderate, or Old—endorsed a candidate in the run-up to the election.[8] Scholars of the "new political history" have analyzed the county-level voting behavior of ethnic voters, revealing how German Americans' politics varied greatly according to local circumstances.[9] However, in 1860 most Lutherans in the United States were not first- or second-generation German-speaking immigrants, but third-, fourth-, and fifth-generation Americans, who wrote and spoke in English. Election studies based on ethnicity, therefore, are only of modest utility for determining Lutheran politics.

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[8] Nels Hokanson, *Swedish Immigrants in Lincoln's Time* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), 58-61; and Arlow W. Andersen, *The Immigrant Takes His Stand: The Norwegian-American Press and Public Affairs, 1847-1872* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1953), 77-82. The only other Lutheran paper to mention the run-up to the election of 1860 was the Old Lutheran paper, the *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, which briefly profiled three of the candidates: "Abraham Lincoln," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, July 15, 1860, 183, and "John C. Breckinridge," and "Stephen M. Douglas," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, August 1, 1860, 190.

[9] The best study remains Frederick C. Luebke, ed., *Ethnic Voters and the Election of Lincoln* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1971). See also Thomas J. Kelso, "German-American Vote in the Election of 1860: The Case of Indiana with Supporting Data from Ohio" (Ph.D. diss., Ball State University, 1967); Roger D. Petersen, "The Reaction to a Heterogeneous Society: A Behavioral and Quantitative Analysis of Northern Voting Behavior, 1845-1870, Pennsylvania a Test Case" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1970); and Stephen L. Hansen, *The Making of the Third Party System: Voters and Parties in Illinois, 1850-1876* (Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1980).

More helpful are scholars who have connected political affiliation with religious membership. According to historians such as Paul Kleppner and Robert Swierenga, Lutherans in the Mid-Atlantic and Middle West, like other religious groups, were divided along the lines of pietists and ritualists, with the former tending to vote Republican and the latter tending to vote Democratic. Yet unlike Congregationalists' support for the Republicans or Catholics' backing of the Democrats, Lutherans never voted in anything resembling a unified bloc. Instead, their theological orientation had only a moderate correlation to their political affiliation. The New and confessional Lutherans of the General Synod, whose quest to become religious insiders aligned them more with the Anglo-evangelical establishment, were more likely to support Lincoln. Moderate and Old Lutherans, who were more averse to Anglo-Protestantism, tended to vote for Stephen Douglas. Overall, in non-slave states, where Lincoln received just over fifty percent of the vote, Lutherans' electoral habits were unremarkable, mirroring those of other Protestants.[10]

Lutherans in the South also reflected the politics of their region. Emblematic of this tendency was John Bachman of South Carolina. The New York-born clergyman's political evolution is a study in inconsistency. To his mostly Northern associates in the General Synod, Bachman proclaimed himself a "union man." As late as February 1860, he declared to one Lutheran colleague his conviction that "there will be no dissolution of

[10] See Paul Kleppner, *The Third Electoral System, 1853-1892: Parties, Voters, and Political Cultures* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), esp. 153-63; and Robert P. Swierenga, "Ethnoreligious Political Behavior in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: Voting, Values, Cultures," in Mark A. Noll, ed., *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 145-68. For an important critique of this "ethnocultural thesis," see Walter D. Kamphoefner, "German-Americans and Civil War Politics: A Reconsideration of the Ethnocultural Thesis," *Civil War History* 37 (September 1991): 232-46.

the Union."[11] To his friends in elite Southern society, however, Bachman expressed much different sentiments. In the 1840s, Bachman had befriended the Virginia planter Edmund Ruffin, bonding over a mutual interest in agricultural science. As Ruffin became one of the South's most prominent fire-eaters in the 1850s, their conversations often turned to politics. After John Brown's raid on the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, in October 1859, Bachman encouraged his friend to stoke the flames of secession in "our sister Virginia." As the Republicans were nominating Lincoln as their candidate, he wrote to Ruffin that the Northern party was trying "to lull us to sleep a little while longer by putting an ass into the presidential chair."[12] Following the election of Lincoln, Bachman broke from his usual custom of avoiding politics in the pulpit and preached a sermon to his Charleston congregation calling for "a peaceful separation."[13]

The next month he offered the invocation at the South Carolina secession convention. Bachman prayed that God would grant wisdom "now when fanaticism, injustice and oppression have estranged us from those who by the ties of nature and the laws of justice were bound to us as brethren" and "enable us to protect and bless the humble [African] race, that has been confided to our care." Bachman hoped that "this division of the government in our land may… be effected in peace," but also implored his "gracious Father," if war should come, "to spread thine arm of protection over those who

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[11] Quoted in Raymond Bost, "The Reverend John Bachman and the Development of Southern Lutheranism" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1963), 498.

[12] Quoted in Peter McCandless, "The Political Evolution of John Bachman. From New York Yankee to South Carolina Secessionist," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 108 (January 2007): 28.

[13] Quoted in [Catherine L. Bachman], *John Bachman, D.D., LL. D., Ph. D: Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church, Charleston* (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans and Cogswell, 1888), 362.

are contending for their liberties…."[14] When the secession crisis turned into armed conflict, Bachman would lead his fellow Southern Lutherans in the direction of Confederate nationalism.

As the chain reaction following South Carolina's secession moved the country inexorably to war, Lutherans throughout the rest of the nation reacted to the political turmoil. Of particular consequence were the responses of those living in Maryland. Though the two Lutheran synods in this border state only comprised a little more than 10,000 members, or less than six percent of the total membership of the General Synod, the city of Baltimore was home to American Lutheranism's most widely circulated periodical, the *Lutheran Observer*.[15] Following the retirement of long-time editor Benjamin Kurtz, the paper went through a series of changes in editorship from 1859 to 1862. In February 1861 alone the paper was managed by three different groups of ministers. Despite this editorial instability, the opinions expressed by the *Lutheran Observer* on the national crisis remained consistent in the first months of 1861.

Drawing on its longstanding practice of attempting to remain "neutral" on topics of political controversy, the paper sought to be a proponent of peace. On February 15, shortly after seven states met to form the Confederate States of America, the paper's editors declared: "Our voice is then for peace…. If we must have two confederacies, let

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[14] "The Secession Convention Prayer," John Bachman Papers, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, James R. Crumley Jr. Archives, Columbia, South Carolina. The original manuscript is found in the Charleston Museum.

[15] According to the paper's editors, "our circulation is larger than that of all other [Lutheran] papers combined." "The Lutheran Observer as an Advertising Medium," *The Lutheran Observer*, March 15, 1861, 2. For membership statistics, see *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1861* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1861), 32.

the separation of states be conducted and consummated in peace."[16] After President Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to put down the rebellion following the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter in April, the *Lutheran Observer* declared that it was "the duty of christians" to unite "in desiring an amicable adjustment of our present difficulties."[17] Even after the Union's defeat at Bull Run, the editors continued to plea for peace and blamed the "rabid political press" for "kindl[ing] the flame of civil strife." Though confident in and hopeful for "the ultimate triumph of the Government," they also wrote that "we deplore this war" and prayed for its speedy conclusion.[18] Throughout the war's first year, the *Lutheran Observer* oscillated between praying for a swift and speedy victory and advocating a negotiated ceasefire.[19]

Two reasons—one geographical, one theological—account for this position. As the editors themselves acknowledged, the location of the *Lutheran Observer* in Maryland placed them in a "peculiar situation." A few weeks after pro-Southern crowds attacked federal troops passing through Baltimore on April 19, the paper's editors responded to critics of their state. They insisted that "our citizens are Union-loving and law-abiding people," and asked for sympathy from those north of the Mason-Dixon Line who would not, as those living in Maryland would, be "exposed to the unspeakable horrors of civil war."[20] In the next week's issue, the paper declared it "time for every true American to

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[16] "Peace," *Lutheran Observer*, February 15, 1861, 2.

[17] "Civil War," *Lutheran Observer*, April 26, 1861, 2.

[18] "The Great Battle," *Lutheran Observer*, August 2, 1861, 2.

[19] See, for example, "The Division of the Church," *Lutheran Observer*, October 11, 1861, 2; J. M. G., "Peace—No. 1," *Lutheran Observer*, December 6, 1861, 1; and J. M. G., "Peace—No. 2: How Best Promoted," *Lutheran Observer*, January 10, 1862, 1-2.

[20] "The Critical Position of Maryland," *Lutheran Observer*, May 10, 1861, 2.

show his undying loyalty to the government." The editors, however, confessed that their stand for the Union was mixed with both "feelings of unuttered sadness" and the "spirit of self-devotion and patriotism."[21] Like many other Marylanders, those who managed the oldest and most widely read American Lutheran paper never supported secession, but were indecisive in their support of the Union.[22]

The stance of the *Lutheran Observer* during the early stages of the war owed not only to its location in a border state, but also its being the flagship publication of New Lutheranism, the school to which most Southern Lutherans, including Bachman, belonged. Consequently, the paper's editors desired peace not only in the nation but also in their church party. Following the secession of South Carolina, they worried "what the effect of this agitation will be upon the Lutheran church south." They noted how in the past "our church has not been distracted" by "the subject of slavery," but they now feared "a division in our church."[23] Even after war was declared, the *Lutheran Observer* persisted in its advocacy for intra-Lutheran unity. Rather than "furnishing an excuse for dividing the church," its editors argued, "the evils [of this war]… constitute a very powerful motive for a closer and more vital union of all sections of our beloved Zion." Drawing on rhetoric similar to Lincoln's first inaugural address, they wrote that "the memories of the past, the association of the present, and the bright hopes of the future

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[21] "Our Country," *Lutheran Observer*, May 17, 1861, 2.

[22] As late as the middle of May, the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* expressed uncertainty about whether or not their state would secede: "Will Maryland Secede?" *Lutheran Observer*, May 17, 1861, 2. On views about the Union and secession in Maryland, see Charles W. Mitchell, ed., *Maryland Voices of the Civil War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007); and Michael D. Robinson, *A Union Indivisible: Secession and the Politics of Slavery in the Border South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

[23] "The Interest of the Church in the Questions which Agitate the Country," *Lutheran Observer*, December 28, 1860, 3.

should constrain all to promptly dismiss the thought of dividing." Lutherans of the General Synod, they insisted, "should unite in hearty efforts of 'keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'"[24] The *Lutheran Observer* feared ecclesiastical schism even more than national disunion.

Despite the numerous olive branches which the *Lutheran Observer* extended to its Southern readers, the relationship between New Lutherans in the Union and those in the Confederacy soured quickly.[25] In June 1861, the paper published excerpts of several angry letters from correspondents in the South who lambasted the paper's Unionist sentiments. One writer, a Lutheran pastor from Georgia, told the editors that "if the Lutherans of the north hold the views presented in the Observer, there is an absolute, an inevitable necessity for a division."[26] By mid-July, all Southern Lutherans had cancelled their subscriptions to the *Lutheran Observer*, costing the paper a thousand subscribers.[27] Lutheran synods in the South began to withdraw from the General Synod. The following month, Confederate Lutherans formed their own paper, the *Southern Lutheran*.

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[24] "Will Our Church Be Divided?" *Lutheran Observer*, May 17, 1861, 2.

[25] For the most complete overview of Southern Lutheranism during the Civil War, see H. George Anderson, *Lutheranism in the Southeastern States, 1860-1886: A Social History* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 26-85. See also Gordon W. Ward, Jr., "The Formation of the Lutheran General Synod, South, During the Civil War," *Lutheran Quarterly* 13 (May 1961): 132-54; William Edward Eisenberg, *The Lutheran Church in Virginia, 1717-1962, including an Account of the Lutheran Church in East Tennessee* (Roanoke: Trustees of the Virginia Synod, Lutheran Church in America, 1967), 205-38; Raymond M. Bost and Jeff L. Norris, *All One Body: The Story of the North Carolina Synod, 1803-1993* (Salisbury: North Carolina Synod, 1994), 111-35; and Russell C. Kleckley, "Abolition and Confessionalism in 'Our Southern Zion': The Civil War and Southern Lutheran Identity," in Raymond M. Bost, ed., *Lutheranism… with a Southern Accent: Essays and Reports, 1994, The Lutheran Historical Conference* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1998), 177-94.

[26] "The Observer—Its Foes and its Friends," *Lutheran Observer*, June 7, 1861.

[27] "Southern Correspondence," *Lutheran Observer*, July 19, 1861, 2. See also "Southern Correspondence," *Lutheran Observer*, July 26, 1861, 2.

Headed by Bachman and the South Carolina Synod, the Charleston-based paper played a crucial role in uniting the members of the various Lutheran synods in the seceded states around a shared Confederate identity. In an open letter directed at Kurtz, who continued to write for the *Lutheran Observer* even after retiring from its editorship, Bachman accused his former colleague of "deceiv[ing] the Northern mind, and le[ading] them to believe that it was their duty to whip the South into submission." He compared the support of Southern Lutherans for the Confederate cause to the participation of "our Lutheran forefathers" in the American Revolution. Those heroes, Bachman asserted, "contended for the same rights for which the South is struggling."[28] The *Southern Lutheran* encouraged all Lutheran synods in the Confederacy, even those not connected to the General Synod, to "meet in Convention for the more perfect organization of our Southern Lutheran Church."[29] The efforts of the *Lutheran Observer* to keep Southern Lutherans in the General Synod had failed.

The Maryland paper's stance during the early years of the war also drew fire from General Synod Lutherans living north of the border state. The most pointed criticism came from William Passavant's *Missionary*. Though more strident than the *Lutheran Observer* in its condemnation of secession, in the early months of 1861 the confessional Lutheran paper shared with its New Lutheran counterpart the hope that a "general civil war will be averted."[30] After Fort Sumter, however, the Pittsburgh-based weekly began to

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[28] J[ohn] B[achman, "A Reply to the Attack of the Rev. Benjamin Kurtz, D.D., Editor of the Lutheran Observer," *Southern Lutheran*, November 16, 1861, 2.

[29] A., "Conservatism," *Southern Lutheran*, September 28, 1861, 2.

[30] "Our National Troubles," *Missionary*, February 14, 1861, 14. For the paper's pre-emptive condemnation of secession, see "Our Country," *Missionary*, December 13, 1860, 186. For similar rhetoric from a minister of the Pennsylvania Synod, see Jacob Fry, *Trembling for the Ark of God: or, the Danger*

beat the war drum: "Secessionists have taken the sword, and by the sword they will perish." Passavant likened "the organized band of traitors at Montgomery" to "an armed mob" and asserted that it is "the duty of every Christian patriot to stand by the Government and the laws."[31] When its Maryland rival failed to express the same sentiments, readers of the *Missionary* voiced their disapproval. One correspondent went so far as to ask, "Is the 'Observer' in League with the Great Civil Rebellion?"[32] Even after the *Lutheran Observer* declared its official support for the Union's war effort, Passavant continued to criticize the paper's "former Secession proclivities and… sudden conversion to loyalty."[33]

The *Lutheran and Home Journal*, edited by a committee of clergymen headed by Charles Porterfield Krauth and Joseph Seiss, not only shared the same theological orientation as the *Missionary*, but also voiced similar political views. As the war commenced, the Philadelphia-based semimonthly made no concessions to city's numerous Peace Democrats and Southern sympathizers.[34] Though they lamented the looming horrors of war and acknowledged the country's "great national sins," the paper's editors laid the blame for the conflict squarely on the shoulders of the "seceding

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and Duty of the Church in the Present Crisis: A Sermon Preached in the First Lutheran Church, Carisle, Pa. on Sunday Evening, Dec. 30, 1860 (Carisle, PA: E. Cornman, 1861).

[31] "WAR," *Missionary*, April 18, 1861, 50.

[32] A Friend of His Country, "Is the 'Observer' in League with the Great Civil Rebellion?" *Missionary*, May 9, 1861, 62, See also the letter from "Stars and Stripes," a self-professed "American Lutheran." *Missionary*, May 9, 1861, 62.

[33] "A Singular Request," *Missionary*, June 27, 1861, 90.

[34] On the contested politics in Philadelphia during the war, see J. Matthew Gallman, *Mastering Wartime: A Social History of Philadelphia during the Civil War* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 170-93; and William F., Quigley, Jr., *Pure Heart: The Faith of a Father and Son in the War for a More Perfect Union* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2016), 42-90, 130-48.

States."[35] According to Krauth and Seiss, "The Southern doctrine of States rights is itself the seed of war, and Secession is an act of war." The editors believed that God would judge the Southern "demagogues who… have plunged the whole land into war" and that "men will stand aghast at the terrors of his retribution."[36]

Unlike the *Lutheran Observer*, the *Missionary* and *Lutheran and Home Journal* showed little concern for how their anti-secession fulminations would be viewed by Southern Lutherans. Once again, theological concerns played a role in this decision. Because the papers' editors belonged to the confessional movement in the General Synod, they had little reason to placate the numerous New Lutherans in the South and every incentive to disparage the *Lutheran Observer* for doing just that. Passavant was particularly fierce in his criticism. He accused the paper of bowing to the wishes of its "masters in the South," such as Bachman, by excluding from its pages "every thing having the most remote bearing to loyalty and liberty" and "every thing offensive to the South."[37] According to some confessional Lutherans, the New Lutherans' Southern entanglements had caused them to come perilously close to treason.

The editors of the *Lutheran Observer* were deeply offended by these accusations of disloyalty. Writing at the beginning of 1862, one of the paper's editors lamented how in the previous year "we had to encounter a form of opposition in the free states as unchristian as it was unjust." He defended his publication's advocacy for "an amicable adjustment to our national troubles" and, when that failed, its attempt "to save our church

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[35] "Our Country," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, May 3, 1861, 68; and "One Difficulty," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, May 17, 1861, 76.

[36] "Character of the Present War," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, June 21, 1861, 92-93. See also E. Greenwald, "The Parties in the Present War," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, July 19, 1861, 105-6.

[37] "A Sudden Conversion," *Missionary*, June 13, 1861, 82.

from being sundered." He laid the guilt for "rending and wounding the body of Christ" squarely at the feet of Lutherans like Passavant, Krauth, and Seiss, who, in the estimation of the *Lutheran Observer*, had exalted the concerns of the nation above the mission of the church.[38]

Other Lutherans in the North also confronted the issues facing the church and the nation. During the secession crisis and early stages of the war, the stance of the *Lutheran Standard*, the biweekly paper of the Moderate Lutheran Ohio Synod, resembled that of its ecclesiastical adversary, the *Lutheran Observer*, in advocating for peace. Even before South Carolina had officially seceded, the editor of Columbus-based paper, Daniel Worley (1829-1888), argued that it was "best… for us to separate into two or more distinct confederacies" and urged his readers to "unite our prayers for a peaceful solution of the difficulties which will be sure to arise in the process of separation."[39] When war was declared in April, the Ohio paper mirrored its Maryland rival in its condemnation of "ungodly ambition, national pride, and sectional prejudices" for bringing on the war and in its supplications to God to "grant that peace and unity… be restored."[40] Yet unlike the flagship publication of New Lutheranism, the Moderate Lutheran paper maintained this stance throughout the war. Though it neither criticized the Lincoln administration nor

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[38] F. R. Anspach, "Past, Present and Future," *Lutheran Observer*, January 3, 1862, 2. See also "The Missionary's Misrepresentations," *Lutheran Observer*, June 21, 1861, 3.

[39] "Our Country," *Lutheran Standard*, December 14, 1860, 3. Worley assumed "entire control" of the paper in December 1859. "Prospectus," *Lutheran Standard*, December 9, 1859, 3. From March 1, 1862, to August 15 of the same year, the paper was printed temporarily in Marysville, Ohio. It then returned to Columbus. Very little has been written about Worley, even in works specifically about Lutheranism in Ohio. The most complete overview of his life is in George Washington Mechling, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran District Synod of Ohio: Covering Fifty-Three Years, 1857-1910* (Dayton, OH: Giele and Pflaum, 1911), 206-7.

[40] "Civil War," *Lutheran Standard*, April 26, 1861, 3.

advocated for Peace Democrats in political contests, the *Lutheran Standard* consistently urged the nation to restore swiftly the status quo ante bellum.[41]

Like the *Lutheran Observer*, Worley's paper had ecclesiastical reasons for urging peace. Over the course of the 1850s, the Ohio Synod had become partners with the Tennessee Synod, the church body made up of those Lutheran congregations which had broken away from the South's various New Lutheran synods. After the war commenced, the *Lutheran Standard* made an even more determined effort than the *Lutheran Observer* to maintain unity with its "Southern friends and brethren." In contrast to the General Synod, which had effectively split along sectional lines by May 1862, Worley insisted that "true Lutheran Synods" like his own "know no North[,] no South, no East, no West, but only a universal Christian brotherhood."[42] The realities of war, however, gradually eroded the two synods' fellowship. In August 1862, the *Lutheran Standard* ceased listing agents for distributing their paper in the South.[43] The following November, the clergy of the Tennessee Synod, who already had thrown their support behind the Confederate cause, began contemplating their own church paper.[44] Though one correspondent hoped as late as October 1864 that the two synods might resume their fraternal connection, no

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[41] "The Way to Peace," *Lutheran Standard*, November 22, 1861, 1. On the ideology of Peace Democrats and their prominence in Ohio and other Midwestern states, see Frank L. Klement, *The Copperheads in the Middle West* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960); and Jennifer L. *Copperheads: The Rise and Fall of Lincoln's Opponents in the North* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[42] "Our Southern Friends and Brethren," *Lutheran Standard*, May 1, 1862, 2. See also "To Our Friends North and South," *Lutheran Standard*, May 10, 1861, 2.

[43] "Agents for the South," *Lutheran Standard*, July 15, 1862, 2.

[44] *Proceedings of the Forty-Second Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, Held in Grace Church, Catawba County, North Carolina, From 4th to 7th October, 1862* (Greensborough, NC: M. S. Sherwood, 1863), 6.

reunion ever occurred.[45] The break between the Ohio and Tennessee synods was not as dramatic or bitter as the General Synod's sectional schism. Nevertheless, by the mid-point of the Civil War the partnership between these Moderate Lutherans had ended.

Ultimately, as in the debates over slavery and politics in the antebellum era, what most shaped American Lutherans' approaches to the early stages of the Civil War was their geographical location. The disputes between the confessional Lutherans of the *Missionary* and the *Lutheran and Home Journal* and the New Lutherans of the *Lutheran Observer* reflected their ecclesiastical partnerships and ideological convictions. But what mattered most was that the former papers were based in Pennsylvania and the latter paper was headquartered in Maryland. In a similar vein, the *Lutheran Standard* of Ohio reflected the attitude of the state's large number of Copperheads. In other words, those Lutherans who took up the Union cause earlier and with greater fervor did so largely as a reflection of the political culture of their respective states, rather than as an application of their particular view of Lutheran theology.

Despite their disagreements, by the spring of 1862 virtually all General Synod Lutherans in the loyal states had come not only to embrace the Northern war effort but also to exhibit the hallmarks of American civil religion. In the first year after the *Lutheran and Missionary* was formed as a combination of the *Lutheran and Home Journal*, the *Missionary*, and a small Illinois-based paper, the *Olive Branch*, its editors Krauth and Passavant devoted nearly half of each issue to news and commentary on the war. The new Philadelphia-based paper also advocated Christian patriotism. As Krauth

[45] J. C. Barb, "Lutheranism in Tennessee," *Lutheran Standard*, October 15, 1864, 8.

confidently asserted, "our blessed Lord was a patriot."[46] The editor also believed that the military conflict had a divine purpose. Reflecting on the one-year anniversary of the war's commencement, he assured his readers that "God will use this war… [so that] we shall have a nation just, tender, and, for the first time, in the highest sense, free."[47]

The *Lutheran Observer* also came to champion the righteousness of the Union cause. In February 1862, Benjamin Kurtz came out of retirement to reprise his role as editor. Under Kurtz, the paper increased its coverage of the war and became more explicit in its condemnation of the South. Confederates, the editor wrote, "are in rampant rebellion, trying to destroy the best government in the world… [and] the fairest and happiest land that God's sun ever shone upon." Though he claimed not to be able to discern the mysteries of "providence," he knew that "one thing is certain—sin is wrong and virtue is right, obedience to God is acceptable and will be rewarded, while disobedience is hateful and will certainly be punished."[48] For those who shared Kurtz's view, the United States was a nation uniquely favored by God and the war to preserve it had a sacred purpose.

Some Northern Lutherans further demonstrated their devotion to the nation by volunteering in the Union army. Determining the number of Lutherans who served militarily in the Civil War and examining the thoughts and experiences of lay Lutheran soldiers are not only beyond the scope of this study but also present severe challenges in

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[46] "Bible Lessons for the Times: The Artful Question," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 6, 1862, 2.

[47] "Lessons of the Twelve-Month," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 1, 1862, 2.

[48] B. K., "'Let Us Alone,'" *Lutheran Observer*, August 15, 1862.

terms of documentary evidence.[49] Yet accurate figures and ample sources are available on the service of Lutheran ministers. At least twenty-three American Lutheran pastors served as chaplains.[50] (This figure does not include Ferdinand Sarner, a German Jewish rabbi mistakenly listed by the American board of chaplains as a Lutheran minister.[51]) For Lutheran chaplains, the war afforded the opportunity to serve both God and country, which many saw as inextricably linked. As one chaplain, John Stuckenberg, prayed before his regiment, "Bless all those have who have gone and still go forth… to preserve among us and to spread abroad to the remotest parts of the Earth the precious blessings of liberty and undefiled Religion."[52]

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[49] The most plentiful sources come from Scandinavians, who made up a tiny fraction of the Lutherans who served in the Union army. See Theodore C. Blegen, ed., *The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg* (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1936); Millard L. Gieske, ed. and trans., "Some Civil War Letters of Knute Nelson," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 23 (1967): 17-50; C. A. Clausen, ed. and trans., "The Letters of Mons H. Grinager: Pioneer and Soldier," *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 24 (1970): 29-77; O. H. Hovde, ed., *The Civil War Diary of George Johnson Hovden*, trans. Norma Johnson Jordahl (Decorah, IA: Luther College Library, 1971); Bersven Nelson, "Notes of a Civil War Soldier," ed. and trans. C. A. Clausen, *Norwegian-American Studies and Records* 26 (1974): 118-45; Lars Dokken and Knud Olsen Dokken, "Two Immigrants for the Union: Their Civil War Letters," ed. Carol Lynn H. Knight and Gerald S. Cowden, trans. Della Kittleson Catuna, *Norwegian-American Studies* 28 (1979): 109-37; Eemory Johnson, trans., "Civil War Letters to New Sweden, Iowa," *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* 36 (January 1985): 3-25; and Waldemar Ager, *Colonel Heg and His Boys: A Norwegian Regiment in the American Civil War*, trans. Della Kittleson Catuna and Clarence A. Clausen (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 2000). For an important collection of German American sources, which contains some Lutheran voices, see Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, eds., *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home*, trans. Susan Carter Vogel (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

[50] Twenty-two Lutheran chaplains were listed in *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1863* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1863), 37. Not included was John H. W. Stuckenberg (see below), possibly because he did not enlist until September 1862.

[51] Warren B. Armstrong, *For Courageous Fighting and Confident Dying: Union Chaplains in the Civil War* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1998), 6.

[52] David T. Hedrick and Gordon Barry Davis, Jr., eds., *I'm Surrounded by Methodists: Diary of John H. W. Stuckenberg, Chaplain of the 145th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry* (Gettysburg, PA: Thomas Publishing, 1995), 118. For another diary of a Lutheran chaplain, see William Furry, ed., *The Preacher's Tale: The Civil War Journal of Rev. Francis Springer, Chaplain, U.S. Army of the Frontier* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2001).

Several Lutheran deaconesses also served the Union army as nurses. The first deaconesses had come to the United States at the behest of Passavant, who discovered the German deaconess movement during his trip to Europe in 1846.[53] From 1850 to 1866, nineteen Lutheran sisters, many of whom were immigrants, served at the orphan house that Passavant founded in Pittsburgh. During the Civil War, several of them temporarily left the orphanage to serve at Union infirmaries. Two of these women, Sister Elizabeth Hupperts (1849-1899) and Sister Barbara Kaag (1823-1900), were the lead nurses at hospitals near the nation's capital.[54] Like their counterparts in the chaplaincy, the war presented the opportunity to demonstrate their obedience to God and their loyalty to their country.

The wedding of American nationalism and the Christian faith was on fullest display in the numerous sermons offered up by General Synod ministers. At the beginning of the war some, such as Seiss, had cautioned against "*patriotizing* Christianity."[55] Most Lutheran preachers, however, ignored his warning, especially on special days of fasting and thanksgiving held throughout the war. Typical of the first kind was the sermon on the National Fast-Day of September 26, 1861 by a New Lutheran pastor in Pennsylvania. Though he saw the entire nation as guilty of many sins, such as "Sabbath desecration" and "the traffic in, and the intemperate use of ardent spirits," he

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[53] G. H. Gerberding, *The Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, D.D.* (Greenville, PA: Young Lutheran, 1906), 174-76.

[54] Herman L. Fritschel, *A Story of One Hundred Years of Deaconess Service: By the Institution of Protestant Deaconesses, Pennsylvania, and the Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse at Milwaukee, Wisconsin 1849-1949* (Milwaukee, WI: Lutheran Deaconess Motherhouse, 1949), 27, 36. For the fullest account of American Lutheran deaconesses, see Margit Herfarth, *Leben in zwei Welten: Die amerikanische Diakonissenbewegung und ihre deutschen Wurzeln* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt GmbH, 2014).

[55] Joseph A. Seiss, *Government and Christianity: A Sermon for the Times* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman and Son, 1861), 9.

believed that the greatest offenses were committed by those in the South, not only "treason" and "rebellion" but also "the inhuman treatment of slaves." True Christians, he preached, were obliged to "a firm and active loyalty to the government and the Constitution of the Union" of this "christian nation."[56] Thanksgiving sermons also made little distinction between the nation and the church. "The God of the Universe… is our nation's God," preached another Pennsylvania Lutheran on November 28, 1861. "Our nation is his peculiar heritage and receives his fostering care, and to Him, as a nation, we owe obedience…."[57] Mirroring their Southern counterparts' embrace of Confederate nationalism, Northern Lutherans in the General Synod—New, confessional, and Moderate—viewed the American Union as ordained and favored by God.

This Christian patriotism found official expression at Lutheran synodical meetings, many of which passed resolutions supporting the Union cause. One of the first was the Moderate Lutheran body, the Pennsylvania Synod, whose members in May 1861 pledged their "unalterable fidelity to the Union; a conscientious obedience to the lawfully constituted authorities; and a heartfelt willingness and readiness to aid to the utmost of

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[56] J. T. Williams, *Sermon Delivered in the Lutheran Churches of the Blain Charge, on the National Fast-Day, September 26th, 1861* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1861), 9, 11, 6, 13, 17-18. See also D. Garver, *Our Country in the Light of History: An Address before the Alumni Association of Pennsylvania College, Delivered by Christ's Church, Gettysburg, Pa., September 18, 1861* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1861); and B. Sadtler, *A Rebellious Nation Reproved: A Sermon Preached by Rev. B. Sadtler, Pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Easton, Pa., on the Day of Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, September 26, 1861* (Easton, PA: Davis and Eichman, 1861).

[57] D. H. Focht, "Our Country: A Sermon Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, in the Presbyterian Church, New Bloomfield, Pa., Nov. 28, 1861," in D. H. Focht, *Our Country: Two Sermons, etc.* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1862), 65. See also D. H. Focht, *Our National Day: An Address, Delivered at Ickesburg, Pa., on the Fourth Day of July, 1862* (Selinsgrove, PA: Kirchenbote Office, 1862); Charles J. Ehrehart, *A Discourse Delivered in St. Peter's Evan. Lutheran Church, Middletown, Pa.: On Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 1862* (Lancaster, PA: E. H. Thomas and Son, 1862); and Peter Anstadt, *Loyalty to the Government: A Thanksgiving Sermon Delivered in Selingsgove, Pa, on the 6th of August 1863* (Selingrove, PA: Luth. Kirchenbote, 1863).

our ability, in preserving and protecting our glorious Union."[58] Synods that leaned toward New Lutheranism voiced similar sentiments. The East Ohio Synod, meeting at New Philadelphia in August 1861, called on the memory of Lutherans who fought in the War for Independence, declaring that "we, in imitation of their patriotic example, and in admiration of their valor, declare it to be a Christian as well as a civil duty to support the government in its constitutional efforts to punish treason, and put down rebellion by all the means within our power."[59]

In May 1862, the General Synod convened in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. With the Southern Lutheran synods conspicuously absent, the twenty-one synods urged "our beloved country… to suppress an armed rebellion against its lawfully constituted government" and declared "it as our duty to give public expression to our fellow citizens in sustaining the great interests of law and authority, of liberty and righteousness."[60] More than a year after the firing on Fort Sumter, the General Synod had officially declared its loyalty to the Union.

Politics and Religion

Over the course of the Civil War, Lutherans, like other American Christians, debated the extent to which religious believers should engage in political activity. Historian Timothy Wesley has sorted the wartime approaches toward political preaching

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[58] G. Krotel, "Resolutions of the Pennsylvania Synod," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, June 21, 1861, 90.

[59] "Abstract of the Proceedings of the East Ohio Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, September 13, 1861, 2.

[60] *Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Assembled in Lancaster, Pa., May, 1862* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1862), 29-30.

into three categories. On one extreme were those, like Presbyterian Stuart Robinson, who divided religion and politics into two entirely "*separate spheres*" and argued that the preacher's obligation was to focus on the former and refrain from the latter. At the other pole were those, such as Congregationalist Henry Ward Beecher, who saw religion and politics as "*separate components* of an all-encompassing Christian ministry" and openly advocated for politicians and parties. Occupying the centrist position were those who believed that religious instruction and political commentary were "*separate duties*," equally legitimate but distinct.[61]

The *Lutheran Observer* exemplified this final category. On the one hand, the paper was sharply critical of Christians becoming "political agitators."[62] While "other denominations attempted to legislate on the subject of slavery… and were rent asunder," the editors boasted in May 1861, "the Lutheran church always confined itself to the legitimate work of preaching the Gospel."[63] Yet the paper also criticized political quietism. In an article that explicitly denounced Robinson and his paper, the *True Presbyterian*, the *Lutheran Observer* asserted that the "theory of the separation of spiritual from secular matters… is in antagonism to the spirit and teaching of christianity."[64] As one contributor to the paper wrote, Lutheran pastors "have duties to our God and our country." He argued that, while they should refrain from "electioneering for office" or "making stump speeches," preachers should "denounce everything which is

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[61] Wesley, *Politics of Faith during the Civil War*, 95. For a useful, but incomplete overview of the various American Lutheran approaches to the issue, see John M. Brndjar, "'Political Preaching' During the Civil War," *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (November 1962): 320-27.

[62] Anspach, "Past, Present and Future," 2. See also "The Missionary's Misrepresentations," *Lutheran Observer*, June 21, 1861, 3.

[63] "Will Our Church Be Divided?" 2.

[64] Religion and Politics," *Lutheran Observer*, May 2, 1862, 2.

injurious to christianity," such as the sale of "intoxicating drinks" and "political corruption."[65] Exempt from his list of sins, however, was slavery.

The *Lutheran and Missionary*, by contrast, exhibited a wider range of approaches toward political preaching. Passavant, the paper's co-editor, was an admirer of Henry Ward Beecher and often resembled the famous preacher's view of a comprehensive approach to Christian political engagement. Yet he saw the role of both the preacher and the religious editor as standing separate from—or, more accurately, above—"party connections" or "partisan readers." "We care not a farthing for the names or platforms of parties," Passavant announced. "Our business as an Editor is with Christian principles. Whatever conflicts with these, we oppose; whatever agrees with these, we advocate."[66] Krauth, the paper's general editor, endorsed a more conservative view. Citing Matthew 22:21, he argued that Jesus "places before us two spheres, the sphere of Caesar, of human government, and the sphere of God, or of divine government" and that "we are not to give one what is due to the other."[67] Yet Krauth also contended that "while the sanctuary is no place for the discussion of the partisan questions that divide good men…, [Christ] also taught that Christian men and Christian ministers… at proper times and under proper circumstances, controlled by charity and prudence,… may utter what they believe."[68]

What united the seemingly divergent attitudes toward political preaching among those associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary* was a shared belief that rebellion

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[65] J. H. B., "Politics in the Pulpit," *Lutheran Observer*, January 25, 1861, 1.

[66] "Afraid of Politics," *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 6, 1862, 5. See also "The Religious Press and the Country," *Missionary*, May 16, 1861, 66.

[67] "Bible Lessons for the Times: The Two Spheres," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 3, 1862, 2.

[68] "Bible Lessons for the Times: The Artful Question," 2.

against lawful authority was sinful and obedience to the government was a Christian duty. Along with Jesus' injunction to "render unto Caesar," key biblical texts for this teaching came from I Peter 2 and Romans 13, which commanded believers to "submit to the governing authorities." As Seiss preached in a sermon in May 1861, not only has "*God has made it our duty to render to the government a loyal obedience*," but "*we are also bound to support the government*."[69] Such sentiments were not unique to Lutherans of the confessional party. Yet more so than with the *Lutheran Observer*, the interpretation of the war as a lawless revolution against divinely ordained authority shaped the approach of the *Lutheran and Missionary* to political preaching. Though the paper acknowledged that a Christian was not bound to obey unjust authority, the Union cause, they believed, was both lawful and just. When Krauth wrote, "The duty to government is a duty to God," he meant that one of the duties of the Lutheran minister was to preach obedience to the American government and Constitution.[70]

Much less reticent about opining on political matters were the small numbers of Scandinavian American Lutherans. As noted in Chapter Three, the Swedish and Norwegian immigrant political press had close ties to the Lutheran church and some papers even were edited by Lutheran ministers. The Swedish *Hemlandet*, edited by Pastor Tufve Hasselquist, openly advocated for the Republican Party throughout the war and published pro-Union articles written by other clergymen.[71] The Norwegian *Emigranten*,

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[69] Joseph A. Seiss, *Government and Christianity: A Sermon for the Times* (Philadelphia: C. Sherman and Son, 1861), 18, 21. See also H. L. Baugher, *The Christian Patriot: A Discourse Address to the Graduating Class of Pennsylvania College, September 15, 1861* (Gettysburg, PA: A. D. Buehler, 1861), 3, 8.

[70] "Bible Lessons for the Times: The Denarius," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 13, 1862, 2.

[71] O. Fritiof Ander, *T. N. Hasselquist: The Career and Influence of a Swedish-American Clergyman, Journalist and Educator* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1931), 185-86; O. Fritiof

edited by Carl Solberg, a layman, likewise supported Lincoln and the Republicans, but the paper also evinced the growing divide between the Norwegian clergy and the laity over the issue of slavery, discussed below. In those papers dedicated solely to the work of the church, such as the Norwegian Synod's *Maanedstidende*, commentary on the war was offered, but not from an explicitly partisan perspective.[72]

In contrast, the *Lutheran Standard* of the Moderate Lutheran Ohio Synod resembled the "separate spheres" approach, drawing a bright line between "religion and worldly policy," even as battles increased and casualties mounted.[73] Like the New Lutheran editors of the *Lutheran Observer*, Worley believed that many were approaching the "war question in such a manner… very much opposed to the dictates of our common christianity and the Gospel."[74] Yet Worley went further, chastising other Christians not merely for mixing religion and politics improperly, but for taking up political questions in the first place. The *Lutheran Standard* also echoed the confessional *Lutheran and Missionary*, when it asserted that Christ's command to "render unto Caesar" meant that "the government, as an instrumentality ordained of God demands the absolute obedience of the Christian citizen." However, unlike Passavant and Krauth, Worley insisted that

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Ander, "Swedish-American Newspapers and the Republican Party, 1855-1875," in O. Fritiof Ander, ed., *Augustana Historical Society Publications, Number 2* (Rock Island, IL: Augustana Book Concern, 1933), 72-74; and Hokanson, *Swedish Immigrants in Lincoln's Time*, 61-64.

[72] Andersen, *Immigrant Takes His Stand*, 82-107.

[73] "Position of the Lutheran Church in the Present Crisis," *Lutheran Standard*, November 22, 1861, 2.

[74] "The Crisis—The Unity of the Church," *Lutheran Standard*, June 7, 1861, 3.

ministers should only state this teaching as a general principle. "[T]he special applications" of this doctrine, he wrote, "we must leave to each Christian reader."[75]

As in the case of other similarly minded American Protestants, the avowal of the *Lutheran Standard* to keep religion and politics completely distinct betrayed a political ideology.[76] Those associated with the paper insisted throughout the war that they had "carefully abstained from bringing to our columns anything which might even have borne the suspicion of our taking sides in any way, in the political questions, out of which our present troubles have mainly arisen." Yet often in those same articles they advocated "a return to peace and unity."[77] Moreover, what Worley failed to recognize was that his supposedly neutral stance *was* a political stance. His contention that Lutherans were "free to choose their own political opinions" implied that secession was a legitimate option.[78] To be sure, the *Lutheran Standard* avoided the pitfalls of Christian patriotism and American civil religion. But its editor's belief that its policy was politically neutral was as naïve as it was deeply held.

A more thoroughly thought-out "separate spheres" perspective came from the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod. Rather than stemming from the Southern doctrine of the spirituality of the church, these conservative Lutherans espoused an American version of the historic Lutheran teaching of the two kingdoms. C. F. W. Walther perhaps best distilled this view when he wrote in May 1862: "State and church… are two completely

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[75] "Render unto Cesar the Things that are Cesar's; and unto God the Things that are God's," *Lutheran Standard*, November 8, 1861, 2-3.

[76] Wesley, *Politics of Faith during the Civil War*, 104-5.

[77] "The Church and the Present Politics of the Country," *Lutheran Standard*, April 1, 1863, 2.

[78] "Position of the Lutheran Church in the Present Crisis," 2.

different kingdoms at the same time. One is spiritual, the other secular. One is maintained and ruled by the sword and force, the other… through God's Word alone. Every alliance between the two is unnatural and can only result in damage to the church."[79] Yet, for Walther and his colleagues, this separation of church and state did not imply that Christians, even pastors, must remain neutral on questions of politics. When the Civil War erupted, one contributor to the *Lutheraner* listed ten principles to guide his fellow Lutherans "in this time of political confusion and agitation of minds." The writer distinguished between "questions… purely of a political kind," which have no place in the pulpit, and "political opinions… aris[ing] from false doctrine," which Christians have a duty to denounce. In their role "as citizens," he encouraged his fellow Lutherans to approach politics with "humbleness and meekness" rather than with "recklessness and presumptuousness," to "seek advice from experts," and to "not forget… that [the Christian] is destined to be an alien on earth."[80] In the Old Lutheran view, the earthly realm of politics was distinct from the spiritual kingdom of the church, but the Christian lived and had responsibilities in both.[81]

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[79] C. F. W. Walther, "Address, Eight Western District Convention, Trinity Church, Crete, Will County, Ill., Beginning May 15, 1862," trans. Robert Ernest Smith, in *Essays for the Church: Volume 1* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1992), 66.

[80] Th. Brohm, "Der Christ und die Politik," *Lutheraner*, May 14, 1861, 153-54. For a translation of this article, see Sieghart Rein, trans., "The Christian and Politics," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 84 (Summer 2011): 119-121.

[81] For the most helpful studies on how Walther and the Missouri Synod understood the relationship between religion and politics in the Civil War era, see Paul M. Kavasch, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod During the Early Years of the Civil War," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 31 (October 1958): 65-78, (January 1959): 104-9; Aug. R. Sueflow, "Walther the American," in Arthur H. Drevlow, John M. Drickamer, and Glenn E. Reichwald, eds., *C.F W. Walther: The American Luther: Essays in Commemoration of the 100th Anniversary of Carl Walther's Death* (Mankato, MN: Walther Press, 1987), 13-35; Angelika Dörfler-Dierken, *Luthertum und Demokratie: Deutsche und amerikanische Theologen des 19. Jahrhunderts zu Staat, Gesellschaft, und Kirche* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001), 239-334; and Cameron A. MacKenzie, "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and the Public Square in the Era of C. F. W. Walther" in David L. Adams and Ken Schurb, eds., *The*

With such an understanding of the relationship between religion and politics, the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod more closely resembled the New and confessional Lutherans of the General Synod than the Moderate Lutherans of the Ohio Synod. The *Illustrirte Abend Schule* (renamed the *Abend Schule* in 1863, when financial pressures forced the paper no longer to print pictures) supplied news and commentary on political and military events in its "Geschichte des Tages" section and sometimes in full-length articles written from, in their estimation, "an unpartisan, truthful" perspective.[82] The *Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre* advanced theological interpretations of the issues surrounding the war, including two sermons in the former publication by Walther on national days of repentance.[83] Two Old Lutheran clergymen—one from the Missouri Synod, the other from the Norwegian Synod—served as chaplains in the Union army.[84]

Anonymous God: The Church Confronts Civil Religion and American Society (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2004), 93-119.

[82] "Vorwort," *Abend Schule*, September 1, 1863, 2. See also "Ueber die beste Politik," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, March 1, 1861, 97-98, March 15, 1861, 105-6. The "Geschichte des Tages" section appeared in every issue. For examples of articles on Civil War-related news, see "General McClellan," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, September 15, 1861, 13; "General W. S. Rosenkranz," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, October 1, 1861, 21; "Vorwort," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, September 1, 1862, 1-2; "Ein gutes politisches Blatt," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, November 15, 1862, 42; and "Trost wegen der Zukunft unseres Vaterlandes," *Abend Schule*, January 1, 1864, 65-66.

[83] C. F. W. W[alther], "Predigt, am allgemeinen Bußtag, den 26 Sept, dieses Jahres, in der Immanuelskirche der deutschen ev.-luth. Gemeinde ungänderter Augsburgischer Confession zu St. Louis, Mo., gehalten und auf ausdrückliches Verlangen genannter Gemeinder mitgetheilt," *Lutheraner*, October 16, 1861, 33-37; and C. F. W. W[alther], "Bußtagspredigt, gehalten den 27. Nov. 1862 zu St. Louis, Mo., und auf Verlangen seiner Gemeinder verffentlicht," *Lutheraner*, January 21, 1863, 81-84. The first sermon was reprinted as "Am alljährlichen allgemeinen Bußtag," in C. F. W. Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Evangelium Postille: Predigten über die evangelischen Pericopen der Sonntage und hauptfeste des Kirchenjahrs* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. a. Staaten, 1870), 398-404. For a translation, see "Day of Humiliation (of the Year 1861)," in C. F. W. Walther, *Gospel Sermons: Volume 2*, trans. Donald E. Heck (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2014), 268-77. This second sermon was reprinted as "Am jährlichen Bußtage," in *Lutherische Brosamen: Predigten und Reden, seit 1847 theils Pamphletform, theils in Zeitschriften bereits erschienen, in Sammelband aufs Neue dargeboten* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, 1876), 270-80. For a translation, see "On the Annual Day of Repentance," in Walther, *From Our Master's Table*, trans. Joel R. Baseley (Dearborn, MI: Mark V Publications, 2008), 130-134.

[84] F. W. Richmann was chaplain to the 58th Ohio Regiment; Claus Laurtiz Clausen was chaplain to the 15th Wisconsin. On Richmann, see Karl Kretzmann, "A Lutheran Army Chaplain in the Civil War,"

Rather than political quietists, Old Lutherans were just as much participants in the debates about the war as were General Synod Lutherans and other Northern Protestants.

Where they differed from other Lutherans was their interpretation of the war's meaning. Rather than a conflict caused by Southern traitors, most Old Lutherans followed Walther in seeing the war as a tragedy brought on by nation's transgressions: "first, sins of doctrine and faith; secondly, sinful ways of life."[85] After eighteen months of war, Walther preached a sermon outlining what he saw as the reason for the calamity befalling the nation. He began by outlining the blessings God had imparted on the United States: "He made [this country] the sanctuary for the poor and oppressed of every nation and opened to them a thousand wells brimming with prosperity, bestowed all the blessings of religious and civil liberty, in short, provided them an early Paradise, so that our America stood out as a wonder before the eyes of every nation." But rather than thanking God, "our nation has committed idolatry with itself, its freedom, its might, its wealth" until "finally, God decided to overlook this no longer" and allowed the nation to be plunged into a "fearsome war… the likes of which the world has hardly ever seen."[86] Both in his evocation of American exceptionalism and his claim that the war was a visitation of God

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Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly 17 (January 1945): 97-102; and David Wollenburg, trans., "Reports of Chaplain F. W. Richmann in *Der Lutheraner*," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 85 (Winter 2012): 33-37. On Clausen, see Andersen, *Immigrant Takes His Stand*, 89, 92.

[85] W[alther], "Predigt, am allgemeinen Bußtag, den 26 Sept," 35. See also "Vorwort der Redaction zum achtzehnenten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, August 20, 1861, 1-2.

[86] W[alther], "Bußtagspredigt, gehalten den 27. Nov. 1862," 82. For an even darker view of the war, see Walther's sermon on August 4, 1864, later published as "Am Nationalbußtage," in C. F. W. Walther, *Amerikanisch-Lutherische Epistel Postille: Predigten über die meisten epistolischen Perikopen des Kirchenjahrs u. freie Texte* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1882), 491-98. A translation of this sermon can be found in C. F. W. Walther, *Standard Epistles*, trans. Donald E. Heck (Fort Wayne, IN: Concordia Theological Seminary Press, 1986), 510-16.

on the nation for its sins, Walther was not unique.[87] Where he differed from many other Christians in the loyal states, including many other Lutherans, was both in the type of sins he condemned and in his refusal to cast the majority of the blame on the South.

For Walther and other Old Lutherans, the great sin unleashed by the Civil War was a false conception of liberty. This assessment was in part a reaction to German American political newspapers, which those in the Missouri Synod continued to label as the "satanic press."[88] Walther saw the views of forty-eighters and other radical Republicans, including abolitionists, as equivalent to the "spirit of the French Revolution" and the "Anabaptists" of the Peasant's War in the Reformation era. "This spirit," he wrote, "confuses Christian liberty with civil equality" and claims that the "the voice of the people is the voice of God." According to Walther, democratic radicalism that subverted the rightly ordained authorities in both church and state was the "idol of this new spirit of the times" and was beginning to take hold of the American citizenry.[89]

Walther was also critical of the many "partisans who are so long-winded in hypocritically inflating their loyalty so long as the government serves their goals, but then throw aside that mask of loyalty when it takes another road."[90] Undergirding this polemic was his interpretation of the apostolic injunction "to submit to the governing authorities." According to Walther, these biblical passages neither permitted the right of revolution nor necessitated blind obedience. Instead, "submission" implied a willingness to endure

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[87] See, for example, Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 80-83, 235-39; and Scott, *Visitation of God*, 97-138.

[88] J. C. W. Lindemann, "Leset! Leset," *Der Lutheraner*, December 1, 1863, 49-51; and "Der Präsident und die Satanspresse," *Illustrirte Abend Schule*, January 15, 1861, 1-2.

[89] "Vorwort der Redaction zum neunzehnenten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," *Lutheraner*, September 3, 1862, 1-2.

[90] W[alther], "Bußtagspredigt, gehalten den 27. Nov. 1862," 82.

the government's authority even when it was wrong. For example, if a state secedes, Walther argued that a Christian citizen should "either emigrate or… subject himself to the seceding state's government."[91] In a similar vein, Walther's paper argued that a Christian could in good conscience refuse military service, if he deemed the cause unjust, "but must patiently suffer the punishment imposed on him or must emigrate."[92] In his view, true Lutherans—and true Americans—should not rebel against the governing authorities, even if they considered those authorities in error.

On account of such opinions, many Northern unionists, particularly other German Americans, viewed Old Lutherans as disloyal. Walther, in particular, was viewed as a Southern sympathizer, a charge that possessed an element of truth. In May 1861, Walther wrote to a fellow pastor that he and his colleagues in St. Louis were "for the Union," but they could not "see why the state does not have the right of secession according to the United States Constitution."[93] After it became clear that Missouri would not leave the Union, Walther urged his readers in the *Lutheraner* to stand "faithfully by our leaders."[94] Yet, the accusations of sedition persisted. In 1862, Walther was among the many ministers compelled by Major General Henry Halleck, the commander of the Department

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[91] Walther to J. M. Buehler, May 21, 1861, in Aug. R. Suelflow, ed., *Selected Writings of C. F. W. Walther: Selected Letters*, trans. by Roy A. Suelflow (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1981), 150.

[92] "'Sind die Untergebenen verbunden, der Obrigkeit Folge zu leitn, wen dieselbe sie zu irgend einem Kriege ruft?'" *Lutheraner*, May 14, 1861, 156. See also, "Vom Kriegsdienst der Christen," *Lutheraner*, September 3, 1862, 3-4.

[93] Walther to J. M. Buehler, May 21, 1861, in Suelflow, ed., *Selected Letters*, 150. See also Robert Kolb, ed. and trans., "C. F. W. Walther to A. F. Hoppe: A Letter," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 42 (May 1969): 79-84.

[94] W[alther], "Bußtagspredigt, gehalten den 27. Nov. 1862," 82.

of Missouri, to sign an oath of loyalty to the state and federal governments.[95] After the war, a German-language newspaper associated with the General Synod claimed that the Missouri Synod's seminary in St. Louis had flown the rebel flag, an allegation Walther vehemently denied.[96]

Old Lutherans were also viewed antagonistically by some Southern secessionists. One congregation in western Missouri was terrorized by Confederate guerillas for their presumed support of the Union. (In reality, most of these immigrants were ambivalent about the war.) In 1862 and 1863, bushwhackers raided the German American settlers near Cook's Store (renamed Concordia after the war), including once during a baptismal celebration, murdering several men on each occasion. As the congregation's pastor wrote to his sister, "No pleading helped…. They had neither Christian nor human feelings."[97] In October 1864, when the guerillas returned for a third attack, about one hundred German farmers gathered at the Lutheran church to defend their community. The battle resulted in a massacre. Besides those killed during the fight, the bushwhackers executed the wounded and several men who were in their homes. The German settlers marked the

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[95] Oath of Loyalty, February 12, 1862, Addendum, Box 4, Civil War Folder, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther Papers, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri [hereafter cited as Walther Papers]. After the war, Walther was compelled to pledge his loyalty once again, this time to Missouri's new constitution. Walther viewed this order as "against the Word of God" and "the Constitution of the U.S." He signed the oath of loyalty, but only after he was allowed to change the wording so as not to offend his conscience. See Carl S. Meyer, ed., *Moving Frontiers: Readings in the History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 237-38. On loyalty oaths in Missouri, see Louis S. Gerteis, *Civil War St. Louis* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 174-75; Adam Arenson, *The Great Heart of the Republic: St. Louis and the Cultural Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 136-38; and Kristen Layne Anderson, *Abolitionizing Missouri: German Immigrants and Racial Ideology in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 171-72.

[96] Suelflow, "Walther the American," 33-34.

[97] J. Biltz to "Dear sister," October 15, 1862, Folder 8, Franz Julius Biltz Family Collection, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

graves of their slain family and friends with the English phrase, "Killed by Rebels."[98] Though most Lutherans did not experience anything resembling those atrocities, they demonstrate how the Civil War forced nearly all Americans, even those who came to the United States to be left alone, to confront the fraught political questions facing the nation.

Slavery and the Bible

Inextricably bound up in Lutheran debates about the American nation and the politics of the Civil War was the central issue of slavery. From the outset of the war, Northern Lutherans of all theological persuasions recognized that slavery was central to the Confederate cause. The *Evangelical Review*, which leaned in the direction of Moderate Lutheranism, saw slavery as "undoubtedly, the great problem, the great source of irritation, and that which distinguishes the one section from the other."[99] Confessional Lutherans held similar views. Passavant's *Missionary* described the Confederates as attempting "to make slavery the corner-stone, not only of their social system, but of the government."[100] Similarly, Krauth and Seiss considered "devotion to slavery" to be "the pretext of [Southern] ambition."[101] A New Lutheran minister in Pennsylvania preached on the fast day of September 26, 1861, that "slavery is the chief cause of our country's troubles" and that "the rebels… are fighting for slavery, avowedly and earnestly."[102]

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[98] On these events, see Robert W. Frizzell, "'Killed by Rebels': A Civil War Massacre and Its Aftermath," *Missouri Historical Review* 71 (July 1977): 369-95; Robert W. Frizzell, *Independent Immigrants: A Settlement of Hanoverian Germans in Western Missouri* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2007), and R. Lee Hagan, "Franz Julius Biltz: A Faithful Shepherd During the Terrors of the Civil War," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 88 (Winter 2015): 7-16.

[99] "Our National Crisis," *Evangelical Review* 13 (July 1861): 143.

[100] C., "State of the Country," *Missionary*, May 9, 1861, 2.

[101] "Character of the Present War," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, June 21, 1861, 92.

[102] Williams, *Sermon Delivered in the Lutheran Churches of the Blain Charge*, 14-15.

Lutherans in the slave states also agreed that the peculiar institution was central to the conflict. On the Confederate Fast-Day of June 13, 1861, a Lutheran pastor in North Carolina prayed for a "peaceable separation." With such an event, he argued sardonically, "the North would be free from the trouble of slavery, and their pious consciences would be free from the sin of slavery."[103] Even the *Lutheran Observer*, the Maryland paper which had tried to remain neutral on the issue, implicitly recognized that slavery was central to war's origin. In January 1862, one of its editors reminded his readers north of the Mason-Dixon Line that "the Lutheran church has never made any deliverances on the subject of slavery" and criticized "the feeling which this war has developed in the free states against all who are connected with slavery."[104] If only Lutherans and other Americans could avoid the central issue of slavery, he reasoned, then perhaps the South would come back into the Union and Northern and Southern churches would remain unified.

While recognizing slavery as the cause of Southern secession, most Lutherans in the loyal states viewed the primary goal of the war as saving the Union and preserving the Constitution, not eliminating the peculiar institution. In this they resembled the opinions of the majority of white Northerners, including Abraham Lincoln, who publicly stated that the "paramount object in this struggle *is* to save the Union; and is *not* either to save or destroy slavery."[105] As historian Gary Gallagher has argued, "[m]aintenance of

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[103] Daniel I. Dreher, *A Sermon Delivered June 13, 1861: Day of Humiliation and Prayer as per Appointment of the President of the Confederate States of America* (Salisbury, NC: Watchman Office, 1861), 8.

[104] Anspach, "Past, Present and Future," 2

[105] Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, ed. Roy P. Basler (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), 5: 388.

the Union… always ranked first among the war aims for most citizens in the United States." Though numerous scholars have challenged and critiqued this claim, American Lutheran opinion during the Civil War for the most part confirms Gallagher's thesis.[106]

General Synod Lutherans held to varying gradations of this "Union War" sentiment. The *Lutheran Observer* was the most conservative. Kurtz spoke for the paper's editors when he wrote that "abolition of slavery… is not the object of the war; its great aim is to crush out rebellion, and restore the integrity of the Union."[107] More moderate was the view of Krauth in the *Lutheran and Missionary*, who declared: "We are as remote in our convictions from the class who would destroy the Constitution and the Union to remove slavery as we are from those would destroy both to uphold it." Yet, unlike the editors of the *Lutheran Observer*, Krauth held out hope that the war would bring about "a change in the convictions of men" so that slavery could be extinguished by constitutional means.[108] The *Evangelical Review* published articles that mirrored both of these interpretations of the Union cause. One writer proclaimed that "slavery must be put… in the sure way of ultimate extinction," but also argued that slavery's abolition depended upon preserving the American Union "as the representative of a true Christian

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[106] Gary W. Gallagher, *The Union War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 34. The literature that touches upon this debate is too vast to enumerate here. For other recent works that reinforces some of Gallagher's claims, see Bridget Ford, *Bonds of Union: Religion, Race, and Politics in a Civil War Borderland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); and Adam I. P. Smith, *The Stormy Present: Conservatism and the Problem of Slavery in Northern Politics, 1846-1865* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017). For an important counterpoint to Gallagher's thesis, see James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013).

[107] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "Politicians and Ministers," *Lutheran Observer*, February 14, 1862, 3.

[108] "Lessons of the Twelve-Month," 2. See also "How to Make the Secessionists Laugh," *Lutheran and Missionary*, January 2, 1862, 2.

civilization, genuine liberty, and the loftiest national character."[109] Another more conservative article contended that Congress had "no right to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed" and insisted that the war was simply about defeating traitors who were seeking "to destroy our nationality, [and] to trample upon our Constitution."[110] While some viewed the end of slavery as a potential salutary outcome of the war and others regarded abolition as something not to be contemplated, all General Synod Lutherans agreed that maintaining the Union was the war's principal objective.

These Northern Lutherans ratified this understanding of the war at the May 1862 convention of the General Synod. The 110 delegates, mostly from Pennsylvania and Ohio, but also from Maryland, New York, Indiana and Illinois, passed five resolutions on "the State of the Country" and appointed a commission to deliver them in person to President Lincoln. The first resolution condemned the "rebellion against the constitutional government of this land" as "wicked" and "unnatural." The second declared the "maintenance of the Constitution and the Union by the sword" to be "an unavoidable necessity and a sacred duty." The fourth diverged from this belligerent tone. After praising "all loyal citizens and Christian patriots in the rebellious portions of our country," the delegates asked "that God would restore peace to our distracted country, re-establish fraternal relations between all the States, and make our land… the permanent abode of liberty and religion." The fifth and final resolution sanctified the war effort by offering "devout thanks… to Almighty God for the success which has crowned our

[109] "Our National Crisis," 150.

[110] H. S. Dickson, "State of the Country—Question at Issue," *Evangelical Review* 13 (October 1861): 171, 166.

arms."[111] These statements reflected the differing interpretations of the Union cause within the General Synod.

The third and most controversial resolution addressed the issue of slavery. While acknowledging their shared guilt in "individual and national sins," the delegates to the convention asserted that the war was principally the "result of the continuance and spread of domestic slavery in our land." Because of this, they endorsed "with unmingled joy the proposition of our Chief Magistrate… to extend aid from the General Government to any state in which slavery exists, which shall deem fit to initiate a system of constitutional emancipation."[112] Though the resolution on slavery was hardly radical, it was the first official proclamation on the subject by the General Synod in its more than forty-year history.

The papers representing the different factions within the General Synod reacted as expected. The confessional Lutherans of the *Lutheran and Missionary* praised the delegates' actions for bolstering Lutheranism's patriotic credentials. Krauth believed that the resolutions "put our General Synod, and through it our church, in the true attitude to the great question of the hour." On the issue of slavery, he praised the delegates for speaking "firmly and moderately," and remarked, quite credulously, that the General Synod "has demonstrated that its long silence gave no consent to the system of slavery."[113] Two months later, Krauth was still elated: "Our General Synod's action in

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[111] *Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the General Synod*, 30-31. Heathcote only mentions the first three resolutions, *Lutheran Church and the Civil War*, 75-76.

[112] *Proceedings of the Twentieth Convention of the General Synod*, 30.

[113] "Our General Synod on the State of the Country," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 15, 1862, 114. See also "The Late General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 22, 1862, 2.

regard to the State of the Country, was, in some respects, the wisest and noblest work it has ever done."[114]

The New Lutherans of the *Lutheran Observer* were less enthusiastic. The Maryland-based paper reprinted an account of the convention from a local newspaper that reported how prominent members of their party had objected to the resolution on slavery. Samuel Sprecher of Ohio, for instance, "did not think it became ecclesiastical bodies to make declarations as to political measures."[115] One contributor to the *Lutheran Observer* claimed that, "like the abolitionists of Congress," the General Synod had taken "advantage of the absence of representatives from the southern Synods" and issued "an utterance only adding fuel to the fire [that] the enemies of the government in the south have kindled." "The avowed object of the Federal government," he declared, "is the restoration of the Union and Constitution as they were."[116] Kurtz, who was elected president of the General Synod at the meeting, was less upset. By this time, he and other similarly minded Lutherans had abandoned their support of black colonization abroad as a viable option, believing instead that the institution of slavery was likely to die out gradually.[117] Because of this, Kurtz viewed his church body's resolution on slavery as "unnecessary, inexpedient, and calculated to effect little or no good, while, on the other hand, it might do harm."[118]

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[114] "The General Synod and the Resolutions on the State of the Country," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 3, 1862, 142.

[115] "Debate in General Synod on the Preamble and Resolutions on the State of the Country," *Lutheran Observer*, May 16, 1862, 2.

[116] Conservator, "General Synod's Utterance on Slavery," *Lutheran Observer*, June 27, 1862, 2.

[117] "A New Colonization Scheme," *Lutheran Observer*, December 27, 1861, 2.

[118] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The Late General Synod at Lancaster, PA.," *Lutheran Observer*, May 23, 1862, 2.

American Lutherans not connected with the General Synod also reacted to the resolutions on the war. The *Lutheran Standard* of the Ohio Synod remained consistent in its criticism of the church becoming involved with politics. "[T]he General Synod has made a great mistake in meddling at all in public affairs," Worley proclaimed. The editor also commented that "it struck us a little strange that so many of the radicals in a churchly view [i.e. the New Lutherans], were upon these [political] questions the real conservatives, and that many from whom better things might have been expected [i.e. the confessional Lutherans], were here perfectly rabid."[119] On the morality of slavery, the *Lutheran Standard* continued to make no comment.

Also reacting to the resolutions were the abolitionist Lutherans of the Franckean Synod, the tiny church body which had boycotted the General Synod on account of its toleration of slavery. During the first months of the Civil War, the statements of the Franckeans differed starkly from other Lutherans. The synod reacted swiftly and decisively to the outbreak of the conflict, calling the Southern cause "a crime against the civilization of the world."[120] In a thanksgiving sermon on November 28, 1861, Nicholas Van Alstine (1814-1900), one of the synod's leading ministers contended that, if the choice was "either the nation must die or slavery," he preferred that "the latter" would perish.[121] Following the General Synod's resolution on slavery, however, the Franckeans began to reconsider their refusal to join. Though they considered the statement on slavery

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[119] "The General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, June 2, 1862, 2.

[120] Quoted in Douglas C. Stange, *Radicalism for Humanity: A Study in Lutheran Abolitionism* (St. Louis: Oliver Slave, 1970), 41.

[121] N[icholas] Van Alstine, *Thanksgiving Sermon: A Specific Remedy for National Calamities; Preached in the Evangelic Lutheran Church of Minden, Montgomery Country, N. Y., November 28, 1861* (Albany, NY: S. R. Gray, 1862), 26, 28.

to be "moderate," they believed it exhibited a "very marked change." Determining that they could now in good conscience participate in the General Synod, the members of the Franckean Synod voted in 1863 to apply for membership.[122] Nevertheless, the abolitionist Franckeans were singular among Lutherans in viewing the destruction of slavery as the war's chief objective.

For most other Northern Lutherans—and most other Northern Americans—the preservation of the Union was paramount. By the summer of 1862, Krauth at the *Lutheran and Missionary* had become firmly antislavery. Yet he reminded his readers that the General Synod's resolution mentioned "not one word… of abolition, of violent, unconstitutional, or dubious, modes of overthrowing slavery." Though "the cancer [of slavery] must be removed… [o]ur General Synod has not said when or where it should begin, or by what plan."[123] Kurtz at the *Lutheran Observer* was even more wary about emancipation than Krauth. He worried about setting free "four millions of such rude and helpless creatures" and argued that, "if slavery is to be abolished, it must be done gradually."[124] Believing that slavery would die out without the meddling of Washington, he wrote on September 19, 1862, that "the government should make one more vigorous effort to quench the rebellion, leaving slavery to the influence of events."[125]

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[122] Quoted in Stange, *Radicalism for Humanity*, 41. See also Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 214.

[123] "The General Synod and the Resolution on the State of the Country," 142.

[124] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The President, the Constitution, and Slavery," *Lutheran Observer*, July 18, 1862, 2.

[125] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The Union Must Be Preserved at all Hazards, though Slavery Should Perish," *Lutheran Observer*, September 19, 1862, 2. See also B[enjamin] K[urtz], "Slavery Likely to Die Out," *Lutheran Observer*, September 12, 1862, 2.

Three days later, following the Battle of Antietam, Abraham Lincoln issued the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation. All slaves living in states still in rebellion against the federal government by the beginning of the next year, Lincoln announced, "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free." On January 1, 1863, Lincoln fulfilled his promise, declaring slaves in most areas of the South to be emancipated, "as a fit and necessary war measure."[126] The Emancipation Proclamation has figured heavily in scholarly debates over how Americans viewed the war's purpose. While many have argued that Lincoln's actions helped to transform the Civil War into a war to free the slaves, others, especially Gallagher, have maintained that most white Northerners always viewed emancipation mainly as a "tool to help restore the Union and protect it against future slavery-related threats rather than as a grand moral imperative."[127] Once again, Lutheran commentary during the Civil War reinforces Gallagher's argument.

In contrast with the controversy surrounding the General Synod's war resolutions, the reaction of Northern Lutheran publications to the Emancipation Proclamation, both in its preliminary and final form, was quite muted. The *Lutheran Observer* reprinted both proclamations, but its editors offered no analysis.[128] Krauth at the *Lutheran and Missionary* followed the same course, printing the proclamations without making any

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[126] Lincoln, *Collected Works*, ed. Basler, 5: 434, 6: 29.

[127] Gallagher, *Union War*, 76. Once again, the scholarship on this subject is too numerous to cite comprehensively. For two important works that diverge from Gallagher's interpretation, see Allen C. Guelzo, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation: The End of Slavery in America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004); and Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), esp. 134-92.

[128] "Proclamation by the President of the United States," *Lutheran Observer*, September 26, 1862, 3; and "The President's Proclamation," *Lutheran Observer*, January 16, 1863, 3.

remarks.[129] The only commentary in the two papers came from Passavant, the more stridently antislavery of the two editors of the *Lutheran and Missionary*. He praised the president's war measure not only for its military strategy but also for its "moral power," claiming that it "boldly sets the Government before the world on the side of liberty for all men… [and] secures for our nation the approbation of Heaven."[130] Yet aside from the singular laudatory article by Passavant, Lutherans greeted the president's proclamations with no fanfare. Rather than transforming the Civil War into a struggle for black freedom and equality, Lutherans in the General Synod, on the whole, accepted emancipation as a war measure, and continued to view the preservation of the Union and the Constitution as the war's chief goal.

Like their dearth of commentary on emancipation, General Synod Lutherans during the Civil War made almost no serious attempt to reckon with slavery's depiction in the Bible. The most conspicuously silent voice was Samuel Schmucker. In the 1830s and 1840s, the Gettysburg professor had been the church's most prominent antislavery advocate, as well as an unwavering promoter of Christian involvement in politics. But in the decade preceding the war and during the war itself, Schmucker published nothing new on either issue. The foremost scholars of Schmucker's life have overlooked this change, presuming instead that his political and antislavery advocacy remained consistent throughout his life.[131] Instead, with his fate linked to Kurtz, Sprecher, and other New

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[129] "Emancipation," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 25, 1862, 191; and "Emancipation Proclamation," *Lutheran and Missionary*, January 8, 1863, 43.

[130] "The Proclamation," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 16, 1862, 1.

[131] Both Abdel Ross Wentz, Schmucker's foremost biographer, and Paul P. Kuenning, whose study of mid-nineteenth-century American Lutheranism casts Schmucker in the role of tragic hero, describe the moderately antislavery professor as an "abolitionist" and portray him as an unceasing advocate of the causes of antislavery and Christian political involvement. When Schmucker's house was ransacked during

Lutherans who either refused to condemn slavery in unequivocal terms or viewed the subject as too politically volatile to discuss, Schmucker curbed his activist rhetoric.[132] Whether or not this was a deliberate decision is impossible to say.[133] His personal views seem to have remained unchanged throughout the Civil War. In his only extant letter that discussed the war in any detail, Schmucker labeled the conflict "as a defensive one… in defence of Republican government… human liberty + popular rights."[134] Whatever his personal views, when the question of slavery brought the nation to the breaking point, the public witness of the most prominent Lutheran in the United States was strangely mute.

Other Lutherans within the General Synod were not completely silent, but serious treatments of the issue were rare. The *Evangelical Review* (renamed the *Evangelical*

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the Battle of Gettysburg, Wentz claims, without evidence, that Confederates did so because they knew that Schmucker was "an execrable Yankee abolitionist." Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 328. Kuenning asserts, not only without evidence but also contrary to it, that Schmucker's theological opponents were motivated by an "aversion to Schmucker's activism and to his involvement in moral reform through political action" and especially to his "unwillingness to curb this involvement with regard to the sensitive political issue of abolition." Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 178. One scholar does contend that the Civil War had a transformative effect on Schmucker, but not on his views of slavery and politics. Rather the war pushed him "toward an older Augustinian view of sin." Nancy Koester, "Schmucker's Benevolence, from Republican Ideals to Civil War Realities," *Lutheran Quarterly* 9 (Spring 1995): 71.

[132] Schmucker authored only one published work during the Civil War, a sermon that defended the use of revivals, but made no mention of slavery or politics: S. S. Schmucker, *Sermon on the Work of Grace, or Revival of Religion at Antioch, Preached in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in Hanover, Pa., January 6th, 1862* (York, PA: W. H. Albright, 1862). He also chaired a committee, which produced a newly proposed liturgy for the General Synod. Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity*, 363.

[133] One minister expressed the view that Schmucker and other "professors at our Gettysburg institutions who, in former days wrote and spoke against the sin of slavery, had in these latter times wheeled about and at least were 'winking' at this evil now, and were no longer 'sound' on the question." Schmucker "denied the truth of such reports." Watchman, "The West Pennsylvania Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 24, 1863, 3.

[134] S. S. Schmucker to D. McConaughy, August 14, 1863, Series 1, Folder 7, Papers of Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Schmucker Family, Gettysburg College, Special Collections, Musselman Library, Pennsylvania. The other four extant letters written by Schmucker during the Civil War entail no extended discussion of slavery or politics. Three of the other four letters are addressed to his son, Beale, and found in this same collection (Series 1, Folder 7). The other, written on August 9, 1864, to the Board of Directors at Gettysburg Seminary is located in the S. S. Schmucker Papers, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Archives, A. R. Wentz Library, Pennsylvania.

Quarterly Review in 1862) published only two articles on the subject during the war. The first, a translation of a short work on slavery in ancient Israel by the German Jewish scholar Moses Mielziner, was learned, but made no reference to the situation in the United States.[135] The other article, an anonymously published essay on "Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man," forcefully labeled slavery as immoral, but the author based his case solely on the "spirit of the religion of the Bible" rather than wrestling with any relevant Scripture passages.[136] Krauth's and Passavant's *Lutheran and Missionary* published only one article that examined the biblical treatment of slavery in any depth, a two-part essay submitted in October 1863 by a guest contributor. This article (discussed in greater detail, below) was short but at least attempted to grapple with the numerous references to slavery in the Bible.[137]

To be sure, several General Synod Lutherans, including Krauth and Passavant, condemned slavery as sinful. But neither offered extensive arguments. Krauth, who unlike his colleague had never commented on the morality of slavery before the war, was perhaps unwittingly honest when he wrote in the summer of 1862, as the military struggle was increasing in intensity, that "God has forced even upon the mildest the conviction that slavery is the sin of all sins, and the curse of all curses."[138] For most Northern

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[135] M[oses] Mielziner, "The Institution of Slavery Among the Ancient Hebrews, According to the Bible and the Talmud," trans. H. I. Schmidt, *Evangelical Review* 13 (January 1862): 311-55.

[136] "The Universal Fatherhood of God and the Universal Brotherhood of Man, God's Argument against Oppression," *Evangelical Quarterly Review* 14 (July 1863): 579.

[137] G[ustavus] Seyffarth, "African Slavery: Is it Consistent or Inconsistent with the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 15, 1863, 1, and October 22, 1863, 1-2.

[138] "The General Synod and the Resolution on the State of the Country," 2.

Lutherans, as with most other Northern Protestants, their views on slavery were shaped primarily by the pressures of war rather than by theological reasoning.[139]

As in other areas, on the issue of slavery Old Lutherans were the exception. Though also influenced by the exigencies of the nation's political and military upheavals, these conservative immigrants, more than any other Lutherans, attempted to wrestle with the question of slavery's morality. Before the Civil War, Old Lutheran publications had been ambivalent about slavery. What scarce commentary they had offered differed very little from that of many other Lutherans and actually resembled their theological rivals at the *Lutheran Observer*. They granted that the institution was not in and of itself sinful, but condemned abuses against the slaves themselves. Mostly they avoided the issue. C. F. W. Walther, Old Lutheranism's foremost leader, published nothing on the subject in the 1840s or 1850s. Yet, by the mid-point of the Civil War, Walther and other Old Lutherans were marshalling a defense of American slavery as robust as some Southern apologists.

The first major Old Lutheran argument over slavery's biblical permissibility came not from the German Americans of the Missouri Synod but from a Norwegian immigrant. Peter Laurentius Larsen had been the Norwegian Synod's representative on the faculty of the Missouri Synod's seminary in St. Louis, but had just moved to Wisconsin to establish a Norwegian Lutheran college. In May 1861, he published an article in the *Emigranten* in response to accusations of his and the Missouri Synod's Southern sympathies. Larsen laid out his understanding of both the Christian's duties to government and the biblical view of slavery. He argued that, while Norwegian Lutherans should obey the government of

[139] Or, as Mark Noll memorably has written, "the great tragedy of the Civil War is that the most persuasive theologians were the Rev. Drs. William Tecumseh Sherman and Ulysses S. Grant." Noll, "Bible and Slavery," 66.

Wisconsin in the Union's war against the Confederacy, "many passages" in both the Old and New Testaments "prove that slavery is not sin."[140]

The article provoked an outcry from many laypeople. At the Norwegian Synod's meeting that summer in Wisconsin, the church body's clergy introduced a resolution to clarify their position: "Although, according to God's Word, it is not in and by itself sin to own slaves, yet slavery in itself is an evil and a punishment from God, and we condemn all the abuses and sins which are connected with it, just as we, when our official duties demand it, and when Christian love and wisdom require it, will work for its abolition." According to many lay leaders at the synod meeting, the pastors' resolution did not go far enough. Their counter-resolution argued, "Slavery considered as an institution can only exist by definite law, and since the laws on which it is based are in direct conflict with God's Word and Christian love, it is sin; and since slavery in the United States has been one of this country's greatest evils both for Church and State, we regard it to be our duty by legal means as Christians and good citizens to do everything in our power to alleviate, diminish and, if possible, abolish slavery, when our country's best interests and Christian love demand this of us."[141] The terms of the debate had been set: A largely lay contingent argued that slavery was inherently sinful, while a mostly clerical faction contended that it was not fundamentally sinful to own slaves.

Taking up the cause of the Norwegian Synod's antislavery party was Claus Clausen. Once the editor of the *Emigranten* and now a pastor in Iowa, Clausen initially

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[140] Quoted in John Magnus Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 202-3. For the fullest account, see Brynjar Haraldsø, *Slaveridebatten i den norske synode: en undersøkelse av slaveridebatten i den norske synode i USA i 1860-årene med særlig vekt på debattens kirkelig-teologiske aspekter* (Oslo: Solum, 1988).

[141] Quoted in Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism*, 206-7.

signed the pastors' resolution, but soon came to change his mind. The first turning point for Clausen, according to his later testimony, took place at private meeting in 1861 between various Norwegian Synod and Missouri Synod pastors, including Walther. According to Clausen, Walther "expressed himself very clearly against the federal government in Washington… characterized it as a fanatical abolitionist government," claimed that "the southern states… were entirely within their rights," and even called slavery a "God-pleasing institution." It became clear to Clausen that the clerical party was engaging in "sophistry" and "'pull[ing] the wool over the eyes' of the laity." Instead of "abstract slavery," he discovered that they were actually "speaking of AMERICAN SLAVERY and AS AN INSTITUTION." After "chok[ing] down his anger," he went home, "turned to the various Scripture passages," and concluded that slavery "must be sinful."[142] A short while later Clausen retracted his name from the clergy's resolution.

As the Civil War progressed, the proslavery party, led by Herman Preus, the Norwegian Synod's president, sought to quell opposition by appealing to the theological faculty of the University of Christiania (Oslo) where he and many of his colleagues had studied. The professors in Norway took nearly two years to reply. Their 1863 opinion hinged on the definition of slavery, whether it meant treating a human being as property or was merely a social institution. The Christiana faculty's conclusion was that slavery, as currently practiced in the United States, was sinful. Unsatisfied, the Norwegian Synod pastors wrote back to the faculty attempting to refute their position. After the professors replied by curtly referring to their original position, the incensed American clergymen

[142] Claus Lauritz Clausen, *Gjenmæle mod kirkeraadet for den Norske synode: i anledning af dets skrift kaldet "Historisk fremstilling af den strid som i aarene 1861 til 1868 inden for den Norske synode i Amerika har været ført i anledning af skriftens lære om slaveri*. (Chicago: F. Frantzen, 1869), 18-20. For a translation of this work, see John R. Nielsen, trans., *Reply to the Church Council of the Norwegian Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1952).

wrote a final rebuttal to their counterparts in Norway. Antislavery agitation, Preus argued in 1864, "is merely a single paragraph in the present-day anti-Christian program" and "one step toward ultimate and absolute carnal emancipation, when government shall be overthrown and man shall rule in God's stead."[143] The slavery question, in their estimation, was a surrogate for the present-day evils of societal disorder and the rejection of God's Word.

The views of Preus and other Norwegian Synod pastors mirrored those being developed by their colleagues in the Missouri Synod. Like it had with the Norwegians, public conflict over the Bible and slavery among the Missourians began with a short, but controversial article. The article was submitted by Friedrich August Crämer (1812-1891), who had been a professor at the Missouri Synod's "practical seminary" in Fort Wayne, Indiana. He became Walther's colleague in 1861, when the former institution merged with the Missouri Synod's "theoretical seminary" in St. Louis, so that students could avoid the state's draft laws.[144] In 1862, Crämer reprinted portions of an essay on the "slavery question" by the Prussian pastor Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg in the seminary's theological journal, *Lehre und Wehre*. In the mid-nineteenth century, Hengstenberg had become one of Germany's most prominent conservative churchmen. Even so, the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod did not consider him to be a true Lutheran because of his affiliation with the Prussian Union church. Yet on the issue of slavery, Crämer

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[143] Quoted in Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism*, 214-15, 217.

[144] Roy A. Suelflow, "The History of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1847—1865," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 24 (October 1951): 111-12. On Crämer , see Erich H. Heintzen, *Prairie School of the Prophets: The Anatomy of a Seminary, 1846-1976* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1989), 42-110.

claimed that Hengstenberg possessed "more light and sound judgment than hundreds of so-called Lutheran theologians."[145]

In his essay, originally published in his Berlin church paper, the *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung*, Hengstenberg argued that the "testimony of the whole Christian church throughout the ages" stands against the "agitation against slavery." The German minister appealed to the slave codes in Ephesians and Colossians, as well as Paul's admonition to Philemon to return to his master. He also referenced the church father Chrysostom and various councils held by the early church. Most significantly, he grounded his argument in the "Curse of Canaan" (sometimes translated as the "Curse of Ham"), which many European and American theologians since at least the Reformation era had interpreted to mean that God had cursed Africans to a status of inferiority. By recommending Hengstenberg's article, Crämer was defending not merely slavery in the abstract, but the black-only slavery practiced in the American South.[146]

Responding to the Old Lutheran publication's endorsement of American slavery as biblically sanctioned was Gustavus Seyffarth (1796-1885). As Clausen had with the Norwegian Synod, Seyffarth became the Missouri Synod's antislavery gadfly. In 1830, Seyffarth had been appointed the first professor of archaeology at the University of Leipzig. Throughout his life, he fought against the consensus interpretation of Egyptian

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[145] Friedrich August [C]rämer, "Dr. Hengstenberg über die Sclavenfrage," *Lehre und Wehre* 8 (April 1862): 106. On Hengstenberg, see Matthias A. Deuschle, *Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg: Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung des kirchlichen Konservatismus im Preussen des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013).

[146] C]rämer, "Dr. Hengstenberg über die Sclavenfrage," 106-10. The Swiss American theologian, Philip Schaff, also referenced Hengstenberg and the "Curse of Ham" in his defense of slavery. Schaff, *Slavery and the Bible* (Chambersburg, PA: M. Kieffer, 1861), 4-5. For historical background on this teaching, see Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002); and David M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2012).

hieroglyphics. He was also, according to one biographer, a "strict" Lutheran who "struggled against Rationalism."[147] Disgruntled with the German scholarly community, he resigned his professorship and immigrated to America in the 1850s. While living in New York, he was recruited to teach at the Missouri Synod's Concordia College in St. Louis, a position he accepted in 1856. Walther hoped that Seyffarth's credentials would lend Old World credibility to the fledgling institution, which at the time numbered less than sixty total students in both the preparatory college and seminary.[148] Three years later, Seyffarth resigned his position and returned to New York, where he began work at the Astor Library. Based on later developments, some denominational historians have speculated that his separation stemmed from private disagreements with Walther on the issue of slavery. Yet the extant letters surrounding his resignation give no indication that his departure was anything but amicable.[149] In 1862, Walther wrote that he "never even suspected" that his former colleague disagreed with him on slavery.[150] Instead Seyffarth most likely left the Missouri Synod's seminary due to the lack of pay and his desire for hands-on work with archaeological collections.

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[147] Karl Knortz, *Gustav Seyffarth: Eine Biographische Skizze* (New York: E. Steiger, 1886), 11. For other important details of Seyffarth's life, see Gustavus Seyffarth, *Literary Life of Gustavus Seyffarth: An Auto-Biographical Sketch* (New York: E. Steiger, 1886); and Warren R. Dawson and Eric P. Uphill, *Who Was Who in Egyptology: A Biographical Index of Egyptologists; of Travelllers, Explorers, and Excavators in Egypts; of Collectors of and Dealers in Egyptian Antiquities; of Consuls, Officials, Authors, Benefactors, and others whose names occure in the Lituerature of Egyptology, from the year 1500 to the present day, but excluding persons now living* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1972), 267-68.

[148] Walther to Seyffarth, December 19, 1855, in Suelflow, ed., *Selected Letters*, 144-45.

[149] For these letters, see Folder 301, Walther Papers; Roy Suelflow, ed. and trans., *Correspondence of C. F. W. Walther* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1980), 59; and Knortz, *Gustav Seyffarth*, 16. For works which speculate on Seyffarth's reason for leaving the St. Louis Seminary, see Carl S. Meyer, *Log Cabin to Luther Tower: Concordia Seminary During One Hundred and Twenty-five Years toward a More Excellent Ministry 1839-1964* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965); and Suelflow, ed. and trans., *Correspondence of C. F. W. Walther*, 107.

[150] Walther to Gustavus Seyffarth, June 17, 1862, in Suelflow, ed. and trans., *Correspondence of C. F. W. Walther*, 60.

Following Crämer's publication of Hengstenberg's article on slavery in *Lehre und Wehre*, Seyffarth reengaged with the Old Lutherans. On June 11, 1862, he penned a letter to Walther expressing his "deepest regrets" that the editor published this defense of slavery. In Seyffarth's view, Hengstenberg failed to distinguish between slavery in biblical times and the institution as found in the United States. The former was permitted and regulated by various Scripture passages; the latter was inherently sinful. Seyffarth resolved to publish a public reproof if the journal did not denounce this "antichristian article."[151]

Walther responded with both hurt feelings and defiant resolve. He wrote that his former colleague's letter gave him "inner pain since I have always thought highly of you." He insisted that Crämer's article was not "an apology for slavery," but that it merely alleged that "the relationship between slaves and masters is not… per se wrong." Walther's epistolary defense made contradictory assertions. On the one hand, he claimed that "not the political but rather the moral and religious aspect is what is the issue here." But in the same breath he also railed against the "abolitionist agitations, which would give this war a different purpose [than] our administration has declared." Ultimately, Walther's letter revealed an inability to see that his views on slavery were being shaped not simply by plain, biblical reasoning, but also by his views on the American political situation. He closed by asking Seyffarth to consider "whether it would be God-pleasing and whether it would further the welfare of the church now to open a public dispute on this point" and warned him not to "enter the ranks of our personal enemies."[152]

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[151] Seyffarth to Walther, June 11, 1862, in Folder 301, Walther Papers.

[152] Walther to Seyffarth, June 17, 1862, in in Suelflow, ed. and trans., *Correspondence of C. F. W. Walther*, 60-61.

Despite Walther's threats, Seyffarth made good on his promise and published a two-part article in the New York-based *Lutherische Herold*. His central (and most original) argument was that, since African slaves came to the New World as a result of "man-stealing," a crime condemned in both the Old and New Testament, the entire American institution rested on a "deadly sin." He contended that even those slaveowners who did not directly participate in kidnapping were guilty of sin, because "whoever knowingly appropriates stolen property" becomes a participant in theft.[153] In addition to his argument about "man-stealing," Seyffarth also rebutted Hengstenberg's appeal to the curse of Canaan and showed how the way Southern slaveowners treated their bondsmen differed greatly from the prescriptions outlined in the Bible. The crux of his case was that the article in *Lehre und Wehre* ignored the historical context in which American slavery originated and the actual realities of the institution as practiced in the United States.[154]

Though Seyffarth's article made no mention of Walther, the Old Lutheran leader still felt compelled to respond, which he did in the foreword to the 1863 volume of *Lehre und Wehre*. While he previously had expressed private opinions on slavery and taken passing swipes at abolitionists in his periodicals, this was the first full statement of his views on slavery.[155] In his article, Walther cited numerous church fathers and biblical passages to prove that slavery was biblically sanctioned. But he did nothing to rebut

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[153] G. Seyffarth, "Ist die gegenwärtige Negersklaverei in Uebereinstimmung mit der Schrift oder nicht?" *Lutherische Herold*, October 15, 1862, 89-90. Seyffarth's appeal to the biblical prohibition against man-stealing was uncommon, but not unique.

[154] G. Seyffarth, " Ist die gegenwärtige Negersklaverei in Uebereinstimmung mit der Schrift oder nicht?" *Lutherische Herold*, November 1, 1863, 97-98.

[155] See W[alther], "Predigt, am allgemeinen Bußtag, den 26 Sept," 33; "Vorwort der Redaction zum neunzehnenten Jahrgang des 'Lutheraner'," 2; and "Zur kirchlichen Chronik," *Lutheraner*, November 26, 1862, 54. For the fullest treatments of Walther's opinions on slavery, see Thomas Manteufel, "Walther's View on Slavery," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 86 (Winter 2013): 12-23; and Suelflow, "The History of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis," 112-17.

Seyffarth's argument about the specific evil of slavery as practiced in America. Instead, Walther chose to lambast abolitionism as a "child of unbelief and its progeny... and a brother of modern socialism, Jacobinism, and communism." Once again, the Old Lutheran theologian returned to his central concern about the Civil War. Talk of abolition, he believed, was leading American Christians to adopt a false view of freedom, which preached that "the Gospel contained in itself a revolutionary element which overturned the external order in the world." Instead, he urged Christians to preach the true gospel of salvation to slaves.[156]

An even lengthier exposition of the Old Lutheran view on slavery came from Wilhelm Sihler in a four-part essay in the *Lutheraner*, which he subsequently published as a book.[157] The argument of Sihler, then serving in Fort Wayne both as a pastor and as an instructor at the Missouri Synod's preparatory academy, resembled that of Walther. He went through various biblical passages that referenced slavery to show that slaveowning was not sinful, and avoided those verses, such as one's mentioning "man-stealing," that might counteract his pro-slavery view. Like his colleague in St. Louis, Sihler claimed to not be speaking from a political standpoint, yet in the same breath condemned "fanatical abolitionists" and their "professional politicians" for distorting the Christian gospel and the meaning of freedom. Yet Sihler went even further than Walther by explicitly defending the black-only slavery as practiced in the American South. Along

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[156] "Vorwort," *Lehre und Wehre* 9 (February 1863): 34, 44.

[157] The article appeared as "Die Sclaverei, im Lichte der heiligen Schrift betrachtet" in the following issues of the *Lutheraner*: February 1, 1863, 89-93, February 15, 1863, 97-101, March 1, 1863, 106-7, and March 15, 1863, 113-15. The book was published in April as W. Sihler, *Die Sclaverei im Lichte der Heiligen Schrift betrachtet*. (Baltimore: A. Schlitt, 1863). For a summary of Sihler's argument, see Lewis W. Spitz, *Life in Two Worlds: Biography of William Sihler* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), 111-15.

with the curse of Canaan, he cited the contemporary situation in Liberia as evidence that Africans were unfit for Christian civilization "on their own and without connection to the white race."[158] For Sihler, not only slavery in the abstract, but the peculiar institution in the United States, was sanctioned by God.

Walther's and Sihler's writings were the most extensive Old Lutheran cases for slavery's biblical permissibility, but they were hardly the end to the debate. Seyffarth published two more articles on slavery and the Bible in 1863. The first was a reworking of his 1862 article, which he published in English in the *Lutheran and Missionary* (mentioned above).[159] The second was a direct reply to what he called Walther's "false teaching."[160] Old Lutherans continued to defend the morality of slavery throughout the Civil War (and, as Chapter Six will show, even after the war ended and the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified).[161] In one case, in April 1865, Sihler published a lengthy review of the pro-slavery argument of the Episcopalian bishop, John Henry Hopkins, praising his work as "worthy of the most careful study."[162] The defense of slavery's

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[158] Sihler, *Die Sclaverei im Lichte der Heiligen Schrift betrachtet*, 24, 33.

[159] G. Seyffarth, "African Slavery; Is it Consistent or Inconsistent with the Scripture of the Old and New Testament?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 15, 1863, 1, and October 22, 1863, 1-2.

[160] G. Seyffarth, "Ist die Erhaltung und Verbeitung der gegenwärtige Negersklaverei eine Sünde oder nicht?" *Der Lutherische Herold*, November 15, 1863, 105-6; and December 1, 1863, 113-14.

[161] See "Die alten lutherischen Lehrer über Sclaverei," *Lehre und Wehre* 9 (March 1863): 79-83, (April 1863): 118-20, (May 1863): 142-47; "Ein neurer lutherischer Theolog über Sclaverei" *Lehre und Wehre* 9 (June 1863): 186-87; Dicke, "Etwas über Colonisation," *Lutheraner*, April 15, 1863, 133-34; "Zur kirchlichen Chronik," *Lutheraner*, August 15, 1864, 189; and "Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Lehre und Wehre* 11 (January 1865): 30.

[162] W. St., "'A Scriptural, Ecclesiastical, and Historical View of Slavery, from the days of the Patriarch Abraham, to the nineteenth century. Addressed to the Right Rev. Alonzo Potter, D. D., Bishop of the Prot. Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. By John Henry Hopkins, D. D., LL. D., Bishop of the Diocese of Vermont. New York: W. J. Pooley & Co., Harpers Building, Franklin Square. pp. VII, & 376 8vo," *Lehre und Wehre* 11 (April 1865): 113. The second half of the abbreviation "W. St." seems to be a misprint, since no other prominent Old Lutheran, beside Sihler, had initials the "W. S." Sihler continued to defend slavery's biblical permissibility even after the war. See Carl S. Meyer, ed. and trans., "A View of

biblical sanction had become so central to Old Lutherans' theological identity that they were willing to draw on the works of non-Lutherans to bolster their claims.

Old Lutherans' full-throated apology for slavery prompts the question of why Midwestern immigrants, who had no economic interest in its perpetuation, came to defend the institution with nearly the same vigor of Southern slaveholders. The answer is twofold. First, as with some conservative Episcopalians, such as Hopkins, and many Roman Catholics, Old Lutherans saw abolition as representing the broader collapse of societal order and the elevation of a disordered conception of liberty. As Walther would write a few years issue after the war, "Every land and every time has its own peculiar temptations and dangers; in America it is this freedom humbug."[163] Second and even more fundamentally, Old Lutherans defended slavery because, in one of the most telling signs of their Americanization, they believed it was plainly taught in the Bible. Seyffarth's challenge to examine a moral problem within its historical context had gone unheeded. Instead, Walther and Sihler believed that the plain meaning of Scripture could be not only easily apprehended, but also directly applied to their contemporary setting. In reality, like other American Protestants, they were oblivious to how political concerns and racial prejudice were informing their interpretation. Though they did not use the term "common-sense," Old Lutherans demonstrated all the hallmarks of this distinctively American hermeneutic.[164]

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the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod: 1866," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 47 (Fall 1974): 99-102.

[163] C. F. W. Walther to A. C. Preus, January 8, 1869, in John E. Helmke, ed. and trans., "Was American Slavery a Sinful Institution?" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 72 (Winter 1999): 246.

[164] On this particularly American-style of interpretation, see especially Noll, *Civil War as a Theological Crisis*.

The Separation of Southern Lutherans

Lutherans in the South also were convinced of slavery's biblical sanction. John Bachman had made the definitive Southern Lutheran pro-slavery argument before the war. Though his newly *Southern Lutheran*, did not delve deeply into the issue during the war, the paper's endorsement of Southern independence was predicated on the belief that Confederate liberty meant the freedom to own slaves.[165] This connection was made explicit in the *Address to Christians throughout the World*, an April 1863 publication signed by more than one hundred prominent Southern ministers, including the Virginia Lutheran David Bittle. The tract, which was reprinted in the *Southern Lutheran* and endorsed by its editors, claimed that the "separation of the Southern States is universally recognized by our people as final" and called for an end to what they saw as a "needless war of invasion." But bound up in this call for political autonomy was the conviction that the enslavement of African Americans is both "Providential" and "Scriptural" and that "abolitionism [is] an interference with the plans of Divine Providence."[166] For Southern Lutherans, their embrace of Confederate nationalism went hand in hand with their approval of slavery.

With the Confederate nation an established fact in the minds of Lutherans in the South, they began to make plans to form their own church body. By the end of 1861, most Southern synods had disavowed the General Synod, and so the *Southern Lutheran* began to issue the call to make "the act of separation between our churches and those of

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[165] See, for example, "Liberty," *Southern Lutheran*, February 7, 1863, 1.

[166] *An Address to Christian throughout the World: By a Convention of Ministers Assembled at Richmond, Va., April, 1863* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1863), 7, 9, 11. The address appeared on the first page of the *Southern Lutheran* in three consecutive issues: May 23, 1863; May 30, 1863; and June 6, 1863.

the North… final and complete."[167] The meeting was held in May 1862 in Salisbury, North Carolina. However, poor attendance due to the difficulties of traveling during wartime forced the delegates to postpone the new church body's formal organization. Those in attendance resolved to reconvene in September. That meeting never occurred, and so its official formation was further delayed.[168] Finally, on May 20, 1863, members from various Lutheran synods throughout the South met in Concord, North Carolina, to found the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America. The twenty delegates came from five synods: Virginia, Western Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.[169] Not present were the Tennessee Synod and the Texas Synod. The former had contemplated admission, but refused because of the other Southern synods' New Lutheran theological orientation. The latter, a small Moderate Lutheran synod primarily made up of German immigrants who tended to support the Union, remained connected to the Northern General Synod throughout the Civil War, even though it was unable to send delegates to its conventions.[170]

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[167] "Circular," *Southern Lutheran*, December 21, 1861, 2.

[168] For details surrounding the formation of the Southern General Synod, see Anderson, *Lutheranism in the Southeastern States*, 33-37.

[169] *Minutes of the First Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Confederate States of America Held at Concord, N. C., May 20-26, 1863* (Columbia, SC: Evans and Cogswell, 1864), 3.

[170] *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1864* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1864), 30. On the Union sentiment among Texas Germans, see Anne J. Bailey, "Defiant Unionists: Militant Germans in the Civil War South," in John C. Inscoe and Robert C. Kenzer, eds., *Enemies of the Country: New Perspectives on Unionists in the Civil War South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001), 208-28; and Walter D. Kamphoefner, "New Perspectives on Texas Germans and the Confederacy," in Charles D. Grear, ed., *The Fate of Texas: The Civil War and the Lone Star State* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2008), 105-19. During the war, William Passavant praised "our foreign (German) brethren in Texas" for "remain[ing] true to their faith and to their adopted country." "The Lutheran Synod of Virginia," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 1, 1862, 1.

After hearing a sermon by Bittle on "Rendering unto Caesar," the delegates quickly moved to the matter at hand and announced their official split from the Northern General Synod. A report detailing their "ground of separation" claimed (falsely) that "the Northern and Southern portion of our Church have for years been divided" and asserted (erroneously) that "the prevailing spirit of the Northern portion is a spirit of *fanaticism*." Because "the Northern Church has… declared it to be the duty of the government to prosecute this war even to our subjugation," the convention declared, "we renounce them as brethren… [and] make our separation from them." Over the course of the week-long meeting, the delegates drafted their own constitution, designated the *Southern Lutheran* as their church body's official paper, and elected Bachman to be their first president. In his first presidential act, Bachman approved the "ground of separation" and declared "this withdrawal to be a final act," with "no provision for any renewal in the future of the intimate relations which have existed between the Northern and Southern sections of the Church in the past."[171] Bachman's election was fitting. Having prayed over the convention that began the process of sundering the American nation, he now presided over a federation of synods that had divided the Lutheran church.

Despite being the first major reversal to American Lutheranism's growing unity, the formal organization of a separate Southern church body did little to curb the optimism of many Northern Lutherans that their church was destined to increase in size, prestige, and internal unity. The separated synods numbered only 20,000 communicants, or a little over 10 percent of the General Synod's membership, a sizeable figure but hardly enough

[171]*Minutes of the First Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Confederate States of America*, 4-5, 12.

to reduce their optimism about the future.[172] If anything, Northern Lutherans predicted, the sectional division would bolster their church's reputation among mainstream American Protestants. As Krauth wrote in the *Lutheran and Missionary*, the secession of the Southern synods left the General Synod only a "little injured," but threw "into relief the almost universal loyalty of our Lutheran people."[173] Moreover, by dividing along sectional lines, Lutherans were simply imitating the nation's major Anglo-Protestant denominations. The Methodists and Baptists had separated in the 1840s and New School and Old School Presbyterians had formed their own sectional church bodies in 1858 and 1861, respectively. At the mid-point of the war, General Synod Lutherans, flush with patriotism, still considered themselves on their way to becoming members of the American Protestant establishment.

Yet the intra-Lutheran battles over political preaching, slavery, and the meaning of the Union were preparing the ground for an even greater ecclesiastical upheaval. Three years after the break between the Northern and Southern synods, the American Lutheran church would undergo a more devastating schism, as competing theological factions split the General Synod in two. Though their disagreements were ostensibly over issues relating to the church's historical confessions, the Civil War would frame and shape these ecclesiastical battles. The ultimate result would be U.S. Lutheranism's conservative theological turn and its alienation from mainstream American culture.

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[172] *Lutheran Almanac, for 1864*, 30.

[173] "The Lutheran Church and Secession," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 4, 1862, 2.

CHAPTER FIVE

American Union and Lutheran Disunity

In July 1865, shortly after the Civil War concluded, Charles Porterfield Krauth announced an important change. In the past, he and his fellow members in the confessional movement associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary* had endorsed the General Synod's toleration of theological differences. Lutherans, they had believed, could differ on the "non-fundamental" doctrines in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, the church's oldest confession, or symbol. Now Krauth admitted to his readers, "time and experience have modified our earlier views." In order to have "true unity," he had become convinced that every Lutheran must subscribe to "all the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession."[1] This was a stunning transformation. Krauth and others had founded the *Lutheran and Missionary* in October 1861 to promote a "Lutheranism… moderate in its tone, [and] free from the spirit of false exclusiveness."[2] While they hoped to bring about theological reform, they also had pledged to "sustain the General Synod in all its efforts to unite and strengthen our beloved Church."[3] After four years of military struggle, political turmoil, and theological debate, the paper now argued that, unless the controversy over confessional subscription was settled, the American Lutheran church "never can have peace."[4] Less than a year later, the General Synod stood in shambles and

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[1] "The Aimless Battle," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 13, 1865, 150.

[2] "Where Do We Stand?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2.

[3] "The Lutheran and Missionary," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2.

[4] "The Two Foundations," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 13, 1865, 150.

the conservative Lutheranism now espoused by Krauth was ascendant. Both directly and indirectly, the issues and debates surrounding the Civil War caused this transformation.

Despite playing a definitive role in the development of American Lutheran identity and illustrating the profound ways in which politics and culture have shaped religious ideas in the United States, the conflicts surrounding the breakup of the General Synod have largely been overlooked by historians of American religion. This dearth of coverage is especially conspicuous when contrasted with the abundance of attention given to the Old School-New School schism among American Presbyterians. Scholars have treated the latter conflict as a crucial episode of nineteenth-century U.S. religious history, one that presaged and even influenced the outbreak of the Civil War. Yet the theologically similar division among General Synod Lutherans, despite lasting for a longer period and involving more people than the Presbyterian split, has received far less attention.[5] Most general histories of religion in the United States, as well as works specifically on the Civil War era, have ignored the General Synod schism completely. Those few scholars who have discussed it have described the division as stemming from

[5] When the General Council broke away from the General Synod in 1867, the two resulting church bodies totaled about 206,000 members. In addition, there were about 17,000 members in the General Synod, South. Just before these three church bodies reunited in 1918 to form the United Lutheran Church in America, they together numbered roughly 942,000 members. By contrast, when the New School and Old School Presbyterians split in 1837, the combined membership of the two factions was about 230,000. After the New School and Old School Presbyterians in the South split from their Northern counterparts in 1858 and 1861, respectively, they formed a united Southern Presbyterian Church in 1864, which numbered about 80,000 members. When the Northern schools reunited in 1869, the new church body's membership was about 460,000. For these statistics, see *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1868* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1868), 35; W. M. Kopenhaver and Grace M. Sheeleigh, eds., *The Lutheran Church Annual for 1917* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1917), 94, 96; Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 136-37; and Thomas C. Johnson, *A History of the Southern Presbyterian Church with Appendix* (New York: Christian Literature, 1894), 482. The ubiquitous claim that the Old School-New School schism in Presbyterianism, as well as the sectional divisions among Baptists and Methodists, inflamed the tensions that led to the Civil War is found in many of the works referenced in the note immediately below. For the fullest expression of this interpretation, see C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the American Civil War* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1985).

tensions between those who were "assimilated" and "American" and those who were "immigrant" and "European," even though both parties were primarily made up of native-born, English-speakers. Despite being the only major ecclesiastical schism to arise in the wake of the Civil War, the General Synod breakup and its aftermath do not feature prominently in most accounts of nineteenth-century American religion.[6]

By contrast, denominational historians have treated the intra-Lutheran schism extensively, but virtually all have failed to connect these ecclesiastical and theological developments to the political and cultural contexts in which they took place.[7] The only

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[6] The following works discuss the Presbyterian schism of 1837, but do not mention the Lutheran schism of 1866: Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1992); Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christopher Hodge Evans, *Histories of American Christianity: An Introduction* (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013); John Corrigan and Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life* (New York: Routledge, 2015); Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout, and Charles Reagan Wilson, eds., *Religion and the American Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Robert J. Miller, *Both Prayed to the Same God: Religion and Faith in the American Civil War* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007); and George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010). For general histories of religion in America that mention the General Synod schism but attribute it to differences between "assimilated" and "immigrant" Lutherans, see Clifton E. Olmstead, *History of Religion in the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1960), 328-31; Robert T. Handy, *History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 210-13; and Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in a New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2002), 238-42. Sydney Ahlstrom, himself a Lutheran, resembles the denominational historians cited in the note immediately below in how he interprets these intra-Lutheran conflicts. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), 523-26.

[7] Most works specifically about the nineteenth-century controversies over confessionalism and church unity mention the Civil War either in passing or not at all. These include Virgilius Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism* (New York: Century, 1927); Carl Mauelshagen, *American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism* (Athens: University of Georgia Division of Publications, 1936); John H. Tietjen, *Which Way to Lutheran Unity? A History of Efforts to Unite the Lutherans of America* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1966); David A. Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis: The Question of Identity in the American Republic* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); and Charles P. Arand, *Testing the Boundaries: Windows to Lutheran Identity* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1995). Conversely, the only major treatment of American Lutheranism during the Civil War treats this ecclesiastical schism and resulting theological shift as an afterthought: Charles William Heathcote, *The Lutheran Church and the Civil War* (New York: Revell, 1919), 130-37. General histories of American Lutheranism often discuss the Civil War in tandem with the General Synod schism and the rise of conservative confessionalism, but none see the war as related to these intra-Lutheran developments in any meaningful way: Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 139-68; August R. Suelflow and E. Clifford Nelson, "Following the Frontier, 1840-1875," in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America*

major departure from this approach comes from historian Paul Kuenning, whose flawed attempt to link support for confessionalism with opposition to antislavery activism was discussed in Chapter Three.[8] Additionally, many historians of American Lutheranism see the conflict over confessionalism and church unity as cresting with the controversy surrounding the *Definite Platform* in the mid-1850s and thus presume that the events of the 1860s were faits accomplis.[9] But such an interpretation overstates the significance of those antebellum conflicts and overlooks how most Lutherans on the eve of the Civil War were looking forward to a future of intra-denominational peace and growth. In sum, most scholars of American Lutheranism treat the breakup of the General Synod and the rise of conservative confessionalism as the inevitable outcomes of strictly theological tensions, rather than the contingent results of their Civil War milieu.

As Krauth himself recognized, the war played an important role in shaping the controversies within the General Synod. In the same article in which he announced the new position of his *Lutheran and Missionary*, he identified what had precipitated his change of heart and mind: "In Church and State the last years have wrought changes, deep and thorough, in every thinking man, and on no point more than this, that

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(Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 210-51; L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 67-79; and Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 173-81.

[8] For the section of his book that makes this argument, see Paul P. Kuenning, *The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 163-78. One of the first comprehensive histories of Lutheranism in America also sees a link between General Synod schism and the Civil War, albeit in a very generalized way: "The passions aroused in the bitter discussion which preceded the class of arms, and all the extravagances of denunciation that marked the utterances of the press and the declamations of public speakers during the war, undoubtedly had their effect in intensifying the violence of ecclesiastical controversy when it again broke out." Henry Eyster Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States* (New York: Christian Literature, 1893), 451.

[9] The origin of this interpretation comes from Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, esp. 322-44, a book which many of the denominational histories in the footnotes above cite extensively. For a newer history that treats these developments in the 1860s with a greater sense of contingency, see Granquist, *Lutherans in America*, 179-181.

compromise of principle, however specious, is immoral."[10] For Krauth and his fellow confessionalists, the Civil War was principally a constitutional conflict. Southern rebels, in their view, were seeking to overthrow the American republic by establishing an unlawful government based on slavery and states' rights, while the Union was fighting to preserve and perfect the principles of liberty and democracy.[11] Those associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary* came to see the Augsburg Confession as an analogue to the American Constitution, and applied the lessons learned during the war to the issues facing the church.

The outlook of Krauth's rival paper, the *Lutheran Observer*, was also influenced by the political debates surrounding the Civil War. Those connected to this paper, however, viewed the war not as a conflict over constitutional principle, but as the result of inflexible, hot-headed political leaders. For them, secession was wrong, not principally because it was unlawful, but chiefly because Southerners had chosen rebellion over compromise. Like their opponents at the *Lutheran and Missionary*, those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* saw an inextricable connection between the upheavals in the American nation and the trials facing the Lutheran church. "[T]he most enlightened congregations," wrote one contributor to the paper, "consider any secession, either ecclesiastical or political, as a sin." He concluded: "We hope to God that the attempt to rend our church asunder will prove unsuccessful, and that all true Lutherans will... take

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[10] "The Aimless Battle," 2. For an example of a denominational historian almost willfully overlooking the Civil War context of these events, see Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 154-55. Here, Gustafson quotes this article at length, including the portion in which Krauth connects the ecclesiastical controversy to the national conflict, but simply claims that "he had come to believe… that one could no longer be neutral."

[11] Krauth was not alone in this view. See Mark E. Neely, Jr., *Lincoln and the Triumph of the Nation: Constitutional Conflict in the American Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

for their rallying word: *United we stand, divided we fall*."[12] In both state and church, the *Lutheran Observer* prioritized the preservation of peace, while the *Lutheran and Missionary* emphasized standing on constitutional principle.

The Civil War then did more than merely inflame the tensions between different schools of American Lutherans. Instead, ideas derived from the era's political culture shaped the doctrinal debates within the church. This argument implies neither that the theological issues which led to the General Synod schism were illusory or imagined, nor that this religious conflict was a façade for more deeply seated political and social concerns. The debates over confessional subscription and church unity were not only real and concrete, but also had intrinsic importance to the participants. Rather, emphasizing how the Civil War shaped these intra-Lutheran controversies demonstrates how religious identity never develops in a vacuum, but always is shaped by its cultural context.

Old School vs. New School

Prior to the Civil War, the various factions within the General Synod had reached a détente over the issues of confessional subscription and church unity, as discussed in Chapter Three. Since the 1820s, the ministers of the General Synod had been asked to affirm that "the fundamental doctrines of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession." In the wake of the controversy surrounding the publication of the *Definite Platform*, all parties—New, confessional, and Moderate— had agreed to abide by this "doctrinal basis." The *Evangelical Review*, in the opening article of its tenth volume, further elaborated upon

[12] Impartiality, "Remarks on the Secession of the Synod of Pennsylvania from the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, September 28, 1866, 1.

this "principle of the General Synod": neither the "strict Symbolist" nor the one "who has received the [Augsburg] Confession without an entire adherence to all its doctrines" should label the other's position as "unlutheran." Instead, the journal's editors wrote, "mutual toleration is the correct principle."[13]

This principle of "mutual toleration" was put to the test during the first months of the Civil War. As narrated in Chapter Four, the confessional Lutheran papers, the *Missionary* and the *Lutheran and Home Journal* (later merged to form the *Lutheran and Missionary*) supported the Union war effort with greater rapidity and vigor than the *Lutheran Observer*, the chief paper of New Lutheranism. Throughout the war's first six months, the former papers mingled their condemnation of the latter paper's reluctance to embrace the war effort with an increased criticism of its theology. After the *Lutheran Observer* officially expressed its support for the Union after several weeks of trying to remain neutral, William Passavant in the *Missionary* insinuated that the paper's "conversion to loyalty" might be, like the type of revivalist conversion it promoted, "too sudden to be permanent."[14] The *Lutheran and Home Journal*, edited by Krauth and Joseph Seiss, brought up the New Lutherans' past support for the "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession." Though acknowledging that the "agitation…[over] the 'Definite Platform' has long since passed away," Krauth and Seiss felt the need to revivify this past act of churchly "treason" in light of the current war "to maintain every article intact in our national Constitution." Just "like the flag and Constitution of our land," the editors argued, "when [our Confession] falls our distinctive life falls with it."[15]

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[13] "The Review: The Church," *Evangelical Review* 10 (July 1858): 12-15.

[14] "A Sudden Conversion," *Missionary*, June 13, 1861, 82.

[15] "'Born Again of Baptism and the Holy Spirit'," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, July 5, 1861, 100.

The *Lutheran Observer* also conflated disagreements over the war with disputes about theology. The New Lutheran paper saw the confessional papers' theological criticism as stemming from the same "spirit of intolerance" as "those who are actively participating in the war that afflicts our country."[16] In March 1861, the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* had written that the different views of "our symbolical brethren… ought to be peacefully tolerated and should not be made a cause or occasion of strife."[17] Just a few months later, the paper was accusing "high-churchism or symbolism" of being a "distorted, intolerant and bigoted thing." Benjamin Kurtz expressed his fear that, just as political extremism had divided the nation, "our good Lutheran Zion is in danger of being riven into fragments" and blamed this situation on "the mischievous working of symbolism."[18]

Tensions eased somewhat with the publication of the first issue of the *Lutheran and Missionary*. As discussed in Chapter Four, the paper's editors, Krauth and Passavant, reaffirmed their support of the General Synod's position on church unity. With the *Lutheran Observer* now officially behind the Union war effort, the two editors also dispensed with their accusations of disloyalty against their rival paper, choosing instead to unite around their shared devotion to the nation. The New Lutheran paper's editors were cautiously optimistic about the editorial direction of the *Lutheran and Missionary*. They commended these "Old-School Lutherans" for their "liberal platform" and for "extend[ing] a rather warm invitation to New-School men to unite with them." Yet they

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[16] "Intolerance," *Lutheran Observer*, July 5, 1861, 2.

[17] "The Folly and Guilt of Intolerance," *Lutheran Observer*, March 8, 1861, 2.

[18] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The General Synod and Other Cognate Subjects," *Lutheran Observer*, August 2, 1861, 2-3.

were also realistic in their appraisal of the current state of the General Synod: "The existence of two parties in the church is an indisputable fact; the one is represented by the Lutheran [and Missionary], the other by the [Lutheran] Observer."[19]

This assertion of two distinct schools was a bit premature, but it reflected the changing nature of the General Synod's various factions. The most significant development was the growing partnership between the confessional movement and Moderate Lutheranism. The latter party was represented primarily by members of the Pennsylvania Synod (or Pennsylvania Ministerium), the oldest and largest Lutheran church body in the United States. Though many within the Pennsylvania Synod had theological objections to New Lutheranism, what chiefly had animated their resistance in the 1840s and 1850s was the fear of losing their Pennsylvania German heritage. By contrast, the members of the confessional movement, led by the former New Lutherans who founded the *Missionary* and the *Lutheran and Home Journal*, were motivated primarily by theology. Though many of these churchmen resided in Pennsylvania, they belonged to different synods than the Pennsylvania Synod and had little interest in preserving German culture.[20] Moreover, they still retained the New Lutheran vision of making the General Synod a less insular and more mainstream American denomination.[21]

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[19] "The New Paper," *Lutheran Observer*, November 15, 1861, 2.

[20] William Passavant became a member of the Pittsburg Synod, which he helped to found, in 1845 and would remain so for the rest of his life. "Rev. W. A. Passavant, Sr.., D. D.," in J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies, or Historical Notices of Over Three Hundred and Fifty Leading Men of the American Lutheran Church, from its Establishment to the Year 1890* (Milwaukee, WI: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 576. Charles Porterfield Krauth became a member of the East Pennsylvania Synod in 1860. Adolph Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth: Volume II, 1859-1883* (New York: Christian Literature, 1909), 25, 27. Joseph Seiss actually worked to ensure that his congregation in Philadelphia would become part of the East Pennsylvania Synod and not the Pennsylvania Synod. Lawrence R. Rast, "Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2003), 54-55.

[21] As late as 1865, Krauth showed in an editorial that he was still animated by this desire: "A gentleman of Philadelphia… remarked to us recently that he had been greatly struck with the increasing

In the years leading up to the Civil War and during the conflict's first years, however, the already somewhat imprecise distinctions between confessional and Moderate Lutherans became increasingly blurred.

This was mostly the result of changes within the Pennsylvania Synod. Already in the early 1850s, Philip Schaff had noticed that new intellectual leaders were infusing the church body with a "deeper spiritual life and church consciousness."[22] Those leaders included William Mann and Charles W. Schaeffer (1813-1896).[23] Especially after the controversy over the *Definite Platform*, Mann, Schaeffer and others began to make common cause with Passavant, Krauth, Seiss, and others in defense of the Augsburg Confession.[24] As it was drawing closer to the confessional party, the Pennsylvania Synod was also distancing itself from the other major Moderate Lutheran church body, the Ohio Synod. The key turning point had come in 1853 when the former group joined the General Synod, while the latter refused. Shortly thereafter, the Pennsylvania Synod, which previously had supported the Ohio Synod's seminary in Columbus, endowed a "German professorship" at the seminary in Gettysburg, a position eventually filled by Charles F. Schaeffer (the uncle of Charles W.), a former professor at the Columbus seminary.[25] The increasing shrillness of the Ohio Synod's paper, the *Lutheran Standard*,

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prominence which the Lutheran church is assuming in our country." "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 9, 1865, 2.

[22] Philip Schaff, *Amerika: Die politischen, socialen und kirchlich-religiösen Zustände der Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika* (Berlin: Wiegandt und Grieben, 1854), 225.

[23] On Schaeffer, see B. M. Schmucker, "Rev. Charles F. Schaeffer, D. D.," in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies,* 648-654.

[24] "Synod of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran and Home Journal*, July 6, 1860, 1; and "'Born Again of Baptism and the Holy Spirit'," 100.

[25] Theodore G. Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, 1864-1964* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Theological Seminary, 1964), 15, 25-26.

formerly considered the "organ" of all Moderate Lutherans, also alienated many in the Pennsylvania Synod. The final straw was the Ohio Synod's brief flirtation with the Missouri Synod in the late 1850s, which led some in the General Synod to lump the Ohio Synod together with the Old Lutherans.[26] In September 1862, the Pennsylvania Synod formally recommended the *Lutheran and Missionary* to its members, signifying not only its rejection of the *Lutheran Standard* but its common cause with the confessional party. The emergence of two distinct factions within the General Synod, which the *Lutheran Observer* had identified about a year before, had officially come to pass.[27]

Assigning labels to the two competing parties is a difficult task, not only because both groups went by a variety of names, but also because they often rejected each other's designations. Those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* most commonly called themselves "American Lutherans." But the faction connected to the *Lutheran and Missionary* refused to concede the term to their opponents, arguing that their own form of Lutheranism was not any less American.[28] The *Lutheran Observer* indiscriminately called their adversaries "symbolists," "high-churchmen," "hyper-Lutherans," and even "Old Lutherans." But once again, the *Lutheran and Missionary* did not accept those names as representative of their viewpoint. The party affiliated with this paper preferred

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[26] "The Review: The Church," 13.

[27] "Recommendation of 'The Lutheran and Missionary' by the Synod of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 18, 1862, 185.

[28] See, for example, "'American Lutheranism'," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 10, 1862, 94; and "Our General Synod: Theological Characteristics of the Era of Formation," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 17, 1862, 98.

to be known as "true Lutherans" or simply "Lutherans," but their adversaries at the *Lutheran Observer* wanted the same thing.[29]

Ultimately, the most accurate designations for each group are terms very familiar to most scholars of religion in the nineteenth-century United States: "New School" and "Old School." While not precisely equivalent, the theological divisions between the two Lutheran parties resembled those in American Presbyterianism, as even the Lutherans involved in the controversies recognized.[30] Though the participants used other names more frequently, those were the only labels that both parties came to accept as accurately characterizing both their own position and that of their opponents.[31] Moreover, the terms "Old School" and "New School" best reflect the realignment of the various factions within the General Synod during the early 1860s.

The theology of New School Lutherans during the Civil War was essentially the same as that of antebellum New Lutheranism. Those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* persisted in their support of revivalism, temperance, and other facets of American evangelicalism and continued to believe that the historic confessions of the

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[29] See, for example, "Where Do We Stand?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2; and B[enjamin] K[urtz], "Where Do We Stand?" *Lutheran Observer*, January 17, 1862, 2.

[30] "Symbolic Analogy between the Presbyterian and Lutheran Churches in the United States," *Lutheran Observer*, December 4, 1863; and "Albert Barnes and Extreme Symbolism in the Presbyterian Church," *Lutheran Observer*, December 25, 1863.

[31] Krauth originally rejected the label "Old School." See "Old School and High Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 31, 1861, 2. However, throughout his two-volume biography of Krauth, Adolph Spaeth, his son-in-law, uses this terminology. See, for example, Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth: Volume I, 1823-1859* (New York: Christian Literature, 1898), 11, 316. Many histories of Lutheranism in the United States have classified the two parties with the General Synod in the same way as Vergilius Ferm did in his influential 1927 study, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology: A Study of the Issue between American Lutheranism and Old Lutheranism*. However, these designations blur the important distinctions between the Old School Lutherans of the General Synod and the self-identified "Old Lutherans" of the Missouri Synod. David Gustafson calls the Old School party "Confessional Lutherans," a label which, though never used by the participants themselves, more accurately captures their theological orientation. However, Gustafson misses the important distinctions between Moderate Lutherans and Old School Lutherans. See Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 121-37.

Lutheran church contained "anti-Scriptural" errors.[32] In particular, they regarded the Augsburg Confession's doctrines of baptismal regeneration and the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper as "antiquated superstitions" inherited from Roman Catholicism or, in the more colloquial phrasing of one correspondent, "all moonshine."[33] Yet following the negative reaction to the *Definite Platform*, which the *Lutheran Observer* originally had promoted, the paper had come to reject the short-lived idea that all Lutherans in the United States needed to adopt their views. Chastened by the negative reaction to the proposed "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession," New School Lutherans committed themselves to the "basis of the General Synod," which allowed "freedom of thought" in "non-essentials."[34] When Kurtz asserted in February 1862 that he and the paper he had edited for nearly thirty years were standing "*in statu quo, or where we always stood*," he was mostly correct.[35]

Old School Lutherans were critical of various aspects of this New School Lutheran program. While "neither in lip nor in heart opposed to revivals of religion," those associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary* were critical of some practices associated with the Anglo-evangelical style.[36] Krauth admitted that "a protracted meeting… is in itself in no respect un-Lutheran," but he criticized "all MEASURES which are confusing, which render judicious instruction impossible, [and] which dispense with

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[32] Spener, "The Peculiar and Distinctive Characteristics of the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran Observer*, March 21, 1862, 1-2.

[33] K[urtz], "Where Do We Stand?" 2; and Anti-Popery, "New Theology," *Lutheran Observer*, April 11, 1862, 1. See also "Symbolism Inconsistent with Itself, Unsettled in its Claims," *Lutheran Observer*, February 14, 1862, 1-2.

[34] "A United Church," *Lutheran Observer*, March 1, 1861, 2-3.

[35] K[urtz], "Where Do We Stand?" 2.

[36] "Ignorance and Revivals," *Lutheran and Missionary*, August 7, 1862, 2.

sound doctrine."[37] He contrasted "TRUE REVIVALS," which happened through preaching and the sacraments, with "PSEUDO-REVIVALS," which "confuse… nervous excitement with living faith." Though more inclined to emphasize the importance of liturgy and the wearing of vestments, Old School Lutherans also insisted that they, like New School Lutherans, opposed "formalism."[38] The disagreements between the two schools on the subject of revivals and rituals were not insignificant, but they were differences in degree, not in kind.

Instead, their principal quarrel centered on theology. In stark opposition to their New School counterparts, Old School Lutherans believed every doctrine in the Augsburg Confession, including its teachings of the sacraments, to be true and scriptural. Several historians have portrayed the confessionalism of Krauth and other nineteenth-century American Lutherans as stemming either from a romantic conception of the Church, as in the Mercersburg Theology of Philip Schaff and John Williamson Nevin, or from a normative view of tradition, as with the Oxford Movement in Anglicanism or the confessional wing of the *Erweckung* in Germany.[39] In actuality, Lutherans like Krauth had no institutional networks with and few intellectual connections to these movements.

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[37] "Measures: New and Old," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 26, 1862, 2.

[38] "Revivals and Reports of Revivals," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 18, 1862, 2. See also "Liturgies: A Little Common Sense About Them," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 26, 1862, 2; and "Evangelical Lutheranism and Spurious Lutheranism. Wherein Do They Differ?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 12, 1863, 10.

[39] These include Sydney Ahlstrom, ed., *Theology in America: The Major Protestant Voices from Puritanism to Neo-Orthodoxy* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1967), 54-58, 425-27; Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America, 1840-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972); Walter H. Conser, *Church and Confession: Conservative Theologians in Germany, England, and America, 1815-1866* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984); Verlyn O. Smith, "Theological Authority in S. S. Schmucker and C. Porterfield Krauth," in Aug. R. Sueflow, ed., *Lutheranism and Pietism: Lutheran Historical Conference*, *Essay and Reports, 1990* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1992), 99-118; Arie J. Griffioen, "Charles Porterfield Krauth and the Synod of Maryland," *Lutheran Quarterly* 7 (Autumn 1993): 277-92; R. Bryan Bademan, "Contesting the Evangelical Age: Protestant Challenges to Religious Subjectivity in Antebellum America" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004), esp. 226-87.

On the rare occasions when they did refer to them, they expressed a mixture of appreciation and criticism.[40] Instead, Old School Lutherans believed that the theology of the Augsburg Confession was true because it was plainly taught in the Bible. As Krauth contended in a seminal article for the *Lutheran and Missionary*, the confession simply presents "the truth set forth in the Word."[41] Rather than deriving their confessional theology from European romanticism or traditionalism then, Old School Lutheranism was just one more manifestation of a distinctively American form of biblicism.[42]

Where the two Lutheran factions differed from the identically named divisions in American Presbyterianism was in the realm of slavery and politics. Old School Presbyterian leaders, such as Charles Hodge, took a much more conservative view of the issues facing the nation during the Civil War than their counterparts in the New School, such as Albert Barnes.[43] As demonstrated in Chapter Four, the exact opposite was the case among Lutherans within General Synod. Especially at the beginning of the war, New School Lutherans, such as Kurtz and Samuel Sprecher, were much more conservative on the issue of emancipation than their Old School colleagues and sought to avoid the contentious topic of slavery. (The New School's leader, Samuel Schmucker, as we have seen, despite advocating a moderate antislavery position before the war, was

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[40] "Dr. Nevin and the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 16, 1863, 98; and ""Puseyites in the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 30, 1865, 90.

[41] "The Doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 13, 1862, 62. Because of the high number of "special orders" for this article, it was reprinted again in a later issue. "The Doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 6, 1862, 74.

[42] For a lengthy expression of Krauth's biblicism, see his tract, which went through two editions: C[harles] P[orterfield] Krauth, *The Bible a Perfect Book: An Address Delivered Before the Bible Society of Pennsylvania College and of the Theological Seminary, April 13, 1852* (Gettysburg, PA: Henry C. Neinstedt, 1857).

[43] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 390, 414-15, 419-20.

publicly silent on the subject during it.) Indeed, the New School *Lutheran Observer* on multiple occasions during the war quoted at length the Old School Presbyterian slaveholder Robert J. Breckinridge of Kentucky, commending his "masterly" defense of the Union and praising his gradualist views on emancipation.[44] By contrast, Old School Lutherans, like Krauth and especially Passavant, were vocally antislavery and more inclined to urge action on emancipation. Unlike in Presbyterianism and other forms of nineteenth-century American Protestantism, Lutherans' theological conservatism did not necessitate political conservatism.

The New School and Old School Lutherans within the General Synod diverged from their Presbyterian equivalents in yet another way: both sides agreed that they could coexist within the same church body. Even after tensions between the two parties were strained in the summer of 1861, both schools continued to insist that ecclesiastical schism would be just was as wrong as national division. The *Lutheran Observer* condemned those who advocated the "loose and dangerous principles" of "the right of secession—the right of revolution" as injurious to peace and harmony in both "church and state."[45] Similarly, the *Lutheran and Missionary* believed that the doctrinal disagreements within the General Synod did not warrant division. According to Krauth, one of the "distinctive features" of Lutheranism was that "no Church has enunciated more boldly the principles of Christian liberty, and none has been so free from the tendency to sect and schism."[46]

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[44] "Dr. Breckinridge on the State of the Country," *Lutheran Observer*, July 5, 1861, 1; and "A Kentuckian on Slavery," *Lutheran Observer*, January 8, 1864, 1. On Breckinridge's view of politics and slavery during the Civil War, see Luke E. Harlow, *Religion, Race and the Making of Confederate Kentucky, 1830-1880* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 165-68.

[45] Cyril, "Revolutions and Secession in Church and State," *Lutheran Observer*, March 14, 1862, 1.

[46] "Distinctive Characteristics of the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 6, 1862, 58.

He condemned any talk of disunion as "Ecclesiastical Secessionism," seeing it as stemming from the same spirit of "licentious liberty" that caused the Southern states to rebel against the federal government.[47] Though holding to differing theological and political positions, Old School and New School Lutherans shared a desire to avoid disunion in the church.

Of course, fraternal affection had its limits. Both schools within the General Synod censured the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod and, by implication, the Moderate Lutherans of the Ohio Synod, as beyond the pale. The New School editors of the *Lutheran Observer* urged toleration toward their "symbolical brethren" in the Old School, but they extended none to "the Missouri [Synod],… and other old-Lutherans, who practice ceremonials and hold doctrines as objectionable to many of us, as those which prevail in the Romish church."[48] Those associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary*, by contrast, had come to hold virtually the same beliefs about the Augsburg Confession as those in the Missouri Synod. But, unlike the Old Lutherans, the Old School Lutherans of the General Synod neither insisted on complete subscription to the confession, nor accepted the Book of Concord as completely true.[49] They also believed that those in the Missouri Synod were too legalistic in their understanding of liturgies and other rituals. As Krauth wrote, "Old Lutherans… cannot discriminate between essence and accident, between truth and her clothes."[50]

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[47] "Bud and Fruit: or Secessionism before Secession," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 1, 1862, 106.

[48] "The Folly and Guilt of Intolerance," 2.

[49] "The Two Foundations," 2.

[50] "Where Do We Stand?" 2.

Yet the more common accusation leveled by both Old School and New School Lutherans was that the Missouri Synod and others outside of the General Synod were guilty of "exclusiveness." The *Lutheran Observer* labeled the Old Lutherans' refusal to cooperate with both non-Lutherans and Lutherans outside their fellowship as "sectarianism and bigotry."[51] Similarly, Krauth condemned Old Lutherans as "exclusive, harsh and repellent." Though believing the Lutheran church to be "pure in her genuine doctrine," the Old School editor "propose[d] no sectarian hedge to our pulpits, no bar to our communion table or abnegation of the sweet bond of Christian fellowship, which would exclude any who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."[52] For their part, Old Lutherans agreed that their differing conception of church unity was the sticking point. What separated them from the Pennsylvania Synod, declared the Missouri Synod theological journal *Lehre und Wehre*, was their fellowship with "the so-called General Synod" and their unwillingness to discipline its pastors who subscribe to the Lutheran confessions "on paper" but depart from it "in doctrine and practice."[53] In stark contrast to the Old Lutherans, both parties within the General Synod endorsed a more inclusive view of inter-Protestant and intra-Lutheran cooperation.

Despite their shared understanding of church unity, both the Old School and New School approached the May 1862 meeting of the General Synod with a sense of anxiety. In the *Lutheran and Missionary*, Krauth expressed his increasing dismay with the General Synod's "somewhat vague" mode of confessional subscription, which permitted

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[51] "Sectarianism and Bigotry," *Lutheran Observer*, January 2, 1863, 2.

[52] "Where Do We Stand?" 2.

[53] "What is it that Separates the Synods of Pennsylvania and Missouri," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 26, 1864, 122-23.

differing interpretations of the Augsburg Confession. Just as the Bible's plain meaning could be determined by common sense, he believed that the Lutheran confessions "have but one meaning" that is "ascertainable." Yet he was frustrated that this hermeneutic had not produced agreement and feared that this diversity of views would "rend the church into fragments."[54] Seeing a parallel between the warring nation and the bickering church, he argued that "with that Confession the character of the Church herself stands or falls, as surely does that of our land with the protection or violation of her flag, the maintenance or overthrow of her union." Though he did not think that the time had come for the General Synod to debate whether or not all the doctrines contained in the Augsburg Confession were "scriptural," as he himself believed, Krauth urged the church body to "set forth a statement of facts" about what the confession actually teaches, so that its members could decide what they believed.[55]

Those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* also approached the upcoming meeting with a heightened sense of anticipation. Some New School Lutherans believed that nefarious plots were afoot. One correspondent feared that "the withdrawal of the church south will lesson [sic] the numerical force of the anti-symbolical party considerably and… [allow] the symbolical party to make the attempt to carry back the church to the stand-point of the sixteenth century." Believing that "the present basis of the General Synod is large, biblical, and liberal" and "fully in unison with the enlightened

[54] "What Is Your Name?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 27, 1862, 86. See also "Uniformity and Unity," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 3, 1862, 90. The editors of the *Lutheran Observer* also believed that confessions' plain meaning could be apprehended by common sense; they simply disagreed with its teachings on the sacraments. See "The Interpretation of Confessions of Faith," *Lutheran Observer*, September 11, 1863, 3.

[55] "Something Greatly Needed," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 1, 1862, 106.

spirit of this age," the writer advocated to "let good enough alone."[56] Kurtz meanwhile offered no specific proposals for addressing the issues surrounding the Augsburg Confession. The New School editor, however, was convinced that "the next General Synod will be one of the most important and interesting ever held."[57]

As Kurtz predicted, the meeting was eventful. The most contentious issue was the General Synod's resolutions on the "State of the Country." As discussed in Chapter Four, its pronouncements were more in accord with the political views of Krauth's and Passavant's *Lutheran and Missionary* than Kurtz's *Lutheran Observer*. Yet in the realm of theology, the General Synod took a decided turn in the direction of the New School. The delegates took no action on the questions posed by Krauth surrounding the Augsburg Confession, a de facto reaffirmation of the General Synod's doctrinal basis. They also chose Kurtz as the church body's new president, replacing the Old School cleric, Charles W. Schaeffer.

Kurtz was honored by his election and cheerfully reported in the *Lutheran Observer* that, though "a stormy session was apprehended," the "meeting was harmonious." Though he disagreed with some aspects of the war resolutions, particularly their harsh condemnation of slavery, he was "much gratified with what the General Synod omitted to do." No attempt, he was happy to say, had been made "to assail the doctrinal basis of the General Synod, and bring it into perfect conformity to every item of the Augsburg Confession." In contrast with the nation divided by war, the General Synod

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[56] An American Lutheran, "The General Synod: Its Present Basis the True One, and the Only One," *Lutheran Observer*, May 2, 1862, 2.

[57] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, April 4, 1862, 2.

had maintained "the continued existence of our great central association" and preserved "the harmony and unity of our beloved Zion."[58]

Krauth meanwhile, despite the seeming setbacks at the meeting, remained hopeful about the General Synod's prospects. As shown in the previous chapter, he was elated about his church body's pronouncements for the Union and against slavery, declaring it "the wisest and noblest work it has ever done."[59] In the realm of ecclesiastical politics, Krauth spun the election of Kurtz as merely a "tribute of kindliness to an old and influential minister." He acknowledged his rival's "toils of many years in the service of the Lutheran Church" and even commended his "qualities [as] a leader." Yet he insisted that Kurtz's election "did not mean to endorse his theology, his newspaper, his Institution, his Platform, or his organic principle of Synodical life." Krauth also expressed disappointment that the General Synod did not make a statement "on the charges widely circulated in the Church against the Augsburg Confession."[60] Nevertheless, he still saw the "General Synod as an important agency of our Church life" and believed that "changes are sure to come." Seeing a parallel between the divisions in the nation and the parties in the church, he declared: "Our Synods are now in a lax

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[58] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "The Late General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, May 22, 1862, 2.

[59] "The General Synod and the Resolution on the State of the Country," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 3, 1862, 142.

[60] "The Late General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 22, 1862, 118. Despite Krauth's attempted magnanimity, several contributors to the *Lutheran Observer* still took offense at his characterization of Kurtz's election: Many, "'The Lutheran' and the Last General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, June 6, 1862, 2; Q. R., "Who Wrote that Editorial," *Lutheran Observer*, June 13, 1862, 2; and X., "Attack of the Editor of the 'Lutheran and Missionary' on the late General Synod and Its President," *Lutheran Observer*, June 13, 1862, 2. Kurtz expressed his appreciation for these "cheering and very flattering testimonials" in response to "the attack of the 'Lutheran'." B[enjamin] K[urtz], "Thanks," *Lutheran Observer*, June 27, 1862, 2.

confederation in the General Synod; but the day is coming, when Confederations will everywhere be superseded by Union."[61]

During the summer of 1862, Krauth continued to push the issue of a stricter confessional subscription in the pages of the *Lutheran and Missionary*. One of his new tactics was to connect those who advocated wide doctrinal leeway with both "sectarianism" and "secessionism." In Krauth's view, those who most often engaged in a "storm of denunciation against sectarianism" were usually the first to form "new sects." Their "anti-sectarianism," he argued, was merely a cover "to diminish the sacredness of doctrine."[62] According to Krauth, this form of "sectarianism in the Church is, in its principles and tendencies, what secessionism is in the State." He asked sarcastically: "Why shall we not let our country be torn into two, or twenty, or a hundred independent States, in the name of love, rather than keep it one by anything that looks like coercion?" He saw the same spirit of appeasement among Lutherans who believe they should not "trouble each other about such trifles, minor matters, non-essentials."[63] For Krauth, the lesson of the Civil War was becoming clear: "We must first be pure, then peaceable."[64]

Patrons of the *Lutheran Observer* recognized that Krauth's jibes were directed at the paper's editors and urged them to respond in kind. The editors, however, declined. The policy of the New School paper, wrote one, was to "avoid the controversies of the day," especially questions about "non-essentials, the mere accessories or accidents of the

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[61] "Tendencies: Our Future," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 22, 1862, 118.

[62] "Sectarianism and Its Cure," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 5, 1862, 126.

[63] "Sectarianism and Secessionism," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 12, 1862, 130.

[64] "Sectarianism and Its Cure," 126. This motto, printed on the header of the *Lutheran and Missionary*, was frequently repeated by Krauth in his editorials throughout the Civil War.

true faith, affecting no man's real orthodoxy or morality."[65] This claim was somewhat disingenuous, as writers for the *Lutheran Observer* engaged in their fair share of polemics—often in the very articles in which they were urging for peace and toleration. Yet on the whole, the paper published fewer articles aimed at their intra-Lutheran rivals during the second year of the Civil War than did the *Lutheran and Missionary*. Like Krauth, the editors of *Lutheran Observer* were applying the political lessons they were learning in the national conflict to their approach to church affairs. The war, in their view, would have been averted, if not for the "the machinations of ambitious and unscrupulous men."[66] Discord in the church, they believed, stemmed from the same fractious spirit. Thus, they repeatedly urged Lutherans to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace."[67]

Just as they had during the first weeks of the newly formed *Lutheran and Missionary*, the tensions between Old School and New School Lutherans briefly cooled when the ownership and editorship of the *Lutheran Observer* changed hands in the fall of 1862. In October, Kurtz reported that, on account of the financial challenges brought on by "this great and diabolical rebellion," the paper was experiencing losses in subscriptions and unpaid dues. A few weeks later, the paper's proprietor, Baltimore printer T. Newton Kurtz, announced that he had sold the paper.[68]

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[65] "Prophylactics," *Lutheran Observer*, June 6, 1862, 2. See also "Our Policy," *Lutheran Observer*, February 28, 1862, 2; and "Prophylactics Again," *Lutheran Observer*, July 11, 1862, 2.

[66] "How Old Art Thou, and Is It Well with Thee?" *Lutheran Observer*, May 2, 1862, 2.

[67] "Our Policy," 2; and "Prophylactics Again," 2. This motto was repeated frequently by the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* throughout the Civil War.

[68] T. Newton Kurtz, "Sale of the Lutheran Observer: A Few Parting Words by the Late Proprietor," *Lutheran Observer*, October 31, 1862, 2.

The new proprietors and editors were George Diehl (1814-1891) and Theophilus Stork (1814-1874), and Frederick W. Conrad (1816-1898).[69] Both Diehl and Stork were pastors in Maryland and previously had served as co-editors of the *Lutheran Observer*. The newcomer to the venture was Conrad, who had straddled the fence between New Lutheranism and Moderate Lutheranism throughout his life. Licensed to preach by the Pennsylvania Synod in 1839, he pastored congregations in Pennsylvania and Maryland before moving to Ohio in 1850. There he served as a professor at Wittenberg College and an associate editor of the short-lived *Evangelical Lutheran*, both of which were associated with New Lutheranism. After pastoring a church in Dayton, he returned to Pennsylvania in the early months of 1862 to serve a Pennsylvania Synod congregation in Lancaster. In his first months there, Conrad had led the effort to recommend the Old School *Lutheran and Missionary* to the members of the Pennsylvania Synod.[70] Now, just a few months later, he had become an editor and proprietor of its New School rival.

Krauth, however, saw Conrad's move not as a betrayal, but as a signal that the *Lutheran Observer* was being imbued with a "new spirit."[71] Though the new editors' introductory article emphasized continuity—they pledged, among other things, to "maintain the doctrinal basis of the General Synod" and "to advocate genuine revivals of religion"—Krauth perceived a change in editorial direction.[72] He claimed that these

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[69] Little is written about these three figures. For brief introductions, see the entries in Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies*, 144-46, 160-62, 770-71; and Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States and of the United Lutheran Church in America, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1826-1926* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1926), 377-78.

[70] "Recommendation of 'The Lutheran and Missionary' by the Synod of Pennsylvania," 185.

[71] "Another Spirit," *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 13, 1862, 10.

[72] Geo[rge] Diehl, T[heophilus] Stork, and F[rederick] W. Conrad, "Introductory," *Lutheran Observer*, November 7, 1862, 2.

"friends will strive to make the [Lutheran] Observer what the LUTHERAN AND MISSIONARY confessedly is," a paper standing on the "true foundation," and confidently predicted that "the Observer of the future will… be the great repairer of the mischief done by the Observer of the past."[73] Krauth also expressed his delight that Kurtz, the paper's "old monarch," had been dethroned. Though he claimed to bear no "personal bitterness" toward his rival, his "unmitigated satisfaction" at his seeming downfall dripped off the page. Even though Kurtz currently sat as president of the General Synod, the editor of the *Lutheran and Missionary* asserted that "the Church no longer desires to hear him."[74]

The new editors of the *Lutheran Observer* politely declined Krauth's offer of companionship. They thanked their "neighbor" for "his warm expressions of friendliness and approval," but made clear that the paper's "doctrinal basis,… spirit and course… are substantially those which the Observer has always held." "Our aim," they declared, "is not to be like the 'Lutheran [and Missionary],' admirable as that paper is… but to be *ourselves*." The new editors also defended the paper's former editor. Though they acknowledged Kurtz's 'imperfections," they expressed "grateful recognition of his manifold works of faith and labors of love."[75]

At first, Krauth did not take the hint. Like a love-sick suitor failing to accept his rejection, he insisted that the newly owned paper only "supposes itself to differ from

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[73] "The New Staff," *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 13, 1862, 10.

[74] "Rev. Dr. Kurtz," *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 13, 1862, 10.

[75] "Our Neighbor: What the 'Lutheran' Says of Us and What We Say to the 'Lutheran'," *Lutheran Observer*, November 21, 1862, 2.

us."[76] However, after the two papers engaged in a series of debates about proper forms of liturgy and acceptable practices of revivalism, and when it became clear that Kurtz would continue to write frequent guest columns for the paper, Krauth finally accepted that his reappraisal of the *Lutheran Observer* had been incorrect.[77] In the final issue of 1862, he once again took up the imagery of war to frame the confessional conflict facing American Lutheranism: "As the glory or shame of a nation is read upon its battle fields..., so may the glory or shame of a Church be determined when we know what it fought for and what it fought against…."[78]

Though Krauth's martial language at the end of 1862 seemed to signal a looming period of controversy between Old School and New School Lutherans, the first two-thirds of the new year actually saw a period of relative peace between the two parties and their respective papers. During the spring and summer of 1863, the rising swell of patriotism among Lutherans in the General Synod submerged their theological squabbles. Though the *Lutheran Observer* and the *Lutheran and Missionary* continued to present their distinctive versions of Lutheranism, the simmering theological conflict was placed on the backburner, as Old School and New School Lutherans rallied around the Union cause.

Much of this owed to the changes at the *Lutheran Observer*. The paper's new proprietors, particularly Conrad, helped to reorient the New School paper toward a more

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[76] "Some Friendly Words," *Lutheran and Missionary*, November 27, 1862, 18.

[77] For the articles surrounding the controversy, see "Response in Church," and "Endorsement of the 'Lutheran'," *Lutheran Observer*, December 12, 1862, 2; "'The Lutheran and Revivals'," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 25, 1862, 34; and "The 'Lutheran' and Revivals," *Lutheran Observer*, December 26, 1862, 2.

[78] "Controversies of the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 25, 1862, 34.

vigorous expression of Christian patriotism and a more explicit endorsement of Christian political involvement. Along with his and his fellow editors' pro-Union editorials, Conrad published several sermons and discourses in other outlets that sanctified the Northern war effort and urged ministers to be the nation's "moral watchmen."[79] The new owners of the *Lutheran Observer* also condemned slavery in explicit terms. Conrad called the institution "the cause of all our troubles" and labeled the "people of the rebellious states" as "the representatives of heathenism," because "they have practiced and intend to perpetuate the system of human bondage."[80] Even Kurtz, writing in a guest column, came to concede that "slavery is a great evil."[81] Like the editors of the *Lutheran and Missionary*, those in charge of the *Lutheran Observer* continued to see the war as a struggle chiefly for the preservation of the Union rather than for emancipation. But under its new leadership, the New School paper removed any lingering doubts about its devotion to the nation and its civil religion.

Both papers demonstrated their commitment to the military struggle by promoting the United States Christian Commission. Founded in 1861 as an agency for distributing Bibles and tracts to Union soldiers, by the third year of the war it had expanded in size and scope. As the number of causalities increased at staggering rates, the commission

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[79] F. W. Conrad, *America's Blessings and Obligations: A Discourse Delivered in Trinity Lutheran Church, Lancaster, Pa., on the Day of National Thanksgiving, November 26, 1863* (Lancaster PA: John Baers' Sons, 1863); F. W. Conrad, *The War for the Unity and Life of the American Union: A Thanksgiving Discourse, May 15, 1864* (Chambersburg, PA: S. R. Fischer, 1864); "Dr. Conrad on Washington," *Lutheran Observer*, February 17, 1865, 1-2; F. W. Conrad, *Ministers of the Gospel, the Moral Watchmen of the Nation: A Discourse Delivered in the English Lutheran Church, Chambersburg, Pa.* (Gettysburg, PA: Aughinbaugh and Wible, 1865); and F. W. Conrad, "The Hand of God in the War," *Evangelical Quarterly Review* 16 (April 1865): 225-45.

[80] Conrad, *America's Blessings and Obligations*, 13; and Conrad, *War for the Unity and Life of the American Union*, 16.

[81] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "Judgments,—Their Origin, Secondary Cause, Use, and Remedy," *Lutheran Observer*, November 21, 1862, 2.

dedicated itself to ministering to the spiritual and physical needs of sick, wounded, and dying soldiers and would continue its charitable work well after the Civil War concluded. General Synod Lutherans enthusiastically supported the Christian Commission not only for its benevolence, but also as way to demonstrate their credentials as mainstream American Protestants. The chairman of the agency appeared at the General Synod's conventions and, beginning in the fall of 1863, both the *Lutheran Observer* and the *Lutheran and Missionary* devoted a portion of nearly every issue to updating their readers on the commission's work and urging them to support it with their monetary contributions.[82]

The high watermark of Lutheran patriotism came in the wake of the Battle of Gettysburg. That the war's pivotal battle took place in the city that housed the church's preeminent educational institutions filled Northern Lutherans with both pride and sadness. One correspondent to the *Lutheran and Missionary* lamented the devastation caused to the college and seminary, which were the "very heart of the church," but praised them for "sending their life blood into every section of the union."[83] The *Lutheran Observer* commended the people of Gettysburg for showing "great liberality and the most self-sacrificing generosity in their kindness to the wounded," and noted the use of the campuses' buildings as make-shift hospitals. One article in the *Lutheran*

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[82] On the work of the Christian Commission, see Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Knopf, 2008), 106-11; and Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 213-19. For examples of Lutheran support for its work, see "The Meeting of the U. S. Christian Commission," *Lutheran Observer*, November 13, 1863, 3; "Christian Commission," *Lutheran Observer*, January 15, 1864, 3; "The Christian Commission," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 18, 1862; and "The Christian Commission," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 24, 1864.

[83] L. L. H., "The Great Battle at Gettysburg, July 1-3, 1863," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 16, 1863, 150.

Observer declared that "the hand of God was strikingly manifest in giving us the victory."[84]

Lutherans also participated in shaping the battle's memory. A professor at Pennsylvania College published one of the first full accounts of the battle, just months after the war, with Krauth writing the foreword.[85] At the dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery on November 19, 1863, Henry L. Baugher (1804-1868), the president of Pennsylvania College, gave the benediction. Almost three years after John Bachman had sanctified the cause of Southern secession, another Lutheran minister blessed the speech that famously proclaimed that "this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom." In a prayer as short as Lincoln's address, Baugher asked the "God of the nations of the earth" to "bless this consecrated ground,… the President of the United States,… and the Representatives of the States here assembled," and implored that "this great nation be delivered from treason and rebellion."[86] The mutual outpouring of patriotism by Lutherans following the events at Gettysburg symbolized their hopeful prospects for their church's unity and growth, as well as their quest to become members of American Protestant establishment.

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[84] "Gettysburg," *Lutheran Observer*, July 31, 1863, 2; and "God Giving Victory at Gettysburg," *Lutheran Observer*, August 14, 1863, 2.

[85] M[ichael] Jacobs, *Notes on the Invasion of Maryland and Pennsylvania and the Battle of Gettysburg July 1st, 2d and 3d, 1863* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1863).

[86] *Address of the Hon. Edward Everett At the Consecration of the National Cemetery At Gettysburg, 19th November 1863, with the Dedicatory Speech of President Lincoln, and the Other Exercises of the Occasion; Accompanied by An Account of the Origin of the Undertaking and of the Arrangement of the Cemetery Grounds, and by a Map of the Battle-field and a Plan of the Cemetery* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1864), 88. On Baugher, see Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies,* 63-65.

"An Irrepressible Conflict"

Despite the shared sense of national pride and optimism about their church's future, during the final months of 1863, the peaceful coexistence between the Old School and the New School began to give way to renewed hostility, as a series of ecclesiastical and theological controversies reignited the firestorm of words between the papers that represented each faction. Previously, Lutherans in the General Synod had been able to cool the tensions between the competing theological parties. But in the final months of the Civil War, their disagreements became increasingly heated, leading some to view the conflict as "irrepressible."[87]

Two episodes in particular helped to make the disputes between the two schools more intense than ever before. The first involved the always provocative Benjamin Kurtz. At the September meeting of the West Pennsylvania Synod, Kurtz preached a sermon that contrasted "TRUE EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION" with "ritual religion." Its hearers immediately recognized it as an attack on the Old School.[88] One eyewitness, a young pastor in the synod, wrote to the *Lutheran and Missionary*, chiding Kurtz, who had been invited to the meeting as a guest, for "taking advantage of the courtesies of Synod" so that he could voice "the old tirade against the peculiarities of our beloved Zion." According to the correspondent, the "condemnation" of the sermon was "universal," so much so that the minister assisting Kurtz left the church service during the middle of his

[87] B., "LETTER FROM WASHINGTON," *Lutheran Observer*, March 4, 1864, 2. See also "Peace versus War," *Lutheran Observer*, March 18, 1864, 2.

[88] B[enjamin] Kurtz, *Experimental (Not Ritual) Religion, the One Thing Needful: A Sermon Delivered in Newville, Pa., before the West Pennsylvania Synod, September 13th, 1863* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1863), 8. Kurtz's sermon was never intended for publication, but, due to the subsequent controversy surrounding it, was published first in the *Lutheran Observer* in its October 23 and 30 issues and shortly thereafter as the stand-alone publication cited above. See "The Condemned Sermon," *Lutheran Observer*, November 13, 1862, 2.

sermon. The writer saw the reaction as a sign that "an indignant and outraged church is rising up" against the New School.[89] Unsurprisingly, Kurtz had a different perspective on the affair. In the *Lutheran Observer*, he responded that "the sermon was adapted to the occasion." He contrasted the negative reaction of "the high-church or symbolic" ministers with the positive response "of my lay-hearers," and condemned the "defamatory remarks" of the "inflated young man," who "was still peeking in his nurse's arms, while I was standing in the very front of the conflict… for sound doctrine and revived religion in the Lutheran church." Kurtz also lambasted Krauth for "giv[ing] publicity to such vile abuse" in the pages of the *Lutheran and Missionary*. He believed that his sermon and the reaction to it had exposed a wide rift between the "American Lutheran and revival Synod[s]" and the "high-toned Old-Lutheran, real presence" ones.[90]

The second controversy stemmed from an article by Levi Sternberg (1814-1886), originally published in the *Evangelical Quarterly Review*, and reprinted in four autumn issues of the *Lutheran Observer*. Sternberg, a professor at Hartwick Seminary, the small General Synod seminary in upstate New York, argued that the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord's Supper was "superstitious," "Romish," "unsustained by Scripture," and "the one dark spot" in the "Lutheran system of theology."[91] Though Sternberg was expressing boilerplate New School Lutheranism, Krauth believed that the

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[89] Conservative, "The Spirit of the West Pennsylvania Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 1, 1863, 195.

[90] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "A Sermon, Privately and Publicly Condemned, and its Author Defamed in Public Print," *Lutheran Observer*, October 16, 1863, 2. See also X., "'The Old Tirade'," *Lutheran Observer*, October 16, 1863, 2.

[91] L[evi] Sternberg, "The Lord's Supper," *Lutheran Observer*, October 9, 1863, 1. The first three installments of the essay came in the September 18, September 25, and October 2 issues. The article was originally published as L[evi] Sternberg, "The Lord's Supper," *Evangelical Quarterly Review* 14 (July 1863): 558-578. Later, it was published as tract with an introduction by Kurtz: L. Sternberg, *The Lord's Supper* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1864).

wording of the article had crossed a clearly defined line of propriety. In the *Lutheran and Missionary*, he called the article "a flagrant assault upon… one of the acknowledged doctrines of the Lutheran church" and "treacherously un-Lutheran." Though the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* claimed that they did not necessarily "endorse its positions" but merely thought that the article deserved to be "spread before the people," Krauth had no patience for such fine distinctions. Like the rebels who were seeking to abolish the nation's constitution, he wrote that any "ministers of the church who are spending their energies in overthrowing its doctrines are traitors."[92]

In the minds of many New School Lutherans, Krauth's words had broken one of the chief terms of the compromise in the General Synod: not to "un-lutheranize" one's opponents. According to the editors of the *Lutheran Observer*, the "bitter invective" of the *Lutheran and Missionary*, particularly the accusation of ecclesiastical treason, had exposed the Old School paper's "true spirit and character" as one of fractiousness and, worse, that of a "Romanist." In response to the denunciation issued by the *Lutheran and Missionary*, the New School paper pronounced its own anathema: "Now we say in the face of the whole church, that a paper calling itself Lutheran… [but] denying the right of an appeal from the Confessions to the Bible… is '*a disgrace to the name it bears*.'"[93] For his part, Krauth believed that Sternberg's "very dishonest and flat article" and Kurtz's "very violent puff of a sermon" were responsible for stirring up the controversy.[94]

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[92] "The Lord's Supper," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 15, 1863, 202. See also "Prof. Sternberg's Article," *Lutheran Observer*, September 18, 1863, 2.

[93] "The Lutheran Unveiled," *Lutheran Observer*, October 23, 1863, 2. See also "The 'Lutheran and Missionary'" shows Its True Colors," *Lutheran Observer*, November 20, 1863, 2.

[94] "The Lord's Supper" (October 15), 202; and "Spirit of the Lutheran Press," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 22, 1863, 206.

At issue were differing interpretations of freedom of conscience and the right of private judgment. For the New School editors of the *Lutheran Observer*, "the assumption that we are bound irrevocably by the decisions of the church in past generations … is both un-Lutheran and un-Protestant." An essential feature of the movement begun by Martin Luther, in their view, was "the right of every generation of the church to re-examine and re-judge, in the light of the Bible, the decisions of former generations."[95] Kurtz, in his controversial sermon, put the matter more boldly, arguing that the Lutheran fathers "knew full well, that in aftertimes men would arise… with increased light and additional and improved facilities for interpreting God's Word."[96] Krauth, however, insisted that the Old School position did not deny the right "to test the every doctrine by the word of God." "[W]e not only concede the right," he declared, "but maintain it to be a sacred duty of every man."[97] Rather, the editor was arguing that, once a person has "reached the conclusion that our church confesses any doctrine in conflict with that Word," he is "bound to leave her communion." Just as Luther ceased to regard himself as a Catholic once he became convinced that the Roman church was in error, Krauth argued, those who regarded certain doctrines of the Augsburg Confession to be false should stop calling themselves Lutherans.[98]

Both schools considered their understanding of freedom of conscience not only to be the "purest and truest type" of Lutheranism, but also the one that best reflected

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[95] "The Lutheran Unveiled," 2.

[96] Kurtz, *Experimental (Not Ritual) Religion, the One Thing Needful*, 7.

[97] "Testing the Confessions by Scripture," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 29, 1863, 2.

[98] "Of Wit and Its Classification with a Digression of Logic," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 29, 1863, 2.

American values. According to the *Lutheran Observer*, the views of the "hyper-Lutherans" or "extreme symbolists" are "not adapted to the active, progressive character of the American people."[99] The New School's version of "American Lutheranism," they argued, not only produced "true piety" instead of doctrinal rigidity, but also was responsible for the institutional growth of the Lutheran church in the United States.[100] For Krauth, this was hogwash. The Lutheranism promoted by the New School, he wrote, was neither "American" nor "Lutheran." "Its fundamental principles… are simply an adoption of and adaption of European error," namely those Ulrich Zwingli and "the Anabaptist fanatics," and "its whole distinctive life turns upon the denial of the Lutheran faith." Instead, the Old School editor argued, "the life and hope of our Church in this country are with the men who are firm in the faith of the Church."[101]

The General Synod's "doctrinal basis," which asked its ministers to confess that "the fundamental doctrines of the Augsburg Confession were substantially correct," had charted a middle course between those two opposing understandings of the place of private judgment in the Lutheran church. On the one hand, by grounding membership in the church's oldest confession, it conceded that Lutheran identity was not infinitely elastic. On the other hand, by only stipulating an adherence to that confession's fundamental doctrines, it allowed leeway on those teachings which had provoked widespread disagreement. Unsurprisingly then, as the May 1864 meeting of the General

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[99] "Lutheranism and Hyper-Lutheranism," *Lutheran Observer*, November 13, 1863, 2.

[100] "What has American Lutheranism done?" *Lutheran Observer*, January 15, 1864, 2.

[101] "The American Lutheran Church," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 24, 1863, 34. See also "The 'American Lutheran' Church: Evangelical Lutheranism and Rationalism," *Lutheran Observer*, December 11, 1863, 2.

Synod approached, this formula for confessional subscription emerged as the key issue facing the convention.

In the months preceding the meeting, Krauth tried to advance a revisionist interpretation of the General Synod's doctrinal basis. In the *Lutheran and Missionary*, he argued that the phrase "fundamental doctrines" actually meant every teaching in the Augsburg Confession, because all of the confession's doctrines are fundamental.[102] The Old School editor blamed New School Lutherans and their "utterly criminal, selfish, and disorganizing… spirit of rationalistic fanaticism" for threatening the unity of the General Synod by distorting the true meaning of this doctrinal basis. Krauth argument, which he had been developing for some time, was clever, but it was also disingenuous, as it contradicted the clear intentions of the founders of the General Synod and the compromise reached in the wake of the controversy over the *Definite Platform*. The chief reason that the Old School leader pursued this line of argumentation was his unwillingness to admit that "we have changed our principles."[103]

The *Lutheran Observer* called Krauth's bluff. In a series of articles, the paper's editors of documented "the great metamorphosis in the views, spirit, and position of the Editor of the Lutheran [and Missionary]" by contrasting his past articles, which espoused a toleration of different views on the sacraments, with his current articles, which demanded a strict confessional adherence.[104] The New School Lutherans continued to

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[102] "The Basis of the General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 31, 1863, 38.

[103] "The General Synod and Its Doctrinal Basis," *Lutheran and Missionary*, March 17, 1864, 82. See also "Fundamental Doctrines: Which Are They? Three Facts," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 5, 1862, 126.

[104] "The Doctrinal Basis of the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, April 15, 1864, 2. For the rest of these articles, see "Krauth vs. Krauth; or, The General Synod's Doctrinal Basis acknowledged and defended in 1859, and denied and repudiated in 1863, by the Editor of the 'Lutheran'," *Lutheran Observer*,

insist that the General Synod's doctrinal basis, as originally conceived, would be the guarantor of American Lutheranism's "universal and uninterrupted prosperity."[105] One correspondent to the *Lutheran Observer* was less optimistic. As the Civil War neared its third year, he wrote that "every discerning mind must see now… that war—the present war, was inevitable." Now he worried that the American Lutheran church was also facing an "irrepressible conflict between truth and error." Fearing for the future of "the true unity of Lutheranism in our land," the New School writer asked, "*must separation come?*"[106]

Despite this dire forecast, in the immediate run-up to the General Synod's 1864 meeting both sides toned down their condemnatory rhetoric and even expressed cautious optimism. The *Lutheran Observer*, convinced that the General Synod is "sufficiently Lutheran" and "can afford to tolerate some degree of diversity on non-essentials," asked the conventions' delegates to keep "the bond of union on its old, liberal basis." Desiring "love, and harmony, and brotherly courtesy," the New School paper resolved to cooperate with "the brethren with whom we have held some controversial discussion."[107] Unsurprisingly, the *Lutheran and Missionary* had a different goal for the meeting. Though Krauth did not propose an amendment to the General Synod's doctrinal basis, he expressed his desire that the General Synod reprimand those member synods who had

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March 4, 1864, 2; "Krauth vs. Krauth; or, The Catholicity of the General Synod's Doctrinal Basis Explained and Approved in 1859, and Mis-stated and Disapproved in 1863, by the Editor of the Lutheran," *Lutheran Observer*, March 18, 1864, 2; "The Character of the Difference of Opinion in the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, April 1, 1864, 2; and "The Doctrinal Basis of the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, April 8, 1864, 2.

[105] "True to the General Synod's Basis," *Lutheran Observer*, February 19, 1864, 2.

[106] B., "LETTER FROM WASHINGTON," *Lutheran Observer*, March 4, 1864, 2. See also "Peace versus War," *Lutheran Observer*, March 18, 1864, 2.

[107] "The General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, April 29, 1864, 2.

adopted the *Definite Platform* nearly ten years before and rebuke "the public assailing of the doctrines taught in the Augsburg Confession" by the likes of Kurtz, Sternberg, and the *Lutheran Observer*. At the same time, he urged "pure love for each other and just forbearance where there are conscientious differences."[108] Each school, confident that this convention would ratify its understanding of confessionalism, believed that they could be somewhat magnanimous to their soon-to-be defeated opponents.

The meeting, held in York, Pennsylvania, saw a decisive victory for the New School. On the first day of the convention, the delegates elected Samuel Sprecher as the new president of the General Synod. Sprecher, the president of Wittenberg College in Ohio, was an ardent proponent of the version of Lutheranism advocated by his mentors, Kurtz and Schmucker. With them, he had co-authored the *Definite Platform* and belonged to one of the few synods which had adopted its proposed "American Recension of the Augsburg Confession."[109] If the proponents of "American Lutheranism" were "a hopeless minority," as Lutheran historian Abdel Ross Wentz claimed, the voters at the General Synod did not get the message.[110]

Controversy erupted on the fourth day, when the majority of the convention's delegates, after a fierce debate, voted to admit the Franckean Synod into the General Synod. As the sole abolitionist Lutheran synod in the United States, the Franckeans had long been a lightning rod of controversy. However, the debate surrounding their admission did not mention their views on slavery. By the third year of the Civil War, most General Synod Lutherans had come to see slavery as immoral and opposing it as a

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[108] "The General Synod—Pia Desideria," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 5, 1864, 2.

[109] Ferm, *Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, 264.

[110] Wentz, *Basic History of American Lutheranism*, 137.

Christian duty. Sprecher, the new president, reflected this change. At the General Synod's 1862 convention, he had been among several delegates who expressed discomfort with the church body's antislavery resolutions, believing them to be too "political." Now, in a sermon given before the 1864 meeting, he not only condemned slavery in explicit terms, but also exhorted his fellow Lutherans to bring to bear "the true spirit of Christianity… upon our public councils, and our national activity."[111] Shortly thereafter, the General Synod passed another set of resolutions on the state of the country. Though they did not mention emancipation as an objective of the Union war effort, the new declarations denounced the "persistent efforts… to prove from the Holy Scriptures the divine institution of American Slavery" and asserted that this "system of human oppression… exists only by violence, under the cover of iniquitous laws." The delegates adopted the resolutions unanimously.[112] Most General Synod Lutherans did not share the abolitionist views of those in the Franckean Synod, but by 1864 they no longer viewed their activism antagonistically.[113]

Rather than on slavery, the conflict over the admission of the Franckean Synod centered on theology. The Franckeans had never formally adopted the Augsburg Confession, but at the convention their delegates pledged themselves to the "doctrinal

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[111] Samuel Sprecher, *The Providential Position of the Evangelical Church of This Country, at This Time: A Sermon Delivered at the Opening of the General Synod, at York, Pennsylvania, May Fifth, 1864* (Selinsgrove, PA: Office of the Lutheran Kirchenbote, 1864), 11.

[112] *Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Assembled in York, Pa., May, 1864* (Gettysburg, PA: H. C. Neinstedt, 1864), 35-36.

[113] Paul Kuenning, in his argument that the Franckean Synod's abolitionism was a key factor in the opposition against their admission to the General Synod, ignores this change over time. Kuenning also does not account for the fact that many of those who were opposed to the Franckean Synod's admission, such as William Passavant, were among the most ardently anti-slavery voices within the General Synod. See Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 218-19.

position of the General Synod." By a vote of 97 to 40, the synod was granted membership "with the understanding" that it would officially adopt the General Synod's basis at its next meeting. For some of those who voted against their admission, this stipulation was not good enough. A formal protest signed by twenty-three Old School delegates, including Passavant and Beale Schmucker, argued that, because "the whole history of the Franckean Synod presents it as having no relation nor connection whatever with the Augsburg Confession," the synod could not be classified as "a regularly constituted Lutheran Synod." By granting admission to the Franckean Synod, the protesters declared, "the General Synod has violated its Constitution." The delegation from the Pennsylvania Synod, the largest member synod of the General Synod, went even further. Led by Charles W. Schaeffer, they announced that, along with signing the protest, they would not participate in the rest of the meeting.[114] Though they had not officially severed fellowship with the General Synod, by leaving the convention in protest, the delegates of the Pennsylvania Synod had paved the way for future disunion.

In an attempt to quell the controversy, the General Synod passed several resolutions meant to give slight concessions to the Old School. First, they asked its member synods to amend the General Synod's constitution to state that newly applying synods must accept "the Augsburg Confession, as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Divine Word." (They would ratify this amendment at the 1868 convention.) The delegates also passed a resolution declaring that "the Augsburg Confession, properly interpreted, is in perfect consistence… with the Holy Scriptures." Finally, in a resolution explicitly passed "for the prevention of disintegration in the

[114] *Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the General Synod*, 17-19, 23-26.

Church and the maintenance of fraternal union" and implicitly directed at the war of words between the *Lutheran Observer* and the *Lutheran and Missionary*, the delegates of the General Synod "most unqualifiedly" condemned "denouncing each other as cold formalists on the one hand, and on the other, as traitors to the Lutheran Church" over "non-essential features of the Augsburg Confession."[115]

Though some denominational historians have portrayed these actions as a decisive turn by the General Synod in a more conservative direction, in reality little had changed.[116] By changing its constitution to require all applying synods to offer a qualified assent to the Augsburg Confession, the General Synod was simply reaffirming the confessional subscription that had been asked of its ministers since its formation in the 1820s. To be sure, the resolutions had closed off any chance of changing the church's doctrinal basis to the one advocated in the 1850s by the supporters of the *Definite Platform*. But that proposal was long dead. By qualifying the terms of confessional subscription with phrases such as "fundamental doctrines," "properly interpreted," and "non-essential features," the General Synod was reaffirming the doctrinal leeway that New School Lutherans had long been promoting.

The New School and Old School papers reacted to the General Synod's meeting in different ways. The *Lutheran Observer* saw the convention as an unqualified victory: "The doctrinal basis and policy for which the Observer has contended in the face of the most determined opposition, was accepted by the General Synod with a unanimity and quiet enthusiasm that filled every heart with joy." The delegates, the paper proclaimed,

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[115] *Proceedings of the Twenty-First Convention of the General Synod*, 39-41.

[116] Jacobs, *A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States*, 459-61; and Wentz, *Basic History of American Lutheranism*, 144.

had rejected "hyper-orthodoxy on the one hand" and "radicalism on the other," and shown themselves to be "true Lutherans."[117] The *Lutheran and Missionary* meanwhile was uncharacteristically reserved. In the first months after the meeting, Krauth, who had not been a delegate to the convention but had attended its proceedings for a few days, limited himself to simply reporting on what had occurred.[118]

The Old School editor's caution owed in part to his trying to figure out what precisely had transpired at the York convention, but he also was waiting to see what actions the Pennsylvania Synod would take following the protest of its delegates. At its annual meeting at the end of May 1864, just two weeks after the General Synod's convention, the members of the Pennsylvania Synod voiced their approval of their delegates' actions. Even more controversially, they voted to begin the process of establishing a new seminary in Philadelphia. The synod appointed an executive committee and scheduled a special convention for July 25 to finalize the proposal.[119]

Even though the resolution said nothing about the new theological institution being a rival to the Gettysburg seminary, the circumstances surrounding the Pennsylvania Synod's decision indicated otherwise. The *Lutheran Observer* queried why another seminary in Pennsylvania was needed. If the new institution's focus would be on training pastors to evangelize German immigrants, the New School paper believed it would be "an undertaking worthy of praise." But if the new seminary was to have a "different

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[117] "Hopeful," *Lutheran Observer*, May 20, 1864, 2.

[118] "The General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 12, 1864, 114; "The Late General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 19, 1864, 118; and "The General Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 26, 1864, 123.

[119] "The Synod of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 2, 1864, 126; and "The New Theological Seminary of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 16, 1864, 126.

theological standpoint from the General Synod's seminary [in Gettysburg]," they worried that it would disrupt the "harmony" of the church.[120]

Krauth, by contrast, expressed unqualified support for the new seminary. Breaking his brief silence on controversial issues, he argued that it was a necessary measure against those who "make the title Lutheran a cloak for war to the death upon Lutheranism itself."[121] Though not himself a member of the Pennsylvania Synod, he offered the church body some advice. Rather than limiting itself to serving German churches, he urged the new institution to conceive of its project more broadly and "make itself thoroughly at home in the national and religious life of America."[122] In July 1864, the special meeting of the Pennsylvania Synod officially approved the founding of its Philadelphia seminary and named its first three, full-time professors: Charles F. Schaeffer, who would resign from the Gettysburg seminary as the Pennsylvania Synod canceled its endowed professorship there; William Mann, who would serve as the seminary's "German professor;" and, in an appointment that left no doubts about the theological direction of the new institution, Krauth.[123]

Just weeks after being chosen as a professor, the editor of the *Lutheran and Missionary* began to use his paper to define the institution's mission and purpose. "The new Theological Seminary is imperatively needed," he argued, "for the sake of PURE

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[120] 'The New Theolog'l Seminary," *Lutheran Observer*, June 10, 1864, 2.

[121] "Why the Synod of Pennsylvania Wants to Establish a New Theological Seminary," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 30, 1864, 142.

[122] The Theological Seminary of the Pennsylvania Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 21, 1864, 154.

[123] Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia*, 30-31. For two articles about the formation of the Philadelphia seminary, see Dale A. Johnson, "Lutheran Dissention and Schism at Gettysburg Seminary, 1864," *Pennsylvania History* 33 (January 1966): 13-29; and L. DeAne Lagerquist, "Revisiting the Founding of Philadelphia Seminary," *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 (Winter 1996): 445-66.

DOCTRINE." Krauth claimed provocatively that, right now, "we might more safely send our sons to Princeton or Andover to imbue them with just ideas of Lutheran doctrine" than to the seminaries of the General Synod.[124] By contrast, the "doctrinal character" of the Philadelphia school would be "unreservedly and unalterably based on the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," which meant a complete subscription to the Augsburg Confession and a "virtual" subscription to the entire Book of Concord.[125] Along with a "homogenousness [sic] of doctrinal influence," the seminary would also seek to unite the German- and English-speaking elements of the church. (Krauth had been named the English professor.) Rather than existing merely for the Pennsylvania Synod, the Old School editor believed that the Philadelphia seminary would supersede the Gettysburg seminary as the theological institution for "the whole Church" and bring about "true unity."[126]

The *Lutheran Observer* was outraged. Following the appointment of Krauth and his blustering editorials, the New School paper's editors dropped their ambivalence toward the new seminary and condemned it unreservedly. They criticized the Old School editor's "unjust and groundless aspersions" against the Gettysburg seminary and accused his theological institution of advocating "the position of the extreme Old-Lutherans."[127] Their most serious charge was that those behind the Pennsylvania Synod's seminary were guilty of "revolution." In the months following the General Synod convention, the New

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[124] "Is the New Theological Seminary Needed?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, August 11, 1864, 166.

[125] "The Theological Seminary in Philadelphia: Is it on the Right Basis?" *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 1, 1864, 176.

[126] "Is the New Theological Seminary Needed?" 166.

[127] "Pure Doctrine in Our English Seminaries," *Lutheran Observer*, August 26, 1864, 2; and "Keep it Before the Church," *Lutheran Observer*, September 16, 1864, 2.

School paper had begun to label themselves not only as "liberal," but also as "conservative." By the former term, they meant toleration in non-essentials. By the later term, they meant not strict confessionalism, but the desire to "preserve from ruin, innovation, injury, or radical change… the General Synod in its present state."[128] Once again, the Civil War informed their views. Just as the Confederate cause was a "revolution" against a good and just government, the "whole movement" for the new seminary was "virtually one of secession."[129]

Another accusation hurled against Krauth was that he was acting out like a "spoilt child," because he was bitter for not being appointed to the General Synod's seminary at Gettysburg.[130] The charge had some truth to it. In the spring of 1864, Samuel Schmucker had announced his intention to retire from the seminary he had helped to establish nearly forty years before. One minister recalled how the Old School Lutherans who sat on the seminary's board were hoping to appoint Krauth as his successor and to reform the school "little by little."[131] The scheme never materialized. Shortly after the formation of the Pennsylvania Synod's seminary in Philadelphia, Schmucker officially tendered his resignation and the board selected James A. Brown (1821-1882) to take his place.[132]

Brown was a seemingly odd choice. Born a Quaker, Brown converted to Lutheranism under the guidance of Kurtz. However, in 1857, he engaged in a war of

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[128] "'Conservative and Liberal'," *Lutheran Observer*, June 17, 1864, 2. See also "Who are the Radicals?" *Lutheran Observer*, December 2, 1864, 2.

[129] "New Theological Seminary," *Lutheran Observer*, September 2, 1864, 2.

[130] "Secession—The New Seminary and the Cause," *Lutheran Observer*, January 20, 1865, 2.

[131] Quoted in Tappert, *History of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia*, 29.

[132] For biographical information on Brown, see Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies,* 115-19.

words with Schmucker, accusing the Gettysburg professor of teaching a "New Theology."[133] (Ironically, given future developments, one of the principal defenders of Schmucker against the charges of Brown was Krauth.)[134] Because this squabble occurred in the wake of the controversy over the *Definite Platform*, some denominational historians have assumed that Brown was a proponent of "conservative Lutheranism."[135] In actuality, Brown was criticizing issues only incidentally related to the controversy over the Augsburg Confession and insisted that he had "no leanings toward symbolism, and no motive to oppose those who take to themselves the name of American Lutherans."[136] In the seven years between his public quarrel with Schmucker and his appointment as his former antagonist's successor, Brown published no articles or tracts. Instead, he taught at Newberry College in South Carolina and, after resigning his professorship once the state seceded, served as a Union chaplain, first for the 87th Regiment of Pennsylvania and then for the Army Hospital in York, Pennsylvania.

By 1864, the two theologians apparently had resolved their past disputes. When Brown accepted the Gettysburg professorship, he wrote that "the liberal yet truly evangelical basis of the Seminary meets my cordial approbation" and that he was "one in

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[133] Brown's first article appeared as J. A. Brown, "The New Theology," *Evangelical Review* 9 (July 1857): 91-109. Schmucker's reply appeared first as an article: S. S. Schmcuker "'The New Theology. By J. A. Brown:' again," *Evangelical Review* 9 (October 1857): 256-67; and then again as a tract: S. S. Schmucker, *Rev. J. A. Brown's New Theology: Examined* (Gettysburg, PA: Henry C. Neinstedt, 1857). Brown then published his original article with a rejoinder to Schmucker's reply and other criticisms of his position in the form of tract: J. A. Brown, *The New Theology: Its Abettors and Defenders* (Philadelphia: Henry B. Ashmead, 1857).

[134] Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth,* 1: 410-11.

[135] Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary*, 169; and Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 173. A more thorough treatment of the controversy is found in Gustafson, *Lutherans in Crisis*, 138-43.

[136] Brown, *The New Theology*, 38.

spirit, aim, and effort" with the school's mission.[137] Shortly after his successor's arrival, Schmucker wrote to his son that Brown "is very friendly & cordial & preaches excellent discourses."[138] The *Lutheran Observer* commended the new professor as "eminently suited to this high and responsible position" and praised "his broad views of christian truth, untrammeled by the narrow prejudices of sectarian littleness."[139] A few months into Brown's tenure, Krauth tried to walk back his harsh comments about the Gettysburg seminary by claiming that the selection of this new professor, whom, "we presume, never changed his opinion as to Dr. S.'s unsoundness," signaled a shift in the school's theological direction.[140] Brown replied that his election was neither meant "to pass sentence upon Dr. S[chmucker], nor to bestow a tardy recognition… [on his] dissertations written 'long ago.'" Such ideas, he wrote in an open letter to Krauth, "[are] the product of your very fruitful imagination." Instead, Brown believed that he was selected because, unlike the editor of the *Lutheran and Missionary*, "I am for unity and peace" and "utterly detest the spirit of secession, whether in state or in church."[141] Rather than a turn in a

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[137] J. A. Brown to A. G. Medekind, August 19, 1864, James Allen Brown Papers, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg Archives, A. R. Wentz Library, Pennsylvania.

[138] Samuel Simon Schmucker to Beale Melanchthon Schmucker, October 17, 1864, Series 1, Folder 5, Papers of Samuel Simon Schmucker and the Schmucker Family, Gettysburg College, Special Collections, Musselman Library, Pennsylvania.

[139] "Our New Professor," *Lutheran Observer*, August 19, 1864, 2. See also "The Philadelphia Seminary—Very Remarkable Logic," *Lutheran Observer*, December 16, 1864, 2.

[140] "The Theological Seminary of the General Synod: A History and Vindication," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 1, 1864, 22.

[141] "The Theological Seminaries at Gettysburg and Philadelphia: A Letter from Professor Brown and our Fraternal Reply to It," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 22, 1864, 34. The two professors would continue a war of letters and articles over the next few months: "A Second Letter from Dr. Brown with a Few Words in Reply," *Lutheran and Missionary*, January 12, 1865, 46; "The Two Seminaries—Their Doctrinal Basis: Dr. Brown's Answer to Dr. Brown," *Lutheran and Missionary*, January 26, 1865, 54; "The Two Seminaries—Their Doctrinal Basis: A Letter from Dr. Brown," *Lutheran and Missionary*, January 26, 1865, 55; J. A. Brown, "Gettysburg and the New Seminary," *Lutheran Observer*, January 27, 1865, 2; "The Confessions of the Church and The Seminaries," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 2, 1865, 58; "The Seminary in Philadelphia: Dr. Brown's Letter Concluded," *Lutheran and Missionary*,

more strictly confessional direction, as some have argued, Brown's appointment represented continuity with the seminary's New School vision.[142]

The two parties of the General Synod now not only had their own church paper, but also their own theological institution. The *Lutheran Observer* recognized the gravity of the situation and foresaw a "coming theological conflict." Shortly after the professors of the new seminary in Philadelphia were officially installed at an October 1864 ceremony, at which Beale Schmucker gave the address, the editors of the New School paper laid out what they saw as the differences between the two factions within the General Synod. The "majority," represented by their paper and the Gettysburg seminary, accept the "doctrinal basis" of the General Synod and "reject the Romish doctrine of the real presence." The "minority," represented by the *Lutheran and Missionary* and the new seminary in Philadelphia, were "tending to radicalism" by "advocat[ing] an unqualified subscription of all the Symbolical books" and assailing the General Synod's "old, liberal, evangelical basis." Though they believed that the "church in this country… will continue [as] one body," they predicted that "the character of that one Lutheran church will depend on the result of the conflict on which we are entering."[143]

February 2, 1865, 58-59; J. A. Brown, "Gettysburg and the New Seminary," *Lutheran Observer*, February 3, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, February 17, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, February 23, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, March 3, 1865, 2-3; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, March 10, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, March 17, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, March 24, 1865, 2; J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, March 31, 1865, 2; and J. A. B., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran Observer*, April 7, 1865, 2.

[142] Wentz, *Basic History of American Lutheranism*, 145; and Kuenning, *Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism*, 173.

[143] "The Coming Theological Conflict," *Lutheran Observer*, October 21, 1864, 2.

American Peace and Lutheran Schism

The following month, Abraham Lincoln defeated George McClellan to win his second term as president of the United States, setting in motion a chain of events that led to the abolition of slavery and victory for the Union. The *Lutheran Observer* and the *Lutheran and Missionary* neither endorsed one of the candidates nor commented on Lincoln's reelection. This silence was consistent with the belief of both New School and Old School Lutherans that the church should avoid partisan politics, but it also represented the shrinking amount of coverage on the events confronting the nation. To be sure, both papers continued to report on major battles and support the work of the Christian Commission. But the space each paper devoted to war news and political developments was shrinking.[144]

One exception was when several clergymen associated with the *Lutheran Observer* came out in support of the "God Amendment" or "Christian Amendment." The proposal sought to add an acknowledgement of the authority of "Almighty God" and, in some versions, the "Lord Jesus Christ" to the preamble of the U.S. Constitution. Once a fringe idea promoted by a small group of Presbyterians, the amendment gained widespread support over the course of the Civil War from many evangelicals and some politicians, including Lincoln.[145] Kurtz believed that its adoption would help to remove

[144] The two chief editors of the *Lutheran Observer* also blamed the fact that neither of them lived in the same city where their paper was printed (Baltimore) and so had to rely on the "foreman in the printing office." "The Regrets of the Correspondent," *Lutheran Observer*, April 7, 1865, 2. For examples of both papers' continued support for the Christian Commission, see George H. Stuart, "The Final Campaign," *Lutheran Observer*, February 24, 1865, 3; and "Christian Commission," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 16, 1865, 66.

[145] See Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ in the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 120-35.

"the awful judgment of… war now resting upon our land."[146] When another Lutheran minister published a sermon in favor of it, Kurtz, who previously had been critical of political preaching, praised the sermon in the *Lutheran Observer* as the type of politics which "*does* belong in the pulpit."[147] Sprecher too had hinted at the merit of the "Christian amendment" in his sermon before the General Synod in 1864.[148] Though the New School paper never officially endorsed the amendment, its editors called it "a subject of absorbing interest to every Christian patriot" and its proprietors helped to circulate the sermon in favor of it.[149] The proposal never made it to the floor of either house of Congress and so Lutheran support for it fizzled out as quickly as it had bubbled up.

Yet for the most part, General Synod Lutherans' commentary on the war was both declining and becoming more circumspect during the final year of the war. On the National Day of Thanksgiving in November 1864, for example, one Old School Lutheran, though determined to see the war "to the bitter end," acknowledged the nation's "errors and mistakes" and expressed his longing for "the day of peace, and happiness, and re-union again."[150] In contrast, many Anglo-evangelicals were growing

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[146] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "National Association for the Amendment of the Constitution of the United States," *Lutheran Observer*, December 9, 1864, 1.

[147] B[enjamin] K[urtz], "A Sermon for the Times," *Lutheran Observer*, January 13, 1865, 3. The sermon was published as Joel Swartz, *God and the Constitution: or, Christ the Sovereign of the Nations: Delivered in the Second English Lutheran Church, Lombard Street, West of Green, on Sabbath Morning, December 4th, 1864* (Baltimore: J. B. Rose, 1865).

[148] Sprecher, *The Providential Position of the Evangelical Church of This Country, at This Time*, 6-8.

[149] "Editorial Items," *Lutheran Observer*, December 9, 1864, 2; and "Rev. J. Swartz's Sermon on 'God and the Constitution'," *Lutheran Observer*, March 17, 1865, 2.

[150] J. F. Plitt, *God's Doings for the Nation: A Sermon Preached in the First Presbyterian Church, Greenwich, New Jersey, on the Day of National Thanksgiving, November 24th, 1864* (Easton, PA: L. Gordon, 1864), 20-21.

more and more boisterous in their religious nationalism, even proclaiming the conflict to be a "holy war" and a "blood sacrifice" for the nation.[151] Though the Northern Lutherans of the General Synod did not reject American civil religion outright and remained devoted to the Union cause, the distance between themselves and other mainstream Protestants was growing.

This increasing caution in their analysis and rhetoric briefly reversed course during the weeks after Abraham Lincoln was killed by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theater on April 14, 1865. The assassination, which occurred just five days after Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Court House, caused an outpouring of grief in numerous editorials, speeches, and discourses. Among the most prominent Americans to eulogize the president were Northern Protestant ministers. In religious newspapers and sermons, religious leaders tried to make sense of the tragedy for their readers and hearers. That Lincoln had been killed on Good Friday added extra solemnity to the event, and also provided material for allegorizing the president's death.[152] Lutheran clergymen also participated in this public ritual of civil religion. The editors of the *Lutheran Observer* and *Lutheran and Missionary* proclaimed the president to be a Christ-like figure, having "died for the nation" as a "substitute" and "sacrifice" and having endured "suffering and death for righteousness' sake."[153] Additionally,

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[151] Harry S. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation: A Moral History of the Civil War* (New York: Viking, 2006), 340; and Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples*, 268. See also James H. Moorhead, *American Apocalypse: Yankee Protestants and the Civil War, 1860-1869* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978); and Philip Gorski, *American Covenant: A History of Civil Religion from the Puritans to the Present* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 83-108.

[152] See David B. Chesebrough, *No Sorrow Like Our Sorrow: Northern Protestant Ministers and the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1994); and Martha Hodes, *Mourning Lincoln* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015), esp. 97-112.

[153] "The Lesson of the Great Calamity," *Lutheran Observer*, May 5, 1865, 2; and "Murder of the President," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 20, 1865, 102.

several ministers, including Krauth, published sermons on the president's death, extoling the president as an exemplar of Christian patriotism and morality.[154]

The president's assassination also prompted Lutherans of both schools to reflect on the war's purpose and the nation's future. By April 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment had passed both houses of Congress and been ratified by twenty of the required twenty-seven states, but these events had received little notice from either the *Lutheran Observer* or the *Lutheran and Missionary*.[155] Following Lincoln's murder, however, the editors of both papers began to trumpet emancipation as inextricably linked to the Union cause. According to Conrad, the Civil War's "baptism of blood," which culminated in the president's death, had "re-consecrated the nation to the maintenance of universal freedom during all coming time."[156] Krauth wrote that the impending death of the "Demon-Spirit of Slavery" would be the "one grand consolation" for the mourning nation.[157] The papers of both schools also agreed that the United States should honor the fallen president by pursuing a policy of reconciliation. For the *Lutheran and Missionary*, showing "compassion" and "tenderness" to the majority of "the people of the South" would be the

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[154] J. G. Butler, *The Martyr President: Our Grief and Duty* (Washington, DC: McGill and Witherow, 1865); M. Rhodes, *A Sermon on the Occasion of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Late President of the United States, Delivered on Wednesday, April 19, 1865 (Being the day of the Obsequies of our Martyr President) in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Sunburgy, Penn'a* (Sunbury, PA: H. B. Masser and E. Wilvert, 1865); Charles Porterfield Krauth, *The Two Pageants: A Discourse Delivered in the First Eng. Evan. Lutheran Church, Pittsburgh, Pa. Thursday, June 1st, 1865* (Pittsburgh: W. S. Haven, 1865); Joseph A. Seiss, *The Assassinated President, on the Day of National Mourning for Abraham Lincoln, at St. John's (Lutheran) Church, Philadelphia, June 1st, 1865* (Philadelphia: North Ninth Street, 1865); and E. S. Johnston, *Sermon Delivered on Thursday, June 1st, 1865, the Day of Special Humiliation and Prayer in Consequence of the Assassination of Abraham Lincoln* (Harrisburg, PA: T. F. Scheffer, 1865).

[155] "OUR COUNTRY: Peace," *Lutheran and Missionary*, February 9, 1865, 63; and "Constitutional Amendment," *Lutheran Observer*, February 17, 1865, 2.

[156] "The Lesson of the Great Calamity," 2.

[157] "Duties of the Hour," *Lutheran and Missionary*, April 20, 1865, 102.

nation's "second victory."[158] The *Lutheran Observer* implored that "judgment may be tempered with mercy, and that persistent prodigals may be kindly received back to their forsaken father's house." In the wake of Lincoln's assassination, both Lutheran papers considered the causes of union, emancipation, and reconciliation to be inseparably connected components of the nation's "glorious future."[159]

Despite their mutual outpouring of patriotism and shared hope for the reunited nation, the confessional dispute between the two papers continued unabated. The differing doctrinal bases of the seminaries of Gettysburg and Philadelphia remained at the center of their disagreement. One contributor to the *Lutheran and Missionary* identified the crux of the matter: "Gettysburg thinks that the doctrinal character is something fluctuating; Philadelphia thinks that it is not."[160] This summary was mostly accurate. For New School Lutherans and their seminary at Gettysburg, Lutheranism was simply "the mother of Protestantism" and could change over time as it shed its "Romanist" dross and developed a fuller understanding of the teachings of the Bible. With this understanding, Lutheranism could encompass a wide diversity of opinion on "non-essential" doctrines. The flaw in this approach, as Krauth repeatedly argued, was that once it was accepted that historic teachings could be modified, there was no limit to which doctrines could be called into question. Because of this, the Old School Lutherans and their seminary at Philadelphia contended that Lutheran identity should be based on an unchanging standard, the Augsburg Confession. But, as those associated with the *Lutheran Observer* frequently contended, this view contradicted the principle of sola scriptura, which they

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[158] "Another Victory to be Won," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 11, 1865, 114.

[159] "The Close of the War," *Lutheran Observer*, April 21, 1865, 2.

[160] "Gettysburg and Philadelphia," *Lutheran and Missionary*, May 18, 1865, 118.

saw as the heart of both Protestantism and Lutheranism. If Lutherans were yoked to a three-hundred-year-old document, how were they any different from Catholics who were bound to the magisterium of the Roman church?[161]

By the summer of 1865, Krauth had had enough of this "aimless battle." Following a series of polemical articles by Conrad in the *Lutheran Observer*, the Old School editor of the *Lutheran and Missionary* threw down the gauntlet to those in the New School: "*The doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession are all articles of faith, and all articles of faith are fundamental. Our church can never have a genuine internal harmony, except in the confession, without reservation or ambiguity of these articles, one and all*." In addition to this ultimatum, Krauth also brought himself finally to admit that his views had changed: "[W]e hereby retract before God and his Church, formally… every thing we have written or said in conflict with this our present conviction."[162]

Once again, the Civil War helped to bring the terms of this theological conflict into sharper relief. Despite the seeming consensus of sentiment in the wake of Lincoln's death, New School and Old School Lutherans still retained subtle but important differences in their interpretations of the war's meaning and lessons. Though the editors of the *Lutheran Observer* had removed any doubts their dedication to the Union, the New School paper still blamed a stubborn unwillingness to compromise for causing the war and viewed the restoration of "peace" as the conflict's preeminent goal. Immediately after the South surrendered, the paper urged their fellow Americans to unite as "one

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[161] Or as Conrad argued, "If no change can ever be made in the doctrinal principles of the Lutheran church, as embodied in the Symbolical Books, then it must be because their authors, Luther, Melanchthon, Chemnitz, Andrea, and Selnecker, were infallible in all their conceptions and expression of divine truth, as contained in them." C., "Gettysburg and Philadelphia Contrasted," *Lutheran Observer*, June 16, 1865, 2.

[162] "The Aimless Battle," 150. Conrad's articles appeared in every issue of the *Lutheran Observer* from June 9, 1865 to July 14, 1865.

people, under one government" and declared that "among the first" duties of citizens "should be an effort to heal divisions and alienations."[163] The greatest tragedy of the president's death, the *Lutheran Observer* editorialized, was that it came "just at this time, on the eve of the close of the calamitous war, when Mr. Lincoln was reconciling parties long estranged… [and] when the whole country was rejoicing at the near prospect of peace."[164] Likewise, in the conflict within the church, New School Lutherans' chief critique of their Old School opponents was that these "symbolical hair-splitters" were disturbing "the peace of Zion."[165]

Those associated with the *Lutheran and Missionary*, by contrast, continued to argue that war was primarily a struggle over constitutional "principle." With the defeat of the Confederacy, Krauth declared, the country now "stand[s] firm upon the great principles of humanity, right, freedom, and law."[166] In his eulogy for the president, Joseph Seiss, who had missed the greater part of the war due to a tour of Europe and the Middle East, praised Lincoln for exhibiting "self-sacrificing devotion to his convictions of justice and right."[167] Though the Old School paper joined their New School counterpart in urging a policy of reconciliation with the South, the *Lutheran and Missionary* differed from the *Lutheran Observer* by arguing that the "voluntary leaders in

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[163] "The Close of War," 2. See also "Coming Peace," *Lutheran Observer*, May 12, 1865, 2. For a New School Lutheran sermon on this theme, see S. Domer, *The Jubilee of 1865, or The Peace We Celebrate: A Discourse Delivered in the Second Luth. Church of Selinsgrove, Penn'a, on Thursday, the 7th of December 1865, The Day Appointed by the President of the United States as a Day of National Thanksgiving for the Restoration of Peace* (Selinsgrove, PA: American Lutheran, 1866).

[164] "The Tragedy at Washington," *Lutheran Observer*, April 21, 1865, 2.

[165] [Frederick] C[onrad], "The Unity of the Lutheran Church," *Lutheran Observer*, August 4, 1865, 2.

[166] "Another Victory to be Won," 114.

[167] Seiss, *Assassinated President*, 20.

this unparalleled crime," namely Southern generals and politicians, deserved "the award of strict justice." As with the prosecution of the war, Krauth argued that reconstruction "must be done in the calmness of *principle*, in reverent submission to law and its officers."[168] Likewise, in the battles facing the Lutheran church, he and other Old School Lutherans believed that principle must precede peace.

Despite the seemingly intractable differences over Lutheran confessional identity between the two parties in the General Synod, neither faction was willing to call for an end to denominational unity. The Pennsylvania Synod had withdrawn from the 1864 convention in protest and founded their own seminary, but at its 1865 meeting the synod resolved to remain within the General Synod and send delegates to its next convention.[169] Krauth, who along with his friend Seiss joined the Pennsylvania Synod in 1865, essentially had declared the basis of the General Synod and its seminary in Gettysburg to be doctrinally unsound, but he expressed no intention of leaving the General Synod. Many associated with the *Lutheran Observer* believed the Pennsylvania Synod and its seminary in Philadelphia to be "de facto out of the General Synod" and the New School and Old School to be "practically… *two denominations*."[170] Yet they also considered the prospect of actual disunity to be unthinkable. As one lay correspondent to the *Lutheran Observer* wrote, "The old symbolists now denounce us as un-Lutheran, and we in turn denounce them as formalists and romanistic, but this is only a family quarrel…. [T]he

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[168] "Duties of the Hour," 102.

[169] "One Hundred and Eighteenth Convention of the Synod of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 22, 1865, 138.

[170] "Responses," *Lutheran Observer*, September 23, 1864, 2; and "Ohio Letter," *Lutheran Observer*, October 21, 1864, 3.

Lutheran church is not divided, and is not going to be divided."[171] For the first year after the conclusion of the Civil War, the problems produced by these unresolved contradictions lingered in an uneasy state of limbo.

The issue finally came to its head at the General Synod's May 1866 meeting in Fort Wayne, Indiana. On the first day of the meeting, Sprecher, the New School president of the General Synod, preached a sermon which claimed that "the church can be held in subjection to no decision of the church, in the past," a clear swipe at the Old School.[172] Immediately thereafter, during the roll call of the convention's member synods, the president refused to seat the Pennsylvania Synod's delegates until "the General Synod can receive a report of an act restoring her practical relations to the General Synod." The convention's delegates sustained Sprecher's decision by a vote of seventy-seven to twenty-four and appointed a special committee, headed by Samuel Schmucker, to study the status of the Pennsylvania Synod. In the meantime, the General Synod elected James Brown, the new professor at Gettysburg, as the church body's new president. After two full days of debate, the convention resolved to receive the delegation of the Pennsylvania Synod. For these Old School Lutherans, this was not good enough. Led by Seiss and Krauth, they stated that they would not accept their seats unless the convention declared Sprecher's actions to be unconstitutional. After this counter-proposal was rejected by a nearly two-thirds majority, the Pennsylvania Synod's delegates left the meeting in protest. Just as they had two years before, the delegation claimed that their "act in no sense or degree affects the relations of the Pennsylvania Synod to the General Synod."

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[171] Lutheranus, "Is the Lutheran Church Divided?" *Lutheran Observer*, January 27, 1865, 1.

[172] Samuel Sprecher, *The Apostolic Method of Realizing the True Ideal of the Church: A Sermon Delivered at the Opening of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, at Fort Wayne, Indiana, May 17th, 1866* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1866), 12.

Brown, the new president, was oblique in his reply, merely giving the protesting synod "the assurance of [the General Synod's] kindest regard."[173] In essence, each side was waiting for the other to make the separation official, in order to avoid blame for causing the schism.

The Pennsylvania Synod chose to bite the bullet and act. On the final day of its meeting held in June, the synod formally announced its withdrawal from the General Synod and resolved to lead the way in organizing a new "general ecclesiastical body representing the true faith." Krauth, quite aware that this action resembled the one taken by Southern states in the formation of the Confederacy, tried to characterize those remaining in the General Synod as the ones guilty of disunion. Once again, the language of constitutionalism framed his argument. "The General Synod, by the action of a majority," he declared, "has violated its Constitution in such a manner as to destroy itself." Their only choice, he argued, was to pursue "the ultimate union of all the genuine Lutheran elements in this country, for the securing of the ends which the General Synod had failed to secure."[174]

For New School Lutherans, this argument was self-evidently absurd. According to the *Lutheran Observer*, "it is a principle universally admitted, (always excepting rebels,) that the right and the power of those who are loyal to a Union, to exercise the functions of

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[173] *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Assembled in Fort Wayne, Ind., May, 1866* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Rodgers, 1866), 4-5, 8-9, 11, 25-26, 28. For the full protest of the delegation of the Pennsylvania Synod, see the separate publication: *The Synod of Pennsylvania and the Late Convention at Fort Wayne, Ind., 1866* (Philadelphia: Jas. B. Rodgers, 1866).

[174] "Proceedings of the 119th Annual Session of 'The Ministerium' of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States," *Lutheran and Missionary*, June 21, 1866, 133.

Government, cannot be impaired or destroyed by the withdrawal of the disloyal."[175] The parallels between the General Synod's conflict and the American Civil War were readily apparent for the New School paper. One writer, citing the Pennsylvania Synod's complaint about how the new president of the General Synod was elected, wrote that, just as "the attempt to destroy the Federal Union was based on the plea of the Unconstitutional election of a sectional president," so also "the disunionists in our church have only seized on this pretext to carry out a previous design."[176] Conrad, the paper's editor, accused Krauth and the *Lutheran and Missionary* of operating from the same principles as "Jefferson Davis and his secession associates" and asserted that "what South Carolina has done in the sphere of the State… the Pennsylvania Synod has done in the sphere of the Church."[177] For the New School, their predictions about the Old School's "hyper-Lutheranism" had been vindicated: just as Southern rebels' unwillingness to compromise had plunged the nation into war, "symbolists" had broken the bonds of Lutheran union over "non-essentials."[178]

Conclusion

Apart from the pleasure taken in labeling their rivals as "secessionists," all was not well for the New School and their vision of overseeing American Lutheranism's growth, peace, and prominence. At the beginning of the Civil War, the General Synod

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[175] Loyalty, "A Review of 'The Response of the Pennsylvania Delegation'," *Lutheran Observer*, June 22, 1866, 1.

[176] Loyalty, "Conspiracy to Destroy the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, July 6, 1866, 2.

[177] F[rederick] W. C[onrad], "The Question at Issue between the Synod of Pennsylvania and the General Synod," *Lutheran Observer*, July 6, 1866, 1.

[178] M., "The General Synod and the Synod of Pennsylvania," *Lutheran Observer*, July 13, 1866, 1. See also Impartiality, "Remarks on the Secession of the Synod of Pennsylvania from the General Synod," 1.

had encompassed nearly two-thirds of the nation's Lutherans. Just over a year after the war's conclusion—due not only to the withdrawal of the Pennsylvania Synod, but also to the separation of the Southern synods and the growth of immigrant-led synods unconnected to the General Synod—the federation totaled just over a third of all Lutherans.[179] Moreover, with several predominantly Old School synods upset about the events at the Fort Wayne convention and with the Pennsylvania Synod determined to form a union of Lutherans to rival the General Synod, a further hemorrhaging of members seemed imminent.[180] New School Lutherans may have seized firm control of the General Synod, but they were presiding over a church body steadily decreasing in size, harmony, and significance.

In August 1866, the Pennsylvania Synod issued "a fraternal address to all Evangelical Lutheran Synods, ministers and congregations in the United States and Canada, which confess the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, inviting them to unite with us in a Convention, for the purpose of forming a Union of Lutheran Synods."[181] The meeting, held that December in Reading, Pennsylvania, drew not only other Old School Lutherans still in the General Synod, but also Moderate Lutherans unconnected to the General Synod, including the Ohio Synod and Wisconsin Synod. The most surprising participants of all were the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod and Norwegian Synod. That Krauth and others were even considering union with those Lutherans whom they

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[179] *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1867* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1867), 30.

[180] Several delegates from other synods, led by William Passavant, had signed a protest against the actions of the General Synod. See *Proceedings of the Twenty-Second Convention of the General Synod*, 38.

[181] *Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States and Canada Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, at Reading, Pa., Dec. 12, 13, and 14, A. D. 1866* (Pittsburgh: Bakewell and Marthens, 1867), 3.

had labeled as “exclusive, harsh and repellent” just five years before demonstrated just how much had changed over the course of the Civil War.

The General Synod schism and its aftermath would mark the beginning of a sharp conservative turn for Lutheranism in the United States. Before the Civil War, Lutherans had anticipated a future of ever-increasing unity and growth and aspired to become members of the nation’s Protestant mainstream. After the war, Lutheranism in America turned inward. Though still desirous for church unity, by the end of the nineteenth century Lutherans were divided into twenty competing church bodies. And while their church membership would grow at a faster rate than any other Protestant denomination, thanks in large part to mass immigration from Germany and Scandinavia, Lutherans’ impact on the nation’s affairs and influence on its religious life would simultaneously decrease. As the re-unified nation’s politics and culture underwent a crucial period of reform and upheaval following the Civil War, Lutheranism in the United States would also experience its own reconstruction.

CHAPTER SIX

Reconstructing American Lutheranism

In 1882, less than thirty years after Philip Schaff had predicted that an ecumenical and united Lutheranism would "contribute to… the entire development of Anglo-American Christianity" (see Chapter Two), another prominent figure in American Protestantism gave a much different assessment of Lutheranism in the United States. Henry Carroll was a Methodist layman who would go on to organize the nation's religious census and use the results to write comprehensive surveys of religion in America.[1] In an article for the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, Carroll painted a picture of American Lutheranism very different from the decades before the Civil War:

> The Lutherans, though strong in numbers, have not impressed their importance upon the people of our country as firmly as Churches which have less than half their numerical strength…. The great body of them have [sic] no bonds of fellowship with other Protestants; their pulpits are not open to other ministers; their altars are not free to other communicants. They believe that they constitute the true Church of Christ, and that the rest of Protestantism is made up of sects more or less steeped in error, with whom fellowship would be dangerous…. If therefore, they have not received the attention to which their numbers, their work, and their importance entitle them, it will not require long or difficult search to find the causes…. Their isolation is of their own choice.

Perhaps his most astonishing observation was that the Missouri Synod, isolated outsiders in the antebellum decades, had "become the strongest and most influential synod in the

[1] On Carroll, see Edwin S. Gaustad and Mark A. Noll, eds., *A Documentary History of Religion in America since 1877* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 78. For the first of his several surveys of American religion, see H. K. Carroll, *The Religious Forces of the United States: Enumerated, Classified, and Described on the Basis of the Government Census of 1890* (New York: Christian Literature, 1893).

United States."[2] Though mistaken in some details, Carroll's 1882 article accurately described the culmination of the conservative turn in Lutheran theology and identity inaugurated by the debates and schisms during the Civil War.

That transformation took place during Reconstruction, an era that defies straightforward categorization or periodization. Standard histories have focused on the rise and fall of the political rights of freedmen and used the Compromise of 1877, when Rutherford B. Hayes was chosen as president by the House of Representatives in exchange for withdrawing federal troops from the South, to mark the end of the period.[3] But as numerous scholars have shown, though the fate of African Americans in the South was the central issue facing the postbellum nation, the scope of Reconstruction was much broader and its time frame much longer.[4] In the North, especially the Midwestern states where many Lutherans lived, white backlash against black progress was a central component of the era.[5] Just as significant were the simultaneous developments often listed separately as the Gilded Age: the rise of corporate capitalism, the further conquest of the Western frontier, and the arrival of numerous immigrants. As recent works by

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[2] H. K. Carroll, "American Lutherans and Their Divisions," *Methodist Quarterly Review* 64 (July 1882): 427-28, 442.

[3] The definitive account remains Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988).

[4] As the author of a recent overview of the era writes, "One could end Reconstruction anywhere." Mark W. Summers, *The Ordeal of Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 398.

[5] See V. Jacque Voegeli, *Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro during the Civil War* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967); and Leslie Schwalm, *Emancipation's Diaspora: Race and Reconstruction in the Upper Midwest* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009). Robert R. Dykstra argues that Iowa, at least in terms of legislation, was an exception to this postwar trend. Dykstra, *Bright Radical Star: Black Freedom and White Supremacy on the Hawkeye Frontier* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

Steven Hahn and Richard White have demonstrated, the entirety of the four to five decades after the Civil War must be understood as a whole.[6]

The historiography on religion in the postbellum United States reflects this "long Reconstruction" perspective. Much of this scholarship has focused on developments that affected the four million newly freed people in the American South. In the years following the Civil War, Southern blacks established their own congregations and church bodies, which not only helped to shape African American theology and religious culture, but also served as the central institutions in the fight for civil rights and racial uplift. White Southerners responded by forming their own distinctive outlook in opposition to black equality and progress. In this, they were aided by Northern whites who either shared their racist theology or had come to prioritize reconciliation with their Southern co-religionists over the plight of African Americans.[7]

A related theme of postbellum religious history is the fragmentation of "evangelical America." The inability of a hermeneutic based on the plain meaning of the

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[6] Steven Hahn, *A Nation Without Borders: The United States Its World in an Age of Civil Wars, 1830-1910* (New York: Viking, 2017); and Richard White, *The Republic for Which It Stands: The United States during Reconstruction and the Gilded Age, 1865-1896* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). For other important works that extend the topical and chronological scope of Reconstruction, see Heather Cox Richardson, *West From Appomattox: The Reconstruction of America after the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Orville Vernon Burton, *The Age of Lincoln* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007); and Thomas J. Brown, ed., *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on the Postbellum United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

[7] Some of the most important works are William E. Montgomery, *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African-American Church in the South, 1865-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1993); Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Daniel W. Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion: The Religious Reconstruction of the South, 1863–1877* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998); Edward J. Blum, *Reforging the White Republic: Race, Religion, and American Nationalism, 1865-1898* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2005); Edward J. Blum, and W. Scott Poole, eds., *Vale of Tears: New Essays on Religion and Reconstruction* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2005); Joe Martin Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction: The American Missionary Association and Southern Blacks, 1861-1890* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008); and Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009).

Bible to avoid a bloody civil war, the social problems caused by industrialization and inequality, and the intellectual challenges posed by Darwinian evolution and biblical criticism caused Anglo-Protestants to divide theologically. Moreover, the continued influx of European Catholics and Jews created a nation less demographically Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. By the end of the nineteenth century, American evangelicalism, which had enjoyed "near hegemony" before the Civil War, lost much of its intellectual and cultural authority in the nation's public life.[8]

The postbellum development that transformed the demographic makeup of the American Lutheran church was the influx of immigrants from Northern Europe. Between 1865 and 1900, more than three million people immigrated to the United States from Germany, including over 250,000 in 1882 alone. During the same period, more than one and a half million migrants arrived from Nordic nations, primarily Sweden and Norway, but also Denmark, Finland, and Iceland. Though about twenty percent of German and Nordic migrants returned to Europe, their rate of return was significantly lower than the percentage of Southern and Eastern Europeans who engaged in this "two-way migration." By 1900, the number of first- and second-generation immigrants from these predominantly Lutheran nations totaled over thirteen million people, or more than one in every six Americans.[9] Consequently, membership in the U.S. Lutheran church grew

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[8] For these quotations, see the recent article: Mark A. Noll, "Reconstructing Religion," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7 (March 2017), http://journalofthecivilwarera.org/forum-the-future-of-reconstruction-studies/reconstructing-religion (accessed May 21, 2018). On the continued effects of the theological debates over slavery in the era of Reconstruction, see Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism*.(New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 119-44; and Luke Harlow, "The Faith That Did Not Die: The Long Life of Proslavery Religion," in Gregory P. Downs and Kate Masur, eds., *The World the Civil War Made* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 132-58.

[9] For these statistics, see United States Bureau of the Census. *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), 105-6, 116-17;

exponentially, from less than 300,000 at the close of the Civil War to more than 1,600,000 at the end of the nineteenth century (and three to four times that many adherents).[10] Only Roman Catholics, Baptists, and Methodists were more numerous.

The majority of these new arrivals, some of whom were lured by the farmland guaranteed by the Homestead Act of 1862, moved to the Upper Midwest and the Great Plains. Though many Northern European immigrants, particularly from Germany, continued to settle in the Mid-Atlantic states of Pennsylvania and New York, the eastern Midwestern states of Ohio and Indiana, and the border states of Maryland and Missouri, by 1900 nearly fifty percent of all Americans born in Germany and Scandinavia lived in eight states—Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. (In 1860, that figure was less than thirty percent.) In three of these states—Wisconsin, Minnesota, and North Dakota—first- and second-generation German and Nordic Americans made up over half of the population.[11] Consequently, the numerical center of Lutheranism in the United States shifted over the course of the last four decades of the nineteenth century. In 1865, less than twenty percent of Lutherans lived in the eight Midwestern states noted above; by 1900, that figure was greater than

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and Mark Wyman, *Round-Trip to America: The Immigrants Return to Europe, 1880-1930* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 9-12.

[10] For these statistics, see *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1866* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1866), 31; and Grace E. Sheeleigh, ed., *The Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 1901* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1901), 84-85.

[11] Statistics compiled from William R. Merriam, ed., *Twelfth Census of the United States, Taken in the Year 1900* (Washington, DC: United States Census Office, 1901), 732-35, 810-11, 818-19; and Joseph C. G. Kennedy, ed., *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864), 338-42.

fifty percent.[12] In manifold counties throughout the Upper Midwest, particularly in rural areas, Lutheranism was the predominant religious expression.

Despite these demographic shifts, American Lutheranism's theological and ecclesiastical developments still were shaped by the institutions established in the antebellum era and the people who had lived through the Civil War. During Reconstruction, the most influential Lutheran seminaries, periodicals, and synods remained those founded before the war and based in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Missouri. Additionally, nearly every major Lutheran intellectual during the final three and a half decades of the nineteenth century, even in those church bodies primarily made up of postbellum immigrants, either was born in the antebellum United States or had immigrated to America before the war. Scholars who have linked the conservative turn in American Lutheranism to the influx of postbellum immigrants overlook those crucial facts. They also ignore that the religious situation from which the majority of these immigrants came differed starkly from the type of Lutheranism that came to reign in America. The intellectual leaders of German Protestantism at the leading universities were the pioneers of modern, liberal theology. And though some parish pastors and a few university faculties, such as Erlangen's, were more conservative in theology, they still were comfortable with inter-Protestant cooperation and less rigorous in their adherence to their church's historic teaching.[13] Rather than importing a European Lutheranism,

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[12] Statistics compiled from *Lutheran Almanac for 1866*, 31; and Sheeleigh, ed., *Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for 1901*, 84-85.

[13] See Nicholas Hope, *German and Scandinavian Protestantism, 1700-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Johannes Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth Century Germany: From F. C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Mark R. Correll, *Shepherds of the Empire: Germany's Conservative Protestant Leadership—1888-1919* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2014).

German and Nordic immigrants assimilated into a deeply confessional but also distinctively American form of Lutheranism forged during the debates of the Civil War.

That conservative version of the faith stood in stark contrast to the New Lutheranism promoted by Samuel Schmucker, Benjamin Kurtz, and others in the antebellum era. Instead of seeking to bring their church's doctrine more in line with American evangelicalism, most Lutherans (including many former New Lutherans) came to insist on a strict adherence to their church's historic confessions, or symbols. Closely related was a change in Lutherans' approach to inter-church cooperation. Schmucker's vision of breaking down denominational boundaries collapsed and in its place arose a principle of ecclesiastical separatism, with most Lutherans refusing to share pulpits and altars with their fellow Protestants or even to cooperate in inter-denominational organizations. The third change was the emergence of a distinctive form of political and social conservatism. Fears of unchecked liberty caused many Lutherans to reject all forms of what they viewed as social radicalism. Moreover, growing discomfort with the civil religion of Anglo-Protestants led many Lutherans to draw a sharp demarcation between religious belief and political action. During the thirty-five years after the Civil War, the majority of Lutherans, both native-born and foreign-born, became conservative outsiders in American religious life.

Synodical Reconstruction

A key development that helped to bring about this outsiderhood was the restructuring of Lutheran church bodies in the immediate aftermath of the Civil War. In 1865, the General Synod stood as the only major federation of synods in the United States, encompassing well over fifty percent of all Lutherans. Seven years later, the

Lutheran church was divided into three major fellowships—the General Synod, the General Council, and the Synodical Conference. This institutional reorganization was the result not only of the fallout from the Old School-New School schism (discussed in the previous chapter), but also of changes within the Moderate and Old Lutheran church bodies that stood outside of the General Synod.

For the Ohio Synod, the label "Moderate Lutheran" was becoming anachronistic during the 1860s, as the views of its intellectual leaders increasingly converged with those of the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod. Signaling this change was the election of Matthias Loy (1828-1915) as president of the Ohio Synod. The son of poor, nominally Catholic immigrants from southwest Germany, Loy came to Lutheranism through the influence of New Lutheran leader Samuel Sprecher. Like William Passavant, Charles Porterfield Krauth, and other leaders of the confessional movement that arose within the General Synod in the 1850s, Loy came to reject the school of Lutheranism that had guided his youth. Where he differed from others who journeyed away from New Lutheranism was in his understanding of church unity. Believing that membership in a fellowship which did not subscribe to the entirety of the Lutheran confessions was "unionisitic," Loy was a key figure in keeping the Ohio Synod from joining the General Synod. In 1864, he was appointed as editor of the *Lutheran Standard*, the church body's flagship publication. During the final four decades of the nineteenth century, he was, in the words of his biographer, the Ohio Synod's "guiding spirit."[14]

[14] For the biographical details and quotations in this paragraph, see Charles George Fry, "Matthias Loy, Patriarch of Ohio Lutheranism, 1828-1915" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1965), 65-66, 72-73, 84-85, 229, and 219.

Through his leadership and writing, Loy steered the Ohio Synod in the direction of Old Lutheranism. Unlike his predecessor at the *Lutheran Standard*, Daniel Worley, Loy was favorably disposed toward those in the Missouri Synod. He referred to them as "brethren" and published translations of articles from their periodicals, the *Lutheraner* and *Lehre und Wehre*.[15] He also penned his own writings that resembled Old Lutheran views. In one of his first articles as editor, Loy argued against "promiscuous communion," namely the permitting of non-Lutherans to participate in the Lord's Supper at Lutheran worship services, claiming that such a practice would jeopardize "our very right to exist as Lutheran church."[16] The New School *Lutheran Observer* condemned such views as "sectarian dogmatism," rightly identifying them as the "practical system of the Missouri [Synod]."[17] Yet despite the movement of Loy and his church body in a more Old Lutheran direction, the leaders of the Missouri Synod continued to view the Ohio Synod as insufficiently orthodox, particularly because of "the unionistic practice in many of their congregations."[18] Still, Loy and others in the Ohio Synod were hopeful of the prospect of future union with "our friends of Missouri."[19]

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[15] On Loy's friendly view of the Missouri Synod, see, for example, "The Missouri Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, May 15, 1864, 5; "Our Brethren in Missouri," *Lutheran Standard*, December 1, 1864, 5; and Matthias Loy, *The Story of My Life* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1905), 193-99. For examples of articles republished from Missouri Synod publications, see "Why Must We Even at This Present Day Hold Fast to the Confessional Writings of Our Evan. Lutheran Church," *Lutheran Standard*, July 15, 1864, 2-3; and "Temporary Calls to the Ministry," *Lutheran Standard*, October 1, 1865, 145.

[16] "Promiscuous Communion," *Lutheran Standard*, August 15, 1864, 2.

[17] "Close-Communion," *Lutheran Observer*, August 26, 1864, 2. For Loy's reply, see "The 'Lutheran Observer' on Church Union and Communion," *Lutheran Standard*, September 15, 1864, 4-5.

[18] E. A. Brauer, "Vorwort," *Lehre und Wehre* 11 (January 1865): 3.

[19] "Unfriendly notices of the Ohio Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, February 15, 1865, 29.

An even more dramatic change was taking place in the Wisconsin Synod.[20] The Moderate Lutheran church body had been founded in 1850 by ministers supplied by various German mission societies which prioritized inter-church cooperation and deemphasized confessional strictness. Its first president, Johannes Muelhaeusser (1803-1868), wrote in 1853 that he was "not strictly or Old Lutheran" and "offer[ed] every child of God and servant of Christ the hand of fellowship." Though not a member of the General Synod, the church body maintained close ties with its synods and educational institutions. Over the course of the late 1850s and early 1860s, however, the Wisconsin Synod moved in an even more theologically conservative direction than its closest American partner, the Pennsylvania Synod. Two young leaders in particular, Johannes Bading (1824-1908) and Adolph Hoenecke (1835-1908), were instrumental in this regard. Both immigrants came to America under the auspices of the ecumenical German mission societies. Yet in the United States both came to embrace a more confessional position. Bading, who was elected president of the church body in 1860 and remained in that position for nearly thirty years, declared in 1864 that "our Wisconsin Synod adheres not only to the Augsburg Confession but to *all* the confessional writings of the Lutheran church" and castigated Muelhaeusser's views as "the long obsolete remark of *one* member."[21]

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[20] As one of the few scholars to have studied the Wisconsin Synod notes, its early history "is perhaps the most obvious illustration in the whole story of American Lutheranism of the triumph of confessional orthodoxy." Leigh D. Jordahl, "The Wauwatosa Theology, John Philipp Koehler, and the Theological Tradition of Midwestern American Lutheranism, 1900-1930" (Ph.D. diss., University of Iowa, 1964), 11.

[21] Quotations in this paragraph come from John Philipp Koehler, *The History of the Wisconsin Synod*, ed. and trans. Karl Koehler and Leign Jordahl (St. Cloud, MN: Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970), 43, 98. For background on Muehaeusser, Bading, and Hoenecke, see Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 22-23, 45, 88-89. For important studies of the synod's early years and its turn to confessionalism, see also Edward C. Fredrich, *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans: A History of the Single Synod, Federation, and Merger* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), esp. 38-42, and

Nevertheless, during the Civil War and its immediate aftermath, the Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod still deemed the Wisconsin Synod's increasing theological conservatism to be insufficient. Disputes between congregations and pastors in Wisconsin, where the Missouri Synod was establishing a sizeable presence, added a personal dimension to their hostility. Yet the crux of the issue, as with the Ohio Synod, centered on the issue of church unity. Because of the Wisconsin Synod's continued association with the ecumenical mission societies of Germany, Lutherans in the Missouri Synod labeled the church body as a "unionistic communion… that pretends to be Lutheran."[22] Despite the growing confessionalism of the Ohio and Wisconsin synods, as well as that of many Lutherans within the General Synod, the Missouri Synod at the end of the Civil War still stood aloof from virtually all other Lutherans.

The split between the Old School and New School Lutherans of the General Synod began to change that situation.[23] Over the course of the Civil War, the leaders of the Missouri and Ohio synods had followed the events leading up to the schism closely.[24] After the Pennsylvania Synod announced its withdrawal from the General Synod in 1866,

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Mark E. Braun, "Wisconsin's 'Turn to the Right'," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 75 (Summer 2002): 80-100.

[22] B., "Die 'lutherische' Wisconsin-Synode," *Lehre und Wehre* 10 (October 1864): 312. For an extensive documentation of the antagonism between the Missouri Synod and the Wisconsin Synod in the 1850s and 1860s, see Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 56-60, 79-86, 107-8, 114-18.

[23] For important background on the founding of the General Council, see Donald L. Huber, "The Controversy over Pulpit and Alter Fellowship in the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1866-1889" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1971), 68-84. For the most comprehensive history of the General Council, see William A. Good, "A History of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in North America" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1967).

[24] For examples, see "Ueber das generalsynodistische Bekenntniß zur Augsb. Conf., 'insofern sie die Fundamentalallehren richtig darlegt," *Lehre und Wehre* 10 (November 1864): 345-47; "Der über die Generalsynode hereinbrechende theologische Conflict," *Lehre und Wehre* 10 (December 1864): 372-77; "General Synod Affairs," *Lutheran Standard*, October 15, 1864, 4-5; and "The Present Crisis in the General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, December 1, 1864, 1-2.

C. F. W. Walther wrote that "scarcely any event within the bounds of Lutheranism has ever afforded us greater joy."[25] Loy was also elated, believing the schism to be an event at which "all true Lutherans must rejoice." Those same leaders, however, were skeptical of the Pennsylvania Synod's plan to form a new union of Lutheran synods. Loy believed that "there are discordant elements… which must first be removed before harmonious co-operation could be expected."[26] The Missouri Synod's Wilhelm Sihler, who had met with the representatives from the Pennsylvania Synod during the General Synod's 1866 meeting in Fort Wayne, expressed admiration for "the dear brethren of the Pennsylvania Synod," but believed that their proposal was "unwise, impractical, [and] indeed dangerous."[27] Walther suggested that a series of meetings "for the purpose of exchanging views" would be preferable to trying to do "great things" right away.[28] Despite their reservations, both the Ohio and Missouri synods sent representatives to the meeting called by the Pennsylvania Synod and held in December 1866 in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Joining them were delegations from eleven other synods (a twelfth, the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, expressed their eagerness to participate, but were unable to attend). The largest delegation came from the Pennsylvania Synod, which had organized the meeting and would make up over a third of the new church body's members. The most eager to form a new Lutheran fellowship were three other synods

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[25] [C. F. W.] W[alther],"Zur kirchlichen Chronik," *Lutheraner*, August 1, 1866, 183. A translation of Walther's article appeared in the August 16, 1866 issue of the *Lutheran and Missionary*.

[26] "The Proposed New General Synod," *Lutheran Standard*, July 1, 1866.

[27] [Wilhelm] Sihler, "Sollte die alsbaldige von der Pennsylvanischen Synode beabsichtigte Bildung einer neuen rechtgläubigen lutherischen Generalsynode wohl rathsam und heilsam sein?" *Lehre und Wehre* 12 (September 1866): 263-72. See also Theodore G. Tappert, ed., "Intercommunion in 1866," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 40 (April 1967): 42.

[28] W[alther], "Zur kirchlichen Chronik," 183.

which had separated from the General Synod in the fall of 1866. Also participating were several immigrant-led synods from the Midwest, including the Missouri Synod's sole ally, the Norwegian Synod, and several of their adversaries. Among the latter group was the Wisconsin Synod, discussed above, and the Iowa Synod, the church body established by missionaries sent by the Missouri Synod's estranged friend in Germany, Wilhelm Löhe. After a joint worship service, at which Loy delivered a sermon on the "Conditions of Christian Union," the meeting proceeded to business.[29]

Setting the agenda was Charles Porterfield Krauth, whose articles in the *Lutheran and Missionary* were principally responsible for the schism in the General Synod and who had become the leading figure of the Pennsylvania Synod. The bulk of the proceedings consisted of debates over two sets of theses offered by Krauth: the first titled "Fundamental Principles of Faith and Church Polity;" the second, "Of Ecclesiastical Power and Church Polity." The propositions expressed the same Old School convictions that had compelled Krauth to lead the Pennsylvania Synod away from the General Synod. In order for "true Unity" to exist in the American Lutheran church, he wrote, all must "accept and acknowledge the doctrines of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession in its original sense" and profess that the other historic confessions are "in the perfect harmony of one and the same scriptural faith." Krauth's theses were adopted unanimously. On the fourth day, a committee presented an "Outline Constitution." The delegates resolved to

[29] For the text of the sermon, see *Proceedings of the Convention Held by Representatives from Various Evangelical Lutheran Synods in the United States and Canada Accepting the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, at Reading, Pa., Dec. 12, 13, and 14, A. D. 1866* (Pittsburgh: Bakewell and Marthens, 1867), 21-31.

take the proposal back to their respective synods for deliberation and to reconvene the next year.[30]

The meeting took place in November 1867 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. The choice of location was significant. In the same city, just a year and a half before, the Old School Lutherans of the Pennsylvania Synod had withdrawn from the meeting of the General Synod in protest. Now, under the leadership of Krauth, they were forming a new union of Lutheran synods.[31] Not all who participated in the 1866 meeting in Reading would join the new church body, however. The Old Lutherans of the Missouri and Norwegian synods sent no official delegation to Fort Wayne. The Ohio Synod sent representatives, but merely for the purpose of continued discussion. Still, over the course of the week-long meeting, eleven different synods decided to affiliate with the new church body. The delegates elected officers and adopted a constitution. The constitution included the doctrinal theses composed by Krauth that had been adopted at the previous meeting and declared those propositions to be "fundamental and unchangeable."[32] They also chose a name for the new fellowship: the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

For Krauth, the establishment of the General Council, as the new church body was commonly known, was the culmination of more than two decades of theological development. He had moved from supporting New Lutheranism in the 1840s, to advocating toleration and reform within the General Synod in the 1850s, and eventually

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[30] *Proceedings of the Convention Held at Reading*, 9-16.

[31] This connection was made explicitly at the convention: *General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: First Convention, Fort Wayne, Indiana, November 20 to 26, A. D. 1867* (Pittsburgh: Bakewell and Marthens, 1867), 6.

[32] *General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: First Convention*, 20.

to promoting an uncompromising confessionalism by the end of the Civil War. Now, in 1867, he stood as the leader of a new Lutheran church body, whose theological outlook he had principally shaped. At its convention in Fort Wayne, he preached a sermon that praised the General Council's "basis"—and implicitly juxtaposed it against the "basis" of the church body from which its synods withdrew. In contrast with the General Synod, he declared, the new fellowship "accepts one rule of God's Word… derives one faith from that Word… [and] would have that faith confessed in the same words used in one and the same sense."[33] Three years later, he was elected president of the General Council and would serve in that position for ten years.

For the New School leaders of the General Synod, the formation of this new Lutheran church body was a demographic disaster. At its zenith in 1861, the General Synod had encompassed more than two-thirds of all Lutherans in the United States. Even after the secession of several Southern synods during the Civil War, its membership still totaled over 157,000 in 1866, or about fifty-five percent of the Lutheran church in America. But after the defection of four of its most numerous member synods to the General Council, the size of the General Synod was reduced considerably. In 1868, it numbered only 87,000 members, or just under twenty-five percent of American Lutherans.[34]

Against this backdrop of decline, Northern New School Lutherans tried to persuade their co-religionists in the South to reunite with them. Like many others in the postbellum North, the leaders of the General Synod saw the principal cause of the war as

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[33] C. P. Krauth, "The General Council: Its Difficulties and Encouragements," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 12, 1867, 29.

[34] For these statistics, see *Lutheran Almanac for 1866*, 31; and *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1868* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1868), 35.

preserving the Union and thus prioritized national reunion over the advancement of racial equality.[35] Already in June 1865, the *Lutheran Observer* began to argue that, because "the war is over and the cause that gave birth to it.... no longer exists, it becomes the duty of our Southern churches to return to their former relation to the churches of the loyal states." Their pursuit of reconciliation, however, was more than an extension of their political views or a ploy to boost their church body's membership. It also rested on their estimation of Southern Lutherans' theological rectitude. Lutherans in the South, the paper's editors wrote, exhibited "no extreme symbolism… no bigotry, no binding of the conscience to all the minutiae of all the confessional writings." Because of this, they urged the "Southern brethren" to "at once return" and "co-operate with us… in building up our church… on the basis of the General Synod."[36] During the first years of Reconstruction, the paper continued to urge both national and ecclesiastical reconciliation.[37] At its convention in 1869, the General Synod officially proposed a reunion of the two sections.[38]

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[35] See Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994); and David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001). For a study that emphasizes the persistence in sectional antagonism, see Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013).

[36] "Reunion of the Church North and South," *Lutheran Observer*, June 30, 1865, 2.

[37] See, for example, "Appeal for the South," *Lutheran Observer*, August 11, 1865, 1; and "What Shall be Done at the Approaching General Synod?—Shall an Effort Be Made to Unite the Church North and South," *Lutheran Observer*, May 11, 1866, 1.

[38] *Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Convention of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Assembled in Washington, D. C., May, 1869* (Lancaster, PA: Pearsol and Geist, 1869), 64.

The General Synod, South (as the church body became known after the Confederacy had ceased to exist) rejected the offer.[39] In the immediate aftermath of the war, John Bachman declared that "not one in a thousand" of his fellow Southern Lutherans "would entertain the slightest idea of a reunion with the Northern General Synod."[40] After several years had passed, Lutherans in the South remained opposed to reunion, seeing their Northern co-religionists not only as a separate people, but also as insufficiently New School in their theology. One writer summed up Southern Lutheran defiance in 1871: "We have taken our stand. We are of the General Synod, South. It saved the Lord's heritage during the dark and heartrending days of overthrow and ruin. It survived the lost cause. It is God's work. And shall we now, while Northern men attempt to destroy God's work, unite and cooperate with them[?] Forbid it God!"[41]

During the final three decades of the nineteenth century, Southern Lutherans preserved their ecclesiastical autonomy, but became numerically insignificant. Moreover, their identity was increasingly shaped by sectional loyalty, rather than theology. In 1886, the New School synods of the South joined with the Tennessee Synod, once their theological archenemy, to form the United Synod of the South.[42] Yet despite their united front, Southern Lutherans' numerical share of the American Lutheran population steadily decreased. In 1865, the synods that would make up the United Synod of the South totaled

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[39] At its 1866 meeting, the Southern church body changed its name from the "General Synod of the Confederate States of America" to the "Evangelical Lutheran General Synod in North America." However, it was more commonly known as the "General Synod, South." At its 1878 meeting, the church body officially changed its name to that title. H. George Anderson, *Lutheranism in the Southeastern States, 1860-1886: A Social History* (The Hague: Mouton, 1969), 208-9.

[40] "Dr. Bachman's Vindication," *Lutheran and Missionary*, October 26, 1865, 2.

[41] "Both Sides of the Question," *Lutheran Visitor*, September 8, 1871, 2.

[42] On these developments, Susan Wilds McArver, "'A Spiritual Wayside Inn:' Lutherans, the New South and Cultural Change in South Carolina, 1886-1918" (Ph.D. diss., Duke University, 1995), 57-65.

just under 40,000 members, or about thirteen percent of all Lutherans in the reunited nation. By 1900, the number of members remained roughly constant, but owing to the large-scale migration of Germans and Scandinavians to the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest, Southern Lutherans represented less than three percent of all Lutherans.[43] (Those statistics do not include Texas Lutherans, who partnered with Northern church bodies throughout their history and, due to the state's growing immigrant population, increased at roughly the same rate as Lutherans in the North during the postbellum era.)[44]

Despite their failure to reunite with their Southern co-religionists and their schisms with Old School Lutherans, the New School Lutherans of the General Synod still viewed themselves as the intellectual leaders of American Lutheranism. In some respects, this was true. General Synod Lutherans possessed more cultural clout and connections with mainstream American Protestants. They also controlled the church's most prestigious educational institutions, such as Gettysburg Theological Seminary and Pennsylvania College, and its most venerable publications, including the *Lutheran Quarterly*, which succeeded the *Evangelical Review* as the church's sole English-language theological journal, and the *Lutheran Observer*, which in 1867 changed its masthead to read, "Devoted to Principles and Interests of the General Synod."[45] In an

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[43] For these statistics, see *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1865* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1865), 31; and Sheeleigh, ed., *Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for 1901*, 84-85.

[44] In 1900, Lutherans in Texas belonged to seven different synods, six of which were headquartered in Northern states. The only Lutheran church body based in the Lone Star State, the Texas Synod, was a member of the Northern-based General Synod. See Russell Alan Vardell, "Striving to Gather the Scattered: The Texas-Louisiana Synod and its Predecessor Bodies, 1851-1987" (Ph.D. diss., University of Houston, 1992), x.

[45] The *Evangelical Review*, which was renamed the *Evangelical Quarterly Review* in 1862, began a new series in 1871 as the *Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*. It was renamed the *Lutheran Quarterly* in 1878, a name which it held until its dissolution in 1928. Beginning with the new series, the periodical was edited by professors at the General Synod's seminary in Gettysburg. In 1882, the

1868 article describing the state of the Lutheran church in the United States for a broadly evangelical audience, James Brown, the successor to Schmucker at the Gettysburg seminary, confidently stated that "the General Synod,… having secured and enjoyed the respect and confidence of other denominations, will continue on its way," and represent "the spirit of the Lutheran church."[46]

Yet in terms of raw statistics, this feeling of preeminence proved to be an illusion. At the time of Brown's writing, the General Synod comprised a little more than a fourth of all American Lutherans. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the General Synod's numerical share of the church's population steadily declined, as the majority of new Lutheran immigrants joined other church bodies. By 1900, the General Synod made up less than an eighth of all Lutherans in the United States.[47]

For their part, the leaders of General Council believed that their new church body would supersede the General Synod as the primary association of Lutherans in the United States. Following its first official meeting in 1867, the *Lutheran and Missionary*, now under the editorship of a committee of General Council clergymen led by Joseph Seiss, confidently predicted that the new church body "would become that great central bond of union which would finally unite all true Lutherans in our land."[48] In the years immediately after its formation, this outcome seemed likely. When the General Council

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General Council's seminary in Philadelphia founded its own theological quarterly, the *Lutheran Church Review.*

[46] J. A. Brown, "The Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 25 (July 1868): 500.

[47] Statistics from *Lutheran Almanac for 1868*; and Sheeleigh, ed., *Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for 1901*, 84-85.

[48] "The General Council at Fort Wayne," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 5, 1867, 26. On Seiss's leading role at the *Lutheran and Missionary*, see Lawrence R. Rast, "Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2003), 59-60.

was established, it numbered nearly 117,000 members, instantly making it the largest fellowship of American Lutherans.[49] Yet this numerical supremacy was short-lived, as the basis for church unity envisioned by Krauth and his fellow Old School Lutherans proved unable to reconcile the various factions opposed to the General Synod.

Already at its first meeting in November 1867, internal disagreements plagued the General Council. The delegation from the Ohio Synod raised questions about where the new church body stood on four points: "Chiliasm [i.e. millennialism]… Mixed Communion… The exchanging of pulpits with Sectarians… [and] Secret, or unchurchly Societies." The delegates from the Iowa Synod also expressed concern about the final three issues. In response, a committee headed Charles W. Schaeffer and Krauth brushed aside their concerns, stating that they would address the subjects when problems arose.[50] The Ohio Synod responded by never sending a delegation to another General Council convention. The Iowa Synod continued to participate in the new church body's annual meetings, but never officially joined.[51] The General Council's inability to retain those two synods, whose growing membership was spread out across many more states than the ones bearing their respective names, spoiled its quest to become the most numerous Lutheran fellowship in the United States. It also signaled that the chief issue that threatened the unity of the American church was no longer confessional subscription, but the question of how Lutherans should relate to other denominations.

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[49] Statistics from *Lutheran Almanac for 1868*, 35.

[50] *General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: First Convention*, 12, 17-19.

[51] For a thorough explanation of this peculiar ecclesiastical relationship, see Gerhard Sigmund Ottersberg, "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Iowa and Other States, 1854-1904" (Ph.D. diss., University of Nebraska, Lincoln, 1949), 663-81.

The Old Lutherans of the Missouri Synod, meanwhile, were working to capitalize on the controversies at the General Council's 1867 meeting. The following March, representatives from the Ohio and Missouri synods, led by Loy and Walther, met in Columbus to discuss the possibility of union. At the meeting, they declared that they "mutually recognize each other as orthodox bodies" and agreed that their synods' pastors could freely move from one congregation to another. Despite the momentousness of the occasion, Loy and Walther agreed not to publicize the meeting in their respective church papers, the *Lutheran Standard* and the *Lutheraner*, until their synods could officially ratify their union at their upcoming conventions. Yet their attempt at secrecy proved unsuccessful. Leaders of the General Council heard about the news via the pen of Friedrich Brunn (1819-1895), one of Walther's few correspondents in Germany who, unaware of the clandestine nature of the meeting, published a report of it in his church paper.[52] Seiss and the *Lutheran and Missionary* evinced a sense of betrayal. The editors believed that the Ohio Synod was making a mistake, not only by rejecting "the Olive Branch" offered by the General Council, but also by acquiescing to "the march of Missouri." "Perhaps," they wrote with not a little bitterness, "after a while they will discover that the General Council is also orthodox."[53]

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[52] Loy and Walther published the resolutions adopted at the meeting, as well as their explanation for why they had concealed them from the public in the "The 'Lutheran' on Ohio and Missouri," *Lutheran Standard*, August 1, 1867, 116-17; and W[alther]., "Zur kirchlichen Chronik," *Lutheraner*, August 15, 1868, 188-89. On the complicated history of this meeting of the Ohio and Missouri synods specifically and their path to unity generally, see Carl S. Meyer, "Ohio's Accord with Missouri, 1868-1880," in Herbert T. Neve and Benjamin A. Johnson, eds., *The Maturing of American Lutheranism: Essays in Honor of Willard Dow Allbeck upon the Completion of Thirty Years as Wittenberg Synod Professor of Historical Theology at Hamma School of Theology, Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1968), 182-200.

[53] "Missouri and Ohio," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 23, 1868, 158. On Seiss's leading role at the *Lutheran and Missionary*, see Lawrence R. Rast, "Joseph A. Seiss and the Lutheran Church in America" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 2003), 59-60.

The Missouri Synod courted further resentment when a delegation led by Walther met with the leaders of the Wisconsin Synod in October 1868. Despite joining the General Council at its inaugural convention, several leaders of this increasingly conservative synod were already having second thoughts. The Missouri Synod, meanwhile, was beginning to reevaluate their negative assessment of their fellow Midwesterners' doctrinal purity. That year, the Wisconsin Synod had severed all relations with its former partners in Germany. Additionally, the hostilities between various pastors and congregations in the two synods were beginning to cool. The meeting between the two church bodies, held in Milwaukee just a few weeks before the General Council's second convention, yielded the same results as the meeting with the Ohio Synod. Both sides declared each other to be "orthodox Lutheran church bodies" and agreed to "practice pulpit and altar fellowship." Unlike at the past meeting, however, the representatives did not seek to keep their deliberations secret. Shortly after the meeting, Walther announced the two synods' agreement in the *Lutheraner* and proclaimed that "our suspicions against the dear Wisconsin Synod have not merely disappeared but also have been put to shame."[54]

In June 1869, the Wisconsin Synod severed its connection to the General Council. As with the actions taken by the Ohio Synod, the editors of the *Lutheran and Missionary* expressed exasperation that their efforts at forming a confessional fellowship were being rebuffed in favor of an even stricter view of Lutheran orthodoxy. Also adding to their sense of frustration was that the synods associated with the General Council had done "so much for the struggling pastors and churches of the Synod of Wisconsin." The editors

[54] W[alther], "Wieder eine Friedensbotschaft!" *Lutheraner*, November 1, 1868, 37. See also in Koehler, *History of the Wisconsin Synod*, 128-33; and Braun, "Wisconsin's 'Turn to the Right'," 93-95.

predicted that the American church would soon be divided into "*three* bodies, *General Council*, *General Synod*, and *Missouri General Something*."[55]

Over the next three years that forecast took shape. Led by the Missouri Synod, the push toward forming another Lutheran church body moved at a slow but deliberate pace. Preliminary meetings in January and November 1871 established a constitution for a new union of synods, named the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America, and elected Walther as the provisional president. The first official convention finally took place in Milwaukee in July 1872. In addition to the Missouri, Norwegian, Ohio, and Wisconsin synods, the new church body also included the Illinois and Minnesota synods, both of which had withdrawn recently from the General Council. Just as the Pennsylvania Synod made up the plurality of the General Council, the Missouri Synod dominated the Synodical Conference, as the new Lutheran union was commonly known, comprising over a third of its membership. And just as Krauth was the chief figure of the primarily Eastern church body, the principal leader of the new mostly Midwestern fellowship was Walther. Though he never served as its president after its formation in 1872, Walther's theology and personality shaped the Synodical Conference, which he regarded as "the ultimate goal for my life in this world."[56] At the opening sermon of its first convention, he proclaimed in his typically grandiose style that "our present brotherly union [is] undoubtedly a cause of joy to God, to all His holy angels, and to all His true children."[57] At its inception, Walther's new church body became the

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[55] "The Wisconsin Synod," *Lutheran and Missionary*, July 22, 1869, 158.

[56] Walther to "Ehrwürdiger Herr," July 13, 1871, in Correspondence Series, Folder 42, Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Papers, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

[57] *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika zu Milwaukee, Wis., vom 10. bis zum 16. Juli 1872* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von

largest of the three major Lutheran fellowships in the United States, a position it held for more than forty-five years.

During the remaining years of the nineteenth century, the landscape of American Lutheran synods became even more fragmented. In 1872, the Synodical Conference, General Council, and General Synod encompassed over ninety percent of Lutherans in the United States. Three decades later, following schisms within the Synodical Conference and the formation of new ethnically Nordic church bodies, that figure was reduced to seventy percent. By 1900, Lutherans in the United States belonged to twenty different fellowships.[58] The level of church unity represented by the General Synod before the Civil War would not occur in American Lutheranism again until the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in 1988.

Confessionalism and Separatism

Denomination fragmentation, however, masked a theological convergence. Even though Lutherans continued to engage in a series of heated doctrinal debates over the final decades of the nineteenth century, the range of views on the topics of controversy was becoming increasingly narrow. Historian Susan Juster's astute observation about the underlying unity of the numerous factions of Baptists during the Revolutionary era applies to Lutherans during the period of Reconstruction: "[T]he extreme sensitivity

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Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1872), 4. For a translation of this sermon see Matthew C. Harrison, ed., *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2011), 193-201. For the fullest history of the Synodical Conference, see Armin W. Schuetze, *The Synodical Conference: Ecumenical Endeavor* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2000).

[58] For statistics, see *The Lutheran Almanac, for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 1873* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1873), 30; and Sheeleigh, ed., *Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for 1901*, 84-85. For the best resource on making sense of this dizzying array of American Lutheran schisms, mergers, and new church bodies, see Robert C. Wiederaenders, *Historical Guide to Lutheran Church Bodies of North America* (St. Louis: Lutheran Historical Conference, 1998).

toward the finer points of doctrine… only reaffirms our sense that these people held a common religious ethos."[59] While the rhetoric surrounding their intra-church arguments remained as contentious as before, Lutherans in the United States, with a few important exceptions, were approaching their debates from an increasingly conservative—and distinctively American—perspective.

Perhaps the most remarkable examples of this increasing similarity in theological outlook involved those issues that had divided Lutherans before and during the Civil War: confessional subscription and church unity. Following the controversy over the Definite Platform in the mid-1850s, the general consensus among American Lutherans was that an affirmation that the "fundamental doctrines" of the Augsburg Confession were "substantially correct" was sufficient for intra-Lutheran harmony. Disagreements over the precise nature of this "substantial correctness," as well as the theological accuracy of the other historic confessions of Lutheranism, should be tolerated. Yet over the course of the Civil War, many began to consider those doctrinal compromises to be as problematic as the political compromises between the North and the South. Toleration for doctrinal differences gave way to an insistence that, in order to achieve "true unity," Lutherans must unite around a more rigorous confessional "basis." Over the course of the three and a half decades following the Civil War, virtually all Lutherans in the United States, even those associated within the General Synod, came to share this view.

Even more remarkable was that C. F. W. Walther and his fellow Old Lutherans, a marginal presence before and during the war, were increasingly shaping the conversation as to what counted as orthodoxy on these questions. Walther explicated his views in

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[59] Susan Juster, *Disorderly Women: Sexual Politics and Evangelicalism in Revolutionary New England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), ix.

perhaps his most famous and certainly his most provocative work, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche, die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* ("The Evangelical Lutheran Church, the True Visible Church of God on Earth"), published in 1867. In twenty-five theses backed up by citations from Scripture and the Lutheran church fathers, Walther rigorously defined the boundaries of true Lutheranism. "The Evangelical Lutheran Church," he wrote in the tenth thesis, "is the sum total of all who without reservation profess the doctrine which was restored by the Reformation of Luther and was summarily submitted in writing at Augsburg in 1530…, and was treated and expounded in the other so-called Lutheran symbols, as the pure doctrine of the divine Word." Such an emphasis on the church's confessional writings, he insisted, did not make tradition a basis for doctrine. Rather, "the doctrine set forth in its Confessions is the pure divine truth, because it agrees with the written Word of God on all points." With this understanding, Walther and his fellow Old Lutherans resolved only to cooperate with those churches "in which the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, set forth in its symbols, is not only lawfully recognized, but is also professed in public preaching." In his final thesis, Walther made his famous (or infamous) claim that because "the Evangelical Lutheran Church has all the essential marks of the true visible church of God on earth, [and] since they are found in no other church body…, it is therefore in no need of any doctrinal reformation."[60] Though stated more provocatively than before, the

[60] C. F. W. Walther, *Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche, die wahre sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden: Ein Referat für die Verhandlungen der Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten bei Gelegenheit der Sitzungen derselben zu St. Louis, Mo., den 31. October 1866 und folgende Tage* (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), 50-51, 138, 150, 152. Originally presented at the Missouri Synod's General Convention in 1866 and published serially in the *Lutheraner*, the book went through several editions. The most complete English translation is C. F. W. Walther, *The True Visible Church: An Essay for the Convention of the General Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, for its Sessions at St. Louis, Mo., October 31, 1866*, trans. John Theodore Mueller (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1963).

content of Walther's doctrinal position had been mostly consistent throughout his American career: the Lutheran church was the sole possessor of pure scriptural truth and only those Lutherans who affirmed that belief could join together in church unity.[61]

What changed in the years after the Civil War was the widespread embrace of Walther's position by other Lutherans in the United States. The most unmistakable place where his views were put into practice was the Synodical Conference. During his previous proposals for intra-Lutheran unity during the mid-1850s, Walther had entertained the idea that Lutherans could join together solely on the basis of the Augsburg Confession of 1530. The Synodical Conference's constitution, however, established the entire Book of Concord as its confessional basis.[62] Many other Lutherans in the new church body even adopted Walther's radical phrasing of Lutheranism's exalted status in Christendom. Matthias Loy approvingly reprinted Walther's theses in the *Lutheran Standard*.[63] One popular Ohio Synod publication boasted that "the Evangelical Lutheran Church claims that in these times of confusion and uncertainty, she is the Church which confesses and teaches the Word of God purely… *and therefore she is Christ's true visible church*."[64]

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[61] See, for example, his 1858 essay, republished in Theodore G. Tappert, ed., *Lutheran Confessional Theology in America, 1840-1880* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 55-77.

[62] *Denkshrift enthaltend eine eingehende Darlegung der Gründe, weshalb die zur Synodal-Conferenz der evangel.-luther. Kirche von Nord-Amerika* (Columbus, OH: Schulze und Gassmann, 1871), 5.

[63] "The Evang Lutheran Church the True Visible Church of God on Earth," *Lutheran Standard*, March 1, 1867, 38. At the opening sermon of the Synodical Conference, Walther claimed that "we are all convinced of the fact that the church of our fathers, the Evangelical Lutheran Church… is the true visible church of God on earth." *Verhandlungen der ersten Versammlung der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Synodal-Conferenz von Nord-Amerika*, 10.

[64] C. J. O[ehlschlaeger,] *The Evangelical Lutheran Church: The True Visible Church of God on Earth* (Columbus, OH: Ohio Synodical Printing House, 1880), 5. This tract went through at least five editions and was published as late as 1895 by the Ohio Synod's Lutheran Book Concern.

This shared understanding of Lutheran confessionalism within the Synodical Conference, however, did not ensure lasting ecclesiastical harmony. During the late 1870s and early 1880s, the fellowship was ripped apart by a long and bitter controversy over the doctrine of election, or predestination. The amount of publications related to this theological conflict, both primary and secondary, is vast and impossible to summarize comprehensively.[65] The basic disagreement centered on the Latin phrase *intuitu fidei* ("in view of faith"), a phrase coined by seventeenth-century Lutheran theologians: Did God predestine to eternal life those whom he "foresaw would persevere in the faith" or did He elect believers according to his "unfailing necessity?" Arguing the latter position was a group headed by Walther. Opposing him was a faction led at first by Friedrich Schmidt (1837-1912), Walther's former student and now a Norwegian Synod professor, and soon also by Matthias Loy of the Ohio Synod. Walther's opponents argued that he was teaching "crypto-Calvinism," which he vehemently denied. Walther responded that his adversaries were making God's saving grace dependent on human merit, which they also denied. Both argued that their ideas represented the "true Lutheranism" of the church's confessions.[66] Though argued over seemingly abstruse points of high theology, the debate over predestination was not confined to clerical leaders at church meetings. According to one participant, "the question was discussed on streets and in lanes, in stores and in

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[65] The most exhaustive treatment is Hans R. Haug, "The Predestination Controversy in the Lutheran Church in North America" (Ph.D. diss., Temple University, 1967), which stands at over 961 pages. The most succinct account is Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 148-68. On the persistence of the conflict into the twentieth century, see John M. Brenner, "The Election Controversy Among Lutherans in the Twentieth Century: An Examination of the Underlying Problems" (Ph.D. diss., Marquette University, 2012).

[66] Quoted in Thuesen, *Predestination*, 157-58. On Schmidt, see J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies, or Historical Notices of Over Three Hundred and Fifty Leading Men of the American Lutheran Church, from its Establishment to the Year 1890* (Milwaukee, WI: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 671-74.

saloons."[67] Eventually the disputes led to the withdrawal of the Ohio Synod and the Norwegian Synod from the Synodical Conference. In the Norwegian Synod, the controversy continued throughout the 1880s and into the 1890s, and the synod splintered into pro-Missouri Synod and anti-Missouri Synod church bodies.

The *Gnadenwahlstreit* ("Election Controversy") shattered Walther's dream of presiding over a unified Lutheran church in the United States. Yet the conflict's fierce polemics and ecclesiastical schisms actually illustrated the successful dissemination of his understanding of Lutheranism among his co-religionists in the Midwest. Like Abraham Lincoln's observation about Northern and Southern Christians, both sides read the same confessions and appealed to the same church fathers. Indeed, it was the fact that those involved in the controversy shared the same underlying hermeneutic and theological assumptions that made their quarrels so acrimonious.[68]

Such a view of Lutheranism was extending beyond the Synodical Conference as well. During the decade and a half following the Civil War, Charles Porterfield Krauth and his fellow leaders in the General Council developed an understanding of confessional and ecclesial purity that differed from Walther and his colleagues in degree, but not in kind. In his weighty tome, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, Krauth claimed Lutheranism to be "the purest Protestantism, that which best harmonizes

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[67] U. V. Koren, "Hvad den norske Synode har villet og fremdeles vil," in Paul Koren, ed., *Samlede Skrifter af Dr. theol. V. Koren* (Decorah, IA: Lutheran Publishing House Bogtrykkeri, 1911), 3: 445. For a translation, see Mark DeGarmeaux, ed. and trans., *U. V. Koren's Works* (Mankato, MN: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 2015), 3: 480. For background, see Jon Gjerde, "Conflict and Community: A Case Study of the Immigrant Church in the United States," *Journal of Social History* 19 (Summer 1986): 681-97.

[68] Leigh Jordahl makes a similar point in his study of Midwestern Lutheranism. Jordahl, "Wauwatosa Theology," 210.

conservatism and reformation."[69] Another member of his church body, Emmanuel Greenwald, put the matter even more straightforwardly, "we believe that we are the True Church of Christ."[70] Like Walther, the leaders of the General Council considered confessional subscription to be essential for church unity. After arguing that "the faith of God's word… is the confessed faith of the Evangelical Lutheran Church," Krauth asked, "Ought the church to rest unreservedly and unchangeably on this faith as her doctrinal basis?" His answer: "She ought."[71]

Where the Lutherans of the General Council differed with Walther was on the nature of the various Lutheran confessions. Though Krauth declared all of the documents in the Book of Concord to be "closely cohering and internally consistent," he distinguished between the Augsburg Confession of 1530, which he called as the church's "primary confession" and the other confessions, which he labeled as "secondary confessions."[72] The General Council's "Fundamental Principles of Faith and Church Polity" reflected this distinction. Churches were required to subscribe to the Augsburg Confession "without equivocation or mental reservation," but only to accept "the other Confessions…, inasmuch as they set forth none other than [the Augsburg Confession's]

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[69] Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology: As Represented in the Augsburg Confession, and in the History and Literature of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1871), xiv.

[70] E. Greenwald, *The True Church: Its Way of Justification; and Its Holy Communion: In Three Discourses*. Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1876), 7.

[71] Krauth, *Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, 168, 179.

[72] Ibid., 179. For his extended discussion of the distinction between primary and secondary confessions, see p. 201-328.

system of doctrine."[73] This seemingly minor distinction was one of the barriers to unity between the Synodical Conference and the General Council.

Along with advocating a strict confessional subscription, Krauth and his colleagues sought to erect rigid boundaries between Lutherans and other Protestants. During its first decade of existence, the General Council was consumed with discussion over the permissibility of non-Lutherans partaking in the Lord's Supper (altar fellowship) or preaching at Lutheran churches (pulpit fellowship), the second and third of the "four points" raised at its first meeting in 1867.[74] Initially, Krauth favored a latitudinarian approach, arguing in 1868 that no clear line between Lutherans and non-Lutherans should be drawn. Yet, over the course of the 1870s, he moved in a much more conservative direction and became the leading proponent of the General Council's 1875 "Galesburg Declaration" (named after the Illinois city where the convention that passed the resolution was held), which read, "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only—Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only."[75] In 1877, Krauth offered 105 theses on the subject, defending the rule as "derived from the Word and Confessions" and "necessitated by them." Though he acknowledged that exceptions could be made in times of "urgent and exceptional necessity," he insisted that the Lutherans should keep their "pulpits and altars… as pure as we can."[76]

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[73] *Proceedings of the Convention Held at Reading*, 11.

[74] For a full account, see Huber, "Controversy over Pulpit and Alter Fellowship," 133-227.

[75] *Minutes of the Ninth Convention of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Held in the Evan. Lutheran Church, Galesburg, Ill., Oct. 7th to 12th, A. D. 1875* (Pittsburgh: Bakewell and Marthens, 1875), 17. Sometimes, the declaration was referred to as the "Galesburg Rule."

[76] Charles P. Krauth, *Theses on the Galesburg Declaration on Pulpit and Altar Fellowship, Prepared by Order of the General Council* (Philadelphia: n.p., 1877), 1, 4, 30.

The Galesburg Declaration and Krauth's strict interpretation of it was not universally accepted within the General Council. A few weeks after the 1875 convention, Krauth's long-time friend and fellow Philadelphian Joseph Seiss wrote him a letter, lamenting the upheaval caused by the decision: "Friends have turned away from my church,… [and] said they will never enter it again,… by reason of the unfortunate touching of this fellowship-question. It is simply impossible to maintain ourselves on the Missouri [Synod] ground."[77] At the 1877 convention, Seiss led the opposition against Krauth's 105 theses (they were never officially adopted or rejected), and offered twenty-four propositions of his own. Yet even in his dissent, Seiss was at pains to point out his basic agreement with his colleague. In the *Lutheran and Missionary*, he approvingly quoted another pastor: "The Theses of Dr. Krauth are able, and conceived in good spirit. With many—with most of them—there will be common consent. But… the extreme limitation given to the kind of 'exceptions' contemplated in the Galesburg Declaration, I think cannot be sustained." Seiss concluded by praising Krauth's theses as "a vigorous contribution in the line of needed correctives to a proscriptive and domineering Unionism."[78] As in the matter of confessional subscription, on the issue of ecumenism the General Council differed from the Synodical Conference not over general principles but specific details.[79]

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[77] Quoted in Spaeth, *Charles Porterfield Krauth*, 2: 208.

[78] "A Few Explanations," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 27, 1877, 408. For Seiss's theses, see "Twenty-Four Propositions on the Galesburg Declaration," *Lutheran and Missionary*, September 20, 1877, 404.

[79] For further evidence of the widespread agreement on the principles of the Galesburg Rule, see the numerous letters of support written to Krauth by General Council pastors: "Correspondence regarding the Galesburg Rule," Charles Porterfield Krauth Papers, Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, Lutheran Archives Center, Pennsylvania.

Even the General Synod, the federation from which the churches of the General Council had separated in 1866, moved in a more conservative direction during the final decades of the nineteenth century. A new generation of intellectual leaders, including Milton Valentine (1825-1906) and James W. Richard (1843-1909), sought to cultivate a deeper appreciation of the Augsburg Confession among their students and to strengthen their church body's commitment to its doctrines.[80] Their efforts were largely successful, though not without controversy. In 1893, three members of the board of directors at Wittenberg Theological Seminary, a General Synod-affiliated institution in Ohio, charged Professor Luther Gotwald (1833-1900) with heresy. According to the three board members, Gotwald's insistence on complete subscription to the Augsburg Confession represented "the Type of Lutheranism characteristic of the General Council" and "antagonistic to that of… the General Synod."[81] At a special meeting, the board cleared Gotwald of all charges unanimously (with the three accusers abstaining). Two years later, the convention of the General Synod declared the Augsburg Confession to be "in perfect consistence" with the Word of God.[82]

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[80] On the turn toward confessionalism in the General Synod, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), 230-32; and Eugene F. Fevold, "Coming of Age, 1875-1900," in E. Clifford Nelson, ed., *The Lutherans in North America* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 308-9. On Valentine and Richard, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Gettysburg Theological Seminary of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States and of the United Lutheran Church in America, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1826-1926* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publishing House, 1926), 317-20, 325-28.

[81] "Copy of Charges as Preferred Against Dr. Gotwald by A. Gebhart, Joseph R. Gebhart, and E. E. Baker," in [Luther A. Gotwald], *Trial of Luther A. Gotwald, D. D. Professor of Practical Theology in Wittenberg Theological Seminary, Springfield, Ohio, April 4th and 5th, 1893, upon Charges of Disloyalty to the Doctrinal Basis of Said Theological Seminary* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), 3. For background on the trial, see Donald L. Huber, "Luther A. Gotwald (1833-1900)," in George H. Shriver, ed., *Dictionary of Heresy Trials in American Christianity* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 160-67; and Luther A. Gotwald, Jr., "The Trial of Luther A. Gotwald," *Currents in Theology and Missions* 36 (April 2009): 118-27.

[82] Quoted in Wentz, *Basic History*, 231.

With a greater allegiance to the Lutheran confessions came a declining interest in inter-church cooperation. In the antebellum era, New Lutherans like Samuel Schmucker had been at the forefront of Protestant ecumenism. In his last major initiative, an aging Schmucker helped to lead the way in reviving the defunct American Evangelical Alliance in 1866 and republished his influential *Fraternal Appeal* in anticipation of the World Evangelical Alliance's meeting in New York, held shortly after his death in 1873.[83] During the final decades of the nineteenth century, General Synod Lutherans continued to support Protestant cooperation, but not with nearly the same optimism for inter-church unity as Schmucker. Speaking before the Evangelical Alliance in 1877, Frederick Conrad, now the sole editor of the *Lutheran Observer*, made no "apology or defence for the existence of divisions in the Church of Christ," but also argued that "in this world of perfection and evil, it is useless to expect to find the divine ideal of the Church perfectly realized" and even endorsed "a healthy rivalry between different denominations" as a way to advance "the interests of the kingdom of God."[84] Though the General Synod never adopted anything resembling the restrictions on inter-church cooperation authorized by the Synodical Conference or the General Council, its turn away from the hopeful ecumenism of the antebellum era reflected the increasing confessionalism and separatism of Lutheranism in the United States.

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[83] Philip D. Jordan, *The Evangelical Alliance for the United States of America, 1847-1900: Ecumenism, Identity, and the Religion of the Republic* (New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), 73-74, 83-84; and S. S. Schmucker, *The True Unity of Christ's Church: Being a Renewed Appeal to the Friend of the Redeemer, on Primitive Christian Union, and the History of its Corruption. To Which is Now Added a Modified Plan for the Re-Union of All Evangelical Churches; Embracing as Integral Parts, the World's Evangelical Alliance, with All Its National Branches* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolf, 1870).

[84] Frederick W. Conrad, "Use and Abuse of Denominationalism," *Lutheran Quarterly* (January 1878): 104, 110. See also "The Evangelical Alliance," *Quarterly Review of the Evangelical Lutheran Church* (April 1874): 233-51.

This shared conservatism was on full display in American Lutherans' almost complete condemnation of the "new theology," which sought to reconcile the Christian faith with modern thought. In the postbellum era, intellectual currents from Europe, particularly surrounding Darwinian evolutionary theory and historical criticism of the Bible, began to take hold among many Protestant denominations in the United States. By the end of the nineteenth century, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Disciples of Christ, and other Anglo-Protestants were dividing into liberal and conservative factions.[85] Yet in American Lutheranism, no such cleavage occurred. Instead, virtually all Lutherans in the United States—native-born and immigrant, Eastern and Midwestern—rejected these new ideas.

Unsurprisingly, the leaders of the Synodical Conference were the most dismissive of modern scientific thought. "Darwinism," predicted one writer for the Missouri Synod's theological journal, "will be regarded… as a confusing episode of absurdities."[86] "Biblical criticism," wrote another, "is nothing else than blasphemy of the Scriptures and therefore blasphemy of God."[87] For Matthias Loy of the Ohio Synod, the entirety of the modern theology rested on false foundations. "Liberalism," Loy wrote in 1883, "is a

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[85] See William R. Hutchison, *The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion: The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986); and Gary J. Dorrien, *The Making of American Liberal Theology: Imagining Progressive Religion, 1805-1900* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

[86] "Darwin und der Urmensch," *Lehre und Wehre* 17 (July 1871): 212. See also W. "Ueber Darwin's neueste Schrift," *Lehre und Wehre* 19 (February 1873): 64, "Darwinismus," *Lehre und Wehre* 19 (March 1873): 87-90; "Darwinismus," *Lehre und Wehre* 28 (October 1883): 476-77; and the multi-issue article in the 1900 volume of *Lehre und Wehre*, titled "Evolution."

[87] G. St., "Schulbibel in Deutschland," *Lehre und Wehre* 36 (May 1890): 167. See also "Zur Thorheit der modernen Bibelkritik," *Lehre und Wehre* 17 (December 1871): 167; G. St., "Großartige Lügen am Grabe eines Entschlafenen," *Lehre und Wehre* 34 (November 1889): 376-377; and G. St., "Antikritisches," *Lehre und Wehre* 35 (November 1889): 344-349.

system claiming for darkness and error and doubt a full equality of right in the Church with light and truth and faith."[88] This anti-modernism sometimes manifested itself in extreme directions. In 1873, for example, one Missouri Synod pastor published a book calling into question the heliocentric universe.[89] For the most part, however, Lutherans in the Synodical Conference did not engage with the intellectual developments of the late nineteenth century. Content to label evolution, higher criticism, and other modern developments as self-evidently unbiblical, they instead focused their energy on an increasingly narrow range of theological issues.[90]

Like their mostly foreign-born Midwestern counterparts in the Synodical Conference, the primarily native-born Lutherans in the General Council rejected any incursions of theological modernism in their churches.[91] Most saw a fundamental contradiction between both Darwinian evolution and higher criticism and the "good confession of our Lutheran church." Typical was the assessment of one writer for the General Council's theological journal, who contrasted "two fiercely hostile parties… the

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[88] M[atthias] Loy, *The Fallacy of Liberalism* (Columbus, OH: Lutheran Book Concern, 1883), 19. For a similar view, see P. Eirich, "Die moderne Lehrenentwicklungshäresie," *Lehre und Wehre* 23 (May 1877): 129-45; (June 1877): 161-74.

[89] J. C. W. Lindemann, *Astronomische Unterredung zwischen einem Liebhaber der Astronomie und mehreren berühmten Astronomen der Neuzeit, worin deutliche Auskunst gegeben wird über die Untrüglichkeit des Kopernikanischen Sonnen-Systems* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten, 1873). Even into the twentieth century, the Missouri Synod's chief theology textbook criticized the "Copernicans" for "offering their 'view of the cosmos' as the 'assured result of science.'" Franz Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatk: Erster Band* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1924), 577-78, n1454.

[90] Roy A. Suelflow, "The History of the Missouri Synod during the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence, 1872-1897" (Th.D. diss., Concordia Theological Seminary, 1946), 68-244.

[91] A thoroughly documented overview of this subject is Reginald W. Deitz, "Eastern Lutheranism in American Society and American Christianity, 1870-1914: Darwinism, Biblical Criticism, the Social Gospel" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1958). However, throughout his study, Deitz overstates the extent to which some Lutherans in both the General Council and General Synod accepted Darwinian evolutionary theory and scientific biblical criticism.

one side defending the old Church and the other a modern theology; one clinging to the faith of our fathers and the other championing an aggressive 'religion in the age of Darwin.'"[92] Another prominent General Council Lutheran argued that modern "negative criticism" rests on evidence which "is almost entirely internal and circumstantial" and, even more fundamentally, on "the ever-present and ever-pressing Desire of the intellect to Deny the existence of the supernatural in history."[93] Seiss, in a sermon before a meeting of the Pennsylvania Synod in 1896, summed up his church body's opposition to "recusant critics" and "their skeptical theorizings": "Stick to the Bible *as it is*…. Cling to the old Faith—the faith of prophets, apostles, and our own honored confessors."[94]

Mirroring their looser understanding of confessional subscription and church unity, the leaders of the General Synod were less strident in their opposition to modern science and biblical criticism than those in the General Council. Representative was the outlook expressed by Milton Valentine in his inaugural address at Gettysburg Theological Seminary. Confident that "the oft-talked of conflict between Christianity and science is a figment," he urged students to approach "the crowding hypotheses and shifting theories that are not science" with neither "hasty and timid modification of theology, nor fierce and denunciatory polemics," but "assured that no truth of the gospel is going to suffer overthrow." Toward "Higher Criticism," Valentine showed less irenicism, disparaging this "present form of speculation and agitation" as full of "baseless

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[92] H. V. Hilprecht, "The Essential Task of Old Testament Science at the Present Time," *Lutheran Church Review* 10 (July 1891): 287, 279.

[93] Theodore E. Schmauk, *The Negative Criticism and the Old Testament: An All Around Survey of the Negative Criticism from the Orthodox Point of View, with Some Particular Reference to Cheyne's "Founders of Old Testament Criticism"* (Lebanon, PA: Aldus Company Publishers, 1894), 29, 129.

[94] Joseph A. Seiss, *Moses and the Higher Criticism: A Sermon, Preached at the Meeting of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania in St. John's Church, Allenstown, May 31, 1896* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Bookstore, 1896), 20, 24.

assumptions, blunders, and contradictions." Yet rather than "ignor[ing] these agitations which sweep around us," he commended a "method of brave trust in the truth and straight-forward examination."[95] Over the course of the postbellum era, a few General Synod writers made attempts to harmonize some aspects of evolutionary theory with the Bible and sought minor accommodations to biblical criticism. Yet their concessions to modern science differed little from those offered by the theologians who would publish the *Fundamentals* in the 1910s.[96] Though constituting the "liberal" end of American Lutheranism, on the spectrum of late nineteenth-century Protestantism in the United States, the General Synod was fundamentally conservative.

Upon entering the twentieth century, American Lutheranism, in the apt description of one observer in 1930, fell into three theological camps: "ultra conservative," "conservative," and "mildly so."[97] The Synodical Conference (and its offshoots), the General Council, and the General Synod all acknowledged the Lutheran confessions as authoritative, expressed either hesitation or outright refusal to participate in inter-church relations, and displayed varying degrees of hostility toward modern

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[95] M[ilton] Valentine, "Inaugural Discourse," *Lutheran Quarterly* 14 (October 1884): 602-5. For other negative assessments of Darwinian evolution and higher criticism, see George U. Wenner, "The Line of Cleavage: Essential Dogmatic Differences Between the Liberal and Positive Schools of Theology," *Lutheran Quarterly* 27 (December 1897): 50-62; and Junius B. Fox, "Oriental Archæology and the Old Testament," *Lutheran Quarterly* 27 (December 1897): 559-75.

[96] For example, in a short article, A. E. Deitz advanced a form of the "day-age theory" that affirmed the special creation of Adam and argued that "the theory of evolution fails" to explain man's "special creation." Deitz, "Evolution as Taught in Scripture," *Lutheran Quarterly* 27 (April 1897): 215. In an introduction to an article by a German theologian, James W. Richard explicated what he called "believing criticism," which insists not that the Bible *contains* the word of God, but that it *is* the word of God." Loenhard Staehlin, "Christianity and Holy Scripture," trans. J. W. Richard, *Lutheran Quarterly* 23 (January 1893): 10. On the wide range of views in the *Fundamentals*, see George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 118-23.

[97] Vergilius Ferm, "Foreword," in Ferm, ed., *What is Lutheranism? A Symposium in Interpretation* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), viii.

science and liberal theology. When other American Protestants erupted in a series of disputes during the 1920s collectively known as the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, Lutherans avoided this upheaval principally because they possessed no viable theological liberalism.[98]

Political and Social Conservatism

Reinforcing American Lutheranism's theological confessionalism and ecclesiastical separatism was a conservative attitude toward politics and society that increased in the wake of the Civil War. In some cases, Lutherans' views mirrored those of other Protestants who either ignored the injustices faced by African Americans and working people or responded apathetically. Their approach to the issues facing Reconstruction-era and Gilded Age society, however, also evinced some important differences. For many Anglo-Protestants, the civil religion enhanced by the Civil War, together with nativist anxieties brought on by increased immigration, reinforced their desire to "Christianize" the nation.[99] In contrast, most Lutherans opposed attempts to legislate morality, as in the case of temperance. More generally, Lutherans envisioned their political and social views as a critique of the predominant religious ethos of the United States. Because Lutherans believed that they alone possessed true doctrine, they

[98] See James Kenneth Echols, "Charles Michael Jacobs, the Scriptures, and the Word of God: One Man's Struggle against Biblical Fundamentalism among American Lutherans" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1989), 26-91.

[99] See Martin E. Marty, *Protestantism in the United States: Righteous Empire* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986); Gaines M. Foster, *Moral Reconstruction: Christian Lobbyists and the Federal Legislation of Morality, 1865-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); and Grant R. Brodrecht, *Our Country: Northern Evangelicals and the Union during the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018).

also considered themselves to have a singular understanding of the root causes of the nation's ills.

Nowhere was this posture more evident than in the continuing disputes over slavery within the Synodical Conference. During the Civil War, Old Lutheran leaders such as C. F. W. Walther of the Missouri Synod and Herman Preus of the Norwegian Synod had adopted a position on slavery, formulated in response to the antislavery views within their ranks, that argued that the institution was sanctioned by the Bible (see Chapter Four). Rather than letting the matter rest after slavery was abolished, however, the controversy picked up with renewed vigor during the late 1860s.

The most contentious debate occurred in the Norwegian Synod.[100] At the church body's 1866 meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, slavery was among the chief topics of discussion. A faction of clergy led by Preus demanded that Claus Clausen and other clergy recant of their "blasphemous and ungodly" antislavery views, which make "Scripture into a wax nose."[101] Unable to resolve their disputes, both Preus and Clausen headed to Norway to plead their respective cases. In February 1867, the two pastors met with Gisle Johnson, a leading conservative theologian at the University of Christiana

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[100] For the fullest accounts in English, see John Magnus Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872* (New York: Macmillan, 1926), 202-22; and E. Clifford Nelson and Eugene L. Fevold, *The Lutheran Church among Norwegian-Americans: A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: Volume I, 1825-1890* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1960), 169-80. For the most complete account, see Brynjar Haraldsø, *Slaveridebatten i den norske synode: en undersøkelse av slaveridebatten i den norske synode i USA i 1860-årene med særlig vekt på debattens kirkelig-teologiske aspekter* (Oslo: Solum, 1988).

[101] Claus Lauritz Clausen, *Gjenmæle mod kirkeraadet for den Norske synode: i anledning af dets skrift kaldet "Historisk fremstilling af den strid som i aarene 1861 til 1868 inden for den Norske synode i Amerika har været ført i anledning af skriftens lære om slaveri*. (Chicago: F. Frantzen, 1869), 75-76. For a translation, see John R. Nielsen, trans., *Reply to the Church Council of the Norwegian Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1952).

(Oslo).[102] Both Clausen and Preus believed that Johnson was mostly on their side and returned to the United States more convinced of their positions than before. In 1868, the Norwegian Synod's pastoral council, led by Preus, drew up ten theses on slavery, reaffirming that the "forced servitude mentioned in the New Testament… is not in and by itself sinful" and that a slave "has no right to demand the abolition of his servitude and procure his own freedom."[103] Debate over this proposal became so heated that proslavery pastors barred Clausen from participating in their celebration of the Lord's Supper.[104] At the Norwegian Synod's convention in Chicago later that year, the church body adopted the ten theses on slavery. Clausen, along with several congregations, withdrew from the Norwegian Synod and joined the Scandinavian Augustana Synod, its less conservative rival.

Though the slavery issue never produced a similar level of strife in the Missouri Synod, Walther followed the events in the Norwegian Synod closely and corresponded with several of its pastors. In one such letter, Walther wrote that insisting that "American slavery… was not a sinful institution" was so vital because it counteracted what he saw as the modern American tendency to raise political and social liberty above the clear teachings of Scripture. It was the divine mission of Lutherans, he argued, "to be a

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[102] Preus's account is found in *Historisk Fremstilling af den Strid, som i aarene 1861 til 1868 indenfor den norske Synode i Amerika: der været ført i anledning af Skriftens Läre om Slaveri* (Madison, WI: B. W. Suckows Bogtrykkeri, 1868), 35. Clausen's account is found in *Gjenmæle mod kirkeraadet for den Norske synode*, 76-80. While abroad, Preus also argued his case in a lecture before the Norwegian Mission Society. See Herman Amberg Preus, *Vivacious Daughter: Seven Lecture on the Religious Situation among Norwegians in America*, ed. and trans. Todd W. Nichol (Northfield, MN: Norwegian-American Historical Association, 1990), 161-73. The lectures were originally published serially as "Syv Foredag over de kirkelige Forholde blandt de Norske i Amerika" in the Norwegian periodical *Luthersk Kirketidende*.

[103] The theses were printed in *Historisk Fremstilling*, 48; a translation can be found in Rohne, *Norwegian American Lutheranism*, 219.

[104] Clausen, *Gjenmæle mod kirkeraadet for den Norske synode*, 83.

threshing machine for America." He warned: "We dare not shirk this responsibility. America, drunk with freedom, needs people such as we are, lest unwarned it should go to destruction."[105] Over the course of the nineteenth century the disputes over the slavery would fade, but the underlying conservatism would persist.[106]

Though other Lutherans were not debating the morality of slavery after the Civil War, most did exhibit a general conservatism toward the issues of race and Reconstruction. As noted earlier in the chapter, as soon as the war concluded, Northern Lutherans prioritized reunion and reconciliation, both political and ecclesiastical. Even the Franckean Synod, the lone abolitionist voice in antebellum American Lutheranism, moderated their social activism and turned their focus toward temperance advocacy and mission work. In 1908, with membership declining and little difference between themselves and other Lutherans, they merged with two other synods to form the Synod of New York.[107] One of the few exceptions was John G. Butler (1826-1909). The pastor of a church in Washington, D.C., Butler prioritized the cause of abolition throughout the conflict, even at the cost of losing members. After the war, he declared that "the revolution must yet go on," and resolved to preach "a Gospel of justice and equity and

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[105] C. F. W. Walther to A. C. Preus, January 8, 1869, in in John E. Helmke, ed. and trans., "Was American Slavery a Sinful Institution?" *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 72 (Winter 1999): 247-48.

[106] Even in the early twentieth century, one Norwegian Synod writer still defended his church body's stand on the slavery question. See U. V. Koren, "Hvorfor er der ingen kirkelig Enighed mellem norske Lutheranere i Amerika? Svar til Hr. M. Ulvestad og til mange andre," in Koren, ed., *Samlede Skrifter*, 3: 463-465.

[107] N[icholas] Van Alstine, *Historical Review of the Franckean Evangelical Lutheran Synod of New York* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), 20-22; and Robert F. Scholz, *Press toward the Mark: History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, 1830-1930* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1995), 247-61.

righteousness between man and man."[108] In 1869, he was elected chaplain of the Radical Republican-dominated U.S. House of Representatives, serving until 1875. In 1873, he became a professor at Howard University, where he served throughout the rest of his life. Yet apart from Butler, the civil rights of freedpeople found few Lutheran advocates.

Additionally, Lutherans made little effort to reach out to blacks with the gospel. At the beginning of the Civil War, more than one thousand blacks, many of whom were slaves, were members of the churches in the Confederate States. After the war, the Lutheran churches in the South took two different approaches to retaining their black members. The South Carolina Synod sought to keep freedpeople under the auspices of white congregations; unsurprisingly, black membership dwindled to nothing. The Tennessee and North Carolina synods, conversely, encouraged separate black congregations and licensed at least six black preachers, yielding modest success. In 1889, Southern blacks formed their own church body, the Alpha Synod, with five congregations and 180 members.[109]

The Northern Lutherans of the General Synod and General Council mostly ignored the plight of African Americans. During the first years of Reconstruction, whites from various Protestant denominations traveled to the South under the auspices of the

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[108] J. Geo. Butler, *God's Work—Our Ebenezer: Eigtheenth Anniversary of the Pastorate of J. George Butler, of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Washington, D. C., July 7, 1867* (Washington, DC: McGill and Witherow, 1867), 13; and J. Geo. Butler, *Courageous Thankfulness: Twentieth Pastoral Anniversary, July 4, 1869, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Washington, D. C.* (Washington, DC: Judd and Detweiler, 1869), 9. No comprehensive biographical study of Butler exists. For basic information, see C. H. B., "Rev. John George Butler, Ph.D., D.D.," in J. C. Jensson, ed., *American Lutheran Biographies, or Historical Notices of Over Three Hundred and Fifty Leading Men of the American Lutheran Church, from its Establishment to the Year 1890* (Milwaukee, WI: A. Houtkamp and Son, 1890), 129-31; and History, Art, and Archives, United States House of Representatives, "Butler, John George: 1826-1909," http://history.house.gov/People/Detail/38354 (accessed May 21, 2108).

[109] See Jeff G. Johnson, *Black Christians: The Untold Lutheran Story* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1991), 126-29, 138-48.

American Missionary Association to provide education, humanitarian aid, and spiritual care to freedpeople.[110] Not only did General Synod and General Council Lutherans not participate in this or similar ventures in the South, but they also did little to minister to blacks in the North. One brief exception to this was the Maryland Synod (a member of the General Synod), which, at the urging of Butler, sponsored several black students to study theology at Howard University in the 1880s.[111] The most successful of those students was Daniel E. Wiseman (1858-1942), an immigrant from the Danish West Indies. After graduating from Howard in 1884, Wiseman founded Redeemer Lutheran Church in the nation's capital, and served there for nearly sixty years. Wiseman's black congregation, a full member of the Maryland Synod, was one of the rare instances of interracial partnership among Lutherans in the North.[112]

Surprisingly, given their continued insistence on the biblical permissibility of slavery, the most concerted effort by Lutherans to reach out to African Americans in the postbellum era came from those in the Synodical Conference. Unsurprisingly, their mission effort was often characterized by racial prejudice and paternalism. The Synodical Conference classified their program under "heathen missions," since, as one promoter reasoned, "their [Southern blacks'] so-called Christianity is in many ways no better than heathenism." Begun in July 1877, its organizers and first missionaries seemed to lack any

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[110] See Richardson, *Christian Reconstruction*; Blum, *Reforging the White Republic*, 51-86; and Stowell, *Rebuilding Zion*, 130-45.

[111] Abdel Ross Wentz, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1820-1920* (Harrisburg, PA: Evangelical Press, 1920), 125-26.

[112] On Wiseman, see Philip M. Teigen, "Rev. Daniel E. Wiseman (1858-1942): African-American Pastor to District of Columbia Lutherans," *Journal of the Lutheran Historical Conference* 5 (2015): 7-30. On Redeemer Lutheran Church, see Wentz, *History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland*, 312-14. For a few other short-lived black Lutheran churches in late nineteenth-century New York, see Scholz, *Press toward the Mark*, 214-18.

sense of the political situation in the South or cross-cultural awareness. Yet after a fitful start, by the end of the century, the church body's "Negro Mission" enjoyed modest success, largely thanks to the work of Nils J. Bakke (1853-1921). Convinced that "Negroes can… become upright, true Lutherans," Bakke helped to establish a church in New Orleans in the late 1880s. In 1891, Bakke moved to North Carolina to assist the fledgling Alpha Synod, which was soon absorbed into the Missouri Synod. By 1905, the Synodical Conference's "Negro Mission" comprised twenty-eight congregations, a college in New Orleans, and a seminary in Greensboro, North Carolina.[113] Yet apart from these few scattered congregations, African Americans were almost entirely absent from the exponential growth of Lutheranism during the four decades after the Civil War.

Lutherans' apathetic and often prejudicial attitudes toward the plight of blacks were unremarkable in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The vast majority of American Christians, including many who formerly fought for civil rights and racial equality, retreated from the initial radicalism of Reconstruction. Instead, many Protestants in the United States poured their energy into causes aimed at suppressing various forms of vice that they believed threatened the Victorian home, such as birth control, sexually explicit literature, and especially alcohol.[114] Lutherans, by contrast,

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[113] Quotations are from F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making: The Missionary Enterprise among Missouri Synod Lutherans, 1846-1963* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 141, 112. For statistics from Richard C. Dickinson, *Roses and Thorns: The Centennial Edition of Black Lutheran Mission and Ministry in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1977), 57. See also Johnson, *Black Christians*, 151-65.

[114] Nicola Kay Beisel, *Imperiled Innocents: Anthony Comstock and Family Reproduction in Victorian America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997); Alison M. Parker, *Purifying America: Women, Cultural Reform, and Pro-Censorship Activism, 1873-1933* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); Wayne E. Fuller, *Morality and the Mail in Nineteenth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 98-252; and Foster, *Moral Reconstruction*.

were becoming more and more reticent about political engagement and increasingly hostile toward evangelical reform efforts.

This wariness pervaded the Synodical Conference. Contrary to some portrayals, these Lutherans did endorse complete political quietism.[115] One Missouri Synod convention in 1870 declared that it was the role of the State to "foster religion in general" and "duty of each Christian in this country, who as a citizen of this country seeks the good of the state, to oppose… undermining tendencies" namely "atheism or papism."[116] Yet most Synodical Conference Lutherans considered many of the reforms pushed by Anglo-Protestants to be deeply flawed applications of religious belief to the realm of politics. This was especially the case in the postbellum push for temperance. A widely circulated tract called the temperance movement, especially its frequent condemnation of all drinking, the "outgrowth of wild fanaticism" and likened the abstinence pledge promoted by revivalist Francis Murphy to the selling of indulgences by John Tetzel.[117] Some Lutherans undoubtedly were motivated by their German heritage, which saw beer-drinking as an enjoyable component of their festival culture.[118] Yet their most basic criticism was that "we cannot legislate men to be good;" only the Gospel could combat

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[115] One historian of the Missouri Synod writes that by the end of the nineteenth century, "the Synod's leaders woodenly applied Martin Luther's doctrine of the Two Kingdoms in such a way that the church had nothing to say about secular affairs." Wayne W. Wilke, "Changing Understanding of the Church-State Relationship: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, 1914-1969" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1990), 3.

[116] Quoted in Suelflow, "The History of the Missouri Synod during the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence," 245-46.

[117] J. L. Trauger, *True Temperance in the Light of God's Word* (St. Louis: Publishing House of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, 1880), 4, 27. The tract went through five editions, including a publication by the Ohio Synod's Lutheran Book Concern.

[118] See, for example, Heike Bungert, "Demonstrating the Values of 'Gemüthlichkeit' and 'Cultur': The Festivals of German Americans in Milwaukee, 1870-1910," in Geneviève Fabre, Jürgen Heideking, and Kai Dreisbach, eds., *Celebrating Ethnicity and Nation: American Festive Culture from the Revolution to the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2001), 175-93.

the sin of drunkenness.[119] This view on the relationship between morality and politics characterized the approach of Lutherans in the Synodical Conference to those social concerns with which they were the most preoccupied, such as the dangers of "secret societies" and life insurance. Rather than campaigning for the government to stamp out those practices, they urged their church members to abstain from them voluntarily.[120]

The Lutheran opposition to postbellum political activism extended beyond the Synodical Conference. Before the Civil War, many of the Lutherans who would come to form the General Council, including William Passavant and Joseph Seiss, had supported many of the causes promoted by Anglo-evangelicals, especially temperance. During the war, their paper, the *Lutheran and Missionary*, had urged its readers to involve themselves in the Union cause. Yet already shortly after Appomattox, those Lutherans were becoming more circumspect in their approach to politics. In a December 1865 article, the *Lutheran and Missionary*, which during the war's first year had urged an uncompromising Christian patriotism, advised "ministers of Christ to be cautious… on questions on which men are politically very sensitive" and cautioned against being "so fiercely patriotic, so ferociously friendly to their country."[121] Throughout the era of Reconstruction, General Council Lutherans became increasingly disenchanted with what they saw as political corruption. Their leader, Charles Porterfield Krauth, considered

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[119] Trauger, *True Temperance in the Light of God's Word*, 31. See also W. Sihler, *Wider das Gewohnheits-Trinken: Epheser 5,18: Eine lutherische Lehr-, Straf- und Lockpredigt* (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1882).

[120] H. C. S[chwan], *Two Discourses against Secret Oathbound Societies or Lodges*, trans. J. H. (Columbus: Ohio Synodical Printing House, 1880). For context, see Suelflow, "The History of the Missouri Synod during the Second Twenty-Five Years of Its Existence," 224-44; and James W. Albers, "The History of Attitudes within the Missouri Synod toward Life Insurance" (Th.D., diss. Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, 1972).

[121] "Political Preaching," *Lutheran and Missionary*, December 14, 1865, 30.

postbellum politics to be "a wretched system of snares and falsehoods, of base aims concealed under specious words, of self-seeking in the guise of patriotism."[122] Another writer lamented that "we are tending to a heartless monied aristocracy on the one hand, and a lawless commune on the other."[123] Though Krauth and other leaders of the General Council continued to assert that preachers had a duty to speak about the "whole counsel of God," they increasingly withdrew from the public sphere, content to criticize other Americans' increasingly disordered conception of liberty.[124]

Even the Lutherans in the General Synod, who had enthusiastically endorsed evangelical reform efforts in the antebellum era, eventually became more circumspect about their church's political activism. During the first decades after the Civil War, many of its leaders continued to promote the cause of temperance, including using the power of the state to address the "most important social problem of the age."[125] However, mirroring its turn toward a higher view of its church's historical confessions, Lutherans in the General Synod became increasingly wary of overt involvement in politics, emphasizing a sharp distinction between the "spiritual kingdom" of the church and "the

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[122] Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, *Caesar and God; or, Politics and Religion. A Sermon* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Book Store, 1874), 14.

[123] A. J. Weddell, "The Lutheran Church and the New American Age," *Lutheran Church Review* 1 (October 1882): 252.

[124] Charles P[orterfield] Krauth, "The Sermon: Its Material and Its Text," *Lutheran Church Review* 1 (April 1882): 81. See also C. W. Schaeffer, "What Should Be the Attitude of the Lutheran Church to the So-Called Reforms of the Day," in W. M. Baum and J. A. Kunkelman, eds., *The Essays, Debates, and Proceedings: Second Free Lutheran Diet in America, Philadelphia, November 5-7, 1878* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Bookstore, 1879), 197-210.

[125] "Alcohol and the State," *Lutheran Quarterly* 8 (1878): 137. Throughout the tenure of Frederick Conrad as editor, the *Lutheran Observer* continued to promote temperance. See Deitz, "Eastern Lutheranism in American Society and American Christianity," 196.

affairs of worldly kingdoms or governments."[126] In a 1905 article, Samuel D. Schmucker (1844-1911), the youngest son of Samuel Simon Schmucker and a federal judge in Maryland, referenced the Augsburg Confession to argue that the civil government might incidentally reflect "the precepts of Christianity," but only "because their enforcement promotes the welfare of society."[127] By the early twentieth century, one General Synod Lutheran wrote that, even in the "great moral interest" of alcohol abuse, "it does not follow that the Church should directly promote any particular piece of temperance legislation." The church, he concluded, "loses the consciousness of what it is when it snatches the weapons of the State and tries to wield them instead of its own."[128] For all Lutherans, religion and politics were occupying increasingly separate spheres.

When combined with their increasingly conservative theological outlook, Lutherans' growing skepticism about Christian political participation produced a nearly wholesale rejection of the Social Gospel. As the nation rapidly industrialized following the Civil War, Christians from various traditions sought to apply the Bible's ethical teachings to the growing problems of economic inequality, poor working and living conditions, and tensions between capital and labor. Though never a unified movement, promoters of Social Christianity shared the belief that believers ought to seek to Christianize society by reforming the nation's political and economic structures.[129] Most

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[126] D. M. Gilbert, "The Relation of the Church to Questions of Governmental Policy," *Lutheran Quarterly* 19 (October 1889): 595.

[127] Samuel D. Schmucker, "The Relation of the Church to the State," *Lutheran Quarterly* 35 (October 1905): 514. On Schmucker, see Abdel Ross Wentz, *Pioneer in Christian Unity: Samuel Simon Schmucker* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967), 339.

[128] David H. Bauslin, "The Socialization of the Church," *Lutheran Quarterly* 44 (April 1914): 178.

[129] The literature on the Social Gospel is too vast to list comprehensively. More recent works which were helpful for this study include Susan Curtis, *A Consuming Faith: The Social Gospel and Modern American Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991); Heath Carter, *Union Made: Working*

American Lutherans regarded such a view of the church's mission as either misguided or outright heretical.

Lutherans of the Synodical Conference were particularly critical of the labor movement. A popular pamphlet by C. F. W. Walther in 1879 set the tone. Walther accused "Labor-Unions" of being "schools of communism and socialism" and using Christian-sounding rhetoric to mask an inherently anti-Christian agenda.[130] An 1886 article in the *Lutheraner* condemned Washington Gladden and members of other "sects" for "endorsing riots" and the "boycotting system."[131] Walther and others, however, did not consider themselves tools of capitalists. The Missouri Synod leader found the source of "the present great troubles which have come upon our laboring men" principally "in the self-interest, avarice and selfishness, in the cruelty and heartlessness, yea, to speak plainly, in the vampirism and tyrannical oppression on the part of the rich." Yet he believed that social change could only come when "the true Christian religion takes possession of the human heart."[132] During the final decades of the nineteenth century, the leaders of the Synodical Conference continued to warn against the dangers of labor

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People and the Rise of Social Christianity in Chicago (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); and Christopher H. Evans, *The Social Gospel in American Religion* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

[130] C. F. W. Walther, *Communism and Socialism: Minutes of the First German Evangelical Lutheran Congregation U. A. C. at St. Louis, Mo.*, trans. D. Simon (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1879), 6. That Walther's tract was translated in English demonstrates its widespread readership. For the original German edition, which went through a second edition eight years later, see Walther, *Communismus und Socialismus: Verhandlungen der ersten deutschen evang.-luth. gemeinde U. A. C. zu St. Louis, Mo.* (St. Louis: Druckerei der Synode von Missouri, Ohio, und anderen Staaten, 1878).

[131] G., "Zur Arbeiterfrage: Ein Gespräch," *Lutheraner*, April 15, 1886, 59.

[132] Walther, *Communism and Socialism*, 29, 74.

unions and other social movements, and argue that only the message of forgiveness could create improvements in society.[133]

Lutherans in the General Council and General Synod were also critical of labor activism and the Social Gospel. Though at times making gestures toward the plight of workers, the papers associated with each church body more often criticized unions, denounced strikes, and condemned socialism during the final decades of the nineteenth century.[134] Similarly, while not completely dismissive of the ideas put forth by proponents of Social Christianity, leaders in both Lutheran church bodies expressed skepticism on two fronts: not only were thinkers like Gladden and later Shailer Mathews and Walter Rauschenbusch far too optimistic about human nature, but they also elevated social reform above the church's chief work of preaching the gospel.[135] Typical was the assessment of Milton Valentine of the General Synod's seminary in Gettysburg. While "*social regeneration* is part of the supreme ethical intent of Christianity," he wrote, "all the enormous activity and colossal work of recent progress, have no healing for the evil" of the modern world. "Brotherhood" and "peace" can only come, Valentine believed, "by the old truths of a divine Saviour, through a vicarious atonement, justification by faith, and *regeneration* by the Holy Ghost."[136] Going hand in hand with American Lutheranism's increasing confessionalism in theology and separatism in church affairs was a widely shared conservatism in politics and society.

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[133] For a fuller treatment, see Milton Rudnik, "The Missouri Synod's Stand on the Labor Question 1879-1901," *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 45 (May 1972): 89-105.

[134] Deitz, "Eastern Lutheranism in American Society and American Christianity," 194-201.

[135] See Harold Herbert Lentz, "History of the Social Gospel in the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, 1867-1918" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1943), 99-186.

[136] M. Valentine, "The Ethical Aim of Christianity," *Lutheran Quarterly* 22 (October 1892): 532-33.

Conclusion

Once aspiring members of the American Protestant establishment, during the era of Reconstruction Lutherans became, as Henry Carroll rightly observed, self-made outsiders in the nation's religious life. At the forefront of this change had been leaders like Charles Porterfield Krauth, whom Carroll considered "the ablest Lutheran writer in the United States," and C. F. W. Walther, whom he described as the "venerable dictator of the Missourian Synod."[137] Yet Krauth's able pen and Walther's dictatorial prowess could not succeed unless other Lutherans—both native-born and immigrant—assented to their teachings. In the marketplace of American religion, numerous laypeople exercised their agency, aligning their religious adherence and membership with churches which, though divided institutionally, increasingly shared a common ethos of theological confessionalism, ecclesiastical separatism, and political and social conservatism.

Yet if Carroll's summary of Lutherans' status as American religious outsiders was largely correct, his prediction of their future was mostly wrong. He believed that "the policy of isolation must, sooner or later, break down utterly." As more and more Lutherans "come in contact with American ideas and institutions," he argued, "the type of Lutheranism represented by the Missourians will… be obliterated."[138] Krauth and Walther died in 1883 and 1887, respectively, and other intellectual leaders took their place, but the conservative confessionalism of Lutheranism in the United States continued unabated. Though they were outsiders in the nation's religious life, Lutherans

[137] Carroll, "American Lutherans and Their Divisions," 438, 446.

[138] Ibid., 449.

were at home in the nation's culture and confident that their "type of Lutheranism" exemplified "American ideas and institutions."

CHAPTER SEVEN

Epilogue: The Paradoxes of American Lutheranism

Lutheranism in the United States approached the twentieth century beset by a variety of paradoxes. By 1900, American Lutherans exhibited more unity in how they viewed their church's historic confessions than at any time in their history, but were divided into twenty autonomous church bodies. Most believed that their denomination represented the true church of Christ, but they could not agree on the precise formulations of Lutheran theology. The most noticeable paradox centered on the church's size and influence. In 1830, American Lutheranism encompassed three seminaries, one periodical, and less than 50,000 communicant members. By 1900, the church operated 142 academies, colleges, and seminaries, ran 91 orphans homes, hospitals, and homes for the aged, published 159 journals, magazines, and newspapers, and numbered more than 1,600,000 members.[1] Yet the aspiration of antebellum New Lutherans to form a united denomination and become a vital part of the American evangelical establishment had foundered. Despite tremendous growth in people and institutions, they were intellectually and organizationally isolated from mainstream Protestants and had little political power or social prestige.[2] At the end of the nineteenth century, Lutherans stood as conservative outsiders in American culture.

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[1] "Statistics of the Lutheran Church for 1830," *Lutheran Observer*, September 1, 1831, 44; and Grace E. Sheeleigh, ed., *The Lutheran Almanac and Year-Book for the Year of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ 1901* (Baltimore: T. Newton Kurtz, 1901), 26-30, 84-85.

[2] In response to the assertion Henry Carroll's article that Lutherans "have not impressed their importance upon the people of our country" (see Chapter Six), one General Council Lutheran accepted

One Lutheran who lamented the conservative transformation of his church in the decades after the Civil War was John Stuckenberg.[3] After emigrating from Westphalia at the age of four with his family in 1839, Stuckenberg grew up in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio. Educated at the General Synod's Wittenberg College in Ohio under Samuel Sprecher, Stuckenberg became an ardent disciple of New Lutheranism. After briefly pastoring a congregation in Iowa, he moved to Germany for two years to study at the University of Halle. When he came back from Europe in 1861, he served a church in Pennsylvania for five years, save for a brief stint as a chaplain in the Union Army. Following the war, he went back to Germany to continue his studies, spending time at Göttingen, Berlin, and Tübingen. Upon his return to the United States, he served pastorates in Pennsylvania and Indiana, and eventually returned to his alma mater in 1873 to serve as a professor of theology.

Throughout the postbellum era, Stuckenberg stood in stark opposition to the conservative trends in American Lutheranism and sought to preserve the New Lutheran vision of a church that was ecumenically proactive, politically engaged, and culturally consequential. Of particular importance to Stuckenberg was working with other denominations in the realm of social reform. In 1880 he published *Christian Sociology*, a work which anticipated many of the arguments of the Social Gospel. His wife, Mary Gingrich Stuckenberg (1849-1934), was an active reformer in her own right, heavily involved with the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). Yet for Stuckenberg,

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Carroll's premise and asked: "[D]oes it not produce in our hearts a reluctant sigh far more than an angry denial?" M[atthias] H. Richards, "Notes and Notices," *Lutheran Church Review* 1 (October 1882): 304.

[3] For biographical information on Stuckenberg, see John O. Evjen, *The Life of J. H. W. Stuckenberg: Theologian, Philosopher, Sociologist, Friend of Humanity* (Minneapolis: Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company, 1938).

his career was a lonely endeavor. Near the end of his life, he wrote to a friend, lamenting his church's growing conservatism and isolationism: "I cherish no delusions respecting my position…. I am trying to promote the Christian social movement in the spirit of Christ, according to the teachings of the New Testament, and I am told that I am not doing the work of the Church…. Other denominations open their churches and institutions and heartily welcome me…. But my own Church is closed to me because I am not doing its work!"[4]

Because of his disagreements with the trajectory of Lutheranism in the United States, Stuckenberg turned instead to Europe. In 1880, he and Mary moved to Berlin. The Stuckenbergs remained in Germany for fourteen years, with John serving as the chaplain of the city's chapel for American expats and visitors, and Mary leading a European affiliate of the WCTU. During his time abroad, Stuckenberg discovered that, in his words, the "narrow, exclusive, and bigoted confessionalism" of the Missouri Synod and the General Council "is regarded in Germany as an Americanism." Even conservative Lutherans in Europe, he realized, had a much more broad-minded approach to the subjects of confessional subscription and church unity than what prevailed in the United States. In order to prevent his fellow General Synod Lutherans from falling into the error of the "American Missourians," he published several tracts, seeking to convince his readers that the "deep, broad, historic Lutheranism of Germany" is where "the hope of

[4] Stuckenberg to A. H. F. Fischer, September 2, 1902, quoted in Evjen, *Life of J. H. W. Stuckenberg*, 456.

our Church in America" lies.[5] For the most part, Stuckenberg's admonitions went unheeded.

Besides being an important dissenting voice in American Lutheranism's turn toward conservative confessionalism, Stuckenberg revealed another important aspect of the paradoxical nature of Lutheran identity in the postbellum United States. At the end of the nineteenth century, the only American Lutherans who maintained any serious connection to European theology were those, like Stuckenberg, who wrote primarily in English and whom historians have designated as the Americanizers.[6] By contrast, the churches which were home to the majority of Lutheran immigrants and which historians have labeled as "European Lutheran" were harshly critical of most theology in Europe and embraced the conservative outlook that was distinctive to Lutheranism in the United States.[7] C. F. W. Walther personified this paradox in an 1877 sermon. The German-born, German-speaking leader of the Missouri Synod told his hearers: "In the Old World, my brothers, it is evident that… the sun of the pure Gospel is setting…. [O]ur young American Lutheran Church... is called to salvage and rescue the pure Gospel here in the

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[5] J. H. W. Stuckenberg, *Orthodox Lutheranism in Germany and the Confessional Position of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States: Testimony of Leaders; an End of Controversy* (Dayton, OH: Lutheran Evangelist, 1892), 13-14, 25. See also J. H. W. Stuckenberg, *Greetings from the Fatherland* (Dayton, OH: Lutheran Evangelist, 1892), esp. 3-5.

[6] The influence of European thought on postbellum "American Lutherans" can be seen in Stuckenberg's mentor, Samuel Sprecher, particularly in his study of the German mediating theologian, Isaak A. Dorner. Sprecher translated, but never published portions of Dorner's *History of Protestant Theology*. See Folder CB4.1, Samuel Sprecher Papers, Wittenberg University, Archives and Special Collections, Thomas Library, Springfield, Ohio. The influence of Dorner and other German theologians on Sprecher is also evident in the copious references to them in his theological textbook: Samuel Sprecher, *The Groundwork of a System of Evangelical Lutheran Theology* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1879).

[7] As R. Laurence Moore has shown, a similar phenomenon was found among Roman Catholics in the late nineteenth century. Moore, *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 48-71.

New World in these last times."[8] For Walther and others like him, the future of Lutheranism lay in America.

That understanding of the providential role of the United States in Lutheranism's historical development received its fullest expression on the occasion of the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. In September, the city's Missouri Synod congregations rented the newly constructed Art Institute and offered a series of lectures on the place of Lutheranism in American history and life. [9] "[O]ne hundred years ago… there was not one really consistent Lutheran preacher on this side of the Atlantic," claimed August Graebner (1849-1904) of the synod's seminary in St. Louis, "but a change for the better has come." Graebner asserted that "to-day, [the Missouri Synod] is by far the greatest Lutheran synod not only in America, but on the face of the earth," and has "exerted a powerful influence throughout this our Columbian continent." He credited his synod's success to its principles of congregational autonomy and strict confessional boundaries. "[T]his precious, pure and sincere and unadulterated scripture doctrine," Graebner concluded, is "the greatest of the manifold blessings this nation can exhibit to the nations of the globe."[10]

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[8] *Denkmal der dritten Jubelfeier der Concordienformel im Jahre des Heils 1877* (St. Louis: M. C. Barthel, 1877), 233. For a translation, see Matthew C. Harrison, trans., "Sermon by C. F. W. Walther for the Celebration of the 300th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord: May 29, 1877," in Harrison, ed., *At Home in the House of My Fathers: Presidential Sermons, Essays, Letters, and Addresses from the Missouri Synod's Great Era of Unity and Growth* (Fort Wayne, IA: Lutheran Legacy, 2009), 222-23.

[9] F. P. Merbitz, "Vorwort," in *Reden, gehalten einer Versammlung der mit der Missouri-Synode verbundenen lutherischen Gemeinden Chicagos im Art Insttitute am 3. September 1893* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1893), iii-iv.

[10] A. Graebner, "Epochs of Lutheranism in America," in *Reden, gehalten einer Versammlung der mit der Missouri-Synode verbundenen lutherischen Gemeinden Chicagos*, 23, 25, 28. On Graebner, see L. DeAne Lagerquist, *The Lutherans* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1999), 183-84.

Some lecturers took that view of American Lutheran exceptionalism one step further: not only was the purest form of Lutheranism located in the United States, but true Americanism was found in the Lutheran church. August Crull (1845-1923), a professor at the synod's Concordia College in Fort Wayne, Indiana, argued that his church epitomized the American principle of ordered liberty. "[O]ur Lutheran Church of America is a *free* Church," Crull boasted. "[F]or no congregational or synodical resolutions have any binding force…, unless they are based on the authority of the Word of God." Lutheran freedom, he explained, is "not the freedom desired by religious anarchists, or revolutionists, or separatists," but "the precious liberty of serving our God according to the dictates of our own conscience" and being "permitted to teach and believe, to preach and practice, what we consider to be divine truth." Because of this, Crull proclaimed: "[Our] Church is a perfectly free Church in a free State."[11]

Such views persisted into the early twentieth century. Friedrich Bente (1858-1930) of the Missouri Synod's flagship seminary wrote in 1902 that, "if Luther were to appear in St. Louis, he could cheerfully and without violating his conscience become an American citizen" and "swear to uphold the American liberties without surrendering one jot and tittle of his Lutheranism." Similarly, Bente argued that, if an American converts to Lutheranism, "he is not required to sacrifice one particle of his Americanism," because "consistent Lutheranism and consistent Americanism are never and nowhere at variance."[12] In his posthumously published autobiography, Otto Hanser (1832-1910),

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[11] A. Crull, "A Free Church in a Free State," in *Reden, gehalten einer Versammlung der mit der Missouri-Synode verbundenen lutherischen Gemeinden Chicagos*, 49, 53-54, 57. For background information on Crull as well as a copy of these lectures, see August Crull Papers, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

[12] [G.] F[riedrich] Bente, "Lutherthum und Americanerthum," *Lehre und Wehre* 48 (November 1902): 324. For a translation, see "Lutheranism and Americanism," *Theological Quarterly* 8 (January

another leader of the Missouri Synod in the late nineteenth century, proclaimed: "[R]eligious liberty in our great republic has given our dear Lutheran church the opportunity to blossom and prosper as never before in the history of the church. We may say without boast or exaggeration that… in the synods connected with the Synodical Conference in the United States the evangelical Lutheran church has appeared for the first time, not only with regard to purity in doctrine—this already existed in Luther's time…—but also now with regard to its outward organization."[13] In the American republic, according to Hanser, Lutheranism had reached its fullest potential.

While insisting on their quintessential Americanness, they also drew a sharp contrast between themselves and other Christians in the United States. Francis Pieper (1852-1931), who succeeded Walther as the Missouri Synod's leading theologian, maintained his predecessor's insistence that the Lutheran church "is the true visible church of God on earth." In an 1891 lecture, Pieper insisted that "all present-day assemblies called churches can be divided into three categories": those which "have totally forsaken" the Bible, those which "rest only in part on [its] foundation," and lastly those "which stand completely on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." In "the first category," he consigned "the Unitarians and Universalists, among others," and in "the second category," he placed "the papal sect and the numerous Reformed sects: the Episcopalians, Baptists, Methodists, and so forth." However, "the third category is

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1904): 55-63. On Bente, see Josephine Haserot Bente, *Biography of Dr. Friedrich Bente* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936).

[13] Carl Johann Otto Hanser, *Irrfahrten und Heimfahrten: Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Buffalo, NY: Lutheran Publishing Company, 1910), 260-61. For background on Hanser, including a rough translation of his autobiography, see Hanser Family Collection, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

represented solely by one," Pieper declared, "the Church of the Reformation, the Evangelical Lutheran Church."[14]

Lutherans in the postbellum United States asserted their superiority over other Christians not only in matters of theological rectitude, but also in their fitness as republican citizens. At the 1893 lectures in Chicago, Pastor Henry Sauer (1845-1896) declared that "our American people, the freest people of the world, owe their freedom to the best part of the Reformation," namely Luther and Lutheranism. On this ground, Sauer defended the Missouri Synod's parochial school system, as "offering up the best gift that we have for the promotion of [the nation's] welfare" and preparing Lutheran children to be "the best citizens."[15] In his 1902 article, Bente argued that all other versions of Christianity were defective in their compatibility with American liberty: "As popery is the opposite of Americanism, because it breeds a priest-ridden people of bondsmen, so also in Calvinism, Zwinglianism, Episcopalism, and Presbyterianism there are elements which, if consistently carried out, are destructive of the very essence of American liberty." He alleged that "all these denominations teach and confess in their creeds that it is the sacred duty of the State to provide for the establishment of the right religion and for rooting out heresy." By contrast, Bente claimed, "Lutheranism and Americanism dwell in perfect harmony," because "Luther stands alone and without a parallel as the prophet" of

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[14] F. Pieper, *Vorträge über die Evangelisch Lutherische Kirche die Wahre Sichtbare Kirche Gottes auf Erden* (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary Press, 1916), 5, 20-21. For the dating of these lectures and a translation of them, see Francis Pieper, *The Church and Her Treasure: Lectures on Justification and the True Visible Church*, trans. O. Marc Tangner (St. Louis: Luther Academy, 2007), xxiii, and 99-278. On Pieper, see David P. Scaer, "Francis Pieper (1852-1931)," in Mark C. Mattes, *Twentieth-Century Lutheran Theologians* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 17-36.

[15] H. Sauer, "Wir lieben unser Land und auch aus diesem Grunde lieben wir unsere Gemeindeschulen," in *Reden, gehalten einer Versammlung der mit der Missouri-Synode verbundenen lutherischen Gemeinden Chicagos*, 30, 35. On Sauer, see Mildred L. Burger, *A Short History of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in Fort Wayne, Indiana* (Fort Wayne, IN: Fort Wayne Public Library, 1967), 9-10.

"complete separation of Church and State." By preaching "true Lutheranism," he concluded, "we at the same time establish and strengthen what is great in Americanism—personal, political, national, and religious liberty."[16] Here then was yet another paradox: despite being isolated from the mainstream of the nation's religion, politics, and culture, many Lutherans insisted that they exemplified American ideals.

Over the first decades of the twentieth century, this identity was subject to challenges and modifications. The First World War stirred up anti-German sentiments among old-stock Americans and strained many Lutherans' sense of patriotism and their conception of their nation's exceptionalism.[17] The subsequent immigration restrictions that followed the war reduced the number of newly arriving Lutherans from German and Nordic nations, making the church an increasingly English-speaking one. Finally, though Lutherans did not participate in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy, they were slowly drawn into debates over biblical inerrancy and evolutionary theory. While many Lutherans embraced views that mirrored those held by fundamentalists, a few others, particularly in the newly established United Lutheran Church in America (a unification of the General Synod, General Council, and General Synod, South in 1918) slowly accepted ideas that resembled those of mainstream, liberal Protestants.[18] Amidst these changes, Lutheranism continued to grow at a faster rate than almost any other American

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[16] Bente, "Lutherthum und Americanerthum," 324, 326-27.

[17] The most complete account of German Americans and World War I remains Frederick C. Luebke, *Bonds of Loyalty: German-Americans and World War I* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1974). For a useful account of the Missouri Synod during the war, see Benjamin James Wetzel, "American Crusade: Lyman Abbott and the Christian Nation at War, 1861-1918" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2016), 275-314.

[18] See Milton L. Rudnick, *Fundamentalism and the Missouri Synod: A Historical Study of their Interaction and Mutual Influence* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966); and James Kenneth Echols, "Charles Michael Jacobs, the Scriptures, and the Word of God: One Man's Struggle against Biblical Fundamentalism among American Lutherans" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1989).

denomination. At the end of World War I, the various Lutheran churches in the United States numbered less than 2,500,000 members. By 1958, that figure had more than tripled.[19]

That same year, Lutherans found their church on the cover of *Time Magazine*. The article highlighted the centrality of their church's teachings on the sacraments and subscription to the Augsburg Confession of 1530 and the Book of Concord. The journalist also documented how Lutherans' "exclusive attitude put [them] in a special position among U.S. Protestants." They were hardly touched by "revivalism" or "theological liberalism," but also "snug, smug and embattled in their mighty fortresses called synods," looking down "not only on their fellow Christians but on fellow Lutherans as well." Though the circumstances were different, Lutheranism's place in mid-twentieth century American culture would have rung quite familiar to those involved in the controversies and debates in the century before.[20]

The *Time* article also reported that "a new tendency" was sweeping the church: it was "emerging from isolation," and seeking "denominational unity and inter-denominational understanding."[21] This movement would culminate in the formation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) in 1988. The new church body

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[19] By contrast, during the same time period Methodists, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians did not even double their membership. Roman Catholics, Baptists, and Episcopalians increased their membership at a slightly lower rate than Lutherans. Of the major Christian traditions in the United States, only Eastern Orthodoxy grew at a higher rate in the four decades after World War I than Lutheranism. See Edwin Scott Gaustad and Philip L. Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 80, 98, 100, 137, 157, 180, 226. For Lutheran statistics, see W. M. Kopenhaver, ed., *Lutheran Church Year Book for 1922* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1922), 45; and E. Clifford Nelson, *Lutheranism in North America, 1914-1970* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1972), 135.

[20] "The New Lutheran," *Time Magazine*, April 7, 1958, http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,863259-1,00.html (accessed April 15, 2018).

[21] Ibid.

brought together nearly two thirds of all American Lutherans, the highest percentage since the Civil War. The ELCA was founded with "high expectations": it would be an active participant in mainline Protestantism, yet true to its theological heritage.[22] Though the Missouri Synod, as well as a few numerically smaller church bodies, continued to stand apart from their fellow Lutherans and other Christians, for many others, the ELCA represented the long-awaited culmination of the nineteenth-century vision of Schmucker and antebellum New Lutherans.

Rather than taking its place as a major player in the nation's religious culture, during the last six decades American Lutheranism has experienced fractiousness and declining membership. Though begun with grand hopes for intra-Lutheran unity, the ELCA was plagued throughout its first two decades by internal divisions, culminating in the breakaway of the North American Lutheran Church in 2010 over questions of sexual ethics, "the largest schism since the General Council was formed in 1867."[23] The Missouri Synod and similarly conservative church bodies underwent their own upheavls in the 1960s and 1970s over the incursions of liberal theology and continue to be divided over to what extent they should embrace facets of modern American evangelicalism.[24] Meanwhile, the number of Lutherans in the United States has plummeted. After reaching 9,000,000 members in the 1960s, the size of the church has declined precipitously; today

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[22] Edgar R. Trexler, *High Expectations: Understanding the ELCA's Early Years, 1988-2002* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2003).

[23] Mark Granquist, *Lutherans in America: A New History* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2015), 325.

[24] On the schisms in the 1960s and 1970s, see Mark E. Braun, *A Tale of Two Synods: Events That Led to the Split between Wisconsin and Missouri* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 2003); James C. Burkee, *Power Politics and the Missouri Synod: A Conflict that Changed American Christianity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011). On present-day divisions within the Missouri Synod, see Paul Robert Sauer, "A Field Guide to the Missouri Synod," *Lutheran Forum* 42 (Summer 2008): 6-8.

the total stands at just over 6,000,000. (In the same period, Baptists have doubled in membership.)[25]

In two articles presented for Lutheran audiences, historian Mark Noll analyzed "the second coming of American Lutheranism," when "Lutherans began to engage the larger American culture in the second half of the twentieth century." In Noll's estimation, "Lutherans turned aside from Samuel Schmucker's American modifications in the nineteenth century only to yield to Americanizing pressures in the twentieth century—for the ELCA, becoming less and less distinguishable from older mainline Protestant denominations, and for the [Missouri Synod], taking on the colors of American fundamentalism."[26] Despite their best efforts to the contrary, Lutherans in the United States continue to be, in his trenchant observation, "remarkably unremarkable," and "the decisions that faced the generation of Schmucker, Krauth, and Walther, are… still confronting Lutherans at the start of the twenty-first century."[27] In order to make an impact on the nation's religious life, he argues, today's Lutherans must finally "find out how to speak Lutheranism with an American accent."[28]

Noll's diagnosis of the contemporary Lutheran situation is largely accurate and has been echoed by some of the church's internal critics.[29] Yet his prescription rests on a

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[25] Gaustad and Barlow, *New Historical Atlas of Religion in America*, 107, 80; and Pew Research Center, Religion and Public Life," available at http://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/ (accessed 6/22/18).

[26] Mark A. Noll, "The Lutheran Difference," *First Things*, no. 20 (February 1992): 36; and Mark A. Noll, "American Lutherans Yesterday and Today," in Richard Cimino, ed., *Lutherans Today: American Lutheran Identity in the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2003), 15.

[27] Noll, "Lutheran Difference," 37; and Noll, "American Lutherans Yesterday and Today," 16.

[28] Noll, "Lutheran Difference," 31.

[29] See, for example, Peter L. Berger, "On Lutheran Identity in America," *Lutheran Quarterly* 20 (Autumn 2006): 337-347; Carl E. Braaten, "An Open Letter—to Bishop Mark Hansen,"

flawed understanding of the defining decades of American Lutheranism during the Civil War era. What Noll and many other scholars have overlooked is that nineteenth-century Lutherans *did* become Americans. They forged their own distinctive form of the faith in the context of the nation's culture. The resulting confessional conservatism isolated Lutherans from mainstream Protestants, but the church experienced nearly a century of growth that outpaced other denominations.

The final paradox of American Lutheranism then may be this: Lutherans are at their most valuable when they distance themselves from the religious mainstream, at their most persuasive when they avoid the lure of respectability and influence, and at their strongest when they are weakest in the eyes of those who occupy the commanding heights of power.

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https://wordalone.org/docs/wa-braaten.shtml (accessed 6/21/2018); and Marie Meyer, "Is There a Lutheran Difference?" http://thedaystarjournal.com/is-there-a-lutheran-difference/ (accessed 6/21/2018).

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