

Pastor Christoph Eberhardt
and
the Birth
of
the Michigan Spirit

for
Prof. E. C. Fredrich
Senior Church History

Marcus P. Manthey
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District loyalty is an affliction that is hardly peculiar to Michigan. I have no doubt that in every district and conference across the Synod there is at least a small faction that is unshakably convinced that their particular baliwick is the Lord's unique gift to the Wisconsin Synod and the church at large. Perhaps some of these people are right. Perhaps they all are right, for different reasons. The legitimacy of their opinion is really unimportant. The significant fact is that such a spirit does exist for one reason or another, and its existence can only effect and reflect the workings of each individual area.

There aren't many districts that I know of, however, that have been bold enough (or vain enough) to actually articulate and acknowledge on an official level the existence of such a spirit. No doubt this is because in most areas the spirit lies buried deep within the body.

But many things are much closer to the skin in Michigan. And the so-called "Michigan Spirit" has there grown into a legend (of sorts) in its own time.

It would be an almost endless task to try to list all those who have contributed to the nurture and up-bringing of this spirit. However, it may be worth while to look to the words of one who undoubtedly has been a very large contributor. In his chronicle of the history of the Michigan District, Pastor Karl F. Krauss has written of the "unique character" of that

Michigan body which, he says, has always been referred to as the "Michigan Spirit." He continues:

It (ie. the Michigan Spirit) is not easy to define; it is something that needs to be experienced; it is a 'flesh and blood' thing. We are part of it and it is part of us. It was stamped indelibly upon our life and being. As I see it, the Michigan Spirit was characterized by an almost fierce loyalty, a burning zeal and a congenial comraderie. This spirit may be traced back to (Pastor Christoph) Eberhardt. ¹

Clearly, when it comes to the Michigan Spirit, Pastor Krauss is a firm believer.

Attempting to grab hold of and define something that has been described no more substantially than as a "spirit" could be an elusive and, probably, frustrating problem. But one way to overcome that problem may be to seek out that spirit at its source. According to Pastor Krauss, that source is Christoph Eberhardt, one of the founding fathers of the old Michigan Synod. In taking a brief look at what Pastor Eberhardt contributed to the birth of the Lutheran church in Michigan perhaps we can also determine what he did to give birth to the Michigan Spirit.

In his writings Pastor Krauss mentioned three key characteristics of the Michigan Spirit -- loyalty, zeal and comraderie. To this list I'd like to add two more of my own -- confessionalism and foresight. On the basis of these five factors we will consider the life and ministry of Christoph Eberhardt and see how, through him, a seed was planted that grew into a vine that has woven its way through 118 years of Michigan Lutheran church history.

The earliest days of Lutheranism in Michigan reflect a condition that has been common to much of the history of God's church. That is, the harvest truly was great but the laborers were few. One name that looms large in the history of those early days is that of Pastor Friedrich Schmid, one of the first to bring the Lutheran ministry to Midwestern America. From his regular correspondence with his "alma mater," the Baseler Missions Anstalt in Switzerland, we glean much of our knowledge of the conditions then present in the Michigan church.

For example, in his letter of July, 1859, we find this plea for workers:

Wouldn't you please send us a brother; have you no retired one, or one who has not yet been examined or ordained, who could preach for a time while studying further under my direction and could be ordained here later? I could administer the Holy Sacraments for a while longer in the congregation. But it must be a Wuertemberger, and, if possible, Lutheran-minded, but not stiff, much like the actual Wuertembergers are. The congregation is Lutheran mixed with Reformed. It would please us greatly if the worthy Mission Committee could help us. ..²

The scarcity of pastors indeed made for an unfortunate situation, one that, as the above shows, often led to a sacrifice of sound fellowship practices. But sadly, the cry for missionaries was great everywhere; so, though help was promised, none was immediately forthcoming.

In Schmid's letter of the following year we read:

Since you promised in your last letter to send me help on or before this coming fall, I would like to request that you send me a brother no later than this fall, if possible, inasmuch as it was decided at our conference to send out a travelling pastor, which is very necessary. ³

(14)

At last, in his brief of April, 1861, we hear Schmid express this grateful word: "In the meantime, I thank you heartily for sending us the dear brothers, Eberhardt and Klingman."⁴

True to Schmid's wishes, Eberhardt was a Lutheran and a Wuertemberger at that. Born on January 3, 1831, he was a native of Laufen-on-the-Neckar in southeastern Germany. We are told that, in his early years, he was quite unsure about which direction his spiritual life would take him. Of himself he said: "I stood at a crossroads, struggling over whether I should choose the friendship of the world or that of the children of God."⁵

Happily, by God's grace he was led to a desire to enter the work of preaching the Gospel. At age 25 he entered the Mission Institute at Basel to carry out his studies for the ministry.

It might be worthwhile to note the importance of this theological school for the history of the church in Michigan. Although it was not a Lutheran institution but was rather in the service of the United Church⁶, yet through its strong mission outreach it supplied a large percentage of the pastors in Michigan and surrounding areas. "In the century beginning with Schmid's arrival in America (1833 &f) 288 Basel missionaries came to the U.S. The Evangelical Synod was served by 158 of these missionaries."⁷ The influence of this body of pastors unfortunately often reflected training that was less than fully orthodox.

But the quality of these two Baseler candidates to be sent to America at Schmid's request no one can discredit. Quite literally, they were an answer to Schmid's prayers.

They left Bremen on September 1, 1860, and arrived in Ann Arbor, Michigan, at the home of Pfarrer Schmid, September 27. Two vacancies were to be filled, one in Adrian, the other in Allegan County. To settle the question which one was to go to which place, Eberhardt said to Klingmann, "I am strong and healthy and more able to withstand the rigors of itinerant mission work than you are; I will go to Allegan County and you shall go to Adrian." Thus it was done.

While both the candidates were faithful, dedicated workers, it is Eberhardt who is repeatedly given the greater mention by Schmid in his letters, in words of praise. In 1861, for example, he wrote of his new itinerant missionary: "Eberhardt is our travelling pastor and he is well suited for this, and self-sacrificing, walks hundreds of miles on foot and looks up these small groups of forsaken and scattered sheep. The Lord has granted him courage and sound health." 9

One of the principle things that set Eberhardt apart and made him worthy of such praise was doubtlessly his unquenchable zeal. He took to his new and strenuous assignment with apparent relish.

The new synod correctly recognized as its chief purpose, home mission work, which was actually "Sammelarbeit," consisting in gathering and serving scattered Lutherans and organizing them in congregations. Pastor Eberhardt was chosen as the itinerant missionary -- a most fortunate choice! 10

Eberhardt was the first such "Reise Prediger" in the Michigan church. The job closely resembled that of the Metho-

dist circuit rider except that most of the travelling was done on foot. Beginning his work in October of 1860, Eberhardt set up his temporary residence in the town of Hopkins in Allegan County. From there he was very effective in branching out his work into surrounding areas.

Within two months he had 16 preaching stations which he served in Van Buren, Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Shiawassee and Clinton counties. He made it a point to preach at each of these stations once every three weeks which required him to travel a 360 mile circuit; quite a few of these trips were made afoot. ¹¹

"Altogether he served some 150 families with the means of grace, covering his whole territory regularly and conducting instructions toward confirmation at four stations." ¹²

It must be recorded with regret that, of the 16 preaching stations established by Pastor Eberhardt, only two -- at Allegan ¹³ and at Hopkins ¹⁴ -- have remained with the Synod. This, however, can not be charged to the work of Pastor Eberhardt but is simply the consequence of the lack of qualified workers to follow up and continue the ministry begun in these areas.

Before Eberhardt ever arrived, Michigan already had a reputation as a mission-minded body. In fact, "it was called the "Mission Synod" because Schmid and his congregations had in mind to do mission work among the Michigan indians." ¹⁵ Eberhardt fit very well into this atmosphere.

His zeal for the mission of spreading the Gospel even compelled him to journey outside his regular circuit to study the needs of Christians in northern Michigan. In his June, 1861,

report to the Basel Inspector, Pfarrer Schmid wrote: "We have asked brother Eberhardt to journey there (ie. to "a place near Lake Superior, Michigan...") and visit the people, from which you can learn the circumstances." ¹⁶ Alone and unaided, funded largely out of his own pocket, Eberhardt went about his trip into the Upper Peninsula mining regions. "His report on this trip was an appeal to the Synod to begin work in the Lake Superior region, where there were many hungry souls and not a single Protestant pastor." ¹⁷ Regrettfully, due to lack of funds and manpower, the hopes of that appeal were never realized.

The strains of this journey took their toll on Eberhardt's strength and health. "On his return from the northern trip he became very ill and was unable to do his work for a protracted period." ¹⁸ In January, 1867, Schmid reported to Basel:

That our travelling pastor, the dear brother Eberhardt, has been ill for some time and still has not fully recovered, you no doubt know. He is at present in Saginaw City, his travels having been suspended, at least for this winter. ...Therefore, it is very necessary that we receive help soon. ¹⁹

And in October of the same year: "Brother Eberhardt has given up the work as travelling pastor and has accepted a congregation to which he desires to devote all of his time and strength." ²⁰

The congregation to which Eberhardt was called following his recovery was St. Paul's in Saginaw. He was the first full time pastor to serve the congregation and he remained there for 32 years, from 1861 to his death in 1893. ²¹ But even his past

illness and the duties and responsibilities of a full-time pastorate did not serve to dilute the zeal for spreading God's Word with which Pastor Eberhardt attacked his work. "Besides the work in the congregation, he continues his mission activities in Mittelfranken, Frankentrost, St. Charles, and Chesaning. He also founded the congregation in West Bay City."²² (and ²³) Pastor Krauss's research also reveals that Eberhardt served as pastor for congregations in Dorr ²⁴, in Custer ²⁵, and in East Bay City ²⁶ during the years of his ministry in Saginaw.

In addition to this pastoral work Pastor Eberhardt found time to become integrally involved in the administrative workings of the young Michigan Synod which he started along with Schmid, Klingmann, and several others. "Eberhardt served the synod which he helped to found as secretary, president, vice-president and trustee."²⁷

Here, indisputably, was a man of seemingly unlimited energy, a compelling love for the gospel and an unswerving dedication to its ministry. It is easy to understand how such a man could become an example and an inspiration to his contemporaries and to his confessional descendants in the Michigan church.

But the example that Eberhardt set was of much deeper substance than simple outward zeal and dedication. That zeal sprung from a heart that lovingly embraced and tenaciously clung to the tenets of authentic confessional Lutheranism. Perhaps

more than any other contribution he made, the confessional foundation Eberhardt helped to lay for the fledgling Michigan Synod stands as his legacy to the Lutheran church in Michigan today.

From his earliest days in Michigan Eberhardt stood for a solid, clearly-defined and orthodox position. Frey describes him as a man "of an honest, up-right mind, faithful, sincere, possessing a childlike faith, a humble servant of his Master, devoted wholeheartedly to his Lutheran church, who did not shun to fight for its confession but fearlessly championed it." 28

Pastor Eberhardt will long be remembered in the rather difficult history of the Michigan Synod. Due to the fact that many poorly prepared pastors appeared from Germany, the Synod was plagued with unscriptural teachings and a lax and loose ministerial practice. Pastor Eberhardt and a few others like him fought for purity of teaching and practice within the Synod. 29

When the area pastors decided to band themselves together into a synod we are told that Eberhardt was one of those who took the lead in influencing the body toward a firmly-stated confessional stance.

The confessional paragraph that was inserted in the regulations for the new synod reads as follows: "The Ev. Lutheran Synod of Michigan and other states acknowledges and pledges itself to all the canonical books of the Holy Scriptures, Old and New Testaments, as the only rule and guide of its faith and life, and to all of the symbolical books of the Ev. Lutheran Church as the correct conception of the Scriptures." It was a sound Lutheran confession. The advent of the young pastors Eberhardt and Klingmann no doubt influenced the acceptance of such a position, because Schmid heretofore had been averse to a definite confession. 30

This unflinching confessionalism remained a characteristic

of Eberhardt's work throughout his ministry and its vital importance for the spiritual growth of the Michigan church cannot be over-emphasized. For much of its early history that body, inflicted by unsound theology and doctrinal disagreement that was only very poorly disguised by superficial unity, remained prime pickings for the devil. Sadly, more than a few congregations were "picked," and fell away from true scriptural doctrine. But, by the grace of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, there were those who did cling to the truth. Their principle leader was Christoph Eberhardt.

As further testimony to his confessional leadership we may look to Eberhardt's conduct in regard to the conflict with the General Council of the Ev. Lutheran Church in America. Pastor Klingmann was president of the Michigan Synod at the time when the loose pulpit and altar fellowship principles of the General Council began to infect brethren of that body.^(i.e. THE MICHIGAN SYNOD) In addition to these fellowship problems there were also doctrinal disputes with the Council over two other points, namely chiliasm and secret organizations. In order to articulate the true, sound scriptural position on these issues Pastor Eberhardt was assigned to deliver a paper on the matter, which he did at the synod convention in 1868. His views on the 4 Points may be summarized as follows: On chiliasm he said:

...while he would like to see his Lord come in order to rule over this world, yet His Word counts more, in which He tells us that the Kingdom of God comes without observation, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God. .. 31

In regard to altar fellowship he stated:

This practice is a direct contradiction of our Lutheran doctrine, no matter how much one wants to emphasize love and tolerance as the governing principle of the church. It is an off-spring of the Unionistic spirit! 32

Concerning pulpit fellowship he stated: "This can rightly be called a lack of principle and unfaithfulness with regard to both office and doctrine." 33

Finally, of lodges he wrote:

At our present time of apostacy in which materialism and humanism are reaping a rich harvest the lodge system has developed as never before into enormous dimensions and social might, so that the church in general sadly deplores and earnestly warns against this great corruption. 34

In the wake of this cogent and perceptive treatment of the disputed issues the Synod was led to resolve the following:

1. We reject Chiliasm as it is rejected in the Augsburg Confession, Article 17.
2. We do not tolerate altar fellowship with the heterodox.
3. We do not practice or tolerate exchange of pulpits with sectarians.
4. We reject the Lodge system as conflicting with the spirit of true Christianity. 35

In spite of this firm stand adopted by the Michigan Synod, the General Council continued in its anti-scriptural leanings. Attempts to rectify the situation by means of the Akron Resolutions (1872) and the Galesburg Regulations (1875) accomplished little. Though the Michigan Synod, now under the presidency of Pastor Eberhardt, sent repeated protests to the conventions of the General Council and, in 1887 even refused to send representatives, all was to no avail.

Thereupon, in 1888, President Eberhardt recommended, "We must publicly declare our position over against the General Council by severing our connec-

tions with that body. Until we take that step we shall rightfully be regarded as un-Lutheran by positive Lutherans. 36

One of the direct results of this firm confessional leadership was the eventual affiliation of the Michigan Synod with the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference, a step on the historical road toward its current orthodox position as part of the Wisconsin Ev. Lutheran Synod.

One of the traits that made Eberhardt stand out as a leader among his colleagues in those early days was his gift for looking ahead to the problems and needs of the Synod for the future; that is, his foresight.

This has already been reflected quite well in what was said about his concern for a firm confessional stand. As was noted, Pastor Schmid had shown little interest in establishing a doctrinal stance for his founding synod. This reflects his liberal leanings and also betrays a limited awareness of the needs of a church body required to insure its future stability and survival.

Happily for the Michigan Synod, Pastor Eberhardt foresaw those needs and took steps to provide for them.

There was also another area in which Eberhardt revealed his concern for the future of the church; all of its aspects may be rather conveniently grouped under the general heading of Christian education.

Already in his early days as Reise Prediger Eberhardt

exhibited interest in overcoming the spiritual illiteracy of the Michigan pioneers he served. We are told that on his circuit walks and mission journeys "he always took along Holy Scriptures and prayer books with which he provided the people, donating them to those who were poor." ³⁷ Eberhardt saw that in areas where the services of a pastor were not constantly available, making such Christian "textbooks" available in the homes was vitally important for keeping the people in contact with the means of grace and united in faith.

In a like concern for the way the individual Christian related to the future of the church, Eberhardt realized the necessity for soliciting and coalescing the financial support of the Synod constituency for church mission ventures. In those beginning years much of what was raised for mission work through contribution was still being sent by the local congregations back to the mission societies in the Old Country, like the Baseler Anstalt. This left little support for synodical efforts.

As late as 1883 President Eberhardt found it necessary to censure this practice in his presidential report. "We find," he writes, "that many a mission offering of members of our synod is sent away to support a non-Lutheran mission society which is sending its candidates to such church organizations over here that seek to abduct members and congregations from us and, unfortunately, in some instances have been successful, even in the abduction of such for which our synodical congregations had made large sacrifices." ³⁸

In a further manifestation of his awareness of the importance of Christian education, Pastor Eberhardt was a strong supporter of Christian day schools. He realized that they were

a means for fostering both spiritual and intellectual growth in the synod's young people who were the future of the church.

In 1885 he stated:

Christian schools are very necessary and salutary for our Lutheran church, although they demand much labor and sacrifice. Every Lutheran pastor whose congregation has as yet no teacher and is unable to support one should make it his holy duty and task to keep school himself. And pastor and congregation should work together for the advancement of the church/school, so that the young may learn God's pure Word and revere it and thus remain faithful in their confession over against the sects and unbelief. 39

Nowhere was Pastor Eberhardt's belief in and, indeed, love for Christian education revealed so clearly and intimately as in his involvement with the foundation of Michigan Lutheran Seminary. And that involvement shows once again that Christoph Eberhardt was a man with an eye to the future.

From the early forties until 1885, the Michigan Synod depended almost exclusively on men who drifted into it from Germany. It was Eberhardt who recognized that the old course could no longer be pursued, if the Synod was not to disintegrate. 40

"In his report to the Synod in 1884 he asked: "Is God about to show us a different way to come to our aid?" 41 It was in that same session of the 1884 convention that the Synod resolved:

That the importance of training pastors be considered, because we must rely on ourselves for such training instead of on others; and that the time is at hand for the practical realization of that desire. 42

That "practical realization" was brought about with the founding of Michigan Lutheran Seminary in 1885. And Christoph Eberhardt may rightly lay claim to the title "Father of the Seminary." It was he who convinced the synod to begin in

Manchester. It was he who influenced synod to relocate in Saginaw. It was he who donated the land for the campus. It was he who for some time served as instructor, refusing any remuneration. It was he who endowed a Seminary fund for its support (money which, incidentally, was gradually used or "borrowed" by the Synod but never paid back. ⁴³). Frey writes of Eberhardt: "His zeal and generosity made possible the building of the Sem and it enjoyed his loving care even beyond his death for he bequested his library, another acre of land adjoining the Sem property and a sum of \$5000 to the Seminary." ⁴⁴

All this he did based on his keen foresight, his 20/20 perception of the need of his beloved Synod for sound, well-trained shepherds to tend the flocks of believing souls.

Speaking of Eberhardt's role in inculcating spirits of loyalty and comradeship into the Michigan brotherhood is a bit more difficult. These are abstract things, not easily substantiated. It is perhaps easier to consider the outward aspects of Eberhardt's work that led to such attitudes.

Simply being involved in the evolution of a new synodical body would in itself inspire a feeling of loyalty toward that body. This occurred in Michigan as I'm sure it did elsewhere. It is evidence to Eberhardt's involvement in this area that he took steps to foster such loyalty.

His most apparent means for doing this, of course, was his championing the cause of an indigenous institution for

training church workers. Michigan was the last of the three bodies forming the Joint Synod to establish such a school.⁴⁵ But once it was started it became a rallying point for the entire district. The knell of the bell inscribed ORA ET LABORA that Eberhardt donated to the Seminary was a tolling that served to bind together the Michigan Synod into "a close-knit family."⁴⁶

This same type of loyalty was nurtured by the high regard Eberhardt exemplified for the work of the Synod. Whether it be in the area of missions -- his primary interest -- or in education or administration, Eberhardt stood not only as an articulate spokesman for the needs of the church but also as a fine model of synodical support through his generous contributions of time and money toward those needs.

From Eberhardt's natural love and concern for people sprang the example that most served to inspire the precious spirit of comraderie in his Synod. It was this love for people that brought him to America bearing the message of God's grace; it was love for people that moved him to volunteer to walk circuits of hundreds of miles to share that message; it was love for people that made him a friend and advisor to all who worked with and under him. This love, of course, was simply Christian charity; thus the comraderie that Eberhardt inspired had its basis in true Christian brotherhood.

It was exactly such Christian brotherhood that Pastor Eberhardt encouraged in his sermon at the laying of the Seminary cornerstone in 1887. Preaching on Romans 10:13-17:

He concluded his address with the prayer: "The

Spirit of the Lord rest upon us, and unite us as true Lutheran Christians in faith and love toward Christ. May we love each other in deed and in truth for Christ's sake and cling to each other as one heart and one soul also in this work which is to be carried on in this edifice which we are erecting to the glory of God and the temporal and eternal welfare of ourselves and our children. ⁴⁷

As its history progressed, as valuable as his financial and administrative aid was to the Seminary, we are told he was valued even more highly "because of his mature and well-considered advice and his sound Lutheran stand." ⁴⁸ When at last this great man died the Gemeinde-Blatt recorded that among those who came to mourn his passing -- his hometown, his congregation, his students and school -- were also included "his colleagues in the ministry, young and old, who in him had possessed a fatherly counsellor and a sincere friend." ⁴⁹

It was in the spring of 1893 that Pastor Eberhardt entered his last illness, inflicted with a recurrence of malaria. His beloved wife, Mary, too was struck by the disease and on April 18 she died.

In his memorial to Eberhardt in the Gemeinde-Blatt, Pastor Huber, the associate pastor at St. Paul's in Saginaw, notes that while Eberhardt was too ill to attend his wife's funeral, he sat at the window as the funeral procession passed. "And as the hearse passed by the house he nodded toward the coffin with the firm conviction in his heart, 'I am coming soon.'" ⁵⁰

Several days later Pastor Huber stopped to see Eberhardt and the doctor was just finishing an examination. He spoke to

the physician and then went to the bedside of his friend and associate. "What did the doctor say?" came the question. With heavy heart Huber replied in the words of Revelation 3: "Behold, I am coming soon. Hold on firmly to what you have, that no one rob you of your crown." Calmly Eberhardt sighed, "Soon, soon, soon I may go home." 51

And "go home" he did, on April 27, 1893, just nine days after his wife. 52 His funeral was held in St. Paul's church in Saginaw; Pastor Huber, who was also the former director of Eberhardt's treasured Seminary, conducted the service, while the Synod's president, Pastor Lederer from Saline, offered the meditation based on Gen 24:56 - "Hinder me not, seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master." 53

Nearly 1000 were present to offer a last auf wiedersehen to this well-loved leader of their church; included were over 40 pastors from near and far, who stood tearfully as the school children sang:

Laszt mich geh'n, lastz mich geh'n
Dasz ich Jesum möge seh'n
Meine Seel' ist voll Verlangen
Ihn auf ewig zu umfängen
Und vor seinem Thron zu steh'n 54

In the words of Pastor Huber in the Gemeinde Blatt:
"The shepherd of the congregation is dead. With him a great man in Israel is fallen; a precious heart has ceased to beat and a watchman on Zion's wall has gone to sleep." 55

The lasting effects of Eberhardt's life and work in the Michigan church perhaps must remain a matter of conjecture. But

for many who have lived and worked there those effects are very real.

The tireless zeal, particularly toward mission work, has remained a principle priority in the Michigan District. Pastor Krauss wrote how

In order that the cause of missions might be intensively fostered and furthered, the early thirties saw the evolvement of the "Michigan Plan" for the promotion of giving for Synodical purposes. The plan was faithfully carried out in the district and brought us to the fore front of giving in our Synod. 56

That the confessional stand of the Michigan church has survived some rocky days to remain true to Scripture is clear from the district's continued allegiance to those basic principles laid down in the first Michigan Synod constitution -- that is, the authority of Holy Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions.

Foresight is, of course, something that must be judged by the test of time but if progressiveness is evidence of such a spirit, then this too is alive in Michigan. Pastor Krauss does not hesitate to blow the district's horn in writing:

The fact of the matter is, that practically every progressive program in our Synod during these 50 years received its start in the Michigan District. This is not said in a spirit of boasting but as a statement of fact, well documented, and also readily acknowledged by leaders in our Synod. I am convinced that this is due to the so-called "Michigan Spirit" I alluded to earlier. . . . it was the Michigan Spirit that made our district unique in many ways. I believe also that it was the Michigan Spirit that produced the aggressiveness and progressiveness that has characterized our district through the years. 57

Finally, one need only spend a year in service in the Michigan District to be assured that the spirit of loyalty and comraderie are still very much alive and kicking. There is much that could be said for this fine atmosphere of Gemütlichkeit but we will confine ourselves to what Pastor Krauss has expressed on the subject. Speaking of the fact that the Michigan Spirit is "alive and Active":

To us the district, the synod, the church came first; all other considerations were secondary. Our fathers were an example and an inspiration for the younger men, whom they instructed, admonished and guided. From the moment we young pastors became part of the district we were their brethren; we were encouraged to take an active part in the discussions at conferences and conventions -- corrected if we were out of step, commended if we were able to contribute something of value. The men referred to were not just our elders, they were our confidants and comrades -- truly our brethren. There was among us a togetherness which is seldom seen elsewhere. 58

How similar these words sound to those we heard earlier spoken of Christoph Eberhardt. Clearly, much of what he began remains in the Michigan District, remains in a way that I myself could detect, to a degree, in the short time I served there.

The Michigan Spirit is real, at least for those who care to believe in it. Those who don't must settle for a less dramatic means to describe the same conditions. But the existence of those conditions, the factors that manifest the spirit, can not be denied.

Some may argue that such characteristics are not really

unique to the Michigan District; despite what Pastor Krauss may think, I believe a strong case could be made for this argument. Such a "spirit" may have evolved equally well in any of our districts. I hope this is the case.

But this is not the point of this paper. The point is that, formed in the tradition of Christoph Eberhardt, such a spirit does exist in Michigan.

And perhaps the most cogent point of all is that such a spirit, at its best, is a Christian spirit. It is a state of mind that the Lord would find desirable for all His church for it is a state of mind that places God, His gospel and His glory as the pre-eminent consideration.

With this in mind we must truthfully acknowledge that such a spirit was not borne and nurtured in the Lutheran church, in Michigan or anywhere else, simply by the work and example of men. Rather, it was brought about and preserved in men by and through the grace of God.

END NOTES: Christoph Eberhardt

- 1) Karl Krauss. Michigan District History, 1833-1970, p. 10.
(Ann Arbor: Lithocrafter, Inc., 1972), p. 10.
- 2) Emerson E. Hutzel. The Schmid Letters, (St. Louis: Hutzel, 1953), p. 82.
- 3) ibid., p. 83.
- 4) ibid., p. 84.
- 5) Feb. Huber. "Christoph Eberhardt," Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde Blatt, (Vol. 28, No. 20, June 15, 1993), p. 158.
(my translation) Continuing in His Word, A.P. Voss, ed. in chief, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951), p. 86.
- 6) Oscar Frey. Outward Growth and Inward Development of the Michigan District in the Century Past, (Essay delivered at Mich. Dist. convention, 1950), p. 3.
- 7) T. W. Menzel. Friederich Schmid, Pioneer Missionary. Reprinted from Bulletin Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, (Vol. XXV, No. 4, Oct. 1954), p. 12.
- 8) A.P. Voss (ed. in chief). Continuing in His Word, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1951), p. 86.
- 9) Hutzel, p. 83.
- 10) Krauss, p. 10.
- 11) Frey, p. 2+3.
- 12) Voss, p. 87.
- 13) Krauss, p. 221.
- 14) ibid., p. 235.
- 15) Voss, p. 84.
- 16) Hutzel, p. 84.
- 17) Voss, p. 87.
- 18) loc. cit.
- 19) Hutzel, p. 85.
- 20) loc. cit.
- 21) Krauss, p. 107ff.

END NOTES (continued):

- 22) Voss, p. 87.
- 23) Krauss, p. 58 (for Chesaning) and p. 51 (for East Bay City).
- 24) ibid., p. 229.
- 25) ibid., p. 61.
- 26) ibid., p. 47.
- 27) ibid., p. 2.
- 28) Frey, p. 2.
- 29) Brenner, John. The Centennial Commemoration: St. John's
Ev. Lutheran Church, (Bay City, 1962), p.2.
- 30) Voss, p. 85.
- 31) Frey, p. 4.
- 32) ibid., p. 4+5.
- 33) ibid., p. 5.
- 34) loc. cit.
- 35) loc. cit.
- 36) Voss, p. 91.
- 37) Frey, p. 3.
- 38) ibid., p. 4.
- 39) ibid., p. 8.
- 40) Krauss, p. 11.
- 41) Voss, p. 85.
- 42) ibid., p. 94.
- 43) Frey, p. 3.
- 44) ibid., p. 12.
- 45) Krauss, p. 11.
- 46) loc. cit.

END NOTES:

- 47) Voss, p. 86.
- 48) Krauss, p. 4.
- 49) Huber, p. 157 (my translation).
- 50) F. Huber. "Christoph Eberhardt," Evangelisch-Lutherisches Gemeinde Blatt, (Vol. 28, No. 21, July 1, 1893), p. 165. (my translation).
- 51) loc. cit. (my translation, including Rev. passage.)
- 52) 125th Anniversary Booklet - St. Paul's Ev. Lutheran Church, (Saginaw, 1976), p. 4.
- 53) Huber, (July 1, 1893), p. 165.
- 54) ibid., p. 165+166.
- 55) Huber, (June 15, 1893), p. 157.
- 56) Krauss, p. 13.
- 57) ibid., p. 11.
- 58) ibid., p. 10+11.

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In addition, various information through conversation and correspondence.