

AMERICAN LUTHERANISM AND THE CIVIL WAR

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

FORWARD ii

Chapter

I. THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND THE ISSUE OF BLACK
SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA 1

II. THE ROLE OF THE EASTERN SYNODS DURING THE
CIVIL WAR 13

III. THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN LUTHERANS DURING THE
CIVIL WAR AND THE FORMATION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD
OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE
CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA 31

IV. THE ROLE OF THE MIDWESTERN LUTHERANS DURING THE
CIVIL WAR 44

V. LUTHERAN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS DURING THE
CIVIL WAR 75

CONCLUSION 91

.

BIBLIOGRAPHY 93

FORWARD

The purpose of this thesis is to delineate the role the Lutheran Church in America played in the American Civil War. Since no monograph is extant about the specific role of the fledging Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in the bloody conflict, this thesis will strive to ^(show evidence) highlight the various contributions of the Lutheran institutions, congregations, and individuals of these two Midwestern synods during the years of the war.

The American Civil War has been the subject of intense and almost mystical interest by generation after generation of Americans. Literature on the subject presently numbers over 50,000 volumes, with new books and studies being published monthly. It is easily the most written about subject in American history. Studies of the Battle of Gettysburg alone outnumber literature about any other battle in world history, including Waterloo and Pearl Harbor. Although there have been several works published on various aspects of American Christianity and the Civil War, little is in the public domain of the specific role of Lutherans

in a conflict which made the United States of America what it is today. The only monograph on the subject was published three generations ago, and this treatment practically ignores the existence of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods in its study of Lutheranism and the Civil War. This thesis is an honest attempt to correct this oversight.

The writer of this monograph, which serves as his thesis for the Master of Sacred Theology degree, is indebted to many people for their assistance in the completion of this study. Special mention must be made of Rev. Roy Ledbetter and Dr. August Suelflow of the Concordia Historical Institute for their kindness and cooperation in providing the writer access to primary sources in his research, to Professor Martin Westerhaus, archivist for the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod, for his kindness and cooperation throughout every facet of the research and writing of this thesis, and to Professor Richard Balge who served as the writer's academic advisor, for his direction and encouragement. Last but by no means least, this writer must acknowledge the support and encouragement of his wife Linda, and young daughter, Monica, in the research, writing, and defense of this Civil War treatise.

Joel Loren Pless

Commemoration of the Faithful
Departed

November 2, 1992

CHAPTER ONE

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND THE ISSUE OF BLACK SLAVERY IN ANTEBELLUM AMERICA

When the new nation of the United States of America was founded on July 4, 1776 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and when the constitution of the new nation was formally drawn up in 1787, there remained a very important unanswered question. What would be the future of the "peculiar institution," black slavery, and who would decide it? That question caused tensions between delegates from the North and South, when both the Declaration of Independence and the Federal Constitution were drawn up. Since by its nature, black slavery was an institution preserved by violence, cruelty and intimidation, the question of its continued existence had to be decided by violence and bloodshed, as the fanatical abolitionist, John Brown, predicted. The result was the bloodiest and most tragic war in American history, the American Civil War. Only by conflict and conquest could the question of black slavery be resolved.

Moreover, the Civil War answered another fundamental question about the future of the American nation, left unresolved by its founding fathers. Does an individual state have a right to succeed from the Union? While the North originally fought the war to preserve the union of the United States of America, the war took on an added cause in September of 1862, after the Union victory at Antietam. Lincoln issued his Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the black slaves in all the rebel states. The war then became a war of conquest, attrition, and subjugation, not only to destroy the old South and preserve the Union, but to destroy the very institution of slavery as well.

It is not within the scope of this monograph to go into an in-depth discussion of slavery in America. It began in the New World shortly after Columbus' first voyage. By the 1850's, it had firmly established itself as a fundamental part of the economy and culture of the antebellum South.

What was the position of the Lutheran church in America toward black slavery, as the nation moved closer and closer to civil war? Few Lutherans outside the Deep South had much use for the institution of slavery, but also, few Lutherans ever became vehement abolitionists either. The notable exception to this general observation can be found in the small but vocal and liberal Franckean Synod.

¹ Charles William Heathcote,, The Lutheran Church and the Civil War, (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1919), p. 54.

The Franckean Synod was founded for the very purpose of opposing slavery. In 1837, four pastors from the Hartwick Synod broke away from the main body and formed their own synod. They were dissatisfied with the leadership in the Hartwick Synod, and they were especially disillusioned with the Hartwick Synod's continued silence on the slavery issue. They met about fifty-five miles northwest of Albany, New York, and formed a new synod, naming it after one of the founding fathers of pietism, August Herman Francke.²

The Franckean Synod was a curious mixture of legalism and extreme theological liberalism, with only a faint Lutheran facade. It did not even accept the Augsburg Confession, but instead had its own "declaration of faith," which left out the distinct doctrines of Lutheranism.³ Loud and emotional revivals, temperance, Sabbath laws, and blatant pietism were all found in the small but very vocal Franckean Synod. Its constitution required its pastors to oppose "slavery as it exists in the United States."⁴

²Harry J. Kreider, History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, 1786-1860, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1954), pp. 94-98, cited in E. Clifford Nelson, The Lutherans in North America, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), p. 143.

³Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America, revised edition, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964), p. 143.

⁴Kreider, History, pp. 112-118, cited in Nelson, p. 143.

Several synods, while rejecting the extremist views of the Franckean Synod, issued declarations stating that American black slavery was evil. The confessional, conservative Tennessee Synod, as early as 1822, had a delegate who asked the synod if it did not consider slavery to be "a great evil." The synod responded that it did indeed and that it wished "that government, if possible, would devise some means as an antidote to this evil." At their 1822 convention, the Tennessee Synod instructed its ministers to admonish the few slaveholders in their ranks, "to treat (their) slaves well." ⁵

As sectional conflict increased between the North and the South in the antebellum years, more Lutheran leaders began calling for the gradual but complete abolition of slavery. Professor Samuel Schmucker, a professor at the Gettysburg Seminary, in 1834, suggested that Christians should continue to support colonization projects for freed slaves, such as Liberia, Africa, but "at the same time also maintain the justice and necessity of gradual and entire abolition by legislative action in the various states." ⁶ Few mainline Lutheran leaders up to the time of the firing on Fort Sumter in April of 1861, called for the immediate abolition of slavery. Their position on the "peculiar institution," was virtually identical to that of the new Republican Party, which was proposed by antislavery Wisconsinites in Ripon, Wisconsin in February of 1854,

⁵ Tennessee Synod, Minutes . . . 1822, pp. 13, 43., cited in Nelson, p. 142.

⁶ Nelson, p. 142.

and then formally organized on July 6, 1854, in Jackson, Michigan.⁷ The Republican Party was established by Northerners who were outraged by the proposed Kansas-Nebraska Act, which was designed to let the status of slavery be decided by "popular sovereignty" in that region. The Republican Party did not call for the immediate abolition of slavery, but it was adamant in its opposition to the extension of slavery.⁸

Many of the Lutheran immigrants from Germany and Scandinavia, who settled in the Midwest during the 1850's readily identified themselves with the politics of the new Republican Party. The Scandinavian Lutherans in particular, were very adamant in their opposition to slavery and possible succession by the Southern states.⁹

In the state of Missouri, the strong German element saved St. Louis from the secessionists and was instrumental in helping save the entire state for the Union cause. It must be stated however, that many German immigrants in St. Louis had no connection to the Lutheran church at all.¹⁰

⁷William Fletcher Thompson, gen. ed., The History of Wisconsin, six vols. (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1976), vol. 2: The Civil War Era, 1848-1873, by Richard N. Current, pp. 218-219.

⁸Carl N. Degler et al., The Democratic Experience, 5th ed. (Scott, Foresman and Company), pp. 279-280.

⁹Wentz, p. 162.

¹⁰Ibid.

Some of the St. Louis Germans were Reformed, some were Catholic, and many more were refugees of the 1848 revolutions that swept through Europe. Many of these refugees were very liberal in their religious ideas, some were "freethinkers." These "Forty-eighters" soon joined forces with the Northern abolitionists.¹¹ These facts help explain why the "American Luther," Dr. C. F. W. Walther, notably did not support the abolition of slavery nor the fledging Republican Party.¹²

Walther, first and foremost a theologian, looked with abhorrence at the theological views of the German "Forty-eighters."¹³ Their joining forces with radical abolitionists unquestionably influenced his attitude on whether slavery should be abolished in his home state of Missouri and throughout his adopted country, the United States. Since the "Forty-eighters" denied many of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, Walther's antagonism toward them and their abolitionist views are then better understood.¹⁴ Noted church historian Professor Abdel Ross

¹¹Paul M. Kavasch, "The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod During the Early Years of the Civil War," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, 32 (October 1958): 70.

¹²Wentz, p. 162.

¹³Kavasch, p. 70.

¹⁴Ibid.

Wentz provides a good summary of Walther's view on slavery and succession in his work, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America:

There was one notable exception to the antislavery attitude and union sympathies of the German Lutherans in Missouri. That was Dr. Walther himself, the distinguished leader of the Missouri Synod, who could not agree with the overwhelming majority of his fellow believers. His extreme conservatism led him instinctively to support the status quo. He was repelled by the radical Methodist abolitionists and by the liberal or godless refugees from the 1848 revolutions in Germany. Above all, it was his firm conviction that the Scriptures teach nothing against the institution of slavery and much in favor of it, for example, the definite command that slaves should be obedient to their masters.

Dr. Walther was very careful about expressing his views in public and wrote only a few innocent items on the subject in Der Lutheraner, although he did publish a series of four lengthy articles by his friends Dr. Sihler of Fort Wayne defending slavery as an institution. The minutes of the Missouri Synod and the seminary publications record nothing concerning these views. But in his letters to friends Walther frankly expressed this disdain for the hypocrisy of 'the Republican rabble' with ~~whom~~? the forty-eighters had allied themselves. He accused the antislavery men of making their voice the voice of God. He regarded the United States as a federation, somewhat like the old Holy Roman Empire in Germany, and therefore he placed loyalty to the state government above loyalty to the Union. But until near the end of the war he made it a point to keep his political views from the general public, and always he counseled obedience to the government de facto. This saved him and his seminary from violence, although not from threats.¹⁵

The Ohio Synod in 1827 was asked to support a plan to colonize a new nation in Africa called Liberia,

¹⁵Wentz, pp. 162-163.

with freed American slaves. The Joint Synod of Ohio responded by approving the purpose of the society, but also referred action on the matter to individual consciences.¹⁶ That apparently was all the Ohio Synod had to publicly state on the issue of slavery up until the time of the Civil War.

The infant Wisconsin Synod, which was not even founded until 1850, apparently did not choose to make a public statement on its position of black slavery before or even during the Civil War. Its church newspaper, the Gemeinde-Blatt was not even in existence until the war was over. Its first edition was published in September of 1865. Its theological journal, the Quartalschrift, did not have its beginning until the twentieth century, in 1904.¹⁷

One small synod in Ohio, the Wittenberg Synod of the Ev. Lutheran Church of Ohio, only five years after its founding, in 1852, issued a sharp declaration, condemning slavery. It termed slavery a national evil and an abomination before God. The Augustana Synod and the Pittsburg Synod took similar positions.¹⁸

¹⁶ Nelson, p. 239.

¹⁷ Edward C. Fredrich, The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans, (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1992), p. 96.

¹⁸ Nelson, p. 239.

Several synods, as stated, chose not to take positions on the issue of black slavery. No slavery comment was published in the Lutheran Standard of the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Kirchen-Blatt of the Synod of Iowa, or the Kirchliche^s Informatorium of the Buffalo Synod.¹⁹

The general observation has already been made that while few Lutherans outside of the Deep South had much use for slavery, most Lutherans also were not participants in the radical abolitionist movement in antebellum America. The exceptions were all very small synods and have already been noted. But what about Lutherans in the Deep South? What was their general stand on the "peculiar institution?" It has already been cited that the Tennessee Synod, in a border state, took a strong stand against slavery, but stopped short of calling for total and immediate abolition. While many Southern Lutheran clergymen and lay people defended slavery as an institution, many also expressed a desire and a concern that the black slaves in the South hear the gospel and be instructed in the Christian faith.

A monograph entitled, A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina, records that as early as 1809, the North Carolina Synod gave explicit authorization to its ministers to baptize black slaves where the owner had no objection.

¹⁹The Lutheran Church Quarterly (Gettysburg), 8 No. 2, p. 171, cited in Chester Forrester Dunham, The Attitude of the Northern Clergy toward the South, 1860-1865, Perspectives in American History, no. 6, (Toledo: Gray Company, 1942; reprint ed., Philadelphia: Porcupine Press, 1974), p. 24.

Moreover, in 1814, the North Carolina Synod adopted a resolution encouraging its clergymen to minister to the spiritual needs of the black slaves, and encouraged slave owners to cooperate in the venture. The South Carolina pastors belonging to the North Carolina Synod soon met some opposition to this new ministry. They then prepared a more detailed statement themselves concerning just how gospel ministry was to be conducted among the slaves of the antebellum South.²⁰

Lutherans in the Deep South in antebellum America were by no means numerous, but those who were in the South did not hesitate to defend the "peculiar institution." Take for example the case of Dr. John Bachmann, the most prominent Lutheran pastor in South Carolina of the 19th century. Dr. Bachmann was pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina for fifty-six years, his entire ministry. Dr. J. L. Neve writes that he was a born leader among the Lutherans of the Deep South, and during the Civil War, enthusiastically supported the Confederate government.²¹

²⁰Richard W. Fritz et al., A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina, published by the South Carolina Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, prepared and edited by the History of the Synod Committee, 1971, pp. 238-239.

²¹Juergen L. Neve, A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, 2nd ed. rev. and enl., (Burlington, Iowa: The German Literary Board, 1916), p. 212.

Dr. Bachmann, soon after his arrival, notified his vestry (church council) that he wanted to begin ministering to the black slaves in Charleston. At this time, he himself owned a slave, who worked in and around his house. After twenty-seven years of ministry, there were over 200 slaves in his Lutheran congregation by 1845.²²

The South Carolina Lutherans formed their own synod in 1824.²³ At its 1836 convention, the South Carolina Synod expressed its "strongest disapprobation of the conduct of the the Northern Abolitionists." The synod declared that abolitionists were "enemies of our beloved country" and South Carolina Lutherans would not engage in any correspondence with abolitionists and would send back all of their "incendiary publications" to their place of origin.²⁴

The Lutherans of South Carolina were typical of the Lutherans in the Deep South, where slavery flourished. The clergymen of the South Carolina Synod sought to constantly exclude from "ecclesiastical circles" all debates concerning slavery and abolition.²⁵ Instead many Lutheran pastors sought to give out information about how the spiritual needs of the slaves were being met.

²²Fritz et al., p. 240. ²³Nelson, p. 123.

²⁴South Carolina Synod Minutes, p. 8., cited in Fritz et al., p. 242.

²⁵Fritz et al., p. 244.

Dr. John Bachmann in particular, provided a lengthy defense of slavery in a publication called The Missionary. He writes in part of the dangers of church bodies becoming involved in political issues:

Every year one ligament after another, that bound us together as a nation, has been broken asunder. No sooner did any religious denomination assail the institutions of the South, and adopt resolutions reflected on the moral and religious character of their ministers and people . . . than the Southern churches withdrew for the sake of peace, and organized Synods of their own.²⁶

Dr. Bachmann argued that Lutheran ministers should leave political decisions to those who made government their vocation. "The glory of God and the salvation of souls" should be the single focus of concern for the pastor.²⁷

In summary, Lutheran Christians of antebellum America by and large were not friends of slavery. Many of them considered it to be intrinsically evil, at least the way it was instituted and carried out in the antebellum South. But the vast majority of Lutherans never became fire-breathing abolitionists either. Since the vast majority of Lutherans lived in the North, they generally reflected the attitude of most Northerners: they were opposed to the extension of slavery in any new territories, they wanted to see it eventually abolished, but few also supported the immediate and total abolition of the "peculiar institution."

²⁶The Missionary, Vol. 2, No. 46 (December 19, 1857), cited in Fritz et al., p. 245.

²⁷Fritz et al., p. 245.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ROLE OF THE EASTERN SYNODS DURING THE CIVIL WAR

The firing upon and the subsequent surrender of Fort Sumter in April of 1861 brought war and division to the United States of America. Before the nation was at peace again, over 600,000 Americans would lose their lives, and large parts of the South would be devastated for years. This chapter will study and evaluate the role of the Lutheran synods in the eastern United States during the War of the Rebellion.

When war broke out in 1861, the Lutheran synods east of the Appalachians rallied around the flag and vowed to fight for the preservation of the Union. Dr. Heathcote writes: "In the North, men forgot their quarrels and all united to defend the flag and to save the union."¹ The Lutherans in the South immediately became alienated from their Northern counterparts and formed their own synod in 1862. Their history will be examined in the next chapter.

¹Heathcote, The Lutheran Church and the Civil War, p. 70.

The vast majority of the Lutherans in the northeast United States were affiliated with the General Synod, which was formed in 1820.

A week after the firing upon of Fort Sumter, the Lutheran Observer, the weekly periodical of the General Synod, declared in an editorial:

Civil war has commenced. Who can say when, where, and how it shall be continued and concluded? Will the guns that have shrouded Charleston harbor with smoke of a fratricidal content and which will cast a gloomy pall over the national heart of the country, prove the last appeal, awaken the people to the horrible nature by which it is surrounded, and bringing the good sense, the civilization and the humanity of the age to avert the most fearful of horrors, or shall they prove but the opening of the contest to be pursued through scenes of warfare that will bring in their train sorrow, suffering, and shame, public discredit and private ruin? This is a question that only the future can solve.²

The summer of 1861 witnessed an impressive display of unity and support for the Federal government and the American constitution by the Lutheran synods of the East.³ The following are four quotations from the minutes of district synods which were made during the summer of 1861. Each expressed firm and unwavering support for the Union war effort:

²Lutheran Observer, April 19, 1861, p. 1.

³Heathcote, p. 70.

"Resolved, . . . It is the duty of every Christian patriot to support and co-operate with the general government to defend and maintain both (viz: freedom and the constitution). (Franckean Synod, Argusville, New York, June 6, 1861)⁴

That we, in imitation of their (Lutheran forefathers) 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 effort to punish treason, and to put down rebellion by all the means within our power. (East Ohio Synod, New Philadelphia, Ohio, August 15-21)⁵

The New York Ministerium met in Rochester, New York from August 30-September 4, 1861. This synod went on record in declaring:

deeming it to be in strict harmony with sound Christianity as well as with true patriotism, to stand by the government and to exert all the influence which God has given us, to aid it in its arduous and praiseworthy efforts to indicate its power, and to maintain its authority.⁶

The East Pennsylvania Synod met in Germantown, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in October of 1861. That synod resolved:

That our brethern in the faith who have gone forth to fight the battles of their country, may have the consciousness that they are acting in defense of the power that God has ordained and signally blessed: that they have our sympathy in their cause as just and righteous, and that our prayers will be offered at the throne of grace unceasingly . . . to crown their arms with success . . . ⁷

⁴Minutes, Franckean Synod, June, 1861, p. 20., cited in Heathcote, p. 72.

⁵Minutes, East Ohio Synod, August, 1861, p. 20., cited in Heathcote, p. 73.

⁶Minutes, New York Ministerium, August, 1861, pp. 42-43., cited in Heathcote, p. 73.

⁷Minutes, East Pa. Synod, October, 1861, pp. 21-22., cited in Heathcote, p. 73.

The following year, the General Synod itself met in convention. The meeting took place at Lancaster, Pennsylvania, May 1-8, 1862.⁸ The Peninsula Campaign of the Union's Army of the Potomac was taking place during the convention. Since the General Synod represented the vast majority of the Lutherans east of the Appalachians, considerable interest prevailed in both the church and secular press concerning what position the synod would take on succession and the war.⁹ Early in the convention, a floor committee was appointed to study the crisis "in the Church and the State."¹⁰ The following is a lengthy quotation of the results and conclusions of that report. This is the official answer, position, and response to succession and civil war from the largest Lutheran synod in the country at that time:

Whereas, our beloved country, after having long formed with a degree of political and religious freedom, security and prosperity, unexampled in the history of the world, now finds itself in a bloody war to suppress an armed rebellion against its lawfully constituted government; . . . and Whereas, We, the representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the United States connected with the General Synod . . . recognize it as our duty to give public expression to our fellow citizens in sustaining interests of law and authority, of liberty and righteousness, be it therefore

⁸ Heathcote, p. 74.

⁹ Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America, P. 166.

¹⁰ Heathcote, p. 74.

Resolved: That it is the deliberate judgment of this Synod, that the rebellion against the constitutional government of this land is most wicked in its cause, unnatural in its character, inhuman in its prosecution, oppressive in its results to the highest interests of morality and religion.

Resolved: (2) That, in the suppression of this rebellion and in the maintenance of the constitution and the union by the sword, we recognize an unavoidable necessity and sacred duty which the government owes to the nation and to the world: and that, therefore, we call upon all our people to lift up holy hands in prayer to God of Battles, without personal wrath against the evildoers, and without doubting the righteousness of our cause on the other hand, that He should give wisdom and success to the army and navy. That our beloved land may speedily be delivered from treason and anarchy.

Resolved: That while we regard this unhappy war as a righteous judgment of God visited upon us because of the individual and national sins, of which we have been guilty, we, nevertheless regard this rebellion as more immediately the natural result of the continuance and spread of domestic slavery in our land, and therefore, hail with unmingled joy the proposition of our Chief Magistrate, which has received the sanction of Congress to extend aid from the General Government to any state which slavery exists, which shall deem fit to initiate a system of constitutional emancipation. So much for the attitude of the General Synod toward the questions of war and slavery.¹¹

The General Synod also went on record as condemning all of the district synods of the General Synod who went on record of supporting the Confederate States of America:

That this Synod cannot but express its most decided disapprobation of the course of those Synods and ministers heretofore connected with this body, in the open sympathy and active co-operation which they have given to the cause of treason and insurrection.¹²

¹¹Minutes, General Synod, 1862, pp. 30-32., cited in Heathcote, pp. 75-76.

¹²Ibid.

The chairman of the special committee which brought these proposals to the convention floor was Dr. William Passavant, editor of the church periodical, The Missionary, which was merged in 1861 into The Lutheran and Missionary. The proposals generated a great deal of discussion on the convention floor, but the entire report was accepted as printed. Dr. Passavant would later become a leader in the General Council.¹³

An editorial in The Lutheran and Missionary strongly endorsed the resolutions, while an editorial in the Lutheran Observer was somewhat less enthusiastic. This editorial deemed the passage of the slavery resolution as "unnecessary and inexpedient."¹⁴

The General Synod went above and beyond in calling for unconditional and unqualified support for the preservation of the Union and the Federal war effort. It formed at convention a special committee to take these resolutions to Washington D.C. and present them to President Abraham Lincoln himself.¹⁵

After securing the necessary arrangements with Secretary of State William Seward, the five man committee from the General Synod appeared before President Lincoln. The chairman, Professor L. Sternberg, made some opening remarks, and then introduced the Rev. Dr. Pohlman of

¹³Neve, p. 249; Heathcote, p. 78.

¹⁴Lutheran Observer, May 23, 1862, p. 1., cited in Heathcote, p. 79.

¹⁵Heathcote, p. 80.

Albany, New York, to present "the sentiments which animated the committee and the Church they represent in view of the present crisis in our national affairs."¹⁶

Dr. Pohlmann then spoke on behalf of the General Synod to the President of the United States. He explained to President Lincoln that his church body represented Lutherans spread out over twenty-six district synods throughout the country. He related an amusing story of the experience of the sole delegate from Tennessee, who remarked, "I am the only minister who dares to pray for President Lincoln and the reason I am allowed to do it is because I pray in German and the rebels don't understand German, but the Lord does!" Dr. Pohlmann concluded his remarks by invoking a benediction upon the President and upon the country.¹⁷

The specific mood of this momentous meeting between Lutheran officials and Abraham Lincoln has been lost over the passage of time.¹⁸ But from the words of President Lincoln, it was a very cordial meeting. President Lincoln responded with these words:

¹⁶Heathcote, p. 80. ¹⁷Heathcote, p. 81.

¹⁸To the best of the author's knowledge, this is the only recorded instance of Abraham Lincoln meeting with a group of Lutheran leaders during the days of the Civil War. Since Lincoln was from Springfield, Illinois, he undoubtedly had local dealings with Lutherans in his hometown and state.

Gentlemen, I welcome here the representatives of the Evangelical Lutherans of the United States. I accept with gratitude their assurance of the sympathy and a support of the enlightened, influential, and loyal class of my fellow citizens in an important crisis which involves in my judgment, not only the civil and religious liberties of our dear land, but in a large degree the civil and religious liberties of mankind in many countries and through many ages. You well know, gentlemen, and the world knows, how reluctantly I accepted this issue of battle forced upon me, in my advent to this place by the internal enemies of our country. You all know, the world knows: the forces and the resources, the public agents have brought employment to sustain a government against which there has been brought not one complaint of real injury committed against society at home and aboard. You may have recollected that in taking up the sword thus forced into my hands, this government appealed to the prayers of the pious and good, and declared that it placed its whole dependence on the favor of God. I now humbly and reverently in your presence reiterate the acknowledgement of that dependence, not doubting that, if it shall please the Divine Being who determines the destinies of nations, that this shall remain a united people. They will humbly, seeking the Divine guidance, making their prolonged national existence a source of new benefits to themselves and their successors and to all classes and conditions of mankind.¹⁹

The meeting ended with the conclusion of President Lincoln's eloquent speech.

Young Lutheran men by the thousands responded to Lincoln's call for volunteers to put down the rebellion of the Southern states. The Lutheran Observer wrote soon after the war began:

¹⁹ McPherson: History of Rebellion, p. 479 seq.; Hartwick Seminary Monthly, p. 10, No. 48., "Dr. Hiller's Reminiscences of Civil War." (No other information provided), cited in Heathcote, pp. 81-82.

Some of the Pennsylvania regiments indeed are almost exclusively composed of Lutherans and hence the denominational element is largely represented in the war a most gratifying testimonial to our loyal and patriotic war.²⁰

Not only did Lutheran men from the Eastern synods volunteer by the thousands to fight in the Union armies, but Lutheran pastors also volunteered to serve as Lutheran chaplains in Union Army regiments. Dr. William Passavant was called by the Pennsylvania Ministerium to serve as a missionary chaplain.²¹ Today perhaps the nomenclature would be "civilian chaplain." He accepted the call and reported on his ministry:

The pulpit was a camp chest with the heavens for a sounding board, while the many soldiers, not yet recovered from the prostration of the hurried march on Monday last, were stretched out on the ground before me. At the close of the service a large number came forward and gladly accepted some tracts but the stock on hand was exhausted before half of the soldiers were supplied. Not knowing of any Germans in the regiments, no provision was made for an entire company of honest fellows who would have been most thankful for some German reading.²²

Another chaplain, John H. W. Stuckenberg, was attached to a Union regiment and was especially active in battles at Antietam, Fredericksburg, and Gettysburg. These battles

²⁰Lutheran Observer, June 28, 1861, p. 1.

²¹Nelson, The Lutherans in North America, p. 241.

²²George H. Gerberding, Life and Letters of W. A. Passavant, (Greenville, Pa.: Young Lutheran Company, 1906), pp. 307-25., cited in Nelson, p. 241.

were among bloodiest and most costly battles of the war.²³ Noted Lutheran church historian E. Clifford Nelson gives a good summary of what Lutherans particularly in the East, both clergy and laity, did to help the Union war effort during the dark days of the Civil War:

In addition to such chaplains there were parish pastors who served their people and the war effort in every possible way. If they could not serve in a personal, direct way they attempted to maintain contact with the soldiers by providing literature and corresponding with them. Lutheran parishes in the North gave support to the United States Christian Commission, organized in November 1861. A host of women volunteered their services as nurses. Laymen, including seminary students, visited the camps, hospitals, and battlefields, assisting the chaplains and doctors where they could. After hostilities ceased, the churches supported relief and rehabilitation programs in the South.²⁴

Moreover, Professor Wentz in his treatise, A Brief History of Lutheranism in America gives an excellent account of how Lutherans, like their fellow Americans, shared in the grief and hardships which come with bloody civil war:

During the years of actual military hostilities Lutheran people shared fully in the fortunes and misfortunes of their several sections. They marched loyally in the military ranks, shared in the casualties, suffered anxiety, grief, and privation in their homes,

²³John O. Evjen, The Life of J. H. W. Stuckenberg, (Minneapolis: Lutheran Free Church Publishing Company, 1938), pp. 105-36., cited in Nelson, p. 241.

²⁴Nelson, p. 241.

and in many places the destruction or confiscation of their property. At the outbreak of the war, Lutherans in America numbered somewhat more than a quarter of a million communicants. Of these about one-third were west of the Appalachian Mountains. About forty thousand were in states that joined the Confederacy. Somewhat less than two thirds of all Lutherans were in synods adhering to the General Synod. Thus the distribution of Lutheran people among the sections was about the same as that of the nation as a whole.²⁵

Even the children of the General Synod were called upon to support the Northern war effort. A publication for the Sunday Schools of the General Synod called The Lutheran Sunday-School Herald, published a touching vignette of a father and his daughter visiting the home of a soldier who had died in the war. This story was published two months after the Battle of Gettysburg. The story is reproduced from a photocopy made at the Concordia Historical Institute at St. Louis:

For the Lutheran S. S. Herald.

VISIT TO THE SOLDIER'S FAMILY.

COME, my young friends, let us look into this house. This was but lately the home of one of our thousands of brave soldiers who have died in camp and field, for the sake of our beloved country. The wife is now a mourning widow; and the little son, the only child, is left a poor, helpless orphan. But the means of living, once furnished by the industrious soldier to his family, being now no longer received, the sorrowing mother labors very hard to keep herself and dear little child from suffering and want.

There are, however, kind-hearted neighbors around her, who do not forget her condition. This gentleman has just come to speak words of comfort, and to afford such help as may appear proper. His little daughter asked to come along, and bring a basket-full of cakes and other good things for their worthy neighbors. The lady, in very touching words, expresses much thankfulness for the kindness shown towards herself and her dear child.

On the way towards this house, the father tried to make his daughter understand the duty of every one to the soldiers and their families. He said the noble men were suffering and laying down their lives for what is dear, not only to themselves, but to all of us. He said that all should, therefore, feel it a *duty* and a *privilege* to attend to the comfort of our soldiers and their families, and that it would be disgraceful and sinful if the people allowed them unnecessarily to suffer.

26

²⁵Wentz, p. 166.

²⁶The Lutheran Sunday-School Herald, Vol. 4, No. 8, (Philadelphia, August 1863).

The Lutherans in the South bore the full brunt of the depredations of Sherman's legions, but Lutherans in the North also suffered significant material losses from Confederate raiders, not to mention the hundreds if not thousands of Lutheran homes where the son, brother, father, or husband never returned.

The Battle of Antietam, waged just outside the village of Sharpsburg, Maryland, on September 17, 1862, was the bloodiest day in American military history.²⁷ More Americans died at Antietam on that September day than at either Pearl Harbor or on the beaches of Normandy. A Lutheran church, Holy Trinity, was located on the edge of Sharpsburg, on the Boonesboro Turnpike. Its steeple was used as a signal tower by the Confederates during the battle, and thus, the church was a constant target of Federal artillerymen. It received substantial damage as a result of the battle. After the Confederates retreated across the Potomac River, the Lutheran church in Sharpsburg was used as hospital by the Union Army.²⁸

²⁷Stephen S. Sears, Landscape Turned Red, The Battle of Antietam, (New Haven: Ticknor & Fields, 1983), p. 296.

²⁸Ronald H. Bailey, The Bloodiest Day - The Battle of Antietam, Collector's Library of the Civil War, (Alexandria, Virginia: Time-Life Books, 1984), pp. 130, 134.

The Northern Lutherans in the state of Pennsylvania suffered by far the worst physical damage, destruction, and depredation from the Civil War. The greatest battle on the North American continent, began near the grounds of the General Synod's seminary in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on July 1, 1863. Chapter Five of this monograph will detail the experiences of the faculty, staff, and campus of the Lutheran seminary in Gettysburg during the Battle of Gettysburg.

The city of Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, in that state's Cumberland Valley, was the Northern settlement which suffered the worse destruction during the Civil War.²⁹ After the Battle of Antietam, Jeb Stuart led 1800 Confederate horsemen on a ride around General McClellan's army in October of 1862. They entered the Cumberland Valley and soon reached Chambersburg. There they proceeded to destroyed a quarter of a million dollars worth of government property, and collected hundreds of horses from the area's German Lutheran farmers, before moving on.³⁰ During the Gettysburg Campaign, Chambersburg was again visited by the Confederate Army, before and after the battle.³¹

²⁹Heathcote, p. 86.

³⁰Sears, p. 327.

³¹Heathcote, p. 86.

But the worse days for the largely Lutheran city of Chambersburg laid ahead. In retaliation for Union General David Hunter's wanton destruction of Southern property in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, including the burning of the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington, Virginia, one of the school's alumni, Brigadier General John McCausland, led a Confederate calvary raid against Chambersburg, on July 30, 1864.³² After demanding \$500,000 from Chambersburg's citizens, the Rebels burned much of the downtown when they refused to pay.³³ According to a Lutheran citizen:

As soon as they had their breakfast, General McCausland demanded \$500,000 in currency and was preemptorily (sic?) refused. On the instant the town was fired upon in some fifty places, without a word of warning from anyone. The very citizens whom McCausland had arrested, and from whom he had made the demand found their homes fired before they had reached them. Everything was done to add to the terror and confusion of the panic stricken women and children. Soon the hunger of the little ones added new horror to the scene. Families were separated, and distracted fathers and mothers could be seen everywhere, seeking amid the confusion for those that were missing; and yet no selfishness was apparent. Everyone was willing to aid and sympathize with his neighbor.³⁴

³²Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), p. 198.

³³James M. McPherson, Battle Cry of Freedom - The Civil War Era, The Oxford History of the United States, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 757.

³⁴Lutheran and Missionary, August 11, 1864, cited in Heathcote, p. 88.

Since Chambersburg had been an important Union supply depot since the beginning of the war, the Confederates again helped themselves to abundant government property, provisions, and livestock, before putting a good part of the city to the torch.

The Lutheran Observer noted that as a result of the raid, 537 buildings were destroyed or damaged.

This property was valued at \$713,294. Personal property losses amounted to \$915,137 with Lutheran losses amounting to a quarter of a million dollars alone. After the war, the Federal government gave modest compensation to the Chambersburg's citizens who had lost property and possessions from the raid.³⁵

As the war progressed, and as the North began to smell and taste the laurels of final and complete victory, the Eastern Lutheran synodical leaders continued to urge their pastors and laity to support the Union war effort until victory and peace was achieved. This is evident from the tone of the reports of the president of the Pennsylvania Ministerium from its conventions during the war years. Notice the sense of anguish and uncertain in Dr. W. J. Mann's report to his synod only six weeks after the surrender of Fort Sumter:

³⁵Lutheran Observer, September 16, 1864, p. 1., cited in Heathcote, p. 88.

Our favored nation, for whose freedom and peace the Father fought and prayed, is shaken to the very foundation of its national existence. The States of the great Union are divided; the air resounds with the clash of arms; and the future of a nation with whose weal and woe the fate our dearly beloved church, and of the entire kingdom of God on earth, is so closely knit, is involved in darkness. These pressing and serious times urge us all to examine ourselves, to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, and to unite in prayer to Him, in whose hand is war and peace, who can chastise us, but according to his mercy also raise us again.³⁶

The 115th annual session of the Pennsylvania Ministerium reported that thousands of Lutheran young men from the congregations of that synod had answered President Lincoln's call for volunteers to preserve the Union. Dr. Mann's 1862 president's report, given June 16, 1862, during the Peninsula Campaign:

. . . Out of our congregations thousands of courageous men have gone forth into the bloody conflict with the armed forces of treason, covenant-breaking and lust for power. We would render them the honor justly do them; . . . We have already endeavored to strengthen the arm of the general government by the public expression of our confidence and patriotic devotion, and our efforts have received its honorable recognition.³⁷

The 1863 annual convention was held right after the Confederate victory at Chancellorville. War weariness was beginning to take a toll in the North as is evident from the president's report:

³⁶Minutes, Pennsylvania Ministerium, May 26-30, 1861, p. 6.

³⁷Minutes, Pennsylvania Ministerium, June 16, 1862, p. 6.

The tremendous struggle in which our country is involved for the re-establishment of its unity, is not yet at an end. We entertained pleasing hopes of a speedy end of these troubles and all the misery connected with them. But they are not yet realized. The hand of the Lord lays heavily upon us. This bloody war claims innumerable sacrifices: in our own beloved congregations thousands of families are oppressed with sorrow and distress with anxiety and grief. Widows and orphans are multiplied amongst us. In fact, there is no soul, which does not to some extent, share the pressure of these times.³⁸

The 1864 convention of the Pennsylvania Ministerium met in the middle of General Grant's bloody Overland Campaign, which ended with the siege of Petersburg, Virginia. The president's speech noted that:

" . . . our own churches and congregations, after so many costly sacrifices, are still called upon to furnish of their blood and their treasure, for the defense of free government against disloyalty and treason.³⁹

Finally, when final victory was achieved in the spring of 1865, the Pennsylvania Ministerium, together with Northern Lutherans everywhere, gave thanks to God that victory had been achieved, and that now a process of reconstruction, reconciliation, and recovery could begin with their vanquished foes, including the Southern Lutherans:

Our prayers on behalf of the ministers and

³⁸Minutes, Pennsylvania Ministerium, June 1, 1863, p. 6

³⁹Minutes, Pennsylvania Ministerium, 1864, pp. 6-7.

representatives of our glorious Union have never ceased. Our contributions of men and money have helped to maintain the strength of our armies, to relieve the sufferings of the wounded heroes, to soothe the dying hours of departing martyrs, and event to touch and melt the hearts of captured foes.

We claim no credit for this, but mention it, that we may occasion to offer thanks to God, who in a time of great public agitation and conflict has enabled us as a church, to place ourselves right upon the Great question from the beginning, and to stand up boldly and firmly, all through, on the side of Liberty and Law. We have rejoiced with great joy in the wonderful successes with which Heaven has been pleased to favor our righteous cause.⁴⁰

In summary, while many Lutherans from the Northeast were reluctant to take a strong stand against the institution of slavery before the Civil War began, once the succession of the Southern states occurred, Eastern Lutherans, without hesitation, united with their fellow citizens in the North, and showed both patriotism and support for the preservation of the Union. After Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation in September of 1862, the war took on another purpose, to end slavery. The Lutherans of the East, as loyal American citizens, then faithfully supported the Federal government and its war aims, until final victory was achieved. When victory when achieved, these Lutherans gave glory to God.

⁴⁰Minutes, Pennsylvania Ministerium, 1865, pp. 6-7.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF THE SOUTHERN LUTHERANS DURING THE CIVIL WAR AND THE FORMATION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA

When America was torn in half by the ^{slavery issue} coming of the Civil War, Lutheranism in America was not as affected by the country's division compared ^{as} to some other Protestant denominations, especially the Baptists and the Methodists. The vast majority of Lutherans lived in the Northern, free states, and were not directly and intimately involved in politically and emotionally charged issues such as slavery and states' rights. The only Lutheran synod which has an appreciable number of constituents in the South was the General Synod.¹ The General Synod had constituent state synods in the South, and these synods all chose to follow the "Lost

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small synods
were located
the South*

¹Nelson, The Lutherans in North America, p. 242.

Cause." A split in the General Synod took place a year after the attack on Fort Sumter, and resulted in the formation of a Lutheran church body composed of Southern Lutherans, who defended the institution of slavery on Biblical grounds.² This Lutheran synod, formed as a direct result of the Civil War, took the name "the United Synod of the South in 1886."³

Although the state of Virginia was one of the last states to succeed from the Union, after its succession, it brought both significant leadership, material resources, and manpower over to the Southern cause. It is then not surprising that the Lutherans in Virginia proved to be early leaders among the Southern Lutherans in organizing a new synod.⁴

In October of 1861, the Virginia Synod passed a resolution at its convention which largely reflected the thought of the Southern Lutherans:

Whereas it is manifest to us, in view of the final disruption of the former United States, the hostile attitude of those yet adhering to the remaining unscrupulous despotism at Washington and uncharitable and intolerant spirit and bearing of many of those whom we once esteemed as brethren in the same faith, and the

² Ibid.

³ Neve, Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America, p. 205.

⁴ Nelson, p. 242.

interest of our Church, loyalty to our government, as well as promptings of self respect, imperatively demand that we should at once dissolve all ecclesiastical alliance with them. Therefore,

Resolved: that we do hereby withdraw our connection with the General Synod of the United States, and earnestly favor the organization of a General Synod of the Confederate States.⁵

Since South Carolina was the first state to succeed, it is also not surprising that the president of the South Carolina Synod, in his presidential address in January of 1862, declared that the Confederate States of America was a just cause:

Merged in a war of self-defense, the preservation of our religious, social and political liberties, our cause is in the hands of Infinite Justice, and if faithful to God and to our country, we can not fear for the result.⁶

In response to President Elias B. Hort's encouragement to form a Southern Lutheran synod, the South Carolina Synod passed a formal resolution, commissioning its delegates to attend a meeting of Southern delegates from the General Synod at Salisbury, North Carolina in May of 1862. This meeting had been called by the North Carolina Synod for the expressed purpose of forming a Southern federation of Lutheran congregations.

⁵Minutes, Meeting of Synod of Virginia, Mt. Tabor, Va., October 18-22, 1861, p. 10., cited in Nelson, p. 244.

⁶Minutes, South Carolina Synod, 1862, p. 5., cited in Nelson, p. 244.

Due to limited attendance, the Salisbury meeting accomplished little more than to appoint a committee to prepare a constitution and present the ground rules for a constituting convention.⁷

This constituting convention met in Concord, North Carolina on May 20, 1863, shortly before the decisive battle of Gettysburg. Dr. John Bachmann, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was elected the first president of the "General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America."⁸ This new Lutheran synod, formed during a civil war, immediately demonstrated its allegiance to the Southern cause by stating its grievances against the General Synod:

The ecclesiastical body, composed of the most influential Lutherans of the North, acknowledged and endorsed the unconstitutional acts of the Federal government; called and denounced secession as a crime, proclaimed through the Church that the defenders of liberty were rebels, insurgents and solemnly declared and branded our southern brethren as traitors to man, to their government, and to God. Hence we can never expect from them mercy or pardon, much less equal rights and privileges, unless we bow in submission to their opinions and denounce as wicked what we⁹ conscientiously believe to be just and right.

⁷Nelson, p. 245. ⁸Ibid.

⁹Minutes, General Synod, Confederate States of America, 1863, appendix, cited in Nelson, p. 246.

A second major resolution reiterated the synod's support for slavery, but did express concern about "the moral relations existing between master and slave."¹⁰ The new General Synod of the Confederate States also adopted a statement of faith, which recognized the Bible ^{as} and the "only infallible rule of faith and practice." The synod's subscription to the Lutheran Confessions was weak from the onset. It acknowledged "a difference of construction among us with regard to several articles of the Augsburg Confession." To solve these impasses, the General Synod of the Confederacy decided to "affirm that we allow the full and free exercise of private judgment in regard to those articles."¹¹

One of the first accomplishments of this new synod was the establishment of a new Lutheran church periodical, the Southern Lutheran. Lutheran leaders in the South Carolina Synod had advocated such a regional newspaper as early as 1859, to promote Lutheran interests in the Deep South, particularly Newberry College in Newberry, South Carolina.¹²

¹⁰Nelson, p. 246.

¹¹Minutes, General Synod, Confederate States of America, 1863, appendix, cited in Nelson, p. 246.

¹²Richard Fritz et al., A History of the Lutheran Church in South Carolina, p. 280.

After the war began, the South Carolina Synod sent a circular letter to Lutherans throughout the Deep South. This letter called for the immediate establishment of a church periodical, to provide effective communication among Southern Lutherans:

Our earliest efforts should in our judgment be directed to the establishment of a paper, which might strictly be regarded as the Organ of the whole Southern Church, to be ultimately under the management and control of a general Synod.¹³

The South Carolina Synod volunteered to publish the paper until a General Synod could be organized. The first issue of the Southern Lutheran appeared on August 4, 1861. The place of publication was the cradle of succession, Charleston, South Carolina. The size and type style was made to correspond with its Northern counterpart, The Lutheran Observer. The subscription price was \$2.00, paid in advance.¹⁴ Within six months of publication, the Southern Lutheran had about a thousand subscribers. When the General Synod of the Confederacy was organized in 1863, the Southern Lutheran was placed under the General Synod's jurisdiction.¹⁵ The Southern Lutheran continued publishing throughout the war, until the first few months of 1865,

¹³Fritz et al., pp. 281-282. ¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Minutes, South Carolina Synod, January 20, 1862, p. 20., cited in Fritz et al., pp. 281-282.

when the Union naval blockade and the Federal occupation of Charleston made further publication impossible.

The Southern Lutheran played a conspicuous role in generating southern Lutheran support for the Confederacy and the war effort. In September of 1861, an editorial declared that "Our people generally, as well as the Confederate Congress, have attributed our past success to the interposition of Divine Providence." The editorial suggested that a "few minutes" be set aside at one o'clock each day for prayer in behalf of Southern arms.¹⁶ The Southern Lutheran became a leader in Confederate patriotism among Southern church papers.¹⁷

The course of the war soon had its effect on the Southern Lutheran. Shortly after its first issue, it had to be downsized to a single halfsheet on two sides.¹⁸ After battles began to be fought in both the West and the East, almost every issue of the Southern Lutheran carried the news of deaths among Lutheran soldiers from South Carolina congregations, deaths by wounds or disease.¹⁹

¹⁶Southern Lutheran, September 28, 1861, p. 2., cited Fritz et al., p. 284.

¹⁷Fritz et al., p. 285. ¹⁸Fritz et al., p. 289.

¹⁹Fritz et al., p. 286.

The Southern Lutheran was not the only organ Lutheran leaders used to rally their members around the flag. Sermons from Lutheran pulpits during the war stressed the divine purpose of the war and traced the working of Providence in every Confederate victory.²⁰ Lutheran pastors not only preached about support for the war, many of them actively participated in it.²¹ Three South Carolina Synod pastors served as chaplains. Dr. John Bachmann visited the military hospitals of his home city of Charleston and reported on his visits regularly to his synod conventions.²² Pastor Nicodemus Aldrich was chaplain for the First South Carolina Artillery, and Pastor Webster Eichelberger of the Newberry College faculty served as chaplain for the Twentieth Regiment of South Carolina Infantry during the latter years of the war.²³

²⁰Fritz et al., p. 285. ²¹Fritz et al., pp. 285-286.

²²Minutes, South Carolina Synod, 1864, p. 23., cited in Fritz et al., p. 287.

²³Southern Lutheran, August 25, 1864, p. 2., Minutes, South Carolina, 1864, p. 16., Lutheran Visitor, January 6, 1887, p. 4., cited in Fritz et al., pp. 288-289.

Those pastors who did not join the ranks of the Confederate forces found other ways to minister to their members serving in the Confederate armies. In the early days of the war, the main effort was to send Bibles and religious literature to the various regiments.²⁴ Pastors who were near the army camps were given the responsibility of distributing this material.²⁵ The Southern Lutheran began to be sent to army units in late 1862. Many of its articles tried to improve the character and the moral standards of the Confederate troops, by providing good examples for them.²⁶ The Southern Lutheran became firmly established as an organ for Confederate Lutherans as a result of this "Army Mission."²⁷

While every synod which constituted the General Synod of the Confederacy voted to provide some ministerial services to the army, a novel idea developed among five synods in 1863. They devised a plan to provide a "Missionary to the Army" to be supported by the General Synod as a whole. This idea never materialized, as there was already a shortage of pastors on the

²⁴George Hugh, Lutheranism in the Southern States, 1860-1886, (The Hauge, the Netherlands: Mouton & Company, 1969), p. 61.

²⁵Minutes, Virginia Synod, 1862, p. 5., cited in Hugh, p. 61.

²⁶Southern Lutheran, December 20, 1862, cited in Hugh, p. 61.

²⁷Hugh, p. 61.

homefront. As a compromise, several synods suggested the idea of several pastors donating a month of their time to serve as "volunteer chaplain." This idea met with limited success, due to limits of manpower, travel difficulties, and lack of finances.²⁸

Lutherans in the South during the Civil War years certainly participated in their share of suffering as the result of four long years of war. In addition to the sons, fathers, husbands, and brothers who never returned home from fields of battle, Lutherans in the South also suffered material losses, especially from Sherman's army as it marched through Georgia and the Carolinas.

Dr. John Bachmann, pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina, was the Southern Lutheran pastor who probably suffered the most material loss from the Civil War. Dr. Juergen Neve writes that Dr. Bachmann was "distinguished for his learning and practical talent."²⁹ He was a born leader and was instrumental in forming the General Synod of the Confederacy. He was pastor of his Charleston parish for 56 years, and was an enthusiastic defender

²⁸ Minutes, Tennessee Synod, 1863, pp. 7-8., Minutes, West Virginia Synod, 1863, pp. 16-17., Minutes, North Carolina, 1863, pp. 10, 17, and 1864, p. 19., Minutes, Virginia Synod, 1863, pp. 5, 16, 21., cited in Hugh, p. 63.

²⁹ Neve, p. 212.

of slavery and an ardent supporter of the Confederacy. This made him and his congregation targets of Federal occupation forces, who finally captured and occupied Charleston in the final months of the war. Federal soldiers took it upon themselves to destroy Dr. Bachmann's valuable scientific collections, burn his library and physically rough him up.³⁰ Many of his members left Charleston during the war and moved to safety inland, to escape the shelling of the city by Federal naval forces. Dr. Bachmann's church building suffered shell damage during a bombardment.³¹ Throughout these tribulations, Dr. Bachmann remained in Charleston and continued to visit the sick and wounded.³²

Other Lutheran church buildings in the South suffered worse fates. The Lutheran church in Ebenezer, Georgia, founded by the Salzburgers, was first used by Sherman's troops as a stable, then later burned.³³ St. Stephen's, Lexington was also desecrated and then burned by Sherman's army.³⁴ In Virginia, Grace Lutheran

³⁰Neve, p. 212., .Wentz, p. 167.

³¹Fritz et al., p. 294.

³³G. P. Voigt, A History of Ebenezer Lutheran Church, Columbia, South Carolina, p. 31., cited in Hugh, p. 298., Wentz, p. 167.

³⁴Evangelical Lutheran, September 26, 1867, p. 2., cited in Fritz et al., p. 298.

Church had to hold worship services irregularly, because during much of the war, the church was used as a hospital.³⁵ St. Paul Lutheran Church in Wilmington, North Carolina was desecrated by Federal troops after its occupation in February of 1865. In the previous year, all of the able bodied men of the church joined the "Home Guards" to defend the North Carolina coast. When Wilmington was captured, the Federals used everything inside the church for tinder, from the pews to the Sunday School library books. At the end of the war, the church was nothing but an empty shell.³⁶

Dr. Heathcote reports that throughout the American Civil War, to ~~the~~ its very closing days, "the Lutheran churches, both individually and as an organization, strongly supported the Confederate cause."³⁷ Virtually every able-bodied Lutheran young and middle age man in the South served in some capacity with the Confederate forces, and Lutherans certainly took their fair share of battle and disease casualties.³⁸

When the war ended in April of 1865, the Southern Lutherans worked to put the South back together again. The North Carolina Synod, meeting in convention less than

³⁵Heathcote, p. 105.

³⁶G. D. Berheim, The First Twenty Years of the History of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Wilmington, North Carolina, (Wilmington: S. C. Hall, 1879), pp. 30-34., cited in Hugh, p. 57.

³⁷Heathcote, p. 107. ³⁸Ibid.

a month after Lee's surrender at Appomattox, declared:

That as a Church we recognize it to be the duty of all good Christians to accept the changes which have been occasioned by the late war, as of Divine appointment, and to submit ourselves to the Constitutional authorities of the land.³⁹

After the war was over, in 1866, the General Synod in the Confederate States of America changed its name to "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod, South." It also declared that for theological and confessional reasons the Lutherans in the South determined to remain distinct. In 1886, the Southern Lutherans changed the name of their synod again, to "The United Synod of the South."⁴⁰ In the watershed years for American Lutheranism, 1917-1918, the United Synod of the South merged with the General Synod and the General Council to form the United Lutheran Church in America, which later became part of the Lutheran Church in America and eventually, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.⁴¹ The Southern Lutherans rallied around the flag of the Confederate States of America during the war years, but after the war was over, they worked just as diligently to cause their beloved South to rise out of the ashes and began a new era of prosperity and growth.

³⁹ Minutes, North Carolina Synod, 1863, p. 20., cited in Heathcote, p. 107.

⁴⁰ Nelson, p. 247. ⁴¹ Wentz, p. 269.