

The Negative Effects on Stephansgemeinde, Adrian, Michigan,
of Building Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw

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DEDICATION

This essay is dedicated to the members of St. Stephen's Ev. Luth. Church of Adrian, Michigan. I dedicate this paper to you because of your Christian love and support which you showed me during my vicar year among you. May the Lord continue to bless you and your congregation as he has for the last 125 years, and may we all continue to look forward to the day on which we will all be reunited in heaven.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the extremely beneficial help and guidance of my former bishop, Pastor Daniel Gieschen. Not only did he play a great role in my training for the ministry, he also instilled in me a love for this particular congregation which ultimately inspired the writing of this commemorative essay.

I would also like to acknowledge the work of Pastor Lyle Hallauer of Salem Ev. Lutheran Church, Scio Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan. Pastor Hallauer translated the previously cryptic first 50 years of the congregational minutes of St. Stephen's church, since they were written in old German script and were almost impossible even for a Seminary student to decipher. Without his generous work this essay would have been impossible.

Finally, behind every good man there stands a great woman. I would like to acknowledge the love, support, encouragement, help, friendship, companionship and direction given me by my help-meet, Wendy.

Thank you all!

The Negative Effects on Stephansgemeinde, Adrian, Michigan,
of Building Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Saginaw

1985 is a landmark year. This year marks the 125th anniversary of the founding of the old Michigan Synod. St. Stephen Lutheran Church of Adrian, Michigan was one of the charter members of the Michigan Synod. The congregation also celebrates its 125th anniversary in 1985.

In connection with the 50th anniversary of Michigan as a district of the Wisconsin Synod, Pastor Karl Krauss, a former Michigan District president, composed an essay narrating a brief history of the Michigan Synod. Krauss notes that Michigan's history has been hallmarked by leadership, aggressiveness, and zeal which he labels "the Michigan Spirit."¹ This "Michigan Spirit," Pastor Krauss points out, is inseparable from the history of Michigan Lutheran Seminary and its effect on the Synod.²

In a not dissimilar way, the history of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church of Adrian and the history of Michigan Lutheran Seminary are likewise inseparable. During the pastorate of Daniel M. Gieschen, St. Stephen's current pastor, the congregation has displayed an attitude of supportiveness of its District's prep school. For example, from the junior confirmation class of 1984, 6 out of 11 members chose to continue their education at MLS. This is quite an impressive ratio, considering the fact that these young men and women are leaving home for the first time to live a three-hours' drive from the security home means. Doubtlessly influential in this area are the pastor and the congregation's love for God's Word, a desire that its children be brought up in the Lord's nurture and admonition, and a clear understanding of the need for workers in the Lord's harvest.

This type of close relationship is to be expected from a congregation situated in a city where the Seminary was almost built. But this was, sadly, not always the case. The brief summary of events leading up to the Seminary's building in Saginaw is familiar to those even

casually acquainted with the school's history. Originally the Michigan Synod had decided to build its Seminary in the city of Adrian. However, two months after this decision was made, a special convention of the Synod rescinded the resolution and voted to build the Seminary in Saginaw. In every history of Michigan Lutheran Seminary ever written, the tale of the Adrian congregation drops from the picture, and Christoph Eberhardt, then Michigan Synod president, receives laudits as "father of the Seminary" for his influence on the school and labors in its behalf.

This essay's aim is to show that President Eberhardt's wheeling and dealing, and in some ways almost tactless machinations to bring the Seminary to his backyard in Saginaw, had considerably negative effects on the Adrian congregation. We would like to examine the early history of St. Stephen's congregation, or Stephansgemeinde, in close detail, guided by the following outline:

Thesis: The Michigan Synod's sudden decision of 1887 to change its plan from building its Seminary to Saginaw was the major reason Stephansgemeinde of Adrian was almost permanently lost to the Ohio Synod (now ALC).

- I. Stephansgemeinde shaped by its first pastor, Stephan Klingmann
- II. The Seminary question
- III. Stephansgemeinde under C. F. Haussmann: deteriorating health, destroyed morale
- IV. Detzer and the decayed doctrine of Ohio
- V. The return to Michigan under H. Heyn
- VI. History's lesson

I. Stephansgemeinde shaped by its first pastor, Stephan Klingmann

St. Stephen's congregation was organized in October, 1860 with eleven members signing the constitution. Its first pastor was the young Basel emigre and future president of the Michigan Synod, Pastor Stephan Klingmann. The "first" Michigan Synod had had a congregation in Adrian under a pastor named Trautmann. Trautmann was a student of Loehe who eventually turned to the Missouri Synod. His congregation

became St. John's of Adrian. So when the faithful Pastor F. Schmid organized his Michigan Synod, Adrian was a natural place to assign one of the men who came over from Basel. In 1860, Christoph Eberhardt and Stephen Klingmann arrived in Michigan. Much like the council in Jerusalem decided to divide the work, agreeing that Paul and Barnabas should work among the Gentiles and Peter, James, and John among the Jews, so did Eberhardt and Klingmann decide where their respective fields were to be. 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."³

Stephan ~~K~~lingmann served the congregation in ~~Adrian~~ as the first stage of a distinguished career. In 1865 he moved to Monroe to help the youthful congregation there, and in 1867 he took the call to Salem-Ann Arbor. From 1867 until 1881 Pastor Klingmann served as president of the Michigan Synod. His guidance of the church body he helped found was characterized by a strong loyalty to the Lutheran confessions. It was Klingmann who especially influenced Michigan's decision to remain in the General Council as long as it did. In Koehler's History of the Wisconsin Synod, he points out that this was not necessarily to its discredit:

The representatives of the latter synods, after all, were maturer men in age and experience than Michigan's. And in the Council's further developments, the Michigan men always sponsored the right principles. Not only did they do so from the start in regard to the mooted Four Points, but as long as they held membership in the Council stuck to their testimony, while practising forbearance for the sake of the right-minded men in the Council whom they did not want to desert in their struggle.⁴

Although Wisconsin, Minnesota, and others withdrew from the General Council early when it became apparent that there were serious doctrinal problems, President Klingmann kept Michigan in General Council membership. In doing so, he displayed a pastoral concern for the faithful within the General Council, yet not at the expense of faithfulness to

the Gospel. At the present time, it is hard for us to imagine a pastor with seven years' experience serving as Synod president and being its chief spokesman in inter-church relations. Yet such was the gifted man with whom God Blessed Stephansgemeinde as its first pastor.

It may be pure coincidence that the congregation took the name of its first pastor. But as we examine its earliest history, we can see that Stephansgemeinde really was "Stephan's congregation." Stephan Klingmann truly left his confessional Lutheran imprint on his first congregation during an age when faithfulness to the Lutheran confessions was an unpopular stand. The first article of the constitution of Stephansgemeinde reads;

Chapter I
Concerning the Pastor

The duties of the preacher are chiefly the following: to preach the Gospel and declare the Word of God in accordance with the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran church, to lead the public worship service (Eph. 4:11-12), to administer the holy sacraments, and to exhort the people to fulfill their duties; likewise, through proper means, privately as well as publicly, to build the church of Christ.⁵

This simple paragraph adds testimony to Klingmann's belief that the Lutheran confessions, the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran church, were clear and true expositions of God's Word.

Later on in his dealings with the General Council as President of the Michigan Synod, one of the biggest problems the council faced was "the Four Points;" pulpit fellowship, altar fellowship, lodges, and millennialism. The rule which became a byword for Lutherans of Klingmann's mold was Charles P. Krauth's "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers only; Lutheran altars for Lutheran Christians only." Again in the constitution of Stephansgemeinde composed by Pastor Klingmann, we see his adherence to this rule at this early point in his ministry:

Chapter VI
Miscellaneous Articles
Article I

No person, without the permission of the pastor and the remainder of the church council, members of the congregation,

and in the absence of the pastor, without the consent of the rest of the members, shall preach in the church. Every strange preacher who wishes to preach in St. Stephen's church must produce a satisfactory testimonial from an Evangelical Lutheran ministerium before permission is given to preach in St. Stephen's church.⁶

It was definitely a good Lutheran constitution with which Stephans-gemeinde took its first steps as a Lutheran organized congregation.

Klingmann's five-year pastorate at Stephansgemeinde was fruitful and eventful. It is incredible to us that a new mission congregation such as this would within five years build a new church, a new parsonage, and open a Christian Day School. But in 1865, Pastor Klingmann left Adrian, apparently over the mysterious case of Mr. Heinrich Schmitt. The minutes of the special meeting of May 13, 1865, tell us:

According to the resolution of the congregation on May 13th,

Mr. Heinrich Schmitt has been excommunicated from our congregation because of unchristian conduct and arbitrary transaction. This resolution shall be announced from the pulpit. Whoever conducts himself in an unseemly manner against the pastor or another member as Schmitt did, shall be excommunicated.

After declaring its satisfaction toward its pastor, the congregation promises to support him with sacrifice, according to its ability, on condition that he withdraw his statement and is further willing to serve her, which he did.⁷

Schmitt apparently acted in an unchristian and disrespectful way to Pastor Klingmann. Although Klingmann promised the congregation, and the congregation was willing to make sacrifices for him, he must have felt the Lord wanted him to serve elsewhere. Two months later, on July 31, 1865, "Pastor John Haas was called unanimously as pastor...the installation of Pastor Haas shall take place as soon as possible by Pastor Klingmann."⁸ Two things strike our attention here. Pastor Klingmann has moved on to Monroe, perhaps feeling the need greater there. But his association with the congregation was not ending. In a way, during the years following Klingmann's departure, the congregation was still influenced by its first pastor. It was still Stephansgemeinde.

During the following pastorates of John Haas (1865-1869), Jacob Wuerthner (1870-1875), and C. F. Hausmann (1875-1893), Pastor Klingmann continued to exert an influence upon St. Stephen's congregation as Synod president. In 1867, when President Klingmann attended the organizational meeting of the General Council, he selected Mr. Henry Beck of Adrian as his co-delegate. Mr. Beck was a charter member of Stephansgemeinde, and, as a council member, had evidently displayed his faith and ability. Klingmann must have noted that during his pastorate at Adrian.

Pastor Haas ran into some difficulty in 1869. From the record we read:

Since, unfortunately, lately two opposing factions appeared in the congregation, the one working for and the other against the last pastor, and many things happened which do not redound to the glory of God and his church, the church council was compelled to call the above mentioned parishioners to a congregational meeting to bring about satisfaction of the offense. The meeting was held without the presiding of the honorable president of the synod, Pastor S. Klingmann. It was also put to a vote regarding the quarrel as to whether all members present were heartily sorry for the offense given. All present answered, "Yes." Also the church council was forgiven where it had failed on its part. It was unanimously resolved to keep the present constitution unchanged and to conform to the given rules. All members present gave mutual promise to promote the spiritual and bodily welfare of the congregation in peace and harmony. It was further resolved to issue a call to Pastor Lutz of Monroe.⁹

Although the record is scant, we can deduce that a Mr. John Schotenhoefer must have been a sort of ringleader in the anti-Haas faction; at the January 17, 1870 meeting, "John Schotenhoefer promised to live according to the rules of the congregation."¹⁰ (Later, Mr. Schotenhoefer became quite active, painting the fence for the parsonage, serving as delegate to Synod, etc.) During this time of turmoil, President Klingmann acted as a guiding force. The congregation was hesitant to even install its new council members without having Pastor Klingmann first install its new pastor, Jacob Wuerthner.¹¹

Let one final example of President Klingmann's continuing influence on Stephansgemeinde suffice. In 1881, when the congregation needed a new teacher, he called J. Benjamin Meister, a former associate from Basel, Germany, as St. Stephen's schoolteacher.¹² So, as president of the Michigan Synod, Stephen Klingmann was still treated with the utmost respect by his first congregation.

II. The Seminary Question

It is important for us to have studied the early history of the congregation in this way in order to more fully understand the negative effects of building the Seminary in Saginaw. In Stephansgemeinde of Adrian, we have a congregation devoutly scripturally and confessionally founded. It is a congregation loyal to the Michigan Synod, but especially loyal to Stephan Klingmann, who at the time of the Seminary question was vice-president of Synod. The other officers of the Synod in 1886 are noteworthy, too. Christoph Eberhardt of Saginaw, also one of the original members of the Michigan Synod, was the president. Of special interest to us is that C. F. Haussmann, Adrian's pastor, was serving as secretary of the Synod. With these men at the helm, it is easy to see why the 1886 Michigan Synod convention chose to build Michigan Lutheran Seminary in Adrian.

The tone for the 1886 Michigan Synod convention was set in the opening remarks and address by President Eberhardt. The seminary question was a major one. Now that the Michigan Synod had withdrawn from the General Council in 1884 because two "Lutheran" pastors preached in Presbyterian pulpits in Monroe, she stood basically alone. Affiliation with the Synodical Conference was still in the future, merger with Wisconsin even further away. If the church body was to survive, pastors were needed, and, logically, a Seminary would provide those pastors. Said President Eberhardt in Kalamazoo in 1886, "Not less importantly are the higher schools a responsibility of the church and especially

useful for the preparation of Pastors and teachers for our churches and parochial schools." ¹³ That was the theme of the opening address which became the keynote for the convention: God upholds the church through the schools.

During the sessions of the convention, the offers of many congregations were considered. From Adrian the delegates heard, "Favorable situation for purchase. Congregation wants to contribute its appointed part, and a contribution of 500.00 if it will be built there." ¹⁴ This doesn't seem like an extraordinarily fantastic offer. Why was it accepted? As we go down to the convention floor in Kalamazoo in 1886, let's keep these things in mind: The temporary housing of the Seminary was in Manchester--approximately only 20 miles from Adrian, if the Synod so chose to build there. The offer was good; support of the congregation is important, and \$500.00 was a lot of money 100 years ago. There was an urgency about the whole affair; the lease at the Manchester facilities was soon to expire. And finally, it is not until the seventh and next-to-last session of the convention that the Seminary question comes to the floor. Delegates were anxious to return home. A decision was to be made, and they wanted it carried out.

Let's sit in on that session of the 1886 convention as recorded by C. F. Haussmann, pastor of Stephansgemeinde and Synod secretary;

Seventh Session

Thursday, October 14, 8:30 A. M.

Opened with hymn, a reading from Psalm 139 and message by Pastor Lederer.

The list was read which was from the minutes of the previous sessions as to what item was to be called before the assembly.

The Synod now decided to consider the Seminary question.

The part of the report of the first committee, which was referred to previously, was read again.

It was advised next to consider the offer of the congregation in Ypsilanti, and grounds for and against the acceptance of this offer.

Likewise the offer of the congregation in Zilwaukee.

Further, the opinions for a Seminary in Lansing.

Again the offer of Adrian.

Again the offer of Saline.

Again the offer of Saginaw City.

It was decided to hold an informal voice vote, in order to await the voice of the Synod in regard to the location of the Seminary, whereby the places of Ypsilanti, Lansing, Adrian, Saline, and Saginaw City were to come into consideration. The result of this informal vote was that of 44 votes taken, 19 fell to Saginaw
 3 to Saline
 18 to Adrian
 3 to Lansing
 1 to Ypsilanti.

Resolved: that the Synod name a committee of five, which would bring their opinions to the assembly this afternoon about both the places, Saginaw and Adrian in deciding the location of the Seminary.

The vice-president, Pastor Stephan Klingmann, was authorized to present a list of members for this committee to the assembly. This list which Pastor Klingmann presented was to be the members of this ad hoc committee--

- Mr. Deibel of Saginaw City,
 - Mr. Maher of Owosso,
 - Mr. Böhner of Sturgis,
 - Mr. Freytag of Adrian,
 - and Teacher Sperling of Saginaw--
- was approved by the assembly.

Pastor Lipperle received permission to leave the Synod assembly this noon, as well as his delegate Mr. Stadel. The same permission to travel home was extended to the following Synod members: Pastor Lederer from Saline, Delegate Schleh from Saline, Mr. Baumann from Greenwood, Delegate Esslinger from Ypsilanti.

Resolved: that the resolution regarding the committee of five be revoked.

Since the time for adjournment had come, it was resolved to extend the present session until the Seminary situation was settled.

Resolved: To take a vote in one ballot over the location of the Seminary between the places Adrian and Saginaw City.

The result of this vote is: that of 42 votes, 18 fell to Saginaw City and 24 to Adrian, and Adrian was announced as the place in which the Seminary was to be situated.

Closed with prayer by Pastor Menke.

Eighth Session

It was suggested to bring the resolution about the location of the Seminary in Adrian into reconsideration. The proposal was rejected by a majority of voice votes. 15

Perhaps it was a rush job. Perhaps it didn't go through floor committees. But it was a correct, orderly decision, arrived at by a majority vote of the delegates.

The news was received with joy by St. Stephen's congregation. It had promised to give its wholehearted support to the Synod if it decided to build the Seminary in Adrian, and it fully intended to

make good on that promise:

Special meeting held in the schoolhouse on Dec. 21, 1886 at 7:30 PM: The meeting, which was called to discuss the business of the Seminary, was unanimous in the following resolutions: 1. The congregation noted with joy the resolution of the Synod to build the Seminary in Adrian. She renews herewith her promise given at the Synod convention in such a case, and will, if possible, do more. 2. She instructs her delegates to carry out the Synod's resolution to be helpful with all might.¹⁶

For a few months the congregation in Adrian felt rewarded for its devout loyalty to the Michigan Synod. But that was enough time for Christoph Eberhardt to put the wheels in motion to change the 1886 decision of the Synod. He wanted the Seminary in Saginaw, and in Saginaw it was going to be built.

In many ways, we can see parallels between the founding of the Michigan Synod's theological training school and her sister synods of Wisconsin and Minnesota. In Minnesota, Pastor C. J. Albrecht of New Ulm was president of the Synod when Dr. Martin Luther College was founded. Pastor John Bading of Watertown was president of the Wisconsin Synod when the theological seminary and college were founded, and when Bading moved on to Milwaukee, the seminary moved with him. So all three synods chose to build their theological schools in the backyard of their synodical presidents.

President Eberhardt of Michigan was the only synodical president of the three who had to counteract a resolution of his synod to get the school built in his backyard. Some of the Michigan Synod's dealings, e. g., with the General Council, are excused because of the youth and inexperience of its leadership. But by this time, Pastor Eberhardt had been in the ministry almost 27 years. The secret, almost sneaky way he went about getting Michigan Lutheran Seminary built in Saginaw was tactless and had long-lasting negative effects on the congregation in Adrian.

As late as December, 1886, Stephansgemeinde thought that Adrian was the ^Site of the new Seminary. However, they heard rumors that ^e something was in the wind, and they didn't like it. In the minutes from the same voters' meeting in which St. Stephen's congregation promised to give the Michigan Synod its wholehearted support, we read:

She instructs her delegates to carry out the Synod's resolution to be helpful with all might, the cancellation thereof, however, as it is according to reports being planned, to counteract it with all legitimate means.

3. She instructs her pastor and teacher to work together with the delegates in the above sense.¹⁷

Their message to the Michigan Synod was clear. They would support the decision to build in Adrian, and would help with whatever means possible. If, however, the rumors were true that the resolution was to be revoked, they could count on total opposition from the Adrian congregation.

It goes without saying that Pastor Eberhardt must have been disappointed at the 1886 Synod's decision to build in Adrian. Between the months of October 1886 and January 1887, Eberhardt must have put the wheels in motion to come up with an offer that the Michigan Synod couldn't refuse. He knew that once the building started, it would be impossible to stop, so time was of the essence. At this time the bid was organized which "saved the synod \$3,487 by building in Saginaw."¹⁸ When he was ready and could virtually count on enough support from the members of the synod, he called the special convention of the Michigan Synod, held in January, 1887 in Lansing.

This convention was marred by absenteeism. In fact, the first session of the convention had to be postponed, because "in the course of taking the roll it became apparent that there was not a quorum."¹⁹ Among the noticeable absentees was Pastor Klingmann. Adrian was well represented. Not only were Pastor Haussmann and Teacher Meister there, but also delegate Henry Freytag and guest Friedrich Haag attended the ^d all-important convention.

The Synod came to order then in the afternoon of January 10, 1887. It was at this time, for the first time, that the reason for convening became evident to the delegates: "Pastor Christopher Eberhardt, president of the Synod, distributed a report concerning the purpose of this Synod. During this, Pastor Lederer presided."²⁰ Finally, the secrecy was over. The delegates who had travelled many miles at the behest of their president were going to be asked to call back into consideration a decision which they had previously resolved in convention not even three months before:

Pastor Kramer made the motion that the resolution prepared in Kalamazoo that the Seminary of the Synod be situated in Adrian be called back into consideration. During the long debate about this came the hour of adjournment.

Resolved, that we adjourn until the evening worship service.²¹

One wishes that he could have heard more of this debate, but it evidently had to do with the propriety of even calling a decision back into consideration. Finally, in the evening, after a worship service, the synod decided that it was going to go nowhere if it didn't at least bring the issue to the floor. The item of most import to this essay is the negative vote recorded by Pastor Haussmann of Adrian:

Second Session

Monday, January 10, evening, beginning at 9:00. Opened with prayer by honorable president Eberhardt. The calling of the roll was foregone. The minutes of the previous session were read and approved. The motion, that the resolution prepared in Kalamazoo that the Seminary of the Synod be situated in Adrian be called back into consideration was accepted. The negative vote on this motion by C. F. Haussmann was recorded.

Resolved: to appoint a committee, which shall be empowered to give a report on the various offers of the congregations regarding the seminary.²²

When the committee was named, no members of the Adrian delegation were even asked to serve.

In the later sessions of this special convention, there is no mention of Adrian at all. The committee considered the offers of

Ypsilanti, Saline, Grass Lake, and Saginaw City.²³ Haussman had withdrawn Adrian's offer, and was ready to carry out his congregation's will that he counteract the synod's change of plans "with all legitimate means." The history of the Michigan Synod and its congregations, written in 1910 in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Michigan Synod, says, "This much is certain, that Adrian neither changed its offer nor withdrew it."²⁴ However, a negative vote is only recorded in the way Haussmann did when there are strong feelings about an issue. St. Stephen's congregation and its pastor were hurt by the secrecy and the tactlessness with which their offer and promises were treated. Contrary to what the Geschichte claims, Adrian withdrew its offer when it became apparent that Eberhardt had called the convention for the express purpose of getting the seminary built in Saginaw instead of Adrian.

The rest of the story is well ~~documented~~ documented in several places. The Synod was convinced of the financial benefits of building in Saginaw, the seminary was built on the Court Street property which Pastor Eberhardt had donated, and Professor Lange started teaching his ministerial students. Pastor Eberhardt got what he wanted, and has long been remembered as the "father of Michigan Lutheran Seminary."

III. The Congregation Under Haussmann: deteriorating health, destroyed morale

We would like to examine the subsequent history of St. Stephen's congregation, especially in the light of its relationship to the Michigan Synod. Because of the Synod's decision to build its Seminary in Saginaw instead of Adrian, the congregation felt betrayed by the Synod which heretofore she had felt deep loyalty to.

The first sign of the deteriorating relationship between the Michigan Synod and Stephansgemeinde of Adrian occurred just seven days after the special Lansing convention closed. In its quarterly voters'

meeting held on January 18, 1887, the congregation resolved "that our congregation does not contribute any more to Synod."²⁵ This was not a totally insignificant gesture, nor was it one that would hardly be felt by the Michigan Synod. St. Stephen's was one of the biggest contributors to the Synod's coffers; its \$20.00 per year was twice the average amount that congregations were giving in 1887.²⁶

The withdrawal of financial support was soon followed by St. Stephen's complete withdrawal from the Michigan Synod. In the quarterly voters' meeting of July 18, 1888, "It was resolved that in behalf of the congregation of the relation of the congregation to the Synod, an extra meeting be held in the church on Sunday, August 5th at 2 P.M." At that special meeting, the decision was made: "It was resolved that our St. Stephan congregation secedes from the union with the Michigan Synod in which she has until now stood. The church council was instructed to communicate this resolution to Synod."²⁷ One can almost read a touch of sadness as those words were recorded. The congregation regrets that the step of secession was, in its own collective mind, necessary. The Michigan Synod, perhaps rightly so, considered the Adrian congregation and its leaders to be acting out of sinful pride.

At the 1889 convention of the Michigan Synod, President Eberhardt mentions to the delegates the regrettable departure from the synod without even alluding to the reason for the congregation's leaving:

The congregation in Adrian explained its departure at the end of our last year's convention. (Note: reasearch in finding any mention of this explanation in the record were fruitless.) Pastors Klingmann and Lederer were instructed, therefore, to endeavor to convince the congregation of its error, so that they might revoke their decision. The result of their many visits there will be verbally shared with the Synod.²⁸

Later in the convention, Floor Committee 1 reported on the president's report:

Resolved that the appoknted committee (Klingmann, Lederer) make a report on their investigation of the situation in Adrian. The report of this committee was given, that their visits had

remained fruitless. Also according to the declaration of Pastor Haussmann and teacher Meister, who explained everything they had to do to settle the points in dispute, this situation was not going to reach a quick settlement. The Synod regrets the unfriendly relations between itself and the congregation in Adrian, but hopes still for a future understanding.²⁹

There were evidently those in Adrian who would just have soon have followed the advice of their former pastor and make peace with the church body to which it had formerly felt such strong loyalty. When Pastor Klingmann visited them both in person and via the mail, his efforts were fruitless because only "After lengthy debate it was resolved to answer the same with a refusal."³⁰ This first seed of divisiveness within Stephansgemeinde was going to prove ominous.

The special meeting held in the church on May 25, 1893 was a landmark in the congregations's history. In that meeting, "The motion was made and supported that Stephansgemeinde join the Ohio Synod," and "The resignation of Pastor C. F. Haussmann was placed before the congregation, and was accepted with 30 votes for and 5 votes against."³¹ That the congregation didn't operate for long without synodical affiliation is not strange. In those days, if three congregations in one area believed the same thing, they formed a synod for mutual support and for cooperation in major undertakings. What happened to Pastor Haussmann? The divisiveness over the issue regarding the congregation's relationship to the Michigan Synod had evidently erupted into factionalism.

Pastor Haussmann first attempted to hand in his resignation on February 7, 1892; along with him, tendering his own resignation letter, was teacher Meister. The minutes of that meeting report, "After lengthy debate a vote was taken by ballot in this manner that those members who want Pastor C. F. Haussmann to continue to perform his duties, vote "Yes," and those against, vote, "No." The first ballot showed 35 Yes

and 24 No. A second ballot resulted in the same."³² The congregation also decided to meet again in a week to try to vote again on Haussmann's resignation. On that date the vote was 31 for accepting his resignation, and 21 against. The teacher's resignation was unanimously granted. Then it appears that the "pro-Haussmann" faction got the upper hand. In another special meeting on March 16, 1892, we find:

The minutes of the last special meeting of Feb. 14 were read, but not accepted as read. But the part of the minutes which dealt with the resignation of Pastor C. F. Haussmann was voted down and not accepted. But that part of the minutes which dealt with the resignation of the teacher, J. B. Meister was accepted. The motion was then made to adjourn, which was passed.³³

Perhaps at this time the "anti-Haussmann" faction became convinced that they had lost the fight. At the quarterly voters' meeting on April 19,

Mr. Wm. Hoehn, a member of the board of trustees, tendered his resignation, which was accepted. It was resolved that the pastor call a special meeting as soon as possible and a new member of the board of trustees be elected. Then a letter from Mr. WM Hoehn was handed in, which was signed by 17 active and 5 passive members, declaring their withdrawal from the Ev. Luth. Stephansgemeinde. The secretary was instructed to strike their names from the congregational record.³⁴

Pastor Haussmann finally did retire or resign after the forementioned meeting of May 25, 1893. He was physically unable to bear the strain of the last five years. The congregational secretary, Henry Freytag, got permission to "impart to the health-broken Pastor C. F. Haussmann the offensive discussion."³⁵

These were tumultuous years for Stephansgemeinde. One can only imagine how the congregation's history would have been altered had the Seminary been built in Adrian. As of May 25, 1893, the congregation had reached a low point as far as its morale was concerned. Its pastor, whose health had been deteriorating because of the strain, had resigned. Since they decided to enter the Ohio Synod, there was still a general indignant feeling toward the Michigan Synod. They were having financial

difficulties. Unfortunately, it was going to get worse before it got better. But so often the Lord uses adversity to build character. Through its brief affiliation with the Joint Synod of Ohio, the synod which had in 1881 withdrawn from the Synodical Conference over the predestination controversy, St. Stephen's congregation became more firmly grounded in the Scriptures and the Lutheran confessions.

IV. Detzer and the Decayed Doctrine of Ohio

A Pastor Meiser of the Ohio Synod acted as vacancy pastor following the resignation of C. F. Haussmann. He was from Detroit, and so it was natural for him to recommend to the shepherdless congregation to call his neighbor, a Pastor L. A. Detzer, also from Detroit, as pastor of St. Stephen's. 36

How Detzer stood doctrinally will become obvious as we study the subsequent history of Stephansgemeinde under his three-year pastorate, but a letter he wrote to the Ohio convention at Wheeling, W. V. in 1881 can give us a picture of where he stood on the doctrine of election:

The debate last week strengthened me in my conviction that the two modes of teaching in reference to the doctrine of election, when untainted by Calvinistic blasphemy and unmixed with synergism, are truly Lutheran. I am confident that the Faculty of our Synod will also in the future testify decidedly, both in writing and by word of mouth, against synergism. I therefore declare, as far as I am personally concerned, that the tropus chosen by the revered Faculty, "That God has elected those who are infallibly saved in view of the merits of Christ apprehended by faith" is not of church-dividing character. Now, personally, I hold to the tropus, "That God had elected those who are infallibly saved, in Christ, through, in and to faith," and reject all Calvinistic inferences. In order, now, that I may be certain as to my future relation in and to the honorable Synod of Ohio and other States, I request an answer to the question: Does the honorable Synod of Ohio and other States consider an adherence to the last-mentioned tropus to be of a church-dividing character? Please answer Yes or No.

Respectfully,
L. A. Detzer 37

The Synod gave the reply that his way of describing the doctrine of election was not of a divisive character to the church, but should

be avoided because of its possible Calvinistic interpretation. (However, a similar statement adopted by the Synodical conference occasioned Ohio's withdrawal from the Synodical conference. It was indeed, of a "church-dividing character.") So although Pastor Detzer personally appears to have taken a truly Lutheran confessional position on election, he still felt that he could consider as brothers those who took the synergistic position that God elected some to eternal life "because of faith (intuitu fidei)." This became a typical position of the ALC, of which the Ohio Synod, along with Iowa and Buffalo, was one of the synods that merged and formed that larger body.

It didn't take long in ^eDetzer's pastorate at Adrian for his true colors to show. By July 19, 1894, he was trying to get the congregation to repeal its constitution. His reason for doing so becomes obvious when we see which articles the Ohio Synod recommends for change. Instead of the firmly Lutheran confessional article which began St. Stephen's constitution, which stipulated that the preacher must teach and preach according to the symbolical books of the Lutheran church, Ohio and Detzer tried to insert,

The duties of the preacher are chiefly the following: to preach and declare the Word of God, to lead the public worship service, to administer the holy sacraments, and to exhort the people to fulfill their duties...and to belong to no fellowship which ever acknowledges the offensive religion opposing doctrine.³⁸

A subtle difference? Not when one considers that the traditional ALC view of the Lutheran confessions is that they are merely historical tracts which resolved problems that the church faced at that time, not as clear expositions of Scriptural teaching which are relevant for the Lutheran church of every generation. It didn't take the faithful of St. Stephen's to remind themselves of the heritage in which their congregation had been founded in 1860. In the next quarterly voters' meeting on October 18, 1894, it was "resolved that

the new constitution recommended by Synod have no validity and that the old church constitution be maintained as before."³⁹ And on July 25, 1895, when the matter came up again, the voters resolved that Article 3 (which stated that certain articles, including the one regarding the preacher's duties, are irrevocable and unalterable) "shall stand as it has for 30 years, underwritten by 31 members."⁴⁰ So, although its pastor and the synod to which it had joined itself tried to get them to do otherwise, St. Stephen's stuck to its guns and would not change their "model constitution."

One final area in which Pastor Detzer tried to introduce false doctrine insidiously was in the matter of lodgery (again, taking the "typical" ALC position!). Pastor Meiser, now recording secretary of the Ohio Synod, was invited to speak to the congregation about lodges. Immediately following his presentation, this resolution was passed:

Resolved, that at the death of a member, when the family requests it, the pastor agree with the lodge regarding the burial of a member who belongs to both the church and the lodge.⁴¹

For a congregation which firmly believed and stood by the biblical teaching that Jesus Christ is the only way, truth, and life, such a resolution seems unlikely to pass--but ^{it} they did. However, thanks be to God, although the devil may win minor battles, he has lost the war. So was the battle for St. Stephen's congregation won by the forces of sound doctrine, for only five months after that resolution regarding lodges somehow passed, the congregation called a meeting on May 21, 1896 "regarding the pastor's release."⁴² Before the congregation voted to release Pastor Detzer from his call, the entire constitution of the church was read by an elder.⁴³ The pastor's and the synod's adherence to false doctrine was manifest. The congregation had no recourse but to release the false teacher and

proceed from there.

Stephansgemeinde of Adrian indeed had suffered many things. Dealing with false doctrine and dealing with factionalism within a congregation is soul-wrenching business. Yet God saw this congregation through these turbulent times and strengthened the members through the various trials. Once they realized what they had lost by leaving the Michigan Synod, it was not long before the machinery was set in ^o motion for the restoration of brotherly relations.

V. The Return to Michigan Under H. Heyn

When Pastor Herm. E. Heyn accepted the call to serve as St. Stephen's pastor, he may have wondered what he was getting himself into, considering the congregation's most recent history. But by the time Heyn became the pastor in Adrian, and partly due to his leadership, St. Stephen's was a congregation which knew what it wanted and knew where to find it. She wanted to join a church body which adhered as faithfully to Scripture and the Lutheran confessions as she did herself; the church body that filled the bill was the Michigan Synod.

During Pastor Heyn's first meeting as pastor, on November 5, 1896, the congregation resolved "that the paper regarding the entrance declaration of 1893 (i.e. to enter the Ohio Synod) be rejected and abolished."⁴⁴ This was not just a "stricken" or "erased," but "rejected and abolished!" They wanted it very clear that they wanted no part of the Ohio Synod. Two months later, on January 28, 1897, St. Stephen's resolved "that we hold a special meeting and change a few points in the constitution, take up membership in the Michigan Synod and hold meetings each month."⁴⁵ This resolution was adopted unanimously at the special meeting held on March 16 of that same year. Henry Freytag was again chosen as the congregation's delegate to the

has stood since 1870. Previously the congregation had a small minichurch, which later was used as a schoolhouse until 1899 when the new schoolhouse was built. The teacherage was purchased in 1883 along with the old parsonage. The new parsonage was built 2 years ago.

Next to the preaching of the Gospel, which certainly always must be the primary matter in a Christian congregation, has become in this congregation the care of the parochial school. This writer has always let it be a chief concern of his. Perhaps we will be upheld, in spite of the hindrances which are against her....May the Lord of the church, our lord Jesus Christ, be and remain our protection and shelter, which he has been until now.⁴⁷

Though the congregation has weathered many storms in its 125-year history, perhaps none was or will be so trying as the years from 1887-1897. Through all of it, Christ remained the Lord of the church and the congregation's protection. By God's grace, the congregation was able to overcome its own sinful pride as well as the unfair treatment it had received from its brothers in the Michigan Synod. God was able to make the ~~well~~ works of men somehow work out to the glory of his kingdom~~s~~ and the praise of his name.

VI. Conclusion

Often the conclusion to an essay of this sort may become the forum for speculation, for asking "What if?" What if the Michigan Synod had stuck to its decision and built its Seminary in the city of Adrian instead of at its present site of Saginaw?" Surely the argument that "it was of great value for the school to have Eberhardt nearby, not only because of the aid he gave in teaching, but moreso because of his mature and well-considered advice and his sound Lutheran stand,"⁴⁸ can be easily met showing that having Pastor Stephen Klingmann nearby in Ann Arbor would have been advantageous to a seminary built in Adrian. I would like to draw two conclusions from the course of this phase of history as I perceive it. Firstly, it would be unfair and judgmental to conclude that the subsequent problems suffered by the Michigan Synod and its Seminary could have been avoided by building

it in Adrian. The second conclusion, on the other hand, cannot be denied. There were definitely negative effects on Stephansgemeinde because of the sometimes tactless manner in which the resolution to build the Seminary in Adrian was withdrawn. The question is, what lessons can this phase of history teach us?

I see three parties involved, basically. On the one side we have Pastor Eberhardt and the wheeling and dealing he did to get accomplished what he set out to do. If we fail to see the importance of tact in our dealings with others, we are truly blind. On the other side, we have Stephansgemeinde and all the troubles which she endured in the following decade after the Lansing special convention of 1887. If we fail to perceive that "pride goeth before the fall," or that seeking to get revenge for real or imagined wrongs is sinful and accomplishes only your own demise, we are truly ignorant.

The third party who I see as involved is none other than Jesus Christ, the Lord of the church. He guided Michigan Lutheran Seminary through rocky years. Now, at this summer's convention, we will dedicate a tremendous building project on the Saginaw campus. What blessings the Lord has bestowed on this school! The Lord of the church also guided St. Stephen's Lutheran congregation of Adrian through turbulent times. Using trials, God strengthened this congregation and made it not only more firmly rooted in the Word of God but also more loyal to and more supportive of the Michigan Synod. It is truly a fitting and appropriate ^{theme} ~~thing~~ in the light of her history, which the congregation has chosen for her anniversary year: St. Stephen Ev. Lutheran Church--125 years of God's grace.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

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