

THE FRANKEAN SYNOD'S IMPACT ON AMERICAN LUTHERANISM

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Few social evils have caused more agitation than our country's struggle over slavery. While slavery did not attract national attention at the formation of the Declaration of Independence, it already concerned America's political leaders. This document declared:

We hold these truths to be self evident: that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, that among them these are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Most of the leaders felt that Negroes were included in the "all men." Yet, this young nation could not endure a test of slave's status at such an early point in its history. So America's political leaders hoped that this question would resolve itself in a peaceful way in the years ahead. It did not. For some Americans, mainly plantation owners in the South, viewed slaves as property. In this way, they were not entitled to these undeniable rights and privileges. To the owners these slaves had no inherent rights.

Yet, the slavery question aroused another dispute. Was this terrible injustice only a prominent social evil or also a corrupt moral sin? Abolitionists used the federal government's documents to confirm that slavery was socially unjust. But did the Bible really support pious preachers' claims that slavery was sinful? In society no person, and certainly slaves were people, should legally suffer cruel and abusive treatment from another human. No person should be treated as property. Every person should be entitled to ~~hold~~^{own} property and enjoy certain basic rights. According to the Scriptures the bodily harm, the sexual infidelity and the withholding of basic human needs by the landowner are definitely

sinful. Yet, many ministers claim that even the institution of slavery incurred God's wrath. They insisted that the Bible also proclaimed slavery as a sin.

Yet, before we examine the Biblical evidence to see whether it permits slavery or not, this social issue necessitates an understanding of the church's purpose. The churches on earth exist for the sole purpose of spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that Christ has removed all sins. The Holy Spirit uses the Means of Gospel in Word and Sacraments to save, or justify, sinners. From that moment the Spirit-filled Christian attempts to please God by following God's will in his life. This sanctified life shows itself in how a Christian treats his fellow man. When the church overemphasizes the believer's role in his daily life, it deemphasizes the Means of Grace. When the Church primarily promotes social changes, it fails to carry out its true purpose. The best help any church can give a person focuses on faith in Christ, not on daily bread or a new social program. The pietistic Frankean Synod would strongly object to such a stance. For it demoted the Word and Sacraments and elevated personal expressions of good works. It insisted on very obvious display of devotion to God in extremely pious living.

THE BIBLE'S POSITION

The Frankeans continually referred to God and his Word in their rejection of slavery. But the Bible does not reject the institution of slavery, it supports it. Jesus himself portrayed the submissive attitude he desired in his disciples.

Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many (Mt 20:26 ff).

Jesus lived among his followers as one who serves (Lu 22:27).

Paul vividly describes Christ's nature on earth when he writes:

"he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.

(Ph 2:7)." Jesus as the servant became the fulfillment on Isaiah's suffering Servant.

In his epistles Paul also encourages this spirit when he urges slaves to obey their earthly masters. His words in Ep 6:5-8, ~~8~~ Col 3:22ff, I Ti 2:9f, and Phm 16~~x~~ confirm this. Paul's letter to Philemon would be a perfect place for Paul to tell Onesimus to seek his freedom. But Paul realizes his responsibility to his owner and sends Onesimus back to Philemon with this letter. Paul wants the master-slave relationship to be respectful and peaceful. So he also exhorts the masters to treat their slaves fairly and respectfully in Eph 6:9, Col. 4:1, and Philemon. Clearly, the Bible desires a peaceful relationship, but does not condemn slavery as an institution.

This does not mean that the Bible does not advocate freedom. But the freedom that God's word speaks about in countless references to servant, slavery or a similar synonym focuses on spiritual freedom. The Scriptures discuss a person's spiritual enslavement to sin and how Christ frees them from it. Because God gives believers such freedom, they gladly serve him by helping their neighbor. According to God spiritual freedom is more important than physical freedom. Yet Paul does suggest that slaves try

to get their freedom if they can in I Cor 7:22ff. So while God does not wish enslavement for anyone, he does want his children to serve him and other people willingly. He does not condemn slavery, but urges both master and slave to treat each other respectfully and fairly.

THE FRANKEAN SYNOD'S ORIGIN

The Frankean Synod originated in New York when a very liberal faction broke away from the liberal Hartwig Synod. The Frankean Synod existed for the principle purpose of abolishing slavery. But before this paper examines its purpose or history, some background knowledge of this area's religious fervor is necessary. In New York, Lutheranism was not very strong. Yet in 1826 some liberal Lutherans in Hartwick, New York formed a seminary which adopted a very limited confessional stand. (Hartwick is located about 8 miles southwest of Cooperstown in south central New York.)

In western New York the religious revivalists prompted people to designate this area "the burned-over district." People used this label to draw an analogy between the fires of the forest and those of the spirit.¹ The habitual revivalism by evangelists constituted "the most important single aspect of western New York's enthusiastic mood to national history."² Slavery provided a convenient challenge; for it did not have to do with the sins of friends and neighbors. Because of that, denunciations of slavery unified revival converts.³ While at first outsiders often looked on these antislavery abolitionists as fanatics, their numbers grew. Another enthused religious fervor started in this area when the Baptist preacher William Miller founded Adventism. (Seventh

Day Adventists of today owe their beginnings to Miller and his Millerites.) His enthusiastic preaching convinced hundreds of thousands to believe that the world was coming to an end in 1843 and 1844.⁴

With these fanatics and abolitionists the small band of Lutherans in Hartwick tried to compete. In order to be part of the gang, this little Lutheran group joined the majority of western New York in strongly advocating abolitionism. For the religious peer pressure around the Hartwick Lutherans lured them into a very liberal Lutheran confessional stand. Yet, from the 1840's to 1860's a firm adherence to the Lutheran Confessions became increasingly preferable.⁵ In fact, the Lutheran churches began to insist on acceptance of the Augsburg Confession. Yet, when the Hartwig Synod would not promote the abolition of slavery as a purpose of their church, four members of the synod broke away and formed their own synod. For them the Hartwig Synod "was not sufficiently pious or American."⁶ When these four men organized on May 25, 1837 at Fordsbusch, NY, about 55 miles northwest of Albany, an abolitionist, liberal, unconfessional synod was founded. One day this synod would single handedly change American Lutheranism in America in dramatic fashion.

ITS PURPOSE

From its beginnings the Frankean Synod existed for one main reason, to abolish slavery from America. The day after its origin the Frankeans passed four resolutions against slavery.⁸ The first resolution on "American Slavery" stated, "That slavery as it exists in the United States...is a sin... opposed to the spirit of the Gospel and a violation of the inalienable rights of man."

It also declared that "we view the traffic in human beings as carried on in this country...as revolting to humanity and as repugnant to the laws of Christ."⁹ The Frankeans took the most advanced positions of any contemporary synod.¹⁰ Many have felt that no group in any denomination exhibited a more extreme position on slavery.¹¹ True to their name, the Frankeans placed great emphasis on piety and unrestrained revivals with loud weeping and audible shouts for mercy. The Lord's Supper and Baptism became less important as Means of Grace. Church membership did not depend on Baptism, but on a public show of conversion experience. They also believed that since the doctrines in the Bible were not encased in creeds, so they were not binding.¹² The backbone of this liberal synod was not doctrine or Scripture, but their views on abolition of slavery.

With its call for aggressive action against slavery, the Frankean Synod first published a periodical entitled The Lutheran Herald. This paper actively supported the American and Foreign Anti-slavery Society.¹³ The Frankeans formulated The Herald to take an outspoken, public stand for abolition of slavery. The Lutheran Herald's antislavery was designed specifically against the Lutheran Observer's neutral stand. It was designed on an "effective instrument for the final overthrow and complete death of the indescribable sin of slavery."¹⁴ In constant financial trouble the first series only lasted from 1839-42. In August of 1844 Henry L. Dox restarted a second series. The first issue did not contain a single reference to slavery but everyone after that did.¹⁵ This second survived only one year of publication. Though it survived only a short time, it certainly reflected the abolitionists

views of the Frankean Synod.

In 1842 the Frankean Synod issued a "Fraternal or Frankean Appeal" to all Lutheran synods. In it they asked them to take action against the sin of slavery. The "Fraternal Appeal" was the most explosive anti-slavery document ever to come forth from a Lutheran body.¹⁶ The "Appeal" was printed in The Lutheran Herald and distributed to every Evangelical Lutheran Synod in the U.S. in July.

The Appeal condemned three injustices of slavery. 1. The inherent nature of slavery is corrupt. 2. Slavery is a system of theft and unparalleled robbery. 3. It is a system of unmingled injustice against men. The Frankean's Fraternal Appeal answers the question "What is the inherent nature of American slavery?" like this:

It is the reduction of immortal and godlike MAN, the crowning glory of this created world, into a thing, or a chattel personal....For slavery consists in the abhorrent principle of chattelship -- the sinking into annihilation all the personal rights of man to himself or the products of his industry and reduction to a thing, stripped of all personality and subjected mind, will, affections, soul and body to the arrogant control of his lordly master. 17

To emphasize slavery's theft and robbery the Frankeans wrote: "No slave has a right to say MY soul, MY will, MY head, MY body, MY affections, MY hands and MY feet, for they all belong to all intents, to his lordly master."¹⁸ Although these next words may sound like the U.S. Constitution, these words sum up the principle point of their Appeal:

Never did the all-wise Creator ordain that man should hold his fellow as his property; but all were created on an equality in the image of God, having equal rights, equal prospects and God-given prerogatives. 19

The Frankeans also listed three solicitations in their appeal to other Lutherans. 1. They asked them as world reformers and holiness

lovers to eradicate slavery. 2. The work of liberty insists on the establishment of brotherhood. 3. This account should persuade you to pray this thought: "The God of love, grace, purity and immutable justice sternly demands uncompromising ACTION against every abomination of the land."²⁰

Reactions to this Appeal were mainly indifference and hostility. The final tab gave the Frankeans few allies. Most Lutheran synods responded like this:

We feel grateful to the Frankean Synod for their well-meant attempt to enlighten us on the subject of American Slavery, and that our minds being always open to conviction on any subject, as soon as conviction has done its work, we will act; at the same time recommend to them the propriety of considering well the measures of abolitionists in the present day before they act. ²¹

A year later the East Ohio and the Allegheny Synod of Pennsylvania joined the Frankean cause. In 1846 the Pittsburgh Synod joined the ranks, led in their efforts by William Passavant. In 1852 the Wittenberg Synod pronounced "the system of American slavery a great national evil and an abomination in the sight of God," and determined to use their influence to remove this evil from the nation.²² Most synods merely turned a deaf ear and tabled this appeal. Many churches did not consider this a theological issue. The Frankeans considered such silence and neutrality as more evil than good because of the hypocrisy. The net result was that no synod had commented favorably or acted positively just because of the "Fraternal Appeal."²³

So while other churches merely spoke out against slavery, the Frankeans DID something about it. They practiced what they preached. From their very beginning, the Frankean Synod refused altar and pulpit fellowship with slaveholders. In 1844 two years after the Appeal,

the synod expressed regret that the greater portion of Lutheran churches allowed slavery. "The next year it declared that an appeal to the Scriptures to justify the sin of slavery is blasphemy."²⁴ It also declared that it would not join forces with any body tolerating slavery. In 1847 the synod amended its constitution to deny ministers and laymen seats in convention if they did not oppose slavery. The Frankeans even had a black minister Daniel Alexander Payne in their synod, but they did not have a church or mission for him to serve.²⁵ While the Frankeans did not make abolition a condition of membership, it scorned slaveholders in its area. To this social issue few people expressed themselves in such violent terms and no other church body or synod. No body, church or person, was willing to deal as seriously with this touchy question at this point in time.

OTHER RESPONSES TO SLAVERY

In addition to such bold antislavery statements, a casual observer can see how serious the Frankeans were by examining other Lutheran positions. The most comparable Lutheran abolitionist to the Frankeans was Samuel Simon Schmucker. Schmucker was a moderate, unionistic, Reformed-^{mind}~~mind~~ed Lutheran. As the president of Gettysburg Seminary and a prolific public speaker, he became a leader in American Lutheranism. Since Schmucker was not a strong Confessionalist, he was one of the authors who devised a broad-based distinctively American Lutheran confession called the Definitive Platform. Yet at the same time He spoke out earnestly against the evils of slavery. While he admitted that the Bible did not attack slavery as an institution, he maintained that it did militate against its evils.

Moreover, he used the biblical references about God creating man

in his own image and man treating his neighbor as himself to argue against the idea of slavery. Schmucker based his arguments against slavery on the Bible's words about man's natural right of personal freedom. His personal views on abolitionism and ecumenism created an unwanted tug-of-war. He felt that a Christian could not condone slavery, yet he also wanted to increase Lutheran unity.²⁶ His liberalism on unity and conservatism on slavery caused a vast conflict that he never resolved.

Another notable Lutheran theologian C.F.W. Walther, the spokesman for the Missouri Synod, permitted slavery too. In fact, although Missouri was a border state in the Civil War, slavery caused very little strife there. What really produced tension involved loyalty to the federal government or to the state, not the slavery issue. Walther did not favor the abolitionist cause because the Scriptures taught that slavery in itself was not sinful. He believed that it was certainly nothing to be desired; but where it existed, it should be tolerated by both slave and master.²⁷ Since the Missouri Synod and Walther considered slavery a temporal matter and not an ecclesiastical concern, they hardly discussed the issue. No Missouri convention ever discussed it, the synod publications were generally silent (only a few articles) and few congregational records mention it.²⁸

When Walther did present officially his views on slavery in the February issue of Lehre und Wehre, he rebuked the abolitionists for their unscriptural stand.²⁹ He further declared the abundant, approving examples from the Scriptures and its acceptance according to the 4th and 10th commandments. He concluded that the Christian should consider this whole slavery question a neutral political issue. The Missouri

Synod correctly taught that there is an unmistakable distinction between the temporal and spiritual realm. God's Word guides relationships in both realms. But spiritual freedom is not tantamount to temporal freedom.³⁰ Although one could enjoy spiritual freedom, he may have to endure a servant-master, subject-lord relationship on earth. The fact that the American government was founded on the natural right of man to be free did not make those principles right.³¹

The Norwegian Lutherans were sharply divided on this issue; most clergy members condoned slavery, while most laymen condemned it. Yet, slavery did not cause problems until the summer of 1861. At their convention the slavery question became a major issue. It ended with the already-mentioned division and the synod allowing slavery. Because the Norwegian Lutherans had close ties with Missouri, they followed their thinking. For they even supplied a professor at Missouri's ministerial school, Concordia Seminary in St. Louis.³² While he taught in this position, Professor Larson received ridicule for his supposed Southern sympathies toward slavery. He expressed the synodical leadership's position when he taught that the Bible did not demand masters to free their slaves. If the Bible desired this, why did it not demand its abolition rather than give rules to govern the principles.³³ Slavery in itself is not a sin but an evil on mankind and a punishment from God. While slavery was acceptable, the specific, sinful abuses of slavery were and would be judged by the Ten Commandments. For Christianity made slaves and masters brothers.

The Southern Lutherans reacted resentfully toward this appeal as you might expect. Many Lutherans in the South favored gradual emancipation, but all of them resented the North's attempts to interfere in

their affairs. They were hurt and upset over the attitude and actions of their brothers in the North, especially this little upstart synod in New York. Of the few Southern Lutherans there were some had brought their slaves along to church. More importantly, their ministers assured them that the Bible permitted slavery. Southern Lutheran leaders like Dr. John Bachman carried on an influential ministry among blacks. For 40 years he ~~seved~~^{served} as a pastor in Charleston, S.C. His synod, the South Carolina Synod brought more blacks into the Lutheran Church than any other Lutheran synod in the South. By 1850 one-third of all new members received by 43 parishes of this synod were black. By 1860 one-quarter of its members were black.³⁴ Of these blacks two, Jehu Jones and Daniel Alexander Payne, became black ministers. Bachman's pervading influence in the pulpit and papers told the South that slavery was not wrong, only its abuses. According to God's Word Dr. Bachman agreed that all people are created equal and that blacks had the same talents and abilities.³⁵ Yet the Bible did not condemn slavery, and it stressed spiritual concerns, not social ones like abolition, as its first priority.

So what final reactions did the Frankean's efforts and Appeal bring? Most Lutherans in the North were silent and unaffected. A few like Schmucker and Passavant were moderate abolitionists. In time when tensions continued to increase, more Lutherans were forced to deal with the slavery question. Then only after the war had begun did Missouri, the Norwegian Lutherans and others discuss abolition. Meanwhile, the South resented the North's absolute stand and finally the Lutheran sides split. The Fugitive Slave Laws in 1850, Uncle Tom's Cabin in 1852 and the Dred Scott case in 1857 gave witness to

the heightening tensions in regard to slavery. The Lutheran Church showed remarkable resistance to abolition. For the Methodists, Baptists and Presbyterians had all divided into northern and southern bodies 10 - 15 years earlier. Wentz writes:

It is indicative of the religious genius of the Lutheran Church and her central conservatism that until the outbreak of actual hostilities did not allow the purely economic and moral issue of slavery to make a division in its ranks.³⁶

For the General Synod remained intact until 1862 when the armies were actually in the field and the battle lines were formed. Before 1862 only the little Synods of Frankean and Pittsburg had broken away from the General Synod.³⁷

Then in 1862 the Southern Lutherans finally severed ties with the north. The Synods of North and South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia founded the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Confederate States of America. When Georgia, Tennessee, and Holston joined this official group in 1863, they changed their name to United Synod of the South. So while the Frankean's Appeal promoted abolition, it affected Lutheranism very little. It was twenty years ahead of its time and directed at the wrong type of Christians. Most Lutherans were not the eager abolitionists that other religious and social groups were.

ITS LACK OF CONFSSIONALISM

Another notable trait of the Frankean Synod was its lack of confessionalism. Named after the pietist Herman Franke, this synod upheld his ideal of "deeds not creeds". Its members put more stress on how a person believed or lived his faith than exactly what he believed. Doctrine was not very important to the Frankeans and as such they did not accept the Augsburg Confession

when they organized. For during the 1800's Lutherans were becoming more confessional not less. Lutherans showed this in their rejection of the Definite Platform and in their insistence on the Augsburg Confessionism as a minimal doctrinal statement.

Exactly what their confessional stand was is unclear, but the Frankeans presented a poor image of confessionalism. For early in their existence their creedal stand was disputed. When the Frankean Synod separated from the Hartwig Synod, churches were divided and often the two Lutheran groups shared the same territory. Because of this, many bitter lawsuits ensued. The New York civil courts were called on to rule in a couple of cases. In Richmondville the two synods reached a compromise. In West Sand Lake the Hartwick minority was awarded the property. And in the most celebrated case the Hartwick minority in Sharon and New Rheinbeck also won. But why did they win and why was a civil court ruling on this?

Pastor Phillip Weiting had left the Hartwick Synod to unite with the Frankean Synod. He wished to take his two congregations in Sharon and New Rheinbeck with him. The majority agreed with him and only a minority opposed the move. Only two leaders in New Rheinbeck parish and none in Sharon remained loyal to the Hartwick Synod.³⁸ Yet the Hartwick Synod won. The decision hinged on who accepted the teachings of the Augsburg Confession. Shortly after the split, the Hartwig Synod began to promote the Augsburg Confessions heavily. This caused the public to look at them as being the more Lutheran of the two liberal groups. Meanwhile the Frankean Synod had never accepted the Augsburg Confessions, but rather formed their own confession called "Declaration of Faith". Furthermore the Honorable Lewis H. Sanford exceeded

the limits of his office. Since the Constitution separates church and state, this case should have been decided in an ecclesiastical court.

In a Lutheran Ecclesiastical court of appeal, the same verdict most likely would not have been reached. Even the Lutheran Observers Benjamin Kurtz, an avowed opponent of the Frankeans, admitted that the "they were sound~~ed~~ in all their fundamental doctrines" on the basis of the writings.³⁹ Yet Judge Sanford ruled that they had departed from these fundamental doctrines in their Declaration in three ways: 1. The article on the Trinity did not teach the three persons, but one God with three different names. 2. The article on Jesus Christ did not teach his equality with God, it only listed his attributes. 3. The article on original sin failed to condemn to hell all those who did not repent and receive Baptism. What the Frankeans said in these articles was not necessarily wrong, but they did not say enough. ¶ They, however, admitted to their deviation from some teachings in the Augsburg Confessions. But they correctly claimed most Lutherans in America taught something differently than what the Augsburg Confessions stated. Most Lutherans were not confessional at this point and few included the Augsburg Confession in their constitution or upheld its teachings fully. This included the Hartwig Synod. For it officially agreed to Schmucker's liberal Definite Platform where baptismal regeneration was rejected as well.⁴⁰ Nonetheless after five years, the Honorable Sanford ruled against the Frankeans. Although Sanford read much Church history and Lutheran doctrine, he was not a Lutheran and had no business in rendering a decision in this case. All this is mentioned because the Frankeans received a tarnished image from this case, when in fact they were no more

liberal on doctrine than half of the Lutheran bodies in the General Synod.

With this reputation preceding them, the Frankeans asked for admission into the General Synod for the first time in 1839. The General Synod denied membership to the Frankean Synod and Tennessee Synod in an unprecedented move. It viewed these two synods as the two extremes, which would endanger Lutheran unity.⁴¹ The ultra-conservative Tennessee was too confessional and the radical Frankean Synod was too liberal. For in 1835 the General Synod had courageously declared that only those synods that believed in the fundamental doctrines of the Bible should be accepted.⁴² Yet at this point this declaration did not mean acceptance of the Augsburg Confession. For the General Synod's constitution and those affiliated with it did not ^{even} mention the Augsburg Confession in their constitutions until after the Civil War. The General Synod, however, rejected both of them with these words:

Whereas said persons (The Tennessee Synod and the Frankean Synod) are introducing practices which we consider contrary to the Word of God, thereby causing disturbances and divisions in our churches (sic)...we deem it our sacred duty... to beware of the efforts of these men to cause divisions and offenses contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel. 43

The General Synod had not said it directly but they had two reasons for rejecting the Frankeans. 1. They lacked a firm stance on Lutheran orthodoxy in which they adopted their own confession. 2. They assumed an emphatic abolitionist stand on slavery. Their failure to promote the Augsburg Confession and their views on abolition and temperance brought rejection. Although no major evidence suggests that their rejection was due to their antislavery activities, their outspoken, negative publicity on abolition and articles of faith certainly hindered their acceptance.⁴⁴ Kuenning's

discussion emphasizes the Hartwig Synods defamation of the Frankeans through their representative George Lintner. His propaganda and influence on other delegates along with Tennessee opponents produced a statement broad enough to exclude both. Lintner's deciding vote that refused to rescind this decision further supports this claim.⁴⁵ This decision showed that slavery and the role of the Augsburg Confession were redefining Lutheran identity.

Finally, when the General Synod accepted the Frankean Synod on its second try in 1864, its admittance caused a divisive split. For twenty-five years later the slavery question had caused more and more tension and publicity. After the War began at Ft. Sumter in 1861, the battle became a war over two ways of life with the main dispute on slavery. After the southern synods broke away from the General Synod, the General Synod denounced the evils of human slavery. It accepted domestic slavery as a national evil and supported Lincoln's plans for emancipation. Now the Frankeans could once again apply for membership into the General Synod. Nothing had changed on the Frankean side. They still vehemently opposed slavery and had yet to incorporate the Augsburg Confession into their constitution. On the other hand, the liberal half of the General Synod was beginning to reveal its true nature. In addition, the majority joined the side of the abolitionists by supporting the union forces, by believing that slavery was a sin or both.

The General Synod had un officially accepted the Augsburg Confession in 1860. So now the Frankean Synod decided to ask

the General Synod at its 1864 covention in York, PA. At first the General Synod refused its membership until they could "give formal expression of its adoption of the Augsburg Confession as received by the General Synod."⁴⁶ But when the Frankeans voted again to join the General Synod at their convention in 1863, they also adopted its constitution. So the next day the delegates of the Frankean Synod explained that they thought that when they had adopted the General Synod's constitution, they had also accepted its confession of faith as well. After a lengthy and spirited discussion, the convention's delegates voted, 97 to 40, to admit the Frankean Synod.⁴⁷ Their acceptance hinged on the "understanding that said synod, at its next meeting, declare in an official manner its adoption of the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession, as a substantially correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God."⁴⁸ The key phrase lies in the words "substantially correct." For the General Synod held a loose view in subscribing to the Augsburg Confession.

But the minority coservatives regarded this action as a dangerous precedent. They entered a formal protest against such a decision which allowed a synod to enter the General Synod without formal acceptance of the Augsburg Confession, but only the mere intention to do so. The next day 28 delegates from 10 of the 25 districts presented a formal protest against the Frankeans' admission to the General Synod.⁴⁹ Ten signers of the documents were from the Pennsylvania Ministerium. They in turn filed their own protest and then withdrew from the convention to report the synod's liberal actions to their own convention. Their report used these objecting words: "that by this action of the General Synod its constitution had been sadly, lamentably violated."⁵⁰

Bente offers his views on this matter when he writes, "The admission of the Frankean Synod was generally regarded as a further victory of the liberal element of the General Synod over the conservatives."⁵¹

When the Pennsylvania Ministerium walked out in protest at the last convention, it did not mean therefore to break with the synod. The Ministerium's delegation assumed that they had withdrawn temporarily while the General Synod, on the other hand, looked at this walkout as a permanent action. In 1864 the General Synod had amended its constitution to make complete subscription to the Augsburg Confession a definite prerequisite. So the Ministerium in 1865 selected their delegates to the General Synod's convention at Ft. Wayne on May 17, 1866. An air of serious conflict permeated the convention's opening. Kuenning states that it was destined to be one of the most disruptive meetings in the history of the Lutheran church in this country.⁵² Both sides expected a split. While the Ministerium did not consider itself out, the orthodox German element in its midst desired a separation. Meanwhile, the liberal element of the General Synod correctly charged the leaders of the Ministerium with negotiating for a new general body. Each side in the controversy wanted to place responsibility for the schism in the church on the other.⁵³

After five days of wrestling over procedures, the assembly upheld President Sprecher's refusal to seat the Pennsylvania delegates. Dr. Sprecher objected to the Ministerium's clause in joining the General Synod in 1853 which claimed the right to secede, and the majority agreed. Because of this episode, the Pennsylvania Ministerium definitely withdrew from the General Synod. Charles Porterfield Krauth on behalf of the Ministerium

published an invitation to all Lutheran synods to form^a more *conservative* Lutheran body. This invitation asked "all those synods which confess unqualified allegiance to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, for the purpose of organizing a new general body upon distinctly Lutheran principles."⁵⁴ Thirteen synods responded to the convention this invitation had requested at Reading, PA in December, 1866. For this convention Dr. Krauth prepared thesis on the fundamental principles of the Lutheran faith which the required number of synods adopted.⁵⁵ In November 1867 at Ft. Wayne, therefore, eleven synods formed the "General Council of the Evangelical Church in North America." The Frankean Synod's admission into the General Synod caused its break up, but it also produced the formation of the General Council. At the time it separated the conservative Lutherans from the liberal Lutherans in North America.

ITS END

From this point on the Frankean Synod received very little attention, if any. When the North prevailed in the Civil War, it firmly declared that slavery was abolished. The Frankeans then lost their national attention. For now the synod was actively involved in easing the tensions between slave and master and between black and white. This small, socially-active synod never possessed many ministers or members. The Handbook of Lutheranism listed these statistics about the Frankean Synod in 1891. It operated 34 churches and 18 missions with 26 Pastors who served 2379 communicants.⁵⁶ The synod lasted another 17 years when in 1908 it merged with the Hartwick, New York, and New Jersey Synods into the New York Synod of the General Synod. This New York Synod followed the General Synod's lead in uniting with the General Council and the United Synod of the South into the United

Lutheran Church in America. All these church bodies continued to exemplify the Frankean mold. They stressed a unionistic outlook, a lack of Lutheran confessionalism and a huge emphasis on social issues.

AN EVALUATION

Kuennings's book The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism contains a wealth of insight on the Frankean Synod. The author explains the Frankean's actions from their viewpoint, which may have been slighted through the years. Kuennig insists that the Frankeans were not unLutheran and that the main reason for its rejection was not its false doctrine, but moral activeism, especially in abolitionism.⁵⁷ But then why didn't the Frankean Synod adopt the Augsburg Confession anytime during the first 25 years? Certainly after its rejection in 1839, it had to know a more confessional stand was necessary. He also praises the social awareness of the Frankeans and the subsequent church bodies like the U.L.C.A. Kuennig incorrectly states, "The divergent theological strands of orthodoxy and pietism are not contradictory" and that "pietism helped to restore the relationship between faith and good works."⁵⁸ But these two do not mix; they clash. For pietism overemphasizes works and lessens the reasons for the Means of Grace.

Kuennings's thinking causes confessional, doctrinal and fellowship problems. Liberation theology only focuses on freeing the body from social ills, instead of the soul. Furthermore he writes:

A new ethical and political theology would allow Lutherans to work more closely with major segments of evangelicals and other Protestants as well as Roman Catholics, who are moving to moving rapidly to a more radical involvement with crucial moral and political problems. 59

Political Theology? What Kuenning is advocating is a social Gospel. This will result in a positive strategy for ecumenical endeavors. For Kuenning believes that "true ecumenicity is realized less in theological dialogues on doctrine than in the community of Christians engaged in efforts to realize peace and social justice."⁶⁹

Kuenning regrets that the Frankeans' moral activism and humanitarianism have been ignored and forgotten. But we rejoice because the Lutheran majority recognized their lack of orthodoxy, their deviation from the Holy Spirit's means and their uplifting of personal piety which seeks social change. This tiny synod's overemphasis on emotion and experience threatened to replace solid adherence to the Word. Slavery, not Christ, became the central focus of the Frankean Synod. When the Civil War ended slavery, abolition went out of style, but Christ crucified is always pertinent.

ENDNOTES

1. Whitney Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1950), 217.
2. Ibid, 217.
3. Glenn Altschuler and Jan Saltzgaber, The Trial of Rhoda Bement (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 159f.
4. David Rowe, Thunder and Trumpets (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985), 92.
5. E. Clifford Nelson, ed., The Lutherans in North America (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975), 218.
6. Erwin Luecker, ed. Lutheran Encyclopedia (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), 388.
7. Paul Kuenning, The Rise and Fall of American Lutheran Pietism (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1988), 143.
8. Peter Unnasch, Slavery and American Lutheranism (WLS Library, 1989), 3.
9. Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955), 163.
10. Nelson, 143. 11. Unnasch, 3. 12. Nelson, 144.
13. Wentz, Basic, 163. 14. Kuenning, 179. 15. Ibid., 179f. (2 sent.)
16. D. C. Stange, "The 125th Anniversary of a Fraternal Appeal," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly (CHIQ), Vol. 40 (April 1967), 43.
17. Ibid., 44. 18. Ibid., 45. 19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., 47. 21. Wentz, Basic, 166. 22. Ibid., 164.
23. Kuenning, 127. 24. Wentz, Basic, 163. (2 sent.)
25. Kuenning, 139-145. Payne graduated from Gettysburg Seminary after Dr. John Bachman had sent him there. He was the officially the Black minister Lutheran ordained into the cleargy roll at the Frankean Synod Convention in 1939. There he made a very emotional, inspirational speech, which surely deepened the Frankeans in their dedication to abolition. Rev. Payne the returned to the African Methodist Episcopal Church and later served as President of Wilberforce University in Xenia, Ohio.
26. Kuenning, 151.
27. P.M. Ravasch, "The Lutheran Church- Missouri Synod During the Early Years of the Civil War", CHIQ, Vol. 31 (Oct. 1958) p. 69.
28. Kavasch, Vol. 31 (Jan. 1959), 106: 29. Ibid., 107.

30. Kavasch, Vol. 31 (Oct. 1959), 68. 31. Ibid., 69.
32. Kavasch, Vol. 31 (Jan. 1959), 106.
33. J.M. Rohne, Norwegian American Lutheranism Up to 1872 (New York: MacMillian Company, 1926), 204.
34. Kuenning, 135f. 35. Ibid.
36. A.R. wentz, The Gettysburg Seminary (Harrisburg, PA: The Evangelical Press, 1965), 204f.
37. Ibid. 38. Kuenning, 188. 39. Ibid., 192.
40. Ibid., 190.
41. J.L. Neve, The History of the Lutheran Church in North America (Burlington, IA: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934), 102.
42. Ibid., 104. 43. Kuenning, 200. 44. Ibid., 208f
45. Ibid., 209f. 46. Wentz, Basic, 149. 47. Ibid.
48. Kuenning, 215. 49. Ibid.
50. F. Bente, American Lutheranism, Vol. II (St Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1919), 125.
51. Ibid., 126. 52. Kuenning, 217. 53. Wentz, Basic, 151.
54. J.P. Koehler, History of the Wisconsin Synod (Sauk Rapids, MN Sentinel Publishing Company, 1970), 110.
55. Ibid.
56. J.D. Roth, Handbook of Lutheranism. (Utica, NY: The Young Lutheran Commission, 1891), 50.
57. Kuenning, 219.
58. Ibid., 229f.
59. Ibid., 233.
60. Ibid., 234.

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