

WISCONSIN'S FIRST LUTHERAN PASTOR
CREATES BIG LUTHERAN DISASTER

The Turbulent Ministry of L.F.E. Krause at Trinity, Freistadt

by

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During this, my senior year at the Seminary, my wife and I have occupied an upper flat in an old white house in the sleepy hamlet of Freistadt, WI, located three miles west of Thiensville on county F, near the border of Ozaukee and Washington Counties. Across the road from our upper flat, there is a tree-shaded cemetery, next to which stands a stately old stone church, with a majestic cross-crowned steeple straining high into the heavens. At night, the cross on that steeple is lighted, and since the church stands on a hill, that cross can literally be seen for miles around. On Sunday morning, lovely Lutheran chorales can be heard tinkling sweetly from the chimes located in the steeple bell tower. Unfortunately, also on Sunday morning, at exactly 7:00 AM, the bells in that bell tower clang abrasively 60 or 70 times, obviating the need for an alarm clock in our bedroom on that day of the week.

As the name of the establishment which serves as one of the two taverns, and as the only restaurant in town, the Landmark, indicates, there is something historically significant about this church. A walk around to the front of the church reveals an official State of Wisconsin historical marker, which tells the reader that this church is Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church, significant because it is the oldest Lutheran church in Wisconsin, established by settlers in 1839. The sign also tells the reader that the first pastor of this church was L.F.E. Krause, who served from 1841-1847, that the Lutheran Buffalo Synod was founded at this church in 1845, but that since 1847, Trinity has been a member of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Conspicuous by its absence on that sign is any further information regarding Pastor Krause, who by virtue of his service at Trinity, was the first Lutheran pastor in Wisconsin. From the brief mention given to Rev. Krause on that marker, one would never guess how complex he was and how much trouble he caused during the stormy years of his ministry at Wisconsin's pioneer Lutheran congregation.

I. BACKGROUND TO ESTABLISHMENT OF FREISTADT: The Prussian Union and the Old Lutheran emigration.

In order to properly set the scene for the years of Krause's ministry in Freistadt, we have to take a look at how the members of Trinity church came to Wisconsin, and how Krause came to be their minister. The settlers were emigrants from Germany, from the Prussian territories of Pomerania and Silesia, who were fleeing the religious persecution which resulted from the creation of Prussian Union Church by the King Frederick Wilhelm III. Partly the result of rationalism, which eroded the desire for spiritual truth, and partly the result of King Frederick's political wish to unify his subjects into one church body, the Union church had as its objective to amalgamate Lutherans and Reformed into one church. This church union movement was instituted in earnest in 1817, the 300th anniversary of the 95 theses of Luther.

At first, resistance to this new church was minimal, but there were still Lutheran leaders who resisted the union movement, for doctrinal reasons, chiefly on the grounds of the differences on the Lord's Supper. One of the foremost leaders was Claus Harms of Kiel, who in 1817 published a 95 theses of his own, urging a return to the true Lutheran principles of the Reformation.¹ Another vigorous and early opponent was Johann Scheibel, professor of Theology at Breslau.² Nevertheless, acceptance of the union grew to the point where by 1826, in Pomerania, the home of most of the future Freistadters, there were only 41 pastors and 64 congregations outside the Union, compared to approximately 660 pastors and 1280 congregations within the Union.³

Toward the end of the 1820's and into the 1830's, however, stiff resistance to the Union began to develop among those Lutherans who felt that the Union was the death knell of true Lutheranism. These people came to be known as the "Old Lutherans." As their resistance to the Union church intensified, so did the persecution of the government against them. Pastors were thrown into jail, churches were stormed during services, lay people holding home devotions were

interrupted by the police, charged with and fined for holding "unlawful divine service assemblages,"⁴ and so on.

In this type of atmosphere, it soon became evident to many of the Old Lutherans that the only way that they could preserve true Lutheranism and maintain their safety was to get out of the country, to a place where they could practice their religion freely. By 1835, emigrants began to trickle out of Prussia, some to Russia, some to New York, some to Australia.⁵ The emigration fever began to build and soon large groups of Old Lutherans were planning to leave the country. Large groups from Silesia and Mark left in 1838, and in 1839, a sizable contingent from Pomerania, made plans to leave. They chose as their leaders Captain Heinrich Von Rohr of Magdeburg and Pastor J.A.A. Grabau of Erfurt, both leaders in the resistance movement. As they prepared to leave for America, these emigrants were joined by a group from Silesia, who were members of Pastor Krause, upon whom we shall now refocus our attention.

Lebrecht Friedrich Ehregott Krause was born on October 19, 1804, in Silesia. He studied under the aforementioned Johann Scheibel at Breslau and under his influence became a staunch opponent of the Union church. He was ordained by Scheibel on May 25, 1835, and his anti-Union activities shortly landed him in jail on July 19, 1835. He was released on the condition that he only serve in a Union church, but he traveled around Silesia secretly as a Lutheran pastor. That is about all that is known about his early life, up to the time of his first journey to America.⁶

Returning to the Old Lutheran emigration, it has been noted that Krause's Silesian congregation joined with the Pomeranians under Grabau and Von Rohr and left Germany in 1839. Krause himself, however, had left earlier, sailing from Germany on Nov. 4, 1838, and landing in New York on Jan. 7, 1839. He was accompanied by one of the elders of his congregation named Faude. The two of them had been sent ahead to check out the lay of the land, with the congregation paying their expenses.⁷ Apparently, while Krause was in New York State and his

congregation in Germany awaiting emigration, confusion took place on both sides of the Atlantic. On the Germany side, the congregation wavered between deciding whether to go to America with Grabau or to Australia with yet another group; and on the American side, Krause wavered between wanting to stay in America or return to Germany. The Silesians finally hitched up with Grabau's people and came along to Buffalo, but Krause eventually decided to return to Germany. He did so right about the time the Silesians and Pomeranians were landing in New York, during the late summer of 1839. Sources disagree as to whether Krause met Grabau and Von Rohr before returning to Germany or just left without their knowledge.⁸ Nevertheless, when all of the Silesians and Pomeranians, who had counted on having two pastors in their new land, finally landed in America, they found themselves with only one, namely, Grabau.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREI-STADT AND THE CALLING OF KRAUSE

The first wave of these immigrants were led by Von Rohr to Buffalo in late September and arrived there on October 4, 1839. Since Grabau had been on the last boat and had been delayed by stormy weather, he and a large number of the group had not gotten to Buffalo yet. Still, Von Rohr led 40 families, mostly the wealthier ones who still had some money, on to Wisconsin, where they landed in October of 1839. Some of these families stayed in Milwaukee, but most of them moved on to the wilderness about twenty miles to the northwest. At the time this site was known as Town Nine in Washington County. It came to be known as Freistadt in the city of Mequon, in Ozaukee County.

The settlers went to work establishing a community, and they also set about the task of establishing a spiritual community. The first building to go up was Von Rohr's log cabin and that was where religious services were held until the spring of 1840, when a separate log church was erected, which also served as the school.

The pioneers, however, soon had to wrestle with what became a monumental problem for the first Old Lutherans in America. That was the problem of church

and ministry. How were they to take care of their spiritual needs in the absence of a pastor? Did the congregation have the right to appoint someone from among their own midst to administer the Sacraments until such time as they could obtain a trained pastor? The Freistadters twice called Grabau to be their pastor, but twice he turned them down. The settlers were in dire spiritual straits, since "their infants were unbaptized, the sick had no one to minister to them, and there was no one to perform marriage ceremonies."⁹ Under such circumstances, the immigrants felt that the only thing to do was to call a layman to dispense the sacraments for the time being. So they asked their school teacher Joachim Lueck "to dispense the Sacraments among them and to hold services in this time of need."¹⁰ Apparently, the services which teacher Lueck conducted were reading services.

The congregation decided to check with Grabau to see if this was OK and received his surprising answer in his pastoral letter, or Hirtenbrief of December 1840. In it, Grabau not only advised against having laymen dispense the Sacraments, but even severely reprimanded them for doing so. This, quite understandably, caused the people in Wisconsin some frustration.¹¹ The Hirtenbrief is a significant document in that it reveals the doctrinal aberrations which were held by Grabau, which also caused the Buffalo Synod much grief later on, and which also were the underlying causes of L.F.E. Krause's later problems at Trinity, Freistadt.

Some of the errors of the Hirtenbrief were as follows: Grabau claimed that a pastor was only validly called if he were approved by other orthodox pastors; that the call of the congregation itself was not enough to establish a valid ministry. He also said that only a pastor who was so called and ordained could properly dispense the sacraments. He held that the body with the overriding authority in the church was the synod, not the individual congregation. Moreover, only the pastor had the right to excommunicate and the congregation is bound to obey the pastor in all things not contrary to God's Word.¹² In a nutshell,

Grabau's error was that the church was established by the pastors, not by the congregations, and ~~by~~ assigning to the office of the ministry authority far beyond the authority given to it by Scripture. "Therefore papistical errors of the crassest sort were handed out in this peaceful frontier life, which killed that very religious freedom which those immigrants had sought in this country."¹³ Grabau insisted that the Freistadters had erred in thinking their emergency situation mandated calling a laymen to minister to them, but that rather God was merely testing them so as to build up their patience until a properly called pastor could serve them.

The majority of the congregation accepted the Hirtenbrief and immediately decided to call a pastor. The man they called was Krause, who, as we have seen, had returned to Germany and was at this time residing in Hamburg. What Krause had been doing in Germany since his return in 1839 is not altogether clear, but one source indicates he had experienced quite a tumultuous year. It is reported that he returned to Breslau to see his fiancee, the daughter of a Silesian pastor. She, unfortunately, had become disillusioned with the Old Lutheran emigration and broke off the engagement. At this time, Krause became subject to the severe depression which apparently plagued him throughout his life. Although he was an outlaw on account of his leaving the country without a passport, he turned himself into the police and spent some time in jail again. Subsequently he betrayed the whereabouts of some other underground Lutheran pastors in order to gain his release. The offer was accepted, Krause was released and asked to join the Union church. Then he abruptly came to his senses and came back to the Lutherans, begging forgiveness, which he received. In view of all that had happened, he was advised to seek a pastorate in another country.¹⁴

Krause records in his Chronicle that he received the call to Freistadt in Hamburg on Dec. 13, 1840. He accepted and left for America on May 25, 1841. He arrived in New York on July 11. He came to Buffalo in August, where Grabau

informed him of the situation in Wisconsin. On Aug. 23, Krause sent a letter to the congregation informing them that they would have to pledge allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions and that they would have to promise to desist from their "sectarian" practices (i.e., allowing a layman to dispense the Sacraments), and then he would come and serve them. The Freistadters responded positively and Krause left for Wisconsin on Sept. 15, arriving Sept. 24. Apparently, during this stay in Buffalo, Krause married a widow named Katherine Elisabeth, who had two daughters named Caroline and Wilhelmina.¹⁶ As far as is known, he never had any children of his own.

Before one examines the activities of Krause in Freistadt and looks aghast at his sometimes bewildering behavior, it is best to try and put oneself into the situation which Krause was entering. If these German pioneers were pretty much like most other American pioneers, they were no doubt just a bit head-strong and independent-minded. They had left Germany because they were tired of having people in authority tell them what to believe and how they could worship. They had left their familiar homeland and had undergone considerable hardship on their way to Wisconsin. And life in the wilderness was certainly no picnic, either. In contrast, Krause was a man, who believed, like his associate/mentor Grabau, that strong centralized church government was required for this new church in this new land of freedom to maintain the purity of true Lutheran doctrine. The two ways of thinking were bound to clash, and that is what they did. "The approach of these Lutherans (Grabau and Krause) was basically episcopal and authoritarian. This type of approach resulted in constant friction between the pastor and people."¹⁷

III. KRAUSE IN FREISTADT, Part one: Getting off on the wrong foot.

In Wisconsin, there were actually two congregations; a smaller one in Milwaukee, where some of the immigrants had remained, and the larger one in the forest at Freistadt. These two groups were considered as two parts of the same congre-

gation throughout Krause's ministry. When he first came to town, Krause first stopped in Milwaukee. He arrived on Sept. 24, 1841, and preached his first sermon there on Sept. 26. After the service, the majority of the congregation agreed to Krause's terms for organizing their church: 1. They declared themselves subject to Scripture, the Confessions and the old Lutheran church orders of Saxony and Pomerania. 2. They recognized Grabau and his Buffalo congregation as the orthodox Evangelical Lutheran church and accepted the principles of the Hirtenbrief. 3. They repented of "those things wherein, they had, even unknowingly, offended against good church order, and (pleaded) for forgiveness." 4. They officially recognized their error in having a layman dispense the sacraments in the absence of a minister. 5. They recognized as "sectarians" those who did not accept the Hirtenbrief. 6. They declared their unity with the congregation in Buffalo.¹⁸ This same procedure was followed in organizing the settlers in Freistadt as well, where Krause preached the following week. There seems to have been more "sectarians" in Milwaukee, however, and Krause devotes much of the early part of his Chronicle describing his repeated invitations to them to rejoin the church, invitations which were always accompanied by scathing condemnations of their "enthusiastic" errors.

Krause, then, came to Milwaukee and Freistadt with all guns blazing, determined to tear out anything that he considered heresy. Just why there was so much trouble among the Milwaukee group and not in Freistadt has not been determined. It is possible that in the Milwaukee group there were more Silesians, and in the Freistadt group more Pomeranians. Some Silesians, we recall, had been forsaken in Buffalo by Krause, and his own congregation in Germany had been ill-treated by him...Therefore the Silesians had no special love for Krause, whereas the Pomeranians did not know Krause so well, and it took them a while to catch on to... his unfortunate character..... How many of the Milwaukee members Krause lost in the very beginning on account of his belligerent nature has not been determined. It is very probable that, if Krause had been good-natured and slower to anger, he could have taken over this congregation without the loss of any members in spite of the errors of Grabau.¹⁹

An example of the way Krause came to town with his guns blazing comes from his own Chronicle, where he describes those who appointed lay people to dispense

in incredibly harsh terms. He called the two teachers (in Milwaukee and Freistadt) who had been so appointed "two sorcerors, who with their heretical baptism and Lord's Supper duped frivolous souls in this devil's comedy."²⁰

Over and over again in his diary, he describes these poor people, who merely had been trying to make the best of a difficult situation (caused in large part by his desertion of them in 1839) as tools of Satan and heretics of the worst kind.

KRAUSE IN FREISTADT, part two: Temporary smooth sailing.

After blowing into town so ferociously, still almost all the folks in Freistadt and the majority of those in Milwaukee "submitted quite humbly to the new pastor and to the teachings of Grabau."²¹ It was decided that since most of the members of the dual parish lived in Freistadt and since the cost of living in Milwaukee was considered too expensive, the new pastor should live in Freistadt. The settlers built him a cozy parsonage and provided for him quite lavishly by standards of the day.²²

There is evidence that Krause had a good side to his personality, and that he could have survived in Freistadt and even flourished if he had consistently demonstrated the warm traits which surfaced at times. For example, during 1844, the congregation in Freistadt was involved in a time-consuming and labor-requiring, building project in that it was building a new stone church. Despite the size of the project, it became a great source of congregational pride and feeling of fellowship. Pastor Krause did much to foster a true atmosphere of camaraderie among the work crews and in the congregation in general. He often would serve the workers a meal or join them when they brought their own food, even though he lived close by and he could have been expected to eat in the comfort of his own home.

At times, Krause, as the original Lutheran pastor in Wisconsin, even showed signs of becoming a truly evangelical leader of Lutheranism in the territory. When another group of Old Lutherans arrived and settled in Kirchain, about seven

miles to the northwest, Krause served them for a time, and when their pastor Adolf Kindermann arrived, he was quick to establish warm relations with him, and even held a public ceremony establishing Kindermann's orthodoxy.

Moreover, when large numbers of Norwegian Lutherans began to settle in the Muskego area, and all over parts of Racine and Milwaukee counties, they appealed to Krause for help. Specifically, they wanted him to examine and ordain Claus Lauritz Clausen, so that they would have someone to administer to their spiritual needs. Krause willingly obliged and did so on October 18, 1843.

For a time, it appears that Krause held an optimistic and enthusiastic outlook for the possibilities of evangelical Lutheran mission work in Wisconsin. He wrote a letter to Wilhelm Hatstedt, a pastor in Michigan and one of the many missionaries sent over by the Wilhelm Loehe missionary school in Bavaria, enlisting his support in the attempt to have more missionaries sent to Wisconsin. Krause had plans for a missionary based in Watertown, one in Milwaukee and for a second pastor for his congregation in Milwaukee. In addition, Krause felt that another missionary who could work in the English language was indispensable; someone who could then "not only exert a positive influence on other Protestants, but would also be in a very favorable position to start mission work among the Indians."²³

Another high point during the Krause years in Wisconsin was the establishment of the Buffalo Synod here in 1845. During sessions in Freistadt from June 3-19, and in Milwaukee from June 23-25, Pastors Grabau, Krause, Kindermann and Von Rohr, who had returned to Buffalo and studied for the ministry under Grabau, organized the fledgling synod, along with several laymen from the various congregations. The Buffalo Synod was therefore the first of the Old Lutheran synods to be formed in America.

KRAUSE IN FREI-STADT, part three: Things start to go downhill.

Even before the establishment of the Buffalo Synod in 1845, Krause began to encounter troubles. As we have noted, he didn't exactly win any congeniality

awards when he showed up in 1841, but for the most part things went well in his first two or three years. There was one constant sore spot, however, which involved the dissidents in Milwaukee who never did accept his ministry. These people came to be served by a Gottlieb Kluegel, who was a theological candidate from among the Saxons in Missouri. Kluegel had some serious doctrinal flaws, chief among them an inclination for enthusiasm. He was not officially sent by the Missourians, was never sanctioned by them and eventually was disowned by them. Still, he was a burr in Krause's saddle, who called Kluegel, among other things, "a misguided Schwenkfeldian nut."²⁴

The situation with Kluegel and the resulting tension between the Buffalonians and the Saxons seems to have gradually irritated Krause to the point where he would allow the darker side of his personality to surface, especially from the pulpit. "When Krause became excited, he would bring things into the pulpit which did not belong there. He would forget himself so completely as to scold and rant and would use expressions which could not be excused, much less justified."²⁵

Late in 1844, presumably after the bulk of the building project had been completed and Krause's irritation began to resurface, he caused a ruckus by hastily excommunicating two men who had recently arrived in Freistadt as part of Pastor Kindermann's group. Their sin? They "expressed surprise at the immoderate, disagreeable invectives and unholy accusations of heresy" which they heard from Krause's pulpit."²⁶ This abuse of excommunication, which Krause demonstrated on many occasions, resurrected tension in the congregation and in this particular episode, naturally engendered some measure of conflict with Pastor Kindermann in Kirchayn.

At the beginning of 1845, Grabau sent Krause a letter informing him that a Pastor Ehrenstroem, who had come over to America with Kindermann but who had settled in the Buffalo area, was guilty of heresy. Krause reported this to his congregation, and when he did so, a prominent member named Martin Krueger²⁷

expressed disbelief at the report, since he had been a member of Pastor Ehrenstroem's congregation in Germany and thought quite highly of him. Krause escalated this disagreement into a major power play and subsequently put Mr. Krueger under the ban, once again without consent of the congregation. When Krause reported his action to Kindermann and the Kirchayn congregation and instructed them to acknowledge Krueger as under the ban in their church as well, the Kirchaynites began to seriously question whether they could accept the dictatorial actions of Krause.

The Freistadt and Kirchayn congregations attempted to get together to discuss these problems, but Krause's overbearing attitude prevented any constructive action. And once again, "he made the old mistake of bringing such matters into the pulpit and scolding his dissatisfied members and also the Kirchayn people."²⁸

The last straw that led to the final breakdown between Krause and his people was the infamous horse and buggy incident. From the beginning of Krause's stay in Freistadt, there was a problem of transportation for him to and from Milwaukee, where he preached once every six weeks. Either a member had to call for him for the trip to Milwaukee or the Milwaukee congregation had to hire a horse and buggy for him at the cost of \$8.00 a shot. Neither of these modes suited Krause very well, and he felt he had a simple solution when he proposed that the congregations buy him a horse and buggy for \$90. This could have been accomplished by having each member contribute three cents a week for twenty weeks.

It wasn't a bad suggestion, but nevertheless the Milwaukee church turned it down, saying that they couldn't afford it, even though they were paying \$64 a year by having a horse and buggy rented every six weeks. Krause thereupon lost his temper and resigned his Milwaukee pastorate. The congregation did not accept the resignation. One almost gets the impression the Milwaukeeans were trying to irritate Krause in return for the irritations he had caused them. Krause reacted in his usual manner and proceeded to pour fire and brimstone upon the congregation

in his next sermon, after which he suspended everyone who did not vote for his suggestion from the Lord's Supper. Krause could have accepted the decision or even tried to work things out with the congregation, but true to Grabau-Hirtenbrief principles on the ministry, he felt the congregation had to accept his suggestion if for no other reason than that he wanted it that way.²⁹

As could be expected, this incident in Milwaukee was received unfavorably by the ~~the Freistadters, who were~~ beginning to get fed up with their pastor's tyrannical antics. Because Krause had now alienated not only the people in Kirchayn, but also almost everyone in his own two congregations, Kindermann suggested that Grabau be called in and a meeting of the Buffalo Synod Ministerium be convened to see if the sorry situation couldn't somehow be worked out.

KRAUSE IN FREISTADT; part four; The roof caves in.

The meeting of the Buffalo Synod which had been suggested by Kindermann for the purpose of salvaging Krause's ministry in Freistadt and Milwaukee was held in the spring of 1846. Grabau and Von Rohr came over from New York, and naturally, Pastor Kindermann was present. Kindermann had been close to the situation and after repeated attempts to smooth things over between Krause and his people, became convinced that Krause was in the wrong. After investigating the matter as best they could in the short time they were there, Grabau and Von Rohr came to the conclusion that while Krause could have handled the situation better, still the congregations should have given in to him. Extensive negotiations were held between Grabau, the President of the Synod, and the congregations. In the end, they got nowhere, since the congregations, although they could forgive Krause, insisted he be transferred to a different charge. Grabau would not give in to this demand, insisting that the congregations had gone back on their promise to buy Krause the horse and buggy (which they hadn't made) and were thereby in error. When Grabau and Von Rohr left town, nothing had changed.

Soon after this fruitless attempt at reconciliation, a sizable part of both congregations declared themselves free of Krause's ministry. This they did officially on June 1, 1846.³¹ Eventually, the anti-Krause group won a court battle for ownership of the church building and also won half of the church property. They began holding separate services on Nov. 8, 1846. First they turned to Kindermann to serve them, but as a member in good standing of the Buffalo Synod, he could not do so. With nowhere else to turn, they appealed to the Missouri Synod, who in 1847 were meeting at their initial convention in Chicago, and asked if they could call a pastor from their midst. After investigating the Freistadt situation, the Missourians assented to the request of the settlers and gave them the right and even assigned the duty to call another pastor. We shall take a closer look at the actions of that convention later.

Returning to Krause in Freistadt; after he caused the split in the congregation, his days in Wisconsin were numbered. He served the small band of Buffalo Synod loyalists for about two years. Their numbers dwindled until most of them either rejoined the original church or were absorbed into other Buffalo congregations in the area. In May of 1848, Krause received a call out of Wisconsin to Martinsville, New York, which he accepted on July 16. He preached his farewell sermon in Freistadt on Sept 3, 1848.

IV. KRAUSE'S POST-FREISTADT ODYSSEY

As Krause's years in Wisconsin were turbulent, the rest of his life was no different. In Martinsville, he had a falling out with Grabau and by May of 1850 he wanted out of the Buffalo Synod. Then he applied for membership in the Missouri Synod. To do so, he had to clear up the difficulties he had caused in Wisconsin. He came back to Milwaukee and Freistadt and apologized for most of his actions. He wrote an interesting "Public Confession" in the Lutheraner, in which he renounced the Buffalo Synod for its errors in the doctrine of the ministry, the call, the universal priesthood, Christian liberty, church government, excommunication, and

the relation of pastor to congregation. He rejected the Hirtenbrief and wholeheartedly embraced Missouri's position on all these doctrines.

For awhile he served a Missouri Synod congregation near Detroit. After experiencing difficulty there, he went back to Germany in 1853 and, incredibly enough, joined the Prussian Union. If that were not sufficiently astounding, he returned to America in 1856 and expressed the desire to rejoin the Buffalo Synod. Of course, he had to retract his "Public Confession" of 1850, which he did in an almost hilarious article in the Buffalo Synod periodical called Informatorium. This article is almost identical to the previous one, only the names "Buffalo Synod" and "Missouri Synod" are switched around, so that Krause completely denounced his former stand and swore eternal allegiance to the Buffalo Synod and its doctrines.

In 1856, Krause went to Minnesota and founded St. Martin's church in Winona. After a year he joined the Illinois Synod, but returned to Winona in 1861 and stayed until 1865. In 1862, along with F. W. Weir, a Buffalo Synod drop-out, he founded the Concordia Synod of the West. In 1863 in Winona, his wife Kaethe died. In 1865, he took a call to Ellenville, New York and was affiliated with the Ohio Synod for a time. In 1871, he accepted a call to Lobethal, Australia, where he lived out his life in yet another troubled ministry. After further changes in his parishes, he died in Australia, on May 24, 1885. It is reported that he died after singing his own funeral hymns and delivering his own burial sermon from his death bed.³¹

V. ANALYSIS

What can be said about this bizarre man? What exactly was it about him that caused him to be so good at getting people, especially the people in Freistadt, mad at him? On one hand, it has to be admitted that some of the charges which the dissidents in Milwaukee and Freistadt had brought against Krause before the Missouri Synod convention in 1847 were not altogether true and that "a little maliciousness was evident in the accusations made to Synod."³² On

the other hand, Krause later admitted to the majority of the charges regarding his personal behavior, chief of which was the charge of over-bearing and scandalous actions in the majority of his hasty excommunications.³³ He admitted he had sinned by burdening the consciences of the people in the horse and buggy incident and especially by resorting to such pulpit language as:

Repeatedly (calling) the members of his church "devils, 'Luderaner,' bloated louts (Ruelpse), stupid oxen, old pigs, asses' ears, cows' eyes, moles, doodle bugs--and all that with repeated emphasis and cursing; furthermore, rabble of Korah, that they came to the confessional as well-fed pigs and to the Lord's Supper as fatted swine, cursed and damned devil's brood, no longer worthy to be called human beings; that the devil would cart Kauffung (a member of the Freistadt church) alive into hell in a knacker's cart," and all this to ³⁴ painfully felt and continued offense to old and young.

It is impossible to excuse such actions and such language and has to lead one to wonder if Rev. Krause was not slightly unbalanced.

It would be fairly difficult to pin Krause down on any doctrinal aberrations, not because he didn't have a lot of them, but because he changed his doctrinal position so many times. The Buffalonian deviations on church and ministry definitely are unscriptural. Indeed, Grabau (and Krause as well when he was in the Buffalo fold), even held that outside of the Lutheran church no one can be saved, and presumably, he meant the Lutheran Church-Buffalo Synod.³⁵ But since Krause later denounced Buffalo's church and ministry stance, it is debatable whether he actually believed it. Krause's constant flip-flops in synodical membership lead one to question his beliefs on church fellowship.

In the end, it is next to impossible to make any kind of definitive evaluation of Krause, since his life was such a strange series of paradoxes. Such paradoxes include: 1. Early in his ministry, he was violently opposed to the Prussian Union, yet on two occasions he joined the Union Church, and his last post in Australia was with a unionistic church, according to Koehler.³⁶ 2. He deserted his congregation in Buffalo in 1839 yet later castigated them for doing the best they could in the absence of a pastor. 3. He was a devotee of Grabau, yet later

he had a falling out in 1850. 4. He was ardently opposed to the Saxons, yet for a time he joins them, from 1850-1853. 5. After repudiating Buffalo, he is ready to rejoin them in 1856.

On the uncharitable side, we could simply write Lebrecht Friedrich Ehregott Krause off as a tortured soul, beset by alternating fits of egomania and melancholia. On the charitable side, we could see in him a man, who, because of his character limitations, simply couldn't handle the challenges that Old Lutheranism faced on the frontiers of Midwestern America, as it struggled to free itself from the church-state mindset of Europe and to find the true doctrine of church government in a free land. Perhaps Prof. Roy Suelflow said it best:

Rather than denounce Krause for his shortcomings, however, we might achieve something constructive if we see in him a reflection of the microcosm of Lutheranism under Sturm und Drang on the American frontier.³⁷

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ENDNOTES:

¹Leroy Boehlke and others, By the Grace of God, vol. 2 of a history of Trinity Lutheran Church, Freistadt, 1964. p. 9.

²Otto F. Hattstedt, History of the Southern Wisconsin District of the Missouri Synod. Originally submitted to the District, in Watertown in 1927 and Janesville in 1928, published by Concordia, St. Louis and translated by the Wisconsin Historical Records Survey Division, Madison, 1941, p. 6

³Boehlke, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴Hattstedt, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵Boehlke, op. cit., p. 12.

⁶Ibid., p. 14.

⁷Roy Suelflow, "The First Years of Trinity Congregation, Freistadt, WI." Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, (hereafter abbreviated CHIQ), vol. 18 April 1945, p. 9. Exact dates in this paragraph supplied by Rev. L.F.E. Krause's Chronicle, translated by Prof. Suelflow, p. 4.

⁸Prof. Suelflow in "The First Years of Trinity" says that Krause returned to Germany unbeknownst to Von Rohr and Grabau, p. 58 and 84 of CHIQ, vol. 18. Boehlke and his co-authors say Krause met with both men but could not be persuaded to stay in America, p.26.

⁹Roy A. Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men, (published by the South Wisconsin District of the LC-MS, 1967) p. 22.

- ¹⁰ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 18, p.85.
- ¹¹ Ibid., p. 85
- ¹² Hattstedt, op. cit., p. 10
- ¹³ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ vol. 18, p. 86.
- ¹⁴ This amazing story is found in Boehlke, op. cit., pp. 27-28.
- ¹⁵ Krause, Chronicle, p. 7.
- ¹⁶ Suelflow, introduction to Krause's Chronicle.
- ¹⁷ Roy A. Suelflow, A Plan for Survival (Greenwich, New York, 1965) p. 28.
- ¹⁸ Krause, Chronicle, p. 8.
- ¹⁹ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. p.91.
- ²² Roy A. Suelflow, History of Trinity Lutheran Congregation, written for 115th anniversary, 1954, pp. 9-10.
- ²¹ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity." CHIQ, vol. 18, p. 91.
- ²⁰ Krause, Chronicle, p. 10
- ²³ Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men, p. 27.
- ²⁴ Suelflow, Plan for Survival, p. 29.
- ²⁵ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 19, p. 84.
- ²⁶ Hattstedt, op. cit., p. 15.
- ²⁷ Suelflow says that Krueger was an elder, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 19 p. 84, while Hattstedt (p. 15) says that he was school principal. Perhaps he was both.
- ²⁸ Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 19, p. 86.
- ²⁹ Ibid., p. 87.
- ³⁰ Suelflow, Plan for Survival, p. 43.
- ³¹ Information for Part IV is an amalgamation of Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 19, pp. 89-90; Walking With Wise Men, pp. 40-42; History of Trinity Lutheran Church, p.14; Introduction to Krause's Chronicle; and John P. Koehler, The History of the Wisconsin Synod (Printed for the Protestant Conference, by Sentinel Printing Company, Sauk Rapids, MN, 1981) p. 125 and pp. 171-172.
- ³² Suelflow, "First Years of Trinity," CHIQ, vol. 19, p. 92.
- ³³ Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men, pp. 39-40.
- ³⁴ CHIQ, vol. 19, p. 115.

³⁵Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men, pp. 37-38.

³⁶Koehler, op. cit., p. 125.

³⁷Suelflow, Walking With Wise Men, p. 43.

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