The Federation of 1892[1]

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On October 11-13, 1892, pastors, teachers, and lay delegates of the Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin Synods met at St. John Church, at 8th and Vliet Streets in Milwaukee. They adopted a plan of federation whereby each would maintain its separate identity and considerable autonomy, but they would cooperate in publishing, missions, and the training of church workers. The Evangelical Lutheran Joint Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan and Other States elected Professor August F. Ernst of Northwestern College, Watertown, as the first president. On the last day of the convention delegates gathered at 60th and Lloyd Streets in Wauwatosa to lay the cornerstone of a new building for the Wisconsin Synod's seminary, a seminary which was to be the sole training school for pastors of the three synods.

The roll of participants listed 22 pastors, one teacher, and six lay delegates from Michigan. Minnesota had 18 pastors, one teacher, and four delegates. The oldest and largest of the three synods, Wisconsin, was represented by 112 pastors, 22 teachers, and 43 delegates. After adopting a strong confessional article, basing the new union on the Word of God and the Lutheran Confessions, the convention agreed on the three general areas of cooperation.

Federated for joint work

The three synods were to be jointly responsible for the publication and promotion of Wisconsin's *Gemeinde-Blatt* as the church periodical for all members. A theological journal was projected, which finally came into existence in 1904 as the *Tlxeologische Quartalschrift,* continuing today as the *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly.* The Wisconsin Synod's *Schulzeitung* would serve the Federation's need for a school journal.

Home missions would continue to be the responsibility of the constituent synods, but under the general supervision of a Federation board. In 1893 the Federation resolved to make the Apache Indian Mission, undertaken by the Wisconsin Synod in 1892, its own.

The Minnesota Synod's Dr. Martin College at New Ulm was to be the one teacher training school for all three synods, and it would continue to conduct a preparatory school. The Wisconsin Synod's Northwestern College, with its preparatory department, would continue as a liberal arts school with the special assignment of pre-seminary training. Michigan Lutheran Seminary at Saginaw would be converted to a preparatory school, and the Federation was to have a single theological seminary at Wauwatosa.

From 1892 until the actual merger in 1917 each synod maintained its separate corporate identity. While all four schools were to be supported by all three synods, actual ownership of the properties remained with the respective synods. The synods seemed ready, however, for increasing cooperation and growing interdependence.

Emerging confessionalism

That the Wisconsin Synod in its beginnings and earliest development was not a strongly confessional Lutheran body is a commonplace, even an understatement. According to its constitution it was committed to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the other Lutheran Confessions. In practice the earliest constituents found it possible to serve people of Reformed persuasion and include them in their congregations. In the original

[1]This article was written to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the formation of the Federation (ed.).

manuscript of the synodical constitution references to the Confessions are crossed out. Replacing them are the phrases *refines Bibelchristentum* ("pure biblical Christianity") and *refines Bibelwort* ("pure Word of the Bible"). The alteration and the synod's early practice reflected the "moderate Lutheran" approach of the mission house at Basel where Johannes Muehlhaeuser, the first president of the Wisconsin Synod, was trained.

By 1868 the synod was ready to terminate its membership in the General Council because of the latter's inconsistency and equivocation in regard to fellowship practices, chiliasm, and lodge membership. It also severed its ties with the unionistic mission society in Berlin which had been supporting it. Fellowship with the Missouri Synod and charter membership in the Synodical Conference (1872) followed shortly.

Friedrich Schmid was the first president of *two* Michigan Synods. In 1843, with two other pastors, he organized a synod so that pastors could be ordained in keeping with the law of the land. The designation "Lutheran Synod" did not prevent "mixed" Lutheran and Reformed congregations from coming into existence. It did not put an end to the administration of the Lord's Supper according to Reformed forms when the communicants preferred. When Schmid in 1848 accepted a Reformed minister for service in the Michigan Synod, men who had been trained by Loehe sought a more confessional fellowship and joined the Missouri Synod. Just as Muehlhaeuser could speak of confessional articles as "paper fences," so Schmid spoke of them as a "paper path."

A weaver's apprentice and a comb-maker attended the Basel institution as classmates and were commissioned in 1860 for work in America. Each was disappointed that he had not been chosen for African missions. They were both present in the study of a Detroit parsonage to participate in the formation of a new Michigan Synod of which Schmid was again elected president. Christoph Eberhardt and Stephan Klingmann were used by God to strengthen the confessional position of the second Michigan Synod, beginning with their insistence on a strongly Lutheran confessional article in the 1860 constitution. Each would eventually serve as president of the body and each would use his office to screen candidates for the ministry and improve practice in the congregations.

Not all were ready to follow the lead of Klingmann and Eberhardt. By 1872 only three of the nine original pastors were still affiliated with the synod. The third man was Schmid. In 1867 seven congregations had gathered $523.52 in mission offerings, of which the synod's mission treasurer had received only $67.50. Most of the funds had been sent to the unionistic mission house at Basel, which was now sending graduates to the unionistic Evangelical Synod that was seducing Lutherans—even some Lutheran congregations—in southern Michigan to its fellowship!

The Michigan Synod held membership in the General Council for 21 years, until 1888. During all those years, however, it bore consistent testimony against the larger group's inconsistencies with regard to fellowship practices, chiliasm, and the lodge. When the synod hosted the Council at Monroe in 1884, two "English" pastors of the General Council preached for the local Presbyterians. When Michigan's protest against this offense was unavailing, the time for forbearance was over and the time for separation had arrived.

Trinity of St. Paul was the first Lutheran congregation in the state of Minnesota. It was organized in July of 1855 under the leadership of Pastor E. W. Wier, who soon afterward also gathered St. John congregation near Stillwater. After succeeding Muehlhaeuser at Rochester, New York, Wier had sojourned briefly with the "Old Lutheran" Buffalo Synod, where he soon had a falling out with Grabau. In 1860 he was one of the founders of the Minnesota Synod, but left that body after two years to take part in the organization of the Concordia Synod of the West. The brevity of his service in the Minnesota Synod was somewhat typical in those unsettled times and in the early history of the synod.

Most distinguished among the six founding pastors who met at St. Paul to organize a synod in the spring of 1860 was "Father" J. F. C. Heyer. For 20 years (1819-1839) he had served as a home missionary in the Middle West, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Ministerium. For 14 years (1841-1855) he was in India as a missionary of the same body. He succeeded Wier at Trinity in St. Paul in 1857 and then served at Red Wing from 1862-1864. The first president of the Minnesota Synod, he continued in that office until 1866—two years after he had left Minnesota to return briefly to India and then retire in Pennsylvania.

The virtual president of the young synod during the years when Heyer was president in name only was William Fachtmann, longtime traveling missionary of the Wisconsin Synod. He had succeeded Heyer at Trinity in St. Paul. His practice during the Wisconsin years had been unionistic, and it did not improve when he crossed over into a new state and a new synod. There were complaints in his own congregation, and the few "Old Lutherans" in the ranks of the Minnesota Synod resented it when he (unsuccessfully) urged membership in the liberal General Synod. In 1872 the Minnesota Synod expelled him, citing his unionism and other offenses.

Among the other founders with Wier and Heyer were a former English Methodist, a licensed preacher of the Indianapolis Synod who retired because of eye trouble in 1861, and a man who served two Lutheran congregations but also considered himself pastor of a German Congregational church as well. The prospects that the Minnesota Synod would develop as a confessional Lutheran church body did not seem good.

By 1867, however, there were 72 pastors, 53 congregations, and 3000 communicants. There were also signs of a growing confessionalism. Membership in the General Synod was rejected. The application of St. Paul's congregation in New Ulm was rejected because "Reformed" was part of its name along with "Lutheran." A pastor whose theology was closer to freemasonry than to Lutheranism withdrew after being publicly admonished at the synod's 1866 convention in his own church at Red Wing.

In 1869 the synod elected a recent arrival as its president. Johann Heinrich Sieker had come to the troubled Trinity congregation in St. Paul in 1867. He had been pastor at Granville, Wisconsin, after training for the Wisconsin Synod's ministry at the Gettysburg seminary. Under his leadership his new synod gave up its short-lived membership in the General Council in 1871, was recognized as an orthodox synod by Wisconsin in the same year, and became a charter member of the Synodical Conference in 1872. That he could lead the young church body which had had such an unpromising beginning in the direction of a pronounced confessionalism in such a short time meant that the Word of Gad had been producing good fruit even in the years when strong leadership was lacking.

Publication

The first-mentioned provision for cooperation in the Federation of 1892 was in the area of publishing. The Minnesota Synod had been providing an associate editor for Wisconsin's *Gemeinde-Blatt* since 1871, beginning with President J. H. Sieker, the transplant from Wisconsin. Minnesota people had been subscribing to the paper since the 1860s, and when Minnesota had begun publishing *Der Synodalbote in* 1886, it had not replaced the *Gemeinde-Blatt* in popularity. Two years after the act of federation *Der Synodalbote* was discontinued.

The Michigan Synod, too, had published its own paper, which was eventually displaced by the *Gemeinde-Blatt.* Even during the years of Michigan's membership in the General Council, *Der Synodal-Freund* consistently upheld the position of the Synodical Conference.

Missions

The stamina and strength of a blacksmith stood Friedrich Schmid in good stead in his labors as the first Lutheran minister in the state of Michigan. He learned the trade from his father in Waldorf, Wuerttemberg, and plied it for a time before going on to Basel for training as a missionary. At the age of 26, in April of 1833, he was assigned to a settlement of Swabian Lutherans at Ann Arbor (Scio). His Salem congregation there remains a member of the Michigan District of the WELS. From Scio, Schmid explored Detroit and Monroe, gathering a good number of families in each place.

Schmid had been trained as a missionary, and he had a missionary's heart. His first letter to his superiors at Basel called attention to the spiritual plight of the American Indians in Michigan. He himself made efforts to learn the languages of a number of tribes. The Loehe men who joined his first Michigan Synod—which he also called the "Mission Synod"—gave considerable attention to the Native Americans of the Saginaw Valley. When these "Old Lutherans" left Schmid's synod and affiliated with Missouri, taking over the Indian work from him, Schmid resumed sending mission movies to Basel on a regular basis.

Christoph Eberhardt, trained at Basel, was the Michigan Synod's first officially designated itinerant missionary. For about two years he covered a three county, 16 station, 360 mile circuit in western Michigan. He did this every three weeks. He also explored the Upper Peninsula all the way to Superior, Wisconsin. When ill health forced him to give up such rigorous activity, he undertook a regimen which must have been nearly as rigorous. Taking charge of St. Paul's in Saginaw, he founded a number of congregations in the Saginaw valley.

In the year of federation, after exploratory work in Arizona, the Wisconsin Synod was ready to begin work among the Apache Indians. The Federation made this field its joint project in 1893.

In the first generation of their synod's history, virtually all the Minnesota preachers were traveling missionaries, something for which the graduates of the St. Chrischona Pilgermission were especially well equipped. No individual seems to have stood out in that synod in quite the way Fachtmann and Goldammer did in Wisconsin, or Schmid and Eberhardt in Michigan had done. But about a score of the small-town and rural congregations gathered between 1860 and 1892 are still members of the Minnesota District of the WELS. Moreover, Minnesota's *Reiseprediger* did not stop at the western boundary of the state; they began to visit some of the German Lutheran settlers in the eastern parts of Dakota Territory.

Worker training

The earliest pastors in the Wisconsin Synod who had benefited by formal training came from the schools of various mission societies in Europe. Then they were joined by a few university-trained men. The synod opened its seminary at Watertown in 1863. Two years later it founded Northwestern College in the same city. Although there was an early lack of focus on the college's purpose, the method of carrying it out, and the means for supporting the endeavor, by 1892 the college had become a reliable source of men who were equipped to undertake seminary studies. Especially instrumental in shaping the college's philosophy and curriculum was August F. Ernst. His German university education and his Lutheran convictions combined to motivate and equip him for the task of remodeling the school along the lines of the German "gymnasium."

In their training for the ministry the founding pastors of the Minnesota Synod were not unlike those of the Wisconsin Synod. Like the latter, the younger synod tried for a few years to augment its ministerium with men who were not well trained, who often lacked Lutheran confessional convictions, and who were not always of good character. The situation was somewhat improved by an infusion of men from the St. Chrischona Pilgermission. Then the synod began to add a few men from the seminaries of the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods, but especially from Missouri's practical seminary at Springfield, Illinois. One result was that sometimes pastors and congregations felt drawn to the Missouri Synod, and a few actually joined it.

Then, in 1883, St. Paul's congregation of New Ulm offered land and $7000 for the establishment of a synodical school in their city. In November of 1884, Dr. Martin Luther College opened its doors as a progymnasium and academy, with an eye to becoming a practical seminary for training preachers. Its first two instructors were graduates of the Wisconsin Synod's seminary, which had by then relocated to Milwaukee. The director was a St. Chrischona man, C. J. Albrecht. He was pastor of St. Paul's, president of the synod, and prime persuader in getting the synod to open the school where it did and when it did. In 1885 a member of Northwestern College's first graduating class (1872), Otto Hoyer, became director and opened the theological department. By 1892, Dr. Martin Luther College had trained 30 pastors and eight teachers, in addition to preparing many who entered other fields of work.

When Friedrich Schmid gathered the first Michigan Synod in 1843, an important consideration was that the synod could ordain pastors. Apparently, the idea of a school for *training* pastors did not seem necessary or practical at the time. Later, after the second Michigan Synod had been founded (1860), Schmid would use the same metaphor which Bading was using in Wisconsin to urge the establishment of a school to train workers: "digging a well." The synod did not take positive action until 1884, with the tragic result that the fruits of Eberhardt's work in western Michigan and the Upper Peninsula were harvested by other church bodies. All but two of Eberhardt's mission congregations were lost to the synod for lack of pastors. There were other losses as well, and usually for the same reason.

Then, in 1884, the synod assigned the task of training men for pastoral work to Pastor A. Lange of Remus. When he moved to Manchester the following year, the layman Heimerdinger offered rent-free use of a roomy brick house for two years to house a training school. Lange, who had taught at the Buffalo Synod's Preacher Seminary, was called as professor, and he opened the school with six students in August of 1885. Among the six were two future presidents of the Michigan Synod, Fred Krauss and John Westendorf. A son of each would later serve as president of the Michigan District of the WELS.

In 1887 the school was moved to Saginaw, where Pastor Eberhardt had deeded two and one half acres to the synod for the building of its seminary. One year later, Director Lange's call was terminated because of disagreement in the doctrine of the ministry. He was replaced by Pastor F. Huber.

A seven-year course was laid out, but, because most students came with some earlier education, most did not require the full seven years. Between 1887 and 1892, 14 men graduated from Michigan Lutheran Seminary and 12 became pastors in the Michigan Synod. Before the school ceased to be a theological seminary in 1907, it had trained 40 men. Of these, 28 were still in the synod's service in 1910. One had died, a few were in the Missouri Synod, a few in other Lutheran bodies.

Earlier contacts leading to federation

A factor in drawing the three synods of the 1892 federation together, which must not be overemphasized but dare not be overlooked, was the addition to their respective ministeriums of pastors from St. Chrischona, and then Hermannsburg and Kropp. Friends and schoolmates were parted at their assignment to the three synods, but in many cases resumed contact after settling in this country. By means of such contacts, Michigan drew close to Minnesota earlier than to its nearer neighbor, Wisconsin.

A few months after organizing the first Michigan Synod and seven years before the founding of the Wisconsin Synod, Schmid mentioned that he had received an encouraging word from "Brother Muehlhaeuser" of Rochester, New York Greetings from one Baseler to another! We have already seen that the St. Paul pastor, E. W. Wier, succeeded Muehlhaeuser at Rochester before making his way to Minnesota.

Fachtmann of St. Paul was still officially a member of the Wisconsin Synod while he served as Minnesota's *de facto* president, between the time of Heyer's departure and the time of Heyer's retirement. It was Fachtmann who gave a brief report on the fledgling synod at Wisconsin's convention in 1862—the first mention of the Minnesota Synod in the Wisconsin Synod *Proceedings.* In 1863 he and Heyer visited Wisconsin's convention at Milwaukee, taking an active part in discussions and calling for a closer relationship between the two synods.

In 1864, Eduard Moldehnke, Wisconsin's itinerant missionary and seminary director, was present at Minnesota's convention to explain why affiliation with the General Synod would be harmful to the growing relationship between their synod and his. In 1866, he reported on his contacts with the Minnesota Synod and recommended closer relations.

These visits and reports, along with more informal and personal contacts, brought the two synods to mutual recognition of one another's orthodoxy in 1871. That, in turn, was followed by a working agreement which, though it stopped short of federation, did foreshadow and prepare the way for the Federation of 1892.

The Wisconsin Synod's president and the director of its seminary attended Minnesota's convention in 1868 as official representatives of their body. Johannes Bading and Adolf Hoenecke proposed a closer union of the two bodies. Minnesota's response was to ask them to prepare a formal overture as a basis for discussion. The overture was prepared, and the discussion took place at La Crosse on September 25, 1869. Under the proposed terms each synod would retain its autonomy, but there would be joint conventions at stated intervals; a pastor's synodical membership would change when he moved from the territory of one synod to that of the other.

The only question of doctrinal significance at the La Crosse meeting was the matter of Minnesota's membership in the General Council. Must that relationship be broken immediately? The Wisconsin representatives at La Crosse did not see that such a move was necessary, as long as the Minnesota Synod would consistently protest whatever was unsound in the General Council's practice.

When the Wisconsin Synod's convention of 1870 considered the proposal, it stopped short of union. It called instead for continuing in fellowship, getting better acquainted, and providing theological candidates for the Minnesota Synod. What Wisconsin was reacting against and avoiding was what a later generation would refer to as a "triangular relationship." How could Minnesota remain a part of the General Council *and* be in a closer union with Wisconsin, which had broken with the General Council in 1868?

Somewhat miffed by Wisconsin's failure to announce publicly what its resolutions explicitly acknowledged—the Minnesota Synod's orthodoxy, Minnesota was nevertheless not discouraged from continuing its suit.

Minnesota and Wisconsin: preliminary working agreement

The Minnesota Synod severed its ties with the General Council in 1871. It accepted Wisconsin's offer to train Minnesota's sons for the ministry, tuition free and board at reduced rates, in exchange for a $500 annual contribution toward the salary of a professor at Northwestern College. Minnesota agreed to supply a man for the editorial staff of the *Gemeinde-Blatt*, with the understanding that it would share in the profits of that paper, which was already familiar to some of its people. The Wisconsin Synod ratified this agreement in its 1872 convention.

Three years later the arrangement foundered. Minnesota's crops had been ravaged by grasshoppers in '73 and '74. The synod had gone into debt (a $700 deficit) to give emergency assistance in its mission fields. It

could not remit the $500 for the Watertown professorship. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, the synod had no students at Watertown. It did have students at the Missouri Synod's Springfield seminary and had already called candidates from that school. It determined to discontinue its agreement to support the Northwestern College professorship and direct whatever support it could to the pastor and teacher training institutions of the Missouri Synod. The *Gemeinde-Blatt* arrangement continued, indicating that Minnesota's attitude toward Wisconsin remained one of cordial confidence.

Although there was some sentiment in the Minnesota Synod during the 1870s to become a district of the Missouri Synod, it remained a minority sentiment. By the end of the decade, the synod was ready to revive the arrangement which had been worked out in the years 1869-71. Joint meetings were held in 1882, 1885, and 1888. Meanwhile, the first three permanent members of the New Ulm faculty were all Wisconsin men.

Federation

In the summer of 1891 the president of the Michigan Synod paid a visit on the president of the Minnesota Synod. C. A. Lederer and C. J. Albrecht had been classmates at St. Chrischona. Now they would provide the impetus for an association between their two synods that would also involve the Wisconsin Synod. In August, Lederer and three other Michigan men met at Watertown with Albrecht and the president of Northwestern College, August F. Ernst, to devise a plan for federating the three synods. Ernst was representing Wisconsin's President Philip von Rohr.

The plan devised at Watertown was considered by the fall pastoral conferences of their respective synods. In the spring of 1892, the plan took final form, and the synodical conventions of that year ratified them. In August, the Michigan Synod, as a condition of its membership in the Federation, applied for and was received into membership in the Synodical Conference.

As we have seen. the Federation was constituted at Milwaukee on October 11-13, 1892, just a bit longer than one year after Lederer's visit to Albrecht. It had been only four years since Michigan ended its membership of 21 years in the General Council. What made the move attractive to the Michigan Synod is recounted in that synod's anniversary history of 1910:

- promising mission fields to the West
- better training for pastors
- more energetic support for charitable causes
- the expectation of inward and outward growth

In Minnesota, four congregations rejected the decision to federate and asked for release. In the case of three congregations the synod did not regard the grounds of their petition as valid, and declined to release them. When the congregations were then received by the Minnesota and Dakota District of the Missouri Synod, a period of tension with the latter synod ensued.

In Michigan, rejection of the terms of federation took another, somewhat belated form.

Michigan's schism

The terms of federation called for Michigan to discontinue theological training at Saginaw. The Michigan Synod in convention had unanimously voted to accept the seminary's conversion into a preparatory school, which would equip young men for further preparation at Northwestern College. Part of the synod,

especially the Saginaw faculty, had second thoughts, and the 1893 convention petitioned the Federation for permission to continue the theological program indefinitely.

The wisdom of hindsight has suggested that the Federation should have insisted that Michigan abide by the agreement of 1892. At the time, however, the sister synods were sensitive to the special feeling of many in Michigan for the Saginaw seminary. It had been needed for such a long time, and it had proved itself of benefit in such a brief time. The Federation expressed misgivings about the adequacy of Michigan Lutheran Seminary's program but recognized the special circumstances and acceded to the request. Some have questioned the Federation's need to comment on the quality of Saginaw's program, but the comment surely came from the same loving concern which prompted the convention to acquiesce in Michigan's request.

As things developed, the concession regarding the seminary did not keep the Michigan Synod as such in the Federation. Neither did the continuance of theological training in Saginaw keep the synod itself intact. The great missionary pastor of the synod's early days, responsible with Klingmann for the synod's confessional article, donor of the land on which Michigan Lutheran Seminary still stands, died on April 27, 1893. Christoph Eberhardt had urged his Michigan brothers to join with the other two orthodox synods in federating, and he had persuaded them to accept the "demotion" of their seminary. His counsel was sorely missed in Michigan's internal strife over where its pastors should be trained and missed even more in the more serious strife which followed almost immediately upon the first.

The Michigan Synod underwent a complete change in officers in 1894, a repudiation of the administration that had taken the lead in federating and in accepting the Federation's worker training arrangement. The new president, C. F. Boehner, was committed to keeping the seminary open and so retained for a time the support of those who believed that school was the lifeblood of their synod.

C. F. Boehner had attended the mission house at Basel but did not graduate from that school. He served in the Wisconsin Synod for a time at Beaver Dam. His reputation was that of a unionist, and he lived up to it by becoming a missionary of the Episcopal Church to China after joining that communion in 1865. After such a sojourn, he must have been a man of some ability to win the confidence of the synod which he joined upon his return to America and the Lutheran Church.

In 1895, the Michigan Synod resolved that all men studying at Saginaw should complete their training there and asked the Federation to agree to this. A minority of convention delegates rejected the resolution and left the meeting after declaring that neither the synodical nor the seminary administration merited their confidence.

The minority sent delegates to the Federation's convention at St. Paul in August of that same year. There they lodged complaints against both the seminary and synod. The convention gave credence to their accusations and also refused to sanction the seminary's continuance. In July 1896, ten pastors—the minority group—were suspended by President Boehner from membership in the synod. They met as a group to organize at Sebewaing, and chose delegates for the Synodical Conference, which was to meet in August. There they presented their charges against the Michigan Synod. The Synodical Conference appointed a committee to investigate and, if possible, resolve the matter. In September, the Michigan Synod, without debate, terminated fellowship with the Federation and, without hearing its committee, with the Synodical Conference. It then ratified the earlier suspension of the ten dissidents.

The excluded men organized as "The Evangelical Lutheran District Synod of Michigan." They continued in membership with the Federation and the Synodical Conference. Both Michigan parties would later regret the haste of all these actions. Those of later generations who have been reluctant to rush to judgment in

intra-church and inter-church relations must have learned something from this sad history. Less than four years after the formation of the Federation, the *Gemeinde-Blatt* of August 1, 1896, carried the official announcement dissolving the Federation's fellowship with the Michigan majority, and giving a hearty endorsement to the minority and any who might follow their lead.

Perhaps Michigan's union with Wisconsin and Minnesota had been premature. Clearly, its withdrawal from the Federation was abrupt. Certainly, its affiliation with the Augsburg Synod in 1897 was hasty and ill-advised. The latter group had advertised for a Lutheran church body with a seminary which would be willing to unite. The Michigan Synod was willing. Three years later it was clear that the two synods were not of one mind and spirit, and they parted.

Reunion

Cooperation in education, in the Apache Mission, and in home missions drew the Minnesota and Wisconsin Synods ever closer. Dr. Martin Luther College graduates, soon including women, staffed schools in Wisconsin. Graduates of the Wauwatosa seminary were assigned to fields in Minnesota and South Dakota. In 1905 the Federation welcomed the Nebraska Synod, which included sons and grandsons of people who had once been part of the Wisconsin Synod.

Meanwhile, Michigan repudiated the leadership of Boehner and his cohorts, electing a completely new slate of officers in 1898. In 1904, at Riga, the synod remorsefully acknowledged that its withdrawal from the Synodical Conference had been unjustified and hasty. In April of 1906, at Bay City, an informal conference of "Synod" and "District" pastors resulted in a mutual acknowledgment of unbrotherly actions in the schism. In October, at Owosso, the work of the informal conference bore fruit in the formal resolution of the synod to acknowledge past mistakes and to seek reunion with the Michigan District Synod and the Federation. The convention further resolved to turn the management of Michigan Lutheran Seminary over to the Federation. The Federation welcomed the Michigan Synod back to its fellowship and union at Fort Atkinson in 1909.

A factor which helped move Michigan toward reunion with itself and with the Federation was the steady decline of enrollment at the seminary. There had been an unhappy choice of a director, a talented teacher who was a harsh administrator and provoked his students to rebellion. In 1907, five withdrew, two had completed their schooling, and one remained. The board of control closed the seminary. When the Michigan Synod met in 1911, President F. Soll could report that the Federation's plan for the school had been put into effect. It had completed its first year as a preparatory school (progymnasium) under Director Otto J. R. Hoenecke.

In 1913, the Federation resolved to take steps toward becoming a single synod. In 1915, it adopted a new constitution. In 1917, the Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Nebraska Synods became a single body. The three smaller synods each became a district and the Wisconsin Synod was divided into three districts. Michigan men played a leading role in these developments.

Presidents of the Federation in its 25 years of existence were A. Ernst, 1892-1900; C. Gausewitz, 1900-1907 and 1913-1917; and F. So11,1907-1913.

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