

Outward Growth and Inner Development of the Michigan District in the Century Past

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[An Essay delivered at the 1950 Michigan District Convention]*

A history of the outward growth of our Michigan District of the Joint Synod and its inner development—which latter term I understand to mean the development of its doctrinal stand or its advancement or growth in sound Lutheran doctrine and practice—will necessarily and to a great extent have to be a history of the outward growth and inner development of the old Michigan Synod, for our district was first formed in 1892 from this former synod.

It is true that members of the Michigan Synod three years later seceded from the Joint Synod until 1909, but the district was not dissolved, for ten pastors, who were residing in the district and who were formerly with the Wisconsin Synod but had joined the district, refused to join in the secession, and these still constituted a Michigan District. Still a history of our Michigan District will necessarily have to include the history of the Michigan Synod also, during the time of its secession. In fact, the history just of this period makes an important chapter in the history of the district because of decisions made and action taken by the Michigan Synod during this time.

As mentioned, the history of our Michigan District is to a great extent a history of the old Michigan Synod. A Michigan Synod was founded over 100 years ago in the early forties of the last century. In the early thirties a number of Swabians had come to America, settling in Washtenaw County in the vicinity of Ann Arbor. Upon their request for a pastor the Mission Society in Basel in the year 1833 sent them a Pastor Frederick Schmid to serve them with Word and Sacrament. He was the first Lutheran pastor in Michigan. He established twenty preaching places from Sebewaing in the North, south to Detroit, and west to Grand Rapids. About ten years later he, with two other pastors, founded a synod, calling it the *Mission-Synode*, for, as they stated, its mission was to do mission work also among the Indians. Prospects for the development of a sound Lutheran body were bright at first, for the pastors and missionaries were required to subscribe to all of the Lutheran Confessions. Also sound Lutherans like the Frankonians: Hattstädt in Monroe, Trautmann in Adrian, Lochner in Toledo, and Kramer in Frankenmuth, who had been sent over to America by Löhe, joined. But it soon became evident that the required subscription was scarcely more than a mere formality, for pastors were permitted to serve mixed congregations, composed of Lutherans and Reformed and to administer the Lord's Supper also the Reformed way. As a result, the Frankonian pastors, who had protested unsuccessfully to this practice, seceded, and the dissolution of this 1st Michigan Synod, the so-called Mission-Synode, occurred shortly thereafter.

The founding of its successor, our old Michigan Synod, dates back to the year 1850. Pastor Frederick Schmid was the principle founder of this synod. He had been instrumental in providing a number of congregations with pastors, some of whom he had personally instructed in theology, others of whom, upon his petition, had been sent over by the Mission Society in Basel; two of these latter later became outstanding men in the synod, namely, the pastors Stephan Klingmann and Christoph Eberhardt. The synod became a reality when, on the 11th of December, 1860, eleven men gathered in the cramped study of a Pastor Müller in Detroit. Eight were pastors and three were lay delegates. Among the pastors were the aforementioned Christoph Eberhardt,

* At the Pastoral Conference in Manistee a year ago, it was decided that, because of the centennial celebration of the Synod this year (1950), it would be fitting at the meeting of our District Convention this year, to have an essay presented on the outward growth and inner development of the Synod/District during the century past, and the work was assigned to me as a former member of the Michigan Synod. The historical data to a great extent is a compilation of material taken from *Synodical Berichte and Proceedings of the Conventions of the Michigan District* but mostly from the *Geschichte der Michigan Synod und deren Gemeinden*, published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Synod in 1910.

then in Hopkins, Michigan; Stephan Klingmann, stationed in Adrian; and C. Volz in Detroit; two of the lay delegates were a Jacob Laubengeier of Freedom and J. Baur of Sebewaing. A constitution was presented and adopted and the synod formally organized as the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Michigan and other States. Only three of the pastors remained with the synod until their death, namely, Schmid, Eberhardt and Klingmann. The constitution was definitely Lutheran. The article relating to the synod's confession reads (in translation): "The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Michigan and other States confesses and binds (*verpflichtet*) itself to all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as the sole rule and norm of its faith and life and to all the Symbolic books of our Evangelical Lutheran church as the correct interpretation of the Scriptures." We are told that Pastors Eberhardt and Klingmann were principally responsible that this sound Lutheran confession was embodied in its constitution, for Pastor Schmid did not want to hear anything about a definite confession.

The young synod showed laudable zeal in gathering Lutherans. As its work was exclusively German, it was naturally confined to Germans, practically all of whom had come from Germany, many of them being pioneers who cleared their farms. These Germans were gathered and provided with Word and Sacrament. To perform this work more effectively the synod sent out a *Reiseprediger*. These were missionaries, somewhat on the order of the Methodist circuit-riders, only much of their travelling was done afoot. The first one was Pastor Eberhardt. The Synod could hardly have made a better choice for he was a man who not only was faithful, but also showed great diligence and perseverance in his work. The following testimony is given him in the *Geschichte der Michigan Synod*. "Eberhardt was of an honest, upright mind, faithful, sincere, possessing a child-like faith, a humble servant of his Master, devoted wholeheartedly to his Lutheran church, who did not shun to fight for its confession but fearlessly championed it."

It is not amiss that we should hear a little more about this man for the Michigan Synod probably owed more to him, to his sound Lutheranism, his devotion and zeal and spirit of sacrifice, than to any of its other members or friends. Pastor Eberhardt was born in 1831 in Wuertemberg, Germany. His most ardent desire was to become a messenger of the gospel. But it was not until he was 25 years old that he saw that his desires and hope were nearing realization, for it was then that he entered the Mission Society in Basel and four years later completed his training there and with his friend Klingmann was then sent to America to Pastor Schmid to be assigned to some parish by him. Two places where these men could be used were to be filled: one in Adrian and the other a mission field in Allegan County. When it was to be determined which one was to go to Adrian and which one to Allegan County, Eberhardt was to have said to Klingmann, "You know what we'll do? I am healthy and strong and can stand hardships better than you; I shall take over the mission parish, and you go to Adrian," and that was then done. In October 1850, he began his work as a *Reiseprediger*. Stationed in Hopkins, Allegan County, he made trips to newly settled places. But his work was far from being confined to Allegan County. Within two months he had sixteen preaching stations which he served in VanBuren, Allegan, Ottawa, Muskegon, Shiawassee and Clinton Counties. He made it a point to preach at one of these stations once every three weeks, which required him to travel 360 miles, and quite a few of these trips were made afoot. We are told that he always took along a Bible and prayer books, with which he provided the people, donating them to those who were poor. In December 1861 he received a call from St. Paul's church in Saginaw but, after becoming pastor there, he still serve as *Reiseprediger*, preaching in his former congregations, and he also did mission work in Frankentrost, St. Charles, Chesaning and was the founder of St. John's church in W. Bay City. He served St. Paul's in Saginaw to his death at the age of 62 in 1893, a faithful shepherd and *Seelsorger*, loved by his parishioners, esteemed not only in Saginaw but wherever he was known. For Nine years (1881-1889) he served as President of the Michigan Synod. He also served for a time as its vice president and secretary and as one of its trustees. And he deserves to be called the "father of our Seminary" in Saginaw for it was to a great extent through his effort that it was established He not only gave the grounds on which it was built, but endowed the Seminary a fund—the money, however, was gradually used or "borrowed" to pay Synod debts, but never returned into the fund! He also donated the Seminary bell, bequeathed his library to the institution, and for some time helped as instructor there, refusing any remuneration. The visible benefits accrued to the synod from the untiring zeal and faithfulness of this worker, outside of the establishment of the Seminary in Saginaw, were very few. Of all the preaching places established by him, only two—Hopkins and Allegan—are still with

the synod. Of course, this was no fault of his. The fault can, to a great extent, be ascribed to the fact that, after the places had been established, the synod did not have reliable, consecrated men to provide these established congregations with Word and Sacrament. It had to depend on men of whose confession and character it knew practically nothing. As a result, it had many sad experiences, for so often men were called to serve a congregation who were not only incompetent, but unfaithful; who disrupted many a congregation or alienated it from the synod. Thus, in 1860 three pastors and one congregation left to join the United Church (Unierten). Some of the pastors, serving congregations in the synod, were a disgrace to the ministry and caused the synod to gain an unenviable reputation, yes to become discredited as a Lutheran synod. In 1872 Pastor Klingmann, then president, complained in his report to the synod:

The struggle of the small body (referring to the synod) for its existence has been a hard and severe one. The differences in our own household of faith have had an enervating, yes paralyzing effect on the tender plant. It could not enjoy a healthy growth until the unhealthy, sickly shoots were removed. After about 1/3 of the present membership severed its connection with us because of unionistic principles, the small plant is developing a healthy growth.

In 1867, in spite of all the missionary zeal, the synod numbered only fourteen pastors, who served fourteen congregations. In that year these raised \$523.52 for missions. However, only \$67.50 of this was received by the synod for its mission work. Most of the sum was sent to Basel. In a way, this is understandable, for, even though Basel was not Lutheran, rather in the service of the United Church, yet a number of the synod's pastors had been furnished by it and so these pastors and their congregations were inclined to support it and did this for a number of years. As late as 1883 President Eberhardt found it necessary to censure this practice in his presidential report. He writes:

We find that many a mission offering of members of our synod is sent away to support a non-Lutheran Mission Society which is sending its candidates to such church organizations over here that seek to abduct members and congregations from us and, unfortunately, in some instances have been successful, even in the abduction of such for which our synodical congregations made large sacrifices.

Unionistic principles and propensities were very much in evidence in the Synod while Pastor Schmid was president, but with his retirement from the presidency and the election of Pastor Klingmann, a time of more conscious and confessional Lutheranism was ushered in, although the difficulty in securing Lutheran pastors for its congregation induced the synod in 1867 to join the General Council. It hoped that, by becoming a member of this body, it could obtain the necessary men from its seminaries. However, it was disappointed in this expectation and otherwise did not find in the General Council what it had expected. The appeal for the organization of such a general Lutheran body on a truly Lutheran basis had been made by the Pennsylvania Synod in 1866. In December of that year, a preliminary meeting was held in Reading, Pennsylvania, at which representatives of thirteen Lutheran bodies were present, including Ohio, Iowa, Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Missouri. Michigan's representative was Pastor Klingmann. The theses presented by Dr. Krauth were unanimously accepted by the gathering and were made the doctrinal basis for acceptance of any synod into the general body. A committee drew up a constitution which was to be submitted to the individual synods. After ten synods accepted it, a meeting was called to adopt it. This occurred. The body was organized and called the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (Michigan apparently was satisfied with the confession or doctrinal stand of this body and joined it.) Missouri was not represented at its first meeting in November in Fort Wayne; Ohio was represented, but not ready to join. It wanted clarification on the doctrinal stand of the Council in regard to chiliasm, secret organizations, pulpit and altar-fellowship. These four points were discussed for years, but no doctrinal agreement with respect to them could be reached. The unscriptural views held by many in the Council regarding these four points and other unlutheran and unscriptural practices

of course soon affected the relations of the Michigan Synod to the Council and eventually forced it to sever its connection with it.

The sound Lutheran stand taken by the Michigan Synod in regard to the four points is clearly revealed in a paper prepared by Pastor Eberhardt and presented to the synod at its convention in 1868. With reference to chiliasm, he stated, in effect, that while we would like to see his Lord come and visibly rule over this world, yet his Word counts more, in which he tells us that the kingdom of God comes not with observation and: “We must through much tribulation enter...” He also quoted Article 17 of the Augustana, in which the church rejects “certain Jewish opinions that before the resurrection of the dead the saints will have a temporal kingdom here on earth and destroy all the ungodly.” In regard to altar fellowship he stated: “This practice is a direct contradiction of our Lutheran doctrine, no matter how much one wants to emphasize love and tolerance as the governing (*leitendes*) principle of the church. It is an offspring (*Ausgeburt*) of the unionistic spirit!” Concerning pulpit fellowship he stated: “This can rightfully be called lack of principle and unfaithfulness with reference to office and doctrine.” And finally in regard to lodges he stated:

In our present time of apostasy in which materialism and humanism are reaping a rich harvest the lodge system (*Logenwesen*) has developed as never before into an enormous and social might, so that the church in general sadly deplores and earnestly warns against this great corruption. Not only Lutheran, but other Protestant churches are not only showing their members how dangerous to the soul, yes even immoral, the principles of the lodge are, but, and rightfully so, demand of their members, after they have been instructed, that they separate themselves from the lodge, otherwise be excommunicated; on the other hand they refuse to accept into church membership lodge members if, after being instructed, they refuse to leave the lodge.

After hearing this paper by Pastor Eberhardt the synod unanimously resolved:

1. We reject chiliasm as it is rejected in the Augsburg Confession, Article 17;
2. We do not tolerate altar fellowship with heterodox [churches];
3. We do not practice or tolerate exchange of pulpit with sectarians;
4. We reject the lodge system as conflicting with the spirit of true Christianity.

This was a sound Lutheran stand, and the synod took it, retained it and championed it in subsequent meetings of the General Council; yes, with the Minnesota Synod, it demanded of the Council that it take a definite stand in regard to these points. And later, in 1872, the Council did declare its stand, especially with respect to pulpit and altar fellowship in the so-called Akron resolution, stating: “only Lutheran pastors in Lutheran pulpits; only Lutheran Christians at Lutheran altars!” But opportunity for circumventing this rule was given in the added words: “Possible exception to this rule must be regarded as a special concession.” This declaration on pulpit and altar fellowship was reaffirmed in 1875 in the Galesburg rules and was really strengthened by affixing the words: “The rule, which is in accordance with God’s Word and the confession of our church is...” But as still many in the Council did not practice this, Dr. Krauth was instructed to present theses at the next convention of the Council in 1875 which would show that the rules without exception were in accord with God’s Word and the Confession of the church. President Klingmann, who attended the was very well pleased with it, as also with what Dr. Krauth stated in his theses and declared that the General Council was now definitely taking a very different stand with regard to doctrine and practice than that which it took ten years earlier. And hearing this report the Michigan Synod expressed its joy and thanks to God for the evident progress toward pure doctrine and Lutheran practice which was manifesting itself in the General Council.

But for many, especially the English synods, in the Council, the accepted rules and resolutions meant nothing. Many of their pastors kept on practicing pulpit fellowship with sectarian ministers. The Michigan Synod saw flagrant example of this in 1884, when the General Council held its convention in

Zion Lutheran Church of Monroe, belonging, of course, to the Michigan Synod. On Synod Sunday, two of the pastors—they are spoken of as English pastors—preached in a Presbyterian church of that city, which, of course caused great offence. A strong protest, signed by the pastors Raible, Eberhardt, and Klingmann and Teacher Sperling, was practically ignored. As a result, Michigan was not represented at the next convention of the Council in 1887, declaring: “We deplore that we must state that under existing conditions it is impossible for us to feel at home in the General Council, neither can we feel ourselves wholly united with it in the unity of the spirit.” The following year, it withdrew its membership, giving the aforementioned reason, adding that it hoped God would give the Council grace to realize that as a Lutheran body bound to the confessions, the Synod could not act differently; also that it hoped that the time would come when the General Council would become serious in carrying out in practice the principles which it had accepted unreservedly. Thus ended this union which had lasted 21 years. While the Synod should not have let itself be appeased time and again with nice sounding resolutions but followed the example of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Illinois, the union may nevertheless have been a blessing in disguise in that the practice in the Council made the discussion of certain doctrines, as those mentioned in the four points, a burning issue and forced its pastors into intensive study of God’s Word and Lutheran practice, which, of course, resulted in furtherance in knowledge of pure doctrine and correct practice.

As mentioned before, the Synod was zealous in the gathering of unchurched Lutherans throughout Michigan and in providing them with Word and Sacrament. Beginning in 1870 its *Reiseprediger* and other pastors of the Synod established preaching places in Greenwood, Ruby, Reed City, Berne, Weldon Creek, Big Prairie, also in Bay City, Tawas, Freemont and other localities. In 1879 Pastor Eberhardt started mission work in Tittabawassee; in 1882 Pastor Schönberg of Kalamazoo gathered a number of Lutherans in South Haven who were then served by Pastor Merz. The same year, Pastor Menke was stationed in Barns and the *Reisepredigt* work was assigned to him; and he performed this work faithfully, conscientiously, and zealously. Inspired by an ardent love for his Master and his church, he was tireless in his efforts to gather the unchurched Lutherans. His field of labor was mostly in the north-central portion of the Lower Peninsula. Here he established preaching places in Sterling, Roscommon, Grayling, West Branch, Standish, and Pinconning. He also preached in Caro, Caseville, Kilmanagh, and Port Hope, and of course served Berne which flourished during his ministry. Unfortunately, it must also be said of his labor that it bore little fruit for the synod, for most of these preaching places, established by him, were lost to the synod. In 1880 a number of Lutherans in Grand Rapids applied to the synod for its ministrations. A Pastor Miller was supplied who, however, soon afterwards joined the United Church, taking the congregation with him.

In spite of its activity in gathering unchurched Lutherans, the Synod’s growth for a number of years could almost be called insignificant. For example, in 1887 it numbered 32 pastors, an increase of only 18 in 20 years. 55 pastors had joined it during this period. These with the 14 already would have made a possible membership of 69. What had become of the 37? Three had died, four were suspended and the remaining 29 either joined other Lutheran synods or the United Church. It can clearly be seen why there could be so little growth of the synod with such conditions existing, even at a time when conditions for exceptional, extraordinary growth were very favorable because of the large influx of Lutherans from some eastern states, but especially through immigration from Lutheran countries also into Michigan. Other synods were profiting by these conditions and enjoying a rapid growth, but Michigan, first in the field, with reference to growth, remained almost static. That it profited so little by the opportunities offered during this period was, of course, realized by it and naturally deplored. In 1880 President Klingmann complained:

Neither a considerable growth of our mission congregations nor the organization of new congregations can be reported. It is to be deeply deplored that in its mission work our synod does not or can not stretch out its arms farther into the region of new settlements in our state. While other church bodies are gathering congregation after congregation even right next to our mission

stations, our mission hardly manages to live and remains confined to its small sphere of activity. Its the same old complaint, repeating itself every year.

And the principle cause? The lack of pastors, faithful, consecrated men, soundly Lutheran. When, in 1884, four mission places were lost because they could not be supplied, President Klingmann complained:

Unfortunately the German mission committee (i.e, of the General Council) has for a year been unable to secure a candidate for us, one in whom we could have confided and trusted that he possessed the necessary ability for work in our state. To the present day I do not know whether or when the requested help of three candidates will be given. May the Lord of the harvest who wishes to be asked for laborers in his harvest soon grant us our many prayers so that under existing conditions we suffer no further loss of harvest fields!

Not only was the synod not able to obtain the desired number of workers but, as already mentioned, not a few of those who were obtained, were incompetent, unfaithful. The first thirty years it secured its pastors from almost everywhere, although after 1865 it did cease to apply to Basel on account of the sad experience it had with a number of its candidates. Its hope of obtaining an adequate and satisfactory source of supply of candidates by joining the Council was not realized. For a while, during the late 1860s and in the 1870s it procured a number of pastors from the Pilgermission in Chrischona and later Hermansburg and Kropp supplied it with most of its new men. In such a conglomerate body, composed of men of such vastly different theological training, unity in doctrine and practice was hardly possible and it was probably only that by the grace of God that it had such leaders as Klingmann and Eberhardt in those critical years that orthodox Lutheranism did win out in the synod.

From the beginning the synod realized not only the importance but the necessity of the parochial school for the proper training of its youth. And the subject was often discussed in conferences and also at synod conventions. Thus in 1876 and 1878 a paper was presented and discussed on the question: How can such and active interest for the parochial school be aroused in our congregations that their members will gladly send their children to such schools? And in 1881 the convention heard a paper on “the great importance of the Lutheran parochial school.” In 1885 President Eberhardt made the statement:

Christian church-schools are very necessary and salutary for our Lutheran church, although they demand much labor and sacrifice. Every Lutheran pastor, whose congregation has as yet no teacher and is unable to support one, should make it his holy duty and task to keep school himself. And Pastor and congregation should work together for the advancement of the church-school, so that the young may learn God’s pure Word and revere it and thus remain faithful in their confession over against the sects and unbelief.

And the same year the synod admonished its constituents:

Congregations should consider the curse that comes upon them and upon the family where the training in a Christian school is neglected and despised; on the other hand the blessing for the congregation, parents and children that comes from a proper appreciation and fostering of Christian training.

And quite a number of congregations had Christian day schools. In 1887, when there were 32 pastors belonging to the synod, there were 35 schools with 1147 children. Five parochial school teachers belonged to the synod.¹ As there was a lack of pastors, so also a lack of teachers. The synod did not train

¹ Some of these schools, however, gave the impression that they weren’t stressing the learning of God’s Word as much as learning the German language, and to non-Lutherans—even to many Lutherans—, they were only known as German schools. In this connection it

any and was not associated with any synod or seminary that did. And so neither was the parochial school able to develop properly in the synod.

An important step for the synod was the establishment of a theological seminary. In 1884 it passed a resolution to consider earnestly the matter of training pastors and not to forget that “we are left to our own resources and dare not depend on others...And that it is time to proceed the practical realization of the suggested idea.” The time was then favorable for this “practical realization,” for the synod had a man in its midst, at the time pastor in Remus who at one time was a professor at a theological seminary in Buffalo, a very capable man, namely Pastor A. Lange, who was willing to devote himself to training young men for the ministry. The following Spring he could report that several young men had applied to study under him.² Matters were expedited by Pastor Lange being called to Manchester, Michigan, where a member offered the synod the uses of a brick house for a seminary for two years.³ In August 1885 the Seminary was opened with six students. These were G. Elnis, C. Burkhardt, J. Brederita, F. Scholles, C. Schafer and K. Lange. To these were added three more in October: F. Krauss, G. Wacker, and Dammes. The following year, two: J.F. Henning and J. Westendorf. Of these eleven, G Ehnis, F. Krauss, G. Wacker, J.F. Henning and J. Westendorf finished and became faithful laborers in the synod. The first two are still with us, post emeritus; the other three have joined the church triumphant.

As the house in Manchester was at the disposal of the synod for two years only, some solution would have to be found if the work begun so successfully was to be carried on. The congregations were circularized and asked to express their opinion on whether or not the synod should erect its own Seminary and, if in favor of such a project, where they would prefer to have it built. All but one congregation was in favor of the project. Six places had been suggested, but only Adrian and Saginaw were seriously considered. Twenty-four congregations were in favor of Adrian and eighteen of Saginaw. And so in 1886 the synod decided to erect the building in Adrian, but it was not done. The reason is not certain, for Adrian had not withdrawn or even changed its offer. In January of the following year a special meeting of the synod was held in Lansing. There it was decided to reconsider the resolution to establish the Seminary in Adrian, and then the whole matter was again discussed: whether the synod was really ready to build; if so, what type of seminary it should be, whether theoretical or practical; how great a debt the synod wished to incur. The synod resolved:

It deems it a necessity to have a seminary of its own; for the time being its mission should be to offer young people a practical training for the ministry and, as much as possible, for the teaching profession. And finally the synod was not to go into debt for more than \$2,000!

Very conservative! Now the question was where to build. Finally Saginaw was chosen as several sites had been offered there, also a sum of \$4150. The trustees were empowered to choose the site. They decided to accept Pastor Eberhardt’s offer of a site, on Center Street of about 2 ½ acres. The contract for the building was let, and on September 20 of that year it could be opened with a dedicatory service, and classes began the next day. Completed, it cost with furnishings \$8871.61 with a dept of only \$1000 plus. The student body numbered 14; besides Professor Lange, who was Director and Housefather, P. Eberhardt, P. Huber, and T. Sperling instructed. The first candidates to graduate from the new Seminary were J.F. Henning and H. Lütjen. Prof. Lange was only at the new Seminary for a year. At the convention of the synod in August 1888, he voiced his disagreement with the synod regarding the doctrine of the call and so the synod found it necessary to remove him from his office. P. Huber was called as his successor, but the opening of the institution was delayed until November 23.

might be stated that, on the whole, not only in the school, but also in church Sunday School, too much emphasis was placed on the language. For example, in our Sunday School in Latin, practically the whole time was devoted to learning read German from the *Bibel*.

² At the meeting of the Pastoral Conference, presumably in late spring, it was resolved that Pastor Lange be instructed to begin giving classes under the “protection” of the Pastoral Conference, meaning, no doubt, that it would assume the responsibility, for the synod had yet authorized going ahead with the project.

³ And at its convention in August, the synod passed the following resolution: 1) That the synod consider the institution of its own theological seminary and accordingly support it; and 2) That it call Pastor Lange as its professor.

With the establishment of its own Seminary and its withdrawal from the General Council shortly thereafter, a new period began for the Michigan Synod. The first five years after severing its relations with the General Council were years of stronger outward growth and also of inner development. From 1888 to 1892 the synod obtained twelve candidates from its seminary, and twelve pastors from outside joined it. An aid to preserving sound doctrine and practice was the institution of a board of visitors in the synod in 1889. Two districts were established; the visitors were to visit all of their assigned congregations every three years. The visits should occur, if at all possible on a Sunday so the visitor could hear the sermon of the local pastor; he was to inquire whether Christian discipline was being exercised and in what manner; whether the services were being well attended; whether there were any persistent abuses or corrupt customs in evidence in the congregation and, if so, what they were. And in regard to school the visitor was to find out how long school was kept, what branches were being taught and how the attendance was. He was to inquire how the collections were being apportioned and whether the synodical paper was being read. But in doing this it was stated that he was not to act in a popish, legalistic, but rather in an evangelical way!

During this time a new synodical constitution was also adopted. Although it was an improvement over the old one drawn up in 1865, which, we are told, contained some questionable statements, it also had its defects and was revised in 1903.

When the synod withdrew from the General Council it had no intentions of remaining alone, i.e., without affiliation, but rather it planned to become a member of the Synodical Conference for officially it agreed with this body in doctrine. The plan became a reality in 1892. The year before it had been suggested by the Minnesota Synod that Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan unite to form a larger body, or general synod. The suggestion was favorably received by Michigan for it was convinced that such a union would enable all concerned to do more effective work. Representatives of the three synods met in April 1892 in Milwaukee and prepared a Vorlage, containing eight points as a basis for the contemplated union, which were to be submitted to the three synods at their next meeting. Two of the points dealt with the institutions of the synod and proposed:

The General Synod shall have control of the now existing institutions as also of those to be established. These institutions shall be 1) a theological seminary; 2) a general classical school (*Gymnasium*) and a teacher's seminary; and 3) a *gymnasium* or preparatory school in Minnesota and Wisconsin. The now existing institutions shall remain property of the respective districts until they voluntarily transfer them to the general body.

It was also stipulated that, before Michigan join, it first become a member of the Synodical Conference, of which the other two synods were members. The union matter was thoroughly discussed at the synod's convention in Saginaw in 1892 and it was unanimously resolved to apply for membership in the Synodical Conference inasmuch as the synod agreed doctrinally with that body and would earnestly strive to remove wrongs in practice. With reference to the union with Wisconsin and Minnesota, it resolved that it was in favor of this union and accepted the eight points of the Vorlage. That same summer the Synodical Conference, at its convention, accepted Michigan into its membership. So the preliminary conditions for the union were now fulfilled. In October of that year representatives of the three synods met in Milwaukee to effect the union. From Michigan 22 pastors, one teacher and six lay delegates were present. At this convention, the union became a reality. Each synod became a district of the Joint Synod. Michigan had agreed, by accepting the eight points, to convert its seminary into a *gymnasium*, but shortly after the union dissatisfaction with this agreement was voiced by a number, especially members of the faculty in Saginaw. They desired a provisional reestablishment of the theological seminary in Saginaw and induced the District to resolve in 1893 to petition the Joint Synod, because of existing conditions, to grant the Michigan District permission to reestablish the former arrangement in Saginaw for an indefinite period of time. The Joint Synod resolved: "It would be difficult to acquire the desired theological training in Saginaw in the manner proposed by the Michigan District, but because of the existing conditions there, we shall leave the adjusting (*Regelung*) of the matter for the time being to the district." It hoped that this resolution would be satisfactory to the malcontents. But it wasn't. Two factions

developed in the district, and those in favor of retaining the theology department in the institution in Saginaw, whose members included newly elected officials of the district, asked, if it weren't better to sever relations with the Joint Synod. A conciliation was sought in meeting held in April 1895 at which representatives of both factions, also President Ernst, were present, and here it was agreed to conduct the theology department in Saginaw for three years and then change the institution to a *gymnasium*. But at its convention that summer the district resolved that all the students enrolled in seminary should receive their theological training there and that the district petition the Joint Synod to grant this. But a minority protested against this resolution, declaring they had no confidence, either in the leaders of the district or the seminary and left the meeting. In August these then sent representatives to the convention of the Joint Synod in St. Paul and brought complaints against the heads of the district and the seminary. As the Joint Synod pronounced the complaints justifiable and had rejected the petition for retention of the theology department the institution Saginaw, this produced a complete breach. The minority ten pastors refused to support the district and consequently, its convention in August 1896 were suspended by the district. They then held a meeting in Sebawaing, organized and in August sent delegates to the convention of the Synodical Conference and brought complaints against the then president of the Michigan District, Pastor C. Böhner, and his followers. The district was not represented at this convention, and so a commission was appointed to attend the next meeting of the Michigan District and earnestly seek to settle the dissension. But at this convention in September 1896 in Sturgis, this commission was not heard, and the district resolved: "to dissolve the union with the Joint Synod; to withdraw from the Synodical Conference and to change the suspension of the minority into an exclusion." Soon afterwards these ten were organized as the Evangelical Lutheran District-synod of Michigan and remained united with the Joint Synod and the Synodical Conference. In at least one instance, the withdrawal from the Joint Synod caused a split in a congregation that was taken into court.

Of course the action of the majority in the district over against the Joint Synod and the minority could not be condoned as they were parties to the agreement to change the seminary at Saginaw into a *Gymnasium* (preparatory school) and later in 1904 at the convention in Riga the synod acknowledged its wrong by passing the following resolutions:

1. We regard the step taken as unjustifiable and rash (*voreilig*) because we must admit that neither necessity nor conscience compelled to do this, actually there was no reason for it;
2. We cannot but express our deep regret that we did not receive or hear the commission which the Synodical Conference delegated to confer with us or accept its kind services; especially do we deplore the manner in which the commission was refused to be heard.

And later 1906 in a conference of pastors of the Michigan District-synod and the Michigan Synod the committed wrong was mutually acknowledged and thus done away with in a brotherly and Christian manner. (In 1897 the synod had expanded its mission field. During the preceding winter P. Merz had made a trip to the states of Washington, Oregon, and California. There he met some Lutheran pastors who were without any synod affiliation who professed their willingness to join the Michigan synod. Professor Merz returned with a glowing account of the mission possibilities in these states. And with high hopes the synod embarked upon mission work in this field, the same year sending out several candidates. However, the field was soon abandoned because of the impossibility of possibly controlling the work and the laborers there and because of the great expense involved which it felt it could not meet.)

Another step which the synod took and which was unwise and later deplored was the union with the so-called Augsburg Synod. This body was composed of a number of independent, i.e., unconnected, pastors, scattered throughout a number of states. They sought a union with some Lutheran body which possessed a seminary. In May 1897 representatives of Augsburg and Michigan held a colloquy in Saginaw and accepted a doctrinal basis which was then accepted by the synod convention in Lansing and a union entered into. But it lasted only three years The Augsburg Synod asked that it be dissolved to which Michigan assented, as a

doctrinal stand and practice of some of Augsburg pastors were not in accord with those of sound Lutheranism. Several of their pastors remained with the Michigan Synod however.

We heard, after P. Lange was deposed as director and instructor at the seminary in Saginaw, P. Huber was called as director. Besides Pastor Eberhardt and Teacher Sperling, Pastor Bodamer, then stationed at St. John's in Saginaw, and Pastor Merz of Zilwaukee, served as assistant instructors. In 1893 Pastor Eberhardt was called home by his Lord, and in his death the Synod and the seminary especially sustained a great loss. He deserved to be called the father of the seminary. His zeal and generosity made possible the building of the seminary, and it enjoyed his loving care even beyond his death, for he bequeathed his library, another acre of land adjoining the seminary property and the sum of \$5000 to the seminary.

Director Huber was called as his successor at St. Paul's and Professor O. Hoyer was called as director and instructor. At the same time a second professorship was created by the calling of Pastor Merz as a full-time professor. Assistant instructors were Pastor Huber, Teacher Sperling and Pastor Wenk, then at St. John's. During this time the seminary had its largest enrollment; at one time there were 24 students. By 1896 18 candidates had entered the ministry. Prof. Hoyer remained only 2 years. In his place Pastor Linsenmann was called who was director until 1902. In 1898 Pastor Bode was called to serve both as pastor of St. John's and also as professor at the seminary. Pastor Huber left Saginaw in 1897; his place was filled by Pastor J. Westendorf. Teacher Sperling was succeeded by Teacher E. Meyer, and he by Teacher C. Schulz. Professor Merz resigned in 1900 and Director Linsenmann in 1902 shortly after he had been relieved of the directorship by the calling as director of Pastor Beer, who formerly had been a professor at the theological seminary in Kropp. He had been highly recommended and the synod was given the assurance that his doctrinal position was that of Missouri. It could not be denied that he possessed unusual gifts but as director, or one to win the confidence of young men, he was a great disappointment. He has been instructed to employ the strictest disciplinary measures at the seminary because of a spirit of insubordination manifesting itself among the students, but the methods he employed were such that under him the enrollment began to dwindle rapidly. Even before he had been installed he nearly caused the entire student body to leave by his unreasonable and unwarranted action. Very few new students enrolled and old ones left: five in May 1907, leaving only four in the institution. Two of these were to become candidates in June, so only two remained. At a meeting of the seminary board in June, at which this deplorable situation was to be discussed and investigated, Director Beer refused to be present and refused to discuss the matter with the board; whereupon it demanded his resignation and, as he refused to resign, the trustees recommended that he be removed from his office at the institution,, which occurred, and the seminary was closed. During the twenty years of its existence as a theological seminary it had trained forty men for the ministry. At the time of its closing one of these was deceased, and twenty-eight were members of the synod and serving congregations in it. The remaining eleven joined other synods: General Council in the West, Ohio, and Missouri. No doubt closing of the seminary accelerated the reentrance of the synod into the Synodical Conference and its union with the Joint Synod.

Almost all in the synod realized that something would have to be done. There were three possibilities: join the Synodical Conference as an independent synod; merge with the Michigan District of the Missouri Synod, which was advocated by a number, especially the Southwest Conference, and eventually five of this conference did join Missouri; and the third possibility was to reestablish the former relationship with the Joint Synod of Wisconsin, etc., which, as we now know, the majority favored as being the only proper course to pursue. But there was strong opposition to becoming affiliated with the Joint Synod. Some even opposed joining the Synodical Conference, and one of the most pronounced opponents was Director Beer. At the convention of the synod in Zilwaukee in 1905 he stated on the floor of the synod that the proposed union was an effort to get rid of him, as the synod very well knew that doctrinally he did not agree with the Synodical Conference. Before coming to Saginaw he had applied for membership in the Wisconsin Synod, but a lengthy colloquy that resulted in his not being accepted for it revealed that he disagreed with Wisconsin not only with reference to practical questions but also in doctrine. He had not changed his position, and still Michigan accepted him, although it must have known his doctrinal stand, for he had been colloquised by the faculty of the

seminary in Saginaw when Linsenmann was director. President Böhner was also present at this colloquy, and they accepted his doctrinal stand.

At the convention in Zilwaukee the lay delegates were asked to report how their congregations stood with reference to a proposed reentry into the Synodical Conference and a union with the Joint Synod. Fourteen congregations reported favoring it, but, as also fourteen were opposed, no definite action could be taken. It was not until in 1909 at the convention in Saginaw that the synod passed the resolution to reestablish the former relationship with the Joint Synod according to the 1892 agreement and to send a delegation to its next meeting and there present these resolutions. This was then done at the convention in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, later in the year, and the members of the Michigan Synod were again received as brethren of the household of faith. (The wayward child had returned!) In a joint meeting of Michigan and the District-Synod of Michigan, held the following May in Adrian, it was unanimously resolved to merge the two, but about half of the District-Synod's pastors refused to join the newly formed District.

With the affiliation with the Joint Synod, Michigan, as an independent synod, passed into history! At the time of the union it numbered thirty-six pastors and three teachers. Of the pastors, twenty have entered the rest of the children of God; seven are emeriti; three are in Missouri; the remaining seven are still active in the district. During the fifty years of its existence as the Michigan Synod, it has eight presidents. They were F. Schmid: 1860-66; S. Klingmann: 1867-80; C. Eberhardt: 1881-89; C. Lederer: 1890-93; C. Böhner: 1894-97; W. Bodamer: 1898-1903; J. Westendorf: 1904; F. Krauss: 1905, who retained the presidency up until 1926.

A review of the history of the Michigan Synod during its brief existence of fifty years as an independent synod shows that it went through some rather turbulent times; that it did not lack its *Sturm and Drang* Period. Its history shows a number of bright spots, but there are also a number of dark pages in it, i.e., occurrences and developments that were and are to be deplored.

With reference to its outward growth it has to be admitted that this was not what could have been expected. It would seem, being the first in the field, it should have become, if not the largest, at least one of the largest Lutheran bodies in the state. The fact that it did not, but remained a comparatively small synod, must be ascribed principally to some of its unfortunate affiliations, as with the General Council, and accepting pastors whose doctrinal stand and practice were, at best, very doubtful and who in so many instances left the synod taking their congregations with them. It showed a lack of vision, depending on securing pastors from almost everywhere and not making more strenuous efforts in the very beginning to train its own pastors, for then it would have been surer of having men who were reliable, loyal, doctrinally sound, and work to build up that Lutheran Zion.

From the mission work it performed, one would get the impression that the synod was only concerned about gather such who were who were German and had a Lutheran background, although it cannot be denied that at least some of its earlier pastors did mission work among the Indians and, while it was affiliated with the General Council, the synod supported its foreign missions. But we do not hear of efforts being made to win such who were non-Lutheran and who could not understand the German. Of course we can understand this attitude, especially in the earlier years. Rightfully it regarded as its first duty to gather the dispersed fellow Lutherans in the state, mindful of the Apostle's words: "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." And during the years, when the immigration especially from Germany was so strong, it had its hands full. And in this respect, it was pursuing practically the same course as other synods in the Central and Midwestern states. We must laud the zeal and untiring efforts of an Eberhardt, also of Schmid and many others, in gathering Lutherans. But many seem to have had the idea that it was not their synod's business to preach the gospel in the English language and endeavor to win such who could not understand German. The use of English was even discouraged by many and congregations had clauses in their constitutions that German was the sole language to be used in their sermons. No doubt the inability of many pastors who had come from Germany to preach in English led to this attitude. And some had their misgivings about a transition into using English. Until the early 1890s practically all preaching was done in German, although some instruction in English was being given the students at the seminary, I believe, from the

beginning. No doubt in those early years the prospects for gaining non-Lutherans were just as bright as they are today.

It was probably this very restricted mission activity which discouraged larger mission offerings. They were pitifully small, but there really was no incentive to larger offerings; there didn't seem to be any need, for the mission offerings were used solely to support small mission congregations, and there weren't so many of these and the amount of support they received was almost insignificant. For example, the following was the recommendation of the Mission Board in 1907: "*Wir empfehlen der Apostolische Gemeinde in Toledo le Unterstützung von \$5.00 pro Monat zu gewähren grant. Für die Parochie Allegan empfehlen wir le Unterstützung von \$50.00 pro Jahr!*" That was about the average support received by mission congregations. Even the seminary, after its establishment, never required more than \$1800 and support for the year. And that was required only once. Before 1900 it was mostly below \$1000. Of course in the earlier years the offerings could not have been large for the means of the average member were meager; but by the close of the century, homes and farms had been paid for, and most members had no difficulty in making ends meet. But hardly any increase in offerings was noticeable. For example, in 1890 the nearly 8000 communicants contributed the "munificent" sum of \$316.72 to missions, about four cents per communicant for the year! In 1900 it was still less: the nearly 10,000 communicants, raised only \$278.36, not even three cents per communicant! In 1909, just before the union, the offerings for missions averaged about a dime. The total offerings for all synodical purposes during these years fluctuated from a low of \$1380.37 to a high of \$2563.75. Although the money then meant much more than it does today, yet how much mission work could be done even in those days with a sum like that!

As we review the history of the synod can we speak of an inner development in the sense of an advancement or growth in sound Lutheran doctrine and practice? With reference to doctrine, I believe it can be said that from the beginning the synod stood square on the Lutheran confession, although there is some evidence of pietism (*freigebig*). If it was claimed after the break with the Joint Synod in 1896 that it leaned doctrinally toward Ohio, it was being maligned either consciously or unconsciously. Even though individual pastors may have favored Ohio over against Missouri, I doubt that instances can be cited of fraternization in the sense of exchanging pulpits. Whether some of its earlier pastors accepted the Lutheran confessions without reservation might be questioned. We can say that in practice there was an advancement toward sounder Lutheranism, especially after Klingmann became president and the synod broke with Basel. But even later the practice of a number of its pastors was very lax. There were instances where practice conflicted with confession, and this practice was evidenced by the fact that they had no scruples about leaving the synod and taking their congregations with them. Some concerned themselves little with the doctrine at issue. Some, as was mentioned before, were a disgrace to the ministry and brought the synod into disrepute and caused it to be discredited as a Lutheran synod. Of course this laxity was not condoned by the synod and at the time it applied for membership in the Synod Conference it agreed that it would "earnestly strive to remove wrongs in practice."

If we take into consideration some of its former affiliation and how pressure was used, even by some of its officials, to induce it to adopt a more liberal confession and to become identified with the more liberal Lutheran bodies, we have reason to thank God today that the doctrinal stand of the old Michigan Synod remained sound.

Now a brief word regarding the outward growth and inner development of the district from the time of the union of the Michigan Synod with the Joint Synod in 1909. Since that time the district has enjoyed a steady although not rapid growth. It might be mentioned here that the growth of the Seminary, which a year after the union was reopened as a preparatory school, was more marked. But, inasmuch as it no longer is an institution of the district rather of the Joint Synod, the history of its growth belongs to the history of the Joint Synod. Still, being a child of the former Michigan Synod and nurtured by it, its development is naturally of special interest to us. Reopened with an enrollment of four students after Pastor Otto Hoenecke had been called as its director and, for the time being, its sole instructor, it has now for some years had an enrollment well over the 100 mark. And with the erection of the new administration-gymnasium building—which we hope will not be delayed—its future looks still brighter.

According to the 1948 statistics the district then numbered 94 pastors, 27 teachers, 73 parishes, 79 congregations, and 20,174 communicants. Today, no doubt, it is somewhat larger. The figures could be still larger, had the district been able to do more intensive mission work and on a larger scale. It had to forego availing itself of a number of opportunities to establish missions in various parts of the state because neither men nor necessary funds were available, although we do want to acknowledge that we received a lion's share of Church Extension funds, almost again as much as the next highest loan which was made to the Nebraska District. Of the \$809,000 loaned out, our district has received \$214,000 and, according to a report of the Mission Board, \$205,000 of this has been granted us since 1942. Two years ago, the Mission Board could report that there were 23 missionaries active in 28 fields; in addition there were four Christian day schools in which four male and one lady teacher were engaged.

In 1947, 340 were added to the communicant membership of the missions, an increase of seventeen percent. That increase, if kept up, would represent a 100% increase in 6 years. During the biennium of 1946-1948, four missions became independent; since then six new missions were started and combined with missions previously started, and others were being considered by the Mission Board, as there are a number of promising fields. I do not believe it is an over-statement to say that, on the whole, our congregations have become more mission-minded. This can be ascribed to the fact that not only is the all-importance of this work and the necessity of supporting it liberally being emphasized, but our people are being familiarized with and given an insight into the nature and scope of this work in our synod and what is being accomplished. This is being done by means of detailed reports on mission activity. Several of these were prepared and distributed in our congregations, much of this work having been done by our missionary at large at the time. Then pictures were taken in the mission fields of the missions, the property, and the missionaries. Slides were made of these and have been shown in our congregations. Thus interest has been stimulated in mission work in our own midst. To stimulate interest in a wider field, in Indian and foreign missions, motion pictures have been taken in these fields and are being shown or will be in the near future as those taken in Africa by Pp. E. Hoenecke and A. Wacker.

The mission spirit and zeal manifested by a number of our pastors—for which we must give three and our former missionary at large credit—must be lauded. They have done outstanding work and must be given much credit for more intensive mission work being done, for aroused interest and for increased offerings, the latter by emphasizing and constantly reminding congregations of the necessity of more generous, systematic and liberal giving. This was also emphasized in the Michigan plan, which some of these men sponsored and for which the main objective was retirement of the synod's debt.

The district's present budgetary expenses for mission work in the state alone are nearly \$46,000 annually. As a district we have been raising for synodical budgetary purposes around \$100,000 annually. That means that our communicants are contributing on an average about \$5.00 per year to the work of the synod, which is quite an increase over the 25¢ contributed at the turn of the century. Still, it is nothing to boast about, considering the present value of the dollar.

Can we speak of an inner development in the district since the union in the sense that the district's doctrinal stand has become sounder? No doubt there has been an advancement in knowledge of sound doctrine in our congregations, especially of those doctrines which are the cause of the controversy between the Synodical Conference and other Lutheran bodies and which again have been brought to the forefront by the present union endeavors. And a better knowledge of these doctrine has not been without effect. Pastors and congregations on the whole are taking a firmer stand with reference to these doctrines, as also the practices which are at variance with God's Word and which doctrines and practices still separate all the members of the Synodical Conference from other Lutheran bodies.

But, if we speak of an inner development in the district, sanctification must also be considered. An inner development demands a furtherance in sanctification. In one part of sanctification, there has been progress, namely, in giving for the spreading of the Gospel.

Yet, in spite of this—that most of our congregations are meeting and some even exceeding their apportionments and otherwise are much more liberal than the forefathers were, raising amounts for church and

school buildings which a few decades ago even the synod would scarcely have ventured to raise—it cannot be denied that, in the last ten or twenty years, a great change, and not for the better, has occurred in the conduct and life of our church members; that, instead of development, i.e., furtherance in sanctification, there has been in many respects a retrogression; that there is less evidence of the real Christian life. The conduct, the habits of a large percentage of our church members of today, our forefathers would have called—and rightly so—a conformity to the world. Such who are frequenters of questionable places of amusement, who are addicted to vices as gambling and drunkenness surely do not hold themselves aloof from the world. It is a poor testimony to the Christian life when a church member will spend in one evening, as much as he gives the Lord during an entire year for His work or may be found regularly at places of worldly amusement and then finds it difficult to get to church possibly once a month. Such pronounced cases of conformity to the world may be exceptions, but that many of our church members go along with the world in its questionable, even sinful practices, cannot be denied.

And a wrong conception of the function of the church is growing among our members, and may we not say that it is becoming quite general? Obviously the Lord does not expect His church to undertake to amuse or entertain its members. And yet, it is just such externals that so many are looking for in the church and expect of it. Not that we have a right to condemn members meeting in their parish hall or school house or church basement for a sociable evening, or the young folks giving a play or organizing ball or bowling teams and even having bowling alleys. But it is these things chiefly, or possibly solely, which keep not a few interested in the church instead of that which is the real mission of the church: to spread the Gospel, to give Christians an opportunity to worship God with their fellow Christians; to strengthen its members in faith and Christian life by preaching the Word and administering the sacraments. In many congregations there is a round of entertainments, of this or that club or social meeting, of suppers and dinners and bazaars and who knows what not! And if a pastor discourages or even fails to approve of such externals, he is regarded as outmoded, behind the times! And of the church that does not devote itself to these externals, many of its members will say: it has nothing to draw!

Then, how many have a false conception of the office of a pastor, or at least would relegate his real duties into the background and place in the foreground, as essentials, things that may be desirable in a pastor, but are not required of him by his Lord as: being a good mixer, a go-getter, one that will put his congregation on the map, etc. And does not the average congregation believe that when a pastor has reached the age of about forty, he is getting too old for effective work? At least many hesitate in calling one beyond that age.

And we pastors need to ask ourselves whether we, too, have not retrogressed, in that we have been effected by the spirit of the time and possibly not only lack that consecration to our work which the Lord expects of us and which many of our forefathers possessed and showed but also do not heed the words of St. Paul: “Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed, but in all things approving ourselves as ministers of God.” Not infrequently some of us do give offence by our behavior, lack of good manners or decorum or the quality of jokes that are sometimes told or busying ourselves too much with allotria, trivialities, etc. At times we give the impression that we are not conscious of the exalted office with which the Lord has vested us.

I believe, all of this must also be considered when we speak of an inner development in our district, our congregation, and among lay members and pastors. It is food for thought and should prompt us to make greater efforts towards inner development also with respect to sanctification or Christian life.

As we review the history of our district, its outward growth and inner development during the century past, we acknowledge, in spite of our many failings, that God has been gracious to us. Even though, as a former synod and now a district, we have not expanded like some other synods, yet we *have* grown; God has used us as his instruments in spreading the Gospel. He has preserved us in sound doctrine. And all of this prompts us, especially in this year of the synod’s centennial celebration, to thank and glorify Him, our Lord and God.