

THE CHIPPEWA INDIAN MISSIONS
OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN (1840-1869)

John Maumann
Senior Lutheran Church History
March 31, 1982

The footnote system is thus: The first number refers to the numbered bibliographic reference and the second number, after the comma, refers to the page.

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W
Mequon, Wisconsin

A good deal of American history deals with the relationships between European Americans settling the country and the Native Americans. Usually these histories deal with the secular aspects such as the battles, the "peacetime" atrocities, or even everyday life. Very seldom does American history deal with the spiritual work done by Christians with the Indians. We are going to look at one portion of that work which brought the good news of Jesus Christ to the Chippewa Indians in the northern area of Michigan around Saginaw from about 1840-1868 by Lutherans.

With the remainder of these pages we have two main desires, First, we wish to examine the history of the Lutheran Indian missions of northern Michigan. Second, intimately connected with the first, we wish to examine their mission techniques and the problems which developed for the missions.

There are primarily four major areas of mission work by Lutherans from 1840-1868, all interconnected. There were the missions considered and begun but for the most part not run by Friederich Schmid in Sebawaing and Shebawaing along Lake Huron. These two mission stations later came under the control of the other mission stations and the Missouri Synod. After some years of success both Sebawaing and Shebawaing were closed. Wilhelm Loehe of Germany began a colony just to the southeast of Saginaw for the expressed purpose of mission work among the Indians about the same time as the two previously mentioned. Friedrich Craemer carried that mission out very capably in Frankenmuth for several years. Because of the Indian movements away from Frankenmuth and the call for a missionary, the mission called Bethany became the center of Indian mission activity under Edward Baierlein. In the 1860s the U.S. government offered inducements for the Indians to move to Isabella county north of the Bethany mission onto the reservation. That move ultimately closed the mission. Ernst G.H. Miessler tried to carry on in Isabella but there the

work did not succeed. In 1868 mission work among the Chippewa Indians in Michigan by Lutherans ended.

After this brief historical run through the trees we will now walk to examine the trees more closely. As mentioned before, we will pay close attention to the mission techniques and problems.

Friederich Schmid arrived in Michigan in 1833 having a call to Ann Arbor. His work was of tremendous importance to the expansion of Lutheranism in Michigan. Let it suffice to say that he formed many congregations but there has been some question about his Lutheranism. Schmid seemed to have a lack of understanding when the differences between Lutheran and Reformed theologies were concerned. That lack was demonstrated when he sent a Reformed missionary, Johann S. Dumser who would not subscribe to the Lutheran confessions, to the Sebewaing mission along the shore of Lake Huron. Not only did that move cause a split in the first Michigan Synod, he also lost control and input into the missions of northern Michigan.

Shortly after Schmid's arrival in Ann Arbor he recognized the need for mission work among the Indians. Pastor Schmid not only recognized their physical poverty but also their spiritual needs. In one of his letters back to Germany he lamented about the Roman Catholic mission work. The Roman Catholics under Baraga converted more by declaration than instruction. Even after "conversion" little or no instruction was undertaken.^{9,p28} Many letters to the mission society at Basel demonstrate his desire to do mission work among the Chippewas. In 1837 he stressed the Indian's needs and said that the missionary would not only have to feed himself but in many cases also the Indians of his flock.^{9,p53} In 1842 Schmid sent representatives to the Indians to see if mission work was feasible, and also to interest youths for training in possible.^{9,p67} By 1845, around the end of June, Johann J.F. Auch, Johann Dumser, and Georg Sinke left for Saginaw to start their work in Sebewaing

and Shebewaing. Auch was to be missionary at the Shebewaing station while Dumser and Sinke traveled with the tribe of Sebewaing. By means of a translator they carried out their work.

After several years some success was realized. Three children were baptized in 1848 being called Abraham, Noah, and Frederick.^{9,p.76} By 1851 the mission at Sebewaing was turned over to the "old Lutherans."^{9,p78} Schmid considered them to have sound teaching but not a living faith. In another way of looking at it, the "old Lutherans" were those who had held to Lutheranism instead of adding some Reformed teachings. Sebewaing did build a church and adopted the liturgy according to the Wuertemberger church.^{9,p78} in 1853 because of Indian movements the station was closed with very limited success.

The mission at Shebewaing had a longer and slightly more successful mission. Johann J.F. Auch was the first missionary there in 1845. J.F. Maier came to help in 1848 but was killed in a boat accident shortly following in 1851. There were about 40 souls in the congregation.^{11,p35} After Auch was left with both missions at Sebewaing and Shebewaing, J.E. Roeder arrived to assist in 1851. But, from 1851 on, the mission began to decline until finally closing.

As we will see with all of the mission projects there were traders and Methodist missionaries who did not like what the Lutherans were doing. Since the Lutherans tried to help the Indians obtain fair business deals, and were training the Indians so that they could read and write, and were also trying to keep the Natives from spending their money wastefully, the traders did not like them. The traders would slander various missionaries trying to keep the Indians from trusting the "blackcoats." Because Baierlein prevented alcohol sales, the traders said that he was training the young men for slavery in a German war.^{1,p28} They also said that the "blackcoats" had fled to

Germany because their forefathers had helped to crucify Jesus.^{1,p28} The Methodists did not like the Lutheran competition either. Their methods for mission work were based upon the revival meeting with a twist. If the Indians did not join and be baptized, they would fall into the hands of the soldiers. The Methodists practiced wholesale baptism with little instruction in the faith. To get "converts" they also promised a great deal in physical benefits. Just as the traders and sometimes with the traders, the Methodists slandered Lutherans saying if an Indian was baptized Lutheran he would be sent to Germany as a slave, all the old men would be sold into slavery, and the Lutherans were snake worshippers (the mission at Frankenmuth had a coiled snake at the base of its cross). Chief Sauaban became a Methodist, "Because they never gave me a second's rest and constantly pestered me, I decided to permit them to baptize me, so that they might leave me some peace in my old age."^{18,p153} The slanders of the Methodists or of the traders for that matter were most effective because of the Indians natural suspicion about whites.

Because of such a lack of trust the Shebewaing mission station came to its end in 1853. The Methodists and traders slandered Auch and turned the tribe away from him. Missionary Auch had convinced the Indians to move to Bethany so that they would be better able to help the natives spiritually. A trader who would loose money by the move told the Indians that the missionary was proposing the transfer only to sell them into slavery. Several other traders verified the others story. A tribal coucil was held.^{11,p39} The council made four points: 1) the Bible was the ruination of the people, 2) one half of the preachers were liars [Probably including the Methodists], 3) the Lutherans were planning to sell the Indians into slavery, and 4) the Indians will live as before. Trying to dissuade the Indians from their path Auch called on Miessler, the missionary from Bethany, and Jim Gruet, his translator, to speak to the tribe. No amount of persuasion

did any good. What had once been a congregation of about 40 souls almost dwindled to zero over night. One year later the mission was formally closed because the Indians had moved to the reservation in Isabella county.

Elements which finally moved the closing of the two missions at Sebewaing and Shebewaing are common to all the mission stations. There were lies from the traders and the Methodists which undercut the Indian's confidence in the missionaries. The general lack of trust of the Indians for whites was not overcome by the missionaries. The lack of stability between whites and Natives did not help to build up the Chippewa's trust. Finally, the general movement of the Indians away from the whites and lastly to the reservation caused the missions to close. These same elements will be negative factors in the success of Frankenmuth, Bethany, and the Mount Pleasant mission of Isabella county.

We could say that Frankenmuth, Bethany, and Mount Pleasant are a line or series of missions from the same source. Bethany was a move from Frankenmuth to better serve the Indians as they moved. Mount Pleasant was a move to follow the Indians to the reservation and continue the work. These three missions are our best examples of the techniques used for mission work, because we have the most information about them. Although the slanders of traders and Methodists will not be mentioned extensively they are still present. Let us now concentrate upon this main stream of mission activity by Lutherans.

In 1843 Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau became interested in an Indian mission in America. He had heard of the plea for Lutheran pastors from Conrad Wyneken and also heard of Schmid's desire for Indian missions. Instead of sending missionaries alone, he decided to send an entire colony made up of Christians. The community members would set up a colony with the purpose of being a "light" to the Indians. Not only were they to have a missionary for the tribes but the entire colony was to be a Christian example to the Natives.

The plan was a clever one. The Michigan area was one which could handle a community just as it was handling many other pioneers. Also, seeing the Christian living and working with other pioneers and with Natives would be a first rate example especially when we consider the crooked traders and unscrupulous whites in many areas who were cheating the Indians. At first glance the plan was very good and one which could help to dispel the Indian's bad opinion about whites.

Unfortunately, the plan was doomed in the "long run" because neither Loehe or his contemporaries in Germany or for that matter missionaries already there having some contact with the Indians could foresee the changes already occurring. As early as 1812 the Indians had already started yielding lands to the whites.^{22,p34} By 1830 the Chippewa were already leaving the areas of northern Michigan as the whites moved in. As a nomadic, hunting people they needed to follow the game as it reacted to population pressure. The Frankenmuth colony as a permanent community was unable to follow the tribes as they moved. In several cases at the Bethany mission the missionary tried to counteract the Indian's nomadic nature. We will examine those attempts later. Even before the colony arrived in America, the Frankenmuth community was to have a short life as a mission outreach to the Indians in the area.

Loehe went ahead with his plans, finding a young man, August Craemer, to be pastor of the Franconian community. We would not need to deal with the trip except for several incidents which affected the community's unity and indirectly its mission impact. On the trip from Germany many people became sick. Because of the sickness Craemer came in contact with an unwed mother, Miss Brenthier, who was very helpful to the people. Upon arriving in New York he married her which did not please the members, although she had long since repented of her sin. The congregation did not want their pastor marrying a woman with an illegitimate, five year old son.^{7,p30} Craemer's action

although justified, caused friction between pastor and congregation. The second incident was a train crash on route from Albany to Buffalo. Pastor Craemer thought the people should see the hand of God and take the more expensive canal boat.^{22,p29} The congregation decided against Craemer and took the train again. Two points are demonstrated by these incidents: there was tension between the congregation and its pastor which certainly would not help the mission project, and second, Pastor Craemer had a stubborn attitude which would not help much in his relations with other people, even the Natives. These tensions would not be resolved until more tension arose in Frankenmuth and until Adam Ernst and George Schuster arrived, who with their "outsiders'" view of the situation would exhort both congregation and Pastor.

Upon arriving in Michigan in 1845, the colony took up temporary residence in Saginaw. Loehe had been in contact with Schmid asking for help to find land they could buy. They chose an area to the southeast of Saginaw about fifteen miles. Missionary Auch took them to the area upon which they would later build Frankenmuth. Auch was to help Craemer as much as he could but differences arose between the men. Pastor Craemer wished to build a German style village but Auch recommended the single family farm. The colony chose to adopt the single family farm, to Craemer's dismay. Other disagreements arose when Craemer claimed that Auch was giving communion to Reformed people. While the two men parted company, the colony's like for Auch caused more tension between Pastor and congregation.

While Craemer was a stubborn man and as Ernst and Schuster put it, "guilty of imprudent conduct,"^{22,p55} he was carrying out Loehe's plan of keeping the colony German. The colony was to remain German and was to impart to the Indians German Lutheranism. The desire to teach the Indians according to the Lutheran doctrine is good because true Lutheranism mirrors the Bible's

teachings. But, they also wished to instill into the Natives the want and training to be German. When the school was finally begun later in 1845 the students were to study German.^{4, pl.65} We certainly cannot praise the people's desire to make the Indians German, even if the German culture did contain many good and useful traits. As we look back on mission history the results of such a plan of cultural change were seldom good. Making faith dependent upon culture can exclude those good aspects of the culture and can alienate all who are part of that culture. The final result could become the rejection of the good news simply because it is closely connected with a culture. Yet, Craemer set out to transplant Germany among the Natives. The children's education in the Craemer's house consisted of reading, writing, and Luther's Small Catechism by means of a translator while Pastor Craemer was learning the Chippewa language.

Translators were a very important part of the mission effort. If the translator was good and loyal the work proceeded smoothly. If he was a bad translator or not willing to make a good translation of the Bible's message through the missionary, the effect could be disastrous. The first translator, a Roman Catholic, Tromble, was not loyal to the message. He finally was released and John Gravereth was hired in 1847, but also released the same year. Later in '47 Jim Gruet was hired. He proved to be a good and loyal translator who helped not only Craemer but also Baierlein, and Miessler.

As with the mission work in Africa, the reaction of the chief to the missionary made a great deal of difference. In one instance chief "Nock-chi-co-me" instructed the translator to mistranslate the message so that his tribe would not accept the man. Some chiefs did not allow the missionaries into the village. Some chiefs, like Bemessikeh, were actively interested in what the missionaries had to offer for his tribe. In 1847 Chief Bemessikeh came to Frankenmuth to ask if a missionary would come to his village, for it was too far

away to send the children. His interest was the beginning of the "most successful" part of the mission effort to the Indians at the Bethany station. Pastor Craemer started his mission school by visiting Chief Thouas who agreed to send some children to the school.^{4,p163} By walking miles to various villages Pastor Craemer was able to gain children for his "school away from home."

Obtaining children for the school was not easy but their first, small attempts did glean results. About eleven children were present in 1846 from the three preaching stations among the various tribes.^{4,p172} Pastor Craemer taught by trying to instill in the children the desire to be baptized. Three of the same family did come forward after some training. They were called Abraham, Magdaline, and Anna.^{13,p200} The year was fairly successful until the fever hit and the Indian children left.

The mission did not have a chance to run smoothly without interference. The Methodists tried to discredit the pastor and the community by saying the children would be sent into slavery. We are not sure how these attacks were dealt with or if Pastor Craemer thought them worth dealing with.

The Methodists were strong in the area. Craemer thought that the Methodist revival meetings would offend the Indian's normal sense of restraint. Obviously the Methodists did have some success, maybe because of the threats used, described earlier. They succeeded with the Cacallien tribe. Chief John Kaily was a Methodist who asked Craemer to come and instruct his tribe. Pastor Craemer was unable to oblige for he could not come to the tribe and leave his responsibilities in Frankenmuth. The Methodists were a constant plague to the Lutherans.

Pastor Craemer had made learning the Chippewa language as soon as he could, his goal. Not only did he want to save money by not having to pay a translator, but he wished to be a better teacher. As when wishing to

communicate with anyone who has a different language; if we are able to rid ourselves of the translator we can be more certain and sure that God's message is being proclaimed. The importance of learning the language is obvious. During the year of 1846 Craemer translated the Gospel of Matthew, a small hymn book, the ten commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer and some collects. Making the good news available through the language of the people, the Indians, was well under way.

Everything that happened during the year of 1846 proved to Craemer that one man was not capable of being the missionary to a nomadic group of Indians and pastor of a German congregation at the same time. There was just too much work for one man. Loehe sent him Edward Baierlein in 1847 to assist.

The arrival of Baierlein was the beginning of the end for the Frankenmuth mission effort and the beginning of the Bethany mission station. Before continuing with the Bethany mission account we will examine the close of Frankenmuth as a mission colony.

As Frankenmuth became better established, more villagers came. Loehe was continuing his colonizing efforts by sending more Franconians and forming three more Franconian villages. These later settlers who joined the Frankenmuth colony were not as mission minded as the original settlers. Yet, the mission continued for several more years.

Even after Baierlein moved the main mission to the St. Louis area of Michigan, Pastor Craemer continued his work. In 1848 the 19th child was baptized.^{17, p20} There were about 17 students in 1849. Finally in 1850 Pastor Craemer received a call which took him away from Frankenmuth and also closed the doors of the Frankenmuth mission to the Chippewa Indians.

Edward Baierlein arrived in Frankenmuth in 1847 to help Pastor Craemer with the mission work. The two men did not get along. Craemer thought that Baierlein was not earnest but was pretentious, and offensive

in his conduct.^{4,pl86} Another point of stress between the two was that Craemer wanted Baierlein to join the Missouri Synod but Baierlein preferred to remain attached to the Dresden society. With these tensions we may wonder how long two men with strong personalities could have worked together? The question was never answered because Chief Bemessikeh came expressing an interest in having a missionary come to his village on the Pine river. Chief Bemessikeh did not like the Methodists for they, "Howl early and late, and move hands and legs as if they would joun into heaven."^{4,pl87} Baierlein promised to come for a visit.

The next year, 1848, Pastor Baierlein and translator Jim Gruet went to Bemessikeh's village. On this occasion most of the men were gone so no decision could be made. Later that same year the missionary returned and the men of the council were there. Baierlein did not force himself upon the village but left the decision up to them. He would teach their children to read, write, figure, and about Christianity. On their part, they would agree to send their children and attend divine services on Sunday. After some talking the men agreed. The Chief promised to build him a wigwam for his family and the shhool.

If Pastor Baierlein had tried to force himself upon the tribe he probably would not have been accepted. Instead, by leaving the decision to the tribe and council he was assuring himself of their support even if some would not come to faith.

Pastor and Mrs. Baierlein attempted to live in the wigwam for a while. The wigwam was completely unacceptable for their needs. When they cooked the smoke so filled the room that they almost choked. The cooking needed to be done outside even if it rained. When he wished to study or translate while it was raining the umbrella he held barely kept his books and papers dry. Because of these problems and that he needed more room for his family and school a cabin was built with the help of men from Frankenmuth.^{16,p27}

At first only eight children were sent as a type of test case.^{18,pl50}
 The Indians were not sure what to make of this "blackcoat". After initial acceptance 20 children came.

The villagers were true to their word and came to Sunday services in Baierlein's cabin. His description of the first services is humorous. The Indians did not know how to behave. The men would smoke and talk, the women would talk aloud to each other across the room, and the children would run in and out as they saw fit.^{16,p29} Although the first services were rather clumsy, with exhortation they would and did get better.

During the years, starting 1847 and '48, Baierlein began studying the language. By Christmas 1848 he was well enough along to translate several Christmas hymns. Christmas was a special holiday for Baierlein and his family and a new experience for the adults and children of the village. The tree was impressive and Baierlein gave gifts to the Natives as part of the celebration for the season which had a winning effect upon the people.

On New Years day, 1849, the Baierleins became the parents of a baby girl. After he announced that she would be baptized ten of the children of the village asked to be baptized too. Some instruction was needed but they were ready for baptism on that special day. While the children were reacting to the good news the adults were not as open. Even so, the congregation was growing.

There were about 19-24 students in the School. During 1849 the mission came under the control of the Missouri Synod. During a synodical mission committee meeting they stressed learning the language of the Indians, which the missionaries were doing, and training some Indian boys to help with the spread of the gospel among the Nation. Their second recommendation would be tried several years down the road.

The year of 1850 was a very important year for the mission. The congregation did not grow by leaps and bounds for there were only fifteen souls in the church but several events did have impact. Several adults had come to faith and were part of the fifteen souls.^{18,pl54} On important convert was an Indian woman by the name of "Sarah" who was 100 years old. The chief had died and at his funeral there was wailing and the normal customs of the tribe. Several days later one of the baptized children died. The Christian funeral was so different and made such an impression upon "Sarah" that she came to believe.

One mission technique which most do not even think of as a technique is the Christian service. In the case just mentioned the Christian funeral was an expression of the good news, and hope which Christians have. The good news was such a startling contrast that the Indians could not help noticing. The difference between unbelievers' fears and the Christians' peace was tremendously important in the lives of the tribe and the spread of the kingdom.

That Chief Bemessikeh had died was a loss. That he died without being baptized left a great witness unsaid. Yet, the chief had always been a friend of the church and had stressed the importance of the Christian faith to his wife and children. That stress would later bear fruit. We cannot be sure whether the chief did come to faith even on his death bed for Pastor Baierlein was not there to ask the correct questions.

Besides the contrasts of the funerals, the chief's death gave Pastor Baierlein one more opening to gain the tribes' trust. With the chief's death his place upon the council was left open. Oddly, the tribe left the position to Pastor Baierlein.^{18,pl56}

The position of respect which he held did not directly help the mission efforts at Bethany but did help indirectly. Pastor Baierlein used this chance

to help the people in several ways which demonstrated his love and concern for the people of the tribe. When Baierlein had first arrived he had been struck by the misery of the tribe, especially the starvation. The tribe's lack of food became especially apparent in the winter when the men would leave to hunt for food. If the men were gone for a long time or had a bad hunt the tribe would suffer. To counteract the starvation Baierlein mentioned for their consideration the idea of the garden. He stressed that the vegetables and other food they would be able to grow would help in those winters when the hunt was poor. Immediate ascent did not come but shortly thereafter because of Baierlein's example some men did try the garden. With their examples more gardens were to follow. The total effect was less starvation during the winter. The second idea he had was again to help them through the winter but also draw them from a nomadic life. Baierlein suggested that they consider building cabins. The cabins were warmer, less smoky and better protection against the elements. That idea was not well accepted at all. Cabins were too foreign to the tribe and would have required too great a change. To help the matter along Baierlein offered nails and the windows to the first to build. No one took the gift until the widowed daughter of Chief Bemessikeh said she would build a cabin. Then more members of the tribe accepted the idea. Not to stifle the enthusiasm of the tribe, Pastor Baierlein found himself giving nails and windows to everyone who built a cabin. Through his efforts as a friend of the tribe, the village was more stable and better suited to survive the weather of Michigan. ^{4, p54-55}

Baierlein's activities in the council are not directly connected with missionary work because they did not include the preaching of the gospel. Yet, his actions as a friend spoke volumes to the Indians so that they may have listened more closely to the Gospel the next time their friend preached.

During 1851 the church was built.^{16,p58} That was a special day for the Chippewa Christians as it is for any church. Baierlein also had a new assistant, E.G.H. Miessler.^{2,p206} Not only did Miessler bring his belongings, but he also brought items for the church: a bell, vestments, a crucifix, and a communion set. Now the 41 souls of the church at Bethany could see an outward expression of God's Word in action. The structure of the church also helped with the behavior of the congregation.

Chief Bemessikeh's widow was baptized and offered for baptism a sick child. Two days later the child died but the mother could be comforted with the Gospel of Christ, that the child was home with the Father. Trying to hurt the mission, the Methodists claimed that the child had died because of the Lutheran rite of baptism. Their lies did not have much effect upon the congregation.

Pastor Baierlein had been busy with the language to help his congregation. He had written a primer for the school consisting of a speller and a reader containing Bible history accounts. Other work included a catechism, a New Testament, portions of the Psalms and portions of Isaiah. These works along with Craemer's translations made the Word of God more accessible to the Indians.

The congregation continued to grow, up to about 50 souls by 1852, after which time a call came for Baierlein in 1853. He had originally been trained for the missions in India. Now, he received a call to begin his original work. He felt inclined to take the call and had to tell the tribe. The congregation and even those tribal members who were not believers were saddened by the announcement. The fruit of his Christian friendship is evident. One member of the congregation was so sad that he would not come to watch Pastor Baierlein leave.

In one way, when Baierlein left, the mission was finished. Certainly, we never want to credit one person as being the dynamic means used by God to express his Word but after he left, the mission was never the same. When Craemer left Frankenmuth, the mission effort fell apart because of lack of interest and ability. In Baierlein's case he left a very capable man, Miessler, but his position with the tribe was not the same as Baierlein's had been. Miessler, while a hard worker did not know the language, did not have the trust of the tribe, and could not be the friend which his predecessor could.^{1, p62} This writer cannot help wonder whether the mission efforts at Bethany would have collapsed if Baierlein had stayed? Certainly there is no answer other than mere conjecture. Some historians would like to blame Miessler for the mission's failure, but the effort he gave to save the mission is a witness against such a criticism. The most we can comfortably say is that Missionary Miessler did not have the same talents as Baierlein had been given.

After Baierlein left, J.E. Roeder was sent to assist Miessler. Part of the help he must have given was in the fight against the Methodists and traders. With a strong personality like Baierlein's gone, they worked more openly in the midst of the tribe. The traders at Bethany could more openly sell alcohol. The traders increased drunkenness among the Indians, especially trying to get baptized Christians drunk. Even the interpreter at Bethany became a drunkard. Adultery became more common even among members of the congregation. The tribe's confidence went up and down. At one point the Indians asked the commission of missions to remove Miessler because he was not giving gifts as Baierlein had. At Christmas Miessler wanted to celebrate communion but only four participated during 1853.^{4, p201} The mission was decaying.

Are we to claim that the members of the congregation were not Christians? Can we claim that the Christians were never well grounded in the faith as one writer states? Greenhold wrote, "In no instance was the Indian well grounded

in the Christian faith."^{4, p201} Did Baierlein fail in his pastoral duty to train the Chippewa Christians? None of these questions can be answered with certainty. We do know that Baierlein had made the children memorize the small catechism so that they would have the essential doctrines of the Christian faith.^{16, p57} This writer thinks a weakness of flesh may be a better reason. Once the Christian Indians saw some of their fellow Christians falling away it would be easier for them too. The old Adam at work in them took the upper hand of their wills. Certainly we wish that the Christians there had stood up to the traders, Methodist and their unbelieving neighbors, but that did not happen.

Another temptation to the Indians became stronger. The government and the Methodists were encouraging the Indians to move to Isabella county onto the reservation. The government offered eighty acres of free land while Miessler ~~trying to compete~~ could offer only three. That the Methodists also encouraged the move is not strange at all. Isabella county was a stronghold of their church. If all the Chippewa Indians moved, especially from Bethany, the stronghold of Lutheran teaching, the Methodists could assure themselves of almost complete control. This writer wonders if the Methodists had any connections with the government to make Isabella the reservation or whether they were just very foresighted? The end of the mission community was clearly in sight.

By 1854 only Miessler was left. Most of the Indians had move on, to the reservation for the free land. Miessler had almost lost all of the peoples' trust. Even the Indian agents were prejudicing the Natives against their missionary. The church was falling apart.^{8, p44}

During this year the mission board tried to train two Indian youths for the ministry. Two boys of the tribe were sent to Fort Wayne for training.^{8, p44} By 1859 the hopes for the boys had ended. One boy had run away and the other was sent home because of fornication.

By 1859 very little was left of Bethany. All the Indians had moved to Isabella county. So, in 1860 missionary Miessler and interpreter Jim Gruet went to Isabella to open the Mount Pleasant Mission. They had no church or no central area. Services were held in wigwams and the people ~~presnet~~ did not wish to behave or listen.^{4,p207} By 1861 Miessler concluded that almost all the Indians were Methodists. They were in a Methodist area. The Methodist had a large school, a church, two English speaking missionaries, and several interpreters for the 800 Indians in the ten mile square.^{4,206} The Methodists gave the Indians offices to retain their loyalty and they sponcered revivals for the tribes.^{4,p207} Even the members of the old Bethany mission were in other churches. Some had become Mthodists and others had gone to other denominations. The Lutheran missions to the Chippewa Indians were no longer functional. Thus, in 1868 the mission project was ended.

Miessler's last offering for the Indian mission was an Indian grammar, and a Chippewa dictionary (Chippewa-English, English-Chippewa). These he could put to use in Minnesota with the missions there.

For a few moments let us look at some of the mission techniques used during the missions. Two types of mission settings were used. One was Loehe's mission colony which was short lived because of the nomadic nature of the Indian and movements caused by white, population pressure. The other was that kind used at Bethany, Sebewaing, and Shebewaing, i.e, the mission station. At one point Baierlein asked for a colony of people to come to Bethany in order to have a group similar to what Loehe had first envisioned but that project never started. Maybe it would have been used if he had stayed. The Indian mission had the classic examples of interpreter troubles. We see that the missionaries translated a lot of Biblical material. Baierlein especially gave social help and counseling to those with which he dealt. Even the religious services and and the missionary's personal faith helped to give the Indians a proper picture

of what the Christian faith meant and gave to believers.

From the mission program we can see classic mission problems. The government was not always working in a fashion which joined well with the mission work. In many instances the government agents were crooks working for their own support more than the welfare of the Indians. In some cases the government overlooked the actions of people defrauding the Indians. Of course there was the movement of the tribes which did nothing for the mission's welfare and ability to carry out the project. There are several clear instances when the missionary himself with the gifts which God had given had a great deal to do with the progress of the mission. Of course we cannot forget the slander and lies given by the traders trying to protect their ability to cheat the Indians, and the Methodists who did not like the competition from a church which did more for the tribes spiritual welfare than they. Even the inherent problems of the Indians did not help the mission effort among the Natives. The Indians were inclined to stay with their old religions. They did not trust most of the whites or it seemed that they preferred to trust crooked whites. The natives were inclined to drunkenness and the wiles of unscrupulous whites. The indian religion which thought that their "red" race was the favorite of their god made preaching the gospel hard.

All of the problems and techniques, except the mission colony, exist today and are in use in one way or another. That observation proves to us that good sense does not change. From this writer's perspective there is only one goal that they could have tried to impliment better and more completely. They could have tried to train more Native teachers and missionaries.

The final question we might wish to ask is was the mission project a failure? If we were to look at the lasting benefits which we can still perceive we would answer, No! The mission disappeared and the members were

absorbed into heterodox churches in many cases. On the other hand, if we agree that a saved soul makes the project a success they it was. There were baptized Christians who died. Even those Indians who went to heterodox churches for whatever reason may still have retained the Gospel seed which was planted there, and held fast to that promise of forgiveness. There were Christians among the Indians. So, even though we would have preferred the project to have turned out differently, than it did, God did reap benefits.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

- *1) Florer, W.W. Early Michigan Settlement. Vol III: Indian Missions in Michigan. Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1953. *
- 2) Frank, Dr. L.F. German-American Pioneers in Wisconsin and Michigan. Trans. by M. Wolff; ed. by H.H. Anderson. Milwaukee County Historical Society, 1971.
- 3) Graebner, Theodore. Church Bells in the Forest. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944.
- *4) Greenholt, Homer R. A Study of Wilhelm Loehe, His Colonies and the Lutheran Indian Missions in the Saginaw Valley of Michigan. Doctor of Philosophy dissertation. Chicago, Illinois, 1937. *
- *5) Hansen, Carl R. "Frankenmuth: A German Missionary Effort in Michigan, 1845-1850." Michigan History Division, Dept. of State, 1978.
- *6) Heintzen, Erich H. Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod, 1841-1853. Thesis for Doctor of Philosophy in History, 1963. Ann Arbor: University microfilm.
- 7) Heintzen, Erich H. Love Leaves Home. Condensed by F. Starr. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973.
- *8). Huegli, Albert G., Jr. The Loehe Colonies in Saginaw County, Michigan, 1845-1854. Thesis for Bachelor of Divinity Degree at Concordia Seminary, April 15, 1936.
- 9) Hutzler, Emerson E., trans. The Schmid Letters. 1953.
- *10) Lockner. "Frederich August Craemer." Lutheraner #47 p. 147ff.
- *11) Luckhard, Charles F. Faith in the Forest. Sebawaing: C.F. Luckhard, 1952.
- 12) Mensel, T.W. "Friedrich Schmid, Pioneer Missionary to the Germans in Michigan." Bulletin Theological Seminary of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, Vol 25, (Oct. 1954), p. 35-46.
- 13) Nelson, E. Clifford, ed. The Lutherans in North America. Revised edition. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980.
- 14) Neve, Dr. J.L. A Brief History of the Lutheran Church in America. 2nd. ed. Burlington: The German Literary Board, 1916.
- 15) Neve, Dr. J.L. History of the Lutheran Church in America. 3rd. ed. Prepared by W.D. Allbeck. Burlington: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1934.
- *16) Polack, W.G. Bringing Christ to the Ojibways in Michigan. Concordia Publishing House.

Bibliography (cont):

- 17) Poppen, E. A Century of Lutheranism in Michigan. Toledo Lutheran Co., 1934.
- 18) Schoenfuhs, Walter P. "Edward Raimund Baierlein: Lutheran Missionary to the Indians in America and Asia." Concordia Historical Institute Monthly, Vol 27 (1954), p. 153-141 & 145-162.
- 19) Schoenfuhs, W.P. "O Tebeningeion"---"O Dearest Jesus." Concordia Historical Institute Monthly, Vol 37 (1965), p. 95-114.
- 20) Tollefson, Don. August Cremer and Mission Efforts at Frankenmuth. Senior Church History Paper, April 15, 1981.
- 21) Wentz, A.R. Lutheranism in America. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1955.
- 22) Zehnder, H.F. Teach My People the Truth: the story of Frankenmuth, Michigan. 1970.
- *23) Comparison of Florer's book Early Michigan Settlements, Vol III, With Baierlein's book Im Urwald bei den roten Indianern. Compiled and translated by a man in Saginaw. Copied pages at the Frankenmuth Historical Museum at Frankenmuth, Michigan.
- *24) Folder "Bethany Indian Mission." At Frankenmuth Historical Museum, Frankenmuth, Michigan.

I would like to thank Carl Hansen of the Frankenmuth Museum for his help with this research. Those marked with an asterisk were supplied by Mr. Hansen.