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VOLUME IV

GOVERNMENT

in the

MISSOURI SYNOD

GOVERNMENT
in the
MISSOURI
SYNOD

THE GENESIS OF DECENTRALIZED GOVERNMENT
IN THE MISSOURI SYNOD

by

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TO
Sophia Krato Munding

FOREWORD

For some years there has been a growing demand for a complete, thoroughgoing, and well-documented history of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. The Literature Board of the Synod at various times attempted to supply this demand by calling on competent students of the history of the Synod to prepare a work of this kind. However, for one reason or another, the task remained undone. When the Literature Board requested the present editor of this series to undertake the task, he suggested the publication of a series of monographs instead of limiting the work to one volume, since in such a series the vast amount of material could be more adequately treated. The Literature Board thereupon authorized such a procedure. A general outline of the series was agreed upon, and individuals were commissioned to write the monographs. As several monographs had already been prepared, or were in process of being written, as doctors' dissertations in several universities of our country, the editor asked that these be included in the series, requests that were graciously granted by the schools and the authors.

According to the plan agreed upon, the history of the Synod itself is to be covered in twenty-five year periods, from 1847 to 1947. Two volumes will deal with the immigration of the Saxons and their settlements in Missouri. One volume will present the work of the Rev. William Loehe and his missionaries. In addition there will be individual biographies of C. F. W. Walther, F. C. D. Wyneken, and William Sihler. Another biographical volume will contain shorter biographies of men who in one field or another figured prominently in the history of the Synod.

At the present writing, twelve volumes have been arranged for; more will be added later. Since each volume will constitute a unit, no special attempt has been made to publish the volumes in chronological order, as this would mean holding up the publication of those now ready. Nor will the volumes be of equal size. In the very nature of the case some will be much larger than others. However, there will be uniformity in binding and format.

The editor is happy to be able to begin the series with this volume: *The Origin of Government in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States*, as its appearance will coincide with the centennial of the Synod. Originally this work, a Ph. D. dissertation at the University of Minnesota, was entitled "The Genesis of Decentralized Government in the Missouri Synod." Important statistics in the book were, at the request of the editor, brought up to date.

It is with a sincere prayer for divine blessing that we send forth the first volume of this series. We earnestly hope that the study of it and its companion volumes will lead many to a renewed interest in the life and work of the men who have, under God, worked together in the building of our Missouri Synod. It will be seen that they were men with all the failings and frailties our flesh is heir to, men who were as prone to make mistakes as are we in our day, yet

at the same time men who were dedicated to a high and noble purpose, namely, the establishment and propagation on American soil of historic Lutheranism, Lutheranism as represented in the great Confessions of our Church. In the measure in which they and their successors hewed to the line, in that measure we may gauge the success of their labors. And, by the same token, in the measure in which the Missouri Synod during the second century of its existence, now looming on the horizon, adheres to these principles, in that measure will it remain true to its great evangelical heritage.

W. G. POLACK

May 1, 1947

PREFACE

On April 26, 1947, the Missouri Synod of the Lutheran Church was one hundred years old. Inconspicuous in its beginnings—only twelve congregations had voted to join the proposed body, eight of which were represented at the first meeting in Chicago by their pastors and three by their pastors and one layman each¹—there grew up in and with America a typical immigrant body, at present composed of 4,428 pastors with 1,532,702 baptized members.² This group is important enough to merit the serious attention of historical research.

Immediately before and during the early years of its existence, from 1840 to 1865, church government was the foremost issue for the members of the Missouri Synod. Many articles and essays were written, pamphlets were published, sermons and speeches delivered, and debates conducted on various phases of church power. The big question was: Who has the power, and what is that power?

To my knowledge no effort has been made to trace back to their origins the forms of government that finally prevailed. When, therefore, Oliver Peter Field, S. J. D., Political Science Department, University of Minnesota, suggested that this be done, the present writer timidly declared his willingness to attempt the task.

During my investigations I received the help of many people. I owe a debt of gratitude to the Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri, and its president, Prof. W. G. Polack, for the use of unprinted source materials—letters, minutes of meetings, and documents of various descriptions; to Old Trinity, St. Louis, Missouri, and its present pastor, Rev. R. H. C. Meyer, for extensive use of the congregation's minutes (which, by the way, are among the best written and best preserved minutes in the Missouri Synod); to Trinity Congregation, Altenburg, Missouri, and its present pastor, Rev. A. Vogel, for access to archival material; to Concordia Congregation, Frohna, Missouri, and its pastor, Rev. G. W. Hafner, for permission to search old boxes of archival materials; and to the Pritzlaff Memorial Library and its librarian, Paul E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D., Ed. D., for the use of printed sources and rare books bearing on the subject. Two men, both sons of founding fathers—Ludwig Fuerbringer, D. D., president of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, and Theodore Buenger, D. D., president of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota (1893—1927)—permitted me to use documents in their private possession. To George M. Stephenson, Ph. D., History Department, University of Minnesota, my adviser, who was of great help to me, I owe a special debt of gratitude. Likewise to E. G. Richard Siebert of Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn., who gave the entire dissertation a critical reading. For any and all deficiencies the gentle reader may blame me.

¹ *Erster Synodal-Bericht*, 1847. (Reprinted as a second edition, Concordia, St Louis, Missouri, 1876.) Pp. 5—6, 24. In order to keep a balance in voting strength between pastors and congregations, the Synod invented the device of non-voting, advisory membership. Advisory members were pastors whose congregations could not yet be persuaded to join Synod. Ten pastors had joined as advisory members, six of whom were present. Some came late, and others left early. Probably never more than twelve pastors were present at one and the same session.

² *Statistical Yearbook of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States* for the year 1945, pp. 140, 144, 184.

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INTRODUCTION

OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

How did it come that the Missouri Synod, whose founders came from an oligarchically ruled Church in which the State played a large role, adopted and adhered to a decentralized form of church government? Had they made any demands for decentralization while still in Germany? Were desires expressed or attempts made to establish a so-called "Free Church," a Church independent of the State, before the emigration? If these attempts failed, was the failure one of the causes of the emigration? Was it ever used as such? This is one set of questions that the present study attempts to answer.

Furthermore, what effect did the new environment have upon the church polity of the immigrants? Did "they imbibe rather distinctly American democratic characteristics"? Was "their contact with a democratic environment responsible for a turn in doctrine and polity which differentiated it from its German prototype"?³ Did the Lutheran Church already existing in America at the time of the immigrants' arrival affect the church polity of the immigrant body? If so, to what extent and in what way? This influence appears to have been rather insignificant and mostly negative.

Again, what is the nature of "Missouri's" decentralized government? Is it democratic? Are matters of church polity decided after the fashion of the New England Town Meeting? Is there any affinity between the peculiar church polity of the Lutheran immigrants and the Congregationalism of the Baptist and the Congregational churches? The study will show a marked divergence of the decentralized government of the Missouri Synod from American Congregationalism.

Finally, what has been the effect of other doctrines not immediately connected with church polity on the government of the Missouri Synod? For example, the doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, the efficacy of the Word, and the Bible as the sole arbiter in matters of faith? While the influence of these doctrines on church polity is more elusive, the study will show that it was a factor.

An effort has been made in Chapter II to give a composite picture of church life in Saxony and surrounding German states during the first half of the nineteenth century. The ever-present danger of generalization, so graphically expressed in the story of the seven blind men and the elephant, was ever before me. The picture differs from the one usually given in that certain brighter colors frequently omitted have been used together with the darker hues.

The question may be raised: Why devote so much space to a study of Luther in the investigation of an American Church? Had not Luther been dead three hundred years when the Missouri Synod was founded? True; but so far as church polity is concerned, the Reformer

was more alive among the Missourians in the 1840's than he had been among the Saxons of the 1540's. Without a knowledge of Luther, governmental forms of the Missouri Synod will be imperfectly understood.

As the title indicates, this study does not go beyond the origin of the Missouri Synod in 1847, nor does it dwell extensively on matters which have no connection with church polity.

³ Maelshagen, *American Lutheranism Surrenders to Forces of Conservatism*, p. 125. Compare also the fear expressed by a contemporary of the founders, Pastor W. Loehe, in a letter to the Synod, September 8, 1847: "Finally, we do not wish to keep you in ignorance concerning something which Hag cut us to the quick and which also is of importance for the seminary at Fort Wayne. We notice with growing concern ('mit herzlichem Bedauern') that your synodical constitution, as it has been adopted, does not follow the example of the first Christian congregation. We have good reason to fear that the strong admixture of democratic, independent, and congregational principles in your Constitution will do greater damage than the interference of princes and governmental agencies in the Church of our homeland." Printed in *Kirchliche Mitteilungen aus und ueber Nord-Amerika*, VI (1848), p. 44. In this letter Loehe gives the seminary at Fort Wayne to the Synod.

**GOVERNMENT IN THE
MISSOURI SYNOD**

CHAPTER ONE

LUTHER'S CONCEPT OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT

THE HISTORICAL INVESTIGATOR will not get very far in his research of the Missouri Synod without coming upon the fact that Luther and his writings played a very important role in the formation of Missourian church polity. The *Erweckungsbewegung* of Saxony during the early decades of the nineteenth century, in which the founders of the Missouri Synod were deeply involved,¹ claimed to be, and in part was, a movement back to Luther.²

Martin Stephan, the father confessor and spiritual adviser of the future founders of the Missouri Synod, was deeply steeped in the writings of Luther. Time and again, with the utmost emphasis, he urged his followers, especially those among the clergy, to go back to Luther. His attitude toward Luther can be gleaned from a statement which he made to Pastor E. G. W. Keyl: "If we were allowed to pray to the saints, I would fall down on my knees before Luther."³ Stephan's insistent emphasis upon the study of Luther explains in part the strong tendency toward stricter confessionalism among the Stephanites during the 1830's.

The ultimate effect of Stephan's exhortations to read Luther can be seen in one of his most obedient followers, Pastor Keyl. Especially in America, Keyl became a fanatical student of Luther. Not only did he frequently spend ten and twelve hours a day in his study of the Reformer, but he made copious excerpts of his writings. He studied with pen in hand. His *Register*, an index made up of statements copied out of Luther's writings, contained 8,800 entries and in addition 54,000 references to Bible passages used and explained by Luther. His motto was: *Nulla dies sine linea*. He published a magazine in which he explained his whole system and in which he urged others to follow his example.⁴ His sermon material was taken exclusively from Luther's writings. He would take whatever Luther had said on a given text and rearrange it into a sermon. He wanted every young minister (and he writes parenthetically: "Why not every old one, too?") to use Luther exclusively in the preparation of sermons. During his presidency of the Eastern District of the Missouri Synod, 1854—1868, he urged the young ministers whom he ordained to study Luther as he did.⁵

Other founders of the Missouri Synod were perhaps not quite as fanatical, but they were just as sincere in going back to Luther as a source of their theology. G. H. Loeber, pastor of Trinity in Altenburg, Perry County, Missouri, instructor in the Altenburg Concordia and, together with Dr. W. Sihler, examiner of the theological candidates, published a volume of excerpts from Luther's writings which enjoyed a wide circulation.⁶ During the terrible turmoil that followed the expulsion of Stephan from Perry County, Pastor Ernst Moritz Buerger naturally took refuge in Luther's writings.⁷ C. F. W. Walther's intense interest in Luther's writings dates back to an enforced absence from his studies at Leipzig. During this period, in which he recuperated from a serious illness, he read Luther's writings with avidity.⁸ Later in life he

summed up his attitude toward Luther in these words: "A pupil, and I hope to God a faithful pupil, of Luther, I have, in all that I have publicly spoken and written in the past, simply repeated in a stammering way the words of this last prophet."⁹ His book the *Church and the Ministry*¹⁰ consists chiefly of quotations from Luther. The habit of Missouri Synod pastors to settle theological arguments with a quotation from Luther's writings is one of long standing. The tremendous amount of space devoted to quotations from Luther's writings in essays delivered before synodical conventions impresses one who goes through the files of the synodical proceedings as peculiar. It shows the bent of Missouri Synod minds. The juxtaposition of the words *Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr*' and the masthead of the *Lutheraner*, portraying Luther as the angel of the Apocalypse, Rev. 14:6-7, is also highly significant.¹¹

A unique attitude toward the person of Martin Luther is evident. He is called the "unforgettable and highly enlightened true servant of God" ("dem unvergesslichen und hocheleuchteten treuen Knecht Gottes").¹² When the three-hundredth anniversary of Luther's death is observed, one gets the impression that the most beloved man of the colony has just passed away. The church in Altenburg is draped with yards and yards of black cloth. A special preparatory service is conducted the week before. On the day of the anniversary there is a morning service at 10 and an afternoon service at 2. In his announcements from the pulpit Pastor Loeber calls Luther "our father who rests in God, who has fallen asleep in the Lord."¹³ The habit of calling Luther "our father" is widespread. In short, there is a definite, emotionally supercharged piety over against anything connected with Martin Luther. This attitude precluded a critical study of Luther. That Luther might have erred in a given instance or that his statement might not apply to the case at hand or that Luther did not take the same stand consistently, does not seem to have been suggested by anyone.

Men were lifted out of the slough of despond by a quotation from Luther.¹⁴ Questions of church polity, as we shall see in the chapter on the emerging forms of church government, were decided or received strong support by quotations from Luther. True, the authority of the Scriptures was never questioned; but so great was the emotional attachment to Luther that a doctrine of Scripture, when put in the words of Luther, seemed doubly dear and doubly authoritative.

To bring Luther's concept of church government to paper presents unusual difficulties. Forms meant so little to Luther. When codified in legal instruments, they might even stifle spiritual life.¹⁵ Small wonder that he threw Pope Leo's bull and the Canon Law into the fire at the same time on December 10, 1520. Luther's interest centered in the spoken Word. That made Christians and thus built the Church. Any form of church government and any order of service that gave the spoken Gospel a chance was acceptable. In Sweden, where the Roman Catholic bishops went over to Luther's side lock, stock, and barrel, the episcopal form of church government might be retained. In Germany, where the bishops failed to co-operate, someone else must be sought to take over the task of administration, and we have an almost endless variety of *Kirchenordnungen*.¹⁶ *Kleinstaat* ideals and the emphasis on individualism in constitutional matters are largely responsible for the multiplicity of *Kirchenordnungen* in evangelical Germany during the sixteenth century.

Luther's opposition to legalism shows itself in his concept of the origin of *Kirchenordnungen*. He was opposed to the ecclesiastical legislator who had an urge to hand down a ready-made

constitution, binding the congregation or a group of congregations.¹⁷ Haste and force are two elements that should be kept out of constitution making. Sets of rules for the government of churches should be a matter of growth and development. Let the rules grow out of a given situation in which the church finds itself; and as the situation changes, the ordinances ought to change with it.

The effect of this principle can be seen in the readiness with which Luther gives up certain attitudes when historical circumstances demand a change. Luther was not a doctrinaire in the matter of church government. It is true, there is a remarkable consistency in certain beliefs about church organization. But his opposition to legalism made it impossible for him to continue his attitudes when the facts in a given case demanded a change. In church government Luther practiced *Realpolitik*. His question was: What action do the realities of the situation demand? To the doctrinaire who wishes to have the same set of rules applied to all situations such a policy is the height of inconsistency. This much is certain, the student of Luther's writings on church polity must constantly ask himself these questions: When did Luther say this? Where did he say it? What were the circumstances in the case?

As a general rule, the ideals of church government that were formed during the period from 1519 to 1525 had to be recast and in part discarded because of the experience gained through the visitations made from 1525 to 1528. The visitors found conditions in individual parishes that forced Luther to change his entire church polity. The reports of the visitors were too convincing to be set aside.¹⁸

Two things—and they are most fundamental in any study of church government—remain constant throughout Luther's writings: his concept of the Church (*una sancta ecclesia*) and his concept of the local congregation (*die Gemeinde*). Put the question to Luther at any place or at any time: What is the Church? and you will invariably get the same answer. Ask him: What is the local congregation? and he will never vary. Strange as it seems, these were the two points on which colossal confusion reigned among the fathers of the Missouri Synod during their first two years on American soil. Luther's answers to these two questions brought light to their troubled souls and proved to be the guidelines of their church polity.

The Church in the real sense of the word is the whole number of all believers.¹⁹ This community of believers is nothing external.²⁰ The essence, life, and nature of the Church is not a bodily assembly, but an assembly of hearts.²¹ It is separate from all temporal communities, because it is not anything external.²² The Church is not bound to any city or to any place. Its boundaries cannot be fixed.²³ Being in the Roman communion does not necessarily make one a Christian and part of the Church, nor does being outside that communion make one a heretic or a non-Christian.²⁴ It is true that the Church has certain marks, namely, the preaching of the Gospel and the Sacraments, whereby one can tell where the Church is in the world.²⁵ Nevertheless, the Church is not a visible body constituted after the fashion of the organizations of this world. There is no one above or under another. The differentiation of rank, so common to the organized bodies of men in this world, is absent from the Church. The true Church, the communion of believers, has no head on earth. Neither bishop nor Pope can rule over it; only Christ in heaven is the Head, and He rules alone.²⁶

According to the doctrine of Rome eternal salvation is dependent upon membership in the Roman communion. The Church is an institution outside which there is no salvation (*nulla salus extra ecclesiam*). The properly ordained priest is the mediator who throws out the lifeline and connects man with all the blessings of the ship of salvation. Luther, on the other hand, believed that we are reconciled to God through the death of His Son. This reconciliation was effected for all men; and the moment a man believes this, he becomes a partaker of this reconciliation, whether he be a member of the Roman communion or of any other communion or of no communion at all. The all-important thing, according to Luther, is faith in the heart. Membership in a man-made communion, brought about by the mediation of a properly ordained priest, is inconsequential.

In fact, every believer is a priest in his own right. He is a priest not in the sense that he must effect a reconciliation through a sacrifice brought on an altar made with hands. His function as a priest is to inform his fellow men of the redemption accomplished once and for all by Christ on the Cross.²⁷ In their function as priests all believers are alike. There is no distinction of rank and authority, nor does the priesthood confer any particular holiness.²⁸

All believers are priests, and yet all do not function publicly as priests. Why not? Because of the disorder that would ensue.²⁹ Therefore every congregation must select one from its midst and ask him to perform the public functions of a priest in the name of the congregation. Only one who has been thus asked by the congregation is to officiate publicly. "Because we are all in like manner priests, no one must put himself forward and undertake, without our consent and election, to do what is in the power of all of us. For what is common to all, no one dare take upon himself without the will and the command of the community; and should it happen that one chosen for such an office were deposed for malfeasance, he would be just what he was before he held office. Therefore a priest in Christendom is nothing else than an office holder. While he is in office, he has precedence; when deposed, he is a peasant or a townsman like the rest."³⁰ The number of believers who happen to be residing in a geographic area select one from their midst whomsoever they think best qualified and by vote transfer to him the task of publicly administering the office of a Christian priest.³¹ This is Luther's concept of the Church and the ministry. As a principle, the priesthood of all believers remained constant throughout Luther's life. It shaped and colored all his thinking about church government. Incidentally, this is the doctrine of transfer (*Uebertragungslehre*), which C. F. W. Walther lifted bodily out of Luther's writings and with which he brought order into the chaotic thinking of the fathers of the Missouri Synod in April, 1841. But more of that later.

This fundamental principle was not entirely forgotten even when Luther was forced to desist from its strict application. In the noise and turmoil of battle, when the grim realities of life forced Luther to suspend this principle, at least for the time being, you can still hear the overtone of the priesthood of all believers. Even the appeal for help directed to the princes contains this teaching. "Since, then, the temporal authorities are baptized with the same Baptism and have the same faith and Gospel as we, we must grant that they are priests and bishops, and count their office one which has a proper and useful place in the Christian community."³² The men who formed the government in his day were confessing Christians. The electors of Saxony were intensely religious men. The same can be said of some of the men who were princes of

other areas that adopted the evangelical faith. They were the foremost members (*praecipua membra*) of the Church. As such, not as statesmen, Luther appeals to them.³³

In trying to arrive at an adequate appraisal of Luther's decision to call upon the princes for help in the government of the Church one must keep ever in mind the chaotic conditions in the Church and in the State. From the end of 1524 to well into 1529 we have a period that was revolutionary in certain parts of Germany. Not only were people changing their faith and others steadfastly refusing to change their faith, but the very Church, the one institution in which the social and economic life of the people was bound up, was being uprooted and reconstituted. The reports of the visitors of this period are most revealing. The disorder was indescribable. The ignorance of the parish priests was profound. Their education and social life was close to that of the peasant. There was great irregularity in the income from parish lands. During the colonization period in the eleventh and twelfth centuries certain acres of land (*Hufen*) had been set aside in each parish to maintain the priest and to repair or rebuild the church when necessary. There was litigation about that now that the "Gospel was free." Lands and income-producing investments which pious men had willed to Mother Church for the celebration of masses after their death were contested. Many heirs were trying to get this piece of land or that mine from the Church, since no prayers were now being said for the dead. The tendency to withhold payments to the parish priests other than income from land endowments was gaining momentum. The income of monasteries and convents was being disputed. The care of men who had grown gray as monks and of women who had lost their bloom of life in convents had to be regulated. Parsonages had to be remodeled and salaries revised now that the priests were marrying and rearing families. In short, a new social order was being established. On top of all this, certain religious sects, which were gaining adherents fast, were opposed to all government. They were not only heretics in the Church, but also enemies of the State.³⁴ One can see why Luther called upon the princes to help regulate the affairs of the Church. Whom else should he have called upon for help? The bishops? They were the logical men, but they refused to participate in the building of a new social order. So he turned to the most prominent lay members of the Church, the princes.

But, after all, when all is said and done and proper allowances, are made for the chaotic conditions which followed the first onslaught of the Reformation, it must be stressed that Luther retained the fundamental concept concerning civil government that was held in the Middle Ages, namely, that civil government must serve Christendom and, with that, the Church. It is true theoretically, and at times practically, Luther sharpened the distinction between Church and State. He set more sharply defined limits to the spheres of activity for each. With his distinction between the mass of humanity ("Herr *omnes*," "der grosse Haufe") and the "assembly of hearts" inside the outer circle³⁵ he contributed to a better understanding of the function of the Church and the function of the civil government.³⁶ But the extremely accentuated distinction between Church and State which makes some of the second and many of the third generation of Walther's students avoid the "things of Caesar" is not found in the theory, and certainly not in the practice, of Luther. Luther's concept envisioned the State and the Church working together for the good of the people, each one in its own sphere, but both actually working.

Nor can Luther be cleared of all responsibility for the existence of a prince-controlled Church in evangelical Germany. The *Consistorium*, with its theologians and jurists as an

administrative device for the control of the Church in the hands of a supreme bishop (the *summus episcopus*), the prince—this is Luther’s counterpart for the medieval bishop.

Luther was indebted to princes for much help. In fact, his Reformation would not have been possible without the German *Kleinstaat* and the steadily growing power of its prince. This is true particularly of Saxony. Frederick the Wise had protected him over against the demands of Rome in 1521. The Wartburg as a hiding place was the prince’s idea. The Edict of Worms, which demanded the eradication of the new doctrine, was never executed in the Elector’s territory. Through the influence of the Elector the imperial government closed an eye to the spread of Lutheran doctrine in other parts of the empire. As the years roll on, the power of princes becomes more and more essential to Luther’s cause. The years 1525 to 1527 were fraught with danger. Foes from within and foes from without, foes from below and foes from above, were attacking Luther’s cause. A well-organized, compact Church was an absolute necessity. Without it the cause was hopeless. Driven by the realities of the situation, Luther asked the new elector, John of Saxony, to inaugurate a visitation and to provide for competent priests in the parishes of his principality. This step of necessity led directly to the establishment of a rule of the Church by princes. The fall of 1525—more specifically, November 30, 1525, the day when Luther asked John to bring order into the ecclesiastical chaos³⁷—is the birthday of the rule of princes in the Lutheran Church. The entire development of church government in Saxony shows that Luther, not the prince, took the lead; that Luther, not the prince, was the dynamic personality in the movement. Every once in a while the Elector shows a certain tardiness, which makes it necessary for Luther to prod him on. Whatever Elector John does he does in close collaboration with Luther. Luther approves every step leading to control of the Church by the princes, and he wishes “that this blessed example might be imitated by all other German princes.”³⁸

The “blessed example” did find imitators. The other Lutheran princes were quick to follow the Saxon prince. The first Diet of Speyer, 1526, expedited the control of the Church by the princes in that it gave each prince the right to arrange religious affairs according to his own desires. It is true, they were not forced to adopt a church polity in which the prince was the *summus episcopus*. They could have adopted constitutions in which the local congregations had much more to say. The fact that they did not must be attributed to Luther. The case of Hesse illustrates the point. Lambert of Avignon had drawn up a constitution for Hesse. In this constitution the local congregation is dominant. In fact, Luther’s principle of the priesthood of all believers receives full recognition. The congregation elects the pastor. There are regularly conducted synods, in which pastors of local congregations discuss their problems and exchange experiences. One such synod was actually held. A constitution was adopted by the synod at Homburg in the fall of 1526. Philip of Hesse, next to the Elector of Saxony perhaps the most prominent prince in the Protestant Church, was in favor of the constitution and voted thus. Why did Lambert’s constitution fail? In January, 1527, Luther suggested to Philip that Lambert’s scheme be given up. Philip listened to Luther, and a church polity with the prince as the *summus episcopus* was adopted in its place. The Great Commoner was not trusting commoners in 1527. To be safe, he wanted a rule that had punch.

The many passages, quoted at length by Harold Diehm,³⁹ in which Luther complains about the rule of the princes and declares his readiness to destroy the *Consistorium* were written by Luther when he was beginning to see to what lengths caesaropapism was taking the Lutheran Reformation. By that time it was a case of: “Die ich rief, die Geister, Werd’ ich nun nicht los.”

Luther started something on November 30, 1525, that culminated in a Roman Catholic king as the supreme bishop of the Lutheran Church in his beloved Saxony A. D. 1830.

¹ Hennig, *Die saechsische Erweckungsbewegung im Anfange des 19. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 27—28, 117, 119, 121, 206—207. Cp. also an article by the same writer in *Zeitschrift fuer Kirchengeschichte*, LVIII (1939), Nos. 1 and 2, pp. 142—166. W. Kohlhammer, Stuttgart. The article is entitled: “Die Auswanderung Martin Stephans.” G. H. Loeber, later pastor of Trinity Church, Altenburg, Perry County, Missouri, was won over for Moravian pietism at the Herrnhut Pastoral Conference in 1823. K. F. Gruber, later pastor in Paitzdorf, now Uniontown, Perry County, Missouri, was an active corresponding member of the Herrnhut Pastoral Conference for several years. The Count of Einsiedel and Prince Otto Victor I von Schoenburg-Waldenburg, who saw to it that pastors “who believed in divine revelation” were placed in charge of parishes over which they had the right of appointment and through whose offices young Keyl, C. F. W. Walther, and E. M. Buerger got into their respective congregations, were outstanding lay leaders in the *Erweckungsbewegung*. The Muldenthal Pastoral Conference, which must also be classified as part of the *Erweckungsbewegung*, was split in two during the 1830’s, Rudelbach leading the men of definitely orthodox tendency, and Keyl, the men of pietistic stripe. C. F. W. Walther, O. H. Walther, and E. M. Buerger went over to Keyl’s side.

² *Op. cit.*, pp. 62, 67, 81, 89, 91, 129, 146. In its opposition to rationalism the *Erweckungsbewegung* stressed Luther’s doctrine of original sin and the reconciliation of God with man. For pietism in Norway see T. Blegen, *Norwegian Migration to America*, 1940, pp. 131—174.

³ *Zeitschrift fuer die gesamte lutherische Theologie und Kirche*. Herausgegeben von A. G. Rudelbach und H. E. F. Guericke, III (1842), p. 99. The quotation is part of an article by Pastor Keyl entitled “Offene Bekenntnisse von Pastor Keyl,” pp. 94—114.

⁴ The magazine was called *Lutherophilus*. The first copy was printed March, 1854, in Baltimore, Maryland. The copy from which the above data are taken is in the private library of Dr. L. Fuerbringer. The magazine is printed in the form of letters. His system of indexing is described on pp. 17—24 of the fourth letter.

⁵ Koesterling, *Leben und Wirken des Ehrw. Ernst Gerhard With. Keyl*, p. 120. In his MS. notes for the biography Koesterling speaks of a young pastor who had to preach four times a week, teach school five days a week, and who was to do his stint of Luther every day. Koesterling adds: “Armer Kerl!” (Poor fellow!) These MS. notes are wrapped up in a large bundle and are in the private library of Dr. L. Fuerbringer. I shall refer to them as Keyl MS.

⁶ Loeber, G. H., *Gaben fuer unsere Zeit aus dem Schatz der lutherischen Kirche und besonders aus Dr. Martin Luthers Geist-und Glaubens-reichen Schriften*. 1834.

⁷ Buerger, Ernst M. “Lebensgeschichte von Ernst Moritz Buerger, Pastor emeritus, von ihm selbst beschrieben,” p. 132.

⁸ Guenther, *Dr. C. F. W. Walther—Lebensbild*, p. 12.

⁹ 14. *Synodal-Bericht der Allgemeinen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten*, 1869, p. 22. This was part of Walther’s presidential address to the General Synod at Fort Wayne, Indiana, September 1 to 11, 1869. The major portion of the address was devoted to quotations from Luther’s writings.

¹⁰ *Die Stimme unserer Kirche in der Frage von Kirche und Amt*.

¹¹ *Der Lutheraner*. Issued fortnightly since September 7, 1844, is a popularly edited religious publication. Through it Walther shaped the religious thinking of the Missouri Synod in its infancy. The masthead representing Luther as the angel of the Apocalypse was first used in Vol. 6, No. 19, May 14, 1850. Changes in the masthead were made beginning August 25, 1857; October 1, 1871; January 9, 1900; January 11, 1921; but Luther as the angel of the