

FOREWORD

This history will attempt to relate the story of the North American Baptists in the State of Oregon. In years past they were known as German Baptists. Since the national Baptist organization to which they belong is now called the "North American Baptist General Conference," and since other organizations of theirs have a similar title, the designation, "North American Baptists," is used in the title of this study. Although their history contains a story of pioneer work and cultural adjustment, it is primarily an account of proclaiming the Gospel in the State of Oregon and especially in the Willamette Valley, at first to those of a certain cultural background, but later, to all men.

This work will commence with the earliest beginnings of German Baptist work on the Pacific Coast, and on through seventy-five years of organized church activity to the year 1954. The material is more or less chronologically organized. It is hoped that the succeeding pages will not present to the reader a mass of dry statistics and prosaic facts, but will reveal living personalities who attempted to build on New Testament principles.

This history was first written as a thesis presented to the Department of Church History of the Western Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary. Since it was felt its contents would be of interest to many North American Baptists, and also because of the need for North American Baptists in Oregon to appreciate their fine heritage, it was decided to mimeograph this work. Much appreciation is owed to Miss Winona Emslie of the Glencullen Baptist Church for the many hours of mimeographing which she spent so that this work might be made available.

I am also indebted to the many fine people who assisted by giving me source material, and also by supplying me with data for this history. I greatly appreciated the assistance of Mrs. Frieda May and Rev. E. Wolff of the Salt Creek Church; the assistance of Mr. and Mrs. R. Perlich, Mr. and Mrs. S. Schirman, and Miss Emma Schifferer of the Salem church; the help of Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Hoelzer of the Immanuel Baptist Church; the information given by Rev. Frank Friesen and Mrs. Fred Moore of the Villa Ridge Baptist Church; the help and information given by Rev. A. Schulz, Mr. Ben Graf, Mrs. Ben Croeni, and Mrs. Sam Rich of the Bethany Baptist Church; the information given by Mr. Fred Moser and Mrs. W. H. Goold of the Stafford Baptist Church; the assistance of Rev. and Mrs. John Wobig, Mr. G. Rahn, Mr. A. G. Weisser, Mrs. Emma B. Meier, Mrs. F. Schmunk, and Mr. J. O. Johnson of the Trinity Baptist Church; for the assistance of Rev. L. B. Berndt of the Central Baptist Church; and for the help of others.

I owe a special debt of gratitude to my great aunt, Margaret Raz Graf, who so ably assisted me in translating German source material. My father, Mr. Albert W. Wardin, also assisted in German translation.

preached to the German colony there, having many times audiences as high as eighty or more.¹⁰⁶ Aurora was an old settlement having been started by Germans from Bethel, Missouri, in 1856, who set up a communal organization where everything was held in common under the leadership of their patriarch, Dr. William Keil. Dr. Keil was also their religious leader who held services of a Lutheran nature. However, after Keil's death in 1877, the colony divided up the communal property, and established individually owned private property.¹⁰⁷ Because of Rev. Gronde's work there, request was made for mission support for Aurora,¹⁰⁸ but none was forthcoming, and the work appears to have stopped with Rev. Gronde's departure in 1896. Another interesting fact concerning Rev. Gronde was that he favored socials for the young people, but since the majority of the church disapproved, he was thwarted in this respect.¹⁰⁹

Rev. F. Reichle, who also preached at Turner for a time, became the pastor in 1896. The church became smaller because of exclusions and also because of the moving away of some.¹¹⁰

A new pastor, A. Graner, arrived from the Seminary in Rochester, and began his work on June 1, 1900. The church first began to receive mission aid about this time.¹¹¹ Also around 1900, the Stafford Church began a mission for German speaking people in Oregon City with meetings once or twice a month in the First Baptist Church there,¹¹² although Rev. Kratt of the First Church of Portland had already preached in Oregon City in 1897 or 1898.¹¹³ However, the work in Oregon City was soon given up, but a station was begun in the vicinity of Canby.¹¹⁴ Rev. Graner left in 1902, for Seattle, and was followed by Rev. C. Waehlte, who had formerly served in Turner and Albany. The mission support which had been given for about two years now stopped.¹¹⁵ At Rev. C. Waehlte's coming, the church had only thirty-one members.¹¹⁶

One might note that Rev. Waehlte began the first preaching in English

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First Baptist Church of Portland which was then located at S. W. 4th Avenue and Alder Street. Rev. H. L. Dietz, the minister of the German Baptist Church of San Francisco, led the meeting and also preached on I Peter 2:9. The members present decided that the church covenant, the confession of faith, and church government were to be based upon the Bible and on Pendleton's Guide. Seventeen people constituted the charter membership.⁸² On January 18, 1891, the Bethany Church officially released a number of its members living in Portland who now constituted the newly formed Portland church.⁸³ However, to the Zürcher and Boehi families, the Bethany Church made the offer for them to remain as members of the mother church since they still had land in Bethany, and they did not have to contribute to the Bethany Church as long as they lived in Portland and supported the work there.⁸⁴

Rev. F. Reichle, one of the charter members, was chosen as the first minister. He was born in Baden, Germany, and was a minister in Switzerland for ten years. Later, he came to America and homesteaded in South Dakota, where he was also a circuit rider for the German Baptists. In 1890, he came to Portland with his family.⁸⁵ However, he was pastor for only a short time until October, 1891, and resigned because he felt that the minister in Portland should be able to speak both English and German.⁸⁶

The second pastor of the church was called from the East upon the recommendation of Rev. H. L. Dietz.⁸⁷ He was Rev. W. C. Rabe of the Second German Baptist Church of Rochester, New York, who had also served as pastor in Buffalo, New York.⁸⁸ As pastor in Portland, he received \$500.00 yearly support from the General Mission Society toward his salary.⁸⁹ He tried to expand the work by establishing several branches in the area.⁹⁰ Not only this, but he was able to collect almost \$3,000.00 for a church building for the congregation; the money came especially from churches in the East. In these early

E. Newspaper

The Oregonian, July 16, 1951.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Ministers of the German Baptist Churches

Ministers of the Bethany Baptist Church

- 1. Rev. Vincent Farnkopf July 1880 - May 1884
- 2. Rev. John Croeni Jan. 1885 - Apr. 1894
- 3. Rev. William Schunke Oct. 1894 - Oct. 1898
- 4. Rev. E. R. Suevern Nov. 1898 - Mar. 1900
- 5. Rev. J. A. H. Wuttke July 1900 - Sep. 1906
- Rev. William Graf (Interim) Nov. 1906 - Mar. 1907
- 6. Rev. Lecker Mar. 1907 - July 1908
- 7. Rev. G. Peitsch July 1908 - Sep. 1910
- 8. Rev. E. Huber July 1911 - June 1913
- 9. Rev. William Graf Sep. 1913 - Aug. 1934
- Rev. T. A. Leger (Interim) Sep. 1934 - Apr. 1937
- 10. Rev. John C. Schweitzer Apr. 1937 - Apr. 1943
- 11. Rev. Frank Friesen Oct. 1943 - Dec. 1951
- 12. Rev. Arthur Schulz June 1952 -

Ministers of the Stafford Baptist Church

- 1. Rev. W. Faschung 1892 - 1893
- 2. Rev. C. E. Kliever 1894 - 1894
- 3. Rev. Joseph Gronde 1895 - 1896
- 4. Rev. F. Reichle 1896 - 1900
- 5. Rev. A. Graner 1900 - 1902
- 6. Rev. Carl Waehlte 1902 - 1909
- 7. Rev. John J. Lucas 1910 - 1919
- 8. Rev. J. Voget 1919 - 1922
- 9. Rev. H. G. Schmid 1923 - 1925
- 10. Rev. F. Bueermann 1925 - 1929
- 11. Rev. Fred M. Waehlte 1929 - 1935
- 12. Rev. Carsten H. Seecamp 1935 - 1939
- 13. Rev. B. J. Friesen 1939 - 1943
- 14. Rev. Leland Friesen 1943 - 1952
- 15. Rev. Ervin Gerlitz 1952 -

Ministers of the Salem Church (Bethel Baptist)

1. Rev. John Fechter June 1890 - May 1894
2. Rev. C. E. Kliever July 1894 - May 1898
3. Rev. Gustav Schunke June 1898 - June 1900
4. Rev. F. Herrmann June 1901 - Sep. 1906
- (3) Rev. Gustav Schunke Dec. 1906 - June 1916
5. Rev. Friedrich Petereit July 1916 - Oct. 1919
6. Rev. John J. Lucas Nov. 1919 - June 1927
7. Rev. Gustav W. Rutsch Sep. 1927 - June 1935
8. Rev. John F. Olthoff Nov. 1935 - June 1946
9. Rev. Gustav Rauser Sep. 1946 - Aug. 1948
10. Rev. Rudolph Woyke Nov. 1948 - May 1955

Ministers of the Trinity Baptist Church

1. Rev. F. Reichle 1891 - 1891
2. Rev. W. C. Rabe 1891 - 1896
3. Dr. Jacob Kratt 1896 - 1936
4. Rev. F. W. Mueller 1936 - 1937
5. Dr. John Leyboldt 1938 - 1945
6. Rev. John Wobig 1946 -

Associate Ministers:

1. Rev. H. G. Dymmel 1926 - 1928
2. Rev. G. Neumann 1932 - 1934
3. Rev. F. W. Mueller 1934 - 1936
4. Rev. Robert Penner 1947 - 1952

Ministers of the Immanuel Baptist Church

1. Rev. Gustav Eichler 1902 - 1903
- Rev. F. Reichle (Interim) 1903 - 1904
2. Rev. F. Bueermann 1904 - 1915
3. Rev. Paul Meier 1915 - 1915
4. Rev. F. Hoffmann 1916 - 1924
5. Rev. Gustav Rutsch 1925 - 1927
6. Rev. Rev. J. A. Wutke 1927 - 1931
7. Rev. W. H. Duening 1931 - 1932
8. Rev. E. P. Wahl 1933 - 1937
9. Rev. Otto Roth 1937 - 1951
10. Rev. Henry Barnet 1951 -

Ministers of the Central Baptist Church

1. Rev. F. W. Mueller 1937 - 1951
2. Rev. Lewis Berndt 1951 - 1955

Ministers of The Turner Church

1. Rev. C. E. Kliewer 1895 - 1896
2. Rev. F. Reichle 1896 - 1898
3. Rev. Carl Waehlte 1898 - 1900

Minister of the Albany Church

1. Rev. C. Waehlte 1898 - 1900

Ministers of the Freewater Church

1. Rev. F. Petereit 1921 - 1922
2. Rev. G. Freigang 1922 - 1923
3. Rev. John J. Lucas 1927 - 1928
4. Rev. C. E. Schönleber 1929 - 1930
5. Rev. G. Freigang 1931 - 1933

APPENDIX B

Oregon Baptist League Presidents

| | Name | Church | Dates |
|-----|-----------------|----------|-------------|
| 1. | H. G. Dymmel | Trinity | 1927 - 1928 |
| 2. | Earl Marks | Immanuel | 1928 - 1930 |
| 3. | Harry Johnson | Trinity | 1930 - 1932 |
| 4. | Donald Jackson | Bethany | 1932 - 1933 |
| 5. | Stanley Cornils | Bethany | 1934 - 1936 |
| 6. | Harold Petke | Immanuel | 1936 - 1938 |
| 7. | Edward May | Trinity | 1938 - 1940 |
| 8. | Sam Rich | Bethany | 1940 - 1942 |
| 9. | Roy Rocks | Salem | 1942 - 1944 |
| 10. | Edwin Rocks | Trinity | 1944 - 1946 |
| 11. | James Billeter | Trinity | 1946 - 1948 |
| 12. | Bill Jenne | Bethany | 1948 - 1950 |
| 13. | George Bauder | Trinity | 1950 - 1952 |
| 14. | Don Rich | Bethany | 1952 - 1955 |
| 15. | Bruce Rich | Bethany | 1955 - 1955 |
| 16. | Robert Patton | Trinity | 1955 - |