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**Protestant Clergymen and Church-Political Conflict
in National Socialist Germany:
Studies from Rural Brandenburg, Saxony and Württemberg.**

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of the requirements of the degree of Ph.D.**

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a comparison of local church conditions in three German Protestant church districts during the National Socialist era: the Nauen district in the Brandenburg Church Province of the Old Prussian Union Church, the Pirna district in the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church and the Ravensburg district in the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church. It focuses on the attitudes and roles of the pastors, curates and vicars who served in the primarily rural parishes of these districts, analyzes the effect of the 'national renewal' that accompanied the National Socialist seizure of power upon the church conditions in their parishes, and probes their own attitudes toward the prevalent religious nationalism of the day. Following a comparison of the controversies surrounding pastoral appointments in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, the study examines the nature and intensity of church-political conflict in each of the districts during the National Socialist era. Finally, the study closes with a consideration of clerical attitudes toward the National Socialist euthanasia programme and the antisemitism that led to the Holocaust. Drawing on official church correspondence at three levels (parish, district and land church), parish newsletters, accounts of meetings throughout the period, the study concludes that while these Protestant clergymen generally shared a common conservative nationalist outlook, the manifestation of the church struggle in their parishes took diverse forms. Parishioners in Nauen and especially Pirna (but not Ravensburg) displayed a high level of interest in their churches in 1933, in part an effect of the strength of the national renewal in their regions. In Nauen, the church struggle was channelled into the quest for control of pastoral appointments. In Pirna, the church struggle mirrored the course of events in Saxony as a whole, and included extreme 'German Christians,' radical members of the Confessing Church and a moderate movement for church peace. In Ravensburg, 'German Christian' pastor Karl Steger dominated local church politics and fostered pro-National Socialist groups throughout the district. Finally, the study found almost no evidence among clergymen of official or public engagement with the moral and theological challenges posed by National Socialist racial policy.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette dissertation est une étude comparative de la vie dans les églises locales de trois districts de l'Eglise Protestante d'Allemagne sous le régime du Parti National Socialiste. Il s'agit plus précisément du district de Nauen appartenant à l'Union de l'Eglise de l'Ancienne Prusse de Brandebourg; du district de Pirna appartenant à l'Eglise Evangélique Luthérienne du département de Saxe; et du district de Ravensburg appartenant à l'Eglise Evangélique du département de Wurtemberg. L'étude porte particulièrement sur l'attitude et le rôle des pasteurs, curés et vicaires en service dans les églises particulièrement rurales de ces districts. Elle analyse les effets produits par le "renouveau patriotique," qu'accompagna la montée au pouvoir du Parti Socialiste National, sur la vie de l'église de leurs paroisses. Elle examine leur propre attitude à l'égard du nationalisme religieux qui était prévalent à l'époque. Après une étude comparative des controverses suscitées par les affectations des pasteurs dans les districts de Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, l'étude examine la nature de l'intensité du conflit ecclesiastico-politique dans chacun de ces districts sous le régime du Parti National Socialiste. Finalement, l'étude termine par une considération des attitudes cléricales à l'égard des programmes d'euthanasie et d'antisémitisme (ce dernier ayant conduit à l'Holocauste), tels qu'ils furent initiés par le Parti National Socialiste. Se basant sur les correspondances des églises à trois niveaux (paroisse, district, province), les bulletins d'information des paroisses et les comptes-rendus des réunions datant de l'époque, l'étude tire la conclusion suivante: bien que ces protestants hommes d'église partageaient généralement une vision nationaliste conservatrice, qui leur était commune, les luttes ecclésiastiques dans leurs paroisses prirent plusieurs formes diverses. Les paroissiens du district de Nauen et surtout ceux du district de Pirna, contrairement aux paroissiens de Ravensburg, manifestent un degré d'intérêt très élevé dans leurs églises en 1933. Cet intérêt est en partie un effet de la vigueur du renouveau patriotique (national) dans leurs régions. Dans le district de Nauen, les luttes ecclésiastiques étaient charriées par la quête pour le contrôle des affectations pastorales. Dans le district de Pirna, les luttes ecclésiastiques reflétaient le cours des événements dans toute la Saxe. On y retrouve ainsi une gamme complète de positions: des membres du mouvement extrémiste "Chrétiens Allemands," des membres radicaux de l'Eglise Confessante et des membres d'un mouvement modéré pour la paix ecclésiastique. Dans le district de Ravensburg, le pasteur Karl Steger, du mouvement "Chrétiens Allemands," dominait la scène politico-ecclésiastique. Il encourageait les groupes pro-National Socialiste à travers tout le district. Finalement, l'étude n'a trouvé presque aucune évidence d'un engagement officiel ou public pour défier la morale et la théologie qui furent le fondement de la politique raciale du Parti National Socialiste.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION:
THE CHURCH STRUGGLE IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT

The story of the German church struggle (*Kirchenkampf*) has been told many times. 'Church struggle' was both coined as a term and defined as a field of study by the clergymen and lay leaders of the German Protestant and Catholic churches who lived and worked in National Socialist Germany. Amid a flood of church-political publications in the first years of the Third *Reich*, the church struggle pitted deeply antagonistic parties against one another, especially within the 28 Protestant *Land* churches and their umbrella organization, the German Evangelical Church Federation (*Deutscher Evangelischer Kirchenbund*), which on 10 July 1933 gave way to a centralized German Evangelical Church (*Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*) which included both Lutheran and Reformed (Calvinist or Zwinglian) Christians.¹

On the one side, nationalist and National Socialist clergymen and lay people argued for fundamental changes in the organization and even theology of the church, in order to align it with the racial and authoritarian values of the new National Socialist state. Great numbers of these Protestants flocked to the Faith Movement of the German Christians (*Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen*) or any number of related groups generally lumped together under the rubric "German Christian."² German Christians whole-heartedly endorsed National Socialism and the government of Adolf Hitler. They desired that German Protestantism conform to the image of the National Socialist state and worked to establish a unitary, centralized *Reich* church, under the authoritarian leadership of a *Reich* bishop. Moderates congregated in the Faith Movement of the German Christians and then the *Reich* Movement of the German Christians (*Reichsbewegung deutscher Christen*).

In a many cases, radical German Christians were referred to as

¹ On the relationship between the terms 'Evangelical' and 'Protestant,' please see p. 4, below.

² In this work, the words 'German Christian(s)' (*Deutsche Christen*) will invariably refer to members of these pro-National Socialist church political groups, and not simply to Germans who were Christian. The confusion generated by the term German Christian is a product of the symbolic union of Germanness and Christianity espoused by the movement and a sign of its excellent propaganda value.

Thuringian German Christians (*Thüringer Deutsche Christen*),³ a label (sometimes pejorative) for members of the National Movement of the German Christians (*Volksbewegung deutscher Christen*) and the Church Movement of the German Christians (*Kirchenbewegung Deutsche Christen*). In June 1937, the latter evolved into the National Church Movement of the German Christians (*Nationalkirchliche Bewegung Deutsche Christen*). Thuringian German Christians were convinced National Socialists who argued that God had called the German *Volk* (nation, people) into a community of blood and faith and created Germans with a particular national mission embodied by Adolf Hitler and National Socialism. They sought to rid Christianity of all Jewish influences and looked towards a time when their movement would bridge the chasm between Protestantism and Catholicism, rendering confessional divisions obsolete.⁴

In contrast, many other German Protestant clergymen and lay people stood for organizational and theological tradition. They opposed modifications to either the external structure or the internal faith content of their *Land* churches, based on their interpretation of the Scriptures according to the Reformation Confessions. Some of these traditionalists also resisted the amalgamation of the 28 *Land* churches into a single *Reich* church and the dissolution of the historic synodal system of church government. They rejected attempts by the German Christians to introduce racial criteria for clergymen and to purge the Christian faith and its source, the Bible, of 'Jewish influences'. Many of these traditionalists entered Berlin Pastor Martin Niemöller's Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*) in 1933. A smaller number subsequently adhered to the Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*).

³ Thuringia was the birthplace of this radical movement and its founders, Pastors Siegfried Leffler and Julius Leutheuser. Thus, 'Thuringian' was simply the label applied to their radical strain of German Christian ideology, and does not imply any geographic limitation to the movement.

⁴ James Zabel, *Nazism and the Pastors: A Study of the Ideas of Three "Deutsche Christen" Groups*, American Academy of Religion Dissertation Series, ed. H. Ganse Little, no. 14 (Missoula: Scholars Press for the American Academy of Religion, 1976), 21-43. Other early works on the German Christians include Kurt Meier, *Die Deutschen Christen: Das Bild einer Bewegung im Kirchenkampf des Dritten Reiches* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1964); Hans Buchheim, *Glaubenskrise im Dritten Reich: Drei Kapitel nationalsozialistischer Religionspolitik* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1953); Reijo E. Heinonen, *Anpassung und Identität. Theologie und Kirchenpolitik der Bremer Deutschen Christen, 1933-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978).

Based on the Barmen Declaration of May 1934, authored largely by Karl Barth, the Confessing Church defended theological orthodoxy and set itself up as the only legitimate church government in Germany. Though outlawed, it trained and ordained clergymen in various *Land* churches. Lutheran martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer was, after Barth, its most celebrated theologian.⁵

In the midst of the conflict between members of the German Christian Movement and the Confessing Church, the majority of German Lutheran and Reformed (Calvinist or Zwinglian) Protestants remained neutral, choosing to avoid the conflict as much as they were able, whether out of principle or fear. Others held intermediate positions. Most often, these were conservative, nationalist Protestants who embraced the notion of a *Reich* church that supported the politically revived Germany, but rejected the deeper theological implications of German Christianity. Sometimes they were sympathetic to the Confessing Church, but unwilling to break completely with their official *Land* church governments. These clergymen and lay people inhabited the middle area on the church-political continuum of the Third *Reich*.

⁵ Among the voluminous literature on the Confessing Church, its leading figures and its foundation at the Barmen Synod, please see Arthur Cochrane, *The Church's Confession under Hitler* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962); Andreas Kersting, *Kirchenordnung und Widerstand: Der Kampf um den Aufbau der Bekennenden Kirche der altpreußischen Union aufgrund des Dahlemer Notrechts von 1934 bis 1937*, Heidelberger Untersuchungen zu Widerstand, Judenverfolgung und Kirchenkampf im Dritten Reich, no. 4 (Gütersloh: Christian Kaiser, 1994); Franklin Littell and Hubert Locke, eds., *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1974); Hubert Locke, ed., *The Church Confronts the Nazis: Barmen Then and Now*, Toronto Studies in Theology, vol. 16 (Toronto: Edwin Mellon Press, 1984); *idem*, ed., *The Barmen Confession. Papers from the Seattle Assembly*, Toronto Studies in Theology, vol. 26 (Queenston: Edwin Mellon Press, 1986); Shelley Baranowski, *The Confessing Church, Conservative Elites, and the Nazi State*, Texts and Studies in Religion, vol. 28 (New York: Edwin Mellon, 1986); *idem*, "Consent and Dissent: The Confessing Church and Conservative Opposition to National Socialism," *Journal of Modern History* 59 (March 1987): 53-78; Victoria Barnett, *For the Soul of the People: Protestant Protest against Hitler* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Hans Prolingheuer, "Der ungekämpfte Kirchenkampf 1933-1945—das politische Versagen der Bekennenden Kirche," *Neue Stimme* Sonderheft 6 (1983): 3-34; Ernst Christian Helmreich, "The Nature and Structure of the Confessing Church in Germany under Hitler," *Journal of Church and State* 12 (Autumn 1970): 405-420; Donald Wall, "The Confessing Church and the Second World War," *Journal of Church and State* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1981): 15-34; *idem*, "Karl Barth and National Socialism, 1921-1946," *Fides et Historia*, 15 (Spring/Summer 1983): 80-95; Gerhard Besier and Gerhard Ringshausen, eds., *Bekenntnis, Widerstand, Martyrium: Von Barmen 1934 bis Plötzensee 1944* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986); Eberhard Bethge and Victoria Barnett, *Dietrich Bonhoeffer: A Biography*, rev. ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000); James Bentley, *Martin Niemöller* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984).

Although the church struggle lasted the course of the Third *Reich*, it was most intense between 1933 and 1935, when the German Christian failure to co-ordinate and centralize (*gleichschalten*) the Protestant *Land* churches into a German *Reich* Church became clear. Already in 1933, however, the church struggle consisted of more than just a church-political or church-theological feud. As Hitler and the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei*, NSDAP), its agencies and its political police interfered ever more directly in the affairs of the churches, the German church struggle evolved into a semi-public quarrel between the churches and the Party-state, primarily over the extent to which the Party-state could or should control the ecclesiastical realm in Germany. Conflict arose over issues such as the application of new civil service regulations within the churches, the extent to which the churches ought to celebrate national holidays, the publication of church news, the religious and ideological education of children and youths and the implementation of National Socialist racial policy.

This dissertation is a comparison of the church struggle as experienced in three diverse Protestant church districts: the Nauen district in the Brandenburg Church Province of the Old Prussian Union Church (*Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union*), the Pirna district in the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church (*Evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche des Freistaats Sachsen*) and the Ravensburg district in the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church (*Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*). The German adjective '*evangelisch*' (evangelical) is misleading within an English-speaking context, because of the historical development of British and North American evangelical churches with different theological emphases and traditions than those of German Lutheran and Reformed Christians. Thus, while I will use the adjective 'Evangelical' in the names of German *Land* churches, church offices or church officials, I will generally employ 'Protestant' as the English equivalent of '*evangelisch*.' I will also use 'Protestant' to describe the Christian clergymen and lay people in the Nauen and Ravensburg church districts, because the 29 September 1922 constitutional document of the Old Prussian Union Church employs '*evangelisch*' (Evangelical), '*evangelisch-*

lutherisch’ (Evangelical Lutheran), ‘*evangelisch-reformiert*’ (Evangelical-Reformed) and ‘*evangelisch-uniert*’ (Evangelical-Union) to describe the confessional diversity within its churches, and because the 24 June 1920 church law concerning the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church constitution describes the church members as ‘*evangelisch*’ (Evangelical), even though the character of the both the Brandenburg Church Province and the Württemberg Church was largely Lutheran. I will employ ‘Lutheran’ in the Saxon context, based on the 29 May 1922 constitution of the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church, which explicitly refers to its members as ‘*evangelisch-lutherisch*’ (Evangelical Lutheran).⁶

Working in the context of these *Land* churches, this study is an attempt to understand how three groups of German Protestant clergymen reacted to the profound changes in their political and ecclesiastical environment during and after 1933 and how they understood and performed their ministry as parish pastors, curates and vicars in the National Socialist era. The introductory chapter—the first of nine—will open with a narrative overview of the church struggle as it developed between 1933 and 1945, then proceed with a survey the existing historical literature in the field that raises three vital historiographical questions central to this study, then briefly introduce the three church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

The remainder of the dissertation will unfold as follows. Chapters two through four are thematic in nature and analyze three key questions of local church life in the church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg: (1) the diversity of district and parish contexts in which the church struggle unfolded; (2) the basis, nature and depth of clerical nationalism among parish clergymen; and (3) the

⁶ “Verfassungsurkunde für die Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union,” *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 73, 1924, 150-192 and 196-207, in Ernst Rudolf Huber and Wolfgang Huber, eds., *Staat und Kirche im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert. Dokumente zur Geschichte des deutschen Staatskirchenrechts*, vol. 4, *Staat und Kirche in der Zeit der Weimarer Republik* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1987), 544-587, especially 545; “Kirchliches Gesetz, betreffend die Verfassung der Evangelischen Landeskirche in Württemberg (Kirchenverfassungsgesetz),” *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 69, 1920, 384-394, in Huber, *Staat und Kirche*, 626-631; “Verfassung der Evangelisch-lutherischen Landeskirche des Freistaats Sachsen,” *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 71, 1922, 409, in Huber, *Staat und Kirche*, 644-651, especially 644; Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vol. 1, *Preliminary History and the Time of Illusions 1918-1934*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), vii.

significance of pastoral appointments in the local church struggle. Chapters five through seven examine the variety of church-political conflicts in the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg districts during the time of the Third *Reich*, focusing on the activities and attitudes of clergymen and identifying the division that church strife introduced into relationships within the Protestant ecclesiastical hierarchy. An eighth chapter probes the responses of the Protestant parish clergymen to aspects of the National Socialist racial policy, after which a concluding chapter will draw together the important results of the study and relate them to the historiography of the German churches in the Third *Reich*.

Since the following study revolves around events and themes in local church history and not around the people and events of German national church politics, the following brief overview of the history of the Protestant churches in National Socialist Germany is meant to provide the broad context within which those local events and themes will be analyzed.

No discussion of National Socialism and German religious life can avoid reference to the ideological roots of National Socialism and its leader, Adolf Hitler.⁷ National Socialism was in large part a movement of protest: anti-Bolshevik, anti-western, anti-capitalist, anti-liberal, anti-democratic, anti-internationalist, anti-pacifist and perhaps above all, antisemitic. The basis of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist worldview consisted of what he termed 'the basic principle of the blood'. The Aryan race, of which the German *Volk* was the most perfect embodiment, was alleged to be a free, strong, creative master race that stood above any other. However, according to Hitler, the Germans had been neglecting their duty to cultivate the purity of their race and were consequently succumbing to foreign influences. Among these influences, the greatest threat to the continued existence of the German race was the Jews, an allegedly degenerate race that produced no

⁷ On Hitler and the ideology and development of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), please see Karl Dietrich Bracher, *The German Dictatorship: The Origins, Structure, and Effects of National Socialism* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Alan Bullock, *Hitler: A Study in Tyranny*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1964); Joachim Fest, *Hitler* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974); Eberhard Jäckel, *Hitler in History* (Hanover, NJ: University Press of New England, 1989); Ian Kershaw, *Hitler, 1889-1936: Hubris* (New York: Norton, 2000).

creative ideas of its own, but infiltrated and weakened the blood of other races caught up in a Darwinist struggle to survive and thrive in the world.

Hitler and his followers asserted that the disastrous influence of the Jews was exemplified by the humiliating Versailles *Diktat* (with its war-guilt lie and demand for reparations) imposed upon a Germany that had never really been defeated in the First World War. National Socialists rejected the Weimar Republic for its weak, Western parliamentary government and its hedonistic and individualistic culture. For Hitler and his associates, the solution to this un-German political and cultural degeneration was to return to an authoritarian government under the NSDAP, which would co-ordinate and centralize (*gleichschalten*) all aspects of German life under its leadership, as well as cultivate the well being of the German *Volk* community and remove the Jews from German society—in what manner was not initially clear.

Based on such a narrow sense of racial superiority, the NSDAP ideology stood opposed to numerous Christian doctrines such as the common sinfulness of all humanity, the universal judgment of God, the salvation of all humanity through the sacrificial death of God's son, Jesus Christ, and the mission of the Christian church to live as the united body of Christ on earth. However, the perceived threat of disestablishment under the Social Democratic Party and its partners in the Weimar system, the threat of Communism in Germany during the 1920s and the social, cultural and political conservatism of most Protestant clergymen inclined them (and many of their parishioners) to favour the authoritarian solution that the NSDAP offered in the late 1920s and early 1930s.⁸

The illusion that Adolf Hitler and National Socialism offered a preferred future for the Protestant churches was reinforced by the National Socialists' vague language and promising symbolism. The NSDAP Program of 1920 proclaimed the independence of the Party from traditional confessional churches, but advocated a form of 'Positive Christianity' that would correspond to the sensibilities of the

⁸ On the early relationship between the Christian churches and National Socialism, please see John Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945* (New York: Basic Books, 1968), 1-44; Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler: Background, struggle, and epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), 121-132; Kurt Meier, *Der evangelische Kirchenkampf*, 3 vols. (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1976-1984); and Klaus Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 1-236.

German *Volk*. Hitler held the 21 March 1933 opening of the new *Reichstag* and installation of the new government at the famous Garrison Church in Potsdam. In a famous speech two days later, he proclaimed that the two Christian confessions would be pillars of the Third *Reich*. National Socialists were encouraged to participate in church life as part of the struggle against godless Bolshevism and the recovery of traditional German values. German Catholic bishops retracted their prohibition against joining the NSDAP, and Protestants hailed the “national renewal” and the “change in the *Volk* and state.”⁹

During and after the immediate seizure of power, the National Socialist leadership avoided any direct confrontation with the churches. In fact, in July 1933 the long-awaited signing of a *Reich* Concordat between the German government and the Holy See purported to guarantee the religious rights of German Catholics in National Socialist Germany. Among Protestants, there was little clerical criticism of the new government or its early measures. The first sign of trouble concerned the future of the 28 historic *Land* churches. Even here, it was not a problem of conflict between the National Socialist Party-state and the Protestant *Land* churches, but rather one of intra-church strife brought on by the agitation of the German Christian church-political movement.

German Christians began to call for a unitary *Reich* church to supersede the *Land* churches, pretending there would be few if any theological or confessional consequences to the ‘external’ reform they proposed. They argued that the church needed to keep in step with the new regime by abandoning parliamentary forms of government and opting for a hierarchical structure headed by an authoritarian *Reich* bishop. However, when representatives from the 28 *Land* churches elected the first *Reich* bishop on 27 May 1933, it was not the German Christian candidate Ludwig Müller who prevailed but rather the representative of theological orthodoxy and church tradition, Pastor Friedrich Bodelschwingh, director of the large Westphalian church hospital and special care centre at Bethel. This was a blow to the German Christians and to the government of Adolf Hitler, which had supported Müller. In

⁹ Kurt Meier, *Kreuz und Hakenkreuz. Die evangelische Kirche im Dritten Reich* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1992), 36.

the end, the political influence of the NSDAP won the day, however, as German Christians prevented Bodelschwingh from gaining the acceptance of the National Socialist government. His position eroded further when Prussian Education Minister (*Kultusminister*) Rust appointed District Court Councillor (*Landesgerichtsrat*) August Jäger to direct the Church Department of the Prussian Education Ministry (*Kultusministerium*). Jäger supported both the German Christian Movement and the drive to create a centralized *Reich* church.

After long negotiations between representatives of the German Evangelical Church Federation and the *Land* churches, on 11 July 1933 a new church constitution was agreed upon, creating the German Evangelical Church (*Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*) and granting the *Reich* Bishop broad executive powers. In the ensuing *Reich* Church elections of 23 July 1933, German Christians were swept to victory, thanks in part to the application of the NSDAP machinery in their cause and the endorsement of Adolf Hitler in a radio address that was broadcast on the night before the church elections. German Christian boisterousness dominated the various *Land* church synods that followed, most notably the Prussian "Brown" Synod and the *Reich* Synod, both held in September 1933. As a result of the elections and synods, German Christians took control of almost every *Land* church government in Germany as well as the new *Reich* Church government. Ludwig Müller was elected *Reich* Bishop and began the task of gathering the German *Land* churches into his fold.

These developments did not go entirely unopposed. Karl Barth, a Swiss theologian and professor at Bonn University unleashed a scathing attack against the false teaching of the German Christians and called the church to stand up for its traditional teaching. Pastor Martin Niemöller of the affluent Berlin parish of Dahlem campaigned vigorously for Bodelschwingh to become *Reich* Bishop, launched the Gospel and Church Party (*Evangelium und Kirche*) to oppose the German Christians in the July 1933 church elections, departed from the 5-6 September 1933 Prussian Synod in protest against its overt National Socialist orientation and then promptly founded the Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*) on 11 September 1933.

The Emergency League bound together Protestant clergymen who determined that they would base their preaching solely on the Bible and Reformation Confessions. It was formed in protest over the German Christian demands that the Aryan Paragraph, which prohibited Jews from careers in the civil service, be applied in the churches. The membership of the Pastors' Emergency League grew to 2000 clergymen within a week, and to 7000 clergymen by the beginning of 1934.

Its stunning growth was due in great measure to the increasing radicalism of the German Christians. Here the watershed event occurred on 13 November 1933: it was the infamous Sport Palace speech of Berlin German Christian leader Dr. Reinhold Krause. Krause demanded the creation of a commanding *Reich* Church and advocated the de-Jewification of Christianity through the purge of the Old Testament and the teachings of the Rabbi Paul, a significant portion of the New Testament. Gospel portrayals of the meek, suffering, and crucified Christ were to be exchanged for those of a heroic Jesus more akin to the needs of the Aryan spirit. In essence, Krause argued that fanatical support for the National Socialist 'national renewal' ought to be the criterion for Protestant clergymen.¹⁰

The chief results of Krause's speech were the mass exodus of Protestant clergymen from the German Christian Movement and the termination of official government support for the Movement. Hitler and the NSDAP distanced themselves from the German Christians and forced *Reich* Bishop Ludwig Müller—who was also Hitler's Plenipotentiary for Protestant church affairs—to resign as patron of the German Christian Movement.

By 1934, it was clear that Müller and the German Christians were not going to unify German Protestantism peacefully. Consequently, on 4 January 1934 *Reich* Bishop Müller promulgated a 'Decree for the Restoration of Orderly Conditions in the German Evangelical Church', the so-called Muzzling Decree that prohibited any political activity in or through the churches and any criticism of the German church leaders and the church constitution of July 1933. Thousands of Protestant

¹⁰ [Reinhold Krause], *Rede des Gauobmannes der Glaubensbewegung "Deutsche Christen" i. Groß-Berlin Dr Krause gehalten im Sportpalast am 13. November 1933* (Berlin: n.p., 1933), *passim*.

clergymen defied the decree by reading a pulpit declaration from the Pastors' Emergency League, and many were fined, suspended and harassed by *Gestapo* officers as a result.

Then, beginning in March 1934, *Reich* Bishop Müller initiated a concerted attempt to incorporate the remaining *Land* churches into the new *Reich* church, culminating with the forcible takeover of several *Land* churches and the suspension of their resistant leaders: *Land* Bishops Theophil Wurm of Württemberg, Hans Meiser of Bavaria and August Marahrens of Hanover (Lutheran). This action was so patently unchristian in nature and aroused such widespread clerical and lay opposition to Müller's plans that it sabotaged any possibility for creating a *Reich* church. Müller's campaign was broken off towards the end of 1934 and remained incomplete thereafter.

Meanwhile, since the beginning of 1934, independent Confessing Synods had been formed by clergymen and lay people who were opposed to the German Christian (and National Socialist) co-ordination and centralization (*Gleichschaltung*) of their churches. On 22 April 1934, representatives from these synods proclaimed the creation of the Confessing Church at a service in Ulm on Danube. In May, representatives from its member synods met at a national synod in Barmen, Westphalia. Under the guidance of Reformed theologian Karl Barth, the Barmen Synod issued a declaration that rejected several key German Christian tenets: (1) that divine revelation existed outside of Scripture (i.e. in the German *Volk*), (2) that Jesus Christ was not lord of all aspects of life; (3) that the form of the church's message and polity ought to be determined by the political trends of the day; and (4) that the state could exceed its own realm and makes claims to be the sole authority in life. A second national Confessing Church Synod in November 1934 at Dahlem in Berlin established a Provisional (Emergency) Church Leadership to replace the corrupted *Reich* Church government dominated by German Christians. Prussian members of the Confessing Church went so far in March 1935 as to issue a pulpit declaration denouncing National Socialist racial ideology and the new heathenism emerging in Germany.¹¹ As a result, 700 Confessing Church pastors were jailed.

¹¹ Joachim Beckmann, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland 1933-*

The emergence of the Confessing Church signalled the obvious failure of *Reich* Bishop Müller's work and convinced Hitler to turn instead to National Socialist lawyer Hans Kerrl for solutions to the ecclesiastical division. On 16 July 1935, Hitler appointed Kerrl to the position of *Reich* Minister for Church Affairs. Kerrl immediately amnestied all clergymen from the judicial punishments of the Müller era and reinstated the authority of the *Land* churches, overturning Müller's arbitrary violation of the July 1933 church constitution. Following the amnesty, Kerrl established Church Committees at the *Reich* and *Land* church levels from October 1935 to March 1936. These committees were comprised of representatives from across the Protestant church-political spectrum. Some churchmen in the German Christian and Confessing Church camps scorned the Church Committees, but on the whole their establishment inaugurated a more settled phase in the church struggle and reflected Kerrl's policy of conciliation.

That policy was only temporarily successful. While Kerrl's *Reich* Ministry of Church Affairs was established to smooth over the sharp divisions created by Müller's policy and restore some semblance of unity within German Protestantism, other forces in the Party were growing more antagonistic toward contrary church leaders. In 1935, Party-state officials and the *Gestapo* began harassing clergymen, initiating judicial proceedings against pastors in the Special Courts (*Sondergerichte*), disseminating racial and anticlerical propaganda, secularizing public education, restricting church meetings and suppressing the church press. These actions amounted to an organized attempt to marginalize the German churches and ultimately, to exclude them from German society altogether.

Within the Confessing Church, the creation of the Church Committees induced a crisis that led to the split of the Provisional Church Leadership. At issue were the theological tensions between Niemöller and his 'Dahlemite' colleagues, who generally followed a Reformed theology more critical of the official church government (and who had been the driving force behind the Barmen Declaration) and the three powerful *Land* bishops of the 'intact' *Land* churches: Theophil Wurm of Württemberg, Hans Meiser of Bavaria and August Marahrens of Hanover

1945 (Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1948), 85-86; Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 122.

(Lutheran). The latter were reluctant to challenge the authority of the official church and the *Reich* government behind it by declaring the Confessing Church to be *the* legal and legitimate church in Germany. Rather, they favoured co-operation with *Reich* Minister Kerrl and his policy of pacification. Niemöller and his followers established a Second Provisional Church Leadership which rejected the Church Committees as just one more manifestation of the German Christian heresy in the churches. The *Land* bishops and their adherents formed the Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany, which continued to promote Kerrl's Church Committees.

The Second Provisional Church Leadership of the Confessing Church was serious about continuing its critical stance towards both the German Protestant church leaders and the regime's church policy. On 4 June 1936 its leaders issued a memorandum to Hitler expressing alarm at the attempt to dechristianize Germany. They criticized the vague and unorthodox interpretations of 'positive Christianity', the repeated interference of the Party-state in the internal life of the churches and the ongoing drive to eliminate confessional public schools. Above all else, they castigated National Socialist racial politics as idolatry:

When blood, race, nationality, and honor are thus raised to the rank of qualities that guarantee eternity, the Evangelical Christian is bound, by the First Commandment, to reject the assumption. When the 'Aryan' human being is glorified, God's Word bears witness to the sinfulness of all men. When, within the compass of the National Socialist view of life, an anti-Semitism is forced upon the Christian that binds him to hatred of the Jew, the Christian injunction to love one's neighbor still stands, for him, opposed to it.¹²

While this memorandum was intended to be a private submission to Adolf Hitler himself, copies were rapidly distributed. Within days of its submission to the *Reich* Chancellery on 4 June 1936, the U.S. State Department knew of its existence and Bishop Bell of Chichester, England, had read a copy. The *New York Herald Tribune* described the memorandum on 16 July and published an English translation

¹² Cochrane, *Church's Confession under Hitler*, 275.

of the full text on 28 July. Five days earlier, on 23 July, the *Basler Nachrichten* had published the full German text.¹³

Already from 1935, the Confessing Church became increasingly involved in the training of new clergymen, establishing its own *Kirchliche Hochschulen* in Berlin and Elberfeld, as well as other seminaries, the most famous of which became Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde Seminary in Pomerania. Though an SS decree outlawed these seminaries on 29 August 1937, Confessing Church leaders continued to train young theological candidates in secret well into the Second World War.¹⁴

Caught between the opposition of the Confessing Church and the radicals within the NSDAP, Kerrl spent the bulk of 1936 trying to convince his opponents in the Party and the church that National Socialism and Christianity were inseparable, indeed necessarily co-existent. Meanwhile, government decrees established finance departments to tighten fiscal control over dissenters in the *Land* churches and legal bureaus to enforce the administrative will of the *Reich* Bishop over dissenting clergymen. Within the *Reich* Church Committee, frustration over the impossibility of uniting the political and theological diversity of German Christians, neutrals and supporters of the Confessing Church led to the resignation of committee members in February 1937. With Kerrl threatening the *Land* Church Committees, Hitler intervened by overruling his minister and announcing new church elections for a general synod empowered to draft a new church constitution. Nothing came of Hitler's announcement, however, since the ensuing election campaign only reconfirmed the deep divisions in the church between the German Christians and the Confessing Church, forcing the indefinite postponement of the elections.

Reich Minister Kerrl, who had reassumed executive control over the churches during the election campaign, tried to regain both his authority within the churches and his prestige within the Party by ordering the arrest of almost 50 leading members of the Confessing Church, including Brandenburg General Superintendent Dr. Otto Dibelius and Pastor Martin Niemöller. That summer and fall, about 700

¹³ The full text of this memorandum is published as Appendix X in Cochrane, *Church's Confession under Hitler*, 268-279; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 200-201.

¹⁴ Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 166 n. 42.

more Confessing Church pastors were arrested, most for refusing to submit church collections to their official church governing bodies. As a result, many pastors were forbidden to teach religious instruction in German public schools and measures were taken to terminate the ministry of pastors trained and examined for ordination by the illegal Confessing Church seminaries and councils. This process culminated with Kerl handing over control of the German Protestant Church to Dr. Friedrich Werner, the German Christian President of the Old Prussian Union Church.

Werner was given control over the external administration of the church, which included the discipline of pastors. In April 1938, he responded by promulgating a decree demanding that all Protestant clergymen swear an oath of allegiance to the *Führer* as an expression of gratitude for the recent German annexation of Austria. Once again, while most clergymen agreed with this measure, a minority in the Confessing Church refused, adding yet another front upon which the church struggle was contested.

The infamy of the church struggle reached its height in 1938 with the trial and acquittal of Martin Niemöller, leader of the Confessing Church. Niemöller was thereupon seized and detained in concentration camps, where he remained until 1945. By mid-1938, however, the National Socialist regime was increasingly preparing for war and decreasingly prepared to antagonize large segments of German society. Thus, while the *Gestapo* continued to harass clergymen, publicly the regime backed away from its earlier anti-Christian extremes.

For their part, Protestant leaders were generally supportive of Hitler's foreign policy, praising the annexation of Austrian and Czech territory and the outbreak of war against Poland. German Christians were the most eager to prove their loyalty to the regime, volunteering for front line duty and positions in the military chaplaincy. At the outset of the campaign against Soviet Russia in June 1941, the Church Council of the German Evangelical Church was quick to assure Hitler of its continuing support for the war effort. The introduction of the war in the East also provided the opportune moment for the National Socialist regime to implement its most radical solution to the 'Jewish Question': annihilation.

Since the beginning of the National Socialist era, political antisemitism had created a problem for the German churches. A long history of Christian anti-Judaism in Germany (as elsewhere) coupled with increasing cultural, economic and even racial antisemitism that emerged in the later 19th century meant that German Protestants often had mixed opinions about Jews. For many, the 'Jewish Question' that obsessed National Socialists held little meaning. Others waded into the debate, sending confusing messages about the nature of Jews that ultimately gave little guidance to parishioners inundated with Party propaganda equating Jews with vermin or diseases threatening the Aryan race. No less a figure than Martin Niemöller both preached that the Jews stood as outcasts under God's punishment and fought tooth and nail to prevent the application of antisemitic legislation in the churches within the period of a few months in 1933. Apart from the 1936 private memorandum to Hitler, however, there was little protest among Protestants against the legal and social marginalization of Jews, the Nuremberg racial laws of 1935 or even the violent 'Kristallnacht' Pogrom of 9-10 November 1938, when SA and SS gangs destroyed Jewish homes, shops and synagogues throughout Germany. Though fewer clergymen dared to speak out as time passed, there were a few notable exceptions. For instance, in Berlin, Roman Catholic Provost Bernhard Lichtenberg led his congregation in public intercession for the Jewish victims of the pogrom. He was subsequently arrested and died while in detention. Likewise, Berlin Protestant Pastor Heinrich Grüber established and operated an office to help Jews escape from Germany, until he was arrested in 1940.

Protestant and Roman Catholic Church leaders were somewhat more active in their opposition to the National Socialist euthanasia policy that was implemented at the beginning of the Second World War. Roman Catholic Bishop von Galen of Münster and Protestant *Land* Bishop Wurm of Württemberg were among the boldest opponents of the organized murder of physically and mentally handicapped and mentally ill Germans. Von Galen preached a famous sermon in August 1941 that was quickly circulated throughout the country, while Wurm wrote pointed letters of protest to National Socialist leaders, including Hitler. Sadly, these men and others like them comprised but a small minority within German Protestantism.

War and conquest served to demonstrate the fundamental anti-Christianity of the National Socialist movement. Ever-present propaganda and harsher police measures to suppress the churches in Germany, repeated manifestations of the deep antagonism of National Socialist leaders toward Christianity and a policy of outright dechristianization in the Warthegau region of occupied Poland demonstrated that Protestants who believed that the Christian religion was an integral force within National Socialism were absolutely mistaken.

With the end of the Second World War, the German church struggle finally ended. However, as in other sectors of German society, the post-war denazification process failed to sufficiently address the depth of active and tacit support within the German Protestant *Land* churches for the Hitler government. Few clergymen were suspended from their positions, even among those outspoken champions of Hitler and National Socialist racial ideology who had comprised the German Christian Movement.

In the Protestant *Land* churches, members of the Confessing Church came to control the church governments following the collapse of National Socialism. They did not undertake a detailed, critical evaluation of the words and actions of the clergymen and church leaders in their *Land* churches (themselves included), but rather chose to focus on the aspects of their activities that touched on or appeared to entail political resistance. They collected documents, published memoirs and established special archival collections. In short, they passed down to subsequent generations the basic interpretive paradigm for the German church struggle.

The Protestant historiography of the German church struggle has been shaped largely by its attention to two fundamental issues highlighted in the preceding overview: the intra-church struggle between church-political factions (primarily German Christian and Confessing Church) and the evolution of National Socialist religious policy, along with the institutional response of the churches. With respect to the internal church conflict, the Confessing Church stands out as the most heavily researched aspect of the church struggle. This was in no small part due to the influence of participants in the church struggle and their contemporaries, who had contributed to the polemical literature of the National Socialist era and carried

their campaign past the collapse of the Third *Reich* into the post-war era. Here Wilhelm Niemöller, brother of the famous Berlin pastor Martin Niemöller, was the most important figure among many, publishing no less than eight books on the church struggle during the first decade after the end of the Second World War.¹⁵ Others contributed collections of documents, smaller or larger histories of the church struggle, and memoirs.¹⁶ In addition, this paradigm of 'church struggle as political resistance' gained legitimacy from the political atmosphere in Germany after the war, in which the German churches were among the only national institutions still standing in the ruins of National Socialism. The Allied forces occupying Germany considered Christendom the most, if not only, untainted domain in society and initially looked to clergymen to help reconstruct civil life in the occupation era.¹⁷

The most important effect of this literature was to establish the basic paradigm through which most historians (and German Protestants themselves) have viewed the Church Struggle. Its basic weakness was the confusion between church politics and secular politics, and the mistaken assumption that the Confessing Church's defence of traditional church structures, practises and theology was really just another form of anti-National Socialist activity. At one level, this assumption is

¹⁵ Wilhelm Niemöller published eight books on the church struggle: Wilhelm Niemöller, *Kirchenkampf in Dritten Reich* (Bielefeld: Ludwig Bechauf, 1946); *idem*, *Kampf und Zeugnis der Bekennenden Kirche* (Bielefeld: Ludwig Bechauf, 1948); *idem*, *Gottes Wort ist nicht gebunden : ein Tatsachenbericht über den Kirchenkampf* (Bielefeld : Ludwig Bechauf, 1948); *idem*, *Kirchenkampf in Westfalen* (Bielefeld: Ludwig Bechauf, 1952); *idem*, *Macht geht vor Recht; der Prozess Martin Niemöllers* (Munich: Christian Kaiser Verlag, 1952); *idem*, *Die Bekennende Kirche sagt Hitler die Wahrheit* (Bielefeld: Ludwig Bechauf, 1954); *idem*, *Karl Koch: Präses der Bekenntnissynoden, Beihefte zum Jahrbuch des Vereins für Westfälische Kirchengeschichte, Heft 2.,* (Bethel: Verlagshandlung der Anstalt Bethel, 1956); *idem*, *Die evangelische Kirche im Dritten Reich; Handbuch des Kirchenkampfes* (Bielefeld: Ludwig Bechauf, 1956).

¹⁶ For instance, the series *Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes*, edited by Kurt Dietrich Schmidt, had grown to 26 volumes by 1971. Its efforts were directed primarily towards writing and documenting the history of the Confessing Church. Owen Chadwick, "The Present Stage of the 'Kirchenkampf' Enquiry," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 24, no. 1 (January 1973): 33-50. Among other early accounts of the church struggle, please see Beckmann, ed., *Kirchliches Jahrbuch*; Buchheim, *Glaubenskrisen*; Walter Conrad, *Der Kampf um die Kanzeln. Erinnerungen und Dokumente aus der Hitlerzeit* (Berlin: A. Töpelmann, 1957); Otto Diehn, *Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes 1933-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1958); Heinrich Hermelink, ed., *Kirche in Kampf: Dokumente des Widerstands und des Aufbaus in der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands von 1933 bis 1945* (Tübingen: R. Wunderlich, 1950); Wolf, *Barmen*.

¹⁷ Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, xxvii-xxviii; Frederic Spotts, *The churches and politics in Germany* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 47-88.

valid. As the National Socialists successfully reorganized German society and its institutions, the fact that elements within the Protestant churches balked at the coordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of their activities meant that they exerted a form of resistance against the regime and its central goal of constructing a racial or national community (*Volkgemeinschaft*) revolving around the NSDAP.¹⁸

Despite this, many of the leading clergymen who opposed aspects of the National Socialist religious policy were committed nationalists—sometimes National Socialists too—who supported the regime's reorganization of German society and its reassertion of German international position. For example, Pastor Martin Niemöller congratulated Hitler on withdrawing from the League of Nations and the international disarmament talks in October 1933 and did not dispute the need to limit the rights of Jews in Germany. Similarly, Württemberg *Land* Bishop Theophil Wurm repeatedly endorsed the NSDAP and affirmed the direction of the new state.¹⁹

Thus, taken as a whole, confusion between the ecclesiastical opposition of traditionalists in and around the Confessing Church to the programme of the German Christian Movement and to specific aspects of National Socialist religious policy on the one hand and political resistance against the National Socialist regime on the other has largely obscured the true position of the Protestant clergy at large. It has also led to a skewed understanding of the church struggle.

A major turning point away from his paradigm was made by Friedrich Baumgärtel's 1959 book *Wider die Kirchenkampf-Legenden*, which challenged the dominant interpretation of the events in the churches of National Socialist Germany by arguing that Protestant clergymen of all church-political persuasions, including prominent figures such as Confessing Church leader Martin Niemöller and *Land* Bishops Wurm, Meiser and Marahrens, had often approved of National Socialist

¹⁸ For a massive documentation of the antipathy of Party officials towards the churches, please see H. Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich. Die geheimen Lageberichte des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS, 1938-1945*, 17 vols. (Herrsching: Pawlack, 1984).

¹⁹ Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, xxi, 42; Friedrich Baumgärtel, *Wider die Kirchenkampf-Legenden*, 2. Auflage (Neuendettelsau: Freimund-Verlag, 1959) 9-11, 32-39, 52.

political goals.²⁰ Others have since joined Baumgärtel in the call for a reappraisal of the church struggle.²¹

The vast change in the historiographical climate from Baumgärtel's time to today is powerfully illustrated by the historical treatment of the German churches in the DDR following the collapse of the Communist state in 1989. Though the downfall of East German communism was at least in part due to lay and clerical protests in and through the churches, there was virtually no chance for a sanguine narrative of Protestant opposition within the DDR to develop. Instead, within a year of unification, historian Gerhard Besier—who had already done much to explain both resistance and its absence within the German church struggle of the National Socialist era—began to publish documents and then a commentary that revealed widespread collaboration between East German clergymen and the SED state.²² No such prominent critique of the Protestant churches in the National Socialist era appeared until Baumgärtel's work, 14 years and thousands of publications after the defeat of National Socialist Germany.

As for the German Christians, their side of the church-political struggle received very little attention in the first three decades after 1945. This was obviously a function of the fact that scholars possessed no sympathy for the German Christian cause once National Socialism had been vanquished. Thus, the German Christians were written into German church history as evil foils against which the Confessing Church appeared saintly. More recently, the German Christian Movement has finally received some appropriate scholarly attention, as young

²⁰ Baumgärtel, *Wider die Kirchenkampf-Legenden*, *passim*.

²¹ Wolf, *Kirche in Widerstand?*; Eberhard Bethge, "Troubled Self-Interpretation and Uncertain Reception in the Church Struggle," in Littell and Locke, eds., *German Church Struggle*, 167-184; Prolingheuer, "Der ungekämpfte Kirchenkampf," 3-30.

²² Gerhard Besier and Stephen Wolf, eds., "*Pfarrer, Christen und Katholiken*": *das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der ehemaligen DDR und die Kirchen*, 2 vols. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1991); Gerhard Besier, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche 1969-1990: die Vision vom "Dritten Weg."* (Berlin: Propyläen, 1995); idem, *Der SED-Staat und die Kirche 1983-1991: Höhenflug und Absturz* (Frankfurt am Main: Propyläen, 1995).

scholars free of direct personal links to the church struggle have attempted to analyze its ideology and activities.²³

There are three historiographical questions within the field of the German church struggle that have special relevance to my study of clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. The first is the question I have already introduced, namely, the extent to which German Protestant churchmen in and near the Confessing Church were engaged in political resistance. From the early era of the history of motives and events, historians of ecclesiastical and political resistance have turned toward the study of various social and occupational groups under National Socialism and the extent to which they collaborated with and resisted the implementation of National Socialist policy.²⁴ With respect to the Christian churches, scholars have rightly questioned the extent to which the Confessing Church functioned as a centre of resistance against the National Socialist state and debated about the role of cultural and theological tradition inside German Protestantism.²⁵ My study will

²³ Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: the German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Rainer Lächele, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Glaube: Die "Deutsche Christen" in Württemberg 1925-1960*, Quellen und Forschungen zur württembergischen Kirchengeschichte, ed. Martin Brecht und Hermann Ehmer, no. 12 (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1994); Christoph Weiling, *Die "Christliche-deutsche Bewegung": Eine Studie zum konservativen Protestantismus in der Weimarer Republik*, Arbeiten zur kirchlichen Zeitgeschichte, series B, no. 28 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998).

²⁴ Martin Broszat, "Resistenz und Widerstand. Eine Zwischenbilanz des Forschungsprojekts," in Broszat et al., eds., *Bayern in der NS-Zeit. Herrschaft und Gesellschaft im Konflikt*, vol. 4 (Munich, 1981), 694; Sarah Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society. Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Detlev Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

²⁵ Please see notes 16 and 17, above; Klemens von Klemperer, "Glaube, Religion, Kirche und der deutsche Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 28, no. 3 (1980): 293-309; Baranowski, *Confessing Church*; Robert Michael, "Theological Myth, German Antisemitism and the Holocaust: The Case of Martin Niemöller," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 2, no. 1 (1987): 105-122; Kurt Nowak, "Evangelische Kirche und Widerstand im Dritten Reich. Kirchenhistorische und gesellschaftsgeschichtliche Perspektiven," *Geschichtswissenschaft und Unterricht* 6 (1987): 352-364; Günther van Norden, "Zwischen Kooperation und Teilwiderstand: Die Rolle der Kirchen und Konfessionen—Ein Überblick über Forschungspositionen," in Jürgen Schmädke and Peter Steinbach, eds., *Der Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus. Die deutsche Gesellschaft und der Widerstand gegen Hitler* (Munich: Piper, 1985), 227-239; Klaus Scholder, "Politische Widerstand oder Selbstbehauptung als Problem der Kirchenleitungen," in *ibid.*, 254-264; Eberhard Bethge, "Zwischen Bekenntnis und Widerstand: Erfahrungen in der Altpreußischen Union," in *ibid.*, 281-294; Gerhard Besier, "Ansätze zum politischen Widerstand in der Bekennenden Kirche:

address this debate by comparing the responses of clergymen in the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg church districts during the heyday of the national renewal of 1933, and then considering the broader question of clerical nationalism in the Third *Reich*.

The second question is that of the relationship between various church-political groups during the church struggle. Just as the German Christians have only recently received appropriate scholarly attention, so too the relationships within the Confessing Church have not been sufficiently analyzed until recently. Andreas Kersting has recently criticized both Klaus Scholder and Kurt Meier for failing to differentiate sufficiently between the members of the Confessing Church, who argued on the basis of the decisions of both the Barmen *and* Dahlem Synods that they comprised the only legitimate German Protestant Church, and their supporters who refused to make a complete break with the official church government and who continued to work with the Church Committees in the spring of 1936 and to pursue other conciliatory measures thereafter.²⁶ Hartmut Ludwig carries Kersting's contention further, arguing that the notion that these two groups were simply two factions *within* the Confessing Church is an historical myth created after 1945 for political purposes.²⁷ Ludwig calls upon historians to write "a history of the Confessing Church 'from below' [...] a history of the daily life [*Alltagsgeschichte*] of the Confessing Church."²⁸ The present study is in part an attempt to do just that—

zur gegenwärtigen Forschungslage," in Gerhard Besier, *Die Evangelische Kirche in den Umbrüchen des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Historisch-Theologische Studien zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, no. 5/1 (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1994): 227-242; idem, "Widerstand im Dritten Reich—Ein kompatibler Forschungsgegenstand—Verständigung heute," in Besier, *Die Evangelische Kirche*, 243-261.

²⁶ Kersting, *Kirchenordnung und Widerstand*, 7-14.

²⁷ Hartmut Ludwig, "Die 'Illegalen' im Kirchenkampf," in Karl-Adolf Bauer, ed., *Predigtamt ohne Pfarramt? Die "Illegalen" im Kirchenkampf* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1993), 23-70. Ludwig captures the problem of historical myth-making by recording an exchange between renowned church historian Adolf von Harnack and the Berlin Nuncio Eugenio Pacelli (after 1939, Pope Pius XII), in which Pacelli asked Harnack: "How much of the church history that we read in the books is really true?" When Harnack answered, "I suspect fifty percent," Pacelli retorted, "You are a very great optimist." Ibid., 23.

²⁸ Ibid., 30-31.

not only for the Confessing Church, but also across the church-political spectrum in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

The third historiographical question concerns the importance of examining the church struggle not only from the perspective atop the upper echelons of the Church, but also from the standpoint of the various regions and—mostly significantly for this particular study—from the level of the church districts and parishes of Germany. There are now many studies of the church struggle at the level of the *Land* church or Prussian church province. They generally provide explanations for the events of the period in the regional churches, or tell the story of the Confessing Church in a particular region.²⁹ Other writers have added local studies. In the early days, many of these were narratives of Confessing Church parishes written by contemporaries who had participated in the church struggle themselves.³⁰ What these local and regional studies lack, however, is an outside

²⁹ Ludwig Heine, *Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes in der Grenzmark—Posen—Westpreußen 1930-1940*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, no. 9 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961); Karl Stoevesandt, *Bekennende Gemeinden und deutschgläubige Bischofsdiktatur in Bremen 1933-1945*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, no. 10 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1961); Theodor Dipper, *Die evangelische Bekenntnisgemeinschaft in Württemberg 1933-1945*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, no. 17 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966); Hugo Linck, *Der Kirchenkampf in Ostpreußen 1933-1945. Geschichte und Dokumentation* (Munich, 1968); Gerhard Ehrenforth, *Die schlesische Kirche im Kirchenkampf 1932-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); Joachim Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf 1933-1937*, Arbeiten zur Geschichte des Kirchenkampfes, supplementary series no. 8 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1972); Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg unter Nationalsozialismus. Eine Dokumentation zum Kirchenkampf*, 6 vols., (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1971-1986); Bernd Hey, *Die Kirchenprovinz Westfalen 1933-1945* (Bielefeld, 1974); Ernst Hornig, *Die Bekennende Kirche in Schlesien 1933-1945. Geschichte und Dokumente* (Göttingen, 1977); Wilhelm Niesel, *Kirche unter dem Wort. Der Kampf der Bekennenden Kirche der altpreußischen Union 1933-1945* (Göttingen, 1978); Günther van Norden, "Der Kirchenkampf im Rheinland 1933 bis 1934," in *idem*, ed., *Kirchenkampf im Rheinland. Die Entstehung der Bekennenden Kirche und die Theologische Erklärung von Barmen 1934* (Cologne, 1984), 1ff.; Erich Stegmann, *Der Kirchenkampf in der Thüringer Evangelischen Kirche, 1933-1945* (Berlin: Evangelischer Verlagsanstalt, 1984); Hartmut Ludwig, "Die Entstehung der Bekennenden Kirche in Berlin," in *Beiträge zur Berliner Kirchengeschichte*, ed. Günther Wirth (East Berlin, 1987), 264 ff.; Peter Maser, ed., *Der Kirchenkampf im deutschen Osten und in den deutschsprachigen Kirchen Osteuropas* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1992); Eckhard Lessing, *Zwischen Bekenntnis und Volkskirche. Der theologische Weg der Evangelischen Kirche der altpreußischen Union (1922-1953) unter besonderer Berücksichtigung ihrer Synoden, ihrer Gruppen und der theologischen Begründungen*, Unio und Confessio, no. 17 (Bielefeld: Luther-Verlag, 1992).

³⁰ Günther Harder and Wilhelm Niemöller, eds., *Die Stunde der Versuchung. Gemeinden im Kirchenkampf 1933-1945. Selbstzeugnisse* (Munich: Kaiser, 1963); Heinrich Wilhelm, *Die Hamburger Kirche in der nationalsozialistischen Zeit, 1933-45* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1968); Helmut Baier, *Kirchenkampf in Nürnberg 1933-1945* (Nürnberg: Korn und Berg,

reference point from which to compare and contrast developments at the lower levels of the German Protestant *Land* churches. The present study is an attempt to address that problem. It is the first study I know of that engages in a detailed comparison of the church struggle in geographically and church-politically diverse church districts and parishes, and thus grapples with the meaning of the church struggle at the local level while simultaneously probing for similarities and differences across *Land* church lines.

For the purpose of investigating these questions, I have employed a wide range of ecclesiastical archival sources, including the Evangelisches Zentralarchiv in Berlin, the main repository of the Old Prussian Union Church, and the Landeskirchliches Archiv in Stuttgart, Württemberg. The bulk of the primary source material came from three archives: the Brandenburg Domstiftsarchiv, repository for many rural church districts and parishes in the territory west of Berlin, and two smaller district and parish church archives in Ravensburg and Pirmasens. Supplementing the diverse and plentiful correspondence between parish pastors, district superintendents and *Land* church authorities were parish newsletters, statistical accounts, sermons and addresses of clergymen in the three districts and newspaper accounts of local church affairs. This study draws conclusions primarily from these documents, supplemented by other contemporary accounts of the church struggle and subsequent historical literature, where it touches on these local concerns.

Before proceeding to the opening chapter, with its analysis of the district and parish contexts in which the church struggle unfolded in Nauen, Pirmasens and Ravensburg, it will be useful to briefly introduce the three church districts and their parishes.³¹ All three districts are rural or semi-rural in nature, for the simple reason

1973); Helmut Geck, *Der Kirchenkampf in Recklinghausen. Die Auseinandersetzungen zwischen der Bekennenden Kirche und den Deutschen Christen in der evangelischen Kirchengemeinde Recklinghausen-Alstadt von 1933 bis 1939*, Vestischen Zeitschrift, no. 81 (Recklinghausen: Druck- und Verlagshaus W. Bitter, 1982); Eberhard Mayer, *Die evangelische Kirche in Ulm 1918-1945* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998).

³¹ Due to the variety in historical development among the German Protestant *Land* churches, ecclesiastical terminology varies from *Land* church to *Land* church. In the Old Prussian Union Church, a church district was generally called a "*Kirchenkreise*," while in the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church, "*Kirchenkreise*," "*Superintendentur*," and "*Ephorie*" all appear in ecclesiastical correspondence and in the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church, "*Dekanat*" is

that churches in the smaller towns and villages functioned more clearly as institutions of importance whose prominent members were easily identifiable.

The first district chosen for this study was Nauen, in Berlin-Brandenburg, one of the Church Provinces in the largest Protestant Church in Germany, the Old Prussian Union Church (*Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union*). The Nauen district was located just beyond the northwest corner of Berlin, several kilometres west of Falkensee and Oranienburg. Because the district of Nauen had incorporated parishes from Spandau and Fehrbellin districts in 1929, during the National Socialist era it was one of the largest districts in all of Brandenburg—over 30 kilometres across. Closest to Nauen, the parishes of Bredow, Markee and Zeestow were located to the southeast, while Berge, Groß Behnitz, Ribbeck, Retzow and Pessin lay to the west. Northeast of Nauen, near the Berlin suburb of Oranienburg, lay Schwante, Vehlefan, Bötzw, Wansdorf, Beetz, Kremmen, Staffelde, Flatow, Tietzow, Grünefeld, and Paaren im Glien. Finally, to the west, in the former district of Fehrbellin, were located the parishes of Fehrbellin, Lentzke, Brunne, Karweese, Friedenshorst, Hakenberg, and Linum. Most of these Nauen district parishes were located in tiny farming villages located in the flat, marshy Havelland and Rhin Marsh zone that lay just beyond the outskirts of the German capital.

The second church district chosen for this study was Pirna, in the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land Church* (*Evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche des Freistaats Sachsen*). The Pirna district was located immediately southeast of Dresden, stretching along the River Elbe towards the Czechoslovak border. Containing 39 parishes, the district measured over 35 kilometres from West to East,

employed. Similarly, the district superintendent was a "*Superintendent*" in Prussia and in Saxony, where he might also have been called an "*Ephorus*," but in Württemberg the name "*Dekan*" was the norm. While recognizing the historical uniqueness of each designation, I have chosen to simplify the English usage and employ the terms "church district" and "(district) superintendent" in all cases. It makes the many comparisons in the study far less cumbersome, and reflects the common set of rights and responsibilities the superintendents shared during the National Socialist era.

"Verfassungsurkunde für die Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union," *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 73, 1924, 150-192 and 196-207, in Huber, *Staat und Kirche*, 563-564; "Verfassung der Evangelisch-lutherischen Landeskirche des Freistaats Sachsen," *Allgemeines Kirchenblatt für das evangelische Deutschland*, 71, 1922, 409, in Huber, *Staat und Kirche*, 650.

and almost as much along its north-south axis. Only a few parishes lay to the west of Pirna, on the outskirts of Dresden itself: Heidenau (Christus), Heidenau (Luther), Zschachwitz and Lauterbach. South of the Elbe River, from Pirna eastward to the border, were located the parishes Maxen, Burkhardswalde, Liebstadt, Friedrichswalde, Oelsen, Bad Gottleuba, Berggießhübel, Cotta, Struppen, Langenhenndorf, Rosenthal, Königstein, Papstdorf, and Reinhardtsdorf. North of the Elbe, also from West to East, lay Eschdorf, Liebethal, Lohmen, Dittersbach, Dorf Wehlen, Stadt Wehlen, Helmsdorf, Stürza, Rathewalde, Stolpen, Hohnstein, Porsdorf, Bad Schandau, Ehrenberg, Rückersdorf, Neustadt, Lichtenhain, Sebnitz, Ottendorf, and finally Hinterhermsdorf, surrounded on three sides by Czechoslovakian territory. The majority of these parishes were small towns set in the rugged Elbe sandstone hills and the uplands known as the Saxon Switzerland (*Sächsische Schweiz*).

The third and final church district selected for this study was Ravensburg, in the Württemberg Evangelical *Land Church* (*Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*). The Württemberg district of Ravensburg was located 200 kilometres away from the *Land Church* capital of Stuttgart, off in the southeast corner of Württemberg. Its southern border was the *Bodensee* (Lake Constance), across which lay Switzerland. East of the district sat the southern tip of Bavaria and a few kilometres past that, Austria. West of Ravensburg lay the parishes of Wälders-Winterbach and Wilhemsdorf, the latter home to several Protestant special care institutions for the physically handicapped. On the north end of the district were located Weingarten and Bad Waldsee; while south of Ravensburg lay Tettnang and the *Bodensee* parishes of Friedrichshafen and Langenargen. Finally, in the eastern portion of the district lay the upland parishes of Wangen im Allgäu, Leutkirch, Isny. These 11 parishes, most in small cities or substantial towns, served a host of smaller "filial" or "diaspora" communities in which tiny groups of Protestants typically met in smaller prayer halls scattered about the country.

It should be noted here that I do not consider these three districts to be case studies in the methodologically rigorous sense of that term. That would imply that each district was somehow representative of its own *Land church*, a claim that is not

possible to make without first performing detailed comparisons of many church districts within each of the three *Land* churches, a task far beyond the scope of this study. However, based on the existing secondary literature on the church struggle, it is my estimation that these three districts and their parishes contain a useful range of people, institutions and problems, and that their regional diversity will serve as an instructive tool in the pursuit of a more differentiated understanding of the church struggle.

CHAPTER 2

NATIONAL SOCIALISM AS A FORCE FOR GERMAN PROTESTANT RENEWAL? ANTICIPATION AND DISAPPOINTMENT IN NAUEN, PIRNA AND RAVENSBURG

Pastors from the Nauen, Pirna, and Ravensburg church districts functioned in quite dissimilar regional and local environments. At the regional level, the different governing structures, theological traditions and church governments combined to create the unique conditions of the German *Land* churches. Likewise, the effect of *Land* church political developments differed in each local church district. In Nauen, pastors were exposed to the vigorous campaign launched by German Christians to seize control of the Old Prussian Union *Land* Church (*Evangelische Kirche der altpreußischen Union*) and unite all the remaining *Land* churches under Prussian leadership. Pastors in Pirna found themselves caught in a heated battle between traditional Lutherans and radical German Christians over control of the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church (*Evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirche des Freistaats Sachsens*). In Ravensburg, pastors worked under leaders in the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church (*Evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*) who were initially supportive of ecclesiastical unification, until *Land* Bishop Wurm and the Württemberg Superior Church Council rejected the harsh methods and theological heterodoxy of the German Christians at the head of the nascent *Reich* church.

These regional realities were, however, only one factor that influenced the way the church struggle evolved in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. Another factor was the basic theological and ideological beliefs of parish clergymen, which shaped the way they practised pastoral ministry and related to the wider world around them.¹ Yet another factor, the subject of this chapter, was the range of district and parish conditions faced by pastors in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. The attitudes of parishioners, civic officials and local NSDAP leaders all contributed to the creation

¹ For details on the nationalist ideological and theological beliefs of clergymen from Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, please see chapter 3, below.

of the unique contexts within which pastors exerted their spiritual and ecclesiastical leadership. Given the importance of that matrix of forces, it is the purpose of this chapter to assess the church conditions in the three districts, particularly in the early phase of National Socialist rule. It was in 1933 and 1934 that many parishes established their basic orientation to the church struggle, as it filtered down into their communities from the *Reich* and *Land* church capitals. After an analysis of the impact of the 'national renewal' (created by the National Socialist political revolution) on the parishes in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg in 1933 and 1934, the focus will shift to consider some of the important developments of subsequent years. While the national renewal appeared to invigorate German church life in some areas, it also politicized Protestant communities and scattered local clergymen across a church-political spectrum ranging from extremists in the Faith Movement of the German Christians to radicals in the Confessing Church.

Of the three districts under consideration, Nauen was closest to the hub of German political life. Spread out directly northwest of Berlin, the Nauen district was located in the Brandenburg church province of the Old Prussian Union Church. Close proximity to the *Reich* capital brought Protestants from the Nauen area into direct contact with the storm centre of the German Protestant church struggle. The resulting politicization of parish life became apparent in many ways, not least in the intensity of the local promotion (and criticism) of German nationalism among Protestant clergymen and in the intense conflict over the appointment of new parish pastors.²

The politicization of parish life was also evident in the general ecclesiastical tumult experienced by many of these otherwise quiet, rural, Havelland parishes during the period of the Third *Reich*—especially in 1933 and 1934, when the political ascent of Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists was accompanied by a surge of nationalism and religious participation within the Protestant churches of the Nauen district. Many local clergymen rejoiced at the emergence of the new

² On the subject of pastoral appointments in the three districts of Nauen, Ravensburg and Pirna, please see chapter 4, below.

National Socialist government, since parish life appeared more robust than at any time since the First World War. Indeed, some veteran pastors reported that participation had never been higher during their tenure. In time, however, local church life began to sour as the ill effects of the church struggle in Berlin filtered into the parishes of rural Brandenburg.

The year 1933 was nothing less than a fundamental turning point in the religious life of Protestant clergymen and lay people in the district of Nauen, even as it completely altered their political and social worlds. At the outset, the transformation appeared to be a godsend. Local pastors, including District Superintendent Graßhoff, delighted in the National Socialist seizure of power. They fundamentally agreed with Hitler's aspiration for a national and (as they believed) moral rebirth. Many responded to what they perceived as Hitler's call for the churches to participate in this renewal through dedicated service to the German racial community, and agreed with both his campaign to destroy communism and his practise of authoritarian politics.³

For those reasons, the May 1933 Nauen district church assembly almost entirely revolved around developments associated with the new National Socialist regime. Superintendent Graßhoff interpreted the rise of Hitler for the district church assembly and proclaimed: "God has spoken to our German *Volk* through a great transformation. An epoch in German history has come to an end, a new period has begun." In the balance of his address, Graßhoff predicted massive and miraculous social and moral changes in Germany and called on local Protestants to help save Germany by cultivating a new, pure national character.⁴

Other sessions in the 1933 district church assembly echoed the patriotic tone of Graßhoff's speech. For example, the theme of the women's assembly was "Ready for Service," an attitude Pastor Cramer of Kremmen affirmed in "this great, fateful

³ For an expansion of these motivations, please see chapter 3, below.

⁴ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen," (unidentified newspaper clipping), n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

time for our *Volk*."⁵ Afterwards, Nauen women listened to a visiting Berlin pastor praise Hitler's piety and the manner in which "the young chancellor of the *Volk* openly professed his faith in God and promoted the work of the Christian churches."⁶

Likewise, General Superintendent Otto Dibelius of the *Kurmark*⁷ came to speak at the men's assembly. Dibelius had been one of the most important voices in the Prussian *Land* Church, ever since the publication of his *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche* (The Century of the Church) in 1927, a work that called the German *Land* churches to act as moral guides in the profane Weimar Republic.⁸ In March 1933, however, German Christian radicals in Berlin-Brandenburg attacked Dibelius for a circular he sent to all the clergymen in the *Kurmark*. In it, Dibelius expressed approval for Hitler's conservative and nationalist regime but insisted that the Protestant *Land* churches must hold onto their theological and practical independence. More broadly, Dibelius argued that the Church must judge sin, stand in contrast to human ideology, practise love instead of hate and maintain its discipline.⁹

Together with the majority of district superintendents in the *Kurmark*, Superintendent Graßhoff of Nauen defended General Superintendent Dibelius, not least by reminding pastors in the Nauen district of Dibelius' association with the laudatory Easter Proclamation of the Old Prussian Union Church.¹⁰ That

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Within the Brandenburg Church province, the region west of Berlin.

⁸ Otto Dibelius, *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche. Geschichte, Betrachtung, Umschau und Zeil* (Berlin, 1927); Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 34-35; Daniel Borg, *The Old-Prussian Church and the Weimar Republic: A Study in Political Adjustment, 1917-1927* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984), 168-169.

⁹ Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 232-234; Jonathan R.C. Wright, *'Above Parties': The Political Attitudes of the German Protestant Church Leadership, 1918-1933* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 112-113.

¹⁰ Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen to district pastors, 29 April 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736.

proclamation had summoned members of the Old Prussian Union Church "to rejoice with us that the breakthrough of the most profound energies of our people is finding expression in patriotic awareness, true national community and religious revival."¹¹ Dibelius himself made similar remarks in a radio speech which he had broadcast to America ten days earlier, criticizing American church protests against the treatment of Jews and communists in Germany. Dibelius declared: "Today, the German *Reich* is firmly united as never before in our history," and urged Americans not to exacerbate the difficulties of a revolutionary time "by believing sensational reports!"¹² By inviting Dibelius to speak at the Nauen district church assembly, then, Superintendent Graßhoff was summoning an important churchman who stood firmly behind the new political awakening of Germany and who asserted church independence, unlike the German Christians.

If the district church assembly was caught up in the wave of excitement generated by Hitler, there is no disputing the fact that the same revolutionary atmosphere also animated many Nauen parishes. In May 1933, local pastors filed reports requested by Superintendent Graßhoff and the Nauen district synod concerning the moral and ecclesiastical conditions in their parishes. These accounts paint a vivid picture of the electric mood of parish life in the early days of National Socialist rule. While some pastors reported little change in church conditions, for many others, 1933 was clearly a special year.

Writing from Bötzwow, Pastor Georg Gartenschläger underscored the communist threat to the churches. "Parish life," he reported, "stands strongly under the mark of the battle against Bolshevism. An assault on the pastor would be countered in the red press with an article: 'With Bible and Revolver against Workers.'"¹³ Though perhaps exaggerated, Gartenschläger's remarks reflected the

¹¹ Peter Matheson, ed., *The Third Reich and the Christian Churches* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981), 16-17; Hermelink, *Kirche in Kampf*, 32.

¹² Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 342-344.

¹³ Pastor Gartenschläger in Bötzwow to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1427 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

tone of the local Bible study group in which Bötzwow parishioners discussed "questions about marriage, family and the battle against Bolshevism."¹⁴ In response to the perceived threat of communism, Gartenschläger and his parishioners expressed their patriotic and anti-Bolshevik convictions by erecting a "practical memorial" to their fallen veterans, a 28-candle chandelier. Because the burning candles commemorated the deaths of local soldiers, the chandelier reinforced the priority of the Fatherland and created "an especially warm bond between family and church."¹⁵

In Fehrbellin, Pastor Günther Harder reported an evening church service on April 30 attended by an astounding 540 people, over one-quarter of the entire Protestant population of his parish. Harder added that attendance had not reached such a level in his "unfortunately unchurchish parish" since the outbreak of the First World War in 1914.¹⁶ Similarly, Pastor Ziegel of Bredow reported an increase in the number of communicants in his parish. Like Gartenschläger, Ziegel was concerned about the presence of communism, though in Bredow the problem was more imaginary than real. On the watch for public attacks against Christianity in Bredow, Ziegel could only report: "Recently, communism and social democracy here, as almost everywhere, have grown completely silent." Still cautious, however, he immediately added: "We know well that the threatening danger to our church is not yet definitively eliminated, and we will therefore remain alert, though above all in the effort to win back the parishioners gone astray and distanced from the church."¹⁷

No pastor in the Nauen district described that political effect during the first

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Pastor Günther Harder in Fehrbellin to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1577 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

¹⁷ Pastor Ziegel in Bredow to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1322 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

months of National Socialist rule as vividly as Pastor Lux of Groß Behnitz.

Attendance at his church had surged, and Lux attributed it to National Socialism:

The political movements of the last year and first months of this year have had a strong effect throughout our parishes. With them, everything has advanced in the greatest peace and order. On National Remembrance Day, for the first time, the swastika flag of the SA stood beside the flag of the military association in the church, and the members of the SA in Groß Behnitz, Klein Behnitz and from the neighbouring towns took part in the Remembrance service *en masse*, in their brown uniforms.¹⁸

Ten days later, on March 21, parishioners and National Socialists held a parade through the illuminated town of Groß Behnitz, followed by a giant bonfire and speeches by local association leaders, taking up the words of the *Reich* President's Potsdam Garrison Church speech earlier in the day.

Likewise, on National Labour Day, May 1, Lux held special services in both Groß and Klein Behnitz. The attendance at those services was greater than any that Lux had ever experienced in his 15 years as pastor there. "Every stratum and every house was represented," he effused. The balance of the May Day celebrations in Groß and Klein Behnitz illustrate the centrality of the national renewal at the parish level, and its direct connection to the National Socialist political revolution. After Lux's 9:00 a.m. service in Groß Behnitz, the congregation listened to the speech of the *Reich* President to the German youth, and then Lux went on to Klein Behnitz for a 2:00 p.m. service. In both parishes, "Hitler linden" trees were planted, and the towns were lit up with torches yet again.

In his report about these momentous events, Lux reiterated his belief in the potential of the new political climate present in the early days of National Socialist rule to foster a revival in the fortunes of Protestantism: "God grant that the strong national movement may also be accompanied by an upturn of church life."¹⁹

¹⁸ Pastor Lux in Groß Behnitz to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, 8 May 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

¹⁹ Pastor Lux in Groß Behnitz to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, 8 May 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

In Lux's parish, that potential was already being realized in the enthusiastic inquiries of Groß and Klein Behnitz citizens about the Word of God, the request of the Groß Behnitz volunteer fire department to attend church *en masse* and the appeal of the local military association for Lux to conduct a special camp service for a jubilee they were celebrating.²⁰

In Flatow, Pastor Otto Schmidt also responded to his parishioners' newfound interest in the Church with services that fostered their religious nationalism.²¹ Describing his aim as the "cultivation of the German-Christian cultural assets," Schmidt planned to hold camp services at the district military festival and at the district *Stahlhelm*²² festival.²³ He also arranged a ceremony on National Remembrance Day, evening meetings about heroic Germans Albert Schweitzer and Richard Wagner, a discussion of the film *Mutter und Volk* (Mother and Volk) and special guest lectures by local German Christian Pastors Gartenschläger and Heidtmann.²⁴

Two other pastors also made the connection between the national renewal and the religious revitalization of their parishes, and attributed it to the work of the German Christian Movement. Pastor Cramer of Kremmen noticed the attention of his parishioners grow during the church elections of autumn 1932, when local Protestants founded a German Christian group. Two German Christian parish

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ In the context of this study, I define "religious nationalism" as an ideological orientation in which (1) Protestant Christianity was understood as a faith that had been revealed uniquely in and that was to be lived primarily within the German national community and (2) in which German nationalism was understood as incomplete without a Protestant Christian ethical foundation and symbolic presence. On the background and nature of religious nationalism in Germany, please see Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 74-87; Zabel, *Nazism and the Pastors*, 1-20. On its influence upon Protestant pastors and church leaders in the Third Reich, please see chapter 3, below.

²² The *Stahlhelm* (Steel Helmet) was a nationalist veterans organization.

²³ Pastor Schmidt in Flatow to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1348 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

²⁴ Ibid.

councillors elected at that time had transformed his parish council through their "lively interest" in the inner affairs of the church.²⁵ Pastor Feder of Vehlefanz also praised the National Socialist takeover as a positive ecclesiastical event and echoed Cramer's sanguine attitude towards the German Christian Movement. Moreover, he regarded the renewal of the corporate body of the church by the German Christians as an important *political* development, described the Germans Christians as a rallying force within the Church and commended them for bringing new men into ecclesiastical leadership.²⁶ Feder's point is an important one, for it illustrates the way in which the political momentum of National Socialism toward national unity propelled a parallel movement (led by the German Christians) toward uniformity within and the union of the German Protestant *Land* churches. In short, patriotic pastors (particularly the German Christians) who were enthusiastic about the political developments of early 1933 helped to translate the nationalist political energy unleashed by the NSDAP seizure of power and co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of German society into the ecclesiastical realm.

Amid the general upswing in religious interest in the Nauen district, another aspect of the parish context in the Nauen district were the pockets of disinterest and heterodoxy that persisted. For instance, Pastor Cramer of Kremmen lamented the disinterest in the tiny local chapter of the Young Men's Christian Association and added that the New Apostolic church, the Jehovah's Witnesses and the neo-pagan Tannenberg Union were all active in the Kremmen area. Because of these groups, five parishioners had withdrawn from his church during the previous winter.²⁷ In Lentzke, Pastor Oestreich reported that the "Godless Movement" was a large problem, and Pastor Kahle of Linum was just one of a group of others who also

²⁵ Pastor Cramer in Kremmen to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1335 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

²⁶ Pastor Feder in Vehlefanz to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1435 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

²⁷ Pastor Cramer in Kremmen to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1335 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

observed that particular danger in their parishes.²⁸ Finally, in Fehrbellin, Pastor Harder complained that a weekly Bible study led by a pastor from Ruppín failed to interest the local men at all and reported the ongoing competition of about 30 Jehovah's Witnesses in Fehrbellin.²⁹

Among the 22 pastors who submitted reports about the moral and ecclesiastical conditions in their parishes, six of them explicitly referred to the *religious* impact of the national renewal. None of them suggested that economic hardships, the tension between National Socialist neo-pagan ideology and Christian belief or even a desire among Protestants to extend a Christian influence upon the Party induced his parishioners to participate more actively in local church activities. Indeed, many Nauen district pastors themselves applauded the manifestation of national sentiment in their churches in 1933 and responded by advocating that Protestantism devote itself to promoting the unity and well-being of the German *Volk*. Almost one-half of Nauen district pastors joined the unabashedly pro-National Socialist German Christian Movement, a signal of their gratitude for or commitment to work on behalf of the religious-national renewal in their parishes.³⁰

To be sure, the rapid rise of the German Christian Movement in Nauen illustrates the impact of the religious-national renewal there. In the elections for the 1933 Nauen district synod, German Christians practically swept the table. No less than 47 of the 58 delegates elected were German Christians, among them 12 pastors from the district. Among the religious instructors, organists and choir directors designated as special representatives to the synod, seven of eight also belonged to

²⁸ Pastor Oestreich in Lentzke to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1349 1933; Pastor Kahle in Linum to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1326 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647. Please see also correspondence from Heidtmann in Paaren (STN 1472 1933), Koch in Retzow (STN 1331 1933), Daab in Schwante (STN 1525 1933), Reichardt in Staffelde (STN 1428 1933), and Heine in Zeestow (STN 1432 1933) on the problem of the "Godless Movement," in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

²⁹ Pastor Günther Harder in Fehrbellin to Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen, STN 1577 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

³⁰ For details on the membership of Nauen district pastors in the German Christian Movement and their own personal affinity with the national renewal, please see chapter 3.

the German Christian Movement.³¹

The combination of the pastoral reports of May 1933, the interest of Nauen district clergymen in the national renewal and the widespread support of parishioners for German Christian candidates in the synodal elections of 1933—taken together they provide the necessary context in which to interpret the substantial increases in the statistically measurable aspects of public religiosity in the Nauen district in 1933.³²

The clearest correspondence between anecdotal and statistical evidence centres on the dramatic shift in church membership patterns between 1932 and 1933, during the time when many pastors reported greatly increased interest in the church and the participation of new community and Party organizations. In 1933, three and one-half times as many people became new church members as in 1932 and 19 out of every 20 of them came from a religious movement that was not a Christian church. The same trend continued in 1934, though by then it was already weakening. As Table 1 (following page) illustrates, these two years marked a zenith after which transfer growth slowed drastically. From 1935 to 1939, an average of just over 30 people became new church members, a far cry from the heyday of 1933.³³

³¹ Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 15 August 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 50/825; "Personalbestand" lists of synodal representatives, NE 48/658.

³² I have found no secondary literature on the history of the churches in the Third *Reich* that analyzes statistical data from diverse church districts or parishes. In my examination of church conditions in the three districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, these parish and district statistics form a vital component, helping to quantify the subjective ebb and flow of parish life.

³³ All statistics are compiled from tables in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 96/754 "Statistische Übersichten über Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens im Kirchenkreis, 1929-1944." Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

Table 1. New Church Membership in the Nauen District, 1932-1939								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
New Members (total)	63	281	105	54	32	33	32	1
Annual Change (%)	N/A	346	-63	-49	-41	3	-3	-97
From the Roman Catholic Church	12	14	15	9	9	19	16	0
From Other Protestant Churches	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
From Other Religious Movements	49	264	90	44	23	14	16	1
From Judaism	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

In short, the initial wave of interest in Protestant Christianity at the beginning of the National Socialist era that some pastors attributed to the wave of religious nationalism and to which almost half responded by joining the German Christian Movement was not sustained over the balance of the pre-war years.

Just as more Germans became members of the Old Prussian Union Church in 1933 and 1934 than either before or after, fewer people withdrew from the church in the Nauen district during those same years. Membership withdrawals dropped in half from 1932 to 1933, and then by more than two-thirds from 1933 to 1934, as illustrated in Table 2.³⁴

Table 2. Church Membership Withdrawals in the Nauen District, 1932-1939								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Members Withdrawing (total)	83	38	11	29	48	83	133	102
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-54	-71	164	66	73	60	-23
To the Roman Catholic Church	0	N/A	1	0	0	1	0	0
To Other Protestant Churches	13	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
To Other Religious Movements	70	N/A	10	29	48	82	133	102

³⁴ Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

From 1935 on, however, the rate of withdrawal increased markedly. From 1935 to 1939, an average of 79 parishioners withdrew their memberships each year—fully double the number who had quit the church in 1933. Given that these departing parishioners did not generally transfer their membership into another Christian church, it appears that the new interest in Protestantism generated by the national renewal in 1933 and 1934 waned and that many Nauen district Protestants who had been drawn to the Church in those years became disenchanted and withdrew from organized Christian life.

Participation in communion also increased among the Protestants of the Nauen district in the first year of the Third *Reich*, as illustrated by Table 3.³⁵

Table 3. Participation in Communion in the Nauen Church District, 1932-1939								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
	4144	4237	4324	4306	4326	4326	4326	4386
Souls	8	1	6	8	4	4	4	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
Communicants	6279	6727	5937	6439	6154	5296	4668	4083
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-12	8	-4	-14	-12	-13
Communion Participation (%)	15	16	14	15	14	12	11	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-14	9	-5	-14	-12	-14

One interesting aspect of this increase in participation is the difference between the two genders. Among men, there was a two percent increase in participation from 1932 to 1933, while among women there was a six and one-half percent increase. In Nauen district parishes, male participation in communion in 1933 varied from 30 to 45 percent, while women comprised between 55 and 70 percent of communicants. In the Nauen district, there was no parish in which more men than women took communion in 1933. Across the district, women comprised between 60 and 65 percent of communicants in the years 1932 to 1939. Even in

³⁵ Participation rose from 15.1 percent to 15.9 percent, an increase of 4.8 percent. Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

1933, when over 100 more men took communion than in the previous year, the increase in women communicants was proportionately larger, so that the percentage of communicants who were men actually declined slightly (Table 4).³⁶

Table 4. Participation in Communion by Gender in the Nauen District, 1932-1939								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Male Communicants	2518	2628	2441	2519	2319	1957	1690	1439
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	41	39	38	37	36	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	5	-5	-4	-2	-2	-3
Female Communicants	3761	4099	3496	3920	3835	3339	2978	2644
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	59	61	62	63	64	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-3	3	2	1	1	2

Within this district-wide increase in communion taking, conditions varied greatly from parish to parish. Participation shot up 83 percent in Beetz, 57 percent in Bredow, 54 percent in Paaren, and 41 percent in Bötzw. Five other parishes saw their participation levels rise between 17 and 25 percent,³⁷ and five more rose between one and 10 percent.³⁸ In contrast, ten parishes in the Nauen district suffered a decline in participation from 1932 to 1933.³⁹ Though causes for the decreasing

³⁶ Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District. The notion that women were significantly involved in the religious-national movement of 1933 and well represented among new churchgoers is supported by observations of the same trend within the pro-National Socialist German Christian Movement. Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 72-73, 119-138.

³⁷ These were Flatow (25 percent, though filial Tietzow declined 15 percent), Groß Behnitz (20 percent, though filial Klein Behnitz declined 19 percent), Kremmen (21 percent), Lentzke (17 percent, though filial Brunne declined 19 percent), and Retzow (23 percent, though filial Selbelang declined 4 percent). Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

³⁸ These were Karweese (9 percent), Linum (2 percent), Nauen (2 percent), Pessin (6 percent, while filial Paulinenaue increased 17 percent) and Zeestow (10 percent, while filial Wernitz increased 25 percent). Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

³⁹ These were Berge (-7 percent), Fehrbellin (-17 percent), Grünefeld (-6, though filials Börnicke and Kienberg increased 1 percent and 36 percent respectively), Hakenberg (-6 percent), Markau (-42 percent, though filial Markee increased similarly), Ribbeck (-4 percent), Schwante (-19 percent), Staffelde (-5, though filial Groß Ziethen increased 46 percent), Vehlefanz (-31 percent), and Wansdorf (-1 percent, though the number for filial Pausin was -18 percent). Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

participation in these parishes are not always evident, in two cases the local pastors opposed the mixture of nationalist politics and Protestant Christianity from 1933 onward.⁴⁰

Though not all parishes corresponded to its pattern, a striking example comes from the parish of Paaren (Table 5), where German Christian Pastor Heidtmann served until his retirement at the end of 1934. As in other parishes, a spike in the rate of participation in 1933 preceded a gradual downturn, so that only one in twenty Paaren parishioners took communion in 1939.⁴¹

Table 5. Participation in Communion in the Paaren Parish, 1932-1939						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	520	523	533	548	548	528
Communicants	125	194	173	182	195	25
Participation (%)	24	37	32	33	36	5
Annual Change (%)	N/A	54	-12	2	7	-87
Male Communicants	54	77	66	75	82	8
Male Communicants (%)	43	40	38	41	42	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	-4	8	2	-24
Female Communicants	71	117	107	107	113	17
Female Communicants (%)	57	60	62	59	58	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	3	-5	-1	17

Other church statistics add detail to that picture of lively lay participation in religious life in Nauen during the first two years of National Socialist rule. For instance, many parishioners—perhaps those who had just joined the church in 1933 or 1934—decided to have their children baptized belatedly. While baptismal statistics generally fluctuated with the rise and fall of the annual birth rate, Table 6

⁴⁰ These were Pastors Posth in Berge and Harder in Fehrbellin. For details about their staunch resistance to German Christian interference in their parishes and their antipathy to the introduction of racial criteria in the Church, please see chapters 4, pp. 136 ff. and 8, pp. 382 ff., below.

⁴¹ Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

shows the high frequency of the baptism of children over the age of one year in 1933 and 1934, as compared with either 1932 or the years between 1935 and 1939, when more children overall were baptized.⁴²

Table 6. Baptisms in the Nauen District, 1932-1939								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Baptisms (total)	589	696	754	831	804	800	822	860
Baptisms of children over 1 year of age	N/A	112	124	78	53	57	78	41

Marriage statistics follow a similar pattern. In the Nauen district, the number of church wedding ceremonies⁴³ jumped over 50 percent from 1932 to 1933, followed by another 34 percent increase in 1934.⁴⁴ This was not simply the result of more Protestant couples marrying in those years. Rather, more couples were demonstrating their commitment to Protestant Christianity by reciting solemn vows in their parish churches. Based on statistics from 24 parish and filial churches in the district, in 1935, an average of 88 percent of civil marriage ceremonies (of Protestant couples) were followed by church weddings.⁴⁵ In 1936, that number fell slightly to 84 percent, but by 1939, only 65 percent of civil marriages were followed by church weddings. That amounted to a 23 percent decline over three years.⁴⁶ Once again, these statistics suggest a waning interest in the Protestant church on the part of young people during the years immediately preceding the Second World

⁴² Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

⁴³ German law required civil marriage. After that ceremony, it was common for religious couples to be married by their parish clergymen in church wedding ceremonies.

⁴⁴ In 1932, there were 235 church wedding ceremonies in the district, while in 1933 and 1934 there were 354 and 473 respectively. From 1935 to 1939 the number of church weddings dropped steadily from 356 to 224. Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

⁴⁵ From parish to parish, the ratio ranged from 70 to 100 percent. Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

⁴⁶ In 1936, the ratio ranged from 50 to 100 percent, and in 1939, from 31 to 100 percent. Please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

War, in sharp contrast to the church's glory years of 1933 and 1934.

In sum, the pastoral reports of a surge of religious nationalism and of the participation of community and National Socialist organizations in church services in early 1933 coupled with the dramatic emergence of the German Christian Movement in the district synodal election of 1933 (and membership of local pastors in the Movement) suggest that a good deal of the temporary revitalization of public religious observance among Protestants in the Nauen district was a response to the national renewal promoted by the new National Socialist government. Statistics on baptisms, church weddings, membership growth and participation in communion services reflect this same trend. They all peaked in the first years of the Third *Reich*, then declined in the years immediately before the Second World War. Amid these developments in parish life in the Nauen district, local pastors faced great pressure to embrace National Socialism and its political values and to allow those values to shape ecclesiastical life in their communities. The fact that at least one-third of the clergymen who served in the Nauen district became members or active supporters of the Confessing Church and opposed the introduction of National Socialist ideology into their parishes is a testimony to their commitment to confessional orthodoxy and traditional forms of religious life there.⁴⁷

In the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church, the Pirna church district straddled the Elbe River just below Dresden, stretching from the immediate vicinity of Pirna southeast to the Czechoslovak border. Ranging from the outskirts of Dresden to the remote sandstone heights of the "Saxon Switzerland," the 39 parishes of the Pirna district defy a single description. As in Nauen, however, the 1933 district church assembly reflected the religious nationalism that had permeated the Protestant *Land* churches. Superintendent Max Zweynert of Pirna captured the prevalent mood with his declaration to pastors and church leaders from across the Pirna district: "We place ourselves without reserve behind the *Reich* government and are determined to support it with all [our] forces in the fulfilment of its

⁴⁷ For details about the church-political affiliation of Nauen district clergymen, please see chapter 4.

responsible work for the national and moral renewal of our *Volk*."⁴⁸

To an even greater extent than in the Nauen church district, parish statistics from Pirna point to an extraordinary upsurge of participation among Lutherans during the first two years of the Third *Reich*.⁴⁹ Parishioners flocked to their churches. Across the district, new church memberships shot up 1789 percent from 212 new adult church members in 1932 to 4005 in 1933. Another 1150 new adult church members joined the Saxon *Land* Church in the Pirna district in 1934. While impressive, that high point in 1933 and 1934 preceded a progressive decline in new church memberships that lasted until at least the early stage of the Second World War. In 1940, for instance, only 52 new adults in the Pirna district became members of the Saxon *Land* Church.⁵⁰

Complementing the wave of new church members into the Saxon *Land* Church in Pirna in 1933, local Lutherans all but stopped withdrawing their church memberships during the same period. Withdrawals declined 74 and 86 percent annually between 1932 and 1934 in the district, as totals declined from 827 withdrawals in 1932 to 219 in 1933 and only 31 in 1934. As in Nauen, however, Lutherans abandoned their church memberships in ever-increasing numbers between 1935 and 1939. While the increase was modest at first—in 1935, only 47 Lutherans withdrew their church membership in the Pirna district—withdrawals shot up to over 1000 in 1937 and almost 2500 in 1939.⁵¹ No matter the cause of

⁴⁸ "Ephoralakonferenz des Kirchenbezirks Pirna.", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁴⁹ All of the following parish statistics for the Pirna church district are compiled from tables in the following Ephoralarchiv Pirna files: 13, "Wiedereintrittsbewegung 1933;" 14, "Kirchenein- und Austrittsbewegung (Statistik) 1938-9;" 15, "Kirchenein- und Austrittsbewegung (Statistik) betr. 1939-1940;" 834, "Übersicht über Gottesdienst Besucher 1943-1945;" 847, "Statistik kirchlicher Einrichtungen... 1928-1939;" 915, "Statistik..." and 925, "Statistik..." For details, please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵⁰ The decline in new church membership was striking, as the annual totals demonstrate: 1933 (4005), 1934 (1150), 1935 (397), 1936 (307), 1937 (132), 1938 (83), 1939 (55) and 1940 (52). For details, please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵¹ Annual totals also reveal the rapidity of the increase in church membership withdrawals in the Pirna district: 1934 (31), 1935 (47), 1936 (243), 1937 (1093), 1938 (1407) and 1939 (2473). In 1940, the trend reversed itself, as only 1337 withdrew their church membership. Please see 45

these astounding swings in church membership statistics, they point towards a tremendous surge of public religious interest in 1933 and 1934, followed by growing disinterest or antipathy towards the Church later in the 1930s.

A monthly breakdown of new church membership and membership withdrawal in 1932 and 1933 illustrates the close chronological connection between the surge in new church membership (and the abrupt end to membership withdrawals) and the National Socialist rise to power in Germany. As Table 7 illustrates, it was during the months of March and April 1933, when the Hitler government consolidated its hold on power and began the co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of German society that Pirna and area residents began to join the church in large numbers. Similarly, Table 8 shows how Lutherans almost completely stopped withdrawing from the church after March and April.⁵²

Table 7. New Church Membership in the Pirna District, 1932 to 1933													
Month	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Totals	16	44	19	17	24	24	238	299	226	198	224	172	1574

Table 8. Church Membership Withdrawals in the Pirna District, 1932-1933													
Month	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Totals	31	57	54	45	42	96	43	12	3	3	2	0	388

In addition, during 1933 local Lutherans began to engage in the activities of their parish churches with new vigour. One measurement of this vigour is participation in the sacrament of communion. Based on parish statistics, 37 of 42 parishes reported an increase in the ratio of parishioners participating in communion services. In some parishes, the increase was dramatic. For instance, in Wehlen Stadt, the participation rate rose 80 percent between 1932 and 1933. In Ehrenburg it

Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵² Please see statistics in "Wiedereintrittsbewegung," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 13. For a details, please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District, 1932-1940.

rose 63 percent, in Zschachwitz, 60 percent, in Reinhardtsdorf, 38 percent, and in Liebstadt, 33 percent.⁵³ Moreover, participation in the sacrament of communion increased between 10 and 30 percent in at least 19 other parishes in the Pirna district.⁵⁴ In only two parishes did participation in communion fall more than two percent between 1932 and 1933.⁵⁵ Thereafter, however, the interest of Lutherans in their parish churches declined. After the upsurge of 1933 and 1934 (in some cases), participation levels decreased substantially in almost all of the Pirna district parishes, often in double-digit percentages over multiple years.⁵⁶

Among those parishes in which participation in communion increased in 1933, Lichtenhain provides a good example of the pattern many others followed (Table 9).

Table 9. Participation in Communion in the Lichtenhain Parish, 1932-1939									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	N/A	1961
Communicants	372	447	407	429	364	329	262	160	230
Participation (%)	19	23	21	22	19	17	13	N/A	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	20	-9	5	-15	-10	-20	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	149	181	152	168	134	126	94	49	70

⁵³ Please see above, n. 49. These statistics may be inflated slightly, since some parish reports appear to have failed to account for the full increase in their number of souls in 1933. Please see Appendix 2: Statistics in the Pirna Church District.

⁵⁴ These were Bad Schandau (29 percent), Cotta (26 percent), Dohna (24 percent), Eschdorf (24 percent), Heidenau-Luther (23 percent), Hinterhermsdorf (23 percent), Königstein (21 percent), Lichtenhain (20 percent), Liebethal (10 percent), Ölsen (30 percent), Ottendorf (26 percent), Papstdorf (23 percent), Pirna-Sonnenstein (14 percent), Rückersdorf (15 percent), Schmeidefeld (12 percent), Sebnitz (24 percent), Stolpen (17 percent), Stürza (28 percent), and Wehlen Dorf (11 percent). The parishes of Heidenau-Christus, Pirna and Struppen also showed marked increases, although exact figures are lacking. Please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵⁵ These were Dittersbach, where participation in communion dropped 11 percent from 1932 to 1933 and then rose 30 percent and 31 percent in the following two years, and Porschdorf, where participation dropped 30 percent between 1932 and 1933 and 20 percent the following year, a decline from which it did not recover as of the Second World War. Please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵⁶ Please see Appendix 2: Statistics in the Pirna Church District.

Male Communicants (%)	40	40	37	39	37	38	36	31	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-8	5	-6	4	-6	-15	-1
Female Communicants	223	266	255	261	230	203	168	111	160
Female Communicants (%)	60	60	63	61	63	62	64	69	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	5	-3	4	-2	4	8	0

A healthy increase in the number of communicants in 1933 was reversed by 1936, after which rates of participation in Lichtenhain continued to sink below the level of 1932, despite a slight increase in 1940, during the war. Noteworthy within this overall decline was the greater decline of male participation in communion. While the participation of men and women in Lichtenhain increased proportionally from 1932 to 1933, men participated in ever decreasing numbers thereafter (in 1939 and 1940, no doubt, because of their participation in military service) so that women comprised 70 percent of all communicants in 1940.⁵⁷

Overall, the cause for the wave of public religious participation in 1933 was the same in Pirna as in Nauen. Both the broader context of religious nationalism in the initial phase of the Third *Reich* and the statements of Lutheran clergymen point to a correlation between the excitement surrounding the national renewal propagated by the National Socialist government and the fortunes of the local Lutheran parishes in the Pirna district. In the first place, the German Christian Movement swept into power in Pirna (and Saxony as a whole) as a result of the single “unity list” of candidates for the July 1933 church election. On 25 July 1933, the *Land* Church government reconstituted parish councils across the Pirna district to conform to the overall results of the 23 July 1933 church elections in Saxony. As a result, at least three out of every four parish councillors throughout the Pirna district were German Christians, ensuring that local church leaders were supportive of the National Socialist government and of the participation of their churches in the national renewal.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ For other parish examples, please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

⁵⁸ Superintendent’s office in Pirna to pastors in the district, 25 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

The actions of Pirna district clergymen reinforce the impression that a wave of religious nationalism animated local churches in 1933. For one, at least 14 of the 31 pastors and curates who served in Pirna during the first years of the Third *Reich* belonged to the German Christian Movement, not including others who abandoned the German Christian camp after the extremism of the Berlin Sport Palace assembly of 13 November 1933. Moreover, most of these German Christians were among the 16 clergymen of the district who joined the NSDAP, most of them in 1933. Motives for joining the Party no doubt varied, but Pastor Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf expressed his reasons in a forthright letter to District Superintendent Max Zweynert. Rasch explained his belief both in the national renewal and in the NSDAP that promoted it, and asserted that he wanted to make a positive contribution to that national renewal and to bring the Party into closer connection with theologically orthodox Lutheranism. Other Pirna district pastors may not have expressed themselves as openly as Rasch did, but they were at least politically loyal to the National Socialist government, according to a 1934 letter from Superintendent Zweynert to Saxon *Land* Bishop Friedrich Coch.⁵⁹

Finally, the statements of several clergymen connect the dramatic increase in public religiosity in 1933 and 1934 directly to the national renewal and the political transformation undertaken by the National Socialist government. In a lecture for the March 1934 Pastoral Conference in Bad Schandau, Pastor Partecke of Sebnitz listed the new church conditions in the Pirna district: large groups coming together to church, new and returning church members and many people distant from the church being reached. Partecke then sounded a note of warning about the motivation behind much of this activity, as caught by the sketchy notes from his talk: "Real incorporation into the parish is not there; many external re-entries [into the church]; the national enthusiasm in its devotion for an ultimate greatness is at the same time a danger! Religious attitude and Christianity become confused. Beside the converted Marxists, the embittered and disappointed. Our time has a

⁵⁹ Please see chapter 3, p. 107 and chapter 6, p. 261, below.

political character [...] the church in danger of becoming an organ of the state.”⁶⁰

Around the time Partecke pointed out the shallow political nature of the renewal of parish life in the Pirna district, one of his colleagues identified the source of the problem. Recognizing the lack of depth among many who had come into the church recently, the pastor—an unnamed member of the monthly Struppın Pastoral Conference—suggested that the attendance of large groups at church meetings was a product of the encouragement of the *Führer* and the urging of other National Socialist leaders to attend, as well as the presence of many of the National Socialist “old fighters” at church. Such encouragement from the Party appears to have been very short-lived, however, because already in October 1933, the Pirna *Volk* mission had come to nothing because members of the local Party circles had not come as expected.⁶¹

No less a figure than *Land* Bishop Coch connected the new religious interest of 1933 and 1934 to the national renewal. During the October 1935 district church assembly, *Land* Bishop Coch preached about people seeking Jesus, and drew attention to the roots of such a sentiment in the *Volk*: “Are not the churches—everywhere grown out of the German soil and the German search [for Jesus]—the cathedrals and the village churches, gripping witnesses of this yearning and its fulfillment?” After Coch finished, Pirna District Superintendent Zweynert delivered his annual report for 1933 and 1934, and reminded the district church assembly of the growth in religious activity among local Lutherans. In a section of the report entitled “Encouragement,” Zweynert recounted with thankfulness the developments in district ecclesiastical life. After reflecting on the “battle of the Church against Marxism, Freethinking and brutal terror in 1932 and on the liberation of Germany through Adolf Hitler,” Zweynert went on to list the positive aspects of the current ecclesiastical atmosphere: “growth in communion [participation] figures, increase in the baptisms and church weddings, belated confirmation of adults, 5000 [new

⁶⁰ “Berich über die Pastoralkonferenz in Bad Schandau am 19.3.1934.” Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁶¹ “Timely Preaching,” Struppen, March 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

church memberships], friendly cooperation with schoolteachers, a new singing movement, etc..⁶²

In sum, then, the growth of German Christian power in the Pirna district, the membership of local clergymen in both the German Christian Movement and the NSDAP and the interpretations of parish and higher clergymen strongly suggest that the upsurge in public religious observance among local Lutherans was—for however short a period of time—caused in good measure by the wave of religious nationalism unleashed during the National Socialist seizure of power.

By the time of the 1935 Pirna district church assembly at which *Land* Bishop Coch and Superintendent Zweynert spoke, much of the religious-nationalist fervour of 1933 had already dissipated. For instance, services scheduled by the *Land* Church government to mark the National Holiday (May Day) in 1935 were so poorly attended that the *Land* Church Office requested reports from pastors throughout the Saxon Church. On behalf of his pastors, Superintendent Zweynert reported that attendance had also been poor at the 1 May 1935 services in the Pirna district, since the planning of many national and local political celebrations had allowed no time for church services on 1 May. Zweynert argued that the relegation of official church services to the evening before the holiday had been embarrassing, since it highlighted the declining status of the churches in the eyes of the government. His clergymen largely concurred. Pastor Hafener of Eschdorf reported that the service held the evening of April 30 was “very poorly attended” since political meetings were also scheduled for the same night.⁶³ Pastor Heinrich Zweynert of Neustadt reported that although he had planned his 1 May 1935 in consultation with the local Party leadership, the attendance had been worse than any other service in the year. He argued that unless the NSDAP guaranteed that its members, associations and vocational groups would participate in the 1 May church

⁶² “Kreiskirchentag in Pirna,” (newspaper clipping), n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 92.

⁶³ Pastor Hafener of Eschdorf to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 14 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

services (and not the meetings of some Party organization), there was no point in holding religious meetings: "No one is served and it is least beneficial of all for the reputation of the church, when a service that is closed to the public is held on this day."⁶⁴

In contrast to Heinrich Zweynert, Pastor Hesse of Stürza reported "good participation" in his service, which had been held the morning of 1 May 1935. The NSDAP, the War Association, the Choral Society, the Volunteer Fire Service, the municipal and church representatives and the youth had all taken part in a service that was definitely the exception to the rule in the Pirna district.⁶⁵ In Sebnitz, Pastor Meier held a service on the evening of 30 April "that was relatively poorly attended." With only 58 parishioners at the service, Meier discouraged future May Day church services.⁶⁶ In Porschdorf, Pastor Grießdorf managed to schedule a service at 9:00 a.m., the usual church service time, on 1 May, thanks to the co-operation of the local NSDAP leader. The attendance, however, was poorer than in 1934, when the local Party leadership had practically made attendance at the service a duty. In 1935, attendance had been good, considering that it had been voluntary. Faithful parishioners had come gladly to the service.⁶⁷ In Gottleuba, however, when Pastor Friedrich approached the local NSDAP about holding a church service, they declined to attend. No one knew when to schedule the church service, since there were also public celebrations scheduled on the evening of 30 April. In the end, no service was held. Frustrated, Pastor Friedrich added: "It is not acceptable that the man concerned, the representative of the NSDAP who draws up the program, has rejected the church service because the pastor belongs to the Emergency League. In

⁶⁴ Pastor Zweynert of Neustadt to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 19 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

⁶⁵ Pastor Hesse of Stürza to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 30 July 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

⁶⁶ Pastor Meier of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

⁶⁷ Pastor Grießdorf of Porschdorf to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 26 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

any case, that is what he said to [me].”⁶⁸ In other parishes like Schmeidefeld, no service was held during the holiday either.⁶⁹

Overall, Pima clergymen were displeased with the failure of the May Day services in 1935. The pastors of the Stolpen Pastoral Conference, led by Pastor Heinrich Zweynert of Neustadt, wrote to the *Land* Church Office to lodge a complaint about the lack of opportunity in most parishes to hold a service on 1 May 1935 itself. They declared that their only option had been to hold services on the evening of 30 April, which had been almost universally bland and in many cases miserable affairs. Concerned that the 1 May holiday represented a new type of festivity that ignored its religious or church components, Heinrich Zweynert and his colleagues petitioned the *Land* church office to work with other higher church authorities to see that in future, the usual church service hours of 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. were set aside and kept free from other meetings.⁷⁰

The reporting of the troubles over the 1 May 1935 church services demonstrates how short-lived the era of religious-national excitement was in Pima. Just as the statistical measurements of public religious observance dropped markedly during and after 1934, so too were local clergymen recognizing the declining interest of parishioners in their churches and the ongoing antipathy of local NSDAP leaders. From this point onward, Pima churchmen began to grapple with the problem of ever-worsening conditions in their parishes.

In 1936, for instance, Superintendent Max Zweynert of Pima publicly considered the problems posed by the mixture of German nationalism and Christian faith. In a lecture to the monthly Stolpen Pastoral Conference in March of that year, Zweynert discussed alternative religious movements. His primary concern was the

⁶⁸ Pastor Friedrich of Gottleuba to Superintendent Zweynert in Pima, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 184.

⁶⁹ Schmeidefeld Pastor to Superintendent Zweynert in Pima, 31 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 184.

⁷⁰ Stolpen Pastoral Conference to the *Land* Church Office in Dresden, 20 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 290.

way current opponents of Christianity in the German Faith Movement were purporting “to bring the ultimate fulfillment and coronation of the National Socialist hope.” Zweynert observed that it was very hard for ordinary Germans to distinguish between the political and religious realms of thinking. In the mind of the superintendent, there was no question about the “pure anti-Christianity” of the German Faith Movement. Moreover, for both the church and the *Volk*, the German Faith Movement presented “a clear either-or” choice to make. The situation was extremely serious for the church, however, because of the way in which the German Faith Movement was gaining adherents among the German youth and among the religious instructors in German schools. The lack of clarity of official language—terms like ‘positive Christianity,’ for instance—created additional difficulties. The result was the growth of a movement that threatened the well being of the German *Volk*, not least by making confessional differences between Protestants and Catholics seem superfluous.⁷¹

Zweynert’s answer to this confusion between the pagan German Faith Movement and the religious nationalism in the Lutheran churches was not to distinguish more clearly between the gospel message of the church and the exaltation of race offered by the German Faith Movement, but rather simply to ensure that important state-sponsored festivities were opened with church services. Whether he hoped this would lead to the conversion of hostile neo-pagans in the NSDAP or simply believed that the Lutheran Church ought to uncritically support the whims of the NSDAP, Zweynert advocated anything but a direct approach to confronting the heretical German Faith Movement.

The following year, other clergymen uncovered new theological and practical difficulties with the position of the Protestant churches in the Third *Reich*. For instance, Pastor Knoch of Langenwolmsdorf tackled “The *Völkisch* Question and Missions” at a Stolpen Pastoral Conference. Knoch described the difficulties created by missions work abroad *and* in the homeland, and suggested ways to

⁷¹ Pastor Zweynert of Neustadt, “Bericht über die Sitzung der Stolpener Konferenz am 9. März 1936.” Ephoralarchiv Pima 291.

overcome those problems.⁷² If the difficulties created by Christian missions in a nationalistic society were left unrecorded in the official church record of Knoch's speech, Pastor Ebert of Pirna left a clearer account of Pirna Pastor Nake's lecture on "Mission and *Volkstum*" at the Pirna Theological Conference of December 1936. Nake discussed notions of race and *völkisch* identity, "which through the loss of faith in God lose their deepest essence."⁷³ From there, Nake went on to discuss the spiritual attitude of Germans who participated in the national awakening. In spite of prevalent racial attitudes, he argued, Christ had still charged the Church with a duty to Christian missions. The discussion that followed revolved around the two obvious problems raised by Nake's talk. First, the clergymen at the conference grappled with the nature of the relationship between the gospel and the racial community, bound up in its blood and soil and history. Second, they tried to answer the question of how to apply the realizations gained on the mission field in the struggle for the German *Volk* church in the homeland.⁷⁴

Nake and his colleagues hit upon the essential problem posed by and for the Christian gospel in the Third *Reich*: how to reconcile the historic and universal Christian doctrines of sin and salvation (and the consequent requirement to undertake mission work) with the National Socialist doctrine of the racial superiority of the German *Volk* and the moral claims that followed from that superiority. Whether they answered the question for themselves that day is not clear from the record of the discussion. One suspects not, given subsequent lectures and discussions on "Luther's Concept of the Church," "Luther, the State and the Church" and "The German Spirit and Christendom."⁷⁵ What is certain is that the

⁷² Pastor Zweynert of Neustadt, "Bericht über die Sitzung der Stolpener Konferenz vom 26. Oktober 1936 u. 7. Dezember 1936." Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

⁷³ Pastor Ebert of Pirna, "Bericht über die Theologen-Konferenz am 7.XII. 1936," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Pastor Ebert of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, February 1937; Pastor Ebert of Pirna, "Pirnaer Theologenkonferenz," 9 May 1938; and Pastor Ebert of Pirna to the Superintendent's Office 55

problem did not go away.

Another facet of church conditions in the Pirna district was the constant danger that deviant religious movements would attract Saxon Lutherans. Already in 1931, Freethinkers held meetings throughout the Pirna district. Pastor Teichgräber of Eschdorf wrote about the Freethinkers in the *Sächsischen Postillion*, calling them “*Untermenschen*” living in darkness and comparing them to defiant children who came “in hate and battle and murder.”⁷⁶ In July 1933, Pastor Klemm reported a few people interested in the anti-Christian Tannenberg Union, the Ludendorff Union and the Hasselbach Home Defence, which had organized a few political meetings in Burkhardswalde.⁷⁷

In early 1934, Pastor Teichgräber of Pirna reported on the activities of Seventh Day Adventists, whom he regarded as a danger to the German state, not least for their overly positive assessment of Jews. Teichgräber interpreted the Seventh Day Adventists as a disruptive element within the church and state, a “germ of decay within the *Volk* community.” Moreover, he argued that the Adventist movement spawned mental derangement from too much studying, marital disputes because of women refusing to work on Saturday and suicides from giving too much money to the movement. He even recounted the tale of an Adventist father who had attempted to murder his wife and children. The woman had died a few weeks later in an institution, simply for having refused to sell all the family possessions in expectation of the end of the world.⁷⁸ With this story, Teichgräber portrayed the Seventh Day Adventists as a dangerously radical sect that deserved to be outlawed by the German government.

That same year, *Land* Bishop Coch warned about the dangers of the German

in Pirna, 21 September 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

⁷⁶ “Es sei noch einmal betont...,” (newspaper clipping), 1932, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 216.

⁷⁷ Pastor Klemm in Burkhardswalde to the Superintendent’s Office in Pirna, 1 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 210.

⁷⁸ “Bericht betr. die Adventistenbewegung und die von den Adventisten verbreiteten Schriften,” n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 196.

Faith Movement and sponsored a special course to educate interested pastors. Pastors Ebert in Pirna, Gerhard Zweynert in Papstdorf and Rasch in Reinhardtsdorf all signed up from the Pirna district.⁷⁹ An April 1935 letter from Pastor Voigt of Stolpen to Superintendent Max Zweynert revealed that the problem of competing religious groups had not yet dissipated. Voigt was angered by an article on Ludendorff's attitude towards Christianity, which appeared in the 10 April 1935 edition of the *NS Tageszeitung Pirna*. In part, Voigt was angry because the article had upset his parish council. More fundamentally, however, Voigt questioned how the press could print such a "Bolshevik" article that completely ignored Article 24 of the NSDAP Programme⁸⁰, and he asked Superintendent Zweynert to lodge a protest with the paper.⁸¹

Along with the problem of non-Christian religious movements in the Pirna district, repeated conflicts between local clergymen and National Socialist officials were a serious problem that upset church conditions throughout the time of the Third Reich. Already in January 1933, National Socialists in Porschdorf created a stir when they asked Pastor Dr. Polster to consecrate their flag. A newspaper article with the headline "Nazi Flag in the Church!" described the visit of uniformed National Socialists to the Porschdorf church a few weeks before Adolf Hitler was appointed to office and criticized Polster for performing the ceremony: "Even if the pastor believes he has to sympathize with the NSDAP, it is nonetheless unbelievable

⁷⁹ Land Bishop Coch to all Saxon superintendents, 3 July 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 210.

⁸⁰ Article 24 of the 1920 National Socialist Party program stated:

We demand liberty for all religious denominations in the State, so far as they are not a danger to it and do not militate against the moral feelings of the German race.

The Party, as such, stands for positive Christianity, but does not bind itself in the matter of creed to any particular confession. It combats the Jewish-materialist spirit within us and without us, and is convinced that our nation can only achieve permanent health from within on the principle:

THE COMMON INTEREST BEFORE SELF

Quoted in Benjamin Sax and Dieter Kuntz, eds. *Inside Hitler's Germany: A Documentary History of Life in the Third Reich* (Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1992), 74.

⁸¹ Pastor Voigt of Stolpen to Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, 11 April 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

to most of the inhabitants of Porschdorf that one simply misuses the church for party-political activities.”⁸² The concern and publicity aroused in Porschdorf *before* the National Socialist seizure of power were well founded, given the experiences of Pirna Pastor Karl Peter later in the spring.

Peter was an established member of the Pirna community, having ministered there since 1918. He was also eager to learn more about the National Socialist ‘national renewal.’ To that end, he decided to attend a National Socialist election rally on 1 March 1933, where *Reich* Minister Göring was scheduled to speak. Hoping to hear Göring address the important political issues of the day and to ask a few questions himself, Peter was seriously considering voting National Socialist in the 5 March elections. For 75 minutes, he waited at the political gathering for Göring to arrive, listening only to music and the repeated assurances of the local leadership that Göring would indeed come, even though organizers knew otherwise. Peter finally gave up and left. On his way out the door, he briskly asked: “Is this the honesty of the Third *Reich*?” and demanded the return of his entrance fee.⁸³ At the cash desk, an official told Peter to pick up his money on another day at the local party office. When he went to get his money as directed, he was harangued by the leader of the Party office “as never before [...] in the 63-years of my life, above all with the words: ‘It is a shame that such pastors still stand in the pulpit!’”⁸⁴

Soon thereafter, Peter found himself in deep trouble. On 9 March, he was returning from the cemetery and passed near the office of the newspaper, when a man called out to him: “Pastor, now the public bookshop is about to be occupied!” Peter looked around and quickly moved on, since it was not his intention to involve himself in the matter. Three houses past the newspaper office he heard shouting behind him: “Clear the street; close the windows; or you will be shot!” Not knowing whether to move on or duck into a house, Peter saw members of the

⁸² “Nazi Flag in the Church!” (newspaper clipping), 13 January 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 216.

⁸³ Pastor Peter of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Consistory, 7 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

NSDAP throwing books out of a local bookshop. The sight was so shocking that Peter said to a man standing near him: "Why do they throw books on the street in so rough a manner? Why don't people get a truck and drive them away?"⁸⁵ After about two minutes, Peter remarked that he could not stand to watch any longer and walked on. As he continued, he repeated himself very briefly with a shopkeeper he knew to be a friend of the NSDAP, and then again with a right-wing teacher. Peter was not acting in a seditious manner, but rather in ignorance, for he had only learned about plans to burn the books when he spoke with the teacher.⁸⁶

That afternoon, as Pastor Peter was about to begin his confirmation class, three auxiliary police from the NSDAP appeared and asked him to come with them. Pastor Peter replied that he would be at their disposal at the end of the confirmation hour. The auxiliary police departed, then reappeared and declared that he had to accompany them immediately. As a result, Pastor Peter had to leave the confirmation class, dismiss his students and cancel other classes, since he was being arrested.

Under the escort of the three NSDAP men, one of them carrying a drawn handgun, Peter was led through the city "with people standing like a wall!" Scandalized by his public arrest, Peter was brought into the local newspaper office and detained together with six members of the Social Democratic Party. There he was held for four hours, until Superintendent Zweynert could obtain his release.⁸⁷ According to local Party officials, Peter had allegedly declared that "culture-books" were being burnt. Peter flatly denied the allegation, pointing out that he had no knowledge of the plan to burn the books until after the scene at the bookshop. Peter added that he too had heard words to that effect, and suggested that someone else had probably made the statement.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to Saxon *Land* Church Office, 10 March 1933; Pastor Peter of Pirna to Mr. Killinger, *Reich* Plenipotentiary for Saxony, 10 March 1933; Pastor Peter of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Consistory, 7 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

So offended at the defamation of his office and his person by “a national party” was Peter that he demanded that the Pirna National Socialist leadership issue an apology in the local paper. Further, he wrote to various officials, not least the *Reich* Plenipotentiary (*Reichsbevollmächtigte*) for Saxony and *Reich* President Hindenburg, hoping for public rehabilitation. Peter defended himself vigorously: “For I stand entirely behind the national concern, I have continually acted affirmatively and supportively to all things national and as a pastor to all things social, the more so as I am a former National-Liberal and from the earliest days of its founding until now as a registered and paying member of the German National Party. In addition, my actions described above were not directed against the national government, but against specific measures of the Pirna NSDAP.”⁸⁸

In a letter to the Saxon *Land* Consistory, Peter explained that he had repeatedly tried to convince the Social Democrats he had met in the course of his pastoral duties that they could have achieved their social goals through the “National Socialist German Workers Party.” He had tried to convince parishioners of the merits of German Christianity, and he had preached the two Sundays following his detainment—one was National Remembrance Day—in such a manner as to have won the praise of parishioners who were oriented towards the Fatherland, not least a schoolteacher who belonged to the NSDAP.⁸⁹ Superintendent Zweynert also came to Pastor Peter’s defence, noting that the arrest and public humiliation had “aroused indignation in the parish” and had “been met with public disapproval.”⁹⁰

If Karl Peter’s experiences were any indication, Pirna parishioners had good reason to be concerned. Local Party officials had rudely and maliciously undermined their parish pastor, and all but ignored the attempted intervention of Superintendent Zweynert. Fortunately for Peter, he was not forced to resign, but

⁸⁸ Pastor Peter of Pirna to Mr. Killinger, *Reich* Plenipotentiary for Saxony, 10 March 1933; Pastor Peter of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Consistory, 7 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to Saxon *Land* Church Office, 10 March 1933; Pastor Peter of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Consistory, 7 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

only suffered the loss of his positions as prison chaplain and deputy to Superintendent Zweynert, both of which were transferred to Pastor Teichgräber of Pirna, NSDAP member and German Christian.⁹¹ More fundamentally, Peter's story demonstrates the confusion generated in the early days of the Third *Reich*, when patriotic, nationally-minded Germans did not yet understand that National Socialists who used national, social and *völkisch* language invested it with more racial and revolutionary meaning than traditional conservatives had ever imagined.

For Superintendent Zweynert, Peter's case was only the first of many times he had to appeal to local National Socialists to remember the rights of the Lutheran churches of the district. In May 1933, for instance, he wrote all the city councils and municipal authorities in the Pirna church district to urge them to retain proper Sunday observances. Zweynert first reminded them of the statements of Hitler and other political leaders about the foundational importance of Christianity in the Third *Reich*. In order for Christianity to fulfill its task in the national, moral and religious renewal of the *Volk*, Zweynert contended: "Sunday must really become a Lord's Day again." So that the churches could engage in their spiritual labour, Zweynert requested that local political authorities work earnestly to keep the Sunday service hours of nine to 11:00 a.m. free from other meetings, and thanked them in advance for their efforts.⁹² A sign that the problem had not gone away was an April 1934 letter from Superintendent Zweynert to the pastors of the district, informing them about a new Party order. It decreed that any dispensing of official information from the NSDAP about church affairs required the express approval from higher Party offices. Local Party officials had been instructed to stop interfering in parish church life.⁹³

Gradually, however, the control of the NSDAP over local church life

⁹¹ Pastor Peter of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, 8 May 1933, and Pastor Adolf Müller of the *Land* Consistory to Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, 18 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁹² Superintendent Zweynert to the city councils and municipal authorities in the church district of Pirna, 31 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

⁹³ Superintendent's office to the pastors in the district, 26 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

increased. In March 1937, pastors were warned that they were required to report all church meetings, no matter what their purpose or whether formal or informal, to the local state police, in order to give them sufficient notice. This was to ensure the political reliability of any meetings held during the campaign for the announced (but subsequently cancelled) church elections of 1937. That order was followed by another notice, restricting any meetings of the Confessing Church in the Pirna district.⁹⁴

A subsequent and ominous development occurred in May 1938, when Acting Superintendent Ebert passed on a request from the *Land* church authorities, asking pastors to report the nature, history, location and frequency of any Bible studies held outside official church facilities. The purpose of this order was to identify "difficulties" arising from Bible studies in privately owned venues, and presumably to detect politically suspect meetings of the Confessing Church in parishes throughout the Pirna district.⁹⁵

Churchmen often came into conflict with the Party over the education and care of German youth. Pastor Knoch from Langenwolmsdorf addressed the problem in his lecture to the May 1934 Stolpen Pastoral Conference. He argued the problem was often severest in the country parishes, in which the Hitler Youth met in a different locale. Lay leaders for church youth groups were hard to find, and two sets of parallel leaders often made for unpleasant results for the children. Above all, Knoch pointed to the need for the higher church authorities to work with the Hitler Youth leaders, so that at least one Sunday each month might remain free from all Party Youth service for church activities.⁹⁶ Pastor Scherffig of Heidenau-Christus also experienced trouble because of the busy schedule kept by the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls. Because Saturdays were now taken up with Party youth

⁹⁴ Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen in the Pirna district, 19 March 1937, and Superintendent's Instructions 112, 23 March 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁹⁵ Superintendent's Instructions 127, 19 May 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁹⁶ Pastor Zweynert of Neustadt, "Bericht über die Sitzung der Stolpener Konferenz am 28.5.1934." Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

activities, the youth of Scherffig's parish were no longer available that day to serve in the children's choir that sang at weddings and funerals. Neither were the children available for weddings and funerals during the week, since they were in school in the afternoons. Because other meetings with the children were becoming much harder to schedule, Scherffig asked Superintendent Zweynert to apprise the *Land* Church Office of those developments "that threaten to lead to an additional restriction and disruption of parish life" and to ask the higher church authorities for a practicable solution.⁹⁷

In 1935, Pastor Ebert of Pirna also encountered National Socialist officials who undermined the role of the parish in the lives of his church youth. After a confirmation class, some of the girls told him how their leader in the League of German Girls had forbidden them from singing Christmas carols in an upcoming public concert and claimed the time for Party activities instead. In taking this action, the Girls' League leader was following the example of the local Hitler Youth leader, who withdrew his church membership and adhered to some of the "24 Guidelines" of the German Faith Movement. Ebert complained that such a measure deeply disturbed the consciences and hearts of his confirmation candidates and stood in opposition to Article 24 of the NSDAP Programme. Ebert also appealed to Superintendent Zweynert to ask the district Party leadership to put a stop to this "anti-Christian demonstration" and to inform the *Land* Church Office. Ebert wanted Saxon church officials to take action, so that the regional leaders in the NSDAP would put a stop to "this anti-Christian agitation within the local League of German Girls and the local Hitler Youth."⁹⁸

Contrary to the hopes of Pastors Knoch, Scherffig and Ebert, relations with local NSDAP and civic leaders worsened as time wore on. In November 1936, the Pirna police forbade the distribution of church pamphlets at the local cemetery on

⁹⁷ Pastor Scherffig of Heidenau-Christus to Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, 17 August 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

⁹⁸ Pastor Ebert of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 17 December 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

the Sunday before Advent (*Totensonntag*), when Protestants in Germany remembered their dead family and friends. For the church, this was one of the ideal days in the church year on which to reach nominal Lutherans with literature designed to stir them to more active participation in their faith and in their parish churches. Superintendent Zweynert was at a loss to understand how such missionary work to the *Volk* could impinge upon the state, but made it clear that the prohibition against distributing pamphlets was a great blow to the parish, which had prepared 4000 leaflets.⁹⁹

In 1939, reports of trouble in confirmation classes began to surface in the district. In Ottendorf, Pastor Börner reported how an NSDAP member told those at a Party meeting in a neighbouring town that civil weddings were far nicer than church weddings, and added that “what the pastor said, the papist man, that was all lies and deception.” Börner had a witness to the event that was now well known in the area, and asked Superintendent Leichte to identify the problem with the appropriate Party officials in Pirna.¹⁰⁰ In another incident, Pastor Börner’s daughter missed some school and borrowed a fellow student’s notebook to catch up on her work. There, she found a sentence dictated by Schoolteacher and NSDAP leader Reuter: “The Bible is a Jewish Book.”¹⁰¹ Börner was scandalized and hurt by the dictation and felt it violated the National Socialist fundamentals of tolerance and freedom of conscience, quoting a recent Hitler speech to make his case. Börner also complained that Reuter’s sentence unfairly set aside the New Testament, which “is also the fundamental historical document for the Positive Christianity on which the Party stands.” In an ingenious if dubious argument, Börner concluded that Schoolteacher Reuter had actually attacked the NSDAP platform on ‘positive Christianity,’ and he asked Leichte to pursue the matter with church and school

⁹⁹ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to the *Land* Church Committee, 23 November 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

¹⁰⁰ Pastor Börner of Ottendorf to Superintendent Leichte in Pirna, 21 February 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

officials so that the man might be put in his place.¹⁰²

Pastor Lothar Ebert of Pirna reported yet another outrageous incident that same year. In Pirna, Party youth leader Lippold of Copitz told some Lutheran youths: "Just as the synagogues are burning down now, so the day will one day come where we burn down the churches." Lippold went on to berate one of his charges for helping to deliver the Pirna parish newsletter, declaring: "A Hitler Youth must not carry a parish newsletter." As Börner had done before him, Ebert complained that the statements of the Hitler Youth leader stood in direct contrast to those of Hitler and his representatives, who frequently proclaimed religious freedom, and to Article 24 of the NSDAP Programme. "They rightly create a scandal among the parents," he added, "and bring the children into most serious conflicts." For those reasons, Ebert again requested that Superintendent Heinrich Leichte speak with the local Party youth leadership, so that such "brutal statements" could be stopped.¹⁰³ Leichte, an ardent National Socialist and local Party official himself, was probably the least likely person to intervene on behalf of frustrated pastors. His ascendancy to the position of superintendent brought a departure from the moderation of his predecessor, Dr. Zweynert, and led to a sharpening of conflict between pastors and parishes that belonged to the Confessing Church and his own office.¹⁰⁴

There is no evidence that relations between the churches and National Socialist Party leaders and municipal officials improved during the Second World War—indeed, they were worsening, if the problems encountered by Pastor Werner of Dohna were at all typical. In his annual report for 1940, Werner predicted that the shortages of clergymen would lead to dire consequences in the Pirna parishes, "particularly in this time, where so much work is secretly and publicly done against

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Pastor Ebert of Pirna to Superintendent Leichte in Pirna, 23 February 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 184.

¹⁰⁴ Please see chapter 6, pp. 294 ff., below.

the church and all religious instruction is eliminated from the schools."¹⁰⁵ Werner went on to describe how the "battle against the church" had worsened in Dohna during 1940. At the city's 900-year anniversary celebrations, the District Party Leader used his 90-minute speech in part to attack the church in an unheard of manner, making false accusations about the high incomes of clergymen. However, "the effect of such basely anti-church propaganda was indeed a different one than the speaker had surely expected. A number of the visitors left the room during the speech. The speaker even had to endure, for example, the loud and clear answer 'No' to his rhetorical question, if it was not so [as he said]." A few weeks later, the NSDAP Christmas celebration in Dohna was cancelled when 16 people appeared instead of the few hundred visitors the Party expected. "The inhabitants of Dohna apparently feared similar gaffes as at the [nine] century anniversary."¹⁰⁶ Otherwise, Werner reported, parish life was suffering in Dohna, with church service attendance and children's church attendance dropping, in part due to the constant agitation against the church and the demands of the Party upon the children. Confirmation instruction was growing more difficult and Party agitation to withdraw from the church was on the increase again.¹⁰⁷

In sum, while 1933 witnessed a spectacular show of interest in the Lutheran churches in Pirna, that interest soon waned as parishioners abandoned the church almost as quickly as they had rushed in. The prominence of the German Christian Movement, the interest shown by many pastors in the NSDAP and the statements of Pirna district clergymen attributing the upsurge in Lutheran participation to the national renewal combine to suggest that the temporary revitalization of parish life in the Pirna district was in large part a product of the religious nationalism common to Germany in 1933. Likewise, the growing frustration of Pirna clergymen with the interference of the National Socialist Party in local church affairs illustrates just how

¹⁰⁵ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Leichte, 13 February 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 915.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

illusory had been the belief that the NSDAP was open to the moral and religious renewal of German society. While a minority of Pirna pastors maintained their faith in the compatibility of National Socialism and Lutheranism, most entered the Confessing Church or promoted a moderate church-political course that defended the traditional Lutheran teachings founded on the Bible and the Reformation Confessions.¹⁰⁸

The Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church district of Ravensburg contained eleven parishes located from the shore of Lake Constance in the southernmost corner of Württemberg northward through the cities of Ravensburg and Weingarten and westward into the hills of the Allgäu region. In contrast to conditions in Nauen and Pirna, no great wave of Protestant nationalism swept through the Ravensburg district. To be sure, there were outbursts of nationalist euphoria over Hitler's seizure of power—witness District Superintendent Hermann Ströle's public celebration of the "miracle" of renewed German unity through the National Socialist revolution and prediction of an impending spiritual renewal of the German *Volk*, spoken out at the Ravensburg District Church Assembly of 1933.¹⁰⁹ In Ravensburg, remarks from a Protestant Men's Association meeting in August 1933 indicate just how generally accepted the new National Socialist government was among local Protestants. Pastor Theodor Bidlingmaier greeted the large gathering of Ravensburg and Weingarten men with references to the beautiful sunny weather, the good harvest, the health of the men, and "the new discipline and order

¹⁰⁸ For an account of the church-political strife in Pirna, please see chapter 5.

¹⁰⁹ "Bericht des Dekans", Kirchenbezirkstag, 14 December 1933, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 88e. Early in his career, Ströle was pastor in Heidenheim. During the Weimar era, Ströle directed the Evangelical Press Association and participated in the Evangelical People's League (*Evangelischer Volksbund*) and the German People's Party (*Deutsche Volkspartei*). In these roles, he contributed to the effort to increase the profile of the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church in Weimar society, though in 1921 he expressed doubt about the ability of the Church to influence its society. David J. Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg, 1918-1933* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987) 109, 142, 276, 303; Christel Köhle-Hezinger, "Schwester Maria Benedikta Ströle (Getrud Ströle, geboren 1918)" in Rainer Lächele and Jörg Thierfelder, eds., *Wir konnten uns nicht entziehen. 30 Porträts zu Kirche und Nationalsozialismus in Württemberg* (Stuttgart: Quell Verlag, 1998), 506.

in our Fatherland."¹¹⁰ Police Inspector Seemüller, leader of the visiting Weingarten group, responded to Bidlingmaier's greeting by praising the brotherly assembly of men "in this age of great times for the Fatherland [...]." He then added: "It is a great [piece of] luck, that the *Führer*, Adolf Hitler, has fought in such an earnest and far-sighted way for the deepest foundations of the life of the *Volk*, Christian faith and Christian morality. May God keep him healthy and strengthen him for his difficult task!"¹¹¹

For the most part, however, church life in the Ravensburg district during the Third *Reich* revolved around a myriad of routine business. In great contrast to the domination of church-political concerns in Nauen and Pirna, it is the mundane that stands out in the voluminous correspondence between parish clergymen, their district superintendent and higher church officials in Stuttgart. Parish councils in Friedrichshafen and Isny sold pieces of land to individuals and civic governments,¹¹² while parish councils in Friedrichshafen, Isny, Ravensburg and Wälde-Winterbach rented space in their parsonages or parish halls to individuals, the German military and Party organizations like the National Socialist Welfare, National Socialist Motor Club and the Hitler Youth.¹¹³

In several parishes in the district, pastors and their parish councils were working with the Württemberg *Land* Church to plan and construct new facilities. In Fischbach-Manzell, a collection of villages in the Friedrichshafen parish, the construction of a parish hall in the mid-1930s consumed much of the local curate's

¹¹⁰ "Evangelischer Männerverein," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 29 August 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 5 April 1941, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54a; Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 6 May 1940; Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Pastor, 12 March 1940, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54c; and Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 33 August 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 60a, among others.

¹¹³ Correspondence and contracts are located in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 55c and 56h (Friedrichshafen), 58c and 60a (Isny), 168g (Ravensburg) and 69c (Wälde-Winterbach).

time and eventually led to the creation of an independent pastorate.¹¹⁴ Similarly, in Tettwang, pastors worked to advance plans to construct a chapel in Meckenbeuren and contemplated a new church in Tettwang itself.¹¹⁵ In Leutkirch and Langenargen, pastors and parish councils grappled with orders to add another apartment to their parsonages. So did the Ravensburg parish council, which also investigated applying fire retardant to church buildings and executed a plan to improve the church's heating system.¹¹⁶ During the war, pastors and parish councils in Friedrichshafen, Isny and Ravensburg all devised plans for bomb shelters and worked to save church bells from confiscation by the military.¹¹⁷

In contrast to these relatively common issues, one subject of deep concern to clergymen and lay people alike in the Ravensburg district was the decision of the Württemberg Education Ministry to move from confessional schools to secular community schools and *Volk* schools throughout the state. For the minority Lutherans in Upper Swabia, the closure of their small confessional schools meant that subordination to local Catholics now applied to their children's education too. While pastors and parish councils all across the district pondered the effects of the secularization of their schools, practically speaking, there was little that parish clergymen could do about it except work to ensure that at least one Protestant schoolteacher was available to teach religious instruction, or find the time to do it themselves. Almost as problematic was the matter of finding a new use for vacant school buildings and negotiating new contractual agreements with teachers who rented apartments from the parish councils.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Correspondence, plans and a celebratory edition of the local parish newsletter are to be found in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

¹¹⁵ Correspondence in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 67a and 67g.

¹¹⁶ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 29 November 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64c. For Langenargen and Ravensburg, please see correspondence in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 55c, 80c and Neue Akten/Langenargen.

¹¹⁷ Correspondence in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54a and 54c (Friedrichshafen), 57a, 58c, 60a and 61a (Isny) and 168g (Ravensburg).

¹¹⁸ Correspondence and contracts surrounding the secularization of schools in Dekanatsarchiv 69

Finally, in Ravensburg, declining German fortunes in World War II created massive amounts of extra work in some parishes, although they also opened new doors for ministry to fearful Germans. In Leutkirch and Isny, local clergymen and extra workers sent by Stuttgart struggled to provide adequate religious instruction and pastoral care for hundreds of evacuated children and mothers from Friedrichshafen, Stuttgart, Duisburg and Essen.¹¹⁹ Moreover, the fact that at least a dozen clergymen were called up for military service between 1939 and 1945 meant that parish clergymen often scrambled to conduct all the substitute church services and religious instruction demanded of them. Pastor Duisberg, for example, served in at least six different pastorates after his retirement in 1939. In Langenargen, where Duisberg laboured from 1940 to 1942, no less than four different clergymen served the parish during the war years, while at least two others, Drs. Helmut Thielicke and Günther Dehn, made their residences in the parsonage but served in Ravensburg parishes, meaning that for several years, there was no resident pastor in the parish.¹²⁰

Apart from the death of many local men, including Pastors Spellenberg of Friedrichshafen and Hoffmann of Waldsee, the most devastating affect of World War II was the physical destruction of parts of the Ravensburg district, in particular the city of Friedrichshafen. The first attack of Allied bombers swept over the city during the night of 20-21 June 1943. In order for the Friedrichshafen parish to assist

Ravensburg 52b (Atzenweiler), 53e and 56e (Friedrichshafen), 58a and 61a (Isny), 62l and Neue Akten/Langenargen (Langenargen), 64e, 66d and 55e (Leutkirch), 67a (Tettmang), 69c, 69d, 69e (Wälde-Winterbach), 72c (Waldsee), 74e and Neue Akten/Wangen(Wangen im Allgäu), and 76d (Weingarten).

¹¹⁹ Correspondence in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a, 63a, 64e and 64g. In Leutkirch, Pastor Hilmar Schieber and others established new stations for worship services and religious instruction in the surrounding villages of Tannheim, Mooshausen, Hauerz, Aichstetten, Altmannshofen, Ottmannshofen, Seibranz, Schloß Zeil, Arnach, Reichenhofen, Herlazhofen, Engerazhofen, Merazhofen, Waltershofen, Friesenhofen, Hofs and Beuren. Willi Eberle, *400 Jahre Evangelische Gemeinde in Leutkirch (1546-1946)*, Sondernummer Trinitatis 1946, *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Leutkirch und seine Diaspora*, p. 32, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Leutkirch A II 1.

¹²⁰ For details on the assignments of Pastor Duisberg and other Langenargen clergymen, please see Appendix 4: Clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. On the rotation of clergymen through Langenargen, correspondence is found in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53c and 62a.

local families who had suffered losses in the attack, the Württemberg Superior Church Council transferred RM 3000 to the account of the Friedrichshafen parish.¹²¹

Far more destructive, however, was the giant air raid of 27-28 April 1944, when 800 to 1000 planes descended on Friedrichshafen, destroying the entire historic city centre. In the main parsonage, fire broke out in three places. Only the energetic initiative of its inhabitants, who worked amid the burning flames of neighbouring houses, saved the parsonage from ruin. The parish hall was similarly saved, though another building owned by the parish burned to the ground. Worse still, fire had destroyed the roof frame of the palace church, along with one-third of the pews and the south tower, which had since collapsed (the rest of the roof threatened to cave in too). Nearby, an aerial mine explosion shook the church caretaker's home and made it uninhabitable, forcing the immediate transfer of the church archives. Finally, bombing also destroyed the former second parsonage and the back house at the current second parsonage. Describing the array of damage, Friedrichshafen Pastor Ludwig Schmidt lamented that no one knew how many wounded or dead there were, and added ominously that undamaged houses were only sparsely scattered throughout the city.¹²² In response to the disaster in Friedrichshafen, the Superior Church Council transferred another RM 15000 to the parish, to enable it to care for parishioners most severely affected by the attack.¹²³

In July 1944, two more air raids hit Manzell and Friedrichshafen, destroying the Zeppelin wharf and an engine factory. Although the parish halls and parsonages suffered some damage, miraculously, they were not directly hit.¹²⁴ During the first

¹²¹ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 19 July 1943, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

¹²² Pastor Schmidt of Friedrichshafen to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 1 May 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

¹²³ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 4 May 1944 and 17 May 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

¹²⁴ Pastor Ludwig Schmidt of Friedrichshafen to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 20 July 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

air raid on Manzell, Mrs. Spellenberg, the widow of the local pastor who had only recently fallen in combat, comforted the inhabitants of a bomb shelter by reminding them that they were all in God's hand. After the attack passed, she led the people in the shelter in the Lord's Prayer, in thanksgiving for their survival. During a second attack two days later, Mrs. Spellenberg again comforted those in the bomb shelter (including the local NSDAP leader), quoting from Psalm 20: "Some trust in chariots and horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord, our God." Calming the crowd, she instructed them to pray, rather than to murmur or argue. Quoting various biblical texts and explaining Jesus' care over all those in the shelter, Spellenberg calmed the crowd completely, and once more led them in the Lord's Prayer.¹²⁵ With her help, the parishioners of Friedrichshafen and Fischbach-Manzell survived the air raids, the worst crisis in the Ravensburg district during the National Socialist era.

The physical damage of the air raids aside, there is little anecdotal evidence to suggest that the National Socialist seizure of power and evolution of the church struggle in Württemberg greatly affected parish conditions in the Ravensburg district, either in 1933 or later. Rather, pastors, parish councils discussed the mundane matters of land, buildings and the secularization of their schools, and tried to cope with the social and physical displacement brought by the war.

Statistical records from the Ravensburg district confirm this picture. Although many clergymen and at least some leading parishioners grew excited about the potential for the new National Socialist state to ignite a renewal within their churches, neither district nor parish statistics from Ravensburg suggest that any of the mass excitement found among Protestants in Nauen and Pirna spread into Ravensburg. For instance, the number of communicants in Ravensburg increased only two percent from 1932 to 1933, and the rate of participation in communion actually dropped (Table 10, following page).¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Pastor Waldbaur of Langenargen, "Report over the events in the parish hall during the last air raid on our city, 18 and 20 July 1944," 23 July 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

¹²⁶ All statistics were compiled from tables in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 89. For details, see Appendix 3: Statistics from the Ravensburg Church District.

Table 10. Participation In Communion in the Ravensburg District, 1932-1944													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	8884	9078	9183	8745	8847	8183	7573	7572	6641	6799	7406	7184	7639
Annual Change (%)	-4	2	1	-5	1	-8	-7	0	-12	2	9	-3	6
Communion Particip. (%)	51	50	51	48	50	51	48	50	51	48	50	51	48
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	1	-5	-2	1	-5	-2	1	-5	-2	1	-5
Men	3786	3881	3925	3723	3817	3296	2975	2872	2439	2428	2570	2249	2189
Men (%)	43	43	43	43	43	40	39	38	37	36	35	31	29
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	1	-7	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	-10	-8
Women	5098	5197	5258	5022	5030	4887	4598	4700	4202	4371	4836	4835	5450
Women (%)	57	57	57	57	57	60	61	62	63	64	65	67	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	-1	5	2	2	2	2	2	3	6

Neither trend improved over the following years, and indeed, the number of communicants waned until the middle of World War II, by which time the course of events might have convinced parishioners to cultivate their spiritual lives more ardently. Even then, however, males comprised an ever-smaller number of communicants in Ravensburg church services, accounting for less than one in three after 1942, when many were away at war. Within individual parishes, there was little variation from the district trend. Eight parishes showed almost no change in the level of participation in communion between 1932 and 1933, while in tiny Atzenweiler, 14 new communicants increased the participation rate by six percent. Only two parishes demonstrated any significant change. In Isny, participation actually declined 10 percent, as 115 fewer people took communion in 1933 than had the year previous. Only in Friedrichshafen, where the passionate German Christian and National Socialist propagandist Dr. Karl Steger¹²⁷ ministered was there a significant jump in communion-taking: 14 percent, or 207 new communicants.

Other statistical categories combine to suggest virtually no significant change in the external signs of parish life. New church memberships jumped 38

¹²⁷ For details on Steger's life and ministry in Friedrichshafen and the wider Württemberg church scene, please see chapter 6.

percent from 1932 to 1933, but in real terms that meant only eight more adults in the Ravensburg district seeking church membership in 1933 than in the previous year (Table 11).

Table 11. New Church Memberships in the Ravensburg District, 1932-1944													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
New Members (total)	21	29	16	11	33	24	13	17	14	15	10	9	11
From the RC Church	15	13	14	9	24	16	9	7	6	3	7	2	3
From Other Protestant Churches	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	4	1	1	1	0	3
From Other Religious Movements	6	14	1	2	8	6	4	6	7	11	2	7	5
Former Members Re-entering	4	14	0	2	8	7	2	8	3	10	2	3	4

Of the 29 new church members in 1933, 14 were re-entering the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church—by definition, they were returning to a faith they had previously abandoned altogether. If so, they represent the best measurement of the effect of the National Socialist seizure of power on local church life in Ravensburg—a far cry from the hundreds and even thousands flocking to the Protestant churches in Nauen and Pirna.¹²⁸ In Ravensburg, then, there was neither a sharp increase in new church memberships in 1933 nor a significant long-term decline in new memberships afterwards, as in Nauen and Pirna.

Similarly, the number of Protestants withdrawing their church memberships and abandoning their parish churches across the district was 35 percent—in real terms an annual decline of only 15 withdrawals, from 43 in 1932 to 28 in 1933. Again, this was very different from the hundreds fewer withdrawals in Nauen and Pirna. Of significance, however, was the steady increase in church membership withdrawals, particularly from 1936 to 1939 (Table 12).

¹²⁸ For details, please see Appendix 3: Statistics from the Ravensburg Church District.

Table 12. Church Membership Withdrawals in the Ravensburg Church District, 1932-1944													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Members Withdrawing (total)	43	28	22	19	37	78	182	255	85	150	176	65	36
Annual Change (%)	-4	-35	-21	-14	95	111	133	40	-67	76	17	-63	-45
To the Roman Catholic Church	8	13	13	11	10	4	11	8	5	1	3	4	7
To Other Protestant Churches	18	5	5	0	3	2	8	23	4	32	1	1	0
To Other Religious Movements	17	10	4	8	24	72	163	224	76	117	172	60	29

Most of these withdrawals—between 1936 and 1944, an average of 88 people annually—left not to go to another Christian church, but to join the German Faith Movement, German Christian Movement, the ranks of the *Reich* Minister Hermann Göring's "deists" or some other non-Christian religious movement.¹²⁹

At the parish level, almost all of the sharp increase in the church withdrawal movement appeared in Friedrichshafen and Ravensburg itself, though 1938 and 1939 were the worst years in several other parishes too (Table 13, following page).

¹²⁹ Statistical tables, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 89.

Table 13. Church Membership Withdrawals in the Parishes of the Ravensburg Church District, 1932-1944

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Atzenweiler	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
Friedrichshafen	10	10	12	10	17	38	89	93	44	67	108	30	6
Isny	3	0	0	0	7	2	5	1	2	3	1	1	3
Langenargen	4	4	0	0	5	6	13	14	4	2	5	0	0
Leutkirch	1	1	0	1	1	1	10	11	3	35	4	3	1
Ravensburg	7	5	4	3	1	13	29	75	19	21	40	17	12
Tett nang	3	2	2	2	0	4	4	3	2	4	2	1	1
Wälde- Winterbach	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Bad Waldsee	3	0	1	0	4	2	9	17	0	6	5	0	2
Wangen im Allgäu	6	0	1	1	3	4	14	20	6	N/A	2	5	N/A
Weingarten	6	3	2	2	5	3	11	18	5	12	7	6	10

As for baptisms and church weddings—categories in which participation jumped significantly in both Nauen and Pirna—totals for the Ravensburg district declined in both categories from 1932 to 1933, as fewer children born to Protestants were baptized and fewer Protestants getting married chose to have a church ceremony. Even giving to voluntary church collections across the district declined seven percent, from RM 20025 in 1932 to RM 18614 in 1933.¹³⁰

In conclusion, there can be no doubt that local church conditions fluctuated immensely both within and among the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg church districts between 1932 and 1939, let alone 1945. In Nauen and Pirna, the early success of the German Christian Movement, the participation of local associations *en masse* in church services, the national and National Socialist sympathies among the clergymen and the explicit statements of local pastors complement the statistical

¹³⁰ For details, please see Appendix 3: Statistics from the Ravensburg Church District.

evidence of a sharp increase in religious interest among parishioners in 1933. Taken together, they illustrate that the national renewal that accompanied the National Socialist seizure of power had the power to temporarily revitalize Protestant parish life in 1933 and 1934. Generally, however, there was an equal if not greater decline in local church life throughout the course of the Third *Reich*, as the growth of NSDAP organizational life and the anti-Christian activities of local Party leaders undermined the influence of pastors and parish organizations, particularly among the youth. In the Ravensburg district, neither the initial upswing nor the long-range decline in church life was as strong, save in the parish of Friedrichshafen, where the tone of church life most closely matched the heated nationalism of the districts in Brandenburg and Saxony.

In light of the fact that clerical nationalism was not significantly different in Ravensburg than in Nauen and Pirna,¹³¹ this lack of religious national enthusiasm among parishioners in Ravensburg is curious. The minority status of Protestants in Upper Swabia might explain the lack of new applications for church membership in the parishes of the Ravensburg district—maybe there were only a few non-Catholics who were not already attached to the Württemberg Protestant *Land* Church to begin with. However, that factor does not explain why participation rates among existing Protestant church members eligible to take communion did not increase markedly, as in parishes in Nauen and Pirna.

The two most likely explanations for the lack of public religious-national enthusiasm among Ravensburg Protestants are both connected to the predominance of Roman Catholicism in Upper Swabia, the area in which the district was located.

¹³² First, there was generally less enthusiasm for National Socialism in the Catholic

¹³¹ For details and analysis, please see chapter 3.

¹³² According to the statistics presented by Frederic Spotts, Upper Swabia was generally 90 percent Roman Catholic. By way of comparison, in the regions of the Old Prussian Union Church and the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church in which the Nauen and Pirna church districts were located, Protestants comprised at least 75 percent of the population, and over 90 percent in the Pirna region. Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 48-49. Laurenz Demps puts the figure for Brandenburg at 90.5 percent Protestant during the Third *Reich*. Laurenz Demps, "Die Provinz Brandenburg in der NS-Zeit (1933 bis 1945)" in Ingo Materna and Wolfgang Ribbe, eds., *Brandenburgische Geschichte* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), 625.

south of Württemberg. Voters in Upper Swabia remained solidly behind the Catholic Centre Party, even in the unfree election of 5 March 1933. In the electoral districts of Ravensburg, Leutkirch, Tettnang, Waldsee and Wangen, the Centre consistently dominated the NSDAP in free elections, and even bested the National Socialists in March 1933, as Table 14 illustrates.¹³³

Table 14. *Reich* Electoral Results from Upper Swabia for the Catholic Centre Party and the National Socialist German Workers Party, 1932-1933 (as a percentage of the total vote)

Electoral District	July 1932 election		Nov. 1932 election		March 1933 election	
	Centre	NSDAP	Centre	NSDAP	Centre	NSDAP
Ravensburg	56	23	53	23	43	42
Leutkirch	70	20	68	22	55	39
Tettnang	54	25	55	23	46	38
Waldsee	75	18	69	18	54	38
Wangen	66	20	64	22	53	36

Well integrated within this Catholic political milieu, Protestants in the Ravensburg district did not have the same freedom (or perhaps inclination) to articulate the Protestant-nationalist ideology that majority Protestants in Nauen and Pirna did. In the Protestant North, the Social Democrats were the primary alternative to right-wing national parties, and were usually shunned by traditional Protestant voters whose faith and politics both inclined them to conservatism.¹³⁴

Second, and related to the dominance of Roman Catholics in the Ravensburg area, any expression of National Socialist fervour that took place did so in a secular, public space and not in the Protestant (or Catholic) churches. Unlike conditions in Nauen and Pirna, Protestants and their pastors did not stand at the peak of the local (Catholic) political elite. Without the same central position in the public life of their communities, there was little emphasis on the ceremonial importance of

¹³³ *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 1 August 1932, 7 November 1932 and 6 March 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

¹³⁴ On voting patterns, please see Richard F. Hamilton, *Who Voted For Hitler?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); Jürgen Falter, *Hitlers Wähler* (Munich: Berg, 1991).

Protestant services and Protestant pastors—a vital factor in the connection of Protestantism and nationalism in the Prussian and Saxon church districts.¹³⁵ As a result, church membership, church rites and church sacraments remained relatively unimportant to local National Socialists. Consequently, the outward expressions of public religiosity in the Ravensburg district remained almost entirely untouched by the weighty political events of 1933. Only the gradual draining of participation in church life due to the constant demands of the NSDAP was a shared reality in Nauen, Pima and Ravensburg.

Ravensburg aside, if the experiences of Protestants in Nauen and Pima (where they comprised the vast majority of the population) are indicative, the year 1933 was absolutely, fundamentally significant to German Protestantism in northern Germany. As ironic as it seems in hindsight, the National Socialist seizure of power set off a national renewal that generated a breathtaking, if illusory, revitalization of the public expression of German Protestantism. Amid the political revolution of 1933 and the wave of enthusiasm sweeping through many Protestant parishes, it is understandable, though ultimately tragic, that so many Protestant pastors looked with awe and wonder upon Adolf Hitler as the saviour of their Christian faith, parish institutions and personal status. Less clear is why it took so many of them so long to perceive and react to their gradual marginalization in German society, as the NSDAP came to dominate German public life to an extent that the churches could not rival. One thing is sure: only the brightest and most influential clergymen were capable of navigating their congregations through the surge of nationalism that swept through their communities and their churches without a disastrous collision with the anti-Christian elements of National Socialist ideology.

¹³⁵ Please see, for example, the role played by Pastor Lux in the Groß Behnitz celebration of the 1 May 1933 national holiday, chapter 3, p. 85, below, or the guest list to Superintendent Leichte's installation in Pima, chapter 4, 135f., below.

CHAPTER 3

PROTESTANT PASTORS AND GERMAN NATIONALISM IN THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST ERA

"The face of the new Germany shall be that of a Christian *Volk*!" Those were the words of the German Protestant *Reich* Bishop, repeated in a sermon by Superintendent Hermann Ströle of Ravensburg in November 1933.¹ In uttering them, Ströle appeared to identify himself with the so-called 'national renewal,' the radical transformation of German politics and society undertaken by Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist government in 1933. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the manner in which Ströle and other Protestant clergymen from the church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg subscribed to the perilous German nationalism so often attributed to them by historians of modern German history and of the German church struggle in particular.²

To assess the nature of Protestant clerical nationalism, several questions require consideration. First, what motivated the clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg who affirmed the national renewal and the new National Socialist government of Adolf Hitler? Then, to what extent did that clerical nationalism include support for National Socialist ideology? How did nationally minded pastors understand the relationship between their spiritual ministry in the Church and the contribution of their Church to the nationalist and potentially National Socialist task of unifying and strengthening the German *Volk* community? Did any clergymen

¹ "Festgottesdienst in der evangelische Stadtkirche Ravensburg," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 20 November 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

² See for instance Richard J. Evans, *Rethinking German History* (London: 1987), 142, 145; Hugh McLeod, "Protestantism and the Working Class in Imperial Germany," *European Studies Review*, 12, no. 3 (1982): 329, 331ff.; Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict*, 20ff., 51ff., 141ff., 201ff.; Borg, *Old-Prussian Church*, 77-81; Wright, 'Above Parties'; Jonathan R.C. Wright, "The German Protestant Church and the NSDAP in the Period of the Seizure of Power 1932-3," in Derek Baker (ed.), *Renaissance and Renewal in Christian History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 393-418; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 4-7, 49, 99-145, 168-216; Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 9-29; Conway, *Nazi Persecution*; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*; Manfred Jacobs, "Kirche, Weltanschauung, Politik. Die evangelischen Kirchen und die Option zwischen dem zweiten und dritten Reich," *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 31, no. 1 (1983): 108-135; Nowak, "Evangelische Kirche und Widerstand im Dritten Reich," 352-364; Baranowski, "Consent and Dissent," 53-78; and Richard V. Pierard, "Why Did Protestants Welcome Hitler?" *Fides et Historia*, 10 (Spring 1978): 8-29.

oppose the concept that the Protestant churches ought to serve the national movement? Finally, were there substantial differences between the nationalist rhetoric of clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg?

Upon investigation, clergymen in the districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg were animated by four motives for nationalism: the belief that national renewal included moral renewal, the perception of a call of the *Führer* to engage in that national and moral renewal, the sensitivity to the political danger of Communism and the tendency toward a theological justification of authoritarian government. By far the most commonly stated motive for nationalism among the clergymen of the three districts was the belief that along with the political transformation of 1933, there would be an associated moral renewal of the German *Volk*. This is clearly seen in the speeches that the three superintendents delivered to their annual church district assemblies in 1933. Superintendent Graßhoff of Nauen described the church's task as "the inner restoration of the German soul and of our beloved Protestant church". In language rich with biblical allusion, he declared: "God has spoken to our German *Volk* through a great transformation. An epoch in German history has come to an end, a new period has begun."³ Graßhoff hailed the end of Party grumbling, class conflict, moral laxity and godlessness in Germany, and looked towards a new period of sobriety, discipline, strong leadership and the will of the nation to follow. Noting the astonishing speed of this transition, Graßhoff exclaimed: "What a miracle has come over us."⁴

For the Nauen superintendent, this turnabout was only the beginning of a revolutionary spiritual resurrection of the German national community that would follow.⁵ That second and greater transformation would produce a profound new

³ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen," (newspaper clipping), n.d, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590. Not only did his language reflect that of the Old Testament prophets proclaiming God's word to Israel, but also that of the New Testament contrast between the old and new spiritual natures, as in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" (NIV)

⁴ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen," (newspaper clipping), n.d, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

⁵ Ibid.

national character: dependable, loyal, and infused with a strong sense of the German racial community. Ultimately, this transformation would achieve the salvation of Germany from the spectre of degeneration depicted by Oswald Spengler in *The Decline of the West*. At the climax of his speech, Graßhoff issued a challenge to the leaders in his district: "The decision about whether or not the new structure of our state will be blessed by God lies in our hands. God has given our *Volk* a great opportunity. If we Christians fail now, then the final end of all the external state structure is in vain. Then the West will indeed finally crumble, just as the Roman Empire crumbled [...]." ⁶ With that warning, Graßhoff completed his speech—a powerful amalgam of *völkisch* and spiritual renewal flowing from the national renewal that was beginning in 1933.

Similar in tone was the speech delivered by Superintendent Max Zweynert of Pirna to the leaders gathered at his district church assembly. Speaking for his audience, he proclaimed, "We place ourselves without reserve behind the *Reich* government and are determined to support it with all [our] forces in the fulfilment of its responsible work for the national and moral renewal of our *Volk*." ⁷ In like manner, Superintendent Hermann Ströle of Ravensburg was only slightly less enthusiastic in his praise of the new political developments. He publicly thanked God, "the guide of history," for allowing German Protestants to experience the new state unfolding before them, and he called the renewed unity of the *Volk* "a miracle," an incredible recovery from the brink of civil war. In addition, he rejoiced: "With the new state, a spiritual change is also being generated. Through this spiritual change, the church will be called to a new, great service," service for the *Volk*. ⁸

All three superintendents connected the new regime and Hitler's leadership with hopes for moral and spiritual revival. The socio-political upheaval of the 1920s Weimar era with its divisive politics, class conflict, weak leadership and

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ "Ephoralkonferenz des Kirchenbezirks Pirna.", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁸ "Bericht des Dekans", Kirchenbezirkstag, 14 December 1933, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 88e.

neglect of the churches would all be overturned by Hitler—or perhaps ‘turned back’ is the better expression, as pastors recalled the bygone Wilhelmine era, when their spiritual authority regularly translated into significant moral and political influence in German society. As the prominent theologian and Ravensburg pastor Günther Dehn recalled: “The Church wanted to remain what it already had been for a long time: a piece of the past in a changed world.”⁹

In their affirmations of national and moral renewal, the three district superintendents reflected the general tone of statements made by higher church leaders.¹⁰ In Brandenburg, General Superintendent Otto Dibelius wrote to all the pastors of the *Kurmark*, including those in the Nauen district. Dibelius, “completely under the spell of the Nationalist misunderstanding of Hitler,”¹¹ praised the National Socialist victory as the return of “a parliamentary majority with a consciously nationalist attitude,” and added: “There will only be a few of us [...] who do not delight in this change with all their hearts.”¹² Though Dibelius’ letter advocated church independence within the new political conditions, his depiction of those new conditions was very positive. Even so, it paled in comparison to the 11 April 1933 Easter Message of the general superintendents, consistorial presidents and members of the Prussian Superior Church Council. In their statement, the Church leaders described Germans as “a people to whom God has spoken by means of a great

⁹ Günther Dehn, *Die alte Zeit, die vorigen Jahre* (Munich, 1962), 212, cited in Barnett, *For the Soul of the People*, 17; *ibid.*, 9-13, 17; Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 6-7, 70-71, 258-309; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 3-4; John Conway, “National Socialism and the Christian Churches during the Weimar Republic,” in Peter Stachura, ed., *The Nazi Machtergreifung* (London, 1983), 124-145; Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict*, 51-61; Hartmut Lehman, “Martin Luther als deutscher Nationalheld im 19. Jahrhundert,” *Luther. Zeitschrift der Luthergesellschaft* 55, no. 2 (1984): 53-65; Baranowski, *Confessing Church*, 20-22; Robert Erickson, “The Barmen Synod and Its Declaration: A Historical Synopsis,” in Locke, ed., *Church Confronts the Nazis*, 30-37; Franz Fiege, *The Varieties of Protestantism in Nazi Germany. Five Theological Positions*, Toronto Studies in Theology, vol. 50 (Queenston: Edwin Mellon, 1990), 48-50.

¹⁰ John Conway, “The German Church Struggle: Its Making and Meaning,” in Locke, ed., *Church Confronts the Nazis*, 94-96.

¹¹ Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 232.

¹² General Superintendent Dibelius to the Pastors of the *Kurmark*, 8 March 1933, quoted in Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 232.

turning point in history.” In addition, they proclaimed: “We know that we are at one with all Protestant fellow believers in joy at the awakening of the deepest powers of our nation to a patriotic consciousness, to a true community of the *Volk*, and to a religious revival.” Further, the Prussian Church leaders added: “In the conviction that the renewal of the *Volk* and *Reich* can be achieved and secured only by these powers, the church knows itself bound in gratitude to the leadership of the new Germany. It is joyfully prepared to co-operate in the national and moral renewal of our people.”¹³

In Saxony, *Land* Bishop Ludwig Ihmels read out a proclamation from his pulpit on 26 March 1933. Referring to the changes that had taken place in the months of February and March, Ihmels stated that no one could have imagined “that so quickly a completely new beginning of the patriotic [*vaterländische*] ethos would seize the widest circles of the German *Volk*.” He then encouraged Saxon Lutherans to participate in the joy that God had given to their nation and to seek to anchor the new developments in God through preaching.¹⁴ This modest beginning preceded a wave of radical German Christian statements from *Land* Bishop Ihmels’ successor, Friedrich Coch. These included an attack on those who opposed the co-ordination and centralization (*Gleichschaltung*) of the German Protestant *Land* churches and a new set of guiding principles for the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church, designed to bring it into line with National Socialist ideology and practise.¹⁵

In Württemberg, Church President Theophil Wurm estimated in February 1933 that at least 80 percent of convinced Protestants in Germany supported the political combination of *Reich* President Hindenburg, Chancellor Adolf Hitler and German National People’s Party leader Alfred Hugenberg.¹⁶ He himself expressed

¹³ Archiv der Evangelische Kirche der Union, Berlin, Gen. II, 42, vol. 1, 140, quoted in Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 236.

¹⁴ Walter Feurich, “Die Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche Sachsens an der Wende der Jahre 1933/34,” *Evangelische Theologie*, 21 (1961) 370.

¹⁵ For details on Friedrich Coch and developments in the Saxon *Land* Church in 1933, please see chapter 6.

¹⁶ Schäfer, *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, vol. 1, *Um das politische Engagement der Kirche 1932-1933* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1971), 234; Jan Rehmann, *Die Kirchen im NS-*

his “thanks (to the *Führer*) for salvation out of very serious danger”¹⁷ and praised the National Socialist Movement because it had “broken the back of terror,” united disparate social classes and taken on “the struggle against the influences destructive of our cultural life.”¹⁸ Indeed, Wurm anticipated that a religious renewal would accompany the national renewal of 1933. His Württemberg *Land* Church government “quietly removed the muzzle from partisans of the new order” and eased prominent critics of National Socialism into retirement. Finally, in July 1933, Wurm exchanged the title “Church President” for “*Land* Bishop,” a measure that National Socialists interpreted as an ecclesiastical application of the *Führer* principle.¹⁹

On many occasions, parish pastors and lay people in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg echoed the sentiments of their three district superintendents. For example, in the Ravensburg district, the Friedrichshafen Men’s Association discussed the impact of Hitler’s chancellorship on 6 February 1933, only days after his appointment. Chairman Konrad Kühlwein explained how God, in his divine foresight, had appointed Hitler to transform Germany. Kühlwein argued that the National Socialist emphasis on the unity of the German *Volk* and the awakening of the sense of sacrifice for one’s neighbour were Christian concepts that Friedrichshafen Protestant Men needed to recognize.²⁰

In the Nauen district, clerical nationalism was at its highest pitch during the early years of the Third *Reich* in which clergymen experienced the beneficial effects

Staat. Untersuchung zur Interaktion ideologischer Mächte, Ideologische Mächte im deutschen Faschismus, no. 2 (Berlin: Argument-Verlag, 1986), 52; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 220; Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 356.

¹⁷ Niemöller, *Die evangelische Kirche im Dritten Reich*, 81, quoted in Baumgärtel, *Wider die Kirchenkampf-Legenden*, 11.

¹⁸ Württemberg Church President Wurm during a sitting of the Executive Committee of the German Evangelical Church Federation, 2-3 March 1933, quoted in Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 228.

¹⁹ Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 357; David Diephouse, “Theophil Wurm (1868-1953),” in Rainer Lächele and Jörg Thierfelder, eds., *Wir konnten uns nicht entziehen. 30 Porträts zu Kirche und Nationalsozialismus in Württemberg* (Stuttgart: Quell Verlag, 1998), 15-21.

²⁰ Unidentified newspaper clipping, 6 February 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

of the National Socialist "national renewal". Superintendent Graßhoff referred to it as "a very pleasant influence," which was adding vibrancy to his parishes—as proof he pointed to the increase in baptisms, church weddings and applications for church membership in the first year of National Socialist rule.²¹ His colleague, Pastor Kahle of Linum, was even more explicit when he wrote: "The spiritual forces of faith, of confidence and of obedience are beginning to come alive again."²² Pastor Lux of Groß Behnitz reiterated that assessment. In his parish, the spring of 1933 was a season of national celebration marked by many church services. Record numbers of parishioners came to celebrate, swelled by local National Socialist SA units entering the parish church in formation, dressed in their brown uniforms. Lux affirmed that the new connection between the Protestant church and the life of the nation was a "pleasant" one and was producing a greater confidence in the church among the public.²³

During that autumn of 1933, celebrations of the 450th anniversary of Reformer Martin Luther's birth provided another context in which to apply traditional Protestant nationalism to the contemporary national renewal. In the four city parishes of Pirna, local pastors offered a series of commemorative lectures that linked Luther with the religious and political atmosphere in National Socialist Germany: Pastor Ebert spoke on "Luther, the German Man," Pastor Teichgräber spoke on "Luther as Messenger of Faith," Pastor Peter spoke on "Luther as Fighter [*Kämpfer*]," Pastor and Secondary Schoolteacher Plotz spoke on "Luther and the State" and Superintendent Zweynert spoke on "Luther and the German Home."²⁴ For parishioners in Pirna, these lectures established the central place of the Protestant reformer in the new religious nationalism of the Third *Reich*, and helped

²¹ Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 3 May 1934, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 48/658.

²² Pastor Kahle in Linum to the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, "Bericht über das kirchliche Leben der Kirchengemeinde", 26 April 1934, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 48/658.

²³ Pastor Lux in Groß Behnitz to District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, 8 May 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 101/647.

²⁴ Superintendent's office in Pirna to the pastors of the district, 18 September 1933, Ephoralarchiv 80.

foster the notion of Hitler's national-religious renewal as a completion of the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.²⁵

Similarly, at the celebration of the 450th anniversary of Luther's birth held in Weingarten, near Ravensburg, Pastor Krauß and Vicar Langbein presented Luther as a devoted servant of the German *Volk*. In Ravensburg itself, the anniversary church service was packed—not least because of the presence of the local SA, *Stahlhelm*, SA Reserve, SS and National Socialist Motor Corps, as well as the local Hitler Youth and League of German Girls. These groups entered the church in rank, complete with uniforms and flags, and proceeded to their assigned places behind the altar. Other elements in the service included a Bach prelude, some congregational singing, the performance of a Luther hymn by the brass ensemble and the ceremonial display of the parish copy of the 1530 Augsburg Confession. All those elements created the ideal atmosphere for Superintendent Hermann Ströle's sermon. Ströle described Luther as a man who had fought a battle of the soul and whose life and words held much meaning for Germans in 1933.²⁶

That anniversary service marked a high point in official celebrations of religious nationalism in Ravensburg, but the invocation of Protestant nationalism was hardly unique. In a subsequent parish evening meeting, Ströle spoke more fully about Luther's Christianity and its uniquely German form. He declared that wherever Germans followed Luther, they retained their national identity, even as ethnic Germans living abroad. At the close of the parish evening, Ströle summed up the revival of Protestant nationalism in 1933, declaring: "We stand in a renewal, in a [time of the] emergence of a German nature. We thank God that in this outburst, we are experiencing a new recognition of our identity as a *Volk*. We are experiencing a miracle of God." Linking that revival of national identity with the Lutheran heritage

²⁵ Leaders in the German Christian Movement had planned since early summer to make the 10 November celebration of the 450th anniversary of Luther's birth into a great *Volk* mission. This mission was "connected increasingly closely with the figure of Luther. The Reformer was to become as it were the spiritual patron of the new *Reich* Church" and the 10 November celebration was to be "a triumph of the *völkisch* Luther." Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 545.

²⁶ "Festgottesdienst in der evangelischen Stadtkirche Ravensburg," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 20 November 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

of his audience, the superintendent concluded that *völkisch* nationalism and pious consciences went hand in hand. Thus, just as Luther was an example of Germanness, so too, in the struggle for spiritual purity, "Luther is the champion for us[...]."²⁷ Ströle's correlation of Luther's importance as a German and as a spiritual model was yet another example of the Lutheran clergymen's cultivation of a renewed sense of German Protestant religious nationalism during the early days of Hitler's rule.

Six months later, Superintendent Ströle reiterated his support for National Socialist rule through a Württemberg church proclamation endorsing the August 1934 plebiscite to ratify Hitler's assumption of the powers of the deceased *Reich* President Hindenburg. Ströle amended his version of the proclamation to read: "We are all living witnesses of this powerful transformation, which we piously regard as the gracious act of God," words which implied complete satisfaction with Hitler's ambitious and unconstitutional assumption of presidential powers. That Ströle felt this way is evident in his treatment of another section of the same proclamation, where he underlined a section of the text that called for the "undivided loyalty of the entire *Volk*."²⁸

David Kuhn, a church trustee from nearby Kißlegg, expressed the same strong approval of Adolf Hitler and the German national renewal in early 1935, in a letter written to Superintendent Ströle. Juxtaposing Luther, Goethe, Schiller, Bismarck, Hindenburg, and Hitler, Kuhn attested his belief "that the *Führer* follows a high calling for the shaping of the German destiny." With respect to his faith in the *Führer*, "there is no criticism." In the statements that followed, Kuhn espoused what was essentially the radical ideology of the Church Movement of the German Christians.²⁹ He argued that Hitler was accomplishing what had not been done before: negating the shameful confessional division of Germany and giving race,

²⁷ "Evangelischer Gemeindeabend zum Luthertag," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 21 November 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

²⁸ "Kundgebung der Deutschen Evang. Kirche zur Abstimmung des 19. August 1934.", Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 85b.

²⁹ Please see Zabel, *Nazism and the Pastors*, 21-43, 199-218.

blood and earth, and the natural forces of the German nation their proper worth. Kuhn predicted that with time, the will of the *Führer* would be made good, and that Germans would abandon their religious confessions and adhere to a single religion centred on Christ: "This *spiritual melding together* of the nation is a *necessity* which will be made a reality in a short time, of that I am convinced." Kuhn trusted that Adolf Hitler would win this struggle of spirits and create a united church, "the yearning of all who really love the German *Volk*." His only wish was that the Protestant clergymen would take up Luther's spirit and place themselves at the disposal of the *Führer*. Then, clergymen would be engaged with "the first fundamental and the call to battle of National Socialism [...] the *Volk* community." At the close of his panegyric, Kuhn asserted: "Adolf Hitler is a 'doer of the word'! He is genuine! The *Volk* feels that he is genuine and consequently it hangs so firmly and tightly to him."³⁰ Kuhn left no question as to his position. Hitler was not only the political saviour of Germany, but also the ecclesiastical saviour of Christianity in Germany.

Pastors in the Pirna district felt similarly about the national-religious renewal emerging in Germany, and related it directly to the influence the NSDAP. For that reason, in November 1933 Pastor Ohnesorge of Lichtenhain passed the leadership of the pastoral conference in Bad Schandau over to Pastor Martin Meinel, whom Ohnesorge deemed more suitable than others because of Meinel's membership in the NSDAP.³¹ One month later, Superintendent Zweynert recommended the approval of both Meinel and his colleague Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen as heads of Pirna pastoral conferences. In the case of Rosenthal, Zweynert explained to the Saxon *Land* Church Office both the high level of Rosenthal's intellectual standing and "his positive attitude towards the new state and the German Protestant Church."³² If Zweynert and many of his colleagues in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg

³⁰ "Sehr geehrter Herr Dekan!", 27 February 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 731.

³¹ Pastor Ohnesorge of Lichtenhain to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 18 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

³² Superintendent Zweynert to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 11 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv

were unabashed in their celebration of the National Socialist national renewal under the firm leadership of Adolf Hitler, it was first and foremost because they connected Hitler's *völkisch* national renewal closely with the moral renewal they anticipated and with a revival of the fortunes of their churches that they believed would surely follow.

Closely related to that primary motive—the belief in a coming moral renewal—was the common tendency for pastors to be drawn to Hitler and his movement in the belief that the National Socialist leader was appealing to the churches for help in the renewal of German public and political life. This belief was founded on a series of promising statements made by the *Führer* during the National Socialist seizure of power. During a radio broadcast Hitler delivered on the day after he had assumed the chancellorship—which was reprinted in the Party paper, the *Völkischer Beobachter*—Hitler promised that his government would “preserve and protect the fundamentals on which the strength of our nation rests. It will preserve and protect Christianity, which is the basis of our system of morality [...].”³³ Two weeks later, in Stuttgart, Hitler made what amounted to a profession of faith, when he stated during a mid-February speech:

Today Christians and no international atheists stand at the head of Germany. I speak not just of Christianity; no, I also pledge that I will never tie myself to parties who want to destroy Christianity [...]. We want to fill our culture again with the Christian spirit, not just theoretically. No, we want to burn out the rotten developments in literature, in the theater, in the press—in short, burn out this poison which has entered into our whole life and culture during these past fourteen years.³⁴

At the opening of the new national parliament on 21 March, Hitler and Hindenburg both participated in a highly symbolic ceremony at the Potsdam

Pirna 290.

³³ *Völkischer Beobachter*, 2 February 1933, quoted in Sax and Kuntz, eds., *Inside Hitler's Germany*, 132.

³⁴ Carsten Nicolaisen and Georg Kretschmar, eds., *Dokumente zur Kirchenpolitik des Dritten Reiches*, Vol. 1, *Das Jahr 1933* (Munich: Christian Kaiser, 1971), 8-9, quoted in Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 129.

Garrison Church. It was a highly successful portrayal of the new National Socialist regime as one rooted in the religious and military tradition of Imperial Germany before, as it existed prior to the First World War. On the day after this ceremony, Hitler continued his promising tone in his opening speech to the national parliament. As in earlier speeches, he made known his government's intention to undertake a dual political and moral revolution of German public life, and then added: "The [Reich] government regards the two Christian Confessions as the weightiest factor for the maintenance of our nationality." Hitler promised to abide by all agreements with the churches, to ensure their proper influence in education, to maintain honest cooperation between the state and the churches, asking only that the churches respect the state's work on the national and moral renewal.³⁵

Protestant clergymen from the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg districts responded to these words in good faith, naively as it would turn out. Pastor Kahle of Linum, in the Nauen district, wrote that his parish "joyfully greeted the fact that the National Socialist state considered the religious and moral forces of the gospel necessary for the recovery of the health of the *Volk*."³⁶ Another pastor from Berlin praised Hitler's piety during a speech at the women's assembly of the Nauen district church assembly of 1933. Referring to both the Day of Potsdam and the Day of National Labour,³⁷ he stated that "the young chancellor of the *Volk* openly professed his faith in God and promoted the work of the Christian churches," which the speaker then interpreted as a call for Protestant women to minister to the *Volk* community. The speaker singled out the women's role as the mothers of the next generation--women who "create the ground, on which the young Germany can truly prosper."³⁸

³⁵ Norman H. Baynes, *Hitler's Speeches*, vol. 1 (London, 1942), 370-371, as quoted by Helmreich, *German Churches Under Hitler*, 131.

³⁶ Pastor Kahle in Linum to the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, "Bericht über das kirchliche Leben der Kirchengemeinde", 26 April 1934, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 48/658.

³⁷ The Day of Potsdam was the ceremonial opening of the new *Reichstag*, dominated by National Socialists, on March 21, 1933. National Labour Day, or May Day, was celebrated officially on 1 May 1933 for the first time in Germany.

³⁸ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

In the Pirna district, it was a congratulatory declaration of the Conference of Saxon district superintendents in April 1933 that set the tone for local clergymen. After their first meeting since the National Socialist political takeover, the superintendents declared to Hitler: "With sincere pleasure, we greet the victory of the memory of the Fatherland, which we also have continually served. From our hearts, we thank the new *Führer*, whom divine predestination has given to the German *Volk* in the *Reich* and *Land* [of Saxony], for the powerful function of Christian statesmanship and for the understanding of the autonomous laws of the church."³⁹ In like manner, one Pirna area pastor attempted to convince his colleagues at one of the pastoral conferences that the divine appointment of Hitler compelled Saxon Protestants to join in the national renewal. "The development of current conditions, the extreme spiritual and mental crisis of our *Volk* and the call of the *Führer* are completely unavoidable demands on the church and all its office-holders to do the utmost possible to unite our *Volk* in a great Protestant *Volk* church, to gather our fellow members of the *Volk* into a living community."⁴⁰

Upon the death of *Reich* President Hindenburg in August 1934, Saxon *Land* Church leaders (speaking through the mouths of local clergymen) were quick to proclaim the end of an old epoch and endorse the replacement of "this great man," Hindenburg, with the "*Führer* and Chancellor of the Third *Reich*, Adolf Hitler." A proclamation that was read aloud in Saxon churches on 19 August 1934, the day on which Germans were to vote their approval of Hitler's assumption of presidential powers, depicted Hitler in glowing terms. The *Führer* was the one "whose love and concern extends to all, even to the least of his fellow members of the *Volk* community," as well as the one "whose thoughts revolve solely and only around the freedom, honour and greatness of the German nation," and whose only goal is "Germany, nothing but Germany!" The *Land* Church leaders also praised Hitler for making the German *Volk* healthier, more content, stronger and unified as each month passed. Above all, however, they hailed the *Führer* of the millions-strong

³⁹ "Mit aufrichtiger Freude..." 18 April 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁴⁰ "Timely Preaching," Struppen, March 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

National Socialist movement as “the Christian statesman” who based his work and the establishment of the Third *Reich* on the basis of “positive Christianity” and who wanted to draw on the moral forces of the Christian churches for his great task.⁴¹

With that, the Saxon church leaders committed themselves to supporting Hitler’s re-election, not that it was ever in question. They affirmed that both clergymen and lay members of the Saxon Lutheran Church had already “thanked God for the salvation of our *Land* out of the dark, difficult time through Adolf Hitler.” Moreover, the church leaders asserted: “We know [Hitler] as given to us by God, we have borne his labour as *Führer* of the National Socialist Movement and as Chancellor of the German *Reich* in praying hearts, we declare again our human respect, our Christian obedience and our allegiance to him.” Consequently, Saxon Protestants in Pirna district parishes and other regions were told to do their duty as Protestants and vote for Hitler. It is hard to imagine a more forceful assertion of political loyalty to Hitler and the National Socialist movement. Unlike other instances in which local pastors appealed to their own consciences and refused to comply with higher church authorities, there is no suggestion that any of them failed to comply with Superintendent Zweynert’s instructions to read the proclamation.⁴²

Local voices in Pirna echoed this unqualified endorsement of Hitler by *Land* Church leaders. In February 1934, Pastor Kühnel of Zschachwitz lectured about “The German Protestant Church and the National Socialist State,” and argued that although the churches had preached obedience for centuries, they had not yet rendered obedience to the National Socialist state. Kühnel advocated the incorporation of the church into the National Socialist state, but added that the church still needed to accept the full meaning of the total claim of the state. Apparently undaunted by the implications of a ‘total claim’ that would have superseded his Christian duty to prefer obedience to God over obedience to human

⁴¹ Superintendent Zweynert to the pastors in the district of Pirna, 17 August 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁴² Ibid.

authorities,⁴³ Kühnel argued that the church did not exist in a vacuum, but had to manage both the spiritual and the worldly aspects of its existence. In short, the Church needed to learn to relate “beside, over, under, in the state,” through an intimate relationship of trust rather than through a concordat. Kühnel believed such an intimate relationship between church and state was highly feasible in Saxony, since (in his view) the Saxon Church government was both National Socialist and true to the confession. In this he was merely echoing the *28 Theses* of the Saxon *Land* Church leadership, a document that proclaimed a racial revolution within the church that was not in fact true to the Reformation confessions at all, since it exalted blood and race as the bases for Christian life in Saxony.⁴⁴ The Zschachwitz pastor closed his speech with a diatribe against those who claimed to recognize the external transformation of Protestantism, but who employed false political objections to block its development into the true *Volk* church. As Kühnel declared: “The *Volk* church embodies Lutheranism as German Christianity!”⁴⁵

The Saxon *Land* Church continued to sanction the new political developments unfolding in Hitler’s Germany, and Pirna district pastors continued to hold services, read out proclamations and ring bells to mark the significant passages in the life of their nation. Prayer meetings were announced for 7 January 1935, in anticipation of the vote in the Saar concerning reunification with Germany. The Saxon *Land* Church Office prescribed a prayer of blessing upon the work of German nationals in the Saar and that the vote on the following Sunday would be a declaration of the allegiance of Saarlanders to their *Volk* community in Germany. Further instructions for ringing bells for the Saar vote followed four days later.⁴⁶

This sort of ecclesiastical celebration of national political achievements

⁴³ Any suggestion of a total claim that superseded the claim of the Christian God would have to grapple with scriptural texts such as Acts 4:1-22, in which the apostles argued that they possessed a higher obligation to God than to the Jewish ruling council.

⁴⁴ Please see chapter 6, pp. 237f., below.

⁴⁵ Report from the Müglitzaler Conference of 5 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁴⁶ Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen in the Pirna district, 7 January 1935 and 11 January 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

continued more forcefully under Superintendent Leichte, following his appointment on 11 November 1937.⁴⁷ In late March 1938, Leichte invited area pastors to a meeting about the upcoming *Reich* elections. Motivated by “an inner sense of duty,” Leichte summoned his clergymen to a discussion of the theme “We pastors and 10 April 1938,” a reference to the date of the election. In light of the importance of the election day, Leichte also instructed his pastors not to schedule any church meetings for that evening.⁴⁸ In response to Leichte’s invitation to discuss the upcoming election, Pastor Ploedterll of Königstein made it clear to the superintendent that he would not attend. His reason was straightforward: “You have a different religious faith orientation than I.” Nonetheless, Ploedterll wanted Leichte to know that he would answer the question of 10 April 1938—in other words, the question of Germany’s future under Adolf Hitler—with a ‘yes,’ both “as a pastor of the German Protestant Church and also as a member of the German *Volk* community and a Lutheran Christian.” For Ploedterll, there was “no other possibility at all, than to joyfully march along in the unity front of the entire *Volk* under the motto to which we are called: ‘One *Volk*, one *Reich*, one *Führer*.’”⁴⁹ Even as a member of the Confessing Church in Pirna, Ploedterll was unabashed in his support for Hitler’s regime, even in 1938, long after the regime had revealed itself as an enemy of the churches and traditional Christian belief.

Clergymen in Ravensburg responded to Hitler and his perceived call to German Protestants in the same way as their counterparts in Pirna. In December 1933, Ravensburg Superintendent Ströle explained to his district church leaders that the National Socialist state desired the political service of the church, “as our *Führer* Adolf Hitler has stated again and again.”⁵⁰ One of his fellow clergymen, Pastor Armbruster of Wälde-Winterbach, took his message to heart. Armbruster filled his

⁴⁷ Superintendent’s Instructions 120, 19 November 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁴⁸ Superintendent’s Instructions 123, 25 March 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁴⁹ Pastor Ploedterll of Königstein to Superintendent Leichte of Pirna, 30 March 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 119.

⁵⁰ “Bericht des Dekans”, Kirchenbezirkstag, 14 December 1933, p. 3, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 88e.

parish newsletter with hymns of praise to the *Führer*, motivated by Hitler's word that "the forces of Christianity are indispensable" to National Socialist rule.⁵¹ Other clergymen expressed it similarly. One focused on the church's responsibility to unite itself with the German liberation under Hitler's leadership. Another argued it was Hitler's conviction that the political renewal be rooted in spiritual revival, and asserted that the *Führer* wanted the Germans to be "renewed people."⁵² Only Pastor Karl Steger expressed any reservation at all about Hitler's religious attitude, but it had nothing to do with any fear of animosity from the *Führer*. Steger only wondered whether Hitler would be too friendly to his Roman Catholic coreligionists, and neglect to give German Protestants their due.⁵³

If anything, as time wore on, these Lutheran pastors argued even more vociferously that Hitler had indeed called on the Protestant churches to assist his national renewal, by providing the moral fibre with which to hold the new Germany together. In 1934, a pastor from Struppen, near Pirna, declared that the call of the *Führer* placed "totally irrefutable demands on the church and all its officials to do the utmost to unite our *Volk*, if at all possible, into a great Protestant *Volk* church, to gather our fellow members of the *Volk* into a living community."⁵⁴

In 1935, Protestants in the Ravensburg area heard *Reich* Bishop Ludwig Müller extol the uniqueness of Hitler's rule. Müller asserted that God had called the *Führer* specifically for the great task of uniting the German nation.⁵⁵ The following year, at a meeting devoted to the cause of a united *Reich* church, Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg reaffirmed Hitler's positive attitude towards German Protestants, even as he commented on the negative outlook of other German

⁵¹ *Gemeindeblatt Wälde-Winterbach/Bavendorf*, Nr. 1, 1934, in Pfarrer Hans-Dieter Schäfer (Red.). *Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Wälde-Winterbach*. Ravensburg 1991, p. 26, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

⁵² "Oberschwäb. evang. Diaspora-Versammlung," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 11 December 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

⁵³ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, May 1933, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁵⁴ "Zeitgemässe Verkündigung", March 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁵⁵ *Seebblatt* (Friedrichshafen), n.d., Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

political leaders. Although Ströle admitted that many Party leaders sought the destruction of the churches, he took comfort in the words of the *Führer* from 1933, and stated, "I cannot believe that the *Führer* wants to go this way [i.e., to destroy the churches]. On many important days, he has stated that our *Volk* has in Christendom a source of the deepest spiritual forces."⁵⁶ So convinced were church leaders in Berlin that Hitler was calling the churches to serve the racial community of Germans, as late as 1937 they printed and distributed a poster of heartening quotations from the *Führer's* speeches, which emphasized Hitler's piety and his view of the important place of the churches in the Third Reich.⁵⁷

Beyond the first two motives of moral renewal and the call of the *Führer*, Protestant clergymen approved of Hitler and his movement in large part because the National Socialists had vanquished communism in Germany.⁵⁸ Already in 1932, Superintendent Ströle identified the communist movement as a grave danger to both Christianity and the German *Volk*. Driven by their "fanatical enmity with God", communists blew up churches in Russia and threatened the life of the parish and the family in Germany.⁵⁹ In the years 1933 to 1935, pastors from all three districts spoke out against communism. They instructed fellow clergymen to overcome Marxist thinking from within, and proclaimed that the German *Volk* would smash Marxism if it returned to a Christian foundation under the renewing work of the

⁵⁶ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, November 1936, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁵⁷ Circular from the Brandenburg Consistory to all the superintendents in the Mark Brandenburg, 13 April 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 71/737. In one passage from a speech in Hamburg in 1934, Hitler was quoted affirming "positive Christianity," promising to do his utmost to protect the rights of the two great confessions, to preserve their teachings from interference, and to establish a harmony between the churches' duties and the views and demands of the current government. In another passage from a speech at Thanksgiving 1933, Hitler was quoted as humbly requesting the Lord God to continue to bless "our" work and provide daily bread.

⁵⁸ Among others, John Conway has drawn to the attraction of German clergymen to National Socialism based on the rigidly anti-communist policy of the movement, and to the failure of church leaders to see the aspects of Christian humanitarianism represented in socialist reform programs. See Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 336. Hans Tiefel, "The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism," *Church History*, 41 (1972), 326-336, echoes Conway's argument.

⁵⁹ *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 14 and 16 January 1932, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

churches.⁶⁰ Others decried the poor effort in the battle against Bolshevism and unbelief, lamented the dreadful and hungry conditions of Germans suffering under Soviet Russian rule, or remembered the earlier struggles of the church against communism, Freethinking and political terror in the Weimar Republic, and expressed relief about Hitler's "liberation" of Germany.⁶¹ Pastor Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen summed up the feelings of many clergymen when he publicly thanked God, "who through our *Führer* saved us at the last minute from the Bolshevik terror."⁶²

Anti-Bolshevism also showed up in the church press, in articles like the one from a Friedrichshafen parish newsletter in July 1935. Entitled "About the Battle of Bolshevism against Religion and Church," it described crimes against German farmers in the Soviet Union, then restated the customary Protestant condemnation of the lack of faith and religion in the communist state, and registered Adolf Hitler's determination to avert Bolshevism in Germany.⁶³

Anti-communism was not only a preoccupation of the clergymen at the outset of Hitler's reign. Comments about the communist threat and the National Socialist victory over the left continue to appear late in the 1930s, as in a 1938 Advent sermon preached by Pastor Friedrich Siems of Nauen. From his pulpit, Siems used the Christmas season as an occasion to feature Hitler's saving work, and in the process voiced the often unspoken basis of the political anti-communism of German Protestant clergymen. He declared: "We were once close to a red dictatorship of the kind which, in Spain and Russia, burns churches, murders clergymen and denies God. We thank God that he granted our *Führer* to lead us

⁶⁰ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

⁶¹ "Wesen und Grund der christlichen Hoffnung", by Pastor Schmidt of Weingarten, October 1933, pp. 1-2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 83b; "Evangelischer Männerverein," *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 29 August 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg; "Kreiskirchentag in Pima", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pima 0092.

⁶² *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, July 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

⁶³ Ibid.; The popular press also played up this religious anti-communism, printing illustrated front page articles about communists burning churches and murdering clergymen in Russia and Spain. *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 1933, in Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

from the abyss that would have swallowed us and our ecclesiastical life. He has led us onto solid ground, where our church stands secure."⁶⁴ In response to Hitler's kindness to the churches, Siems resolved to follow Hitler as the all-time greatest unifying and healing force that God had ever raised up in Germany.⁶⁵

Finally, behind these clearly stated reasons for pastors to approve of the Hitler regime and espouse a conservative brand of nationalism lay certain weaknesses in contemporary Lutheran theology. Hans Tiefel has outlined these weaknesses efficiently in an article on the response of certain leading Lutheran theologians to the rise of National Socialism.⁶⁶ Tiefel argues that a series of important trends predisposed theologians such as Paul Althaus, Werner Elert, Emmanuel Hirsch and Friedrich Gogarten to uncritically support Hitler and National Socialism: the belief in the dual revelation of the law and the gospel, the subscription to the traditional Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms, and finally, the emphasis on the theology of orders.

First, Tiefel describes how these Lutheran theologians argued that God's revelation to humanity consisted of two parts: the law and the gospel. Althaus argued that the law was an original revelation of God's demanding will—his ethical obligations for humans. Hirsch and Elert agreed, and added that this law was

⁶⁴ Anna von Hofsten, "Det Andliga Livet i Tyskland," *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 8 February 1939. Von Hofsten had become acquainted with Siems during a visit to Nauen, had written an article describing his ministry, which she then translated from Swedish to German sent to Friedrich Siems of Nauen. The translation is in Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg Nau 26/21.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Hans Tiefel, "The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism," *Church History*, Vol. 41, 1972, pp. 326-336. For an expanded discussion of political theology in Weimar and National Socialist Germany, please see Wolf, *Kirche im Widerstand*, 14-15; Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, 99-119; Robert Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler. Gerhard Kittel, Paul Althaus and Emmanuel Hirsch* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), who develops these theological trends in much more detail. For instance, Ericksen analyzes the theological emphasis of Kittel, Althaus and Hirsch on the concept of the *Volk*, especially on pp. 54-62, 84-89, 91-96, 100-109, 125, 134-139, 146-150, and 155-166; Cochrane, *Church's Confession*, 50-73; Fiege, *Varieties of Protestantism*, 61-99. Fiege goes on to discuss five theological responses to National Socialism, represented by Karl Barth (pp. 209-250), Paul Althaus (pp. 251-290), Emmanuel Hirsch (pp. 291-339), Martin Rade (pp. 340-394) and Paul Tillich (pp. 395-443); Berndt Hamm, "Werner Elert als Kriegstheologe. Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Diskussion "Luthertum und Nationalsozialismus," *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte*, 11, no. 2 (1998): 206-254.

revealed both in history and nature. Gogarten asserted that the law was manifest in the blood and earth and history of a nation and that, consequently, the political demands of any particular nation amounted to the law of God. For this group of theologians, the result of these propositions was the immediate attachment of all ethics to the existing social-legal mores of their own country. Based on the assertion that God guides history and the existing political powers, political history becomes a permanent revelation of God's Law. Consequently, the gospel message of the death of Jesus Christ, an act of divine grace that fulfilled the requirement of divine justice for human sin, functioned merely to provide forgiveness for violations of the law and to help humans obey it more consistently. That gospel, according to Elert and Gogarten, produced no change at all in the temporal realm and made no ethical demands upon the state.⁶⁷

Second, Tiefel demonstrated that the Lutheran doctrine of the two kingdoms was used by theologians like Althaus to create an artificial division between the eternal, spiritual kingdom of God ruled directly by Christ and the kingdom of this world ruled by God through the institutions of the state, complete with its use of coercion and external discipline. Those kingdoms, for Althaus, "must be strictly distinguished and may not be mixed."⁶⁸ Based on this doctrine, many Lutherans avoided engaging in politics during the 1930s. And yet, as Tiefel points out, this did not prevent them from arguing for obedience to the state, based on their Christian duty.⁶⁹ Referring back to his discussion of the law-gospel dualism, Tiefel concludes, summarizing his selected Lutheran theologians: "As the gospel does not normatively influence the law—as it does not shed light on the will of God—and yet enjoins obedience, so the kingdom of Christ does not challenge the kingdom of this world but does counsel obedience in the earthly realm."⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Tiefel, "The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism," 331-2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 333.

⁶⁹ Please see "The Lost Empire" in Barnett, *For the Souls of the People*, 9-17; Hans Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1970), 39.

⁷⁰ Tiefel, "The German Lutheran Church and the Rise of National Socialism," 333.

Third, Tiefel explained that by the 1930s, many German Lutheran theologians were consumed with the study of the divinely established orders, those social institutions through which God relates to humanity. During the National Socialist era, adherence to orders like blood (race), gender, marriage, and not least the state (as interpreted from Romans 13) meant that theologians who espoused the theology of orders spoke in the same language about the same socio-political values as National Socialist ideologues and Party leaders.

Effectively then, theologians such as Althaus, Elert, Gogarten, and Hirsch provided language for a theological justification of National Socialist ideology. In the districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, a few clergymen took up that language and (no matter their personal beliefs) thereby blessed National Socialist racial ideology. For instance, in January 1934, Dr. Ranft of Helmsdorf graced a meeting of his fellow clergymen from the Pirna district with a highly charged lecture entitled "The German Evangelical Church and the National Socialist state." In the talk, Ranft compared church-state relations in different eras of German history, noting two new phenomena in Hitler's *Reich*: the emergence of the total claim of the National Socialist state, and the new precedence of the *Volk* community over the individual. In language echoing that of the theologian Gogarten, Ranft acknowledged that "the total claim of the state bumps up against the total claim of God." He continued: "For that reason, it is necessary to bring state and church into the right relationship with one another." Ranft's solution was captured in the slogan: "Total Church in the Total State." The church had to have absolute confidence in the state and to learn how "to recognize the total claim of God in the total claim of the state." To drive home his point, Ranft drew an extraordinary comparison between Christianity and National Socialism: "Just as the church remembers its eternal cause in the sacrificial death of Jesus, so the Third *Reich* has its eternal cause in the sacrificial death of the Fallen," those who died fighting for the National Socialist cause.⁷¹ For Ranft, the duty of the church was expressed in its highest form as service to the *Volk* (as directed by the National Socialist movement), and

⁷¹ "Bericht über die Sitzung der *Stolpener Konferenz* am 22. Januar 1934," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

spiritual salvation through Christ was superseded by *völkisch* salvation through National Socialism.

Pirna clergymen also received the same message from other clergymen writing for the wider public, as in the newspaper article "The German *Volk* is National Socialist," which appeared in a special edition of the *Dresdner Anzeiger* on 1 December 1933. The National Socialist writer explained that Hitler's Protestant followers did not want "orthodoxy" in the sense of the faith of their fathers. Rather, they wanted to move forward into "a genuine devoutness." If there was any question about how that could be achieved, the writer made it clear what the National Socialists in the Saxon church wanted. "Our solution is: the German Protestant Church stands in the state, and only as the church in the state can it be a *Volk* church. That means first of all, that the church perceives the call of the living God to *Volk*, state and family in the total claim of the state."⁷²

Another case of this theological justification for National Socialist rule comes from the pen of Nauen parish pastor Friedrich Siems. Siems was an outspoken German nationalist and antisemite. He had been an NSDAP member since before 1933, and a local Party official. Theologically, Siems combined the two-kingdoms doctrine and a theology of orders in which he emphasized race as a divine creation. Ironically, in all this Siems claimed to be apolitical. In a 1938 sermon on the theme of giving to Caesar what was Caesar's, and to God what was God's,⁷³ Siems used Christ's identification of two kingdoms to argue that Protestant clergymen ought to steer clear of political activity. "We pastors have other things to do than to occupy ourselves with politics, when we want to give to God, what is God's. Our struggle belongs to another realm than the political."⁷⁴ However, like the theologians who argued against political engagement but advocated support for

⁷² "Das deutsche Volk is nationalsozialistisch," *Dresdner Anzeiger*, Special Edition, 1 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁷³ The reference is to Matthew 22:21.

⁷⁴ Anna von Hofsten, "Det Andliga Livet I Tyskland," *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 8 February 1939, translated and sent by von Hofsten to Friedrich Siems of Nauen, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Nau 26/21.

political developments they saw as beneficial, Siems turned directly from his disavowal of political engagement to an expression of thanks for Hitler's saving work in Germany. For Siems, the *Führer* was clearly a dynamic expression of God's providential rule over the kingdom of this world. Hitler, who ruled with God's help, was a man whose life was an example of service to God.⁷⁵

As for a theology of orders, Siems sought the welfare of the German nation through the creation of a strong, united *Volk* church in which both Protestants and Catholics would feel at home. In doing so, Siems gave distinct priority to his racial community over his spiritual community. To a Swedish visitor in his parish, Siems asserted: "We serve God as we serve our brothers—in the first place, those who stand nearby in our own home *Volk* [...]." ⁷⁶

What did that mean? For Siems, the first Christian duty was to the Fatherland. National identity was God-given, and included the duty to accomplish special national tasks—tasks for which the racial community had to prepare itself. The churches could contribute to this preparation by becoming national in character, in part by encouraging the maintenance of blood purity among their parishioners. Siems argued that blood purity was a divine order, a Christian duty that was threatened by the presence of Jews in the German *Reich*. Attacking Jews as both the root and strength of Bolshevism and the high priests and servants of mammon, Siems asserted that it was a God-pleasing work to transfer them from Germany into their own colony somewhere else.⁷⁷

Siems returned to the theme of the Jews in 1939, in a letter in which he questioned Jesus' racial identity, arguing that "the founder of Christianity had nothing, really nothing at all to do with the Jewish people, rather they were always his sharpest opponents. [...] The personality of Christ is too great and too holy for us to bring it into connection with [Jews, who have] become a curse for the whole

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

world."⁷⁸ Accordingly, just as Christ opposed "the Jews" on religious grounds, so too German Protestants could drive off Jews on the grounds of preserving the divine order of race, and serve God in the process!

Other clergymen, like young Pastor Wertz of Isny, near Ravensburg, also employed a theology of orders to legitimate National Socialist values. In a 1936 Ravensburg pastors' conference, Wertz presented a treatise entitled "State and Church." His starting point was the conviction that God created humanity with the need for blood-bound community, expressed in the blood union of marriage and the blood ties of the *Volk*. On that basis, he decried internationalism as "not community-forming, but destructive of community." In contrast, Wertz insisted: "Völkisch uniformity of the blood, völkisch character is God-willed."⁷⁹

After the blood unions of marriage and *Volk*, the next "God-given expression of human will to live" Wertz introduced was the economic life (*Wirtschaft*), and farming in particular: "The human is bound to the earth [*Erde*], more precisely to the soil [*Boden*]." For Wertz, the Bible ennobled the soil in such a way that the farmer was identified as the foundation of the entire economy. Farmers were vital, since God had willed that the economy "goes out from the soil and returns to the soil." With that, Wertz joined all these elements together: "Just as human existence takes place in the realm of the blood, in marriage, family and *Volk*, so also in work, in the first place in work with the soil."⁸⁰ From there, he completed his political theology with the assertion that it was God's will that the human being "should and must be a ruler." For Wertz, human mastery was exercised over nature, in marriage and family, and as political authority within the blood-bound *Volk* community.⁸¹ Wertz's treatise rendered perhaps the ultimate service that a

⁷⁸ Pastor Siems in Nauen to Frau von Hofsten, Upsala, Sweden, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Nau 26/21.

⁷⁹ This point was influenced by a talk by Dr. Hartenstein, director of the Basel Mission, in which he described the creation of the three main branches of humankind, using the Genesis 10 account of Noah's descendants. "Staat und Kirche", by Pastor Wertz of Isny, [November 1936], 2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 83b.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁸¹ Both the ennobling of the soil and the need for authority were based on Genesis 1:28 and 3:19.

Protestant cleric could offer National Socialism—a theological justification for the three core values of the National Socialist movement: blood, soil and authority.

Even a church-political moderate such as Superintendent Hermann Ströle of Ravensburg was not immune from this theological tendency. For instance, in a talk entitled "Our *Volk* Life in Light of the Bible," Ströle explained that the fear of God and the devotion to God would guide the racial community towards God, and ensure its continued existence. Ströle then argued that Christians had a special duty to the *Volk*, and based his case on a misinterpretation of Matthew 5:13-16, Christ's command that Christians be salt and light in the world. Concentrating narrowly on his own national community, Ströle declared: "The Christian has a duty to the whole *Volk*. It is service, co-responsibility to the whole *Volk*." For the Ravensburg superintendent, Jesus did not bring any conclusive Christian political, economic or social order. Rather, through responsibility and brotherhood (as opposed to interest politics and class egoism): "*Völkisch* character in its totality is and remains the basis of our common development and work, according to God's creative order." While on other occasions he established theological limits on his emphasis on the nation,⁸² Ströle was clearly influenced by the theology of orders, and closed his talk with the slogan "*Volk* community over Party!"⁸³ This preoccupation with *völkisch* themes was not limited to individual talks or sermons, but appears time and again in the themes of the monthly pastors' meetings in all three districts.

Similarly, Chairman Konrad Kühlwein of the nearby Friedrichshafen Evangelical Men's Association was reported as having asserted: "God has assigned

Ibid., 3-4.

⁸² In many other talks delivered in the Ravensburg parish and district, Ströle laid emphasis on *Volk* as the context in which the German Protestant commission was to be executed. Nonetheless, on occasions, Ströle did affirm that Christian salvation and the preaching of the gospel transcended racial boundaries. See for example a sermon recounted in *Evang. Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, November 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

⁸³ Other talks in this series delivered to the local *Evangelische Volksbund* were centred on the themes of family and parish in the light of the Bible, suggesting that Ströle thought in categories akin to the leading theologians of divine orders. In this case, Ströle's elevation of the national community over the NSDAP demonstrated that such a theological approach could also serve to temper the self-interested extremes within the Party and to guide the NSDAP into the fulfilment of its national and social mandate. *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 20 January 1932, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

the individual nations [*Völkern*] and races [*Rassen*] their boundaries [*Grenzen*].” Kühlwein went on to explain that the nations of the world were engaged in “a battle for their existence,” though not apart from the sovereignty of God: “When God hands an age over to judgment, we must not try to stop the wheel, if we do not want to be destroyed with the outgoing [age].”⁸⁴ With his clear theological definition of the *Volk* as a divinely created order and his not so subtle intimation that the collapse the Weimar system and the rise of National Socialism were the work of God, Kühlwein left very little space from which to critique the National Socialist political regime and its nationalist and racist political ideology.

If the motivations for clerical nationalism—from belief in the national renewal and the call of the *Führer* to anti-communism and the theological justification of authoritarianism—emerge unequivocally from the public utterances and official correspondence of clergymen from Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg, identifying the extent to which this form of nationalism included concrete support for National Socialist ideology is a far more difficult task.

Membership in the German Christian Movement is one important factor. The German Christians were ardently nationalist in outlook and whole-heartedly affirmed the National Socialist Movement and its leader, Adolf Hitler. German Christians sought to unite the 28 Protestant *Land* churches into a powerful *Reich* church and hoped to co-ordinate and centralize (*gleichschalten*) German spiritual life according to the national, authoritarian and racial values of the NSDAP. The movement espoused a campaign for racial purity in Germany in 1932 and defined the German Evangelical *Reich* Church as an Aryan Church in 1933.⁸⁵ Moreover, it continually demanded the application of authoritarian leadership principles and the NSDAP principle of ‘positive Christianity’ in the Protestant *Land* churches and *Reich* Church: “The Church must enter completely into the Third *Reich*, it must be co-ordinated into the rhythm of the National Revolution, it must be fashioned by the ideas of Nazism, lest it remain a foreign body in the unified German Nazi

⁸⁴ Unidentified newspaper excerpt, 6 February 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

⁸⁵ Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 46, 345.

community.”⁸⁶ This connection between German Christians and National Socialism is particularly relevant for the period up to the 13 November 1933 German Christian assembly at the Berlin Sport Palace, where the full extent of the radical German Christian attacks on the authority of Scripture was revealed. The scandal that ensued drove hundreds of German clergymen from the ranks of the German Christian Movement, though it did not necessarily imply that they disagreed with the application of National Socialist ideology in other realms of German society beyond the Church.

NSDAP membership and leadership in certain Party organizations are surer indicators of affinity with core National Socialist values. It must be added, however, that mere membership in ancillary Party organizations did not necessarily imply a high level of commitment to National Socialism. For example, the National Socialist *Volk Welfare* (*Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt*, NSV) became the largest social work agency in the Third *Reich*, and assumed public welfare duties traditionally carried out by parish organizations. Consequently, many pastors and church officials joined the NSV so that they could maintain their previous involvement in parish social work. Even the Confessing Church recognized this and instructed its pastors to join the NSV, as Pastor Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde argued during the denazification process following the defeat of National Socialist Germany in the Second World War.⁸⁷

Finally, explicit statements of approval from pastors about specific values in the National Socialist ethos or about specific events in which the *Führer* or Party exhibited those same values provide another means of identifying clerical nationalism that included sympathies for National Socialism itself. Where pastors praised radical measures undertaken by the Party, defended the allegedly positive religious inclinations of the *Führer* or spoke publicly about the need to work toward the accomplishment of NSDAP racial goals, National Socialist sympathies can be

⁸⁶ Joachim Beckmann, *Artgemäßes Christentum oder schriftgemässer Christenglaube* (Essen, 1933), 11, quoted in Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 46.

⁸⁷ Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 12 July 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 180.

postulated. Unfortunately, it is precisely here that evidence grows scarce. Important events such as the 1 April 1933 boycott of Jewish shops and stores, the book-burnings of May 1933, the many decrees and laws concerning the coordination and centralization (*Gleichschaltung*) of German political, social, cultural and economic life, the murder of SA leaders and certain marked enemies of the regime on 30 June 1934, the 16 March 1935 reintroduction of universal military service, the 15 September 1935 Nuremberg racial laws, 8 March 1936 reoccupation of the Rhineland, the 1936 implementation of the Four-Year plan for economic autarky to prepare Germany for war, the 9-10 November 1938 Kristallnacht Pogrom, the 1 September 1939 attack of Poland and initiation of the Second World War and the subsequent steps towards the Holocaust—none of these are taken up in the official correspondence of clergymen from the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg districts, except for several cases in which measures against the Jews are addressed.⁸⁸

This silence is troubling—one would have hoped for a pastoral word on some of these matters—but it does not constitute evidence of clerical affinity to National Socialism. It is only evidence of a reluctance to state publicly or officially consider opinions on certain important issues of public life. Moreover, the evidence that does exist—namely the persistent consideration of the relationship between Protestant Christianity and the welfare of the German *Volk* community—is extremely difficult to assess. Because the National Socialist Movement invoked the language of traditional conservative nationalism and invested it with a radical new level of meaning, the use of the same language by Protestant clergymen does not necessarily imply the full extent of the National Socialist meaning.

In Nauen, the only clear measure of clerical nationalism that included an affinity to National Socialist values was membership in the German Christian Movement. Of the 31 pastors and curates in office between 1933 and 1935, 14

⁸⁸ For details about the pastors and National Socialist racial policy, please see chapter 8 below. In the wake of the Nuremberg Laws, the 3rd Prussian Confessing Synod affirmed the right of pastors to baptize Jews, but avoided any comment on the legislation itself. Baranowski, *Confessing Church*, 83-84.

belonged to the German Christian movement, a testimony to their belief and desire to participate in the National Socialist 'renewal' of church and society along nationalist, authoritarian and (often, though not always) racial lines.⁸⁹

In Pirna, the body of Protestant clergymen appear to have been overwhelmingly favourable to the Hitler regime. In February 1934, Superintendent Zweynert officially declared: "All pastors in my district are nationally reliable and loyal, even those who belong to the [Pastors'] Emergency League. There has not been the least bit reported to me that would cause complaint from the political point of view. There is no one who can speak of an attitude hostile to the state." As proof, Zweynert noted that members of the Emergency League included pastors in the NSDAP or its circle of contributors, in the Working Group of National Socialist Pastors and the German Christian Movement.⁹⁰ When the Pirna clergymen were surveyed in 1937 and 1938 to find out who held positions in the NSDAP or its member organizations,⁹¹ the superintendent's office reported that at least 16 pastors and vicars were Party members since 1933.⁹² Five other clergymen held the status of candidate (*Anwärter*) for Party membership or had unsuccessfully applied for membership.⁹³

⁸⁹ These were Pastors Andrich of Vehlefanz, Becker of Grünefeld, Feder of Vehlefanz, Gartenschläger of Bötzwow, Heidtmann of Paaren, Isleib of Hakenberg, Kahle of Linum, Koch of Retzow, Lux of Groß Behnitz, Weicht of Wansdorf, Werner of Ribbeck, and Ziegel of Bredow, as well as Curates (later Pastors) Siems of Nauen and Wallmann of Bötzwow. For details and sources, see Appendix 4: Clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

⁹⁰ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to *Land* Bishop Coch, 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁹¹ Superintendent's Instructions 117, 7 July 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81; Saxon *Land* Church Office Circular Nr. 45, 6 September 1938.

⁹² These were Superintendent Leichte and Pastors Meinel of Bad Schandau, Schwär of Liebethal, Rosenthal of Lohmen, Ranft of Oberhelmsdorf, Börner of Ottendorf, Ebert, Quodbach and Teichgräber of Pirna, Rother of Pirna-Sonnenstein, Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf, Voigt of Stolpen, Kühnel of Zschachwitz and Rieser, parish unknown, as well as Vicars Hermann, parish unknown, and Eberhardt of Pirna. Superintendent Meinel of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Church Committee, 30 July 1937; Superintendent Leichte, Handwritten Lists, 1938; Superintendent Leichte of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 18 October 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

⁹³ These included Pastors Schulze of Dohna and Ruhland of Königstein, both members of the SA, both of whom were accepted as candidates (*Anwärter*) for Party membership, though official word

In Ravensburg, the record of the political convictions of local clergymen is murkier, in part because there was less public religious nationalism among lay people and less church-political conflict among local clergymen than in Nauen or Pirna. Moreover, since the Württemberg *Land* Church remained 'intact,' there was less attention paid to clerical political allegiances than in the Old Prussian Union Church or the Saxon *Land* Church. In Ravensburg, five pastors were German Christians,⁹⁴ but only Pastor Karl Steger remained committed to the Movement for the duration of the Third *Reich*.⁹⁵

Another angle from which to consider the relationship between local clergymen, the national movement and National Socialist ideology is the question of how the pastors, curates and vicars understood the relationship between their spiritual ministry in the Church and the contribution of their Church to the nationalist and potentially National Socialist task of unifying and strengthening the German *Volk* community.

For some pastors, the fervour aroused by the revitalizing aspects of the National Socialist political take-over created confusion between their temporal and divine loyalties. Already in 1933, one pastor from Nauen (probably Superintendent Graßhoff himself) expressed his fear that if he preached the concept "*Volk* is of God", then his parishioners would fail to see the need for their own conversion to the message of Christ. On the other hand, he admitted that he was hesitant to preach the unpopular formula "*Volk* is of God, but *Volk* is fallen", since it meant a return "to the old difficulty, that we degrade National Socialism, insofar as it is without Christ." His solution—after much soul searching—was a compromise. He decided to preach that anyone who took up the National Socialist struggle in his own

had not yet arrived. Pastor Herbst of Liebenthal, also an active SA man, applied but was rejected. Pastor Strauß of Markersbach, active in the SA since 1936, applied verbally through the local Party leader, and Pastor Meckert of Reinhardtsdorf applied too. Both were rejected. Superintendent Leichte of Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 18 October 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

⁹⁴ These were Pastors Armbruster of Wangen, Duisberg of Friedrichshafen (1), Elsenhans of Tettang, Krauß of Weingarten (2), and Steger of Friedrichshafen (2). For details and sources, please see Appendix 4: Clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

⁹⁵ On the career and ideas of Karl Steger, please see chapter 7, below.

strength, boasting about his own exploits, would be lost before God. That said, anyone who came to the crucified Christ, abandoned his sinful nature and entered the National Socialist struggle as a faithful Christian, would be considered to be participating in a holy act.⁹⁶

Pastor Martin Partecke of Sebnitz, in the Pirna district, echoed Nauen Superintendent Graßhoff's concern. In March 1934, Partecke presented a talk entitled "On the Question of Preaching In Keeping With the Times." Though he defined the *Volk* as an "indivisible, encompassing totality of blood and soil,"⁹⁷ Partecke clearly viewed his racial community as subject to the effects of the Fall. First, he described the problem of preaching to the *Volk* as if one were talking to people trying to pass through the narrow gate to heaven marching six abreast, a not-so-subtle reference to the constant marching within National Socialist political organizations. The *Volk*, he then added, was lost before God. The community of believers stood before God in grace, not as the *Volk*, and renewal came by spiritual rebirth, not political transformation. For Pastor Partecke, then, preaching in the Third *Reich* still had to be biblical preaching that revolved around the message of sin and salvation in Christ.⁹⁸

This tension between the claims of the *Volk* and the claims of the Christian faith shows up in other places too, as in the 1936 confirmation program from the Nauen district. One session was entitled "Religion from the Blood? Religion as Revelation," implying a critique of the *völkisch* notion of a blood-bound faith community. In contrast to that, a second session revolved around the "Christianisation of the Germans", and the overarching theme reflected the preoccupation of local leaders with the fusion of Christianity and national identity: "All for Germany, Germany for Christ".⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Unidentified correspondent from Nauen to Lic. Kummel in Stahnsdorf, Westhavelland, 27 July 1933, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 120/596.

⁹⁷ "Berich über die Pastoralkonferenz in Bad Schandau am 19.3.1934." Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁹⁸ "Berich über die Pastoralkonferenz in Bad Schandau am 19.3.1934." Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁹⁹ Report of the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen re: "Einführung von Konfirmandenrüstzeiten", 18 March 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 125/744.

As late as 1939, confusion reigned in the mind of Pastor Konrad Isleib of Hakenberg, near Nauen. In a letter to his friend, Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac, Isleib argued the case for creating a unitary *Reich* church, asserting that it was both vital for the well being of the *Volk* and the expectation of the *Führer*. A member of the moderate wing of the German Christians, Isleib betrayed his movement's utter inability to bridge the gap between the ultimate claims of both Christianity and National Socialism when he wrote: "The Fatherland stands above everything, just as it always has been for us, even when [...] naturally, our conscience—bound to God and his Word—speaks the final word"¹⁰⁰ The Fatherland stands above all, but the conscience speaks the final word. If this was an unusually confused attempt to decide whether national or Christian identity was pre-eminent, others refused to worry about such inconsistencies. Pastor Gartenschläger of Bötzwow summed it up when he proclaimed the "great fighting goal" of "unity between *Volk* and church."¹⁰¹

Not all clergymen were so strident in their affirmation of union of Protestant Christianity and the German *Volk*. Many simply proposed that the Protestant churches take on the role of a servant to the German *Volk* community and the National Socialist state. They hailed the coming of a united *Reich* church for the very reason that it could more effectively contribute to the German national renewal. Pastor Wacker of Leutkirch and Marstetten, near Ravensburg, was typical. In his parish newsletter, he depicted the coming *Reich* church as the culmination of 400 years of Protestant history and exclaimed: "May God now bless its work in our *Volk*."¹⁰²

Two examples from the year 1936 illustrate the staying power of the concept of service for the *Volk* and demonstrate how culturally bound the vision of Christian

¹⁰⁰ Pastor Isleib in Hakenberg to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 7 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

¹⁰¹ Pastor Gartenschläger in Bötzwow, "Die Deutschen Christen rufen zur Volksmission," n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Nau 56/85.

¹⁰² *Ev. Gemeindeblatt für die Leutkirchner Diaspora*, July/August 1933, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 66f.

service was for these German Protestant clergymen. First, in March 1936, District Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg spoke in Tett nang, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the parish. Ströle preached on the relationship between service and community, revealing that the deepest inner community, the community of faith, serves "the great community of the *Volk*. Whoever serves the faith community, performs great things also for the *Volk* community [...]." Ultimately, as Ströle explained, the faith community embodied by the church was not an impediment to the *Volk* community, but rather its "source of life."¹⁰³ This was not a call to an unthinking subservience to the *Volk* community, but rather to a dynamic partnership between the Church and the national movement.

Six months later, in October 1936, the Friedrichshafen Evangelical Men's Association held a series of special meetings with guest speakers from Stuttgart. In one of those sessions, Pastor Eichler, head of the Württemberg Parish Service, reflected the *Führer's* recent message to open the Winter Relief campaign (*Winterhilfswerk*), in which Hitler had proclaimed that service to the *Volk* was a Christian duty. Eichler used that statement as a canvas on which to portray two duties of the Christian. The first was the duty to love one's neighbour as oneself, which Eichler associated with devotion to fellow members of the *Volk* community: "It is a very pleasant fact that now under the leadership of the state, the whole *Volk* is participating today in this duty of love." The second was the duty to love the Lord God with all one's heart. Eichler argued that Christian service to the *Volk* community went beyond mere earthly significance and involved eternal life. Indeed, Christ called the church to serve others, beginning in the family and expanding to include the message of God for the *Volk*. Eichler closed his call to service with the stirring injunction: "A true Christian will always be a fighter [*Kämpfer*] in the service of his Lord."¹⁰⁴ While Eichler called for the participation of the Church in the social work of the National Socialist state, his location of

¹⁰³ "75 Jahre evangelische Kirchengemeinde Tett nang", (newspaper clipping), 17 March 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 67h.

¹⁰⁴ *Evang. Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, November 1936, and "Evangelischer Männerverein Friedrichshafen, Bericht, Juni 1937.", Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

Christian love in the context of the German *Volk* community and his use of militant National Socialist language to describe Christian service blurred the lines between Christian teaching and National Socialist ideology.

The theme of service to the *Volk* community was also an important one in messages directed to Protestant women. For instance, at the 1933 Nauen district church assembly, Pastor Cramer of Kremmen introduced the theme for the women's meetings: "Ready for Service." This he described as the duty of every Protestant woman "in this great fateful time for our *Volk*."¹⁰⁵ In a subsequent session of the that annual assembly, a visiting pastor from Berlin enlightened the women's gathering about the experiences of German mothers in the Great War, through the Weimar era, during 14 years of state powerlessness and contempt, of unemployment and hopelessness, until Hitler's assumption of power amid the ringing of church bells. The speaker described the work of men to build the great German Fatherland, while their women fashioned the cottage of the Christian family. "No one else can do this holy, important service for the *Volk* but you, Protestant woman! [...] Be German, Protestant mothers ready for service for God, Church and Fatherland!"¹⁰⁶

Similarly, in 1940, at the 10th anniversary of the Women's Aid in the Schwante parish, near Nauen, retired Pastor Daab called on the women of the parish to help build up the national community. In doing so, he reminded his female audience of the two realms of women: the domain of the house and the domain of the heart. Justifying the efforts of women to make a house into a home, Daab stated: "How shall the life of our *Volk* be built up, if not from the house? Who then shall perform this great service for our *Volk*, which is currently fighting for its freedom, if not the woman? She shall let the men know how happy it is for those [who live] in a house in which Christ rules in his goodness, in his love and with his peace."¹⁰⁷ In good times and bad—and not least in times of war—pastors affirmed

¹⁰⁵ "Kreiskirchentag in Nauen", (newspaper clipping), n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ *Evang. Sonntagsblatt für den Kirchenkreis Nauen*, 3 March 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ki 490.

the domestic labour and spiritual character of Protestant women as both the will of God and a vital service for the German *Volk*. In all these cases, and in many others, Christian service was proclaimed as service to the *Volk* community, not to fellow human beings or to the lost who did not know Jesus Christ. That blind spot illustrates the extent to which Protestant clergymen were culturally bound, caught up in the nationalist mindset that permeated the Third *Reich*. These constant references to the application of Christian teaching within the context of the German *Volk* did not mean that clergymen who employed such national language necessarily adhered to National Socialist racial doctrines. They did mean, however, that these clergymen were substantially preoccupied with the national renewal and ill prepared to consider aspects of their faith that did not correspond to the nationalist and racist cultural trends swirling around them. Further, their advocacy of church partnership in the national movement that elevated the unity and interests of the German *Volk* above all other considerations only helped legitimize the National Socialist government behind the national renewal in the eyes of their parishioners.

There were, however, clergymen who expressed scepticism about the ability of the Protestant Church to serve the German *Volk* in such a grand way. One such voice was Pastor Schneider from Rückersdorf, who spoke on "The Question of Church and *Volk* in the Present Situation" in July 1935. Schneider argued that at the current time the *Volk* was hardly asking the church for its service. Given that fact, he argued that the church could do nothing but wait on the matter and continue to preach the gospel loyally and conscientiously in the knowledge that the *Volk* direly needed it. The church could only hope that the state would come to perceive more clearly the indispensability of its service.¹⁰⁸

A handful of clergymen swam against the stream of clerical nationalism. There were, consequently, some instances when pastors criticized the preoccupation of their churches with *völkisch* nationalism or drew clear lines beyond which nationalist ideology was not permitted to interfere with eternal Christian truth.

¹⁰⁸ Pastor Zweynert of Neustadt, "Bericht über die Sitzungen der Stolpener Konferenz am 1. und 22. Juli 35," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

There were also instances where pastors recognized (then tried to bridge) the growing gulf separating overheated National Socialists and pious Protestants. The results could be surprising, particularly when members of the Confessing Church—dedicated to the independence of their Protestant churches from state control—offered their support for the totalitarian rule of Hitler and the NSDAP.

Pastor Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf provides the best example of this incongruous approach. In May 1933, Rasch wrote to Dr. Max Zweynert, District Superintendent in Pirna, to explain his reasons for applying for NSDAP membership: "I did not want to rejoice in the [National Socialist] freedom movement and not make a sacrifice for it and actively promote it." Rasch added that he was also applying because he did not want to raise any doubts about his patriotic attitude and his "exuberance for the national revolution" through any of his ecclesiastical decisions.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, Rasch's adherence to the Confessing Church landed him in trouble with the Saxon Land Church authorities several times in 1933 and 1934. Along with his colleagues Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau and Gerhard Zweynert of Papstdorf, Rasch felt so strongly about the political resurgence of Germany that he abandoned the Confessing Church, in part because of the concern that the Confessing Church would divide his parish and undermine the unity work pursued by the NSDAP. Naively, he even hoped to bring National Socialism into close contact with the kind of confessionally orthodox and biblically grounded Christianity promoted by Berlin Pastor Martin Niemöller's Young Reformation Movement.¹¹⁰ The impossibility of Rasch's hopes becomes clear in light of the fact that Niemöller's Movement, the very group Rasch wanted to bring into ideological contact with National Socialism, was bitterly opposed by the German Christian Movement. In turn, it was the German Christian Movement—with its nationalist enthusiasm, racial ideology and disregard for church tradition—that enjoyed the political support of Hitler, leading Party members and local Party officials

¹⁰⁹ Pastor Martin Rasch in Reinhardtsdorf to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 19 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

throughout Germany in 1933.¹¹¹ The Young Reformation Movement neither would nor could ever compete with the German Christians' fawning adulation of the National Socialist state, no matter what Rasch's dreams. In the context of the clerical nationalism in Nauén, Pima and Ravensburg, however, Rasch's proposal stands out as a unique attempt to connect the national renewal and the spiritual renewal he and so many other pastors longed for.

Elsewhere, administrative irritations created by church-political conflict sometimes provoked fundamental criticisms of the National Socialist state. In Nauén, Interim Superintendent Bettac poured out his frustration over local church-political divisions to a colleague in Berlin. Angered by the radicalism of German Christians, Bettac wrote: "I cannot say it any other way—consciously or unconsciously, [the German Christians], on behalf of the state, are destroying the bothersome church."¹¹² Six months later, Bettac was quite openly sceptical about the possibility of any unity between church and state in the Third *Reich*. Writing to his nationalistically overheated colleague, Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg, Bettac argued that the National Socialist state "declares that it is not and does not want to be Christian." In light of that, the interim superintendent asked how a union of state and church could possibly be achieved, as long as the state kept advancing its totalitarian claims over everything, even the church. Bettac considered the danger of state interference in and control over the churches a greater threat than the conflict over matters of faith within the churches, and tried to cool Isleib's excitement over the German Christian Movement and its adulation of the National Socialist state.¹¹³

The most energetic resistance against the union of nationalist and Protestant ideologies among any clergymen in Nauén, Pima or Ravensburg came from Pastor

¹¹¹ On the Young Reformation Movement, please see Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1:306-380; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 140-146.

¹¹² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Knuth in Berlin, 18 July 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

¹¹³ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Isleib in Hakenberg, 10 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

Herbert Posth of the Berge parish, near Nauen. Like other Confessing Church clergymen around him, Posth was the subject of frequent ecclesiastical investigations and administrative persecution. In part, this stemmed from his tone when discussing *völkisch* themes, for Posth almost completely detached the political and spiritual planes. In an article he wrote for a 1935 edition of his parish newsletter, Posth stated: "One is ~~born~~ into the *Volk*, one belongs to it through blood and race, one is called into the church by the Holy Spirit in the Word of God [...] independent of blood and race."¹¹⁴ Three years later, in the course of a dispute with the Brandenburg church authorities, Posth reiterated his view: "The opinion [that] the church should 'promote the life of faith of the members of the *Volk*' contradicts the clear Word of God [...]. It amounts to disobedience against the Word of Christ to preach the gospel to all nations—the word *Volk* member [*Volksgenosse*] is not a church word at all, but rather a political word [...]."¹¹⁵

Posth's disdain for mixing nationalist politics and Protestant Christianity carried over into his frustrations with implementing National Socialist racial policy and Prussian Land Church financial policies.¹¹⁶ It also carried over into criticism of actions of the political police in the churches, and even to aspects of daily life in National Socialist Germany. Concerning the interference of the National Socialist state and political police in ecclesiastical affairs, Posth was not afraid to take a stand within his parish. For instance, after Pastor Martin Niemöller was arrested by the *Gestapo* and then later thrown into a concentration camp, Posth was one of the Confessing Church clergymen in Brandenburg who demonstrated his support of Niemöller. In March 1939, he wrote to the Brandenburg Confessing Church Council to participate in the discussion about how long to maintain the use of black altar cloths and the ringing of bells in an expression of "church mourning" over

¹¹⁴ *Evang. Sonntagsblatt für den Kirchenkreis Nauen*, 3 March 1935, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ki 490.

¹¹⁵ Pastor Posth in Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

¹¹⁶ See a fuller description of Posth contentious relationship with Brandenburg Consistory Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, in chapter 5, pp. 206ff., below.

Niemöller's detention.¹¹⁷

In 1943, Posth worked with Confessing Church colleague Günther Harder of Fehrbellin and others in the writing of a "Word of the Church" concerning the 10 Commandments, which spoke out forcefully against the murder of non-Germans.¹¹⁸

Around the same time, in December 1943, Posth found himself fighting with the mayor and teacher in his parish town of Berge over the use of the German Greeting, as the National Socialist salute had come to be known. Some parishioners in Berge had claimed that Posth had forbidden the use of the salute when entering his confirmation instruction. He denied it, but clearly inclined himself against the use of the salute within the realm of the church and against the interference of the mayor and teacher in what was purely ecclesiastical business.¹¹⁹

One of Posth's colleagues, Pastor Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, found himself under attack in March 1938, six months after he was appointed to his pastorate. Some of Fritzsche's leading parishioners interpreted his membership in the Confessing Church as a stance of opposition to both the German *Volk* and the National Socialist movement. They argued that Fritzsche's teaching "rends the racial community" and rejected the idea that "there could be some other law for a German church than there is for the German *Volk*." Several times they repeated the assertion that Fritzsche's church politics were un-German and illegal, and claimed that Fritzsche's Confessing Church believed itself able to set aside not only the authority of the Land Church government but also "the sovereignty of the state".¹²⁰ Perhaps more clearly than many of their clergymen, these parishioners recognized the total claims of the National Socialist regime, and understood their pastor's refusal to submit his confessionally informed theology to those all-encompassing

¹¹⁷ Pastor Posth-Berge to Bruderrat der BK Brandenburg, 18 March 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 143/948.

¹¹⁸ Please see chapter 8, pp. 396f., below.

¹¹⁹ Pastor Posth in Berge to the Prussian Superior Church Council, Berlin, 1 December 1943, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934.

¹²⁰ 55 Groß Behnitz parishioners to the Brandenburg Consistory, 7 March 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

demands.

In Ravensburg, several clergymen called the ideology and practises of the National Socialist regime into question. One was the Lutheran theologian Helmut Thielicke, who served for two years as vicar in Ravensburg and Langenargen and after 1945 went on to international fame as a popular preacher and theologian. In his memoir, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, Thielicke described his beginnings as a "greenhorn vicar" in Upper Swabia, with its mistakes, adventures and confrontations with National Socialist opponents. One such confrontation occurred at the funeral of a young judge in Ravensburg, who had joined the NSDAP and the SA at a very early stage, but whose widow insisted he had kept his Christian faith over the years. Thielicke opened with some passages describing death from an SS pamphlet, using them to challenge the gathering of Party faithful about their pagan, collective view of humanity. Thielicke vividly remembered the occasion and the tone of his funeral oration. He began, saying:

'We constantly hear in our country that the life of the individual is of no significance compared with the life of the nation. And when it comes to dying, we are told, then it's only as if a leaf had fallen from the tree of the nation. The living trunk, however, constantly brings forth new leaves in a process of creative renewal. I have a question with regard to this. Does anyone of you gathered here today *dare* in front of this grave and in the presence of the widow, parents, and three children of the deceased to repeat this and to maintain *here* (not in the pub or at the safe distance of one's desk) that this man, loved as a husband and father by his family, is merely an interchangeable leaf on the tree of our nation?' I had said all this with a considerable vehemence and then used what I had said as the peg on which to hang a brief meditation on the infinite worth of the individual in the eyes of God.¹²¹

Thielicke also spoke out forcefully in confirmation classes, challenging his students to defend their National Socialist ideology.¹²²

In nearby Isny, Pastor Siegle used the occasion of his 1938 farewell sermon to make some pointed criticisms concerning the effects of the National Socialist

¹²¹ Helmut Thielicke, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, trans. David R. Law (New York, 1995), 140.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 140, *passim*.

movement in his parish. He criticized the departure of parish councillors on political grounds, referred to battles with city officials over the use of the prayer room in the local hospital, and noted his loss of the right to give religious instruction, for supposedly having made disgraceful remarks. Alluding to "difficulties with the current powers," Siegle went on to lament the recent decline of the parish: "Since National Socialism has been here, people have absolutely no sense for things Protestant, and the same circles which initially awoke such hopes in Isny and appeared as if they wanted to help the Protestant cause, have now so shamed the Protestant cause that I have often said: indeed, they are only good for Catholicism."¹²³ The circles Siegle referred to were none other than local and national branches of the NSDAP. At a time and in a manner similar to Nauen Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac, Siegle found that his administrative frustrations and the recognition of the basic divergence of National Socialist and Christian interests drove him to take a critical stance towards the regime. Though clergymen like Posth, Fritzsche, Thielicke, Bettac and Siegle were not alone in their discovery that the early promise of National Socialist religious renewal was a false hope for German Protestantism, they were among a minority who were brave enough to express their disappointment and disagreement to their colleagues and parishioners.

Finally, there remains the question of comparing the nature and extent of clerical nationalism across the church districts of Nauen, Pirmasheim and Ravensburg. It is noteworthy that the pastors, curates and vicars spoke in very similar terms in all three districts, despite obvious differences in their political, geographic and demographic contexts. Indeed, it mattered little whether their Land Church government had been taken over by members of the German Christian movement, as in Nauen and Pirmasheim, or whether it remained in the hands of theological and church-political moderates, as in Württemberg. In all cases, clergymen advocated that their churches support the National Socialist political revolution and its

¹²³ "Abschied von Stadtpfarrer Sigle [sic], Isny, am 21.2.1938. aus dem Diözesanverein in Ravensburg.", PA S/446, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart.

national-moral transformation of Germany, driven by a common set of motivations.

If regionalism is of little explanatory value with regard to the nature and potency of clerical nationalism in these church districts, what can account for the remarkable outburst of nationalism among some parish pastors or help to explain the resistance of others to the fusion of national political and Protestant ecclesiastical loyalties? One possibility is that the level of ecclesiastical tension within individual parishes was a significant (though not vital) factor in producing conspicuous opinions concerning clerical nationalism. Whether it was a causal factor or not, there was certainly a correlation between church-political strife and the expression of opinions concerning the churches and the national movement in Germany. Where there were longstanding conflicts between pastors and their parishioners, colleagues or superiors, vocal pronouncements about church politics and nationalism were sure to be found.

In Nauen, Friedrich Siems and Herbert Posth were two prime examples of this conjunction of church-political upheaval within the parish and outspokenness on the part of the pastor. Siems fought a running battle with many of his parishioners over the appointment of a second German Christian pastor in Nauen, while Posth clashed repeatedly with his congregation over his refusal to recognize the Prussian church authorities, deliver suitably nationalistic confirmation instruction, and work with junior clergymen holding German Christian views.¹²⁴ In Pirna, Pastor Martin Meinel was often at odds with the Saxon church authorities as he strove to navigate a middle road between church political extremes,¹²⁵ while in Ravensburg, Pastor Siegle of Isny had to contend with an aggressive German Christian group in his parish. Perhaps the best example of all was Karl Steger, the highly nationalistic pastor in Friedrichshafen, near Ravensburg. Steger fought against the church authorities under *Land* Bishop Theophil Wurm, was ostracized by the other pastors in the district of Ravensburg, was undermined by junior

¹²⁴ For details concerning the careers and ideas of Pastors Siems and Posth, please see chapter 5, below.

¹²⁵ For details about the career and ideas of Pastor Meinel, please see chapter 6, below.

clergymen opposed to his deviation from traditional confirmation instruction and opposed by a majority in his parish, including a vibrant local chapter of the Evangelical Men's Association.¹²⁶

To conclude is to return to the initial questions posed in this chapter: why did Protestant clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg identify so strongly with the national renewal unleashed by the National Socialist seizure of power? To what extent did their nationalism translate into affinity for the doctrines of National Socialism itself? How did they understand the relationship between their ministry and the renewal of the German *Volk*? Simply put, pastors believed that the national renewal would bring with it an associated moral renewal and revival of their parish churches, just as many of their ecclesiastical superiors did. As well (and again, like their *Land Church* leaders), they took Hitler at his word when he declared that the churches were going to be pillars in the Third *Reich*. Moreover, these pastors were grateful that the NSDAP had vanquished their common foe, communism. Finally, they adhered to a theology that emphasized the divinely established nature of their contemporary political circumstances and enjoined them to submit to the authority of their state. While a handful of local clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg questioned the close connection between *völkisch* nationalism and their churches, the majority sought a special place for Protestantism in the new Germany, and by promoting the ideal of *völkisch* unity within the churches, they hoped to earn their rightful place of leadership in Hitler's revitalized society.

That cast of mind placed the clergymen of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg squarely in the majority of German Protestant clergymen, who were on the whole quite politically conservative. Historians have long known of the conservative nationalism of Protestants in the Second *Reich*, throughout the Weimar era and during the time of the National Socialist seizure of power.¹²⁷ In many cases, it led clergymen to hastily give their stamp of approval to the national renewal of 1933, without understanding that the National Socialist government behind that renewal

¹²⁶ For details about the careers and ideas of Pastors Siegle and Steger, please see chapter 7, below.

¹²⁷ See note 2, above.

was fundamentally more radical and revolutionary than any previous conservative government they had known. A minority of other clergymen, however, criticized the facile mixture of religion and nationalism or discovered more important priorities than the religious cultivation of the *Volk* community. The stories of their ideas, careers and struggles make up the following chapters, which seek to examine more fully the nationalist ideology, theological and pastoral convictions, ecclesiastical politics, religious propaganda and church-political successes and failures of energetic pastors who participated in the church struggle in the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg church districts.

CHAPTER 4
PULPIT POLITICS AND PARISH OUTRAGE:
CONTROVERSIAL PASTORAL APPOINTMENTS IN THE GERMAN
CHURCH STRUGGLE

No single factor affected the church struggle in the German Lutheran parishes of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg more than the church politics of the resident pastor. Though parishioners, church patrons, neighbouring clergymen, district superintendents, land church authorities or NSDAP officials could and did censure, harass, suspend and arrest parish clergymen, German pastors generally possessed great personal and positional authority within their churches. They administered the sacramental benefits of the Church, baptizing, confirming, marrying and burying their parishioners. They taught children and youth, led Bible studies and prayer meetings, chaired parish meetings, appeared at important functions, visited homes, prisons and hospitals, counselled troubled parishioners, edited parish newsletters and of course, preached sermons. As the key figures in their parishes, pastors (particularly established ones) usually set the spiritual tone and determined the church-political orientation for their parishes. Curates and vicars carried less weight. If they were especially energetic and had proven themselves over time, they might also earn the respect and admiration of their parishioners and attain a position of importance similar to that of their permanently appointed counterparts.

Consequently, pastoral appointments were events like no other in parish life. Sometimes they progressed smoothly, but periodically they evolved into noisy battles between divided factions of parishioners, clergymen and *Land* church authorities. Protestants on both extremes of the church-political spectrum—members of the Confessing Church and the German Christian Movement—coveted the power to influence (and ideally, to control) these clerical appointments. In fact, as a general rule, the church-political group that won the contest over the appointment of clergymen in a parish invariably also set the tone for church life

there. Because of their importance in the life of the parish, understanding the process of pastoral appointments is vital for understanding German Protestantism in the Hitler era. Often, however, that historical understanding has not extended down to the level of parish institutions, and historians of the church struggle have failed to determine in what ways the factional struggle within the governing institutions of the German Protestant churches affected the everyday spiritual life of German Protestants.¹ In short, the analysis of pastoral appointments connects high-church politics to parish *Alltagsgeschichte*. The resulting picture is in no small way a surprising one.

With participation from every level of the Protestant churches, clerical appointments in Nauen, Pima and Ravensburg offer a revealing look into the mechanics of parish politics. As the cases below demonstrate, land church authorities initially determined whether a clerical vacancy would be filled by a new appointee or by a temporary appointment (often junior and sometimes retired) under the administrative supervision of a neighbouring pastor. In the case of a new appointment, those same land church authorities spoke the final word of approval. In between those two ends of the process, however, district superintendents, supervising pastors, patrons, parish councils and individual parishioners all played their roles. They urged their superiors to authorize new pastoral appointments, campaigned for candidates of their choice, launched grievances against appointments they believed to be unjust, and when all else failed, resorted to blatant obstruction.

Though the process of appointments varied slightly between the Brandenburg Church Province of the Old Prussian Union Church, the Evangelical Land Church of Württemberg and the Evangelical Lutheran Land Church of

¹ Please see the historiographical overview in chapter 1, above. Very little research has been conducted concerning pastoral appointments in the parishes of the Old Prussian Union Church or other German *Land* churches. One study of Recklinghausen in Westphalia noted how neutral clergy worked with members of the Confessing Church to block German Christian potential appointments. Geck, *Kirchenkampf in Recklinghausen*, 73-77.

Saxony, most appointments followed a series of common steps. In Brandenburg, vacancies were generally advertised in official church publications. Sometimes the Brandenburg Consistory, the governing body for the church province, also provided the names of potential pastors. The parish patron—often either a local aristocrat or the resident mayor, *ex officio*—would nominate the candidate of his or her choice, usually in consultation with some combination of the parish council, the district synod and superintendent, and the Consistory in Berlin. Next, a candidacy visit would take place, during which the prospective pastor(s) would perform a service, deliver a sermon, and perhaps give religious instruction to a group of children or young people. Afterwards, the parish council (sometimes with input from the district synod executive) would consider the reactions of parishioners and vote on the appointment. Within a fixed period, parishioners were entitled to submit letters or petitions of protest, which were taken into account by the Brandenburg Consistory. Only afterwards did the Consistory ratify the appointment, arrange for moving expenses and assign starting dates.

Between 1933 and 1939, the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg districts all witnessed a substantial turnover of clerical personnel. Of the 28 pastorates in the Nauen district, three (11%) stood vacant from 1933 through 1939, two of which left their parishes without permanent pastoral care.² By September 1939, ten (36%)

² These were Fehrbellin (2), Ribbeck and Tietzow. Numbers in parentheses refer to specific pastorates in parishes filled by multiple clergymen. Unless otherwise noted, information about the tenure of Nauen clergymen comes from four sources: 1) the *Pfarralmanach für die Kirchenprovinz Mark Brandenburg*, 1937, with a 1939 update, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg library collection; 2) the yearly reports from the Nauen District Church Office to the Brandenburg Consistory: 1934-1935 report, 30 September 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 125/744; 1936 report, 11 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 126/750; 1937 report, 18 March 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 129/900; 1938 report, 11 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 130/840; 1939 report, 22 July 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751; 1940 report, 5 March 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 128/752; 1941 report, 10 March 1942, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 131/803; 1942 report, 9 March 1943, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 131/803; 1943 report, 7 March 1944, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 132/759; 3) monthly circular letters sent from the Nauen Superintendent to the clergymen of the district: 1931-1935 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736; 1935-1938 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 71/737; and 1939-1944 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 72/738; 4) copies of the *Evang. Sonntagsblatt für den Kirchenkreis Nauen*, 1935-1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ki 490.

more were vacant.³ In all, 15 new appointments were made in Nauen parishes during that seven-year span.⁴ During the Second World War, from September 1939 to May 1945, the Brandenburg Consistory approved a further five appointments in Nauen, though none after July 1942.⁵

In Pirna, the situation was equally changeable. Of the 57 pastorates in Pirna, nine (16%) were vacant from 1933 to 1939, though all but one was the second or third pastorates in its parish.⁶ By 1939, seven (12%) more pastorates were vacant.⁷ It was not that there were no new appointments in the Pirna district. Indeed, fully 32 positions were filled between 1933 and 1939, as well as 15 more during the war.⁸

³ These were Bötzwow, Bredow, Flatow, Hakenberg, Königshorst, Markau, Nauen (2), Paaren, Pessin and Staffelde.

⁴ These were: in 1933, Posth of Berge and Rocha of Pessin; in 1934, Andrich of Vehlefan and Engelke of Königshorst; in 1935, Schumann of Nauen (1); in 1936, Höft of Zeestow and Rehfeldt of Kremmen; in 1937, Herzog of Wansdorf, Pachali of Retzow, Rumpf of Schwante and Siems of Nauen (2); in 1938, Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, Lehmann of Karweese and Siems of Nauen (1); and in 1939, Bedorf of Pessin.

⁵ These were: in 1939, Wallman of Bötzwow; in 1940, Isleib of Flatow and Wiese of Zeestow; in 1941, Born of Linum; and in 1942, Glockner of Markau.

⁶ These were Bad Schandau (2), Dittersbach (3), Heidenau-Luther (2), Heidenau-Christus (2), Hohnstein (2), Liebstadt (2), Oelsen, Pima-Sonnenstein (2), and Stolpen (2). Unless otherwise noted, information about appointments in Pima comes from Reinhold Grünberg (editor), *Sächsisches Pfarrerbuch. Die Parochien und Pfarrer der Ev.-luth. Landeskirche Sachsens (1539-1939)*, 1939-1940, and "Besetzung des Pfarramtes und Superintendentamtes, 1934-1939," Ephoralarchiv Pima 422.

⁷ These were Dittersbach (2), Eschdorf, Hohnstein (1), Lauterbach, Pima-Hospital, Rosenthal, and Stürza.

⁸ These were: in 1933, Meier of Sebnitz (1) and Partecke of Sebnitz (2); in 1934, Breutel of Heidenau-Christus, Hellner of Dohna (2), Herz of Berggießhübel, Lange of Wehlen Dorf, Schwär of Liebethal, Voigt of Stolpen and Werner of Dohna (1); in 1935, Ebert of Pima (3), Kühn of Neustadt (2), Teichgräber of Pima (2), and H. Zweynert of Neustadt (1); in 1936, Bahrmann of Sebnitz (1), Lotichius of Lauterbach, Morgenstern of Dittersbach, and Teichgräber of Eschdorf; in 1937, Ebert of Pima (2), Griebdorf of Porsdorf, Leichte of Pima (1), and Quodbach of Pima (3); in 1938, Kühnel of Zschachwitz (1), Richter of Zschachwitz (2), Ruhland of Königstein, and Schwär of Pima (4); and in 1939 (pre-war), Esselbach of Stürza, Gartzke of Struppin, Meinel of Liebethal, Rothe of Pima-Sonnenstein (1), Strauß of Reinhardtsdorf, and Ullrich of Wehlen Stadt. From the outbreak of war on, pastoral appointments included: in 1939, Richter of Zschachwitz (1); in 1940, Dr. Brunner of Heidenau-Christus, Gartzke of Berggießhübel, Kühn of Lichtenhain, Schulze of Dohna (2), and Thilo

In contrast to conditions in Nauen and Pirna, of the 17 pastorates in the far-flung Ravensburg church district, none were vacant for the entire period of 1933 to 1939.⁹ In September 1939, four (24%) were vacant, under the care of vicars and neighbouring clergymen, though all were in communities with multiple clergymen.¹⁰ Finally, the Württemberg *Land* Church approved nine new appointments in the Ravensburg district between 1933 and August 1939.¹¹ During the Second World War, from September 1939 to May 1945, an astounding eight new appointments were made in the district, though none after June 1943.¹²

The result of the many retirements, deaths and transfers of clergymen was that in Nauen, only six of the 28 pastorates (21%) remained in the same hands from before the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933 to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.¹³ In Pirna, where 19 (33%) of the 57 pastorates remained unchanged between 1933 and August 1939, the situation was somewhat more

of Pirna (4); in 1941, Naumann of Hohnstein and Nestler of Bad Schandau (2); and in 1942, Faber of Rosenthal, Günther of Eschdorf, Kapler of Wehlen Dorf, Nitzsche of Graupa (1), Schindler of Lauterbach, Steinhäuser of Dohna (2), and Unkrig of Lohman.

⁹ Unless otherwise noted, information on appointments in the Ravensburg district comes from four sources: 1) "Pfarrer" and "Unständige Geistliche" subfiles in both Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 52-77 and 151-152 parish files and Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Bad Waldsee to Weingarten parish files (the latter identified by name, not number); 2) "Pfarrbesoldung," Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 91; 3) "Verhandlungsbuch VI, 1929-1946" (minutes of the Ravensburg parish council), Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 125; 4) Correspondence concerning pastoral appointments in Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart Alt. Reg. Ortsakten Ravensburg, Besetzung I, II, and III.

¹⁰ These were Friedrichshafen (1), Friedrichshafen (3), Leutkirch (2) and Ravensburg (2).

¹¹ These were: in 1935, Siegle of Isny (1) and Wertz of Isny (2); in 1937, Ahner of Wäld-Winterbach, Hoffmann of Waldsee, Kommerrell of Ravensburg (1) and Schieber of Leutkirch (1); in 1938, Hartmann of Wilhelmsdorf and Kinzler of Tettnang; and in 1939, Schlack of Isny (1).

¹² These were: in 1939, Gestrich of Ravensburg (3) and Schmid of Friedrichshafen (1); in 1940, Armbruster of Wangen, Schäfer of Wangen, and Spellenberg of Friedrichshafen (3); in 1941, Metzger of Wangen; in 1942, Waldbaur of Langenargen; and in 1943, Palm of Wilhelmsdorf.

¹³ These were Pastors Becker of Grünefeld, Bettac of Beetz, Harder of Fehrbellin (1), Isleib of Hakenberg, Kahle of Linum, and Oestreich of Lentzke.

settled.¹⁴ Similarly, in Ravensburg, there was only one pastor in at least six (35%) of the 17 pastorates during those seven years between Hitler's seizure of power and the Second World War.¹⁵

Ironically, in the Württemberg district of Ravensburg, the clerical appointment most significant for the church struggle occurred in 1929, four years before the National Socialists came to power. That was the year Dr. Karl Steger was appointed to the associate pastorate of Friedrichshafen.¹⁶ Initially recommended by the Württemberg Superior Church Council, Steger was approved only after a thorough investigation by the Friedrichshafen parish council. The Friedrichshafeners had several concerns about Steger: his health, his personal history and above all his political attitudes. While the Friedrichshafen parish was looking for a liberal pastor to complement their conservative senior pastor, Steger appeared to be the exact opposite of what they were looking for. However, after discussions with the former liberal pastor in Friedrichshafen, the patron of Steger's parish in Massenbach, his superintendent in Brackenheim, Prelate Theophil Wurm of Heilbronn (later Württemberg Church President and Land Bishop) and Steger himself, the two representatives decided that an "outstanding" conservative pastor like Steger was better than a mediocre liberal pastoral candidate, and recommended his appointment.¹⁷

¹⁴ These were Pastors Börner of Ottendorf, Carl of Cotta, Dittmann of Ehrenberg, Friedrich of Gottleuba, Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Knoch of Langenwolmsdorf, Meinel of Bad Schandau, Müller of Heidenau-Luther, Ohnesorge of Lichtenhain, Otto of Hinterhermsdorf, Ploedterll of Königstein (2), Ranft of Helmsdorf, Rosenthal of Lohmen, Schneider of Rückersdorf, Voigtländer of Maxen, von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf, Vorwerk of Liebstadt, Werner of Dittersbach (1), and G. Zweynert of Papstdorf.

¹⁵ These were Pastors Duisberg of Ravensburg (1), Steger of Ravensburg (2), Daur of Langenargen, Krauß of Ravensburg (3), Gaiser of Wangen, and Schmidt of Weingarten. Pastor Knapp of Atzenweiler served from before 1933 until at least October 1938, possibly longer.

¹⁶ For the details of Steger's turbulent career in Friedrichshafen, please see chapter 7.

¹⁷ "Bericht über unsere Reise am Ostersonntag bis einschl. Ostermontag 1929 nach Massenbach O/A. Brackenheim zu Herrn Pfarrer Dr. Steger, Massenbach, Herrn Dekan Metzger in Brackenheim, Herrn Prälat Wurm in Heilbronn und Herrn Stadtpfarrer Eifert in Heilbronn," 5 April 1929, Dekanatsarchiv 130

In hindsight, Steger's appointment in Friedrichshafen was probably a mistake, considering the heretical tendencies of his nationalist theology, his scandalous opposition to the Land Church authorities, and his divisive presence in Friedrichshafen. However, once the church struggle swept into the Württemberg Land Church in 1933 and 1934, the Superior Church Council began to use its authority over pastoral appointments to undermine the German Christian forces in the Ravensburg district, to give positions to important adherents of the Confessing Church, and to uphold the traditional Reformation confessions of faith.

Various examples support this contention. For instance, in August 1937, the Württemberg Superior Church Council appointed Pastor Gottfried Hoffmann in Waldsee. Hoffmann came to the Ravensburg district after a turbulent history in Bad Liebenzell, in the Calw district, west of Stuttgart. There, the commissarial church government suspended Hoffmann for two months in autumn 1934, for publicly criticizing its takeover of the Württemberg Land Church and for creating ill will among the local National Socialists.¹⁸ In Bad Waldsee, Hoffmann inherited a pastorate in which former Pastor Hartmann had fought a running battle with some prominent families in the parish since the end of the 1920s. After 1933, that opposition to Hartmann's ministry was channelled into the creation of a vocal German Christian group in Waldsee. The selection of the committed Confessing churchman Hoffmann as pastor in Waldsee suggests a deliberate strategy by the

Ravensburg 53b.

¹⁸ Gottfried Hoffmann, "Aufstellung der persönlichen Verhältnisse," Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart PA H/345. Suspended without pay by the commissarial church government in Stuttgart, twenty-six year old Gottfried Hoffmann refused to recognize the ban. As a result, Bad Liebenzell police prohibited him from performing any official pastoral actions. Hoffmann's grievance against the police order was only partly successful, and even after the return to power of Land Bishop Wurm, both the Bad Liebenzell police and the Oberamt Calw resisted rescinding Hoffmann's suspension. The relevant correspondence, including Hoffmann's grievance and the ruling of the Oberamt Calw, is in Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart PA H/345.

Württemberg Superior Church Council to apply its power of appointment to undermine its German Christian adversaries throughout the Land Church.¹⁹

In another case, the Superior Church Council sent Pastor Eugen Schmid to the difficult parish of Friedrichshafen in October 1939, just after the outbreak of the Second World War.²⁰ The discussions surrounding Schmid's appointment reveal the nature of interaction between local and Land Church leaders and underscore the primacy of the Superior Church Council in questions of personnel. As Prelate Buder of Ulm and the Friedrichshafen parish council began talks, they immediately addressed the need to adjust the pastoral ministry in light of the striking surge in the local population. Friedrichshafen, which had doubled in size since mid-decade, thanks to an influx of Protestant factory workers from across Germany, was now a heterogeneous parish of close to 7000 souls. In the midst of this rapid change, the parish council observed that many Protestants were not making their way into the church, since "the church does not find the way to them."²¹

Given the certainty of continued growth, the Prelate and parish council agreed that the new pastor needed to generate much personal contact with parishioners. They agreed that the splintering of the parish created by the demographic changes and by other circumstances—in all probability, an oblique reference to Pastor Steger's divisive labour—made it vital that the new pastor care for the nucleus of lay leaders and their organizations. As an example, the parish council singled out children's church for special attention, in the hope that their young ones might be brought into closer connection with the pastor and grow to feel

¹⁹ Correspondence concerning Hartmann's conflict with a prominent manufacturing family and the principal Protestant schoolteacher in Waldsee is in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71a, 71b ("Fall Birkmeyer"), 72c, 72d, and 72f.

²⁰ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 20 October 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53a.

²¹ "Protokollauszug of the Kirchengemeinderat Friedrichshafen," 27 August 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53a.

more connected to the church.²² The other special request of the Friedrichshafen council was that the new pastor "would do justice to the inner longing of the parish, to present nothing but the pure gospel." Amid the social upheaval of the Third Reich, the parish council asked for a strong leader, and all but promised that parishioners would follow united.

Significant in these negotiations for a new pastor was the attitude of the Friedrichshafeners, who looked to the Superior Church Council in Stuttgart to find the best candidate. The parish council merely requested that the *Land* Church authorities in Stuttgart pay special attention to their parish, and affirmed their confidence that Stuttgart had the best view of the situation and would send the right man.²³ The Superior Church Council's answer was Eugen Schmid, an experienced pastor and regular critic of Pastor Karl Steger, Schmid's German Christian counterpart in the Friedrichshafen parish.

Beyond the Superior Church Council, Land Bishop Wurm himself was directly involved in the appointment of another pastor in Ravensburg, Dr. Helmut Thielicke. In 1940, the Gestapo forced the young theologian Thielicke from his professorship in the University of Heidelberg theological faculty. Next, Thielicke endured a short stint in the army, until a medical problem allowed him to return to civilian life. Unemployed and politically compromised by his critical stance against National Socialism at the Tübingen University, Thielicke was rescued by Wurm, who summoned him for an meeting in Stuttgart. According to Thielicke, the Land Bishop arranged to give him a quiet post in Upper Swabia so that he could devote time to preparing for his future role as a leading theologian in the Württemberg Land Church.²⁴ Sent to Ravensburg, Thielicke pastored there from mid-January 1941

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Helmut Thielicke, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, 110-125.

until September 1942, when Wurm commissioned him to head the new Theological Department of the Württemberg Land Church and to serve as his theological advisor.²⁵

Following Thielicke's move to Stuttgart in November 1942, the Superior Church Council sent another theological exile to Ravensburg, Professor Dr. Günther Dehn, late of Halle.²⁶ Dehn was already famous for his condemnation of the glorification of war and for his demand that the church advocate international peace and reconciliation. Those opinions aroused the fury of nationalists and National Socialists beginning in 1928, when Dehn first voiced them, and then again in 1931 and 1932, when the so-called Dehn Case erupted. A Berlin pastor at the time, Dehn was offered and then driven out of theological professorships in Heidelberg and Halle.²⁷ Sheltered in the Württemberg Land Church during the war, Dehn followed Thielicke to Ravensburg, graduating from third to senior pastor during his tenure there between autumn 1942 and early 1946. Dehn considered his time in Ravensburg "quite an experience" because of the high level of interest among parishioners for the affairs of their Church.²⁸ His theological exile complete, Dehn then returned to academic life in northern Germany, much to the disappointment of

²⁵ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 20 January 1941, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 151e; Pastor Daur in Ravensburg to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 16 January 1942, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart Alt. Reg. Ravensburg Besetzung III; Minutes of the Ravensburg parish council meeting of 24 September 1942, *Verhandlungsbuch*, Band VI, p. 362, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 125; Thielicke, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, p. 147.

²⁶ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 21 November 1942, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 151e; Minutes of the Ravensburg parish council meeting of 14 December 1942, *Verhandlungsbuch*, Band VI, p. 367, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 125.

²⁷ On the Dehn Case, please see Dehn, *Die alte Zeit, die vorigen Jahre*, 247-285; Fiege, *Varieties of Protestantism*, 103-105; Cochrane, *Church's Confession under Hitler*, 51-53; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 172-177; Huber, *Staat und Kirche*, 4: 785-803.

²⁸ Dehn, *Die alte Zeit, die vorigen Jahre: Lebenserinnerungen*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1964), 346, quoted in Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 52.

the Ravensburg parishioners who had flourished under the exceptional preaching of both Thielicke and Dehn.²⁹

In the Saxon district of Pirna, clerical appointments were made by a combination of the *Land* Church authorities, the local patron and the parish council. Or so it was in the days before the First World War, when Superintendent Dr. Maximilian Zweynert was appointed to Pirna.³⁰ By the mid-1930s, church authorities in Dresden controlled appointments, and used their advantage to promote German Christian candidates within the Evangelical Lutheran Land Church of Saxony. The Land Church Office intervened in Pirna on behalf of the German Christians and wrecked the ecclesiastical peace that Superintendent Zweynert had worked so hard to establish in the early 1930s.

Upon Zweynert's retirement in June 1937, the Saxon Land Church Committee designated Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau as interim superintendent for the Pirna church district. A senior pastor in the district, Meinel was already the chairman of one of the pastoral conferences—the monthly gatherings of district clergymen—and had also been the standing substitute for Zweynert during some of the former superintendent's absences.³¹ Despite that, Meinel lasted only four months in his new post. First, the local National Socialist leader expelled Meinel from the Party, and then the district court investigated him. Finally, the leader of the Land Church Office, Klotsche, and the chairman of the Finance Department of the Saxon Land Church, Kretzschmar, suspended Meinel from his position as interim superintendent and gave the position to Pastor Heinrich

²⁹ Thielicke, *Notes from a Wayfarer*, 184; Prelate Buder in Ulm to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 16 October 1945 (and reply of 3 November 1945), Prelate Buder to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 14 December 1945, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart Alt. Reg. Ravensburg Besetzung I.

³⁰ "Herr, auf dein Wort! Abschiedspredigt von Oberkirchenrat Dr. Zweynert in der Marienkirche zu Pirna am 27. Juni 1937," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³¹ Superintendent's Instructions 113, 5 April 1937; Superintendent's Instructions 115, 25 June 1937; Pirna Superintendent to district clergymen, 19 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

Leichte from Königstein.³² Meinel briefly resisted his suspension, refusing to hand over the keys to the superintendent's office in Pirna on 18 November 1937. By the following day, however, a circular letter to the pastors of the Pirna district had been sent out under Leichte's signature.³³

That Leichte's appointment was politically motivated is beyond question. A self-described German Christian and National Socialist, Leichte had worked for the National Socialist movement prior to 1933 and joined the Party in the year of Hitler's seizure of power. Since then, he had functioned as a local Party leader.³⁴ Within the Pirna district, however, he was something of an outcast for his German Christian agitation and uncollegiality.³⁵ Leichte's installation service reflected his commitment to the twin movements of National Socialism and German Christianity. His guest list began with 22 district and local NSDAP leaders and officials responsible for various Party offices. Following a series of 25 *Reich* officials, nine state and 13 civic officials from Pirna and district, Leichte included the names of only nine local leaders from the various ecclesiastical associations, among them the

³² Klotsche and Kretzschmar, Saxon Land Church Office, to Pastor Meinel in Bad Schandau, 11 November 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³³ Letter to the Pirna political police, 18 November 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422; Superintendent's Instructions 120, 19 November 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80. This was not the first time that Meinel had run afoul of the Saxon Land Church authorities. Early in the Third Reich, he joined the Pastors Emergency League. Though he withdrew from the League in mid-1934, Meinel remained an opponent of the Saxon German Christians who dominated the Land Church government. In 1937, he joined the Middle (*Der Mitte*) and worked actively against the German Christians in the Pirna district. Saxon Land Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna, 25 July 1934; Pastor Meinel in Bad Schandau to the Saxon Land Church Office, 8 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815; Meinel to Zweynert, 23 March 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 819. For more on Meinel, please see chapter 6, *passim*.

³⁴ List of district clergymen who acknowledge the authority of the Saxon Land Church government, 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815; "Wiederbesetzung der ersten Pfarrstelle in Pirna," (newspaper clipping), 30 May 1938; Heinrich Leichte, "Lebenslauf," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³⁵ For more on Leichte's divisive behaviour among his colleagues, please see chapter 6, pp. 242ff. and 294ff., below.

district leader of the National Church Union of the German Christians.³⁶ Two subsequent lists of invited guests included 17 school leaders from Pirna and district, and one rail official and two Protestant leaders from an adjacent district in the Czechoslovak Republic.³⁷ Among this impressive list of Party and state officials, one notable omission was Leichte's predecessor, retired Superintendent Zweynert. Zweynert sent Leichte a postcard ten months after Leichte's appointment, explaining why he had not sent the new Superintendent any good wishes on the occasion of Leichte's installation. The simple truth was, no one from Pirna had even informed Zweynert about the event, let alone sent him an invitation.³⁸

Leichte's installation as superintendent demonstrated the extent to which the *Land* Bishop and his administration possessed the power to control pastoral appointments in Pirna, and appears to have been the rule in the district. Out of 46 other appointments in Pirna parishes between 1933 and 1942, there is no evidence of any local controversy, despite the fact that there was a great deal of church-political conflict in Pirna parishes. Circular letters from Superintendents Zweynert and Leichte simply noted the appointments, and seldom even mentioned a parish election. Likewise, in the 450-page file on the participation of the 14 most contentious pastors in the church struggle in Pirna, pastoral appointments never come up as an issue over which the 14 fought.³⁹ In view of their outspokenness and willingness to defy the authority of the Saxon church authorities, it may be assumed

³⁶ Pastor Heinrich Leichte to the District Superintendent's Office, Pirna, 13 June 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³⁷ Pastor Heinrich Leichte to the District Superintendent's Office, Pirna, 15 June 1938; Leichte to the District Superintendent's Office, Pirna, 21 June 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³⁸ Maximilian Zweynert to Superintendent Heinrich Leichte, 24 April 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

³⁹ The relevant material includes many circular letters from Pirna superintendents in Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80 and 81, as well as the large file containing the cases of 14 Pirna pastors, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

that the Confessing Church in Pirna would have contested Leichte's appointment if it had been possible.

There is other evidence that confirms that Pirna pastors did not see pastoral appointments as locally controlled events. In response to a survey from June 1933, over two-thirds of the Pirna pastors on record supported two measures proposed by the *Land* Church Office to reduce local input into the appointment of parish pastors and district superintendents. The first question proposed that the *Land* Bishop simply appoint one of three candidates for a vacant pastorate, guided solely by the relevant parish council's opinion about the candidates, only one of whom could be invited to candidate. Under the proposal, the parish would still hold veto power. The second survey question proposed the appointment of district superintendents solely by the *Land* Bishop, guided solely by advice from the parish council of the pastorate that the new superintendent would hold.⁴⁰

In the district of Nauen in Brandenburg, both the administration of vacant parishes and the process of appointing new pastors generated infinitely more controversy than in either Ravensburg or Pirna. With so many parishes vacant during the 1930s and 1940s in Nauen, maintaining adequate pastoral care became a constant challenge for local clergymen, their district superintendents and the Brandenburg Consistory. During the time of the church struggle, there was a virtual flood of supervision proposals from local clergymen and *Land* Church officials. The aim of these plans was always to cover the administrative supervision and spiritual care of the neglected parishes, until such time as a permanent appointment could take place.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Superintendent Zweynert to all pastors in the Pirna district, 7 June 1933; Various replies from pastors, June and July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁴¹ Because of the complexity of these proposals for temporary pastoral care, and the constant linking and unlinking of parishes in the Nauen district, I have prepared a map of the parishes, located at the back of Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

Sometimes, these temporary arrangements became almost permanently entrenched. This was the case in the southeast corner of the Nauen district, where unforeseen circumstances brought the parishes of Bredow and Zeestow together. While the October 1934 retirement of Pastor Ziegel of Bredow was anticipated, the September 1934 suicide of Pastor Heine of Zeestow was not. In the haste to provide care for the two neighbouring parishes, Nauen Superintendent Graßhoff suggested that the Brandenburg Consistory unite the two parishes. Prelate Loerzer of the *Kurmark* tried to modify Graßhoff's proposal, suggesting instead that Zeestow be linked with a neighbouring parish in a different district while Zeestow's filial church, Wernitz, be tied to Bredow instead. However, Patrons Dr. A Schurig of Zeestow and General Director Harney of the Nauen sugar factory, controller of the Bredow parish, agreed in early 1935 that Graßhoff's original plan was best.⁴²

The resulting appointment of Pastor Höft to the Zeestow parish was not without opposition in neighbouring Bredow, but Höft managed to care for both parishes adequately.⁴³ Even so, in 1937 Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac of Beetz suggested yet another plan, this time to join Bredow with the vacant Markau pastorate, in order to justify filling the latter.⁴⁴ This brought Bredow no closer to a new appointment, and fell through in any case. In the end, Höft and his successor administered both the Zeestow parish and the vacant Bredow parish from early 1936 until at least the end of the war.⁴⁵

⁴² Superintendent Graßhoff of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 September 1934; Brandenburg Consistory to the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, 26 October 1934; Dr. A Schurig, Rittergut Zeestow, to Consistorial Councillor Hermann, 20 February 1935, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10365.

⁴³ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 September 1935, 26 October 1935, 13 December 1935, 21 January 1936 and 15 February 1936; Pastor Höft in Zeestow to Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow, 15 February 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10365.

⁴⁴ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Nauen District Synod Executive, 18 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 59/646.

⁴⁵ Brandenburg Consistory to General Director Harney, Nauen, 8 April 1940, Evangelisches

In the southwest section of the Nauen district, Groß Behnitz, Retzow and Ribbeck all figured heavily in a series of supervision plans put forward by the Consistory, interim superintendents in Nauen and other local clergymen. While Groß Behnitz remained vacant for over two years after the retirement of Pastor Lux in October 1935 and Retzow was vacant for one and a half years following the retirement of Pastor Koch in December 1935, Ribbeck remained vacant from early 1934 through the end of the Second World War.⁴⁶

In Ribbeck, the 1934 retirement of Pastor Werner left the parish patron Erich von Ribbeck scrambling to find temporary pastoral care. Neither neighbouring Pastors Koch-Retzow nor Lux-Groß Behnitz (both of whom retired within the year) was able to take on the extra work of supervising the Ribbeck parish. Reluctantly, Pastor Posth of Berge agreed to take on the responsibility.⁴⁷

Posth was also supervising pastor in Groß Behnitz during the period of Pastor Lux's pre-retirement illness. Thus, he inquired of the Prussian church authorities about refilling the soon-to-be vacant pastorate and proposed that, if necessary, the Consistory consider tying Groß Behnitz together with Markau and even Retzow. Posth calculated that such a combination would create a position sufficiently large enough to justify a new appointment.

However, the Consistory was already considering other options. At the beginning of July 1935, a plan was put forward to link Groß and Klein Behnitz and their 1000 souls with tiny Riewend and Bagow (120 and 310 souls respectively), both filial churches in the Pāwesien parish, located in the neighbouring

Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10365. Other correspondence surrounding Wiese's appointment is in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10730.

⁴⁶ Both Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz and Walter Pachali of Retzow were curates in their parishes for several months prior to their appointment as permanent pastors, making the vacancies in those parishes shorter than the official statistics suggest.

⁴⁷ Herr von Ribbeck to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 October and 16 October 1933; Pastor Posth of Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 10 February 1934, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

Brandenburg-Dom church district.⁴⁸ In January 1936, Interim Superintendent Schmidt-Flatow proposed to combine the parishes of Groß Behnitz, Markau and Retzow. This plan was the same as Pastor Posth's, except that Schmidt foresaw filling the Markau pastorate, not Groß Behnitz as Posth had proposed. By July 1936, Schmidt was pursuing a new plan for Groß Behnitz, one that involved linking it with the Ribbeck parish. As usual, Schmidt's aim was to accumulate a significant number of parishioners, which would justify a new appointment.⁴⁹

When Pastor Bettac of Beetz replaced Schmidt of Flatow as the interim superintendent in Nauen, he quickly criticized Schmidt's plan to link Groß Behnitz and Ribbeck. He argued that not only were the roads poor between the two pastorates, but also the resulting pastorate would still require funding from the Consistory, a second consideration that any personnel plans had to take into account. Bettac pondered a new combination of Groß Behnitz, Retzow and Pessin, a total of 1500 souls, which would ensure a new appointment. However, Bettac subsequently returned to his predecessor Schmidt's plan to link Groß Behnitz, Ribbeck, and possibly Retzow. Otherwise, Bettac reckoned that Retzow could link with Pessin to form a combination large enough to warrant a new pastor.⁵⁰

This plan, however, soon encountered the opposition of Posth, who supervised both the affected parishes, Ribbeck and Groß Behnitz. As much as Posth wanted a settlement—he complained that he could not physically manage the overload of work much longer—Bettac's plan made little sense to him. Posth examined the number of souls, the amount of travel and the incomes of the parishes to arrive at the most considered plan for the area to date.

⁴⁸ Prussian Superior Church Council EO II 3050, 27 September 1935; Report on Groß Behnitz, 1 July 1935, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

⁴⁹ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 8 August 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10317.

⁵⁰ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, Finance Department, 23 December 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10317.

First, Posth asserted that tying Groß Behnitz and Ribbeck together would make it impossible to fill either the Retzow or neighbouring Pāwesien (Brandenburg Dom) pastorates, simply for lack of souls. Further, to link Retzow and Pessin would be impractical, due to the population growth from new settlements in Pessin and its filial church Paulinenaue; as well, the distance from Retzow to Paulinenaue was prohibitive. Moreover, travel from Groß Behnitz to Retzow would entail a 28 km (one way) trip, passing through Nauen for lack of good roads between the two towns, while the 21 km trip from Groß Behnitz to Ribbeck also went through Nauen. Again, distances made a link between Groß Behnitz and either Ribbeck or Retzow completely impractical.

Instead, Posth proposed separating Ribbeck from Berge (his parish, which he was quick to point out comprised 4 towns, three preaching stations and 1755 souls all by itself) and placing it with Retzow. Then, Groß Behnitz would take on Pāwesien filial churches Riewend and Bagow, and Pāwesien itself could be combined with its neighbouring parish Wachow. According to Posth's calculations, his solution would require no additional financing from the Consistory, save in the case of Groß Behnitz. Both Berge and the Retzow-Ribbeck combination could pay for their own pastors from existing parish income.⁵¹

To drive home his point, Posth wrote to the Consistory again one week later. After explaining how he had been overworked for four years while caring for other parishes as well as his own, Posth let it be known that if the Consistory could not arrive at a settlement within a month, he was going to resign the administration of Groß Behnitz as of 1 February 1937.⁵² Interim Superintendent Bettac seconded Posth's comprehensive plan, informing the Nauen District Synod Executive that

⁵¹ Pastor Posth of Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 8 December 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10317.

⁵² Pastor Posth of Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 15 December 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10317.

Ribbeck and Retzow ought to be joined together, since Groß Behnitz and Pessin were both too far from Retzow to be linked with it.⁵³

By that time, the Prussian church authorities were finally becoming impressed with the urgency of filling the vacancy in Groß Behnitz. In March 1937, the Consistory adopted part of Posth's and Bettac's plans, advocating the combination of Groß Behnitz, Bagow and Riewend.⁵⁴ At the same time, the Consistory proposed to create a conglomerate of Retzow, Ribbeck and Möthlow (a filial church in the Pessin parish), which Interim Superintendent Bettac and the Nauen District Synod Executive both supported.⁵⁵ Again, their calculations revolved around accumulating a large enough number of parishioners to justify a new appointment.

Ultimately, all these complicated calculations went for naught. In mid-1937, the Brandenburg Consistory appointed Pastor Walter Pachali in Retzow. Soon Pachali supervised vacant parishes in Pessin, Ribbeck and even Groß Behnitz (where Kurt Fritzsche was awaiting appointment), demonstrating that for all the planning of local and provincial church officials, ever-expanding needs forced permanent pastors to take on inconvenient duties in hard-to-reach parishes. In Groß Behnitz, church-political infighting dragged out the appointment process into January 1938, until the desperate parish councils from Groß Behnitz and Pāwesien submitted a joint request for action to the Brandenburg Consistory.⁵⁶ Two months

⁵³ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Nauen District Synod Executive, 18 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 59/646.

⁵⁴ Prussian Superior Church Council EO II 398/37, 12 February 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233; Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934.

⁵⁵ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934 and 7/12765; Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10753.

⁵⁶ Prussian Superior Church Council EO II 56/38, 28 January 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

later, Pastor Fritzsche was finally appointed in Groß Behnitz. Ironically, Fritzsche succeeded Pachali as the supervisor of the unfortunate Ribbeck parish, which remained vacant from 1934 right through to the end of the Second World War.

Though the situation was not as bleak as that of Groß Behnitz, Retzow and Ribbeck, in the northwestern corner of the Nauen district, both Karweese and Hakenberg were also affected by the constant shortage of pastors. In Karweese, vacant since before 1933, Pastors Otto Schmidt in Flatow and Günther Harder in Fehrbellin both provided administrative supervision and pastoral care in the early years of the Third Reich. However, the temporary absence of Pastor Konrad Isleib of Hakenberg raised the question of pastoral care for almost the entire stretch between Flatow and Fehrbellin.⁵⁷ In April 1936, the Confessing Church Council for Brandenburg asked Günther Harder, their district pastor in Nauen, whether Lentzke and Brunne could possibly be joined to Karweese, and whether Hakenberg, Tarmow and Linum were also possibilities.⁵⁸ In August of the same year, the Karweese parish council learned of new consistorial plans for area parishes, including combinations of Linum, Hakenberg and Tarmow, and Karweese, Betzin and Dechtow. In response, Karweese parish councillors argued that the large size of their parish (1400 souls) and its train station made them deserving of a new pastor, who, they argued, could then supervise and care for the neighbouring parishes of Hakenberg, Dechtow and Betzin.⁵⁹ By 1937, the Consistory began to see the merits

⁵⁷ While the parish of Linum also lay between Fehrbellin and Flatow, German Christian Pastor Kahle in Linum was so unpopular that his ministry was unacceptable in either Hakenberg or Karweese, both with strong Confessing Church elements. Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Consistorial Councillor Kegel, 12 March 1940; Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg to Bettac, 13 February 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁵⁸ Brandenburg Confessing Church Council, Department of Pastoral Appointments to Pastor Harder in Fehrbellin, 15 April 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ka 30/93.

⁵⁹ Karweese Parish Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, Finance Department, 8 August 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ka 30/93.

of such a plan.⁶⁰ Consequently, when Pastor Martin Lehmann was appointed in Karweese the following year, he also supervised the parish of Hakenberg, along with Königshorst to the south.⁶¹

While providing adequate pastoral care and administrative supervision were the immediate goals of these many supervision plans, church-political agendas were never far from the surface. There is ample evidence of this conflict at the local level. In some parishes, German Christian *Land* Church officials, pastors and parishioners attempted to free vacant pastorates for German Christian candidates. The ongoing vacancy in Markau illustrates abundantly how these German Christian officials intervened in local church politics during the era of the church struggle.

Just south of Nauen, the Markau parish suffered badly following the death of Pastor Ideler in January 1935. A series of four young clergymen served the 950 souls of Markau poorly, generating frustration and disinterest by their ineptitude and constant turnover. Two of them, vicar Klundt and curate Dreves, were accused of stealing by their supervising pastor, Ernst Höft of Zeestow.⁶² Klundt's German Christian church politics created enough displeasure in the parish that a petition demanding his dismissal garnered 75 signatures. While this was no mass protest, it did represent a greater number of parishioners than took communion in 1935. In fact, the low rate of participation in Markau during the mid-1930s suggests that parishioners there responded to the consistently poor pastoral care by staying away from church rather than complaining to officials in the Brandenburg Consistory.⁶³

⁶⁰ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934.

⁶¹ Please see note 2, above.

⁶² Pastor Höft of Zeestow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 December 1936 and 2 January 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

⁶³ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 8 April 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800. For details about public participation in the Markau parish, please see Appendix 1: Statistics from the Nauen Church District.

Klundert's successor, Vicar Dreves, failed to complete some extra accounting work he was paid to do, creating such a confusion of the church tax records that the parish could not collect from everyone during the 1936 harvest. When Dreves moved on to another parish without having completed that work, Pastor Höft of Zeestow hounded the Consistory to force Dreves to pay back his unearned wages.⁶⁴ Another temporary clergyman, Vicar Bolle, completely undermined supervising Pastor Höft's authority in Bredow, another parish in which the two clergymen worked together. As a result, towards the end of 1936, both Höft and Interim Superintendent Schmidt of Flatow implored the Consistory not to send another vicar to Markau. Höft claimed there was so much opposition in the parish that any new vicar would be forced to live in Nauen, not Markau, because Vicar Dreves' negligence had "enormously embittered" the parish. For his part, Schmidt described Markau as a "dying parish," in which only four to six people regularly attended the Sunday church service. In some weeks, no one came at all.⁶⁵

While Höft, Schmidt and the Markau parish council called for a new appointment to end the two-year vacancy and turn the parish around, no lasting solution appeared on the horizon. Meanwhile, plans for the supervision of the parish multiplied. In September 1935, Confessing Church Pastor Posth of Berge broached the idea of linking the Markau and Retzow parishes with vacant Groß Behnitz. Posth's goal was the procurement of a new pastor for Groß Behnitz, a parish loyal to the Confessing Church.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Pastor Höft of Zeestow to the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, 8 October 1936; Höft to the Brandenburg Consistory, 16 November 1936, 5 December 1936, 2 January 1937 and 6 March 1937; Brandenburg Consistory, Finance Department, to Curate Dreves, the Markau Parish Council and the District Superintendent's Office, Nauen, 19 March and 13 July 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

⁶⁵ Pastor Höft of Zeestow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 December 1936; Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 20 October 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

⁶⁶ Prussian Superior Church Council EO II 3050, 27 September 1935, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

Against that, Interim Superintendent Schmidt of Flatow initiated a plan in early 1936 to unite the parishes of Groß Behnitz, Markau and Retzow and Selbelang. In contrast to Posth, Schmidt's goal was not only a pastoral appointment, but also the creation of a seat in Markau for a new superintendent, hopefully himself. This was an ambitious strategy that required the cooperation of no less than five parish patrons, their parish councils, supervising Pastor Höft and the Brandenburg Consistory. With so many competing interests, opposition was almost inevitable, and even the patron in Markau, a friend of Schmidt's, rejected such dissolution of pastoral care in his domain.⁶⁷

Schmidt's plan did not die, however, because both the Markau patron and officials in the Consistory supported his plan to move the position of the superintendent to Markau. That they would pursue the transfer of the district office to Markau despite its weak condition underscores the church-political intent of the plan. Because Schmidt was loyal to the Land Church and antipathetic towards the Confessing Church, Consistorial Councillor Hermann of Berlin advocated his idea among church leaders in the Brandenburg Consistory. Hermann hoped to diminish the strength of the Confessing Church in the district by appointing a German Christian superintendent, whether it was Schmidt or someone else.⁶⁸ Nothing came of this in 1937, by which time Interim Superintendent Schmidt had resigned and had been replaced by Pastor Bettac of Beetz, an active supporter (though not a member) of the Confessing Church.

Thus, when word filtered back to the Confessing Church Council for Brandenburg that Consistorial Councillor Hermann planned to appoint a new, permanent German Christian superintendent based in Markau, one of its members

⁶⁷ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 31 January and 18 March 1936; Patron Schoch in Markau to the Brandenburg Consistory, 18 March 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10317.

⁶⁸ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934.

contacted Bettac. Hoping to scuttle this latest German Christian intrusion, the Confessing Church representative and Interim Superintendent Bettac agreed to a two-pronged counter-offensive. First, Bettac pressed the Consistory to appoint Pastor Krafft, the Confessing Church curate in Markau, to a permanent position there. Second, he asked the ally of the Confessing Church in the Consistory, Councillor Kegel, to speak with Markau Patron General Director Schoch, in order to convince Schoch to withdraw his support from the German Christian plan.⁶⁹

While Kegel refused to support Krafft's appointment, he assured Bettac that there was little to fear about Schmidt becoming the new superintendent in Nauen. Schmidt had abruptly resigned the interim superintendency back in 1936, and as Kegel explained: "The way in which he suddenly broke off his activity at that time has really irritated [officials] here in the Consistory."⁷⁰ In spite of Kegel's advice, Bettac pleaded with the Markau patron to appoint Pastor Krafft in Markau, and tried to convince him that Councillor Hermann's plan to put a superintendent in Markau was wholly unrealistic, given the amount of work that needed doing in Markau itself.⁷¹

By appealing to the Markau patron's concern for his own parish—and perhaps also to a patron's jealousy about giving away his pastor's labour merely for the Consistory's objectives—Bettac tried to undermine the influence that both Consistorial Councillor Hermann and Pastor Schmidt of Flatow held over Patron

⁶⁹ Pastor Scharf of the Brandenburg Confessing Church Council to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 30 January 1938; Bettac to Consistorial Councillor Kegel, 2 February 1938; Bettac to Scharf, 2 February 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814. To Kegel, Bettac explained that he was wary of approaching Patron Schoch of Markau himself, which "would be really unbrotherly and would awaken in others the appearance, that I wanted to speak *pro domo*."

⁷⁰ Consistorial Councillor Kegel to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 3 February 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁷¹ Güterdirektor Schoch of the Lynarschen Güterverwaltung, Patron of Markau, to Curate Krafft in Markau, 4 March 1938; Schoch to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 4 March 1938; Bettac to Schoch, 28 February 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

Schoch.⁷² Though Bettac failed to get Krafft appointed to Markau in 1938, the interim superintendent tried the same strategy again in later 1939, when he tried to persuade Schoch to appoint Curate Dr. Liebert to the Markau pastorate. Just as before, Bettac's chief hope was to undermine Councillor Hermann's plan to place a German Christian superintendent in Markau, which was still under consideration by both the Consistory and Markau patron.⁷³ Again, Bettac failed to convince Patron Schoch to support the appointment of a pastor (but not superintendent) in Markau.

The threat of a new superintendent with German Christian leanings had not passed, however, even in 1940. Late that year, Interim Superintendent Bettac of Beetz was forced to resign his post, because of his wife's marital infidelity and a pending divorce. Subsequently, a rumour spread that a former German Christian, Pastor Isleib of Flatow, was going to become the new superintendent. In response, Pastor Posth of Berge, the Confessing Church radical, wrote to Bettac in a panic, asking if Bettac could confirm the rumour. Posth asserted that if the plan was indeed for Isleib to become superintendent, "we must *immediately* react energetically against it, before it is too late!" Bettac replied that he knew nothing about the future of the superintendency, except that Consistorial Councillor Hermann was still trying to place a German Christian into the superintendency and to move it to Markau.⁷⁴

⁷² Bettac to Consistorial Councillor Kegel, 2 February 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814. While Hermann's influence was rooted in his position in the Brandenburg Consistory, Schmidt's was based on his personal relationship with Schoch. Bettac must not have known of Schoch's sad letter to Schmidt seven months earlier, in which the patron lamented the fact he could not nominate Schmidt for the Markau position. When Schoch had asked Consistory officials about Schmidt, they praised Schmidt's actions as interim superintendent but explained that the other pastors of the Nauen district would not tolerate Schmidt as superintendent. In response to Schoch's news, Schmidt stated that he was finished in the Nauen district and asked Schoch to quietly approach the Consistory to initiate a transfer to another district. See Generaldirektor Schoch to Pastor Schmidt in Flatow, 2 June 1937; Schmidt to Schoch, 4 June 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

⁷³ Fürstlich Lynar-Gräfllich Redem'sche Generalverwaltung to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 April 1939; Brandenburg Consistory to Fürstlich Lynar-Gräfllich Redem'sche Generalverwaltung, 24 April 1939, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800; Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Prelate Bormann in Angermünde, 23 November 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁷⁴ Pastor Posth of Berge to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 21 October 1940; Bettac to Posth, 24 October 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835. The matter of Bettac's divorce is

Two months later, in December 1940, Bettac had learned only that the superintendency would be transferred provisionally to the moderate German Christian Superintendent Simon of Oranienburg, but had heard that a new permanent superintendent would be transferred in from the Danzig region.⁷⁵

In sum, for five whole years, German Christians threatened to place one of their own into the influential position of superintendent of the Nauen church district. While the efforts of Interim Superintendent Bettac and others helped avert this, the cost to the Markau parishioners was a seven and a half year vacancy, which lasted from 1935 until 1942. Neither the church-political strife nor the consequent lack of proper pastoral care during this period improved the health of the parish, and parishioners continued to stay away from church. Only under the ministry of Curate Glockner did conditions improve. Glockner was finally appointed pastor in July 1942, though not until the parish council intervened to undo Patron Schoch's nomination of another unknown candidate.⁷⁶

Based on pastoral appointments in the Nauen district, several conclusions about German Christian church politics emerge. First, the basis of the German Christian Movement's ability to influence clerical appointments in the Nauen district was its strength in the Land Church government. Interim Superintendent Bettac of Beetz confirmed this truth in a letter to Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg. Since Isleib was about to resign, he began urging Bettac to submit the paperwork for a new appointment in Hakenberg. Bettac explained to Isleib that once the vacancy questionnaire would have returned from the parish council, it would sit for two or

documented in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10879.

⁷⁵ While Simon from Oranienburg served as interim superintendent from January 1941 until his death in March 1944, no permanent superintendent was appointed and Bettac resumed his role as the interim superintendent for the Nauen church district. Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Born of Leegebruch, 2 December 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁷⁶ Fürstlich Lynar-Gräfllich Redem'sche Generalverwaltung to the Brandenburg Consistory, 15 May 1942; Markau Parish Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, 27 May 1942, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

three months with the Superior Church Council in Berlin before there would be any possibility of a new appointment. That this was a product of German Christian church politics was clear to Bettac, and he explained to Isleib the difference between Confessing Church and German Christian appointments. Lamenting the recent appointment of German Christian Pastor Wallmann in Bötzwow, Bettac commented that in cases like that "it happens in 24 hours."⁷⁷

In Markau, the ongoing participation of Consistorial Councillor Hermann meant that there was always the possibility of such a sudden appointment of a new, German Christian pastor and superintendent. However, the same Markau case demonstrates the limits of the ability of German Christians to influence pastoral appointments. Interim Superintendent Bettac, Supervising Pastor Höft of Zeestow, Confessing Church Pastor Posth in Berge, the Markau parish council, Consistorial Councillor Kegel and even Patron Schoch all worked against the plans of Pastor (and sometime Interim Superintendent) Schmidt of Flatow and Consistorial Councillor Hermann.

There is yet another testimony to the inability of German Christians to control pastoral appointments solely from their base in the Brandenburg Consistory. It comes from a confidential letter written in 1939 by Interim Superintendent Bettac to Mrs. Eichler, a parishioner in Leegebruch, near Vehlefanz. In late 1939, the status of the Vehlefanz pastorate was altogether unclear, since incumbent Pastor Andrich had just failed to obtain a position in Nauen, had been called up into the army, and was facing a judgment on charges of embezzlement of church money. While it was clear that Andrich would not be accepted back in Vehlefanz, no new appointment could be made until the legal proceedings had been concluded. Explaining the situation to Mrs. Eichler, Bettac revealed that a new curate, Herr Klähn, was soon coming to Leegebruch from Pritzwalk, in northwestern Brandenburg. Bettac's

⁷⁷ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg, 19 February 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

advice to Eichler is illuminating, for it demonstrates the power of parishioners and local clergymen to influence clerical appointments—at least negatively, by avoiding unwanted clergymen. Bettac admitted that he did not know the new curate's church-political alignment, then added: "If I may give you advice *confidentially*, it is this: As soon as Herr Pastor Klähn is there, establish his church-political position through an open inquiry. If he is not a 'German Christian,' I would ask you to work with him, but if he is a 'German Christian,' reject him and turn to me again, so that we obtain another temporary pastor there."⁷⁸ As Bettac understood, *Land Church* authorities were simply unwilling to place temporary or permanent clergymen into positions in which they were manifestly unwelcome. Bettac and the Confessing Church pastors of the district exploited that fact for the purposes of keeping new German Christians out of the Nauen district. This they accomplished wherever there was a sufficient number of parishioners committed to the Confessing Church and where Interim Superintendent Bettac and local Confessing Church clergymen convinced other decision-makers, such as parish patrons and councils, to demand that pastoral candidates adhere to the Scriptures and Reformation Confessions.

Even in the matter of the assignment of an interim superintendent, German Christians in the Brandenburg Consistory could not simply assign their candidate of choice in Nauen. After Superintendent Graßhoff retired for medical reasons in April 1935, the interim superintendency was regularly assigned to the senior clergymen of the district. Pastor Ernst Ideler of Markau assumed the position during Graßhoff's illness in 1934, but died himself in January 1935. Pastor Schmidt of Flatow became interim superintendent in 1935, but stepped down suddenly in 1936 for medical reasons. At that point, Pastor Bettac of Beetz took over, and directed the district in the interests of the Confessing Church until the end of 1940. Only when Bettac had to abandon his position for personal reasons did a German Christian, Superintendent

⁷⁸ Interim Superintendent Bettac to Mrs. Eichler of Leegebruch, 27 October 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg 141/835; Bettac to the Brandenburg Consistory, 31 October 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751.

Simon of Oranienburg, come to control the vacant superintendency in Nauen. Even in the case of Simon, it was probably his proximity in Oranienburg as much as his church politics that led to his appointment. This is suggested by the fact that after his death in March 1944, Pastor Bettac resumed the post of interim superintendent in Nauen, until after the end of the Second World War.⁷⁹

Despite their control of the Old Prussian Land Church government during the National Socialist era, the German Christians were largely unsuccessful in their attempts to influence pastoral appointments in the Nauen district. In contrast, the Confessing Church proved surprisingly adept at the task. Examples from Groß Behnitz, Kremmen, Linum, Ribbeck, Retzow, Pessin and Markau demonstrate convincingly the success of the Confessing Church at placing pastors in or friendly to their movement into vacant pastorates around the Nauen district. These cases also illustrate the weakness of German Christian power at the local level in at least one part of rural Brandenburg.

After a series of temporary arrangements for the care of vacant Groß Behnitz, the Land Church finally began to address the matter of a new appointment in 1937. That October, Groß Behnitz Patron Dr. Ernst von Borsig nominated Kurt Fritzsche, previously of Kietz/Elbe, where he had been district pastor for the Confessing Church.⁸⁰ However, controversies generated by two Confessing Church vicars in late 1937 and early 1938 delayed the appointment again.⁸¹ Finally, in early March 1938, the Groß Behnitz parish council elected Fritzsche as their pastor.

⁷⁹ Information of the length of the terms of the interim superintendents is based on the flow of correspondence between the district superintendent's office and the pastors, found in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736, NE 71/737 and NE 72/738, and between the superintendency and the Brandenburg Consistory from 1932 to 1946, in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 122/742, NE 124/743, NE 125/744, NE 127/751, NE 128/752, NE 129/900, NE 130/840, NE 131/803, NE 132/759 and NE 133/830.

⁸⁰ *Berufsurkunde*, 28 October 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

⁸¹ Groß Behnitz Parish Councillor Rudolf Günther to the Brandenburg Consistory, 16 January 1938; Groß Behnitz School Principal and Church Organist Th. Lehmann to the Brandenburg Consistory, 16 and 17 January 1938; Groß Behnitz Mayor and Parish Councillor Stackebrandt to the Brandenburg

Within days, the mayors and the teachers of Groß and Klein Behnitz and 101 other parishioners filed a grievance, hoping to overturn Fritzsche's appointment. They comprised about one-tenth of the total number of souls in the parish and included two members of the parish council, including the mayor of Groß Behnitz. These parishioners were infuriated because Fritzsche belonged to the Confessing Church: "For the sake of our German *Volk* [...] we can make no allowance for teaching which tears apart the *Volk* community [...] as if there could be some other law for a German church than that which is law for the German *Volk*." When Fritzsche signed the "red card" of membership in the Confessing Church, it united him with the "un-Lutheran and un-German teaching" of the Barmen and Dahlem synods of the Confessing Church. Describing their pastor elect as a dangerous "lawbreaker from conviction," they demanded he either resign from the Confessing Church or withdraw altogether from the Prussian Land Church, and they called for German Christian Pastor Friedrich Siems of Nauen to supervise the administration of their parish until another appointee could be found.⁸²

This belated grievance—it was submitted after the period for such protests had ended—was answered by two petitions in support of Fritzsche's appointment, signed by 392 parishioners from Groß and Klein Behnitz, including the patron and five other parish councillors. These petitions, signed by two out of every five parishioners and almost four times the number of communicants in the parish in 1939, demanded the speedy investiture of Pastor Fritzsche. They argued (correctly) that no protests against his appointment had been submitted within the allotted time span.⁸³

Consistory, 16 January 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

⁸² R. Günther, Mayor Stackebrandt *et al.* to the Brandenburg Consistory, 7 March 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233 and 14/10318. Copies were also sent directly to the Reich Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs Kerrl, the Ecclesiastical Chancellery of the German Evangelical Church and the President of the Old Prussian Union Church.

⁸³ Petitions from the parish council in Groß and Klein Behnitz, 9 March 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

It was then that the patron of the Groß Behnitz parish, Dr. von Borsig, weighed in on behalf of his candidate, Fritzsche. Von Borsig complained to the Consistory that the promised confirmation of Fritzsche's appointment had not yet reached him and surmised that "the petitions of irresponsible parishioners" had delayed it. While "a host of younger curates, vicars, etc." had laboured in Groß Behnitz since the October 1935 retirement of Pastor Lux, von Borsig argued that they had failed to gain the necessary trust of the parish "on account of their youth" and the frequency of their replacement.⁸⁴ Patron von Borsig pointed out that the Groß and Klein Behnitz parishes were among the most devoted to the Old Prussian Union Church in the entire Havelland. He reminded the Consistory that there was no legal basis for putting off the appointment any longer, since Fritzsche was properly called to the parishes and no grievance was lodged during the prescribed period. Furthermore, von Borsig explained that there had been no "deception of the parish," since the parishioners were aware that Fritzsche was a member of the Confessing Church, after he read a notice from the Confessing Church during his candidacy visit.⁸⁵ Patron von Borsig described the Consistory's refusal to confirm the appointment of Fritzsche as a "serious attack on my rights as patron." Moreover, he explained that he had chosen Fritzsche from among 40 to 50 candidates, not simply because he was a member of the Confessing Church. Rather, it had been based on Fritzsche's letter of application, a graphologist's expert opinion, Fritzsche's preaching, von Borsig's personal impression and a four hour interview concerning the duties of a pastor, in which Fritzsche's "calm, serene, determined and very loving manner" set him apart as "the most suitable candidate."⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Dr. Ernst von Borsig to the Brandenburg Consistory, 14 March 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

⁸⁵ Brandenburg Confessing Church Council, "Notice for Sunday, the 27 February 1938 in the morning and evening church services," Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318. The notice was a protest against the dissolution of Protestant confessional schools in Brandenburg.

⁸⁶ Dr. Ernst von Borsig to the Brandenburg Consistory, 14 March 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

The fact that Fritzsche had won the favour of the majority of parishioners was a bonus for von Borsig, who described "the most awful demagogic manner" in which signatures were gathered by Fritzsche's opponents. Describing his own hasty efforts to launch a counter-petition, von Borsig asserted that roughly 75 percent of adult parishioners from Klein Behnitz and 80 percent from Groß Behnitz had signed petitions on behalf of Fritzsche. "There could hardly be a more impressive number," claimed the patron, who added that between 40 and 50 signatures on the petition for Fritzsche were those of parishioners who were renouncing their signatures on the protest against his appointment. Summing up his expansive attack on the dilatory Consistory, von Borsig depicted the vast majority of the complainants against Fritzsche as participants in "efforts hostile to Christianity" and as people "who have never had any time for Christianity and the church."⁸⁷

Judging from the marginal notes of Consistory officials and the speed with which they ratified Fritzsche's appointment, von Borsig's letter made quite an impression with Prussian church authorities. Within a month of receiving the letter, the Consistory had ratified Fritzsche's appointment, and he was installed as pastor in Groß Behnitz, complete with the participation of Confessing Church District Pastor Günther Harder of Fehrbellin.⁸⁸

What is more, Fritzsche's appointment was not subsequently overturned by the Consistory, even though its officials agreed with the complainants from Groß and Klein Behnitz and their assessment of the political and ecclesiastical danger of the Confessing Church. In the end, Fritzsche's declaration to the church authorities that he was prepared to work within the established ordinances of the Old Prussian Union Church convinced them. Though the complainants argued Fritzsche should be forced to withdraw from the Confessing Church, the Consistory recognized that

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ "Beglaubigte Abschrift aus dem Protokollbuch Gr. Behnitz," 21 April 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10318.

the former Confessing Church District Pastor had taken a big step by simply declaring his readiness to cooperate with Brandenburg church authorities. Consistorial officials believed that in time Fritzsche would part fully from what they perceived were his Confessing Church errors.⁸⁹

In fact, the Consistory misjudged the situation in Groß Behnitz, in no small part due to lack of information. The complainants never mentioned the fact that already in May 1937, Pastor Posth of Berge and the parish council of Groß Behnitz voted to officially join the Confessing Church. Mayor Stackebrandt of Groß Behnitz abstained from that vote, but failed to mention it in the grievance against Fritzsche's appointment. The first the Consistory appears to have learned of the rebellious action was from a report from Groß Behnitz in July 1938, over a year after the event.⁹⁰

Ironically, conflict between the German Christian Movement and the Confessing Church was often overshadowed by differences in the Confessing Church camp itself. Disagreements were common between the full-fledged members of the Confessing Church, who refused to recognize the spiritual leadership or legal authority of the Old Prussian *Land* Church government, and the supporters of the movement, who adhered to the theological positions of the Confessing Church but believed (whether philosophically or practically) that it was better to recognize and cooperate with the ecclesiastical authorities in the Brandenburg Consistory.

By the middle 1930s, then, there were three camps waging church-political battles in the Nauen district: German Christians, Confessing Church members, and

⁸⁹ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 5 May 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

⁹⁰ "Beglaubigter Auszug aus dem Verhandlungsbuche der evangelischen Kirchengemeinde Großbehnitz. Sitzung [...] den 28. Mai 1937"; Brandenburg Consistory to the Groß Behnitz Parish Council and Nauen District Church Office, 30 July 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

neutrals who supported the Confessing Church. Among the German Christians, influence came from consistorial councillors, the consistorial financial department and individual pastors (whether active German Christians or simply neutrals antipathetic towards the Confessing Church). On the other hand, German Christian parish councillors were usually a minority and German Christian parishioners fewer in number than their Confessing Church counterparts, though the German Christians were often important personalities such as mayors and teachers. This was simply because the lay people who were the most ardent supporters of National Socialism generally cared less about the church. That conclusion accords with the common refrain of Confessing Church members, that the German Christians in their parishes were uncommitted, marginal members who seldom contributed to parish life.

The strength of the members of the Confessing Church, those who wanted to have nothing to do with the *Land* Church authorities, lay mainly at the grassroots level. Individual pastors, of whom Herbert Posth of Berge is the best example, patrons, parish councillors and parishioners were the most effective at promoting Confessing Church interests. Patrons nominated Confessing Church candidates, Confessing Church pastors directed parish councils which vetoed German Christian candidates, and parishioners signed petitions protesting the appointment of German Christians, or (as in Groß Behnitz) promoting the appointment of their own Confessing Church candidates.

Supporters of the Confessing Church who remained loyal to the Old Prussian Union Church included consistorial councillors, Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac, various patrons and pastors, and presumably the many parishioners who wanted neither German Christian theological errors nor Confessing Church fights with ecclesiastical authorities. Here Bettac was the key. He worked endlessly to convince Confessing Church pastors in the Nauen district to cooperate with the Land Church government for their own benefit, and helped convince patrons to nominate candidates acceptable to both the Brandenburg Consistory and the parishes in the district. More often than not, Bettac sought officially neutral clergymen who were

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approved by the Consistory, who opposed the German Christians, and who were willing to work with Confessing Church groups within their parishes.

All in all, this mix of church-political interests produced a number of surprising appointment processes in the Nauen district, particularly during Bettac's first tenure as interim superintendent, between 1936 and 1940. More often than not, these appointments involved tensions, even competition, between members of the Confessing Church and clergymen like Bettac, supporters of the Confessing Church who still wanted to work with the Old Prussian Union Church government.

For instance, in the parish of Kremmen, even the agreement of Bettac, the Brandenburg Consistory and the parish patron did not guarantee the easy appointment of their candidate. In early 1936, they arranged the assignment of Ewald Rehfeldt as curate, with the view to his permanent appointment. Yet, Rehfeldt almost lost the subsequent parish election for pastor because the Confessing Church was promoting a rival candidate, curate Grützmacher. In the first round of voting between Rehfeldt, Grützmacher and a third candidate, Rehfeldt won by only one vote, and he finally defeated Grützmacher by only five votes on the second ballot.⁹¹

Though radical German Christian pastors sometimes alienated their parishes, equally radical clergymen from the Confessing Church were not always the antidotes. In these cases, moderates who supported the Confessing Church while remaining loyal to the Brandenburg Consistory were the best that advocates of the Confessing Church could hope for. Such was the case in the parish of Linum, where the imminent retirement of Pastor Kahle in 1940 created an ideal opportunity for the Confessing Church. Interim Superintendent Bettac suggested either curate Ewald Born from Leegebruch or Johannes Franck from Vehlefanz as potential

⁹¹ Results from the first ballot: Rehfeldt 16, Grützmacher 15, Heintzeler 2. Results from the second ballot: Rehfeldt 19, Grützmacher 14. Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 31 January 1936 and 20 May 1936; Report on the parish election in Kremmen, n.d., Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10418.

replacements. Both supported the Confessing Church, and both needed secure posts. Though Born held out the hope that Leegebruch would grow large enough to become a pastorate within a couple of years, Franck was caught in a difficult situation in Vehlefanz, where he was filling in for Pastor Werner Andrich during Andrich's contested appointment process in Nauen. Bettac had good reason to believe that a competent Confessing Church curate could "build a nest" in Linum, since the parishioners had been "radically cured from the German Christians by Kahle." Further, the Linum patron wanted either a neutral or Confessing Church pastor, a position Bettac encouraged.⁹²

When Kahle finally stepped down in April 1940, Confessing Church Pastor Hoffmann from Wernikow was assigned as a curate to replace him temporarily. According to Bettac, Hoffmann had suffered some bad luck in other parishes and had been persecuted by German Christian Consistorial Councillor Hermann.⁹³ Soon it became clear that Hoffmann was not merely unlucky, but unsuited to be a pastor. First, in early August 1940, Herr Quehl of the District Synod Executive informed Bettac that Hoffmann was in trouble. While Quehl refused to say that Hoffmann was "totally finished" in Linum, he did admit that Hoffmann did not have the requisite tact and that the Women's Aid groups in Linum and Hakenberg had rejected him.⁹⁴

Within two weeks, Bettac had given the Patron, Magistrate Demuth, a new list of possible candidates for the opening in Linum. From a total of 16 names, Bettac pointed out three German Christians (with the implication that they ought not

⁹² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Consistorial Councillor Kegel, 12 March 1940; Pastor Isleib in Hakenberg to Bettac, 13 February 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁹³ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Harder of Fehrbellin, 16 April 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835 and 143/948; Bettac to the Brandenburg Consistory, 26 April 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10669.

⁹⁴ Herr Quehl to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 8 August 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

to be chosen), then four others who would be good choices, and three who would be all right—the other six applicants were unknown to the interim superintendent.

Bettac thanked Demuth for working to find a candidate who adhered to the Bible and Church Confessions, a sign that the parish leadership had rejected the radical German Christianity of former pastor Kahle, and was now looking in the direction of the Confessing Church.⁹⁵

Meanwhile, new reports of Hoffmann's ineptitude reached Bettac. Pastor Isleib of Flatow, formerly of Hakenberg, pleaded with Bettac to hasten Hoffmann's dismissal from Linum. Having spoken with leaders in Hakenberg and Linum, Isleib bemoaned "Hoffmann's gruff, provocative behaviour, as if he were an old general superintendent." Upset about conditions in his old parish, Isleib pressed Bettac: "That is really a bit much—a man who does nothing but require and demand and who wants to push through the wall of people with his thick skull, let alone his personal pretensions." Isleib was especially upset because Hoffmann's lack of love was destroying Isleib's former parish, Hakenberg. Isleib begged Bettac to listen to some of the well-meaning church leaders in Hakenberg who were scandalized, and who, Isleib assured, only wanted the best for both Linum and Hakenberg.⁹⁶

Fortunately for Bettac and the Linum parish, curate Hoffmann was called up into the military in November 1940. Though Hoffmann hoped he would have Sundays free to preach in Linum, Bettac told him that he was being replaced. The interim superintendent explained that he had to recognize the wishes of the patron and parish council, and argued that any continuation of Hoffmann's work in Linum "would only be a constant source of trouble and irritation for [Hoffmann]."⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Curate Born, 21 August 1940; Bettac to Patron Oberamtmann Demuth, Linum, 21 August 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁹⁶ Pastor Isleib of Flatow to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 16 September 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

⁹⁷ Curate Hoffmann of Linum to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 20 November 1940; Bettac to Hoffmann, 26 November 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

Within days of informing Hoffmann of his release, Bettac set to work to bring Pastor Born from Leegebruch to Linum. Born, like Bettac, was inclined towards the Confessing Church, but still recognized and co-operated with the Prussian Church authorities. Bettac soon arranged Born's candidacy visit in Linum for 5 January 1941. Three days after that, Magistrate Demuth nominated him for the pastorate.⁹⁸ Much relieved to have the Linum matter settled in the interests of the Confessing Church, Bettac thanked Demuth for his careful consideration of Born, who Bettac now thought was "the right man for Linum."⁹⁹ That same month, the Consistory approved Born's appointment.¹⁰⁰

The theological difference between members of the Confessing Church and other supporters of the movement within the Land Church is best captured in the ongoing debate between Confessing Pastor Posth of Berge and Interim Superintendent Bettac of Beetz. Their divergent views about the legitimacy of the Old Prussian Union Church government first emerged within the context of the administrative supervision and pastoral care in Ribbeck, then carried on through an exchange of views over appointments in Retzow and Pessin.

Vacant since before 1933, the Ribbeck pastorate was without adequate supervision, a fact that its patron, landlord von Ribbeck, made clear to authorities in Berlin. After waiting well over a year for consistorial recognition of his rights as patron, Ribbeck immediately pointed out to the Consistory that none of the neighbouring pastors was able to care for Ribbeck. Berge parish pastor Posth's

⁹⁸ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Born of Leegebruch, 2 December 1940 and 13 December 1940; Patron Oberamtmann Demuth, Linum, to Bettac, 8 January 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835 and Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10669.

⁹⁹ Pastor Bettac of Beetz to Oberamtmann Demuth, Linum, 8 January 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

¹⁰⁰ Letter of the Brandenburg Consistory, 19 January 1941, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10669.

health was too poor¹⁰¹, and Pastors Koch in Retzow and Lux in Groß Behnitz were simply too old and sick to come any longer. Declaring that he could not be held responsible if church conditions deteriorated, Patron Ribbeck requested an appointment for a discussion with Consistory officials within the week.¹⁰² Despite his suspect health, Pastor Posth of Berge was saddled with the administrative authority for Ribbeck when 68 year-old Pastor Koch of Retzow refused. Almost immediately, both Pastor Posth and Patron Ribbeck petitioned the Consistory to assign a curate for the Ribbeck parish.¹⁰³

Ironically, while Posth took up the work in Ribbeck only reluctantly, his church-political convictions impelled him to continue long after the Consistory tried to relieve him of the burden. Posth and Patron Ribbeck used the Ribbeck parish council to shepherd the parish into the fold of the Confessing Church¹⁰⁴, and Posth kept a tight hand on the parish administration throughout the balance of the 1930s. In 1937, when the Brandenburg Consistory and Interim Superintendent Bettac attempted to transfer the administrative responsibility for Ribbeck to Walter Pachali, the new neutral curate (later pastor) in neighbouring Retzow, the Ribbeckers refused. In a letter to the Consistory, Posth explained that this refusal was based on the fact that Pachali was not a formal member of the Confessing Church, even

¹⁰¹ Already in August 1933, Posth complained that his duties were too burdensome. Preaching in Berge and Lietzow and a hemp factory 4.6 km away (total 1558 souls), along with regular youth and women's meetings in Berge made Ribbeck too great a challenge for Posth, who suffered from chronic lung problems. Posth suggested giving the work to Pastor Koch of Retzow, who only had two towns 2.5 km apart (total 1020 souls) to care for. Pastor Posth of Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 15 August 1933; Nauen District Synod Executive to the Brandenburg Consistory, 11 October 1933, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

¹⁰² Herr von Ribbeck to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 October 1933, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

¹⁰³ Herr von Ribbeck to the Brandenburg Consistory, 16 October 1933; Pastor Posth in Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 10 February 1934, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

¹⁰⁴ Ribbeck Parish Council to Pastor Pachali in Retzow, 6 October 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649. Lists of Confessing Church membership are in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

though he was favourably inclined towards the organization and entirely prepared to negotiate a happy working relationship in Ribbeck.¹⁰⁵

As a result, between October 1937 and January 1941, Pastor Pachali of Retzow was *de jure* administrative supervisor of the Ribbeck parish, but Pastor Posth of Berge remained *de facto* chairman of the parish council. Interim Superintendent Bettac admitted he had no ability to influence this anomalous situation, which was unfolding against his wishes, and so he called on the Consistory to help broker a solution.¹⁰⁶ Posth, for his part, was not acting alone, but enjoyed the support of the Ribbeck patron and parish council, the benevolence of his friend Bettac and even the good will of Pachali, who was averse to pressing his rights by force.

With the appointment of Kurt Fritzsche in Groß Behnitz in 1938, Posth had found his replacement for Ribbeck, and presented the idea to the Consistory in April 1939. Fritzsche met Posth's condition for giving up control of the Ribbeck parish, that he was a full-fledged member of the Confessing Church. Posth made a spirited case for Fritzsche (and against Pachali), and argued that Ribbeck should be joined to Groß Behnitz (not Retzow) for six reasons: first, the old Consistory plan for Groß Behnitz to care for Riewend and Bagow (filial churches of the neighbouring Pāwesien parish) had been abandoned when Pāwesien was refilled; second, the distance between Ribbeck and Groß Behnitz was no longer a great problem, because Fritzsche owned his own car; third, Ribbeck was beyond Retzow's filial church Selbelang, and thus poorly located for Retzow; fourth, the old plan to move the filial church Möthlow from Pessin to Retzow had been revived; fifth, Ribbeck parishioners would be happier with Fritzsche than with Pachali, whose church politics were not compatible with the parish; and finally, according to Posth, it was

¹⁰⁵ Pastor Pachali of Retzow to the Ribbeck Parish Council, 15 October 1937; Ribbeck Parish Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, 21 October 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

¹⁰⁶ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 24 June 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649.

cheaper by RM 144 per year for the Consistory to place Ribbeck with Groß Behnitz than with Retzow, based on Posth's calculation of financial transfers from the Consistory to these parishes.¹⁰⁷

While Posth put forward a convincing case, nothing came of his offer of spring 1939. Only after Pachali was called up into the military forces in April 1940 was the question of the administration and care of Ribbeck finally reopened. Posth finally consented to transfer administrative authority for the (still vacant) Ribbeck parish, but only to his fellow Confessing Church pastor, Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz.¹⁰⁸ For more than three years after the Ribbeck parish should have come under the control of Pastor Pachali of Retzow, the tenacity of Pastor Posth and the support of the Ribbeck patron and parishioners enabled the Confessing Church to maintain its hold on the vacant Ribbeck parish.

While Interim Superintendent Bettac disagreed with Posth's policy in Ribbeck, it was in the context of pastoral appointments in Retzow and Pessin that the two engaged in a fuller debate about the Confessing Church's uncompromising rejection of the spiritual leadership of the *Land* Church government. Retzow, just west of Ribbeck, fell vacant upon the retirement of former pastor Koch, at the end of 1935. Within months, the Confessing Church sent Curate Grützmacher from Kremmen to Retzow to help with the parish there.¹⁰⁹ However, the Brandenburg

¹⁰⁷ Pastor Posth of Berge to the Prussian Superior Church Council, Berlin, 11 April 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 143/948.

¹⁰⁸ Ribbeck Parish Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, 21 October 1937; Report on a meeting between Consistorial Councillor Hermann, Interim Superintendent Bettac of Beetz, and Pastors Posth of Berge and Pachali of Retzow, 22 February 1938; Pastor Pachali in Retzow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 June 1938; Pastor Posth in Berge to the Brandenburg Consistory, 12 July 1938 and 20 October 1938; Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 9 December 1938; "Beglaubigter Auszug aus dem Verhandlungsbuch der Kirchengemeinde Ribbeck," 19 January 1941, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10649; Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory (yearly reports on the administration of vacant parishes), 11 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 130/840; 22 July 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751; 5 March 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 128/752.

¹⁰⁹ Curate Grützmacher of Brandenburg/Havel to the Brandenburg Consistory, via the Brandenburg Confessing Church Council, 31 March 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10753.

Consistory sent Curate Walter Pachali to Retzow and proposed to link the parish with vacant Ribbeck and Möthlow (a filial of Pessin) in order to create a position large enough to justify filling it.

While both Interim Superintendent Bettac and the Nauen District Synod Executive supported that consistorial plan,¹¹⁰ Confessing Church Pastor Posth argued vigorously against appointing the neutral Pachali, even though the latter was an avid supporter of the Confessing Church. Though Pachali agreed with the Confessing Church about Scriptural and confessional authority and about the errors of the German Christians, he preferred to work within the *Land Church* organization rather than to reject it completely. For Posth, that did not constitute a sufficient level of commitment to the cause of the Confessing Church. Consequently, he complained about Pachali to Bettac, even though he knew Bettac shared Pachali's views.

Posth argued that it made more sense to dispel antagonism against the Confessing Church in Retzow through a competent new Confessing pastor than to allow the unjust accusations of the more radical Thuringian German Christians against the Confessing Church to remain unchallenged under the leadership of a neutral pastor. Posth summed up his position, insisting that there could never be a situation in which a neutral pastoral candidate ought to be preferred over a Confessing Church pastoral candidate. Any compromise on that point would undermine the claim that Posth and the other Confessing Church pastors stood by, namely that the Confessing Church's Provisional Church Leadership was the uniquely legitimate authority in the Old Prussian Church.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, Berlin, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934 and 7/12765; Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10753.

¹¹¹ Pastor Posth of Berge to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 8 November 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 69/741.

Though Pachali was appointed in Retzow in 1937, his summons into the military forces in April 1940 raised once again the issue of finding a Confessing Church pastor for Retzow. As Pastor Posth and Interim Superintendent Bettac planned for a suitable replacement, they soon fell back into disagreement. Posth argued that Bettac ought to summon a full-fledged Confessing Church pastor. Bettac pointed out the difficulties of Posth's demand—for example, securing approval from the Consistory—and criticized the rigidity of the Confessing Church position. Bettac rationalized that the Consistory simply sent out a replacement for a conscripted pastor, and added that consistorial officials only sent out clergymen who recognized their authority. Mixing his biblical metaphors, Bettac outlined his practical view of the situation: "Herein lies the whole difficulty, to find a place for the Confessing Church brothers, and on this basis, I have taken and do take the view that the Confessing Church hurts itself through its isolation. What does it matter if the brothers get themselves legalized? Indeed, they would thereby come into regular pastorates and we could work through the whole church like leaven, until the extremely patched up German Christian wineskin bursts."¹¹²

While the disagreement remained unresolved in Retzow, the arguments were repeated in Pessin, during the search for a replacement for dismissed Confessing Church Pastor Bogumil Rocha. Appointed in 1933 to replace retired Pastor Schulz, Rocha's delivery of a Confessing Church pulpit declaration and gathering of Confessing Church collections led to official complaints from his parishioners in October 1934. In September 1936, the Consistory sent Vicar Bedorf to replace Rocha, though Rocha was not officially released until June 1938.¹¹³ As Interim

¹¹² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Posth of Berge, 19 April 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

¹¹³ Correspondence concerning the grievances lodged against Rocha includes Brandenburg Consistory to Pastor Rocha of Pessin, 20 October 1934, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10774; and Brandenburg Consistory to Pastor Rocha of Pessin, 3 June 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10770.

Superintendent Bettac began to look for candidates for Pessin, Confessing Pastor Posth argued for a Confessing Church candidate, not simply a neutral. As a basis for his request, Posth claimed that the Women's Aid in Paulinenaue would never accept a neutral pastor.¹¹⁴

Despite Posth's ideas, Bettac made it clear to the Confessing Church Council for Brandenburg that the radical behaviour of former Pastor Rocha had soured the Pessin parishioners to all clergymen affiliated with church-political groups. Of course, Bettac added, he hoped to find a neutral candidate who leaned towards the Confessing Church.¹¹⁵ Similarly, Bettac advised Pastor Pachali of Retzow, supervisor for the vacant Pessin parish and thus chairman of the parish council, to shy away from full-fledged Confessing Church candidates and to look for a neutral with a strong, pro-Confessing Church stance. With that in mind, Bettac supplied Pachali with a list of names for the Pessin parish council to consider.¹¹⁶

All Bettac's planning almost went awry, however, because of a miscommunication with Pastor Günther Harder of Fehrbellin, the Confessing Church District Pastor for Nauen. Scrutinizing his list of potential candidates, Bettac had asked Harder about the church-political orientation of a candidate named Schultz. Harder did not reply, so Bettac, assuming all was well with Schultz, submitted his name to Pachali and the Pessin parish council. When they summoned Schultz for a candidacy visit, the Pessinians soon discovered he was a German Christian. Pachali, however, managed to ward off the old German Christians on the parish council, and Schultz was not heard from again. In the aftermath, when Harder asked Bettac why he had chosen a German Christian to be a candidate in

¹¹⁴ Pastor Posth of Berge to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 8 November 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 69/741.

¹¹⁵ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Confessing Church Council, 23 August 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

¹¹⁶ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Pachali of Retzow, 16 December 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

Pessin, Bettac was miffed, since Harder had failed to warn him in the first place.¹¹⁷ After that confusion, the Pessin parish council finally elected their curate, Theodor Bedorf, who became pastor in April 1939. Church-politically, he was exactly what Interim Superintendent Bettac wanted—a neutral willing to promote the interests of the Confessing Church in his parish.¹¹⁸

That same contrast between full-fledged Confessing pastors and their supporters inside the *Land* Church emerged in conversations surrounding the appointment of a new pastor in Markau. There, the long and troubled process of appointing a new pastor fuelled the theological and church-political disagreement between Interim Superintendent Bettac and the full-fledged Confessing Church clergymen. During the winter of 1937 to 1938, Pastor Krafft, a Confessing Church curate from the Rhineland (but ordained in Brandenburg), ministered in Markau. As much as Bettac wanted to keep Krafft there, German Christian Consistorial Councillor Hermann refused to allow the Rhinelander to remain active in the Brandenburg church province. Bettac urged Krafft to "view things completely coldly, as they are," and suggested that Confessing Church officials in the Rhineland would probably help Krafft find a position there. Then Bettac made his primary point, that he doubted it was right that the Confessing Church always kept clear of the German Christian church authorities. "The Consistory in the Rhineland will hardly have enough German Christian pastors to make appointments in all positions, and will have to place Confessing Church brothers too. Why should they not be able to turn to this Consistory?"¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Harder of Fehrbellin, 10 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

¹¹⁸ Pessin Parish Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, 5 December 1938; Confirmation of Bedorf's appointment, 29 January 1939, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10770; List of neutral pastors in the Nauen church district, n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

¹¹⁹ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Curate Krafft of Markau, 10 January 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

Krafft replied to Bettac's letter with a seven-page missive, in which he sharply rejected Bettac's church politics. Krafft reminded Bettac that the state recognized neither the Confessing Church Brethren Councils nor their Provisional Church Leadership. He argued that the more the German Christians joined forces with the church authorities, the harder it would be to get permission from the consistorial financial departments to appoint a Confessing Church pastor. Simply put, the German Christians were the "sworn enemies" of the Confessing Church, which they regarded as illegal. As for the German Christians not having enough pastors to fill all the positions, Krafft maintained that the German Christian church authorities would always sooner turn to a neutral pastor than appoint a member of the Confessing Church. And if Bettac argued that the Confessing Church only had to enter into conversations with the German Christians, Krafft doubted that this would succeed anywhere—certainly not in Thuringia, Mecklenburg or the Rhineland. In short, working with the German Christians meant recognizing heretics as legitimate ecclesiastical authorities, something Krafft was not prepared to do.¹²⁰ Despite the vehemence of Krafft's protest, his logic did not prevail in Brandenburg, where local alliances of clergymen, patrons, lay people and district superintendents were able to place many Confessing Church candidates into vacant parishes.

Beyond the size and state of vacant parishes and the nature of the church-political contest over new appointments, four other factors influenced the pastoral appointments described above: the direction of popular opinion within the parishes, the interference of other past or present parish clergymen, the personality of the patron and a collection of secondary issues relating to geography and spiritual vitality in the parishes. Of these, popular opinion was undoubtedly the most spectacular, though not always the most effective.

¹²⁰ Curate Krafft of Markau to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 12 January 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

At times, discontented vicars or curates stirred up parish anger against new appointees. Such was the case in Bredow, where Vicar Bolle undermined the authority of new pastor Ernst Höft of Zeestow. In Bredow, parishioners were angered because they were refused a new pastor of their own and attached to the Zeestow parish. While opposition had been building since 1935, things came to a head as Pastor Höft of Zeestow took up his duties in early 1936. In Bredow, Höft's appointment spelled unemployment for Vicar Bolle, who continued to live in the Bredow parsonage anyway. Bolle's continued presence in Bredow fuelled local resentment against both the Prussian church authorities and Pastor Höft. By mid-February, attendance at Höft's church service in Bredow had fallen to about two parishioners per week. Both Höft and Interim Superintendent Schmidt loudly demanded that Bolle be transferred from Bredow at once. As Höft argued, Bolle exacerbated problems by acting as if he were the pastor in Bredow: "The parish of Bredow, which is greatly angered because not they but rather the much smaller Zeestow was filled, want to hold onto 'their Pastor Bolle.' As long as Bolle is in Bredow, I meet great mistrust there and my work is hopeless from the outset, because I am considered the one who ousted Bolle from his position."¹²¹ Soon Bolle left Bredow, and Höft settled into his ministry in the joint Zeestow-Bredow pastorate.

Similarly, popular opinion and the interference of temporary clergymen in Paaren combined to complicate the appointment of Pastor Herzog in Wansdorf in 1937. Neither the Wansdorf nor Paaren pastorates had been filled since 1934, but in mid-1936, the Brandenburg Consistory decided to appoint a new pastor in

¹²¹ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 September 1935, 26 October 1935, 13 December 1935, 21 January 1936 and 15 February 1936; Pastor Höft in Zeestow to Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow, 15 February 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10365.

Wansdorf. It was planned that he would also supervise the administration and ministry in neighbouring Paaren.¹²²

Ironically, the Wansdorfers were not ready for a new pastor. Indeed, parishioners there were still so shaken by the actions of former pastor Weicht that 27 of them petitioned the Prussian church authorities to put off the new appointment for a year. They lamented that Weicht had embezzled RM 5500, behaved in an overbearing manner, completely ignored lay leaders in Wansdorf and its filial church Pausin, and demanded extensive renovations in the parsonage. In contrast, they argued, their Vicar Theodor Bedorf had successfully won back the trust of parishioners, who in turn hoped to elect him as their pastor once he had completed his second theological examination.¹²³ However, by autumn 1936, the Wansdorf and Pausin parish councils had changed their minds and approved the appointment of Pastor Kurt Herzog.

While the Wansdorfers were reluctantly agreeing to a new pastor, parishioners in Paaren were upset at the Consistory's refusal to grant them a new pastor. Just at the time of Herzog's installation—when the parishioners in Paaren and its filial Pernewitz were feeling the loss of their pastor most acutely—they were assigned a new curate. Curate Raede, their man, was a veteran pastor from Berlin, who had just finished making himself almost instantly distasteful to parishioners in

¹²² Paaren and Pernewitz parish councils to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 5 September 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10604.

¹²³ Gotthold Rauschfuß, Theodor Zug *et al.* to the President of the Prussian Superior Church Council, 21 August 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12975. If the sentiment of the parishioners from Wansdorf and Pausin was genuine, their letter was somewhat misleading, as Pastor Becker in Grünefeld demonstrated. Becker, who was then supervising the administration of the two parishes, wrote the Brandenburg Consistory to clarify the situation in Wansdorf. After reassuring the Consistory that young Vicar Bedorf was not party to the request of the 27 parishioners—Becker claimed it was planned without Bedorf's knowledge and against his will—Becker also corrected the parishioners' accusation of embezzlement. Although Weicht's "poor or completely failing record keeping" had completely confused the finances of the parishes, eventually it was found that the parish had not lost "one penny." Pastor Becker in Grünefeld to the Brandenburg Consistory, 2 September 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12975.

Hakenberg, 15 km northwest of Paaren.¹²⁴ Raede exploited the feeling of abandonment in Paaren, and within two weeks had whipped the parish into a frenzy, been dismissed by the Consistory and prohibited from subsequent ministry anywhere in the Brandenburg church province.¹²⁵

This is what happened in Paaren: When Raede arrived and found Paaren parishioners upset over the appointment of Herzog, he immediately fuelled the fire of their frustration, telling them that since the Paaren parish generated so much church income, it should have its own pastor (indeed, he would be their pastor) and not pay the salary of an unknown pastor. As neighbouring Pastor Becker from Grünefeld observed: "With that, [Raede] naturally found the approval of the parish," and set in motion an uproar against newly elected Herzog, who had not even taken up his position in Wansdorf yet. This behaviour, unacceptable in a junior clergyman let alone an experienced man like Raede, shattered the church peace, made Herzog's entrance into Wansdorf extremely difficult, and led to Raede's dismissal.¹²⁶

Despite the obvious need for the Land Church authorities to get Raede out of the Havelland, the parish councillors from Paaren and Pernewitz were mystified and regarded the sudden departure of the popular Raede as yet another slight against them. In two letters to the Brandenburg Consistory and the Prussian Superior Church Council, they argued that they, not Wansdorf, deserved the new pastor. While they agreed with the Consistory that Wansdorf had a more modern parsonage (thanks to former Pastor Weicht's extravagance), they claimed theirs was a solid structure with a well-maintained garden, which only required superficial repairs. Besides, they inquired, was the Consistory really claiming that the state of the

¹²⁴ Documentation of Raede's short time in Hakenberg, his successful preaching, poor pastoral care and tenuous financial state is in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10537.

¹²⁵ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 21 October 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10604.

¹²⁶ Pastor Becker of Grünefeld, "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des Pastor Raede in Paaren," 24 October 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10604.

parsonage was a sufficient basis for appointing a pastor in Wansdorf and not Paaren? Should not the fact that the Paaren parish generated RM 5600 per year, enough to pay for a pastor, be grounds for an appointment there rather than in the poorer parish of Wansdorf? On top of all that, Paareners were confused that the popular Raede had been driven away, supposedly on account of complaints from the parish, when they knew of no complaints against him from parishioners. Darkly, they hinted that their parishioners would not tolerate the Prussian church authorities using the generous parish income from Paaren to pay for a pastor in Wansdorf.¹²⁷

From the side of the Consistory, it was not simply that Wansdorf had a newer parsonage, though that was one factor in Wansdorf's favour. What was more important was that the Consistory planned not to appoint a pastor in Paaren for two other reasons, both more important than the parsonage: first, Paaren had fewer parishioners than the growing parish of Wansdorf; and second, its parish conditions were intact, while conditions in Wansdorf had been "largely ruined by the ministry of the last, mentally ill pastor," Weicht.¹²⁸

It is not surprising that those reasons failed to satisfy the Paareners, who almost immediately fulfilled the predictions of their parish councillors by obstructing the ministry of the new Wansdorf pastor, Herzog. From 1936 to 1939, they refused to hand over parish income and church taxes from Paaren, until the financial picture deteriorated to the point that Herzog refused to work with them. In spring 1940, the Brandenburg Consistory appointed a financial plenipotentiary to oversee accounts in Paaren. Once again, the Paareners protested what they saw as the interference of higher church authorities, and once again they failed to overturn

¹²⁷ Paaren and Pernewitz Parish Council to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 5 September 1936 and 23 November 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10604.

¹²⁸ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 7 January 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12645; Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 13 March 1937, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/11934.

the will of the consistorial officials to carry through their realignment of the Paaren and Wansdorf parishes on the eastern edge of the Nauen district.¹²⁹

In short, parishioners harassed newly appointed pastors primarily because of long-standing frustrations over the Consistory's neglect of their parishes, poor care at the hands of curates and vicars, and agitation from ousted clergymen who remained in the parishes in which they had formerly ministered. They did so, however, with mixed success. In both Kremmen and Groß Behnitz, popular opinion against Confessing Church candidates was not strong enough to overturn pastoral appointments in 1936 and 1938. In Markau, however, a motivated parish council—no doubt cognisant of the popularity of local Curate Glockner—did manage to thwart the will of the Markau patron, who had nominated another candidate unknown to parishioners.

Another factor of consequence in the appointment of clergymen in Nauen was the personality and participation of the local patron. Patron von Pleßow of Flatow pressed the Consistory in 1939, until officials finally agreed to appoint a new pastor in Pleßow's parish.¹³⁰ Patrons von Ribbeck in Ribbeck and von Borsig in Groß Behnitz, both members of the Confessing Church, were most determined to promote pastoral candidates of their choice, even against the will of the German Christians who dominated the Brandenburg Consistory. Both helped maintain their parishes as Confessing Church strongholds. In Ribbeck, Patron von Ribbeck gave unrelenting support to Pastor Posth of Berge, who supervised the Ribbeck parish on behalf of the Confessing Church, even after the Consistory had transferred authority to neutral Pastor Pachali from Retzow. In Groß Behnitz, von Borsig employed both

¹²⁹ Brandenburg Consistory, Finance Department to the Prussian Superior Church Council, Finance Department, 19 July 1940; Prussian Superior Church Council to the Paaren Parish Council, 5 August 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12645.

¹³⁰ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 19 July 1939 and 16 November 1939, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10459.

the energetic application of his patronage rights and the zealous mobilization of popular opinion to achieve and defend the appointment of Kurt Fritzsche in 1938.

Other patrons became active out of reaction against unseemly church politics in their parishes. Such was the case in Linum, where Magistrate Demuth rejected both German Christian and full-fledged Confessing Church candidates in the 1941 appointment of Pastor Born in Linum. In Markau, General Director Schoch did not play quite as active a role, though his participation in the appointment process prevented the German Christians from establishing a new stronghold in the Nauen parish.

Finally, participants in the appointment process invoked a collection of other, less vital, arguments in their quest to convince the Brandenburg Consistory to ratify or overturn clerical appointments. In the case of Flatow, Interim Superintendent Bettac used four arguments to try to convince the Brandenburg Consistory to approve a new appointment: the expectation of population growth in the Flatow parish, where a new settlement was supposed to add hundreds more to the 1150 souls currently in the parish; a vacancy in the neighbouring parish of Staffelde, which was already stretching the limits of the ability of the local clergymen to cope; the establishment of a Polish prison camp in late 1939, which raised the prospect of a military confiscation of the empty parsonage; and the demands of Patron Bernhard von Pleßow, who continued to ask when his pastorate would be refilled.¹³¹ While the Consistory put off Bettac, Pleßow and the parishioners in Flatow from July through November 1939, by December permission was granted, and in February Pastor Konrad Isleib took up the pastorate.¹³² In Markau too, Interim Superintendents Schmidt-Flatow and Bettac-Beetz advanced

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Brandenburg Consistory to the Nauen District Superintendent, 27 November 1939; Prussian Superior Church Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, 9 December 1939; Patron Pleßow in Flatow to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz and the Brandenburg Consistory, 30 January 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10459.

several arguments for a new appointment, from the possibility of a new superintendency to the need for ministerial care in neighbouring parishes to the idea of adding the hospital visitation in Nauen and the district youth pastors' portfolio to the Markau job description.¹³³ In Paaren, parishioners presented a series of reasons why their parish, and not Wansdorf, should receive permission for a new pastor: the level of parish income, the loss of a popular curate, and the need to restore confidence among parishioners¹³⁴

In sum then, parish appointments in the Nauen district could be contentious affairs, in which church-political groups like the German Christians and Confessing Church tried to exploit connections in the Brandenburg Consistory, the authority of the district superintendent, the influence of parish patrons and pastors, and the force of popular opinion to place clergymen of their orientation into vacant positions throughout the district. Drawing on parish population and income statistics, balancing the spiritual state of the various parishes and taking into account the level of pastoral care available, clergymen and lay people alike argued the necessity of refilling vacant parishes, often in vain. German Christians were much less successful at influencing these appointments in the Nauen district than members and supporters of the Confessing Church.

All these elements that made up the complex and often emotional nature of parish appointments are clearly visible in the most heated and drawn out conflict over any clerical appointment in the district during the National Socialist era, the fight over the appointment of an associate pastor in Nauen itself. Since the Nauen parish was the seat of the district superintendency, the largest parish in the district and subject to the greatest influence from the NSDAP district leadership, it bears a closer examination than other appointments in the rural parishes of the surrounding

¹³³ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 20 October 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10800.

¹³⁴ Paaren and Pernewitz parish council to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 5 September 1936 and 23 November 1936, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10604.

Havelland. Moreover, an investigation of the contest over the appointment in Nauen, a series of church-political battles from 1937 to 1943, uncovers the fascinating diversity of personalities and arguments involved in the search for a new pastor in an important parish.

The problems in Nauen began in 1935, when the former German Christian pastor Gerhard Schumann was joined by a more radically nationalist German Christian, Friedrich Siems.¹³⁵ By 1937, the moderate Schumann had retired and Siems was the head pastor in Nauen. Siems was politically active, and not only within the church. He was an old NSDAP member, served as a local Party official and had married the daughter of the deputy mayor. Indeed, one of his colleagues was convinced that this explained Siems' appointment to the coveted pastorate in Nauen.¹³⁶

The first wave of open conflict swept through the parish in the spring of 1939. The candidate nominated for the vacant associate pastorate was Pastor Werner Andrich from neighbouring Vehlefanz. Like Pastor Siems, Andrich belonged to the more radical Thuringian German Christian Movement. In a revival of previous church-political battles,¹³⁷ Confessing Church parishioners in Nauen launched a grievance against the election of Andrich, based largely on the argument that Pastor Siems already served the German Christian minority in the Nauen parish and that a second German Christian pastor would be unfair.¹³⁸ The protesters argued that they represented the majority in the parish who stood by the "old faith", and they

¹³⁵ "Einspruch gegen die Wahl des Herrn Pfarrer Andrich [...]," n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770.

¹³⁶ Interim Superintendent Pastor Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, re: "Pfarrstellenbesetzungen bei Stadtpatronen", 12 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 126/750.

¹³⁷ For details about the conflict between Pastor Siems and Interim Superintendent Bettac, Mrs. Krüger and the Nauen Women's Aid, please see chapter 5, pp. 221 ff., below.

¹³⁸ "Einspruch gegen die Wahl des Herrn Pfarrer Andrich [...]," n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770.

appealed to a Prussian church precedent: in a divided parish, multiple appointments should be divided between rival church-political groups.¹³⁹

To this basic charge, they added other grievances: that Andrich had managed his parish finances irregularly in Vehlefan, and was under investigation there; that his clothes were unclean; that he baptized children born to parents who had formally withdrawn from the church; that he conducted funerals for others who had abandoned church membership; that he had played with his confirmation students while dressed in his bathing suit; that he called the parish Women's Aid a coffee club; and finally, that his own parish found him unbearable and that the elders there said he was not always truthful.¹⁴⁰ If some of these seem trivial, together they demonstrated a concerted effort by the majority of active parishioners in Nauen to thwart the appointment of pastor Andrich.

Other grievances were more substantial, taking issue with Andrich's teaching and ministry. Complainants cited seven errors, including Andrich's failure to employ the Trinitarian invocation ("In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit"), his elevation of the *Führer* as a model of Christian piety, and his exaltation of the religious unity of the German *Volk* under National Socialism above the Word of God. According to the grievance, Andrich had claimed that Jesus Christ gave Christians the power to fulfil the divinely created order of National Socialism, and had stated that it was his highest aim as a preacher to spur his hearers on to an ever more devoted service to the National Socialist movement. The protesting parishioners replied that there was no single form of government approved by God and that seeking God's kingdom and righteousness was the Christian's highest duty. They charged Andrich with blurring the Christian distinction between Christians and non-Christians in his quest for the religious unity of the German *Volk*.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. There is also a similar grievance from three Nauen women, 11 June 1939, Domstiftarchiv

Despite this list of grievances, Interim Superintendent Bettac remained pessimistic about the chances of overturning the appointment of the German Christian Andrich. Bettac suspected that the Brandenburg Consistory in Berlin would use the appointment in Nauen for two purposes: first, to rescue Andrich from the uncomfortable circumstances of his current parish, since it appeared that the baby Andrich and his new wife were then expecting was going to be a "seven month child," conceived out of wedlock; and second, to appoint a German Christian superintendent based in Andrich's old parish, in place of Bettac, who was staunchly opposed to appointing German Christians.¹⁴²

Bettac tried to avert Land Church interference by appealing to the head of the local Women's Aid, Mrs. Krüger, to convince the seemingly ill-informed patron of the parish, Mayor Urban of Nauen, to withdraw his nomination of Andrich.¹⁴³ Krüger did so, explaining to the mayor the long history of conflict between her 170-member organization and the Nauen German Christian Pastor Siems. Krüger made it clear that the Women's Aid steered clear of church politics and expected at least a neutral pastor, if not a member of the Confessing Church—in other words, one who would hold theologically orthodox services and co-operate with the women of the parish.¹⁴⁴

Brandenburg NE 703/770 (also in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 143/948, attributed there to Confessing Church Curate Ossenkop in Fehrbellin).

¹⁴² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Mrs. Krüger of Nauen, 5 April 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770.

¹⁴³ Ibid. Bettac bemoaned the fact that Mayor Urban had not consulted with his counterpart in Vehlefanze about Andrich, nor with the neighbouring pastor in Velten, nor with Bettac himself. As interim superintendent, Bettac had initiated a pair of grievances against Andrich and was well placed to give advice. Concerning the opinion of complainants in Nauen that Andrich lacked any semblance of pastoral dignity, Bettac knew prominent parishioners in Vehlefanze who described Andrich as a "harlequin". Frustrated with the lack of disciplinary action against Andrich, Bettac vented his anger over the "scandal" of the Brandenburg Consistory's continual protection of the German Christian clergymen.

¹⁴⁴ Mrs. Krüger to Mayor Urban of Nauen, 18 April 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770.

Thanks to these and other efforts, the appointment of the German Christian Werner Andrich in Nauen was scuttled.¹⁴⁵ However, the saga of the associate pastorate continued into 1940. When the position became open, local members of the Confessing Church again demanded a candidate who would conform to their neglected church-political orientation. And so there came to Nauen the candidate of choice, one preacher by the name of Gustav Gille. He preached a candidacy sermon from Luke 16:10 ("Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."), charging the Nauen congregation to maintain a high level of political loyalty but otherwise simply urging them to imitate God's faithfulness. He used the normal formula of service, including the Trinitarian version of the invocation and the Apostles' Creed.¹⁴⁶ In short, he appeared to be a theologically orthodox young pastor whose appointment the Nauen parish council supported.

Then came the explosion. It soon became apparent that Pastor Gille was in fact from the extreme racial-nationalist wing of the German Christians. He had in the past regularly deviated from the Apostles' Creed because he did not fully subscribe to it, and generally held German Christian religious celebrations instead of the prescribed *Land Church* services.¹⁴⁷

Immediately, Nauen parishioners began to circulate petitions. Some accused Gille of neglecting to preach about Jesus Christ, of belittling God by conflating divine and human faithfulness, and of emphasizing human obedience as the way to God rather than Jesus' atoning death and resurrection. Others stated simply that they

¹⁴⁵ "Vakanzliste Nauen," 3 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

¹⁴⁶ "Predigt gehalten bei der Probeaufstellung am 21. Jan. 1940 in Nauen durch P. Gille," Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559; "Wir Endesunterzeichneten erheben hiermit Anspruch gegen Lehre, Gaben und Wandel des Herrn Hilfspredigers Gille," 19 February 1940, Minutes of the Nauen District Synod Executive, 23 August 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559 and Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg 59/646.

¹⁴⁷ The representative of those in the parish protesting against the election of Pastor Gille in Nauen to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 31 May 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

wanted an associate pastor who would preach on the basis of the Bible and the traditional confessions. Women in the Nauen Women's Aid spearheaded both these important grievance petitions.¹⁴⁸

When this first round of petitions was rebuffed,¹⁴⁹ the protestors from Nauen wrote angry letters to the *Land* Church authorities, reiterating their grievances and adding a few others: that Gille had portrayed Jesus only as a model teacher, and not as the Saviour too; and that Gille had led the children into a renewal of Old Testament legalism and works rather than pointing his listeners towards Christ.¹⁵⁰

In spite of the efforts of Gille, Siems and the mayor of Nauen¹⁵¹ to rebut these accusations, the Nauen District Synod Executive supported the grievances and urged the Brandenburg Consistory to overturn the appointment of Gille. The synod executive argued that Gille had dishonestly used the full Trinitarian invocation and the Apostles' Creed in his candidacy sermon, in order to deceive the parishioners about his true theological position.¹⁵² Further, they understood that Gille had tricked

¹⁴⁸ "Ich erhebe Einspruch gegen die Lehre von Herrn Pfarrer Gille aus Raguhn aus folgenden Gründen [...]", n.d., Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559. Edith Troost of the Women's Aid and three women, two of them children's church helpers, signed the grievance. It was then forwarded with a letter to President Heinrich of the Prussian Superior Church Council, signed by the widow Emma Preuss and two other Nauen women (also in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559). Other grievances and related correspondence, including evidence of Gille's leadership in the German Christian National Church Movement and his dedication to German anti-Jewish, *völkisch* piety are in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835 and Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁴⁹ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 16 March 1940; Brandenburg Consistory to the protesting parishioners in Nauen, 18 May 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁵⁰ Letter from Nauen parishioners, 17 July 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 143/948.

¹⁵¹ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 8 October 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559. Patron Mayor Urban of Nauen had informed the Brandenburg Consistory that no matter what happened in the case of Gustav Gille, he would continue to nominate German Christian candidates for the position in Nauen.

¹⁵² Sitting of the Nauen District Synod Executive, 23 August 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 59/646 and Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559. The synod executive argued that Gille had not used the full Apostles' Creed in Raguhn, his previous pastorate, and that he knew that the German Christians in Nauen avoided using it too. Thus, they judged that he had acted deceitfully by using the full formula.

the parish with the full connivance of head pastor Siems. They also added the mundane complaint that Gille had preached his candidacy sermon without looking at the congregation in Nauen, and introduced a recent discovery of theirs, that Gille had a record of divisive German Christian agitation in his old parish.¹⁵³ Indeed, Gille's record of agitation proved consistent. As an indication of his style during the conflict in Nauen, he insulted Mrs. Krüger of the Women's Aid on her barrenness and argued those opposed to him were merely a clique of academics, officials and small business owners.¹⁵⁴

This last item points to a similar feature of disputes between the Confessing Church and the German Christian Movement in other parishes. Throughout the conflict, both sides claimed to speak as the voice of the parish. For his part, Curate Gustav Gille claimed the existence of a 300 member German Christian group in Nauen, and argued that the parish groups behind the grievances comprised only a vocal minority who did not have the greater interests of the parish at heart. In complete contrast, the speakers bringing the charges against Gille claimed to speak for a group of almost 300 themselves, including 170 in the Women's Association, 69 in the Evangelical Union, and 51 in the Christian Fellowship. Moreover, according to the report of the synod executive, the German Christian group consisted of only a few parishioners who attended church regularly and many guests, while the protesting groups were comprised of the leading participants in parish life.¹⁵⁵

By the time the Nauen District Synod Executive had rendered its judgment, however, Gille had returned to his former parish, Raguhn in Saxony-Anhalt, and to his position as an officer in the German army.¹⁵⁶ Nonetheless, his supporters

¹⁵³ Sitting of the Nauen District Synod Executive, 23 August 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 59/646 and Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Nauen District Synod Executive to the Brandenburg Consistory, 29 August 1940; Pastor Gustav

continued to agitate on his behalf. Pastor Siems was incensed at the Nauen District Synod Executive rejection of Gille, and wrote a letter from the Eastern Front criticizing the Women's Aid for its misuse of many old women and its adoption of "parliamentary methods of a democratic past."¹⁵⁷ Rather than listen to the "small circle" of complainants, the Consistory ought to turn to "people capable of judgment, who really stand in the contemporary, pulsating life of the Third Reich." Siems argued that the Women's Aid had separated itself from parish life by refusing to work with him when he was present in Nauen, and suggested that Patron Mayor Urban was looking to the interests of the majority of the twelve thousand souls in the Nauen parish when he nominated Gille, whom Siems praised for his "'manly' attitude" in the face of the hatred of his opponents.¹⁵⁸ Mayor Urban also defended Gille, and castigated the Consistory's treatment of the Nauen parishioners engaged with National Socialism as "a snubbing and a clear violation." He was incensed that they had abandoned his candidate Gille, "a front soldier since the beginning of the war!!!" He reminded the Consistory about a 1940 regulation recommending the appointment of veterans. Attacking the Confessing Church opponents of his nominee, Mayor Urban pointed out that they could only gather about 120 signatures, which he described as "a storm in a water glass!" and "a Marxist manoeuvre."¹⁵⁹

Although Mayor Urban continued to try to nominate Gille for the vacant Nauen parish until June 1941,¹⁶⁰ he finally gave up trying, and in April 1942

Gille in Raguhn/Anhalt, at present in the army, to the Brandenburg Consistory, 19 October 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁵⁷ Pastor Siems of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 11 October 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Mayor Urban of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 20 January 1941, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

¹⁶⁰ Mayor Urban of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 23 June 1941, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10559.

nominated another war veteran, a disabled military chaplain and vicar named Erich Schröder.¹⁶¹ Schröder, a vicar in Nauen for eight months in 1939 and 1940, found himself in Russia, then Kiev, with the army, and could not get away for a candidacy visit in Nauen until well into 1943. Faced with the prospect of yet another round of protests from the Confessing Church in Nauen, Schröder explained to Interim Superintendent Simon from Oranienburg that he had no interest in any church-political group whatsoever. Describing his many experiences as a soldier and then military chaplain, Schröder made it clear that his constant exposure to mortal danger drove him to the simple message of salvation in Christ, which he preached and ministered from the Word of God and the Reformation Confessions.¹⁶² This must have been enough to satisfy both the Nauen parish and the Brandenburg Consistory, since Schröder was called to Nauen in May 1943.¹⁶³ With that, the four-year struggle to appoint an associate pastor in Nauen ended.

This story of Pastor Siems, Mrs. Krüger and candidates Andrich, Gille and Schröder is telling. It was certainly the largest scandal in the Nauen parish during the second half of the National Socialist era, demonstrating that the church struggle—though it spread from Berlin and the other *Land* church capitals throughout the German countryside—manifested itself in the unique institutions and events of parish church life. The many cases in the Nauen parish in the Brandenburg church province demonstrate the possibility for the Confessing Church to achieve tangible results in church-political conflict at the lower levels of the Old Prussian Union Church. Upon analysis, four conclusions stand out.

¹⁶¹ Mayor Urban of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 27 April 1942, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10556.

¹⁶² Military Chaplain Schröder to Interim Superintendent Simon in Oranienburg, 10 August 1942 and 12 January 1943, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10556.

¹⁶³ Schröder's nomination and signature of acceptance are in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10556.

First, the contentious nature of pastoral appointments certainly reaffirms the importance of parish pastors, if the sheer volume of correspondence and its emotion are any indication. Pastors set the basic tone and direction of parish life, and the appointment of a pastor was the single most important ecclesiastical event at the parish level during the National Socialist era. Based on the written records in Nauen, it caught the imagination of parishioners far more than the important national or historical concerns, such as the fight for the Reich church or the plight of the Jews.

There are several good reasons to think that this was not an isolated case, but a situation common to the Brandenburg Province of the Old Prussian Union Church. For one, the Old Prussian Church—as a fusion of Lutheran and Reformed elements—possessed wider theological and institutional latitude for lay participation in parish life than either Württemberg or Saxony. The synodal system had a longer history and appears to have been a more integral aspect of local church administration.¹⁶⁴

Another reason why there was more controversy over pastoral appointments in Nauen, and perhaps in Brandenburg as a whole, was simply the high number of vacancies. While about one-third of the pastors in Ravensburg and Pirna held the same positions from 1933 to 1939, only one-fifth did so in Nauen. Even before many pastors were summoned into military service during the Second World War, clergymen in the Nauen district struggled to keep up with the demands of multiple-parish ministry. Between 1933 and 1938, there were regularly 12 to 15 parishes under some form of provisional care—nearly half of the parishes in the district.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Nikolaus Nürger, *Das Synodwahlssystem in den deutschen evangelischen Landeskirchen im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1988), 142-169; Borg, *Old Prussian Church and the Weimar Republic*, 11-13, 68-71; Wright, 'Above Parties', 3-6, 20, and 36.

¹⁶⁵ The yearly reports from the District Superintendent's Office in Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory concerning vacant parishes are contained in several files: 1934-1935 report, 30 September 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 125/744; 1936 report, 11 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 126/750; 1937 report, 18 March 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 129/900; 1938 report, 11 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 130/840; 1939 report, 22 July 1940, 186

Nor was it often clear how long positions would remain vacant. Some, like Pessin (1933), Vehlefan (1934), Kremmen (1936) and Zeestow (1940) only took a few months to fill. Many took around a year to complete, like an earlier appointment in Zeestow (1936) and others in Retzow (1937), Flatow and Pessin (1939), and Linum (1941). A few took much longer: Schwante (1937), Wansdorf (1937) and Groß Behnitz (1938) remained vacant for over two years each, Bötzw (1939) was vacant for over five years and Markau (1942) for seven and a half.¹⁶⁶

One more reason why clerical appointments in Nauen, and perhaps in all of Brandenburg, were so prone to controversy was the strength of the Confessing Church. Prussia was the theological and organizational heart of the Confessing Church, which worked as an administrative counterweight to the Old Prussian Union Church government. This situation contrasted most sharply with intact land churches like Württemberg, where German Christians did not control the church administration and where no institutional opposition akin to the Confessing Church existed. In Brandenburg, as in other Old Prussian Church provinces, Confessing Church clergymen worked long and hard to influence pastoral appointments. Their council kept itself informed of open pastorates and used its contacts among ecclesiastical officials in the Brandenburg Consistory to put forward suitable candidates from their own ranks. In doing so, it clashed with German Christians in both the *Land* Church government and the Nauen district parishes.

Second, the appointment contests in Brandenburg demonstrate that the outcome of even such a vital event in the local church struggle was unpredictable, the cumulative product of many forces. The patron, land church authorities, the parish council, the district synod executive and parish groups all had a voice in the process, and the presence of particularly forceful personalities in any of those groups fundamentally altered the result. In plain language, the Church Struggle was not

Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751.

¹⁶⁶ For details about the vacancies in Nauen parishes, please see above, note 2.

simply imposed upon the parishes from above. It was the product of an agenda from above transformed, instrumentalized or even overturned in a matrix of local personalities, groups and concerns.

Third, and most surprising, the church political contests in Nauen district parishes were not simply contests between German Christians and the members and supporters of the Confessing Church. Where the Confessing Church held sway in a parish or where some former German Christian clergymen had discredited themselves, German Christian candidates were not a threat. In those circumstances, members of the Confessing Church often found themselves struggling against supporters of the movement who sought pastors who would support the Confessing Church, but also recognize and co-operate with Prussian *Land* Church authorities. Generally speaking, the front lines in these less heated encounters divided local lay and clerical members of the Confessing Church against their supportive but less radical patrons, district superintendents and Land Church officials. The latter could not so easily ignore the Old Prussian Union Church government with whom and for whom they worked.

Fourth, and last, the situation in Nauen suggests that both parish clergymen and their lay people did have a meaningful influence upon their parish life. They enjoyed a significant range of freedom in which to act. This is proved not only by the effectiveness of lay grievances, but also by their fundamental nature. Parishioners were well able to articulate their ideological antipathy to the application of National Socialist values within their Protestant churches, and used Scripture and the Reformation Confessions to do so. In Nauen, they opposed clergymen whose preoccupation with National Socialism made them poor servants of the church. In other parishes, a variety of reasons influenced popular opinion in the churches, from pastoral negligence and church-political radicalism to the termination of popular curates. Moreover, forthright lay people opposing the imposition of National Socialist ideology in their parishes did not face brutal police retaliation or even censure from the Party. Within limits, they were free to direct their own

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ecclesiastical affairs. These conclusions certainly match newer research in other branches of National Socialist history, which over the past two decades has demonstrated that the German public, almost all of who were nominally Protestant or Catholic, played a significant role in shaping society in the Third Reich.¹⁶⁷

The lack of similar upheaval in Ravensburg and Pirna is a sign of the greater centralizing power in the Württemberg and Saxon *Land* Churches, whose *Land* Bishops—though on opposite sides of the church struggle—both appealed to the *Führer* principle to take on powers previously held by synodal or administrative bodies. Both *Land* Bishop Wurm of Württemberg and Coch of Saxony used their growing power to pull their respective *Land* churches in the direction of their theological, confessional and political convictions. Although they did not have the ability to suppress all of their opponents, Wurm and Coch largely controlled new pastoral appointments, especially compared to their counterpart, President Werner of the Old Prussian Union Church. Over time, that power of appointment enabled Wurm and Coch to place a cadre of loyal clergymen in the parishes of their *Land* churches. Thus, the relatively peaceful pastoral transitions between pastors in Ravensburg and Pirna stand in stark contrast to the fractious and fruitless effort to appoint new German Christian clergymen in Nauen. That reality surely stands as one of the fundamental regional differences in the German church struggle, together with the marked differences in the impact of National Socialism on parish life in 1933, and in sharp contrast to the relative uniformity of clerical nationalism across the three districts covered in this study.

¹⁶⁷ Gellately, *Gestapo and German Society*; Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"*; Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and perspectives of interpretation*, 3rd ed. (London: Edward Arnold, 1993); Thomas Childers and Jane Caplan, eds., *Reevaluating the Third Reich* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1993).

CHAPTER 5

ECCLESIASTICAL CHAMPIONS OR ENEMIES OF THE PEOPLE? PASTORS IN THE NAUEN CHURCH STRUGGLE

At the parish level, it goes without saying that clergymen were both the most influential and the most vulnerable people in the church struggle. At the centre of a web of relationships between parishioners, church patrons, local political leaders, clerical colleagues and the higher church government, pastors and vicars had the information and the influence which gave them the potential to shape the church-political orientation of their parishes. Their position, however, was also vulnerable to the noisy protests of parishioners and to the disfavour of higher church authorities. The next three chapters—each an examination of one of the three districts of Nauen, Pima and Ravensburg—will address three questions concerning the church struggle in the districts of Nauen, Pima and Ravensburg. First, how close was the relationship between the church struggle in the church capitals of Berlin, Dresden and Stuttgart and the parishes of these districts? Second, how much and in what ways did clergymen engage in the church struggle in their parishes? Third, how were pastors, curates or vicars adversely affected by attacks from parishioners or local National Socialist leaders and by pressure from their fellow clergymen and their *Land* church governments? In all cases, at least one of these important relationships in the clergymen's lives was strained and in many cases severed.

In order to understand the roles of individual pastors and vicars, it is necessary to analyze the changes that occurred among the clergymen as a group within the district. Ironically, the early electoral success of the German Christians in the Nauen district did not ultimately translate into either administrative control or ecclesiastical leadership. This was not least due to the moderating influence of two district leaders, Superintendent Graßhoff (1932-1935) and Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac (1936-1940, 1944-1945), who both shunned the excesses of church-political radicals and worked to unite parish clergymen in the face of increasingly difficult local church conditions.

That policy of moderation was not an easy one to sustain. In the Nauen district, no position demanded as much skill and wisdom during the church struggle

as that of the district superintendent. As officials of the Old Prussian Union Church government, superintendents transmitted instructions and passed along information from the Prussian Church authorities to their parish pastors and acted as the executive arm of the church government in their districts. They participated in pastoral appointments, enforced Prussian Church law, mediated parish disputes and presided over the district synod and various other church bodies. As pastors for the pastors in their districts, superintendents mentored younger clerics, oversaw the continuing education of pastors and worked to create harmonious relations among local clergymen. Finally, since they were also parish pastors, superintendents continued to preach, teach and perform other pastoral functions in their own parishes. In all three of these roles, superintendents invariably found themselves caught up in church-political controversy, whether in the parishes, among feuding clergymen or between local pastors and the Prussian Church authorities.

In Nauen, the challenges inherent in the position of superintendent were compounded by the fact that there was no permanent superintendent for 10 of the 12 years of National Socialist rule. Superintendent Graßhoff served from 1932 until only April 1935, when a chronic stomach disorder forced him to retire prematurely.¹ During Graßhoff's earlier medical leaves of absence, Pastor Ernst Ideler of Markau had replaced him, but when Ideler died in January 1935, Pastor Otto Schmidt of Flatow took up the position of interim superintendent. After Schmidt stepped down suddenly in 1936 for his own medical reasons, Pastor Ulrich Bettac from Beetz took up the position and remained interim superintendent until the end of 1940, when the collapse of his marriage made it necessary for him to resign. Superintendent Simon from the neighbouring district of Oranienburg was appointed interim superintendent in Nauen in 1941, but after his untimely death in March 1944, the Consistory reassigned Bettac to the position.² This procession of local leaders did nothing to

¹ Superintendent Graßhoff in Nauen to the pastors of the Nauen district, 23 March 1935, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736.

² The calculation of the terms of service of the interim superintendents is based on the flow of correspondence between the superintendent's office and the pastors in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736, NE 71/737 and NE 72/738, and between the superintendent's office and the Brandenburg Consistory from 1932 to 1946, in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 122/742, NE 124/743, NE 125/744, NE 127/751, NE 128/752, NE 129/900, NE 130/840, NE 131/803, NE 132/759 and NE

strengthen the hand of the Brandenburg Consistory in Nauen, as evidenced by the successful careers of oppositional clergymen in the district. In fact, one of the chief characteristics of the church struggle in Nauen was the lack of direct connection between ecclesiastical events in Berlin and those in the rural parishes of the district. One reads little of the German Christian seizure of power within the Old Prussian Union Church government, for example, or of Berlin Pastor Martin Niemöller and the events surrounding the creation of the Pastors' Emergency League. For all intents and purposes, ecclesiastical conflicts in Nauen between 1933 and 1945 were largely local affairs, influenced by larger events only insofar as Confessing Church pastors participated in widespread disobedience to the Prussian Church authorities, withholding collections and reading unauthorized pulpit declarations. One factor in this relative isolation was the lesser status of the interim superintendents, which did not afford them a significant role within the higher church politics of Berlin-Brandenburg.

Nauen Superintendent Graßhoff and the interim superintendents who succeeded him faced two major obstacles to the fulfilment of their duties. One was the church-political radicalism of Confessing Church pastors who refused to recognize the spiritual or governing authority of the Brandenburg Consistory. The other was the consequent conflict among local pastors, which was often exacerbated by the unreasonable demands of local German Christian clergymen.

These deep divisions between district clergymen fuelled church-political conflict in Nauen. Lists of clergymen compiled by the Confessing Church supplemented by correspondence from the Nauen superintendent's office provide a rough idea of the church-political orientation of about three-quarters of all local clergymen.³ As Table 15 illustrates, the pastors of the district were almost evenly

133/830.

³ The church-political orientation of Nauen clergymen was determined based on lists compiled by the Confessing Church in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/94, supplemented by marginal notations from the list of delegates to the 1934 district synod in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 48/658, correspondence between the pastors, superintendents and the Brandenburg Consistory in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 122/742, official private correspondence between pastors and superintendents in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814 and 141/835, correspondence concerning the monthly pastoral convents in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 200/734 and the "Brotherly Get-Togethers" that replaced them in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 202/860, as well as material

divided between members and supporters of the German Christian Movement and members and supporters of the Confessing Church. A remnant of neutrals tended to oppose radicalism from either end of the church-political spectrum. Among the junior clergymen of the Nauen District whose church-political stance is known, however, there were over six times as many members and supporters of the Confessing Church as there were German Christians.

Table 15. Church-political Orientation among Nauen clergymen				
Church-Political Status	Pastors	(%)	Vicars/Curates	(%)
German Christians	14	33	3	8
German Christian Supporters	3	7	0	0
Neutrals	6	14	2	5
Confessing Church Supporters	7	17	1	3
Confessing Church Members	8	19	12	32
Unknown	4	10	19	51
Total	42	100	37	100

relating to pastoral appointments and the church struggle in Nauen in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770. Of the 79 known clergymen (doubtless there were other vicars who served for shorter terms), the church politics of 55 (70 percent) could be identified. German Christians included Pastors Andrich of Vehlefanz, Becker of Grünefeld, Gartenschläger of Bötzw, Heidtmann of Paaren, Isleib of Hakenberg (who drifted towards a neutral position after 1936), Kahle of Linum, Koch of Retzow, Lux of Groß Behnitz, Schröder of Nauen, Siems of Nauen, Wallmann of Bötzw, Weicht of Wansdorf, Werner of Ribbeck and Ziegel of Bredow, as well as Vicars/Curates Gädigk of Nauen, Klundt of Markau and Weltersbach of Nauen. Supporters of the German Christians included Pastors Feder of Vehlefanz, Herzog of Wansdorf and Schumann of Nauen. Neutrals included Pastors Bedorf of Pessin, Cramer of Kremmen, Daab of Schwante, Graßhoff of Nauen, Heine of Zeestow, and Schmidt of Flatow (a former Confessing Church pastor, who was ostensibly neutral but antipathetic to the Confessing Church), along with Vicars/Curates Hartmann of Paaren and Kuschel of Wansdorf. Supporters of the Confessing Church (who still recognized the Old Prussian Union Church government) included Pastors Bettac of Beetz, Born of Linum, Höft of Zeestow, Pacahali of Retzow, Rehfeldt of Kremmen, Reichardt of Staffelde, and Rumpf of Schwante, as well as Curate Franck of Vehlefanz. Full members of the Confessing Church included Pastors Engelke of Königshorst, Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, Harder of Fehrbellin, Lehmann of Karweese, Oestreich of Lentzke, Posth of Berge, Rocha of Pessin, Wiese of Zeestow and Vicars/Curates Ebeling of Fehrbellin, Grützmacher of Retzow, Heidrich of Groß Behnitz, Hoffmann of Linum, Krafft of Markau, Krause of Fehrbellin, Mickley of Königshorst, Ossenkop of Fehrbellin, Priester of Ribbeck, Schramm of Nauen, Wagner of Ribbeck, and Wilm of Fehrbellin. There was no strong indication of church-political viewpoints of other clergymen in the archive of the Nauen church district. These included Interim Superintendent Simon of Oranienburg, Pastors Glockner of Markau, Ideler of Markau and Schulz of Pessin, along with Curate Grentz of Pessin and 17 Vicars: Abraham of Nauen, Böck of Staffelde, Bolle of Zeestow, Drevs of Markau, Dumont of Groß Behnitz, Grundmann of Schwante, Herschenz (unknown parish), Kornrumpf of Nauen, Kretschmer of Markau, Lahde (unknown parish), Heinz of Staffelde, Liebert of Markau, Neitsch of Nauen, Noske of Markau, Raede of Paaren, Rendler of Ribbeck, Stehmann (unknown parish) and Zachow of Flatow.

In Nauen, the most obvious effects of this division were the strain it put on relations between fellow clergymen from around the district and the conflicts between local Confessing Church clergymen and the Old Prussian Union Church authorities governing in Berlin. The local church struggle is best understood through the careers of a handful of active clergymen: two leaders in the Confessing Church, Pastors Günther Harder and Herbert Posth; one moderate interim superintendent, Pastor Ulrich Bettac; and the energetic German Christian organizer in Nauen, Pastor Friedrich Siems. Each of these was a prominent churchman in the district who was active in the instigation and settlement of the local church controversies that shaped the church struggle in Nauen.

The two leaders of the Confessing Church in the district, Harder and Posth, both stand out for their willingness to defy the Prussian Church authorities and to disrupt the flow of official information from their parishes to the Brandenburg Consistory. Working under the direction of Brandenburg Confessing Church leaders, the two men boldly led their parishes into a confrontational course against the Brandenburg Consistory and together turned their corner of the Nauen district into a bastion for the Confessing Church. Consequently, they were regularly engaged in disputes with higher church authorities, criticized by local political leaders and subjected to the disciplinary measures of the Old Prussian Union Church.

Moreover, the two were active in the leadership of the Confessing Church at the level of the Brandenburg Province of the Old Prussian Union Church. Harder served as a New Testament Professor in the *Kirchliches Hochschule* in Berlin from 1936 to 1972, in which capacity he also examined illegal Confessing Church theological candidates for ordination. Moreover, he sat on the Brandenburg Confessing Church Council and after 1943, on the Old Prussian Union Confessing Church Council as well. On 9 May 1937, at the 4th Prussian Confessing Church Synod, he gave the opening sermon, and used the occasion to remind his colleagues that “the world simply wants to know nothing of the Church, of its service, its

message, of the truth to which it testifies.”⁴ In August 1942, Harder chaired a committee comprised of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and four other Confessing Church theologians, whose purpose was to formulate a statement concerning the murder of disabled people and Jews.⁵ Finally, in October 1943, both Pastors Günther Harder and Herbert Posth worked on the committee that wrote the Confessing Church “Word of the Church” concerning the 10 Commandments for the 12th Prussian Confessing Church Synod.⁶

Günther Harder was the District Pastor for the Confessing Church in the Nauen district, as well as two other districts in Brandenburg.⁷ As such, he presided over a core group of Confessing Church pastors who committed themselves to engage in pastoral ministry bound by the Word of God and the Reformation Confessions, according to the oath of ordination they had sworn. Since they believed that the German Christian domination of the Old Prussian Union Church government violated that standard in both principle and practise, these pastors refused to submit to the authority of the Brandenburg Consistory, the ecclesiastical body to which they were responsible. Along with Harder, the group included outspoken Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge, as well as Pastors Johannes Engelke in Königshorst, Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, Martin Lehmann from Karweese, Max Oestreich in Lentzke, Bogumil Rocha in Pessin, and Pastor Wiese of Zeestow.⁸

Harder pastored in Fehrbellin, a parish in the northwestern corner of the Nauen district that grew from roughly 2000 to 3500 parishioners during the years of National Socialist rule.⁹ Only 27 years old when he was appointed pastor in 1929,

⁴ Niesel, *Kirche unter dem Wort*, 118, 134, 224, 260.

⁵ Please see chapter 8, pp. 395ff., below.

⁶ Please see chapter 8, p. 395, below.

⁷ Wolfgang See and Rudolf Weckerling, *Frauen im Kirchenkampf. Beispiele aus der Bekennenden Kirche Berlin-Brandenburg* (Berlin: Wichern Verlag, 1984), 125.

⁸ List of Confessing Church clergymen, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944; Pastor Bettac of Beetz to Interim Superintendent Simon of Oranienburg, 4 March 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 202/860.

⁹ Günther Harder, “Fehrbellin,” in Günther Harder and Wilhelm Niemöller (ed.), *Die Stunde der Versuchung*, 131, 143. A draft of the chapter is in Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 50/D1.

Harder dependably led both his own parish and the Confessing Church party in the Nauen district throughout the Church Struggle, defying political, ecclesiastical and police authorities—frequently at great cost to himself and his parishioners.

That Harder would become a stubborn opponent of the German Christian attempt to co-ordinate (*gleichschalten*) the Old Prussian Union Church according to National Socialist ideology became apparent from his early reaction to events in Berlin. There, near the end of August 1933, Prussian Educational Minister Rust appointed District Court Councillor Dr. August Jäger as an administrative commissar in the Old Prussian Union Church. Jäger immediately purged the Prussian church administration, suspended the general superintendents and placed loyal German Christians in many positions of authority in the Prussian Superior Church Council, in the consistories of the Prussian provincial churches (including Brandenburg) and in other ecclesiastical institutions, including the Inner Mission.¹⁰ Joachim Hossenfelder, Commissarial General Superintendent for the Kurmark and one of Jäger's new appointees, publicized plans for celebratory worship services on 2 July 1933, intending that pastors and parishioners should give thanks for this German Christian "reform" of the church. Harder was away from his office at this time and first read about the upcoming service in his local newspaper.

Shocked that no one had bothered to ask him whether such a service ought to be held in Fehrbellin, Harder's response was sharply negative. Instead of a celebration of Jäger's conquest, Harder conducted a service of mourning and repentance. Preaching from Ephesians 4:3-15,¹¹ he emphasized the themes of

¹⁰ Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 36-37.

¹¹ Ephesians 4:3-15 reads: "Make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. This is why it says: 'When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men.' (What does 'he ascended' mean except that he also descended to the lower, earthly regions? He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe.) It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into

Christian unity, peace, and love, as well as the authority of Christ, and greatly surprised a delegation of local Party leaders who had expected a more triumphal word from their resident pastor.¹²

Harder's resolute adherence to the Confessing Church also constrained him to disobey the Prussian Interior Ministry, resulting in altercations with local police. The initial cause of this conflict was a denunciation of the neo-pagan German Faith Movement from the Second Confessing Synod of the Old Prussian Union Church at Dahlem on 4-5 March 1935. Rooted in the first commandment, the Second Confessing Synod rebuked those who were setting up lesser gods like blood, race, and *völkisch* notions of honour and freedom above the Lord God of the Bible.¹³

Because this critical declaration obliquely attacked National Socialist ideology, the NSDAP, Hitler and his immediate associates, Prussian Interior Minister Frick forbade the public reading of the text, which Confessing Church leaders had planned for 17 March 1935. At first, the threat of house arrest made Harder insecure. He told police that he would not read the declaration. A sleepless night changed his mind, however, and so he informed police of his intention to read the word of the synod in his church. In doing so, he consciously strained relations not only with the Prussian Church authorities, but also with local police and Party officials.

Harder's change of heart forced local police to seal the doors of the church and to refuse to allow the Fehrbellin church service to take place, "something which had never taken place there."¹⁴ Since the Sunday of 17 March 1935 was Repentance Day, news of the cancellation of the service raced "like a wildfire through the town." The result, ironically for the police, was the arousal of a keen interest in the wording

him who is the Head, that is, Christ." (NIV)

¹² Not only Harder did refuse to read the prescribed celebratory message from Brandenburg Bishop and German Christian leader Hossenfelder, but he also decided to read expressly prohibited messages from General Superintendent Dibelius and Dr. Friedrich Bodelschwingh. Harder, Fehrbellin," 132-133.

¹³ Beckmann, *Kirchliches Jahrbuch für die evangelische Kirche in Deutschland, 1933-1944*, 84-86; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 178-179.

¹⁴ Harder, "Fehrbellin," 139.

of the banned declaration. Even some travelling salesmen lodging at the local inn heard about it and took a copy with them on their way.¹⁵

Harder was not alone in his decision to proclaim the message of the Second Dahlem Confessing Synod. In spite of the threat of arrest and the pressure to celebrate the reintroduction of military service in Germany announced the day before, at least five other Confessing Church pastors in the Nauen district read the declaration in their services. Harder was placed under house arrest, and Pastors Bettac of Beetz and Posth of Berge and Curates Rehfeld in Kremmen, Lehmann in Karweese and Fritzsche in Groß Behnitz were also arrested, as part of a round-up of over 700 other Prussian clergymen.¹⁶ They were soon released, after Confessing Church leaders assured the Prussian Interior Ministry that the declaration was directed solely against the German Faith Movement and not the state or Party. As part of a broader Confessing Church action against the authority of the Old Prussian Church, it was not the last time that Harder and his colleagues would suffer legal consequences for their opposition to the nazification of Protestant ecclesiastical life.

Indeed, Harder and his fellow Confessing Church clergymen endured another round of arrests in August and September 1937, on account of their struggle with the Old Prussian Church authorities for control of voluntary church collections. Harder was detained for three weeks for refusing to submit his church collections to the Brandenburg Consistory, but retained the loyalty of his Fehrbellin parishioners. As he later recalled: "They had learned in those years to sacrifice. They had learned that the collection is a real offering of thanks, and until 1945, not once was an offering of thanks from the parish handed over to the Consistory and [its] Finance Department."¹⁷

Other Confessing Church clergymen were also incarcerated for their refusal to surrender their church collections to the Brandenburg Consistory. Vicar Krause, who worked under Harder in Fehrbellin, was jailed from mid-October to mid-

¹⁵ Harder, "Fehrbellin," 139.

¹⁶ "Aufstellung über Massnahmen gegen BK-Brüder, Kirchenkreis Nauen," 11 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 179.

¹⁷ Harder, "Fehrbellin," 143.

November 1937, on account of the collection controversy and additional provocative statements he made in a sermon. Pastor Posth of Berge spent three and a half weeks in jail, but was amnestied by ecclesiastical authorities. Curate Fritzsche in Groß Behnitz was in custody for only two days before he was amnestied, but Curate Mickley of Königshorst spent three weeks in jail and Vicar Heidrich of Groß Behnitz was incarcerated for ten weeks.¹⁸

The ecclesiastical struggles between Harder and the Prussian Church continued unabated. In 1939, the Brandenburg Consistory withheld Harder's salary for eight months because he and other Confessing Church clergymen supported colleagues in the Confessing Church's Provisional Church Leadership who had issued a special intercessory liturgy in 1938. During the time he received no income, Harder's parishioners helped him with gifts and food, encouraged that Harder's service was not merely tied to the regular payment of a salary.¹⁹ After Interim Superintendent Bettac proposed that Harder be included in a new amnesty initiated by the Brandenburg Consistory, the Fehrbellin pastor's salary was restored.²⁰

In 1941, Harder was incarcerated yet again, this time from May 13 to December 22. Other Confessing Church pastors and vicars helped provide spiritual care in the Fehrbellin parish, particularly Pastor Lehmann from Karweese. Looking back on the event, Harder credited his wife for watching closely over the parish to ensure that no "false shepherds" appeared to lead parishioners away from their Confessing Church orientation.²¹ Harder also found that the experience drew his parish into much closer communion: "Never before or since were more tears of emotion and joy shed in a Christmas service of the parish as on that 24 December

¹⁸ "Aufstellung über Massnahmen gegen die BK-Brüder, Kirchenkreis Nauen," 11 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

¹⁹ "Aufstellung über Massnahmen gegen BK-Brüder, Kirchenkreis Nauen," 11 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944; Harder, "Fehrbellin," 143-144; See and Weckerling, *Frauen im Kirchenkampf*, 126.

²⁰ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 31 October 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751.

²¹ Harder, "Fehrbellin," 143.

1941, as Harder—released the day before from jail, even if now as an ex-convict—held the Christmas eve service.”²² Harder’s final incarceration lasted from 22 January to 23 April 1945. By that point, the war was almost over and the Fehrbellin parish had been well conditioned to endure his temporary absence.²³

With the help of his Confessing Church colleagues and parishioners, Harder was able to endure the consequences of his refusal to recognize the authority of the German Christian Prussian Church authorities. His participation in a series of Confessing Church illegalities shaped the church struggle in Fehrbellin, which did not revolve around external attacks on his ministry but rather around his attempt to establish his parish as a centre of Confessing Church faithfulness to Scripture and the Reformation Confessions. Nonetheless, his choices cost him months of salary and freedom, the disfavour of local Party officials and the stigma of a criminal record.

Though Günther Harder was the district pastor for the Confessing Church, there was no character in the Nauen district who generated so much annoyance among Prussian Church officials or who created so many headaches for Nauen district superintendents as Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge. Just as certainly, there was no one in the district who was more principled in his refusal to tolerate National Socialist values, terminology and praxis within the church.²⁴ No one was more stubborn in his advocacy of the Confessing Church cause in the matter of pastoral appointments than Posth, who regularly refused to recognize either the spiritual or legal authority of the Old Prussian Union Church government in the matter.²⁵

Posth’s loyalty to the Confessing Church repeatedly drove him into conflict with the Prussian Church authorities. For instance, his determination to read the

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.; Niesel, *Kirche unter dem Wort*, 310–311.

²⁴ For a full account of Posth’s response to the nationalist rhetoric of his fellow pastors, please see chapter 3, pp. 116ff., above.

²⁵ Posth successfully fought to keep the Ribbeck and Groß Behnitz in the hands of full-fledged Confessing Church pastors, and tried to accomplish the same goal in Markau, Retzow and Pessin. In all three of those parishes, pastors were appointed who supported the Confessing Church. See chapter 4, pp. 136–166, above.

outlawed Confessing Church pulpit declaration from the Second Dahlem Synod in March 1937 landed Posth almost a month in jail before he was amnestied.

The Berge parish pastor demonstrated the same resolve in reading a subsequent Confessing Church pulpit declaration on 23 August 1936. After the Brandenburg Provincial Church Committee had issued a ban against reading the declaration, Interim Superintendent Otto Schmidt from Flatow immediately telegraphed the various Nauen pastors to inform them about it.²⁶ However, as the organist in Lietzow reported, Pastor Posth read the prohibited pulpit declaration in church anyway and neglected to intercede for the *Führer* during the closing prayer.²⁷ Despite the serious nature of Posth's offence, there is no record of any resulting disciplinary action in the Nauen district archive or the Brandenburg Consistorial files on the Berge parish.

Posth's intransigence in the face of Prussian Church pressure is best illustrated by his use of administrative authority in the vacant Ribbeck parish to create a local bastion for the Confessing Church. In Ribbeck, Posth enjoyed the support of the majority of parishioners and the church patron, Erich von Ribbeck, who was himself a member of the Confessing Church.²⁸ A result of the close union between Posth, the Ribbeck patron and local Protestants was the May 1937 decision of the Ribbeck Parish Council to lead their parish into the Confessing Church. As the parish councillors first discussed and then accepted Posth's seven point decision paper, they declared their agreement with several Confessing Church assertions: that the Old Prussian Union Church had adopted un-Protestant teaching and practises in

²⁶ Telegrams were sent at 7:10 pm to clergymen Bettac in Beetz, Posth in Berge, Harder in Fehrbellin, Heidrich in Groß Behnitz, Lehmann in Karweese, Engelke in Königshorst, Oestreich in Lentzke, Rocha in Pessin, Rendler in Ribbeck and Höft in Zeestow. At the same time, phone calls were made to Wallmann in Bötzw, Becker in Grünefeld, Kahle in Linum, Siems in Nauen, Hartmann in Paaren, Pachali in Retzow, Kuschel in Schwante, Reichardt in Staffelde, Bedorf in Wansdorf and Andrich in Vehlefanz. All of the district clergymen attached to the Confessing Church were in the group that received telegrams, which suggests that Interim Superintendent Schmidt wanted to be sure they received word of the prohibition of the declaration in writing. "Landeskirkenausschuß warnt vor Verlesung der Kanzelabkündigung der Bekenntniskirche," n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 138/745.

²⁷ Interim Superintendent Schmidt in Flatow to the Brandenburg Consistory, 25 August 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 138/745.

²⁸ See lists of Confessing Church members in NE 142/944.

1933; that the Protestants who opposed the teachings and practises that contradicted the Bible and Reformation Confessions had congregated as the Confessing Church; that the Confessing Church was the only legitimate church leadership; and that they pledged to support Confessing Church institutions with their finances. While the decision did not bind all Ribbeck parishioners individually, it would not have been possible without the support of the patron and parish leaders.²⁹

Although Posth and his Confessing Church influence in Ribbeck irritated officials in the Brandenburg Consistory, the personnel shortage in the Nauen district ensured that they had little choice but to leave Posth in charge of the parish.³⁰ That changed, however, in 1937, when Walter Pachali was appointed pastor in nearby Retzow. Pachali supported the Confessing Church but did not become a formal member because he chose to remain under the authority of the Old Prussian Union Church government. As the Consistory attempted to transfer authority in Ribbeck from Posth to Pachali, a protracted war of wills began.

It started in September 1938, when the Consistory demanded that Posth give up control of the Ribbeck parish by month's end, a demand they repeated in mid-October after Posth had refused to comply. It was then that Mayor Stackebrandt from the neighbouring town of Groß Behnitz entered the fray. An enemy of the Confessing Church, Stackebrandt initiated a grievance against what the illegal decision of the Ribbeck parish council to join the Confessing Church. The Consistory agreed with Stackebrandt and declared that the confessional mandate of pastors did not give them freedom to set aside the legal ordinances of the church authorities. Church officials argued that Posth's pastoral freedom of conscience only applied to his preaching, which ought to be based on the Scriptures and the

²⁹ "Entwurf eines Beschlusses über den Anschluß an die Beken nende Kirche (BK)," 25 May 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

³⁰ The only other parishes within 15 km (by road) were Retzow, Pessin and Nauen. In Retzow, Pastor Koch retired late in 1935, and the parish remained under the care of temporary clergymen until Walter Pachali's appointment in 1937. Pastor Rocha in Pessin, appointed in 1933 and dismissed in 1938 was a staunch member of the Confessing Church, and no alternative for the Consistory to Pastor Posth. Nauen itself was constantly short-handed, from the time of Superintendent Graßhoff's illness in 1934 until the appointment of Friedrich Siems in 1937. With the death of Pastor Gerhard Schumann in July 1938, the Nauen parish was once again reduced to a single pastor, making it an unlikely source of a replacement for Posth in Ribbeck. See chapter 4, above.

Reformation Confessions, a principle they argued was affirmed in the church constitution.³¹

As in so many of the conflicts between German Christian church authorities and Confessing Church pastors, the Prussian Church authorities persistently distinguished between the external ecclesiastical administration and the internal spiritual life of the church, a dualism which Posth and other Confessing Church pastors fundamentally rejected. Intransigently, Posth refused to give up administrative control of the Ribbeck parish. His reply to the response of the Consistory to Stackebrandt's grievance was a full-scale essay, an explication of Posth's most fundamental church-political positions and a blistering attack on the theology and praxis of the Old Prussian Union Church government.

In it, Posth rejected the consistorial view that the decision of the Ribbeck parish to make official its membership in the Confessing Church was "unconstitutional and legally inoperative." Turning the matter on its head, Posth argued that it was the Confessing Church that upheld law and order, unlike the unlawful and heterodox German Christians at the head of the Old Prussian Union Church.³²

In his argument, Posth stood on the Barmen Declaration of 1934, and challenged the church authorities to explain what it contained that was unconstitutional. He based his refusal to submit to the demand to give up control of the Ribbeck parish on the decision of the Sixth Confessing Synod, which forbade returning parish administration to an ecclesiastical bureaucracy not bound to the Reformation Confessions. To do so, Posth argued, would amount to a breach of his vow of ordination to uphold the Scriptures and Confessions. Posth acknowledged that the Bible did not legislate the external shape of the church, but argued that the Scriptures and Confessions provided boundaries defining what could and could not be done in the church. With that in mind, Posth pointed to Article 28 of the

³¹ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26; Brandenburg Consistory to Posth of Berge, 14 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 69/741.

³² Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

Augsburg Confession, which mandated disobedience as a response to any episcopal teaching or actions of that violated the gospel, an idea reiterated in the Schmalkaldic Articles.³³ For Posth, the Scriptures and Confessions remained the measure of church leadership, and his judgment that the Prussian church authorities had departed from them constituted legitimate grounds to disobey their orders to hand the administration in Ribbeck over to Pastor Pachali of Retzow.³⁴

Posth also criticized the Consistory's use of political force to compel obedience within the church. This he based on the passage Matthew 20: 25-26, in which Christ contrasted selfish worldly leadership with selfless spiritual leadership. He also added a reference to Article 15 of the Augsburg Confession, which teaches that human traditions are unnecessary and potentially dangerous additions to the gospel.³⁵ If that wasn't enough, Posth cited the formulas for pastors' and elders' oaths in the 1922 and 1933 church constitutions, in order to reiterate that the Bible and Reformation Confessions formed the basis for not only the teaching, but also the work and the community of the church—in other words, conduct within the church.³⁶ For Posth, political methods were not welcome in the ecclesiastical realm.

Moreover, according to Posth, the duty of church leadership was to ensure the preaching of the gospel. Falling back once more upon the Schmalkaldic Articles, Posth affirmed the principle of establishing new church leadership where the existing one failed to provide for the preaching of the gospel, and cited the

³³ Philip Melancthon, "The Confession of Faith: Which Was Submitted to His Imperial Majesty Charles V at the Diet of Augsburg in the Year 1530," trans. F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau, in *Triglott Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), 37-95; Martin Luther, "Smalcald Articles," trans. F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau, in *Triglott Concordia: The Symbolical Books of the Ev. Lutheran Church*, 453-529.

³⁴ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

³⁵ Matthew 20:25-26 reads: "Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant.'" (NIV); Melancthon, "Confession of Faith," 37-95.

³⁶ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

injunction to ordain "capable" people for church offices.³⁷ As Posth pointed out, these same historic confessions formed the basis for the Barmen and Dahlem Declarations of 1934 and the decisions of the 1938 Confessing Church Synod as well.³⁸

Posth then returned again to the Augsburg Confession, pointing out that Article 7 instructed that pure teaching sufficed to unite the church.³⁹ Posth contended that it was the duty of every leader within the church—from the highest authorities down to the local pastors and parish councillors—to keep watch over the purity of the church's teaching.⁴⁰ In contrast to that injunction, Posth asserted: "Precisely here, the Church leadership today is failing at all levels."⁴¹ As proof of that failure, he described the anger of the Consistory over his decision to bar the visit of a pastor who "speaks openly against the Confession of the Church—thus against the gospel."⁴²

Based on his concern for the confessional integrity of the Old Prussian Union Church, Posth launched into a full-scale critique of the concept of a national church. "The opinion (that) the Church should 'promote the life of faith of the members of the *Volk*' contradicts the clear Word of God in a dual sense. It amounts to disobedience against the Word of Christ to preach the gospel to all nations [*Völker*]*—the word Volk member [Volksgenosse] is not a church word at all, but rather a political word—and to all races [Rassen]. It would also be a boundless lack of love towards all the people for whom the Lord has also shed his blood.*"⁴³ In

³⁷ Martin Luther, "Smalcald Articles," 453-529.

³⁸ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

³⁹ Philip Melancthon, "The Confession of Faith," 37-95.

⁴⁰ Posth referred to Ezekiel 3:17, where God commissioned the prophet to be a watchman for the house of Israel, and to Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession, which affirmed the duty of clergymen to watch over the teaching of the church. Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

other words, Scriptural and confessional integrity demanded the application of Christ's atonement for all people, not only German Protestants.

Posth identified a second sense in which the national church idea contradicted the Scriptures and Confessions, based on the Apostle Paul's teaching that the natural person does not understand the spirit of God.⁴⁴ Since people could not come to true faith in God through nature (i.e. through their national or racial identity), Posth argued that the Consistory was unacceptably adopting a hybrid: German faith teaching "as well as faith in God." He continued in his letter:

The gospel is no psychological 'help' for a naturally pious feeling, but rather is the preaching of the *judgment* of the holy God over an entire sinful nature—that means the cross of Christ too!—and of *grace* for the sake of Christ. It is unintelligible to me, how a church authority can say that the gospel says nothing about what is good and evil, just and unjust. If human reason alone has to determine order in the Church, then I am justified without the appeal to the Scriptures and Confession! Then with what right can the church authorities punish disobedience—unjustified as well? Then everyone has a right; that leads to the destruction of *all* order whatsoever.⁴⁵

Simply put, Posth was arguing that if the Scriptures and Confessions alone were not the basis for human salvation (and the life of the church), then the basis could only be arbitrary. If that were so, the consequent loss of identity and authority could only result in the dissolution of the church into chaos.

Pastor Posth's final point of objection to the consistorial demand to give up control of the Ribbeck parish stemmed from a broader criticism of political influence within the church. Perhaps in response to the kinds of political arguments put forward by his opponent, Mayor Stackebrandt of Groß Behnitz,⁴⁶ and perhaps in reaction against the more general interference of political authorities in German

⁴⁴ 1 Corinthians 2:14 states: "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned." (NIV)

⁴⁵ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

⁴⁶ See the protest of Stackebrandt and others in Groß and Klein Behnitz against the appointment of Confessing Church pastor Kurt Fritzsche in 1938, in chapter 4, pp. 149-153, above.

ecclesiastical life, Posth asserted that the state must not be allowed to decide religious truth for the church. That, he argued, would not only violate Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession⁴⁷ but also contradict the words of political leaders in the period after 1918, who had turned control of the *Land* churches over to the ecclesiastical authorities themselves.⁴⁸

In spite of his resolute and fundamental opposition to the Brandenburg Consistory and his detailed reply to their demand to hand over the leadership of the Ribbeck parish to Pastor Pachali, Posth did want a solution to the dilemma there. To put it mildly, relations between the Ribbeck parish and ecclesiastical authorities in Berlin had grown tense, since Posth would not give up his administrative authority and the Consistory would not recognize him. Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac was caught in the middle of what Posth bemoaned as "a real juridical curiosity!" As Posth complained to Bettac: "I am supposed to respond, but my statement is of no legal consequence; the parish council is supposed to respond, but it is invalid without the chairmanship of [Pastor] Pachali. What now? I see absolutely no juridical possibility!"⁴⁹

Posth continued to argue for a fundamental settlement of the matter. Compromise was unlikely, given his repeated objection to consistorial policy and his ongoing refusal to recognize its authority, all based on fundamental confessional and scriptural arguments. All the same, the struggle weighed on him, cost him hundreds of hours of time and necessitated repeated confrontations with his superiors in the Brandenburg Consistory. With the Ribbeck affair and other matters weighing on his mind, Posth lamented: "I am forever disheartened for the sake of our Church! How long will it still last, until this demon is overcome. It is all pointless, if no one takes

⁴⁷ Article 28 of the Augsburg Confession asserts that ecclesiastical authority comes solely through the preaching of Scripture and the administration of sacraments, and that the civil power has no authority to interpret of Christian truth from the Word of God. For Posth, this served as a basis for defying the Brandenburg Consistory, whose teaching he regarded as heretical and whose authority was therefore void.

⁴⁸ Herbert Posth, "Betr. Abgabe der Pfarrstelle Ribbeck," 20 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 6/26.

⁴⁹ Pastor Posth of Berge to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 11 October 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 69/741.

a good look at the question of *truth*, as we see it."⁵⁰ As disheartened as he was about the breach of relations with the Prussian Church authorities, however, Posth placed his belief in the truth of the Confessing Church cause first and refused to depart from his uncompromising stance.

In 1939, the Brandenburg Consistory adopted a new approach to Posth's intransigence. Hoping to escape the drawn out arguments over the relationship between the Bible, Confessions and Prussian Church policy, it appointed an official from its Finance Department, Gustav-Adolf Hoppe, as Financial Plenipotentiary for Ribbeck. Hoppe immediately informed Ribbeck Parish Treasurer Behrendt that Posth was prohibited from any further financial management in Ribbeck and not even allowed to receive information about the state of the accounts.⁵¹

In vain, Posth countered with a proposal to transfer the administration of Ribbeck to his Confessing Church colleague, Pastor Kurt Fritzsche in Groß-Behnitz. Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe declared himself "entirely uninterested" in the idea.⁵² His solution having been rejected, Posth pressed forward with the argument with Hoppe over control of the parish finances, from May 1939 to April 1940. Hoppe demanded that Posth hand over all the records, include receipts for every disbursement, cease using the surplus in the pastoral account to finance a local print mission project, and (most contentiously) submit the weekly church collections.⁵³ Posth flatly rejected these demands. The situation became so deadlocked that the Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory wrote the Regional Government Administrator in Potsdam, requesting that an enforcement officer be sent from the Rathenow District Magistrate (*Landrat*) to ensure that Posth handed over the Ribbeck finances to Hoppe. In making their case for support from Potsdam, the

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe to Ribbeck Parish Treasure Behrendt, 30 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁵² Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe in Ribbeck to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 28 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁵³ Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe to Pastor Posth of Berge, 19 June 1939 and 10 July 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

Finance Department reminded the political authorities that Posth had already been jailed once before "for statements hostile to the state".⁵⁴

Hoppe and his colleagues in the Consistory followed up with action. In June 1939, the Consistory's Financial Department informed the Governing President in Potsdam that it had taken direct control of the financial and church tax rights of the Ribbeck parish. Then, it requested that the Rathenow District Magistrate send an enforcement officer to ensure that the Ribbeck finances were handed over to Hoppe.⁵⁵

Once more—this time in a long letter from 8 July 1939—Posth justified his resistance to Hoppe's authority on three grounds. First, he leaned upon the support he had from the elders and patron in Ribbeck. As Posth explained, it was the parish council that chose to use the surplus in the pastoral account to buy Christian papers for young girls, journals for women and book gifts for all the children. He defended the decision to divert funds in that direction by drawing attention to the lack of funding for outreach to children. Posth argued: "The children have gone begging again! A piece of the work of the gospel rich with blessing has been done away with! That is the result!"⁵⁶ Moreover, as Posth explained, it was the parish council that decided to follow the Confessing Church collection plan, rather than that of the Old Prussian Church government.⁵⁷

Second, Posth appealed to the necessity of religious freedom of conscience. He argued that the Word of God and his vow of ordination both bound him to refuse to comply with the Finance Department of the Consistory and its Financial Plenipotentiary for Ribbeck, Hoppe. For instance, Posth felt compelled to send

⁵⁴ Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe in Ribbeck to Parish Treasurer Behrendt in Ribbeck, 30 May 1939; Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe to Pastor Posth of Berge, 20 June 1939; Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory to the Governing President in Potsdam, 1 June 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁵⁵ Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory to the Governing President in Potsdam, 1 June 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁵⁶ Pastor Posth of Berge to Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, 8 July 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

church collections directly to their appointed destinations, not to the Prussian Church authorities, and fell back on his vow of ordination for support:

When the state attacks [the vow of ordination], we must go to jail for the sake of this vow! But I consider it a bit much, when the *church* authorities want to cause the pastor to break his vow of ordination. It would be unheard of, if they were to coerce him to do that through the threat of force. How am I going stand in the pulpit then! Either I keep my vow, which I have sworn before God and the parish—as long as God gives me the strength to take upon myself all the trouble that results from that too—or I must resign my pastorate. At this point, things revolve around the ultimate tie of conscience in our office! A threat from the church authorities does not release me from my vow!⁵⁸

By reducing the church-political issues to their theological roots, Posth was able to employ the argument of conscience to undo Hoppe's demands.

Third, Posth defended himself by broadening his discussion of ecclesiastical vows and turning it against Hoppe: "The parish and every member is also bound by God's Word! We all, even *you* as a Protestant Christian, are *bound*. We have no freedom *against* God's Word!" Posth went on to argue that even Hoppe's obedience to his superiors in the Finance Department was limited by the dictate of the Scriptures, as expressed in Article 29 of the Augsburg Confession, which commands disobedience to orders that violate Scripture. Boldly, Posth argued that Hoppe stood under the same responsibility as he and his parishioners did in the matter of collections.

Drawing on the lessons in Ribbeck, Posth pronounced: "The *parishioners* have learned well in the collection war that they may only give their gifts for the likes of the *real* gospel." Posth informed Hoppe that his parishioners in Ribbeck were asking whether they should give towards the Prussian Church collections at all. When they had asked him about the matter, Posth had explained to them about orders from the Regional Government Administrator in Potsdam to submit the collections to the Consistory. In response, they had decided to give "not a penny of collection!" Therefore, Posth asked Hoppe not to force his hand, since the only

⁵⁸ Ibid.

result would be that the collections themselves would suffer and the institutions of the church would go unsupported.⁵⁹

The fact that Posth had such strong support from his parishioners meant that his position was quite strong. If Hoppe pressed the matter, the collections would simply stop. By regularly referring back to his parish council, his patron and his parishioners, Posth reminded the Prussian Church authorities that he was not simply acting of his own accord. His strategy illustrates the way in which pastors could afford to sever their relationships with the Prussian church government, as long as they maintained the support of and relationship with the local church community.

Thus, Posth continued his war of words with Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, repeatedly returning to the question of biblical and confessional integrity. Whenever Hoppe raised a new argument, Posth had an answer. For instance, when Hoppe warned Posth about the consequences of his actions, Posth retorted: "A pastor does not act according to any kind of consequences, but according to his vow of ordination! I have considered all the consequences, but I *must* not act in any other way, as I must act in *commitment to God's Word!*"⁶⁰ Decrying the use of state power within the church, Posth even dared to criticize Dr. Werner, the German Christian President of the Old Prussian Union Church. Posth wrote that Werner's plans were "against *God's law*" and "ecclesiastically intolerable." While they might be accomplished with the help of the state, "they destroy the church and they build nothing!"⁶¹

By this point, Posth had whipped himself into a real fury. He declared to Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe that if the present policy continued, the Protestant church would die in Germany within the year. Describing the destructive action of the church authorities, he suggested that the Consistory "seems not to have the faintest idea [...] what a terrible crisis of conscience now lies upon individual

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

parishioners!!!⁶² Dazzled by political power and lost in its "ignorance," the Consistory was plunging "daggers into the *consciences* of the *parishioners!!!*" The result, argued Posth, would be the falling away of many shaken parishioners, while the small band of loyal parishioners left over would survive the removal of churches, parsonages, property—even the absence of pastors. Posth stated: "We shake our heads over the illusion that people still ought to accept such measures as positive for the future of the church." Again, Posth was able to press his case because he was confident of the support of his parishioners. Ultimately, he believed that the faithful Christians would withdraw from the church in Ribbeck if the Prussian Church authorities continued to oppose the law of God.⁶³

By the middle of August 1939, the dispute between Pastor Posth and Finance Plenipotentiary Hoppe had deepened to the point where Posth began to actively disrupt Hoppe's work. Teasingly, Posth informed Hoppe that he should not expect to find the Ribbeck financial records anytime soon. 'Now comes the perniciousness of the thing, in a double sense,' Posth wrote: "During the extensive renovation before the holiday, I placed our records from that time in a particular place, where I have them quickly at hand, but where!"⁶⁴ In fact, as Posth later explained, he had tucked them away under a large music book behind the harmonium, "so that you do not think badly of my order."⁶⁵ Having previously condemned the use of political force in the church, Posth now informed Hoppe that political force would be the only way the Consistory would be able to obtain the Ribbeck records.⁶⁶ He added that Consistory would "surely forfeit any respect" if it coerced its pastors to violate

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Pastor Posth of Berge to Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, 15 August 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁶⁵ Pastor Posth of Berge to Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, 21 August 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

their vows of ordination by collecting offerings for a heretical Prussian church government.⁶⁷

Once again, Posth reminded Hoppe of his own oath of office, which "compels you and binds you in [your] conscience, not to obey superior authorities if they instruct you to do something that is against God's Word! When you call on God as your witness for the truthfulness of your vow of loyalty and ask him to 'help' you, it is surely self-evident that God cannot help you to do things that he does not will, but rather forbids [...]. When the authorities promote something against God's Word, your oath compels you to act in obedience to God and to be disobedient to the authorities."⁶⁸ Clearly, Posth did not think that Hoppe or other officials in the Consistory understood the implications of swearing an oath as a Christian.

As for the collections Hoppe had demanded of him, Posth reported that he was told there were none for July 1939, but added that if there was money in the coffers, he would leave it there, and that Hoppe would then have to get it through the police.⁶⁹ This Hoppe did not do. As the Second World War began in autumn 1939, Hoppe and his colleagues in the Consistory had still not achieved a solution to the dilemma Posth had created. Hoppe continued to accuse Posth of insubordination, neglecting the work in Ribbeck, siphoning funds from Ribbeck for the use of the Confessing Church, squandering money and violating the prohibition on church services during wartime blackouts.⁷⁰

Naturally enough, Posth rejected all these accusations, calling them "stupid," "rash," and "terribly stupid."⁷¹ What Hoppe called the submission of money for the purposes of the church, Posth interpreted as the submission of money for the purposes of Hoppe's German Christian church-political orientation. In his rebuttal,

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Pastor Posth of Berge to Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe, 5 November 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Posth compared Hoppe's demand to that of some NSDAP Local Group Leader collecting money for the NSDAP, then using some of it for the communists. He asked Hoppe: "Shall we really use our money for the enemy of our Protestant faith, for the German Christians?"⁷² Ultimately, as Posth made explicit, he and the parishioners at Ribbeck "call ourselves a Confessing Church, because we want to remain subordinate to the confession."⁷³

Frustrated by Posth's intransigence, Hoppe filed a report with the Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory in April 1940. Accusing Posth of falsifying receipts in his financial reports, Hoppe reminded the Finance Department that the *Gestapo* had previously investigated and detained Posth. Though his duty was only to report on the financial problems in Ribbeck, Hoppe explained that he had also become aware of a number of political actions for which Posth and the Ribbeck patron both ought to be investigated by the organs of the state. While he would not go into those matters, he encouraged the Regional Government Administrator in Potsdam not to judge Posth solely on the basis of the financial difficulties in Ribbeck.⁷⁴

Posth's allies were also growing weary of the increasingly bizarre church-political battle over Ribbeck. The Brandenburg Confessing Church Council encouraged him to submit any outstanding accounts or records and to participate in a settlement of the financial controversy in Ribbeck. The Council's hope was that one of the young Confessing Church pastors could be appointed in Ribbeck and put an end to the struggle.⁷⁵ Ultimately, however, Posth got his way. In 1941, Pastor Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz assumed administrative control over the Ribbeck parish. Fritzsche was a fellow member of the Confessing Church, but one who had agreed to work with the Brandenburg ecclesiastical authorities in Groß Behnitz. On that

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Financial Plenipotentiary Hoppe to the Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory, 22 April 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

⁷⁵ Brandenburg Confessing Church Council to Pastor Posth of Berge, 7 August 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 7/35.

basis, he was given charge of the Ribbeck parish.⁷⁶ For all Posth's insubordination, there is no record among the Nauen district correspondence with the Brandenburg Consistory of any disciplinary action having been taken against him.

Günther Harder and Herbert Posth both displayed the strength of character (and in Posth's case at least, the mulishness) to refuse to compromise their biblical, theological and church-political convictions, even when that meant running afoul of the Brandenburg Consistory. Others in the Nauen district were not so willing to break with the Prussian Church authorities, because they believed that they could accomplish more by working with the existing system of church government, even if it was corrupt. Ulrich Bettac, pastor in Beetz and twice interim superintendent in Nauen, was the leading proponent of this church-political orientation. More interested in settling disputes than in creating them, Bettac worked to smooth over the ruffled relations between pastors like Harder and Posth and the Brandenburg Consistory. For the most part, Bettac was successful, and increasingly won the trust of clergymen from the Confessing Church and neutral camp in Nauen, albeit at the cost of separating himself from Thuringian German Christians who wanted no part of Confessing Church 'illegalities.' It is no exaggeration to conclude that without Bettac's aid, Harder and Posth would not have been able to hold their parishes so effectively for the Confessing Church. In short, Bettac's mediation consistently created the space for the radical Confessing Church clergymen to function.

By 1935, Bettac had pastored longer than all but one of his colleagues in the Nauen district, and was considered their senior member.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, his choice as interim superintendent in 1936 was a curious one, given his faithful if not uncritical support of the Confessing Church over the previous years. An early member of the ecclesiastical opposition, Bettac was even jailed briefly in March

⁷⁶ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 5 May 1938, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12233.

⁷⁷ After the March 1940 retirement of the unpopular Pastor Herbert Kahle of Linum (Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835), Bettac became the senior member of the company of pastors in the Nauen district. Interim Superintendent Simon to the clergymen of the Nauen district, 31 December 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 202/860.

1935 for refusing to submit some church collections to the Consistory.⁷⁸ For the most part, however, Bettac consciously placed himself in the church-political centre. He allied himself not only with the Confessing Church, but also with neutrals who stayed in the Old Prussian Union Church "conference."⁷⁹

If his rejection of church-political extremism kept Bettac from full-fledged membership in the Confessing Church, his demand for theological orthodoxy and ecclesiastical independence drove him to support local Confessing Church pastors in their struggle to thwart a German Christian takeover of the Nauen district. He accomplished these goals in three ways: by advancing pastoral candidates who would support the Confessing Church in their parishes, by transforming the divided Pastoral Conferences into informal Brotherly Get-Togethers which drew in neutral and Confessing Church clergymen, and by opposing German Christian clergymen in conflicts among pastors in the Nauen district.

As interim superintendent, Ulrich Bettac played a key role in all pastoral appointments in the Nauen district between 1936 and 1940, and again after 1943. In the parishes of Groß Behnitz, Retzow, Ribbeck, Kremmen, Linum and Pessin, Bettac actively supported pastoral candidates who would defend the theological positions of the Confessing Church but continue to recognize the administrative authority of the Old Prussian Church authorities. His opposition to German Christian pastoral candidates was clearest in the parishes of Leegebruch and Nauen. In Leegebruch, Bettac advised the local Women's Aid leader—a women deeply attached to the interests of the Confessing Church—to work with any pastor who was not a German Christian, whether he was a Confessing Churchman or neutral. In Nauen, Bettac worked with the Women's Aid, the district synodal executive and other Confessing Church clergymen to thwart the appointment of two Thuringian German Christian candidates between 1938 and 1941.⁸⁰ Using his position to

⁷⁸ "Aufstellung über Massnahmen gegen BK-Brüder Kirchenkreis Nauen," 11 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944.

⁷⁹ Interim Superintendent Bettac to retired Superintendent Graßhoff in Ketchendorf, 25 July 1938; Bettac to Pastor Knuth of Berlin, 18 July 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁸⁰ These cases are taken up in detail in chapter 4, pp. 174-181, above.

advance pro-Confessing Church candidates was an important part of Ulrich Bettac's strategy to combat German Christian church politics and theological heterodoxy.

The second means through which Bettac undermined German Christian interests in the Nauen church district was his authority over the monthly pastoral convents of district clergymen. He repeatedly invited alienated Confessing Church pastors, despite the fact that they rejected the authority of the Prussian Church government, including Interim District Superintendent Bettac's own authority. When Confessing Church pastors refused to attend the official pastoral convent, however, Bettac created an unofficial meeting called the Brotherly Get-Together. Excluding the radical German Christians who were not, in Bettac's view, working for the good of the Church, Bettac invited all moderates and members of the Confessing Church to the Get-Togethers, which became far more successful than the old convents had been, notwithstanding the protests of local German Christians.

In his effort to unite local clergymen, Bettac openly confessed his own church-political standpoint, and did not shy away from broaching the subject with others. For instance, in his invitation to Vicar Böck, a newcomer to the Staffelde parish, Bettac explained that the Brotherly Get-Together (for Böck, he calls it a "Confessing Church Convent") was meant for both members and friends of the Confessing Church, as well as neutral clergymen. Bettac added that he hoped that Böck was not leaning towards the German Christians and that he would join the other pastors and vicars meeting with Bettac. Explaining his own position, Bettac wrote: "Openly, I would like to inform you that I belong to the mild Confessing Church orientation, and for that reason I also take part in the [official Old Prussian Union Church] 'Conference' and take the position that we all must build a common front against the German Christians, in order to save our church. I would be delighted if you stood the same way."⁸¹

Finally, Bettac advanced the cause of the Confessing Church by opposing the German Christian movement and taking up conflicts against German Christian clergymen. In the midst of the period in which he strove to shut out German

⁸¹ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Vicar Böck of Staffelde, 7 December 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

Christian pastoral candidates throughout the Nauen district, Bettac became increasingly frustrated with the political methods of the movement. Writing to a colleague in a nearby parish, Bettac argued that the German Christians were destroying the church on behalf of the state.⁸² On another occasion, in late 1938, Bettac tried to convince Pastor Herbert Posth, a key member of the Confessing Church in the Nauen district, that it was a lesser evil for Posth and the Confessing Church pastors to recognize the legality of the district synod by nominating new members than to allow the German Christians to take over the district synod through inaction. Such a withdrawal from the system would only give the German Christians "the desired opportunity to destroy the Church."⁸³ It was better, Bettac reasoned, to use the local superiority of the Confessing Church in the Nauen district to control the official church organs than to let them be controlled by a minority of German Christian opponents. It was this pragmatic approach to the church struggle that made Bettac an effective interim superintendent, and allowed him to maintain good relations with most of those around him, save for the radical German Christians who denounced his willingness to deal with the Confessing Church.

In fact, during his time as interim superintendent, Bettac opposed any change in church practise that he felt was church-politically motivated. He was reticent to swear an oath of allegiance to Hitler and opposed the regulations that banned confessional meetings outside churches.⁸⁴ Further, when the Consistory suggested that superintendents in Brandenburg should consider working to make their parish councils younger, Bettac was quick to voice the mistrust of his constituency. He suggested that the consistorial proposal was probably another element of interference connected to the church struggle, since older parish councillors were

⁸² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Knuth in Berlin, 18 July 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁸³ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Posth of Berge, 6 December 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁸⁴ While this prohibition was an attempt to contain the conflicts of the church struggle within the churches, it made it difficult for many parish organizations to meet, including the Nauen Women's Aid. Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 12 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 130/840.

more immune to German Christian innovations and tended to oppose them. Bettac noted that one of the reasons there were few younger men committed to the churches was the ruling opinion among members of the NSDAP, including German Christians, that the church was a relic institution filled with old people out of step with the National Socialist movement.⁸⁵

By 1938, relations between local clergymen from the German Christian and Confessing Church camps had grown decidedly cool, and Interim Superintendent Bettac found it increasingly difficult to maintain the middle ground of compromise in the church struggle. Under attack from German Christians, he began to side more and more openly with the Confessing Church. Ardent German Christians grew frustrated with the actions of Bettac and Confessing Church pastors who failed to exhibit sufficient loyalty to the Old Prussian Union Church. In February 1938, German Christian Pastor Georg Gartenschläger of Bötzw took Bettac to task for failing to encourage the district synod to approve his recent request for funds. Gartenschläger accused Bettac of undermining his application for funds by not speaking directly enough in his favour.⁸⁶ Such a petty objection is understandable in light of earlier attempts by Gartenschläger to get funding from Bettac and the Nauen district synod, both of which were cool to his German Christian extremism.

Gartenschläger then raised another complaint which cut straight to the heart of the German Christian frustration with Confessing Church clergymen, when he refused to consider a request for funds for youth work submitted by Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge:

As far as I know, Pastor Posth does not support the legal church government. The attitude of Pastor Posth gives rise to the suspicion that he carries on youth work, which brings us into difficulties with the political authorities. As the responsible district youth pastor, I must therefore object to a financial contribution to him.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 2 December 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 128/752.

⁸⁶ Pastor Gartenschläger of Potsdam to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 28 February 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 59/646.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Similarly, Posth's request for aid for a Kindergarten in Ribbeck raised the ire of Gartenschläger. He asked whether Posth was authorized to sign such a request, then pointed out that "according to the information of the Consistory, Pastor Posth is not responsible for Ribbeck."⁸⁸ Rather than work with the Confessing Church pastors and accept their refusal to work with the Prussian church authorities unless it suited them, Gartenschläger and other German Christians simply dismissed their Confessing Church colleagues as lawbreakers.

Another front on which Interim Superintendent Bettac found himself mediating the church-political division among pastors was that of the *Volk* Church Working Group (*Volkskirchliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft*), headed by the radical German Christian Dr. Zöllner. In Nauen, Bettac worked to convince church-political moderates to avoid the group. Replying to an inquiry from a layman in Nauen, Bettac explained that the *Volk* Church Working Group was wholly German Christian, controlled by *Reich* Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs Kerl. Moreover, Bettac reminded the parishioner that the local representative of the Working Group had been commissioned by radical German Christian Pastor Siems. "That would indeed say well enough, then," wrote Bettac, who continued: "In any case, the Confessing Church, as also the [Official Old Prussian Union Church] 'Conference,' react completely negatively toward this working group."⁸⁹ In another conversation with a retired pastor from the district, Bettac again asserted the impossibility of working with the radical Thuringian German Christian Movement and their colleagues in Zöllner's *Volk* Church Working Group.⁹⁰

Ulrich Bettac's concern over church-political conditions in Germany also surfaced in of an extended correspondence with his colleague, Pastor Konrad Isleib of Hakenberg, in early 1939. Their debate reveals much about the conflicting views of the church conflict, for the two pastors could not even agree on what the most

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Mr. Krüger in Nauen, 5 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁹⁰ Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Retired Pastor Lux, 9 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

important issues were. For Isleib, recent experiences in Berlin led him to believe that the most pressing question for the church was unity. He proposed the "bitterly necessary aim to establish a unifying band which spans the individual church groups, in order to have a Protestant church for our *Volk* which is at least united externally, and to a great extent unified, a church such as our *Volk* and Fatherland need and such as one which our *Führer* expects from us." For Isleib, this was a time in which the German church would either "bend or break," and it pained him that so many pastors failed to see it. Isleib argued that his colleagues should greet every unity action, no matter where it came from. He also advocated the negotiation of any matters of conscience that blocked ecclesiastical unity, particularly if they were related to the external realm of the Church, where the state makes proposals. Isleib argued that many qualms of conscience did not even touch on confessional or faith matters, and he felt they could be set aside, especially in the wake of a mass movement of pastors toward such a "unifying, powerful, clearly and joyfully decisive deed" as the creation of a German *Reich* Church. In sum, nothing mattered more to Isleib than uniting the divided German Protestant church, and not least for political reasons: "The civil war and the disunity must be overcome. We must come out of the paralysing ecclesiastical discord and fruitless battle of groups, we must come to a clear relationship between church and state."⁹¹

While Bettac agreed with Isleib's desire to come together "under a common roof with the various church groups," he refused to work with the Thuringian German Christians, whether they were local pastors or officials in the Berlin church administration. Bettac argued that Isleib did not see the kernel of the situation clearly enough. "The state wants to sharply divide the spiritual leadership and the administration of the church, as the Finance Department demonstrates." Bettac then perceptively outlined for Isleib two situations in which a state-controlled church administration could easily interfere with the spiritual leadership that Isleib believed was a separate realm: first, if the Brandenburg Consistory decided to send a curate to a desperate rural parish but the financial department refused to grant the funds for

⁹¹ Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 7 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

some reason or other; and second, if a local teacher gave up his position of organist and the local political authorities decided to sell the land which paid for the organist and instead pay a new organist out of pocket, it would not be in their interest to see many worship services (due to the cost); gradually there would be fewer church services. Bettac insisted that the spiritual leadership of the church needed to control the church administration or else it would be powerless. Explaining that "the finance department, in other words the state," was already enmeshed in the church, Bettac then bemoaned: "This state declares that it is not and does not want to be Christian." Bettac asked how a union of state and church could possibly be achieved, as long as the state kept advancing its totalitarian claims over everything, the church included. Referring to church-state relations, Bettac concluded: "Here lies the enormous difficulty, and not in the questions of faith. God help us and our church!"⁹²

In his desire for a middle ground between the outlawed Confessing Church and the destructive German Christians, Bettac attempted to work with the Brandenburg Consistory, Brandenburg Confessing Church Council, local neutrals, moderate German Christians and members of the Confessing Church. His goal was to maintain the ministry of the church according to its traditional basis of the Scriptures and Reformation Confessions, so that Protestants in the Havelland would suffer as little disruption to their ecclesiastical life as possible. He was successful most of the time, but often found himself under attack from the Thuringian German Christians of Nauen and their leader, Pastor Friedrich Siems.

As a young pastor, German Christian leader, NSDAP member and soldier, Friedrich Siems was a fervent nationalist, anti-Bolshevik and antisemite, as evidenced by his speeches, sermons and correspondence.⁹³ In Nauen, much of his energy was expended in the vain attempt to win the appointment of a second German Christian pastor in the Nauen parish.⁹⁴ Siems was a contentious character who often exasperated his colleagues in the Nauen district and stirred church-

⁹² Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz to Pastor Isleib of Hakenberg, 10 January 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁹³ Please see chapter 3, pp. 97, 101f., above, and chapter 8, pp. 375, 378, below.

⁹⁴ Please see chapter 4, pp. 176ff., above.

political passions with his radical German Christian ideology. In October 1937, for instance, Siems rashly filed a grievance against Interim Superintendent Bettac over a dispute in a pastoral conference. The disagreement started after Vicar Stehmann offered an effective, theologically complex rejoinder to a lecture by German Christian Pastor Werner Andrich on the essence and mission of Christianity in the old German *Reich*. Siems, a younger pastor, took up the statement by Stehmann, an older vicar, and a debate ensued. At one point, Stehmann asked Siems how he could reconcile his comments with his vow of ordination. Siems angrily packed his bag and left, uttering some kind of retort to Stehmann. That very day, Siems filed an official complaint against Bettac, for not censuring Stehmann during the debate.⁹⁵

Interim Superintendent Bettac was highly critical of both Siems' outburst at the pastoral conference and the hasty letter of complaint that followed. Calling the grievance "laughable" and "grotesque," Bettac pointed out that Siems should have known to wait 24 hours before writing up such a complaint, and added that if anyone had acted so as to justify a grievance, it was Siems himself, for walking out on the pastoral conference without justification. The other pastors in the conference agreed with Bettac, and even Curate Wallmann of Bötzwow, who also left the conference in support of Siems, could not understand why the Nauen pastor had lost his temper.⁹⁶

Siems combative nature led him into another dispute with Bettac in 1939, in which he again filed a complaint against the interim superintendent. This time, Siems took offence at Bettac, who had asserted that Siems had lied to him about providing for an organist for a church service Bettac had conducted for the Nauen Women's Aid. Siems was particularly upset that the Nauen Women's Aid and its leader, Mrs. Krüger, had begun spreading rumours in the parish about him, allegedly because of Bettac's communication with her.⁹⁷ In fact, there had been little new for

⁹⁵ Interim Superintendent Bettac of Nauen to the Brandenburg Consistory, 20 October 1937, Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 140/814.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Pastor Siems of Nauen to Interim Superintendent Bettac, 18 April 1939; Bettac to Siems, 21 April 1939, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10884; Bettac to Mrs. Krüger of Nauen, 28 April 1939, Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 703/770.

Krüger to say against Siems, for she was already involved in grievances against Siems because of his repeated attempts to appoint a second German Christian pastor in the Nauen parish.

After Bettac repeated his assertion that Nauen Pastor Siems was not telling the truth over the matter of the organist,⁹⁸ Siems filed a complaint with the Brandenburg Consistory (again, on the same day that the insult had reached him). In response to inquiries from Berlin, Bettac simply explained that Siems had lied about arranging for an organist and that the organist had confirmed that fact in the presence of witnesses. Bettac also tried to convince the Consistory to demand that Siems change his behaviour and drop the matter, which Siems had since brought before a civil arbitrator.⁹⁹ In turn, Siems accused Bettac of more misunderstandings and sent two more submissions to the Consistory in Berlin.¹⁰⁰ By this time, two months after the original events, the dispute had devolved into a series of mutual insults and slander that only achieved the complete souring of relations between the two men. There is no record that the Consistory ever decided the affair and the two men carried their argument across into the struggle over the appointment of new clergymen in Nauen.

In that context, Siems lost his temper once more in January 1940, when he wrote a nasty letter replying to a grievance that Carl Quehl of the Nauen District Synod Executive had filed against the election of German Christian pastoral candidate Gustav Gille in Nauen. Siems accused Quehl of waiting until he was away from Nauen (at the battlefield) to send the complaint to the Brandenburg Consistory. He also took exception to Interim Superintendent Bettac's recent complaint that German Christian Curate Schröder was regularly referred to as 'Pastor Schröder' in the newspaper, although 'pastor' was not a title that he

⁹⁸ Interim Superintendent Bettac to Pastor Siems of Nauen, 11 May 1939, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10884.

⁹⁹ Interim Superintendent Bettac to the Brandenburg Consistory, 12 June 1939 (two letters), Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10884.

¹⁰⁰ Pastor Siems of Nauen to Interim Superintendent Bettac, 12 June 1939; Siems to the Brandenburg Consistory, 18 June 1939 (two letters), Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10884.

possessed. Siems ranted that Bettac ought not to waste his precious time on details, if he wished to promote the welfare of the Nauen Protestant church. Threatening further action in the future, Siems instructed Bettac: "It would be better for you and the future of the church if you would change your methods."¹⁰¹

Carl Quehl wrote a forceful reply to Siems, mocking Siems' notion that Quehl would be too intimidated by the young pastor's presence to file a complaint. Quehl made it clear that he had expected an objective response to his grievance from Siems. He then opined that Siems lacked the ability to deal objectively with matters and had to resort to "laughable threats" instead. After commenting "Always the same methods," Quehl recalled how Siems had failed to answer Vicar Stehmann objectively in the Nauen pastoral conference (three years earlier!). Instead, at the time, Siems had complained to the Brandenburg Consistory that Interim Superintendent had not protected him in the debate against the vicar. Quehl corrected Siems: "No, you should have protected yourself and your own affairs!" Quehl added that Siems had left the pastoral conference only because he was unable to answer Stehmann in the debate.¹⁰²

Returning to the current controversy, Quehl attacked Siems' pretensions and lack of pastoral ability. In response to Siems' reference to "my parish," Quehl suggested that Siems consider the poor attendance at his services so he could understand whether or not he had a parish. Quehl also criticized the large advertisements Siems took out in the local newspaper. Finally, he stated that parishioners demanded to hear the gospel, that they were not interested in Siems' substitute and that 90 percent of the parishioners had rejected Siems as a pastor. In conclusion, Quehl turned Siems' own threat on its head, suggesting that Siems change his approach and concentrate on serving the Nauen parish more effectively rather than fighting with his church-political opponents.¹⁰³ This Siems refused to do.

¹⁰¹ Pastor Siems of Nauen to Interim Superintendent Bettac, 2 January 1940, Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

¹⁰² Carl Quehl of Nauen to Pastor Siems of Nauen, 27 January 1940, Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

Rather, he continued to promote the German Christian cause and fight for the appointment of a like-minded pastor in Nauen, even from his post in the German army on the Eastern Front, during the Second World War.

Other pastors in the Nauen district were not as active in the local church struggle as Harder, Posth, Bettac or Siems, but still found themselves in trouble with Prussian NSDAP officials and higher church authorities. The three cases of Pastors Ewald Rehfeldt of Kremmen, Friedrich Rumpf of Schwante and Martin Lehmann of Karweese demonstrate the high level of political tension in rural Brandenburg, and the ease with which clergymen could fall in and out of political controversy.

Pastor Ewald Rehfeldt of Kremmen was accused of praising England during a confirmation class on 5 May 1940, even though the class took place before the spring military campaign began. Accused by the Gestapo for “breaking the resolve for war,” Rehfeldt made light of the affair in a letter to Interim Superintendent Bettac. Even so, the experience of appearing before the Gestapo had shaken him, and he commented soberly: “Woe to those who must go to Potsdam!” For six hours he had waited behind the iron doors—“tired, worn out, without food or cigars, with a hang-dog feeling in his chest”—until the matter was settled. From that point on, declared Rehfeldt, he would only wish that his enemies would have to go to Potsdam.¹⁰⁴

If Rehfeldt assumed the matter was closed, he was wrong. In fact, the National Socialist paper *Das Schwarze Korps* published a defamatory article against him on 12 September 1940. Entitled “St. Halifax and the Cubs,” the article quoted Rehfeldt and then attacked him as a British lackey and a “sixth column of prayer.” Only then was the story of Rehfeldt’s action told: Rehfeldt had been teaching his confirmation candidates about merit, and had reiterated that humans do not merit anything from God, just like “thirty-three generations of pastors” before him. Unfortunately, at that point Rehfeldt had chosen to use the war with England as an analogy. He had asked his students whether they believed that they merited a

¹⁰⁴ Pastor Rehfeldt of Kremmen to Interim Superintendent Bettac in Beetz, 25 July 1940, Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 141/835; Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 7 November 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12410.

victory against England, and had then explained how anyone needed to be careful when using the word “merit.” Having asked if it were not true that the English were scoundrels and that the Germans were the only good people, Rehfeldt had then described how people could buy Bibles at English newspaper kiosks, how there were Bibles on all English hotel night tables, and how no trains ran in London during church services. Having stunned his students, Rehfeldt had concluded: “Now no Pharisaism, as if we are better. Before God, no one deserves the victory, not us and not them.”¹⁰⁵

The *Schwarze Korps* article blasted Rehfeldt for assuming that he knew what the outcome of God’s grace was and mocked him as a motorcycle prayer. Finally, it declared that Rehfeldt was the only one, the English included, who took seriously the British pseudo-piety, and mocked: “the Bible [as a cover for] the chamber pot, the Bible beside the smutty romance at the train station kiosk, the Bible in Chamberlain’s hand.”¹⁰⁶

Rehfeldt was understandably shaken and offended by the article, although it is hard to understand why he would have chosen to employ an analogy that exalted England, whose government had declared war on Germany. The Brandenburg Consistory excused Rehfeldt as a “simple country pastor” with a common faith, who had never given cause for complaint. It added: “we may assume that he has drawn from this incident the relevant lesson for his life.”¹⁰⁷

Another pastor whose careless words landed him in legal trouble was Friedrich Rumpf of Schwante. In October 1943, Rumpf commented critically on the National Socialist religious policy and military policy. Subsequently, he made another negative remark about the same subject. Charged with defeatism, Rumpf was placed in custody, brought before the Special Court of Berlin on 10 August 1944, convicted and sentenced to four years in prison. Fortunately for Rumpf, the

¹⁰⁵ Copy of “St. Halifax und die Pimpfe,” *Das Schwarze Korps*, Folge 37, 12 September 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12410.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 7 November 1940, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12410

court took into account his weakened constitution and tendency to utter emotional statements—both products of combat in the First World War—and declined to issue the normal sentence for his crime: death. As a result of his conviction, Rumpf was dismissed from his pastorate and denied his pension. Rumpf's wife was granted a small monthly allowance in order to survive during his imprisonment.¹⁰⁸

Along with Pastors Rehfeldt and Rumpf, Pastor Martin Lehmann of Karweese was twice forced to answer for his words and actions in various Sunday services in Karweese. First, in August 1937, Otto Bellin of Karweese filed an official complaint against Lehmann with the Brandenburg Consistory, accusing his parish pastor of undermining National Socialist racial policy and attacking the state. Bellin accused Lehmann of deviating from the National Socialist racial worldview and thereby making himself unfit to be a pastor, all for stating: "Abraham is the father of our faith." Lehmann replied that Bellin had taken the statement entirely out of context and failed to comprehend that he was preaching about the distant past, not current racial policy. The Legal Committee of the Brandenburg Church Province agreed with Lehmann's explanation, and also dismissed Bellin's accusation that Lehmann had not preached suitable sermons on particular church holidays in the previous two years.¹⁰⁹

The Legal Committee did take Lehmann to task, however, for reading out lists of names of Confessing Church pastors who had been persecuted, imprisoned or oppressed. Bellin had accused Lehmann of calling the affected clergymen "martyrs," a term Lehmann denied using. Even so, the Legal Committee argued that the illegal public reading of intercessory lists of imprisoned clergymen came dangerously close to attacking the state, which carried out the judicial sentences against Confessing Church clergymen. However, in a surprising twist of logic, the Legal Committee decided that since many Confessing Church pastors read outlawed lists of clergymen for intercessory prayer and faced no disciplinary measures, neither

¹⁰⁸ Copy of the judgment against Rumpf, "IM NAMEN DES DEUTSCHEN VOLKES!..." 12 December 1944; Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 23 September 1944, 15 October 1944 and 12 December 1944, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 7/12837.

¹⁰⁹ "Entscheidung In dem Verfahren betreffend die Beschwerde des ... Otto Bellin..." 3 February 1938. Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10393.

should Lehmann. With that, they judged that Bellin's grievance contained insufficient grounds for action and dismissed it.¹¹⁰ Lehmann continued to read the lists of suspended and imprisoned Confessing Church clergymen.

Suddenly, on 12 September 1941, the Gestapo detained him for the same reason, namely, that he was reading out intercessory lists of suspended and arrested Confessing Church clergymen.¹¹¹ No formal charges were pressed against him, however, and he returned to work for the Confessing Church in Karweese.

In conclusion, Nauen clergymen from across the church-political spectrum participated passionately in a wide range of local ecclesiastical conflicts, from Confessing Church violations of Prussian Church authority to petty squabbles over personal insults. Invariably, these conflicts strained or severed relations between parish clergymen, with Prussian Church superiors or with lay opponents within the parishes of the Nauen district. Nauen district pastors, curates and vicars were not simply responding to the events of the church struggle in Berlin—indeed these events do not often resonate in the official correspondence of these clergymen. Rather, they imported the ideological and theological positions of the German Christian Movement and the Confessing Church and lived them out among the Protestant congregations in which they ministered.

For Confessing Church clergymen, their engagement in the local church struggle was a matter of conviction and personal choice, although their vulnerability to church discipline or judicial persecution was also ameliorated by the support they enjoyed from patrons and parishioners. For German Christians, early successes gave way to a frustrating marginalization within the parishes of the Prussian Church that they were supposed to control. That reality points to the most interesting conclusion about the participation of Protestant clergymen from the Nauen district in their local version of the church struggle: Prussian Church authority was difficult to translate into local strength, and even the support of the local chapter of the NSDAP did not

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Hilde Lehmann to the Finance Department of the Brandenburg Consistory, 14 September 1941; Interim Superintendent Simon of Oranienburg to the Brandenburg Consistory, 16 September 1941, Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin 14/10393.

gain them power in the church. For local influence, they required the support of the committed Christians at the parish level, an asset they frequently lacked. The dearth of support for the German Christian Movement among committed Protestants in the Nauen district manifested itself in the clashes between German Christian and Confessing Church pastors and district synodal members. It was clearest, however, as previously described, in the consistent failure of German Christian pastoral candidates to acquire positions in the parishes of the district.

CHAPTER 6
TRUTH OR UNITY?
STRAINED RELATIONS IN THE PIRNA CHURCH STRUGGLE

In contrast to the rather localized church struggle in the Nauen district in Brandenburg, the church struggle that unfolded in the Pirna district was intimately tied to conflicts within the Saxon Evangelical Lutheran *Land* Church headquarters in Dresden. In May 1933, Pirna District Superintendent Max Zweynert placed the question of relations between church and state at the head of the local church agenda in his address to the clergymen and lay leaders at the district church assembly. Zweynert announced that local pastors would assist the responsible work towards the moral and national renewal of the German *Volk* with all their forces. He also highlighted the reconstructive work needed within the church at all levels, from the summoning of the German *Land* churches into a united *Reich* church to the renewal of the corporate bodies of the Saxon *Land* Church.¹

By the time of that Pirna district assembly, however, the campaign to renew the Saxon *Land* Church was already well under way. The contest to succeed outgoing *Land* Bishop Ihmels opened the door for radical Thuringian German Christians to advocate immediate church elections for a new *Land* Synod, which they hoped would elect their candidate, Pastor Friedrich Coch, to lead the Saxon Lutheran church boldly forward into the Third *Reich*. Groups sprang up among Saxon Lutheran leaders, including The Association for Luther's Church in Saxony and in the *Reich*, which sympathized with the new German political leadership and committed itself to assemble all German Christians in a united, nationalist, Lutheran and anti-Bolshevik church.² Opposed to the Association was the Positive *Volk* Church Union, which argued that the existing *Land* Synod was fully competent to elect *Land* Bishop Ihmels' successor and that only church law counted in the matter of the renewal of the Saxon *Land* Church. Very quickly, a heated debate erupted, in

¹ *Pirnaer Anzeiger*, "Ephoralkonferenz des Kirchenbezirks Pima," May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

² Bund für Luthers Kirche in Sachsen und im *Reich*, Information Letter, 22 April 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

which individuals and groups from higher clergymen on down to the *Volk Church* Lay Association for Saxony weighed in with their opinions. Published and unpublished letters, official and unofficial meetings all followed one another in hasty succession during the debate that raged during the spring of 1933, devouring much of Pima Superintendent Zweynert's time.³

On 19 May 1933, outgoing *Land* Bishop Ihmels agreed to remain in office until 1 July, in order to avert a complete breakdown within the church government and to give warring factions time to work out an agreement for the future direction of the Saxon *Land Church*. Superintendent Zweynert was intensely involved in these negotiations, and argued for summoning the *Land Synod* and Consistory in order to pass a new church constitution and revise regulations governing both local church administration and *Land Church* elections.⁴ Meanwhile, the President of the *Land Synod* continued to argue for the speedy election of a new bishop, all the more after Ihmels' agreement to prolong his term as *Land Bishop*.⁵ One critic of this plan was the National Socialist *Freiheitskampf*, which published a scathing article called "*Gleichschaltung* in the Church." It argued that the co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of the church community and the *Volk* community was the vital ecclesiastical complement to the political revolution of National Socialism. In contrast to the unity movement within the political realm, however, more and more church-political groups sprang up in Saxony the longer the church conflict dragged on. The *Freiheitskampf* article argued that the answer to the church-political division in Saxony and the rest of Germany was a strong national church leader. Consequently, the paper attacked Berlin Pastor Martin Niemöller and his Young Reformation Movement for their advocacy of traditional church structures and confessions.

³ A large collection of official and personal correspondences between Superintendent Zweynert and his high church colleagues from 1933 is in Ephoralarchiv Pima 814. On the succession battle in the Saxon *Land Church*, please see Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche in Kirchenkampf*, 13-18; Hermann Klemm, *Ich konnte nicht Zuschauer bleiben. Karl Fischers theologische Arbeit für die Bekennende Kirche Sachsens* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1985), 14-17.

⁴ Nostitz von Wallwitz, circular letter, 21 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁵ *Land Synod* President Graf Vitzthum von Eckstädt to Synod members, 15 March 1933 and 19 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

Demanding an immediate popular election for a *Reich* bishop, the *Freiheitskampf* took direct aim at the existing Saxon *Land* Synod and those who sought a gradual, orderly transition in the leadership of the Saxon *Land* Church. "Who, then, is the church?" it asked. "The church is not the Consistory, not the old Synod, not the pastors, not the 'Young Reformation Movement,' not the 'Association for a Lutheran Church,' not this association and not that union within the church, rather we, we National Socialists who belong to the *Volk* and to the parish, we are the church."⁶

Such a call for National Socialist action within the church was hard for individual pastors to ignore, particularly since the Party could potentially mobilize a majority of parishioners on behalf of the German Christian Movement in general church elections. It was in this charged atmosphere that Pastor Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf decided to join the NSDAP. Not only did he want to promote the movement that had brought about the national revolution in Germany, but he also wanted to make his political loyalties clear and to work to bring the Party and its notion of 'positive Christianity' into closer connection with those who upheld traditional church confessions and stood wholly for the gospel. By joining the NSDAP, Rasch believed he had found the path towards a "good solution to the unresolved church-political questions."⁷

Rasch demonstrated a deep interest in the raging church-political storm in Dresden, not least because Superintendent Zweynert kept clergymen in the Pirna district informed of the many discussions, proposals and meetings he had participated in, particularly in June and July 1933.⁸ Indeed, it is one of the peculiarities of church conditions in Pirna (and presumably much of Saxony) that pastors and church leaders were so directly concerned with the fundamental questions of church government, from constitutional renewal and church elections

⁶ "Gleichschaltung in der Kirche," *Freiheitskampf*, 26 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁷ Pastor Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf to Superintendent Zweynert, 19 May 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁸ Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen from the district of Pirna: 7 June 1933 and 22 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

down to matters of local church administration. Given the unsettled nature of their *Land* Church government, pastors enjoyed few opportunities to savour the dramatic resurgence of public religious observance in their parishes.

One example of *Land* Church intrusion into pastors' time was a survey sent around the district by Superintendent Zweynert, asking clergymen to respond to a series of 12 questions about church government at the *Land*, district and parish levels. The survey concerned potential constitutional revisions designed to bring the Saxon church closer to the hierarchical, authoritarian administrative style favoured in National Socialist Germany and captured in the term '*Führer* Principle.' Zweynert asked the pastors to consider making local church elections more efficient, diminishing the powers of synodal bodies, freeing higher church authorities to appoint new clergymen with less or no local participation, centralizing church finances and increasing the central powers of the *Land* Bishop.⁹

Most of the clergymen agreed with the thrust of the survey, some strongly. For instance, German Christian Pastor Ernst Ranft of Oberhelmsdorf argued that the "strongest emphasis of the *Führer* principle is necessary, on account of the absence of insight in the broader church community," while Pastor Dr. Walter Leonard of Stolpen even argued that the *Land* Bishop ought to be empowered to appoint new superintendents without any participation from the district church governing bodies.¹⁰ Others were not so sure about such radical reform. Pastor Rudolf Peter of Pirmasheim argued the parish council and synod must not only play an advisory role, but also hold the power of decision, while Pastor Karl Müller of Neustadt warned against applying the *Führer* principle too forcefully to church administration.¹¹ That pastors stood on both sides of these issues is understandable. That they were so involved in the debates that swirled around the upper reaches of the *Land* Church

⁹ Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen from the district of Pirmasheim: 7 June 1933; Replies from 16 pastors in the district, 14 June to 15 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 814.

¹⁰ Pastor Ranft of Oberhelmsdorf to Superintendent Zweynert, n.d.; Pastor Leonard of Stolpen to Superintendent Zweynert, 1 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 814.

¹¹ Pastor Peter of Pirmasheim to Superintendent Zweynert, 11 July 1933; Pastor Müller of Neustadt to Superintendent Zweynert, 13 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 814.

government sets the pastors from the Pirna district significantly apart from those in Nauen and Ravensburg, who had little to answer for except the vagaries of parish church administration.

Meanwhile, as the debate about the future leader of the Saxon Land Church raged on through June 1933, Superintendent Zweynert was forced to take a medical leave of absence. His deputy, Pastor Rudolf Peter of Pirna, filed two long reports to keep the superintendent abreast of the convoluted course of Saxon church politics.¹² In one of the reports, Peter admitted that his colleague Paul Teichgräber, a National Socialist pastor in Pirna, knew more than he did about the day-to-day state of emergency in the church. In late June 1933, Pastors Teichgräber, Heinrich Leichte of Königstein and Walter Börner of Ottendorf were all summoned to Dresden together with about 50 other pastors, in order to meet with their leader in the National Socialist Pastors' League, Friedrich Coch. Afterwards, Teichgräber informed Peter that Coch would be appointed as Commissarial *Land* Bishop in early July.¹³

Peter subsequently described to Superintendent Zweynert how heated debates between the President of the Land Synod and zealous German Christians had led to the intervention of the Saxon Interior Minister Fritsch into *Land* Church affairs. In doing so, Fritsch was following the lead of Prussian Education Minister Rust, who had appointed August Jäger State Commissar in the Old Prussian Union Church on 24 June 1933.¹⁴ On 30 June, Saxon Interior Minister Fritsch issued a *Decree for the Removal of the State of Emergency in the Saxon Evangelical Land Church*. The decree appointed German Christian pastor Friedrich Coch to be *Land* Bishop and invested him with dictatorial emergency powers: the rights and authority of the *Land* Bishop, the *Land* Consistory, the *Land* Church Committee and the Standing Synodal Committee—in short, complete executive and legislative power in

¹² Pastor Peter of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert, 30 June and 1 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf*, 16.

the Saxon *Land Church*.¹⁵ Without delay, Coch suspended most of the Saxon *Land Church* Consistory and several district superintendents, and announced a new group of executive assistants in an assembly of all Saxon clergymen, on 6 July 1933.¹⁶

News of Coch's rise to power in the *Land Church* unleashed a frenzy of celebratory newspaper articles and church services throughout Saxony. The subsequent success of the German Christian candidates in the 23 July 1933 national church elections crowned Coch's triumph. Three quarters of the delegates 'elected' to Saxon parish councils through pre-arranged unity lists were National Socialists who firmly supported Coch's rule as *Land Bishop*.¹⁷ In turn, these parish leaders elected an overwhelming majority of deputies to the *Land Synod* from the Association of National Socialist Pastors and the German Christian Movement. On 8 August 1933, three days before the new *Land Synod* was to have met, Coch overrode the Saxon *Land Church* constitution and introduced rule according to the *Führer* principle.¹⁸

Despite his hold on power, however, Coch hardly enjoyed the support of the majority of the superintendents and pastors in Saxony. Over the fall and winter of 1933 to 1934, two new church-political groups emerged in Saxony, largely in response to Coch's unconstitutional government. The first of these groups was the Pastors' Emergency League, Martin Niemöller's organization of clergymen committed to upholding the authority of the Bible and Reformation Confessions within the church. If necessary, its members were prepared to reject the authority of what they perceived to be heretical church leaders such as Saxon Land Bishop Coch and German Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller.¹⁹ The second group was as yet

¹⁵ Ibid, 17; Klemm, *Ich konnte nicht Zuschauer bleiben*, 15.

¹⁶ Pastor Peter of Pima to Superintendent Zweynert, 30 June and 1 July 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814; Klemm, *Ich konnte nicht Zuschauer bleiben*, 15.

¹⁷ Various articles from the *Dresdner Anzeiger* of 1 and 2 July 1933, along with other newspaper clippings, circular letters and legal notices describing the new state of the Saxon church government are gathered in Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

¹⁸ Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf*, 18.

¹⁹ Ibid, 22-41; Klemm, *Ich konnte nicht Zuschauer bleiben*, 16-22.

unnamed, but would later grow into "the Middle" (*Die Mitte*), a group of moderates who rejected both the ultra-nationalist agitation of German Christians and the refusal of the Emergency League and Confessing Church to operate within the structure and under the authority of the existing Land Church government.²⁰

Before long, the dramatic developments at the pinnacle of the Saxon *Land Church* had repercussions in the Pirna church district. In November 1933, the Pastors' Emergency League emerged in Pirna as a forceful critic of *Land* Bishop Coch and his administration. They also spoke out against the illegal, heterodox and unchurchly measures of German Christian leaders in the *Reich Church* government in Berlin. Throughout 1934, the Emergency League dominated the local church-political stage in Pirna, capturing the loyalty of a significant minority of parish pastors.

The first local pastor to officially complain about National Socialist tendencies within the Church was Walter Schumann of Hohnstein. Schumann was motivated by his displeasure with an infamous speech delivered by Dr. Reinhold Krause on 13 November 1933 at a mass rally of 20,000 German Christians in the Berlin Sport Palace. Krause advocated the abandonment of the Old Testament and of much of the teaching of "the Rabbi Paul" in the Bible, as well as the de-Jewification of the Christian faith.²¹

Eleven days later, Schumann informed Superintendent Zweynert that he refused to put up the *Land Church* poster "With Luther and Hitler for Faith and *Volkstum*" on his church door. This was because the poster amounted to an illegal

²⁰ On the beginnings of this Middle group, please see "Schreiben von 47 Leipziger Pfarrern der Mittelgruppe an Landesbischof Coch," 17 November 1934, in Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf*, 194-195. That letter and the correspondence that follows it explain the Leipzigers' demands that *Land* Bishop Coch: 1) repeal measures to arbitrarily incorporate the Saxon Evangelical *Land Church* into the German Evangelical Church, 2) dismiss some of his most odious appointees in the *Land Church* Office and restore suspended clergymen throughout Saxony, 3) assure the members of the Middle that he would deal with personnel matters objectively and in the spirit of the church, and 4) summon all willing participants in a joint effort to restore the *Land Church*.

²¹ [Krause], *Rede des Gauobmannes*, 6-8; Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, Vol. 2, *Um eine deutsche Reichskirche* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1972), 828-850; Cochrane, *Church's Confession under Hitler*, 111-113; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 551-553. Scholder points out the similarities between Krause's speech and Arthur Rosenberg's antisemitic attacks on Christianity in *ibid.*, 1: 553, 667 n.6.

application of racial criteria within the church, which Schumann could not accept “in good conscience.”²² In like manner, Pastor Gustav Carl of Cotta also refused to put up the poster, since “this poster invokes the confession-violating Aryan paragraph.”²³

In a tangible expression of his disapproval of the German Christian Movement, Schumann prohibited all its activities in his parish of Hohnstein. This decision sparked an immediate conflict with Schumann’s neighbour, Pastor Heinrich Leichte of Königstein, who served as an ideological resource and mentor for the German Christians in Schumann’s parish. Schumann wrote to Leichte and asserted that any participation of Leichte in local German Christian meetings would be interpreted as “an attack on the peace” in his parish.²⁴

Zweynert replied to both Pastors Schumann and Carl, explaining that it was his duty to report them to the Land Church Office in Dresden, which would in turn lead to disciplinary measures. He added, however, that he would not immediately inform the ecclesiastical authorities about their letters, in order to give the two pastors a chance to think about the possibility of an avoidable suspension. In this important communication, Zweynert set the tone for his future dealings with these pastors and with others who would eventually comprise the Pastors’ Emergency League and Confessing Church in Pirna. Consistently, Zweynert chose to turn a blind eye to the demands of Saxon church law, to tolerate slights against his authority and to grant dissenting pastors as much time and freedom as possible, in order that they might moderate their attitudes and abandon their illegal disobedience to higher church authorities. All the while, Zweynert protected them from hostile German Christians in the Dresden church offices.

²² Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 24 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

²³ Pastor Carl of Cotta to Superintendent Zweynert, 24 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814; Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf*, 23-24.

²⁴ Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 24 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

In the instances of Schumann and Carl, Zweynert went so far as to advise the two pastors not to officially inform him of their decision, but to use the Pastors' Emergency League in Saxony as a go-between to the Saxon *Land* Church Office. This was an unequivocal and potentially dangerous decision by Zweynert to suppress official church correspondence (and not for the last time), in order to avoid the kinds of direct confrontations that would only upset the church peace in his district.²⁵

That Zweynert himself was not altogether comfortable with *Land* Bishop Coch and the direction of the Saxon church government is clear both from his approach to managing church-political controversy within the Pirna district and from his attitude to Coch's published opinions. In December 1933, Zweynert scribbled numerous marginal notations on a copy of an article entitled "Church and Reaction," written by Coch and published by the Saxon German Christians. In the article, a scathing attack on all those who did not fully support his agenda, Coch made a denigrating reference to "so-called men and women [who are] loyal to the church." Beside it, Zweynert inserted a thick exclamation mark in the margin. Further on, Zweynert placed four more large exclamation marks beside Coch's accusation that Protestants from all associations and parties other than the German Christians were united in their hatred of the National Socialists and insincere in their approval of Hitler and the new German state. Zweynert also marked up sections in which Coch derided the appeal of churchmen to their consciences as the last vestige of an unwanted individualism, castigated opponents of the German Christians for overreacting to the Sport Palace speeches of November 1933 and accused his enemies of trying to thwart the creation of the German *Volk* church.²⁶

Coch's article was published together with the *28 Theses of the Saxon Volk Church for the Inner Establishment of the German Evangelical Church*, which were promoted as guidelines for the Saxon *Land* Church government and adopted by the

²⁵ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to Pastors Schumann of Hohnstein and Carl of Cotta, 27 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

²⁶ Land Bishop Coch, "Zur kirchlichen Lage," *Schulungsbriefe der volksmissionarischen Bewegung Deutsche Christen in Sachsen*, 12 December 1933, ed. M. Heinz Poppe, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

Saxon branch of the German Christian Movement as the basis for its work. The 28 *Theses* attempted to unite Christianity and National Socialism by declaring that the German Evangelical Church stood *in* the state, thus making it a national church (*Volkskirche*). Moreover, this national church understood race as the creation of God, professed its belief in the German blood and race, and declared that only members of the racial community could be members in it. The 28 *Theses* also called for the preaching of the gospel of Jesus: that God was Lord and Father, that God revealed himself in Jesus Christ and that Jesus was the way for humanity to find its way to God the Father. Moreover, God placed people in certain orders of life: family, *Volk* and state, all of which found their expression in the total claim of the National Socialist state. While the foundation for this new national church would be the Bible and Reformation Confessions, the 28 *Theses* did not regard the Old Testament as being equally as valuable as the New Testament. Rather, the Old Testament served as a warning of the way in which a people (*Volk*) could continually wander from God, in spite of his repeated revelation. It revealed the Jews' sin of falling away from God, which culminated in Jesus' crucifixion. Neither did the 28 *Theses* accept the Reformation Confessions as absolute, but rather noted that the Confessions were historically bound up in the peculiar questions posed in the time of their writing: "Not back to the faith of [our] fathers, but forward *in* the faith of [our] fathers!"²⁷

Pirna Superintendent Zweynert grew increasingly disenchanted with Land Bishop Coch's response to conflict in the Saxon Land Church. Within a month of the publication of Coch's article and the heretical 28 *Theses*, Zweynert had completely distanced himself from the Land Bishop and his allies. The Pirna superintendent expressed his disfavour by cancelling his membership in both the Working Group of National Socialist Pastors and the *Volk* Missionary Movement of the German Christians. In letters to both those organizations, Zweynert reiterated his support for Hitler's new political regime in Germany. He rejected, however, the

²⁷ "Die 28 Thesen der sächsischen Volkskirche zum inneren Aufbau der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche," *Schulungsbriefe der volksmissionarischen Bewegung Deutsche Christen in Sachsen*, 12 December 1933, ed. M. Heinz Poppe, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814; Fischer, *Die sächsische Landeskirche im Kirchenkampf*, 24-25.

slander of members of the Pastors' Emergency League by the Working Group and the refusal of German Christian leaders to distance themselves from the contents of speeches delivered by radical German Christians at the Berlin Sport Palace assembly of 13 November 1933.²⁸

More important still was the step Zweynert took in late December, when he wrote directly to the Land Bishop and informed Coch that the clergymen of his district felt obviously "depressed, joyless and pessimistic" about church conditions in Saxony. Zweynert made it clear to Coch that this pessimism was not the result of any disloyal political opinion. The negative attitude of pastors in the Pima district towards the church government of *Land* Bishop Coch was, argued Zweynert, "all the more distressing and critical because, as far as I know, all the clergymen of the district deliberately and gladly profess themselves for the National Socialist state, and since the ablest and most zealous pastors are seized by this mood, and even [National Socialist] Party members enter into it." He added that divisive church-political opinions had created so much mistrust among local pastors "that an open discussion of the unresolved problems within the community of pastors is virtually impossible."²⁹

By December 1933, several other leading Saxon district superintendents, led by Hugo Hahn and Karl Fischer of Dresden, also broke with Coch. These men, leaders in the Pastors' Emergency League, publicly denied the Land Bishop's authority over the church, arguing that he employed coercion, treated the spiritual office of bishop like a command post, undermined the reputation of the Lutheran

²⁸ Superintendent Zweynert to the Working Group of National Socialist Pastors, 20 December 1933; Superintendent Zweynert to "Herr Oberstudiendirektor," 16 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

²⁹ Superintendent Zweynert to Land Bishop Coch, 29 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814. One gets the impression that Zweynert continued to harbour doubts about the politicization of the church by German Christians in the *Land* Church hierarchy. For instance, in August 1934 he wrote a worried letter to Superintendent Spranger of Annaberg, bemoaning a recent decree banning the use of the name 'Church of the Atonement': "This decree has shaken me and filled me with great concern. If 'Church of the Atonement' is no longer suited to the times, will Redeemer Church and Church of the Cross suffer the same fate, which logically they must suffer? Can one still answer for that in good conscience?" Superintendent Zweynert to Superintendent Spranger, 28 August 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 815.

church and departed from the tradition of Holy Scripture and the Reformation Confessions.³⁰

Before 1933 came to a close, the growing division and mistrust started to become apparent among Pirna pastors. Disagreements centred on the conduct of the Reich and Saxon Church leaderships and the German Christians who controlled them. For instance, Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau bemoaned the inability of local pastors to practice fellowship together, even as he informed Superintendent Zweynert that he could not come to the year-end family get-together.³¹ Pastor Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther) notified the superintendent that he was so put off by the German Christian Sport Palace assembly in Berlin, and particularly Dr. Reinhold Krause's vitriol, that he had withdrawn from the German Christian Movement. After an ineffectual discussion with Land Bishop Coch, Müller had promptly joined the Pastors' Emergency League.³²

In his 1934 New Year's message to the Pirna district pastors, Superintendent Zweynert admitted that the church-political situation in Pirna and Saxony was confused and unclear. He asked the Lord to direct the body of pastors and to lead the deeply divided group back together again into a trusting brotherhood. That relationships among local pastors had been rent was made clear in Zweynert's next announcement: the usual Christmas pastoral conference was cancelled "on account of the acute differences among the clergymen in the way they assessed the church-political situation."³³ Sebnitz Pastor Siegfried Meier replied to Zweynert's message, observing that the cancellation of the Christmas pastoral conference in Pirna highlighted the tremendous tensions in the church. He and his assistant, Pastor Karl Partecke, respected Zweynert's judgment in cancelling the gathering, but jointly

³⁰ Pastors' Emergency League in Dresden to Land Bishop Coch, 7 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

³¹ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, New Year 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

³² Pastor Müller of Heidenau (Luther) to Superintendent Zweynert, 31 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

³³ Superintendent Zweynert to the pastors in the district, 28 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

advocated that the Pirna clergymen “must hold a [monthly district pastoral] conference immediately, so that we come to a sense of community in spite of the opposing attitudes of individuals.”³⁴

Unfortunately, the sense of community that Pastors Meier and Partecke were looking for was nowhere to be found. Clergymen in the Pirna district (not to mention the rest of Saxony) remained deeply divided right through 1934—indeed, one of the chief characteristics of the entire National Socialist era in Pirna was dissention among the clergymen. A primary consequence of this division was the continual cancellation of the various monthly pastoral conferences.³⁵ Already in December 1933, the Berggießhübel monthly pastoral conference had to be cancelled on account of deep differences of opinion about the German Christian Movement.³⁶ The Müglitztal monthly pastoral conference was also crippled by church-political division and was shut down from early 1934 until at least May 1936.³⁷

The cancellation of these monthly pastoral conferences caused the monthly conference in Pirna to grow so large that by February 1934 it was no longer suited for the discussion of emotional church-political questions. Members of the Pastors' Emergency League refused to attend and Superintendent Zweynert could only throw up his hands and ask his superiors in Dresden for a solution.³⁸ No help came, however, and attempts to hold meetings of the Pirna monthly pastoral conference continued to fail throughout 1935, due to the non-attendance of Emergency League

³⁴ Pastor Meier of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert, 31 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

³⁵ There were normally at least five monthly pastoral conferences in the Pirna District: the Bad Schandau conference, the Berggießhübel conference, the Müglitztal conference (usually in Heidenau or Zschachwitz), the Pirna conference and the Stolpen conference. Correspondence and reports from them are in two files, “Die in der Ephorie Pirna bestehenden Konferenzen der Geistlichen,” Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290 and 291.

³⁶ Superintendent Zweynert to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 11 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

³⁷ The Müglitztaler conference was comprised of pastors from Burkhardswalde, Dohna, Heidenau, Maxen and Zschachwitz. Pastor Drechsler of Zschachwitz to Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, 2 May 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

³⁸ Superintendent Zweynert in Pirna to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 8 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

clergymen, other last minute cancellations and general low attendance, especially during holiday periods.³⁹

Similar problems plagued the Schandau monthly pastoral conference, which had to be cancelled due to the refusal of pastors from the Emergency League to work together with colleagues who recognized the authority of the Land Church.⁴⁰ In the case of the Schandau conference, there was very good reason for the disinclination of the Emergency League pastors. After successful meetings in November and December 1934, the Schandau conference was rocked by the decision of Pastor Leichte of Königstein to lodge a formal complaint with the local NSDAP leadership against Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein. Leichte alleged that Schumann had uttered statements hostile to the state during the course of one of the monthly conference discussions. Adding to the insult to the pastors of the Bad Schandau conference, Leichte took his action long after the discussion in question had taken place and after he had shaken hands with Schumann and welcomed the Hohnstein pastor back after a disciplinary suspension.⁴¹ Further, Leichte had slighted them by taking his complaint to a third party instead of working it through the monthly conference in an orderly way. Moreover, by making his complaint public, Leichte had not only slandered Schumann but had also created the impression that the Bad Schandau conference was the source of "a reactionary mentality."⁴²

Due to Leichte's antagonistic act, the January 1935 Bad Schandau pastoral conference collapsed. After the pastors from the Emergency League abandoned the gathering, the remnant saw no point in meeting with the ill-behaved Leichte. Thus, when the monthly conference was revived in February, it was as an unofficial gathering of clergymen, so that the other pastors did not have to invite Leichte and

³⁹ Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen to Superintendent Zweynert, n.d.; Pastor Ebert of Pima to Superintendent Zweynert, 1 October 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290; Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen [to the Superintendent's Office in Pirna], n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

⁴⁰ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 12 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁴¹ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 28 March 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

⁴² Ibid.

the Emergency League pastors could come again. As conference leader Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau explained to Superintendent Zweynert: "In this way we managed, so that [the] pastors of our circle did not lose contact with one another."⁴³ Meinel explained that Leichte's behaviour was so destructive that the other pastors unanimously agreed not to meet in an official conference with him.

In the mean time, Superintendent Zweynert and 14 of his colleagues had banded together to pressure *Land* Bishop Coch to reinstate two suspended Emergency League superintendents in early January 1934.⁴⁴ Three days later they issued another set of demands, including the repeal of legal measures and defamatory statements directed against members of the Emergency League, the reconstitution of the Land Church Office and the withdrawal of the controversial 28 *Theses*, the German Christian guidelines for governing the Saxon *Land* Church.⁴⁵ Out of this and other common actions designed to restore confidence and collegiality to the Lutheran pastors of Saxony, a group of moderate churchmen emerged in the *Land* Church, a foreshadowing of the Middle, the organization of Saxon clergymen that rose to prominence later in the year.

From this time onward, Superintendent Zweynert was intimately involved with church-political moderates from Leipzig and Dresden. On an ongoing basis, he attempted to persuade Pima pastors from both church-political extremes to emulate his moderate approach, repeatedly defended the motives of members of the Pastors' Emergency League before the Land Church Office and tried to avert disciplinary actions against them.⁴⁶

⁴³ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 March 1934 [*sic.*], Ephoralarchiv Pima 290.

⁴⁴ Declaration of 15 superintendents to Land Bishop Coch, 6 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁴⁵ Superintendents Arnold, Böhme *et al.*, "Um unserer Landeskirche willen ..." 9 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁴⁶ Pastor Bruhns of Leipzig to Superintendent Zweynert, 8 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814. Zweynert's regular contact with moderate leaders is documented in Ephoralarchiv Pima 814, 815, 817-819. For examples of Zweynert defending Emergency League clergymen, see the cases of Pastors Schumann, Carl and Klemm, below.

In this same spirit, Zweynert regularly added pleading personal messages to the ever-harsher orders he transmitted from higher church authorities to his parish clergymen. For instance, when he asked his clergymen (on behalf of Land Church authorities) whether they belonged to the Pastors' Emergency League, Zweynert took the opportunity to urge them to make peace with the church, lest the unity of the *Volk* be disrupted and endangered by disunity in the church, and lest the church take on completely "the suspicion of having a fundamental attitude that is reactionary and hostile to the state, which now hangs over it and hinders its effectiveness."⁴⁷ Citing the need for personal sacrifices to achieve this goal of unity, Zweynert asked the pastors to end their program of opposition to the Land Church and either to work for the dissolution of the Pastors' Emergency League in Saxony or to withdraw from it.

Throughout 1934, Zweynert continued his patient policy of persuasion, though with mixed results. He was able to restore relations between Emergency League pastors and moderates, but could not prevent either the growth of the Emergency League in the Pirna district or the introduction of disciplinary measures against its members by the Saxon Land Church government.⁴⁸ It was that growing radicalization of church politics in Pirna that marked the first months of 1934. Until about April, pastors in the Emergency League did not have to take any serious decisions, and could participate in the organization as a way to distance themselves from the radical German Christians in Saxony and to show their disapproval with *Land* Bishop Coch's unorthodox theology and methods.

Beginning in January 1934, in response to several requests from the Land Church Office, Emergency League pastors in Pirna began to publicly identify themselves. Responding to an official questionnaire sent out by Superintendent Zweynert, Pastor Adolf Schmeißer of Struppín replied that he had joined the

⁴⁷ Superintendent Zweynert to the pastors in the district, 13 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁴⁸ By April 1934, 18 Pirna district pastors had participated in Confessing Church actions. Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 18 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815; Pastor Meier of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

Emergency League “to stand up for the cause of the gospel.”⁴⁹ Schmeißer’s note was followed by one from Pastor Walter Schumann of Hohnstein, who wrote Zweynert on behalf of 15 as yet unidentified Emergency League pastors in the Pirna district. All had withdrawn from the National Socialist Pastors’ League on account of its slanderous statements against the Emergency League, and because they “yearned most ardently for peace in the church.” Schumann began to draw a line in the sand, however, when he asserted: “There can only be peace and order which is rooted in truthfulness and in the spirit of the church.”⁵⁰ His assertions were a challenge to Zweynert’s emphasis on church peace as the first priority, downplaying the German Christian deviation from orthodox Christianity.

Local political authorities, who began to interfere in the life of the church, also threatened peace in the Pirna church district. Little had happened since the first and most shocking case of political interference in March 1933, when a few Pirna SA members arrested and humiliated Pastor Rudolf Peter of Pirna.⁵¹ In January 1934, however, Pirna political authorities prohibited Pastor Carl of Cotta from holding a church meeting—likely Carl was organizing on behalf of the Emergency League—based on the grounds that Carl’s actions violated the Decree of the *Reich* President for the Protection of the German *Volk*.⁵² That same month, veteran Pastor Walter Plotz of Pirna-Hospital wrote a passionate letter to the Land Church Office in Dresden, urging them to intervene to stop a 100,000-man march in Pirna that was scheduled by the SA for Palm Sunday, 25 March 1934. Plotz pointed out that Palm Sunday was not only the beginning of the Easter week, but also a confirmation Sunday, one of the most important and well-attended services of the entire year. The pastor complained that Protestant pastors had already given up the 19 November

⁴⁹ Pastor Schmeißer of Struppin to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁵⁰ Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 16 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁵¹ For an account of the mistreatment of Pastor Rudolf Peter, please see Chapter 2, pp. 57ff., above.

⁵² Amtshauptmannschaft Pirna to Pastor Carl of Cotta (copy to Superintendent Zweynert), 24 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814. On the back of his copy, Zweynert scratched the draft of a letter urging Carl to comply with the order.

1933 Luther anniversary celebrations “for the sake of Germany, out of devotion to our Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler [and with] hearts not wholly light.”⁵³ He did not want to see another important date lost to political celebrations in a time when the church was supposed to be “the guardian of the Protestant cause and of Christian morals.” Plotz demanded that Land Church authorities act: “The more earnestly and truthfully I struggle each day for the blessing of God upon Hitler and his work, the more my right grows to not have my Protestant conscience and my evangelical sensibility shaken by [Hitler’s] assistants.”⁵⁴

One of the first tests of the resolve of Pirna clergymen who belonged to the Pastors’ Emergency League was whether or not they would read a prohibited Emergency League pulpit declaration on 8 January 1934. The declaration criticized the lack of action from the *Reich* Bishop in the wake of the disastrous Berlin Sport Palace assembly of German Christians on 13 November 1933.⁵⁵ When Superintendent Zweynert requested reports from pastors who had read or posted the Emergency League declaration, 17 pastors answered as members of the League. Most had read out the pulpit declaration in their churches, though some had only read out parts and had added their own explanations to their parishioners—more evidence of the fluidity of the church-political conditions in early 1934.⁵⁶

Superintendent Zweynert proceeded to write to these pastors on 13 April 1934, hoping to persuade them to abandon the Pastors’ Emergency League, even if they were critical of some aspects of the *Land* Church government. Several pastors replied to this letter, and began to reveal their motives for participating in the

⁵³ Pastor Plotz of Pirna (Hospital) to the Land Church Office in Dresden, 26 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ For more details about the pulpit declaration, please see below, p. 247.

⁵⁶ These were Pastors Gustav Carl of Cotta, Herbert Dittmann of Ehrenberg, Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba, Kurt Hellner of Dohna, Dr. Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau, Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther), Rudolf Peter of Pirna, Franz Ploedterll of Königstein, Scherffig of Heidenau (Christus), Ernst Schmeißer of Struppen, Walter Schumann of Hohnstein, Otto Scriba of Stadt Wehlen, Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf, Martin Vorwerk of Liebstadt, and the superintendent’s son, Gerhard Zweynert of Papstdorf.

Emergency League. Pastor Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther) explained that after attending an NSDAP meeting in conjunction with a *Volk* mission project in the Pirna area (he did not want to be guilty of disunity), he discovered the fundamental confessional question: "revelation in Christ or revelation in blood and race." Müller took direct aim at the controversy produced by radical German Christians and argued they, not the Emergency League, were causing the unrest within the church.⁵⁷

Franz Ploedterll responded similarly, arguing that even the lofty goal of the unity of the German *Volk* was not more important than the purity of the gospel, which the German Christians and their church government were endangering. As evidence, Ploedterll referred to the preaching of blood, race and *Volk* religion, the Aryan paragraph [the racial categories in which contradicted the soteriology and ecclesiology of the Reformation Confessions], and the 28 *Theses* endorsed by the Saxon *Land* Church government.⁵⁸ Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde explained that he could not leave the Emergency League, because "we must, in purity and truth, seek to go the way that God leads us."⁵⁹

To drive home the force of these individual replies, members of the Pastors' Emergency League from the Pirna district wrote a joint letter to Superintendent Zweynert on 17 April 1934. They thanked him for his recent letter to them and praised his sense of responsibility for the condition of the church, but countered with five reasons why they could not "abandon the cause of the Pastors' Emergency League, for the sake of the church." First, no one would believe they had changed their opinion anyway, since Land Bishop Coch had said as much recently at a public gathering. Second, if they left the Emergency League, they would unjustly appear to have been the disturbers of church conditions in Saxony. Third, they viewed the

⁵⁷ Pastor Müller of Heidenau (Luther) to Superintendent Zweynert, 16 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁵⁸ Pastor Ploedterll of Königstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 17 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁵⁹ Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde to Superintendent Zweynert, 14 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

recent Reich Church Law of 14 April 1934⁶⁰ as an intervention of God in response to their prayers and yearnings, and declared themselves unable to abandon the cause for which God had acted. Fourth, the recent disturbances of church gatherings had revealed who the disturbers of the church peace were—German Christians had not yet served to bring peace to their parishes, and the pastors wished to continue working towards that end. Fifth, they felt compelled to stand by Emergency League pastors in other parts of Germany and did not want to abandon their God-given duty, concluding that there could not be “‘peace at any price’ in the church, if it comes at the cost of truth and the confessions.”⁶¹ No less than 17 pastors signed this letter, a strong statement of their unity and willingness to disagree publicly with both their district superintendent and his superiors for the sake of the gospel.⁶²

By late April, however, the growing extremism of the Pastors’ Emergency League was beginning to worry some of the League’s members in Pirna, particularly Pastors Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau, Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf and Gerhard Zweynert of Papstsdorf—three neighbours from the southeast corner of the Pirna district. Although they had signed the joint letter of the Emergency League clergymen to Superintendent Zweynert, they ended up discussing the matter with him once again a few days later at the installation of Pastor Otto Voigt in Stolpen.

⁶⁰ This 14 April 1934 Church Law for the Pacification of the Church Situation overturned the 4 January ‘Muzzling Decree’ (Decree Concerning the Restoration of Orderly Conditions in the German Evangelical *Reich* Church), which had given the *Reich* Bishop dictatorial powers. The 14 April Church Law also prohibited further legal measures against pastors and instigated a review of all judgments against clergymen based on the 4 January decree. Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 2: 20, 81-82.

⁶¹ Pastors Otto Scriba of Wehlen Stadt, Schumann of Hohnstein *et al.* to Superintendent Zweynert, 17 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁶² As identified by Superintendent Zweynert, they were Pastors Gustav Carl of Cotta, Herbert Dittmann of Ehrenberg, Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba, Kurt Hellner of Dohna, Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Siegfried Meier of Sebnitz, Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau, Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther), Rudolf Peter of Pirna, Franz Ploedterll of Königstein, Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf, Ernst Schmeißer of Struppin, Walter Schumann of Hohnstein, Otto Scriba of Wehlen Stadt, Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf, Martin Vorwerk of Liebstadt, and the superintendent’s son, Gerhard Zweynert of Papstsdorf. Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 18 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815. Pastor Siegfried Meier of Sebnitz was not mentioned in that correspondence, but did admit to reading parts of the declaration. Pastor Meier of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

Superintendent Zweynert followed up that meeting with an emotional letter to the three men. He expressed his agreement with their shared concern that their membership in the Emergency League would end up splitting their parishes. Upon reflection, the superintendent added that he worried about the growing dogmatic nature of the Emergency League and whether it was so valuable that it was worth the price of the long-term division of their parishes and the dishonour to the church in the eyes of a growing majority of fellow Germans. Zweynert also warned of reports that reactionary lay people were using the Emergency League as a means to effect indirect opposition to the state. For the good of their parishes, Zweynert's advice was simple: "Withdraw from the Emergency League."⁶³ Superintendent Zweynert's letter had exactly the effect he hoped for, driving the three pastors Meinel, Rasch and Gerhard Zweynert (his son) back into further discussions and a new set of questions for Saxon Emergency League leader Superintendent Hahn of Dresden.⁶⁴

During this time of uncertainty for some of the Emergency League pastors, conditions changed radically in both the Emergency League and the official Saxon Land Church. For the Emergency League, the fundamental change was the creation of the Confessing Church and the proclamation of its foundational Barmen Declaration. In the wake of repeated failures to remove *Reich* Bishop Ludwig Müller, several leading churchmen, including *Land* Bishops Meiser of Bavaria, Marahrens of Hanover (Lutheran) and Wurm of Württemberg met in the city of Ulm on Danube on 22 April 1934 and founded the Confessing Church as the "legal Protestant Church of Germany."⁶⁵ One month later, on 29-30 May, Reformed and Lutheran delegates met at the First Synod of the Confessing Church, at Barmen in Westphalia. There they approved the Barmen Declaration rejecting *Reich* Bishop Ludwig Müller's rule and German Christian theological heresy.

⁶³ Superintendent Zweynert to Pastors Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau, Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf and Gerhard Zweynert of Papstdorf, 23 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁶⁴ Pastor Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf to Superintendent Zweynert, 29 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁶⁵ Ericksen, "The Barmen Synod and Its Declaration: A Historical Synopsis," in Locke, ed., *Church Confronts the Nazis*, 55.

In Pima, the complete rejection of the existing church government by the Confessing Church created a split among pastors who had belonged to the Emergency League. Some moved on into the Confessing Church, but others such as Pastors Meinel, Rasch and Gerhard Zweynert were unwilling to break completely with the existing church authorities joined Superintendent Max Zweynert's growing group of church-political moderates.

The second important change in local church conditions occurred on 4 May 1934, when the Saxon Land Synod decided that their church should officially join the German Reich Church, under Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller. The fledgling Confessing Church in Saxony immediately attacked the decision as based on a misguided belief that the theological and confessional orthodoxy of the church could somehow be separated from its external form, and declared that the Land Synod did not have the right to make such a decision.⁶⁶

In light of the opposition of the Emergency League/Confessing Church, the Saxon Land Bishop made appointments to speak with the member pastors from each district. Pima pastors were instructed to meet at a parish hall in Dresden on 17 May 1934.⁶⁷ They did not attend, however, since Emergency League clergymen from eight church districts, Pima included, jointly informed the Land Bishop they would not meet with him, since they understood he had no intention of really discussing their concerns.⁶⁸

By Pentecost 1934, Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau was so distraught about the emerging church struggle in Saxony that he published an open letter to all the Lutheran clergymen in Saxony, subtitled "What do we do now?" In it, Meinel underscored the disunity among Saxon clergymen. He challenged his colleagues to consider how they ministered to one another as "brothers," quickly adding, "and this

⁶⁶ Confessing Community of the Saxon Lutheran Land Church, "To the 16th Saxon Lutheran Land Synod." 3 May 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814. Other documentation, including newspaper clippings and published pamphlets concerning the decision to join the Reich church, is in Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁶⁷ Superintendent Zweynert to the pastors in the district, 26 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 80.

⁶⁸ Cathedral Preacher Arndt von Kirchbach, in the name of 110 Emergency League pastors, to Land Bishop Coch, 17 May 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

word must really not be a farce!!”⁶⁹ Meinel contrasted the reputation of the early Christians, who were known for their love for one another, and the current contentious relationship among “shepherds” of the Saxon church. He prodded his colleagues to set aside their division, and reminded them of all they had in common—not least, rallying together during the First World War and fighting together against the red flag of Bolshevism during the time of the revolution. He then urged them to step between the fronts of the current church struggle and minister to each other, to their common fellowship and thus ultimately to the wider church in Saxony. Lest he be thought of as a political reactionary, the Bad Schandau pastor informed his fellow Saxon clergymen that he was a member of the NSDAP.⁷⁰

Meinel went on to propose that pastors begin to build up the dwelling of God in the Spirit, on the foundation where “Jesus Christ is the cornerstone.” He then observed: “As the [church-political] fronts become ever more rigid, they must ultimately be smashed to pieces.” That would be a fate that would seriously injure the health of Saxon Lutheran parishes.⁷¹

Consequently, Meinel set forth a four-point plan for peace revolving around the Bible and the Confessions: (1) Starting immediately, mandatory monthly district pastors’ conferences to discuss common themes set down by the Land Bishop and superintendents; (2) In three months, a gathering of all clergymen in Saxony, or at least representatives (an equal number of German Christians and Emergency League pastors), not for a boundless debate, but to really come together as brothers under the spiritual leadership and ministry of the Land Bishop; (3) Immediately, the reinstatement of suspended or forced into retirement, and the withdrawal of all defamatory statements against church-political opponents (no second class

⁶⁹ Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau, “Eine Bitte am Pfingstfest 1934 an alle ev.-luth. Geistlichen in Sachsen.” Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Ibid.

Christians and Germans); and (4) The imitation of Christ's example of forgiveness and the restoration of good working relations among colleagues in the same parish.⁷²

Meinel understood that this was not a complete solution and admitted that others could address the problem more effectively than he, but he made it clear that he felt himself constrained by the Spirit of God to act. He argued forcefully for making unity and the restoration of Christian love within the body of clergymen as the starting point for the greater settlement of the church conflict in Saxony, based on Galatians 5:13: "Serve one another in love."⁷³

Meinel's open letter signalled a substantial shift in his church-political attitude towards the moderately critical stance of Superintendent Zweynert and foreshadowed the decision he made together with his two closest colleagues in ministry, Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf and Gerhard Zweynert of Papstdorf, to withdraw from the Pastors' Emergency League in July 1934. As Meinel reported to Superintendent Zweynert, that decision was made "after many inner struggles and after repeated discussions between the three neighbouring pastors." Though both Meinel and Rasch feared that their decision would not be of much significance in the wider context of the church struggle, Rasch made it clear that "the concern for our church weighs heavy on our hearts, even as before."⁷⁴ In his letter of withdrawal from the Emergency League, Rasch explained his fear that the development of two closed fronts (the German Christians and the Pastors' Emergency League/Confessing Church) would destroy the church. Speaking for his colleagues, he declared: "For months, we have found ourselves in an unbearable tension, because this [Emergency League] parish movement that leads to schism contradicts our National Socialist will for the unity of the *Volk*."⁷⁵ Eventually, that tension overcame them, and they chose to pursue unity within the

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 July 1934; Pastor Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 July 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁷⁵ Pastor Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf to Superintendent Hugo Hahn of Dresden, 10 July 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

church and harmony with their National Socialist political values rather than insist on the absolute faithfulness of their superiors to the Scriptures and Reformation Confessions and thereby stir up controversy.

If Pastors Meinel, Rasch and Zweynert hoped to avoid church-political conflict for the sake of peace in their parishes, such was not the will of the other Emergency League pastors, who were growing more determined in their opposition to the church governments of *Land* Bishop Coch and *Reich* Bishop Müller. In October 1934, Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde notified Superintendent Zweynert that local members of the Pastors' Emergency League would no longer recognize the authority of those two church leaders and their administrations, making that fundamental breach that defined full-fledged members of the Confessing Church.⁷⁶ This was based on the argument of the Confessing Church Dahlem Synod of October 1934 that the national church administration had acted illegally and set itself out of existence—not least because *Reich* Bishop Müller and his associates had attempted forcibly to incorporate the South German *Land* churches into a *Reich* church, a move defeated by the obstinacy of South German church leaders and the judgment of a Württemberg court against Müller.⁷⁷ The Dahlem Synod attempted to establish a new church government and called on German Protestants to completely cease recognizing the official church.⁷⁸ In practical terms, the Emergency League pastors from Pirna followed up their letter by refusing to attend the monthly pastoral conferences in their district.

In response to the Dahlem Synod and the position taken by local pastors in the Emergency League/Confessing Church, Superintendent Zweynert sent a letter to all clergymen in his jurisdiction on 5 November 1934, demanding to know

⁷⁶ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 26 October 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁷⁷ On the attempted amalgamation of the Protestant *Land* Churches into the *Reich* Church, please see Klaus Scholder, *The Churches and the Third Reich*, vol. 2, *The Year of Disillusionment: 1934 Barmen and Rome*, trans. John Bowden (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988), 1-88, 212-282.

⁷⁸ "Botschaft der Bekenntnissynode der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche," Berlin-Dahlem, 20 October 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

within three days whether or not individual clergymen were going to recognize and obey the Land Church authorities. Attached was a nine-point questionnaire in which pastors were to provide details about their church-political memberships, activities, writings and declarations. Zweynert appealed to the ordination oaths of pastors, and urged them not to disrupt the church peace in Saxony any more.⁷⁹

The declaration of the Confessing Church Dahlem Synod, the downfall of the Prussian German Christian attempt to establish the *Reich* church by force, Pirna Superintendent Zweynert's letter and the sharply worded questionnaire from the *Land* Church Office all combined to open up a significant chasm between the Confessing Church and moderates who still hoped to restore order and unity within the Saxon *Land* Church. For a number of pastors in the Pirna area, the changed conditions and Zweynert's plea were enough to drive them from the Emergency League. Pastor Rudolf Peter notified Zweynert that he was no longer in the Emergency League, in large part because of the removal of Prussian Church Commissar August Jäger and the restoration of a secure legal basis for the churches.⁸⁰ Peter did not take this step without mixed emotions. In a letter to Confessing Church District Pastor Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Peter argued he could not yet agree to the establishment of a rival church, and declared that even when the official church employed "unchristian methods," it was still "the church." As he surveyed the church-political landscape, however, Peter had been pondering the question "whether it was not God's will, that now as before the Reformation, the church is supposed to exist for a time under unchristian superiors. I believe that in this God has the intention to force us to work absolutely and solely internally, on the spiritual, and to silently put up with all that is external in the church, even when it is totally unchristian, as a yoke imposed by

⁷⁹ Superintendent Zweynert to clergymen in the district, 5 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80 and 815; *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 2 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁸⁰ Pastor Peter of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert, 6 November 1934; Pastor Peter to the Saxon Pastors' Emergency League Council of Brethren, 6 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

him.”⁸¹ At the same time, Peter expressed his belief that God would allow the present political realm, with the *Führer* principle and especially “the unchristian church government” to continue “*ad absurdum*.” He argued: “As before the Reformation, the time will come when the majority of the *Volk* will understand the unchristian [nature] of the German Christian church government.” Returning to his quandary concerning the Confessing Church, Peter suggested that “we should learn to wait here,” and not establish a rival church.⁸² Clearly, although Peter was abandoning the Confessing Church and its unlawful course of action, he was no less critical of the official *Reich* and *Land* churches than any of his colleagues, and more disposed than most to speak about German church politics in the language of the spiritual conflict between the forces of good and evil.

Along with Pastor Peter, Pastor Kurt Hellner of Dohna also agreed to obey the *Land* Church authorities as long as he was not hindered in his preaching, and Franz Ploedterll of Königstein informed Zweynert that he would too, as long as his conscience allowed him to and as long as the church followed the first commandment “to fear, love and trust God above all things.”⁸³ Pastor Herbert Dittmann of Ehrenberg was also sceptical about the official church, but his great personal attachment to Superintendent Zweynert induced him to agree to obey the *Land* Church authorities. Dittmann was also put off by the radical approach of the Confessing Church and argued its leaders had gone too far for his conscience in proclaiming: “Obedience to the church government is disobedience to God.”⁸⁴

Others remained faithful to the Confessing Church, even if they felt uncomfortable with the radical nature of their decision. For instance, Pastor Johannes Herz of Berggießhübel earnestly affirmed his deep personal respect for

⁸¹ Pastor Peter of Pima to Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde, 7 December 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 818.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Pastor Hellner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 6 November 1934; Pastor Ploedterll of Königstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 7 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 815.

⁸⁴ Pastor Herbert Dittmann of Ehrenberg to Superintendent Zweynert, 6 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 815.

and attachment to Superintendent Zweynert, and asked Zweynert not to take his membership in the Confessing Church personally.⁸⁵ Herz remained with the Confessing Church, but lamented the breach it forced between his district superintendent and himself.

By November 1934, then, the division between the Confessing Church and the Saxon *Land* Church was more or less complete. *Land* Bishop Coch sent out a stern warning about the Confessing Church's call to "open rebellion," and professed a new desire for unity in the Saxon church.⁸⁶ Other voices called for moderation as well. Pastor Martin Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf sent a circular letter to all clergymen in the district, expressing hope for a new church peace and asking his colleagues whether they would be willing to support suffering Emergency League pastors with financial assistance or to establish a new group of pastors "standing between the fronts" in the event of a renewed conflict.⁸⁷

At the *Land* Church level, hundreds of clergymen were coming together in a new group, the Middle, with the aim of terminating the church struggle in Saxony and restoring peaceful conditions. The group called for the reinstatement of suspended clergymen, abandonment of the use of force by the *Land* Church Office, the dissolution of the German Christian Movement, a financial audit of the *Land* Church books, a return to the Saxon church tradition, and the withdrawal of the NSDAP from internal church business. Until then, the Middle pledged to support the Confessing Church in Saxony.⁸⁸ In Pirna, Superintendent Zweynert stood firmly behind this new movement and heartily recommended it to his

⁸⁵ Pastor Herz of Berggießhübel to Superintendent Zweynert, 13 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁸⁶ *Land* Church Office to Saxon parish councillors, 5 November 1934; *Land* Church Office to all clergymen, 7 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁸⁷ Pastor Rasch of Reinhardtsdorf to "Colleagues," 19 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁸⁸ Response of the Dresden Clergymen to the Message of *Land* Bishop Coch, 19 November 1934.

pastors. In fact, Zweynert put forward a multi-point plan of his own designed to bridge the gap between the Middle and *Land* Bishop Coch's government.⁸⁹

While the development of the Middle was a positive step on the path towards peace in the Saxon *Land* Church, pastors in the Pirna district were growing exhausted by the struggle. In December 1934, Pastor Karl Partecke replied sharply to one of a long line of *Land* Church inquiries from Superintendent Zweynert: "If only this foolish necessity for letters would ever let up and we could take pleasure in our [pastoral] offices again."⁹⁰ Even those who most earnestly supported the Middle were discouraged. In late November 1934, Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau asked Superintendent Zweynert asking for clarification about what was really going on in the *Land* Church, then shared his frustration. "As with me, so it is with very nearly all the pastors of our district, this awful waiting for what will happen, it wears us down. Confidence in the present church government is almost completely gone; and yet we clergymen [...] want an orderly development [...]. The nervousness, frustration and bitterness are great."⁹¹

If conditions were discouraging for members of the Middle in the Pirna district, they were growing worse for pastors who remained in the Confessing Church. At the close of 1934, the *Land* Church Office demanded yet another confirmation of the clergymen who were members in the Confessing Church, and Superintendent Zweynert predicted a new round of disciplinary measures in early 1935. In truth, he did not even have to wait that long, for on the final day of 1934

⁸⁹ Superintendent Zweynert to clergymen in the district, 20 November 1934; Superintendent Zweynert to *Land* Bishop Coch (open letter), 26 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815. Reaction to Zweynert's proposals was mixed. Other superintendents and members of the Middle were sceptical, while the *Land* Church Office and German Christians responded positively to Zweynert's proposals.

⁹⁰ Pastor Partecke of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 December 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁹¹ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 29 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

the *Land* Church Office launched an inquiry into the withholding of voluntary church collections by members of the Confessing Church.⁹²

In 1935, the Saxon *Land* Church Office attempted to take further disciplinary action. In April, 11 pastors from the Confessing Church in Pirna were targeted for refusing to hand in voluntary church collections.⁹³ In June, the same pastors (save for Siegfried Meier, no longer in Sebnitz) refused to hand in annual reports and were once more censured by the *Land* Church Office.⁹⁴ In all, over a dozen pastors from the Pirna district faced disciplinary measures from the Saxon *Land* Church government, because of their participation in the actions of the Confessing Church and the local controversy they stirred up. Among them, three pastors stand out for the outspokenness of their opposition to church authorities, the level of disruption in their parishes and the extent of the consequences they faced. They are Pastors Walter Schumann of Hohnstein, Gustav Carl of Cotta and Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, and their stories are richly illustrative of the nature of the Saxon church struggle at the level of the Pirna district and its parishes, particularly during the crucial years of 1934 to 1936.

As a member of both the Pastors' Emergency League and the Confessing Church, Walter Schumann of Hohnstein regularly and (generally) successfully defied the instructions of higher church authorities. The strength of his character, authenticity of his ministry and support of local Lutherans enabled him to survive a seven-month suspension and resume his career in Hohnstein, if only until 1936. His story demonstrates the power of a godly character to mobilize parishioners on behalf of an outlawed pastor, and especially the extent to which Pirna District

⁹² *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 and 31 December 1934; Superintendent Zweynert to the clergymen in the district, 17 December 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 815.

⁹³ These were Pastors Gustav Carl of Cotta, Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba, Kurt Hellner of Dohna, Johannes Herz of Berggießhübel, Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Siegfried Meier of Sebnitz, Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther), Otto Scriba of Wehlen Stadt, Walter Schumann of Hohnstein, Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf and Martin Vorwerk of Liebstadt. Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 15 April 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 818.

⁹⁴ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 818.

Superintendent Zweynert was willing to go to stand up for members of the Confessing Church in his district, even when they were obviously operating outside the law.

It did not take Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein long to find his way into conflict with the NSDAP leadership in his community. On 19 December 1933 the NSDAP in Pirna lodged a grievance with the Land Church Office in Dresden against Schumann. District Party Leader Sterzing complained that Schumann had failed to read the message of Land Bishop Coch to the Rathewalde congregation on 10 December. As Sterzing had already once reported, Schumann was alleged to have taken a strong position against Coch. This the Party leader regarded as “a very great insubordination” and a disruption in Schumann’s parish, “since it stands united and full of devotion behind the leader of the Saxon church government.” Sterzing called upon the Saxon *Land Church Office* to discipline Schumann.⁹⁵ As a consequence of Sterzing’s protest, Schumann had to meet with Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna, where he denied the charges of insubordination and upsetting the parishioners and declared he had not spoken one word against Coch.⁹⁶

Within a week of his statement, however, Schumann read an outlawed pulpit declaration of the Pastors’ Emergency League, and found himself in trouble once more. The declaration was both a criticism and violation of the 4 January *Emergency Decree of the Reich Bishop Concerning the Restoration of Orderly Conditions in the German Evangelical Church*. After recognizing that many parishioners felt confused about the unrest and division in the church since the summer of 1933, Schumann’s pulpit declaration blamed the daily press coverage for not explaining more clearly the meaning of the German Christian mass assembly at the Berlin Sport Palace, where in November 1933 “men who call themselves Christians” repudiated the divine revelation of parts of the Holy Scripture and advocated setting aside the “offence of the cross.” While the declaration added that

⁹⁵ NSDAP District leadership in Pirna to the Saxon Land Church Office, 19 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

⁹⁶ Copy of a declaration of Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein, signed by Superintendent Zweynert and Pastor Schumann in Pirna, 8 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

Reich Bishop Ludwig Müller had sharply criticized the Sport Palace assembly and emphasized the importance of Scripture and the Reformation Confessions as the basis for the gospel in Germany, it criticized him for failing to construct a stable church government on that same basis. Instead, the declaration argued that Müller had endangered the unity of the church and threatened to coerce those whose consciences and parish well being forced them to speak out against such a threat to the church. With that, the declaration described the *Reich* Bishop as a danger to the church and reiterated the centrality of Scripture and the Confessions in the Lutheran tradition. "Every attempt to intimidate consciences through external force is an apostasy from the spirit of the Reformation."⁹⁷ Because he had read the declaration, Schumann was charged with undermining the authority of the church government and misusing his pulpit, and was consequently suspended from his pastorate and reduced to half pay on 6 February 1934.⁹⁸

In response, Pima Superintendent Zweynert wrote to Land Bishop Coch, defending Schumann and other pastors in his district who belonged to the Pastors' Emergency League.⁹⁹ Zweynert argued against the police investigations and the coercive measures of the Land Church against men like Schumann. He assured Coch that he too denounced the unlawful activities of the Emergency League, including its politicization of the pulpit, but added that he believed most of the pastors of his district had heeded his warning and refused to read the January declaration.

Even in the case of Schumann, however, Zweynert went out of his way to assure the *Land* Bishop that the Hohnstein pastor had read the Emergency League declaration only "out of the best, most noble motives, because he believed that the confession of the church, and thereby its existence, was threatened."¹⁰⁰ Zweynert

⁹⁷ Pastors' Emergency League, "Pulpit Declaration," January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

⁹⁸ Saxon *Land* Church Office, "Beschluß" [against Pastor Walter Schumann], 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

⁹⁹ Superintendent Zweynert of Pima to Land Bishop Coch, 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv 814.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

did not believe this action deserved the damning suspension from office, when compared to the continual disobedience and neglect of office shown by other pastors. He asked Coch to reinstate Schumann and described him as “an uncommonly diligent, inwardly profound, honest, pious man” who had greatly promoted the ecclesiastical life of Hohnstein and Rathewalde. Zweynert pointed out how beloved Schumann was in his parish, and asserted that politically, Schumann stood wholeheartedly behind the new state and worked to serve the Third Reich through his preaching and leadership of parish organizations. In what can only be described as a generous attempt to support Schumann, Zweynert declared: “There can be no better representative of the new Reich in deed than him, and one could not quote a word of his speaking about which anyone could take offence.”¹⁰¹

If Zweynert’s enthusiastic defence of Schumann was not enough, he went on to protest police investigations of other pastors, noting the unrest they produced among parishioners, who began to wonder whether their pastors were hostile to the state. Zweynert declared to Coch “that all pastors in my district are nationally reliable and loyal, even those who belong to the Emergency League. There has not been the least bit reported to me that would cause complaint from the political point of view. There is no one who can speak of an attitude hostile to the state.” As proof, Zweynert noted that members of the Emergency League included pastors in the NSDAP or its circle of contributors, in the Working Group of National Socialist Pastors and the German Christian Movement.¹⁰²

In reply to Zweynert’s entreaty, Consistorial Councillor Adolf Müller, Coch’s assistant, suggested that the Emergency League might not be so politically benign as Zweynert believed. Müller described Emergency League leader Martin Niemöller’s character as subversive, and brought up Niemöller’s contentious meeting with Hitler as proof.¹⁰³ As for police investigations, Councillor Müller explained that the Land Bishop had nothing to do with them. When it came to

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to Land Bishop Coch, 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

¹⁰³ Please see Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 2: 40–42.

disciplinary measures, however, Müller reminded Zweynert that pastors were not only bound to uphold the Scripture and Confessions in their vows of ordination, but also to maintain proper submission to higher church authorities in the administration of their offices.¹⁰⁴

Superintendent Zweynert rushed to arrange a substitution rotation for the suspended Schumann contacting Pastors Dittmann of Ehrenberg, Rosenthal of Lohman, Franz Ploedterll of Königstein and Siegfried Ohnesorge of Lichtenhain.¹⁰⁵ At the same time, Schumann's parishioners rushed to his defence. First, the youth group at Hohnstein and Rathewalde testified that Schumann was an upright leader in word and deed, who "also stands in Adolf Hitler's *Reich* with a joyful heart." Signing with a "*Sieg Heil*," the youth asked the *Land* Church Office to reinstate Schumann.¹⁰⁶

Next, parishioners submitted a series of petitions supporting Schumann. From the Rathewalde church, 180 parishioners requested the cessation of Pastor Schumann's suspension, arguing that he had won their hearts over the course of his three years of service. "Nearly every member of the parish hangs with love on Pastor Schumann," they wrote, and explained how he was always ready to help his parishioners. They added a word about his loyal stance behind the government and how he, "for several years, has actively advocated the Hitler movement." Describing the potential of losing Schumann as "one of the most painful losses for every individual member of the parish," the parishioners asked for his return.¹⁰⁷

In addition, the Rathewalde Women's Aid and grandmothers of the Rathewalde congregation mustered their 40 signatures on behalf of Schumann.

¹⁰⁴ Consistorial Councillor Adolf Müller to Superintendent Zweynert of Pima, 9 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 814.

¹⁰⁵ Superintendent Zweynert to Pastors Dittmann of Ehrenberg, Rosenthal of Lohmen, Ploedterll of Königstein and Ohnesorge of Lichtenhain, 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁰⁶ The Protestant Youth of the Parish Hohnstein-Rathewalde to the *Land* Bishop, 8 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁰⁷ Rathewalde parishioners to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 9 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

Schumann's pure, honourable character, his powerful preaching and his care for the elderly were all advanced as reasons for his return. As the grandmothers reported: "Adolf Hitler has in him a loyal follower, who participates affirmatively in the Third *Reich* and loyally in the restoration in his parish."¹⁰⁸

Finally, parish councillor and landlord von Zeschnig from Hohnstein echoed the pleas of the other parishioners. Noting the great affection of parishioners for Schumann, von Zeschnig wrote: "There is no one among the great and small, the poor and the rich, who does not appreciate and love and highly respect him." In fact, Schumann's ministry had again filled the empty church and built bridges to the antipathetic elements in the parish. The elderly, poor and ill all received support and daily gifts from Schumann, often out of his own means. Summing up his case, von Zeschnig declared that "the whole parish stands behind us, and if it were desired, we could bring the signatures of nearly all the parishioners."¹⁰⁹

Another group wishing Schumann could return to work was the team of pastors substituting for him in Hohnstein and Rathewalde. By Easter, these pastors were beginning to tire of their extra workload and the frustrated hostility of Hohnstein parishioners, who only wanted Schumann back. Pastor Dittmann lamented that he felt like he was the one being punished.¹¹⁰ When Superintendent Zweynert complained to the *Land* Church Office for more help (hoping for a reinstatement of Schumann), the *Land* Church Office only called his bluff and offered to send theologians from Dresden to help cover services in Hohnstein.¹¹¹

In spite of the outpouring of affection in Hohnstein and the frustration of his temporary replacements, Schumann did not help his own cause during his suspension. He refused to sign a declaration presented to him by the *Land* Bishop,

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Parish Councillor von Zeschnig to the *Land* Bishop, 11 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹⁰ Pastor Dittmann of Ehrenberg to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 March 1934, 27 March 1934 and 29 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹¹ Saxon *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 9 April 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

and also held unauthorized, private meetings with groups of parishioners.¹¹² Consequently, the Saxon *Land* Church Office increased its pressure on Schumann by transferring him to the parish of Großolbersdorf, in the Marienberg district, and declaring him replaced by Pastor Michael of Merschwitz.¹¹³ When Schumann refused to obey the transfer, the Saxon *Land* Church Office simply charged him with disobedience and docked him another 10 percent of his income.¹¹⁴

By late July 1934, however, Schumann's mind was apparently changed. According to Superintendent Zweynert, Schumann no longer objected to a transfer to another pastorate, but only wanted to hold a proper farewell service in Hohnstein.¹¹⁵ This, however, was a mistake on Zweynert's part. Schumann soon informed the Pirna superintendent that his position had not changed, that he still wanted to go back to Hohnstein unless the parishioners there no longer wanted him. Schumann explained to Zweynert that he did not want to be seen to be running away from the ultimate consequences of his actions. "That I cannot do. I have not acted in my own interests; I know myself bound in my actions to Scripture and confession and dare not act against my conscience. About that I am certainly glad, that the Lord of our church will help me in the hour of doubt and distress."¹¹⁶

As if to emphasize his determination, Schumann prepared a four-page, typewritten defence entitled "Why can I not abandon my parish Hohnstein?" In it, he raised six arguments: his legal and binding election by the Hohnstein parish, which no one save a few disturbers have asked him to renounce; the fundamental right of the parish to elect its pastor and the fundamental freedom of the pastor within his office; the faithfulness shown him by the parish during the first months of

¹¹² Saxon *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 March 1934; Amtshauptmannschaft Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert and Pastor Schumann, 25 June 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹³ *Land* Bishop Coch to Pastor Schumann, 21 April 1934; Coch to the Marienberg Superintendent, 28 April 1934; and Saxon *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 26 May 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹⁴ Pastor Schumann to the *Land* Church Office, 5 May 1934; *Land* Church Office to Pastor Schumann, 7 June 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹⁵ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 31 July 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹⁶ Pastor Schumann to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 August 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

his suspension, offering him time, energy and money; the emergence of a gradual spiritual awakening in the parish over the past year; the murder of one of his parishioners, who died for Schumann's cause ("for the blood of martyrs binds and obligates");¹¹⁷ and last, his personal honour and the honour of his position, both of which would be sullied if after six years he left without a farewell sermon. Schumann reiterated the justice of his cause, and declared himself willing to leave Hohnstein only upon the expressed wish of the parish council.¹¹⁸

Finally, in September 1934, after a conversation with an official from the Superior *Land* Church council, *Land* Bishop Coch informed both Pastor Schumann and Superintendent Zweynert that Schumann could return to his position in Hohnstein. Coch explained to Schumann that he believed the suspended pastor would no longer endanger the church peace in Hohnstein, since Schumann had declared himself willing to work for peace in the parish.¹¹⁹

Schumann and his wife Maria returned that same month, full of thanks to their parishioners for the love and assistance shown them during Schumann's suspension. Schumann resumed his duties, knowing he enjoyed the support of many, perhaps most, of his parishioners. Six months later, he reported that the parish was at peace and that religious life had been blossoming since his return from suspension. Attendance at church had doubled, Bible study times were especially blessed and people's doors were really open to him.¹²⁰ Not everyone in Hohnstein shared his or her pastor's sense of peace, however, particularly after Schumann led his parish into membership in the Confessing Church. By pursuing membership in the Confessing Church, Schumann alienated not only the *Land* Church authorities

¹¹⁷ This is a most mysterious inference, for there is no other mention of any violence, let alone a murder, in the district archival material concerning Schumann or the Hohnstein parish. An inquiry with the Pirna police department also proved futile.

¹¹⁸ Pastor Walter Schumann, "Why can I not abandon my parish Hohnstein?" summer 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹¹⁹ *Land* Bishop Coch to Pastor Schumann, 7 September 1934; *Land* Bishop Coch to Superintendent Zweynert, 8 September 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹²⁰ Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 2 March 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna.

over him, but also some of the parish councillors and parishioners among whom he ministered, and who did not condone his unlawful activities.

Like other Confessing Church pastors in the Pima district, Schumann faced the discipline of the *Land* Church Office, for refusing to submit voluntary church collections. Though fined in both January and August 1935,¹²¹ Schumann was eventually repaid when the Saxon *Land* Church Committee overturned the disciplinary measures in an attempt to heal relationships between Friedrich Coch's *Land* Church government and Confessing Church pastors.¹²²

In Hohnstein itself, membership in the Confessing Church split the parish council. In February 1935, the mayor of Hohnstein and chairman of the parish council notified Superintendent Zweynert that he refused to recognize or invite all but two of the other parish councillors to any more parish council meetings, since the others supported Schumann and thus made it clear "that they no longer recognized the *Land* Church Office."¹²³ The Saxon *Land* Church Office also took action against Schumann and his parish. In May, the ecclesiastical authorities refused to grant the customary transfer of funds to cover the budgetary shortfall in Hohnstein. Schumann complained to the Saxon Ministry of the Interior that the church government had no right to withhold the transfer payment, since church taxes had been regularly and correctly paid to Dresden, but had a difficult time arguing that the church he refused to recognize should fund his outlaw parish. Little had changed by August 1935, when the *Land* Church Office threatened to dissolve the rebellious Hohnstein parish council and to appoint a new one.¹²⁴

Some of the complaints against Schumann were frivolous. For instance, a Mrs. Marschner from Hohnstein repeatedly pressed the *Land* Church Office to take

¹²¹ *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 31 January 1935 and 4 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²² Saxon *Land* Church Committee to Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein, 16 and 17 December 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²³ Mayor of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 16 February 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²⁴ Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to the Saxon Ministry of the Interior, 24 June 1935; *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 24 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

action against Schumann, but only earned herself the contempt of other parishioners. After one such complaint, Schumann wrote to Superintendent Zweynert a personal note to explain the problem. Apparently, Marschner had previously belonged to the Adventists and the Vandsburg Fellowship, then a *Land* Church fellowship, “until her conversion to National Socialism suddenly destroyed all her religious interest.”¹²⁵ Without cause, she became “a furious opponent of the pastor,” even though Schumann had often visited her Bible study group and her home and had gone so far as to lend her family 200 RM to help their struggling business, only part of which had been repaid. On top of that, the family lost all credibility as earnest Christians in the Hohnstein parish when their 16-year old daughter gave birth to a child, fathered by a member of the SA.

When Schumann’s suspension was originally to have been lifted, in April 1934, Marschner and others thwarted his return by sending about 20 telegrams to the *Land* Church Office. As a result, Schumann remained suspended for another five months. “The indignation in the city was naturally great,” explained Schumann, and when a list of the people involved was posted around the town, parishioners loyal to Schumann began to boycott certain stores, including Marschners’ bakery. This was while Schumann was still suspended. Schumann’s wife deliberately broke the boycott, choosing to buy bread and pastries at the Marschners in an effort to reach out to the family and set a good example for parishioners. “Even when I do not approve of the behaviour of the Hohnsteiners,” Schumann wrote: “I can still well understand their indignation. I can only say in conclusion, I feel sorry in my heart for the poor Marschner family and I pray to God, that they do not remain in bitterness and hiding, but find their way back to the steps of the church.”¹²⁶

A second frivolous accusation against Schumann followed in December 1935. Complaints lodged by parishioners compelled the Saxon Ministry of the Interior to investigate a special communion service Schumann held for the local League of Protestant Girls. Schumann had chosen to use the small, decorative

¹²⁵ Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 2 March 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

chapel at the cemetery (recently repainted) in order to create a festive atmosphere for the youth service, and could not understand what anyone could possibly be upset about. No record of any subsequent action appears in Superintendent Zweynert's records.¹²⁷

If the complaints concerning the Marschner family and the girls' communion service were groundless, neighbouring Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen had more substantial reasons to be concerned about Schumann. Although Rosenthal did not want to lodge a formal complaint, in May 1936 he notified Superintendent Zweynert that Schumann had held Bible studies and church-political talks in for a group of Lohmen parishioners—generally eight to ten women—who were interested in the Confessing Church.¹²⁸

Though Rosenthal was worried about the divisive potential of such meetings, nothing came of the meetings, because Schumann soon departed from Hohnstein. Whether he did so of his own choosing or under pressure from the *Land* Church Office is not clear, but in June 1936, Schumann was appointed to the pastorate of Großrückerswalde in the Mauersberg district and a Pastor Beyerlein of Ramsdorf was placed as a vicar in Hohnstein to replace Schumann.¹²⁹

With Schumann's departure, members of the Confessing Church in the Pima district lost one of their first leaders, the pastor who had initially given direction to the Pastors' Emergency League in the district. A devout character, Schumann remained respectful throughout his conflict with his church superiors. He consistently provided meaningful spiritual care, both in office and during his suspension, actions that earned him the devotion of his parishioners. Such could not be said for his colleague in the Cotta parish, Pastor Gustav Carl.

¹²⁷ Saxon Minister of the Interior Uhlig to the *Land* Church Office, 12 December 1935; Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 December 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²⁸ Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen to Superintendent Zweynert, 29 May 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹²⁹ Superintendent's Instructions 101a, 4 June 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pima 80; Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Rosenthal of Lohmen, 22 June 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816; Superintendent's Instructions 106a, 13 October 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pima 80.

Carl was another of the early members of the Pastors' Emergency League in Pirna, and would prove to be an unwavering member of the Confessing Church after 1934. Like Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein, Carl struggled to retain his position while defying the authority of the Saxon *Land* Church government. Unlike Schumann, Carl kept his post for the duration of the church struggle, and did so at far lower odds. His actions and philosophical approach to the church struggle are most similar to those of Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge, in the Nauen district. Carl did not produce as much vitriolic correspondence as Posth, but was just as tenacious in his defence of his fundamental rights as a pastor and just as stubborn in the face of *Land* Church orders to submit.

Already in November 1933, Superintendent Zweynert received a complaint from Carl's longstanding predecessor in Cotta, Retired Pastor Walter Eichenberg. Eichenberg reported that Carl had read a prayer on behalf of three pastors who had been suspended for protesting the German Christian mass rally of 13 November 1933 at the Berlin Sport Palace. Angered that Carl had placed parishioners in a crisis of conscience—caught between pastor and *Land* Church government—Eichenberg quoted several passages of Scripture to support his contention that Carl had erred: "Love your enemies [...] Submit to the authorities who have power over you [...] Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."¹³⁰

Though Eichenberg did not want to lodge a formal complaint, he was upset that Carl had used the house of God for "a demonstration against the German Christians," and asked Superintendent Zweynert to convince Carl "of the impossibility of his fight against the inner union of our *Volk*." The retired pastor went on at length about Carl's antipathy towards National Socialism and the conflict it was producing in Cotta. He remained convinced of the need to persuade Carl that the laws pertaining to Aryan ancestry were necessary for the spiritual cleansing of Germany, implying that Carl was antipathetic to either the racial laws themselves or the extra work created by many requests for baptismal records to 'prove' his parishioners blood purity. Lamenting Carl's inability to see the fundamental value

¹³⁰ Walter Eichenberg to Superintendent Zweynert, 26 November 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816. The quotes are references to Matthew 5:44, Matthew 22:21 and Romans 13:1.

of the German Christian Movement and his preoccupation with the senseless words of a few extremists, Eichenberg contrasted the nationally minded preaching of Pastor Lothar Ebert of Pirna with Carl's insolent attitude during an abrupt exchange the two had had about the church struggle. Carl had spoken to Eichenberg of a "*Kulturkampf*" and of apostasy from the pure preaching of the Word of God in the Saxon *Land* Church. When Eichenberg asked him: "Is it really so unchristian in our state?" Carl had replied: "Are you, as a German Christian, really one of the those who carry out the demolition of the church?"¹³¹

Eichenberg's refusal to lodge a formal complaint in the wake of such offences was evidence of his desire to see Superintendent Zweynert persuade Carl informally to change his attitude and behaviour. Unfortunately for Eichenberg, his hopes were misplaced. Carl remained unshakeable in his conviction of the justice of the Emergency League cause and continued to tolerate—indeed, to create—division within the Cotta parish as the cost of pursuing Scriptural and confessional truth.

Among the parishioners displeased with Carl's church politics was the parish patroness, Mrs. Dora von Eschwege. Between 27 December 1933 and 21 February 1934, she wrote four long letters of complaint to Superintendent Zweynert, asking him to convince Pastor Carl to cease his church-political agitation in Cotta. First, von Eschwege echoed Eichenberg's complaint that Carl had used the Sunday service to pray for three pastors suspended by the church government. Then, she added, some members of the parish had distributed pamphlets (presumably from the Pastors' Emergency League) informing parishioners about current happenings in the church. Finally, she complained, Pastor Carl had not prayed explicitly for *Reich* President Hindenburg or *Reich* Chancellor Hitler.¹³²

Conditions only worsened in Cotta when Pastor Carl read out the Pastors' Emergency League pulpit declaration on 7 January 1934. Von Eschwege reported how the declaration accused the *Reich* Bishop of false teaching, announced that the

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Patroness Dora von Eschwege to Superintendent Zweynert, 27 December 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

Emergency League pastors refused to recognize the authority of the *Reich* church, and that they appealed to the Augsburg Confession to justify their disobedience to the governing authorities in the church. "Such words," wrote the patroness, "must certainly drive out of the church many of those previously devoted to it; for [the words of the declaration] produce strife in many [parishioners] who want to seek their God in the in peace of the house of God but do not want to participate in church-political or theological conflicts."¹³³ Moreover, as if the pulpit declaration had not been enough, Carl had completely neglected to pray for either *Reich* President Hindenburg or *Reich* Chancellor Hitler. Superintendent Zweynert spoke with Carl about von Eschwege's complaints, but Carl only replied that he was appealing to his conscience because he believed the foundation of the church to be threatened.¹³⁴

Patroness von Eschwege of Cotta continued to expect Pastor Carl to quit making outrageous church-political statements, and continued to be disappointed by the reality that Carl was a very serious opponent of the introduction of National Socialist ideology into the Saxon Lutheran church. Carl consistently employed the Sunday services in Cotta to uphold fellow members of the Pastors' Emergency League, and prayed for 25 suspended pastors "who suffer for the sake of their faith."¹³⁵ Von Eschwege was extremely upset by this action. She deplored the way Carl was disturbing both the peace in the Cotta parish and the unity of the German *Volk*. Angry that Carl showed no respect for the views of others, she asserted that the Emergency League pastors Carl interceded for were not suspended for their faith, but for refusing to obey the higher church authorities and spreading unrest and strife in the German *Volk*. Finally, the patroness informed Zweynert that if Carl did not formally declare his intention to stop his agitation, she would file an official complaint with the *Land* Church.¹³⁶

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Superintendent Zweynert to Patroness von Eschwege, 9 January 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹³⁵ Patroness von Eschwege to Superintendent Zweynert, 11 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

After Carl refused to address the concerns of his patroness, Superintendent Zweynert was forced to pass along her complaint to the *Land Church Office*.¹³⁷ Surprisingly, though, nothing came of Patroness von Eschwege's complaint. In fact, Pastor Gustav Carl continued to commit an unbroken string of church-political offences. In May 1934, political authorities in Pirna warned him to quit holding church-political meetings in his house, and in August 1934, the *Land Church Office* informed Superintendent Zweynert that Carl was flying only church flags from the church, and not the customary *Reich* flags too.

Tired of Carl's subversive behaviour and the unrest with the Cotta parish and parish council, the *Land Church Office* declared its intention to transfer Carl to a different parish.¹³⁸ Asked to provide his view on the matter, Superintendent Zweynert wrote a lengthy reply to the *Land Church Office* the following day. Zweynert admitted that Carl was "one of the most spirited members of the Pastors' Emergency League," but defended him as hard working, conscientious and blameless in the conduct of his office and his family life. Though NSDAP officials in Cotta made Carl out to be an enemy, there was "nothing to say about [Carl's] opposition against the state." Despite attacks against him, attendance at services in Cotta had doubled or tripled. Zweynert went on to identify misunderstandings about events that had taken place recently in Cotta, then concluded that he would not presently recommend a transfer for Carl, adding that many in the parish also blamed Carl's enemies for the unrest in the parish.¹³⁹

Zweynert's support saved Carl from a transfer out of Cotta, but did nothing to change the Cotta pastor's approach to church leadership. Carl pulled his parish into membership in the Confessing Church in November 1934, aided by sympathetic

¹³⁷ Patroness von Eschwege to Superintendent Zweynert, 21 February 1934; Pastor Carl of Cotta to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 February 1934; Superintendent Zweynert to Patroness von Eschwege, 6 March 1934; Patroness von Eschwege to Superintendent Zweynert, 8 March 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹³⁸ Amtshauptmannschaft Pirna to Pastor Carl of Cotta, 29 May 1934; *Land Bishop Coch* to Superintendent Zweynert, 20 August 1934; Saxon *Land Church Office* to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 August 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹³⁹ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church Office*, 24 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

members of the parish council. Thereafter, Carl refused to invite the other ten parish councillors who opposed the Confessing Church to any more meetings of the Cotta parish council, and even passed an important business decision the next month without a quorum of parish councillors. At that point, the *Land Church Office* threatened to intervene and appoint a new parish council.¹⁴⁰ In April, the *Land Church Office* finally acted, stripping Carl of his position as chairman of the parish council and handing it over to his unlucky deputy, Martin Mühlbach, a farmer from Cotta.

Pastor Gustav Carl responded with a stern letter directed to Mühlbach and the nine other parish councillors who opposed his leadership and the membership of the parish in the Confessing Church. Carl explained to them how recent court decisions in favour of the Confessing Church affirmed its legality, as opposed to “the unlawful church government of Coch.” On that basis, Carl absolutely rejected the order of the *Land Church Office* stripping him of the position of chairman of the parish council in Cotta. He also placed the blame for future upheaval in the administration of the Cotta parish at the feet of the 10 parish councillors who opposed him, and suggested that an orderly Confessing Church parish council was possible, since it had occurred in Burkhardswalde. Referring to a legal decision from yet another parish in the district, Carl asserted that the chairman of a parish council could not be arbitrarily removed.¹⁴¹

Given his rigid stance, there was little question that Carl would not hand over the parish stamp, seal and church keys to Mühlbach, who could only stand back and ask the *Land Church Office* for advice about what to do. Moreover, without the stamp, no one else could access the parish bank account, making it impossible for Mühlbach or anyone else to get at the Cotta parish funds.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church Office*, 8 February 1935; *Land Church Office* to Superintendent Zweynert, 12 February 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁴¹ Pastor Carl of Cotta to Martin Mühlbach *et al.*, 20 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816. A copy of this letter was sent on to the NSDAP *Gau* Leadership in Saxony.

¹⁴² Consistorial Councillor Adolf Müller, “Besprechung mit Vorsitzenden des Kirchenvorstands zu Cotta, Herrn Mühlbach,” 22 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

In the midst of these other conflicts, the *Land Church Office* twice convicted and fined Carl for failing to submit voluntary church collections, though in both cases the fines were later overturned and refunded by the *Land Church Committee* in 1935.¹⁴³ The *Land Church Office* went ahead and appointed five new parish councillors to replace Carl's allies in the Confessing Church, but Carl still refused to hand over the stamp, seal and church keys to Mühlbach and the 'official' parish council.¹⁴⁴

More troubling yet was the fact that the standstill in the Cotta parish administration left the parish without an organist from mid-1935 until well into 1936. Cantor Bortenreuter resigned his post in June 1935 because of Carl's continuation at the helm of the parish and because of its ongoing membership in the Confessing Church, which Bortenreuter considered a danger to the peace at the local school where he taught. This vacancy came just at the time of the rival church councils in Cotta, and led to a curious administrative quandary. Because Carl had been demoted from his position as chairman of the parish council, he was technically not responsible for the fact that all the church services were being conducted without organ music. However, Martin Mühlbach, *de jure* chairman of the parish council, had no access to parish funds to hire a replacement cantor until Patroness von Eschwege gave him 187,50 RM to open a new bank account for the parish. When Mühlbach eventually appointed a new cantor in September 1935, Pastor Carl refused to give the cantor any keys to the church or the organ, claiming speciously that it was the pastor's job to find a new cantor.¹⁴⁵

Surprisingly, parish records show little evidence of this divisive state of affairs. From 1933 to 1935, there were a total of 33 new adults who took out

¹⁴³ *Land Church Office* to Superintendent Zweynert, 31 January 1935 and 4 August 1935; *Land Church Committee* to Superintendent Zweynert, 17 December 1935; *Land Church Office* to Pastor Carl of Cotta, 16 December 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁴⁴ *Land Church Office* to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 July 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church Office*, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁴⁵ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church Office*, 5 June 1935; Martin Mühlbach to Superintendent Zweynert, 16 June 1935; *Land Church Office* to Superintendent Zweynert, 24 June 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church Office*, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

Lutheran church membership in Cotta. Only 5 parishioners withdrew from the church during the same period, all of them in 1933. Between 1933 and 1936, participation in communion remained steady at 22 to 23 percent of all parishioners.¹⁴⁶ In autumn 1935, however, some Cotta parishioners were becoming frustrated with the constant upheaval in their church life. At least 10 people wrote letters criticizing the division in the parish, and three parishioners threatened to withhold their church taxes until the situation in Cotta settled down and a new pastor was appointed.¹⁴⁷

But Pastor Carl was not replaced, because conditions in the German churches changed dramatically in late 1935. The repeated judicial defeats of *Reich* Bishop Müller brought the attempt to forcibly create a unitary *Reich* church to an abrupt end, ushering in an era of appeasement in the church struggle. *Reich* and *Land* Church Committees were created, pulling together neutrals, moderate German Christians and moderate Confessing Church clergymen in an attempt to settle the conflicts of 1934 and 1935. Church leaders hoped to create a new sense of order in the church, by maintaining a careful balance between the interests of pastors from the various church-political parties. In the Pima district, one of the effects of this new policy was the cessation of the judicial persecution of Pastor Carl of Cotta and his colleagues in the Confessing Church. In December 1935, the *Land* Church Office again recognized Carl as the chairman of the parish council, entrusted him with the money from newly created church accounts and overturned fines it had previously levied against him.¹⁴⁸

This action may have put an end to the competing parish councils in Cotta, but as with earlier attempts to pacify Carl, it did nothing to moderate his church-political attitudes. If anything, Carl became more high-handed and rude in his

¹⁴⁶ For details and sources, see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pima Church District.

¹⁴⁷ Protest letters from 10 parishioners who demanded a new pastor, September to November 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁴⁸ *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 11, 12 and 17 December 1935; *Land* Church Office to Pastor Carl of Cotta, 16 December 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

triumph, launching a campaign of harassment against former parish council chairman Martin Mühlbach as he searched for information about Mühlbach's interim administration of the Cotta parish. When Mühlbach's wife wrote Carl to defend her husband as a good Christian man and to ask Carl to show consideration for his heart condition—a product of the stress in the Cotta church—Carl replied callously. He encouraged Mühlbach's wife to keep him out of further parish work, questioned the quality of the Mühlbach's Christianity, and asserted that where Mühlbach thought he was doing his Christian duty, he had actually "collaborated a great deal with the opponents of Christendom." Shamefully, Carl reminded Mühlbach's wife that he had often suggested in Bible studies that heaven and hell battled one another within her husband. Now, Carl told her he hoped for the victory of light in her husband's life, a not so subtle suggestion that Mühlbach might have been serving the forces of darkness.¹⁴⁹ The following day, Carl again wrote the Mühlbachs about unfinished parish business. Brusquely, Carl requested a host of details from Martin Mühlbach: copies of two contracts and 30 letters for the parish archives, plus reports about receipts and expenditures from the new accounts Mühlbach had opened and more reports about four telephone conversations between Mühlbach and church officials, including Superintendent Zweynert.¹⁵⁰

Carl's letters to the Mühlbachs and the fact that he had still not provided for organ music during Cotta church services compelled Patroness Dora von Eschwege to write a scathing letter to Superintendent Zweynert. She repeatedly explained how Carl had ruined parish life in Cotta with unrest and division and then she demanded his removal from the pastorate. Von Eschwege herself had long since broken with Carl and refused to attend church in Cotta. Recounting Carl's many misdeeds, and particularly the accusatory letter he wrote to Mrs. Mühlbach, the patroness argued that his attitude created "the impression, as if Pastor Carl considered all those who stand unreservedly behind the new movement and the *Führer* as opponents of Christendom." Von Eschwege observed that Carl had lost the confidence of

¹⁴⁹ Copy of Pastor Carl of Cotta to Mrs. Mühlbach, 6 January 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁵⁰ Copy of Pastor Carl of Cotta to Martin Mühlbach, 7 January 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

everyone in the parish who stood loyally for the *Führer*, whether or not they were members of the Party, then repeated twice more her accusation that Carl's attitude was highly antipathetic to the government and National Socialist movement.¹⁵¹

Superintendent Zweynert passed von Eschwege's letter on to the *Land* Church Committee along with his own observations, and urgently pleaded for the committee to appoint a new cantor and to force Carl to apologize for his accusations against the Mühlbachs.¹⁵²

Whether Carl ever apologized is unclear, but contrary to Superintendent Zweynert's pleas, he continued to wreak havoc in Cotta. In February and April, Carl withheld voluntary church contributions from the district office, choosing to send them to the Confessing Church administrators instead.¹⁵³ Also during April, Carl twice fought with parishioners requesting permission to have their children baptized in the neighbouring parish.¹⁵⁴ Most ominous of all was a dispute over statements Carl made about the German army. In February 1936, he announced in a confirmation class that 80 percent of the soldiers in the Dresden garrison were believers in the pagan German Faith Movement. When the daughter of Farmer Heschel, the former head of the Cotta Military Association, reported Carl's statements to her father, Carl was forced to withdraw his claims as unfounded.¹⁵⁵ As he argued with Heschel about the religious orientation of German military personnel, Carl explained the motive for his contentiousness, which may have justified

¹⁵¹ Patroness Dora von Eschwege to Superintendent Zweynert, 9 January 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁵² Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Committee, 13 January 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁵³ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Committee, 6 February 1936; Pastor Carl of Cotta to Superintendent Zweynert, 1 April 1936; *Land* Church Committee to Superintendent Zweynert, 18 May 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁵⁴ Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Carl, 15 April 1936; Pastor Carl of Cotta to Superintendent Zweynert, 21 April and 18 May 1936; *Land* Church Committee to Superintendent Zweynert, 15 April 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁵⁵ "Vorgelesen, genehmigt und unterschrieben: Saxon Church Office Councillor Dr. Ziemann und Pfarrer Carl [...]" 6 March 1936; *Land* Church Committee to the Amtshauptmann zu Pirna, 14 April 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

Patroness von Eschwege's accusation that Carl was opposed to National Socialism. Carl declared: "I consider it my duty to instruct my parishioners to the best of my ability about the current worldview situation within the German *Volk* and the widely held standpoint of rejection towards Christianity."¹⁵⁶ With that statement, Carl nearly portrayed himself as an enemy of the state, and certainly voiced a sharper critique of the anti-Christian core of National Socialism than any other pastor in the Pima district.

In retrospect, Pastor Gustav Carl provides a curious and at times unsettling example of how persistence, stubbornness and conviction enabled pastors to survive in office against heavy odds—in Carl's case, the expressed wishes of the parish patroness and the majority on the Cotta parish council, the district superintendent and local political leaders. As unlikely as it seems—and in contrast to Pastor Schumann of Hohnstein, whom the majority of his parishioners and parish council defended—Pastor Carl remained in Cotta until at least the mid-point of the Second World War. True to his character, in November 1941 Carl had not yet submitted his own "Proof of Aryan Ancestry" form, due in mid-1939, to the *Land* Church Office.¹⁵⁷

The third important member of the Pima Pastors' Emergency League and Confessing Church was Dr. Hermann Klemm, pastor of the Burkhardswalde parish since 1929. Identified with the initial group of Emergency League pastors in April 1934, by October 1934 he had become their spokesman, declaring that he and his colleagues in the Emergency League would henceforth refuse to obey the church authorities.¹⁵⁸ Moreover, after the Dahlem Synod of the Confessing Church, Klemm and others declared they would no longer recognize the German Christian church government in Berlin or Dresden.¹⁵⁹ It was that fundamental church-political

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Superintendent's Instructions 8, 10 November 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

¹⁵⁸ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 18 April 1934; Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen in the Pima district, 5 November 1934, Ephoralarchiv Pima 815.

¹⁵⁹ Pastor Meier of Sebnitz to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 January 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 815.

decision that shaped Klemm's career in Burkhardswalde, and guided him through the complications of the church struggle in the Pima district and enabled him to endure the sacrifices he was forced to make for his cause. Klemm's career, particularly in the tumultuous year 1935, illustrates the ability of Pima district pastors, buoyed by the unstinting cooperation of their parishioners, to frustrate the administration of higher church offices. It also reveals how frustrating Confessing Church clergymen could be to their law-abiding colleagues who were forced to take on the burden of substituting in hostile parishes for pastors with whom they could not agree.

Like Pastors Schumann of Hohnstein, Carl of Cotta and others, Pastor Hermann Klemm was disciplined in January 1935 for refusing to submit voluntary church collections to the *Land Church*¹⁶⁰ Until then, his participation in the Confessing Church had not landed him in legal trouble. This changed on 19 April 1935, when the Pima *Gestapo* arrested Klemm for undisclosed reasons,¹⁶¹ sending Superintendent Zweynert scrambling to find a substitute for Klemm's parish. After Pastor Adolf Voigtländer of Maxen declared himself too ill, Pastor Werner of Dohna agreed temporarily to administer Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein on behalf of Klemm.¹⁶²

It was only after 4 May that Zweynert found out from the *Land Church* Office that the *Gestapo* had arrested Klemm for reading a Confessing Church pulpit declaration and intercessory prayer on 7 April, in spite of the prohibition of the political authorities. As usual, the *Land Church* Office requested a report from Pima Superintendent Zweynert. Zweynert was more restrained in his support of Klemm than he had been in the cases of Pastors Schumann and Carl. The superintendent explained to the *Land Church* Office that there was a great difference between the

¹⁶⁰ *Land Church* Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 31 January 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁶¹ Amtshauptmannschaft Pima to Superintendent Zweynert, 19 April 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church* Office, 23 April 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁶² Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Voigtländer of Maxen, 20 April 1935; Pastor Voigtländer to Superintendent Zweynert, 6 May 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church* Office, 26 April 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Werner of Dohna, 8 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

time before and after Klemm's November 1934 decision to stop recognizing the authority of the Saxon church government. Before then, Klemm's ministry was blameless, free of offence. Zweynert described Klemm as an academically gifted theologian who possessed an especially strong interest in foreign missions. In both those respects, he had performed many valuable services to other pastors and parishes in the Pima district. Although he preached at a very high level that did not correspond to the needs of his parish, Klemm's personal and family life was beyond reproach.¹⁶³

After November 1934, however, Zweynert's relationship with Klemm collapsed. As chairman of the Confessing Church district council, Klemm functioned as a shadow superintendent. He received voluntary church collections, granted holidays, and even compiled annual reports for the Confessing Church parishes. Although Klemm refused to engage in official correspondence with Zweynert, the superintendent had learned from private sources that Klemm was more moderate in outlook than other Confessing Church pastors in the district and that the Burkhardswalde parish council was united behind Klemm.¹⁶⁴

Superintendent Zweynert gained more reliable information from Pastor Werner of Dohna, who met with both cantors and councils in Burkhardswalde and its filial church, Weesenstein. In Weesenstein, the parish council had agreed to work with Werner and so he had put the local administration in order, even completing the budget. In contrast, only some of the Burkhardswalde parish councillors came to their meeting, and they were divided between the Confessing Church and the *Land* Church. Klemm's wife exacerbated this division by refusing to hand over the Burkhardswalde parish records to Werner unless the parish council voted to submit to Werner and the Saxon church authorities.¹⁶⁵

A second meeting four days later determined that the Burkhardswalde parish council would not work with Werner. Ten of the eleven councillors attended the

¹⁶³ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 8 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 11 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

meeting, but only four voted to remain loyal to the *Land* Church. As for the others, some were committed to the Confessing Church cause, while others were reluctant to decide “against Pastor Klemm.” As a result, a disgruntled Pastor Werner was forced to concede his inability to assume temporary administrative oversight of the Burkhardswalde parish. Werner directed much of his frustration at the Saxon *Land* Church Office and its irresolution:

As long as the *Land* Church leadership is not ultimately able to bring itself to a decisive clarification of the church struggle, it will be impossible for the lesser authorities to be responsible for an orderly provision [of spiritual care] in the parishes. Moreover, the parish councillors are so confused by this indecisive attitude of the ecclesiastical authorities that they no longer know, with the best will in the world, where justice and duty lay for them.¹⁶⁶

Werner was no doubt frustrated by the ongoing refusal of Klemm’s wife and the obstinate parish councillors to hand over either the official documents or the parish stamp, seal and church keys. This non-compliance, which Werner attributed to confusion, was the chief characteristic of the Burkhardswalde parish throughout 1935, as local Lutherans drew courage for their subversion from Klemm’s release from detention in early June.¹⁶⁷

Although Klemm was free again, the *Reich* governor had forbidden pastors released from detention from serving in their pastorates again. Thus, Superintendent Zweynert instructed Klemm that Pastor Werner of Dohna would continue to substitute for him in Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein.¹⁶⁸ Within two days, the Saxon Confessing Church council intervened, informing Superintendent Zweynert that there was no such order from the *Reich* governor, who had stated that released pastors could preach and it would not be considered politically subversive.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁶ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 15 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁶⁷ Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Klemm, 5 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Saxon Confessing Church council to Superintendent Zweynert, 7 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

News that the Confessing Church leaders supported Klemm's return to work initiated a month of utter chaos for substituting pastors in Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein. On the first Sunday of Pentecost, 9 June 1935, Pastor Teichgräber of Pirna was supposed to hold a service in Burkhardswalde at 8:30 in the morning. At 6:45 a.m., Mayor Heyne of Burkhardswalde telephoned Teichgräber to inform him that Pastor Klemm had planned a rival service for 8:00 that morning. Teichgräber rushed out to Burkhardswalde and surprised Klemm in the church at 7:45. Klemm told Teichgräber to go on home, since Superintendent Hugo Hahn from Dresden, leader of the Confessing Church forces in Saxony, was going to preach. Instead, Teichgräber phoned Superintendent Zweynert and then proceeded to the sacristy, where Klemm and Hahn were preparing for the service. A lively exchange followed, after which Superintendent Hahn agreed to hold a separate service at the parsonage.¹⁷⁰

When Teichgräber announced to the congregation that he was the official substitute and would be holding a service shortly, Klemm stood up and told the row of confirmation candidates: "Come with me over to the parsonage—there is nothing for you here!" They left, as did the adults. Outside were other parishioners waiting to come in for the service. When they sat down, Parish Councillor Wünsche began calling them out of the pews, row by row. By the time he was finished, there were only 25 adults and 10 children left. Teichgräber quickly signalled the cantor to begin playing the prelude on the organ, and Teichgräber went on to conduct the official service. Outside, someone had been posted to direct any latecomers to the Confessing Church service in the parsonage, further confusing innocent parishioners. Throughout Teichgräber's service, loud hymn-singing from the parsonage and the bustling of gawkers popping in and out of the service (some from the pagan German Faith Movement) created a fearful distraction.¹⁷¹

Teichgräber was furious at Klemm and the Burkhardswalders for the embarrassing spectacle, and demanded the dismissal of Parish Councillor Wünsche

¹⁷⁰ Pastor Teichgräber of Pirna to Superintendent Zweynert, 9 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

for having the effrontery to summon parishioners out of the official service Teichgräber was trying to conduct. In addition, Teichgräber called for the replacement of the Confessing Church members on the parish council with ‘men who are proven Christians and likewise well-disposed to National Socialism.’¹⁷²

Next it was Pastor Werner’s turn. The Dohna pastor came during the week to conduct a funeral in Burkhardswalde. There the bell ringer refused to co-operate with him and the cantor sent the children’s choir home, saying they were not allowed to sing. Pastor Klemm stopped the children on the way and managed to bring about half of them back to sing for Werner during the funeral, but Werner was furious all the same. Werner demanded that if Superintendent Zweynert could not put a stop to Klemm’s antics, he should intervene immediately and energetically with higher church authorities to put a stop to events in Burkhardswalde. “It is irresponsible and at present wholly unacceptable for children to be placed in such a dilemma between two authorities [...]. If insubordination in the church continues to be managed in the hitherto usual lax manner, the damage will be incalculable.” Pastor Werner added that in his opinion a solution in Burkhardswalde was impossible as long as Klemm remained there.¹⁷³

The following week, when Werner travelled to Burkhardswalde to hold a confirmation class, only the children from Weenstein showed up. Werner was surprised, because he had informed the parents that he would be the official instructor for their children, and that only the children who came to him could only be confirmed the following year. Three days later, however, a Confessing Church pastor from Dresden had informed the same parents that he had official permission to conduct the confirmation classes. Once more, Werner was incensed, and began accusing the Saxon church authorities of neglect. “What the *Land Church* lets take place in Burkhardswalde beggars description. I am of the standpoint that immediate assistance must be applied for from the state. Should it not be granted, then the *Land Church* should leave Burkhardswalde. [...] In the end, there will be absolutely

¹⁷² Pastor Teichgräber of Pirmasheim to Superintendent Zweynert, 9 June 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land Church* Office, 11 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 816.

¹⁷³ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 12 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 816.

no one left that still listens. No one can expect of the small man that he endlessly makes a fool of himself, while far above him people only shuffle paper!”¹⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the day before, Pastor Walter Börner of Ottendorf had come to Burkhardswalde to substitute for Klemm on the second Sunday in Pentecost. Only three women, two confirmation candidates, the cantor and choir were present at the service. No preparations had been made for Börner. There was no order of service, no Bible and there were no other service books—conditions that Börner felt bordered on theft, and which left him extremely upset. “The conditions in Burkhardswalde cry to the heavens, [not only] with respect to the church but also in relation to the political state.”¹⁷⁵

In Burkhardswalde before the service, Börner had happened upon his colleague, Kurt Hellner, the associate pastor in Dohna. Hellner, a member of the Confessing Church, informed Börner that Pastor Klemm had already arranged for his own Confessing Church service. Börner rejected this, replying sharply that it was Pastor Werner of Dohna, the legal administrator of the parish, who had arranged for Börner to come. Just then, local Parish Councillor Wünsche came by and insolently informed Börner that the Burkhardswalders were not interested in his service. Börner could hardly believe Wünsche’s behaviour. In his report about the incident, he asked Pastor Werner: “How is it that this man is in the parish council at all?”¹⁷⁶ Meanwhile, Klemm had indeed arranged for a rival church service in Burkhardswalde, conducted by Retired Pastor Lieschke of Dresden in the parsonage. While only five parishioners attended Börner’s official service, 60 parishioners filled the parsonage to hear Lieschke.

After Börner had finished his very small, official service, he started to prepare for a scheduled church wedding. When the couple came, they turned out to

¹⁷⁴ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 18 June 1935; Pastor Werner to Confirmation Parents, 14 June 1935; Pastor Lieschke to Confirmation Parents, 17 June 1935. Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁷⁵ Pastor Börner of Ottendorf to Pastor Werner of Dohna, 17 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

be advocates of Pastor Klemm, and declared that they would rather forego the church wedding than be married by Börner. Just then Pastor Lieschke of the Confessing Church came along and told Börner that the couple had arranged for him to marry them.

Like Pastor Werner, Pastor Börner was very upset at the Burkhardswalders, but maybe more upset at the Saxon church government. In bold type, Börner wrote Werner asking how the *Land* Church and the Saxon state did nothing to stop these parallel church services that were now the rule in Burkhardswalde. Börner advocated making an example of Klemm, stripping him of position, salary and pension if he did not stop his “crass disobedience.” Adding insult to injury, the Burkhardswalde parishioners had maligned his official church service as “pagan,” which deeply offended Börner. He concluded: “A weak government is a misfortune for a people—a strong government is a blessing,” and described Burkhardswalde as a source of danger for the National Socialist regime.¹⁷⁷

The following week, Pastor Werner of Dohna returned to Burkhardswalde, but only three women, two children and Werner’s own wife attended. Beyond these persons, there was one youth present to post the songs and later, a member of the local gendarmerie looked in. As Werner approached the church, he saw a note posted for a celebration in the cemetery, next to the church. Assuming it was for the following day, he began to prepare for his own service. Soon it became apparent that Pastor Klemm had organized a rival church service immediately outside the church, where parishioners sat on stools that had been set up. As before, Retired Pastor Lieschke of Dresden preached for the Confessing Church gathering. The singing outside was so loud that Werner’s sermon was hard to hear—especially because someone had opened the windows that stood directly between the two services. He practically had to shout out the closing prayer. Feeling “well and truly sunk” by the complete lack of support by the *Land* Church government, Werner resigned as substitute for Burkhardswalde, but not before pressing charges against

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

Klemm for the “transparently and systematically planned disruption of a church service.”¹⁷⁸

The next Sunday, 30 June 1935, was just as grim. Confessing Church Pastor Lieschke stared down the cantor, and Klemm himself took over the service inside the church (the cantor shut the organ and left). On top of that, no one had prepared for a baptism that Werner was scheduled to perform that afternoon—his son had to run and get water in a metal can.¹⁷⁹

Having reached the limit of his patience, Werner responded to this latest series of insults by negotiating permission from the *Land* Church Office for an interim settlement in Burkhardswalde. Under the agreement, Klemm’s status did not change. He had not been suspended by the *Land* Church, only prohibited from working because the Gestapo had arrested him in April 1935. After his release, the *Land* Church authorities believed they were not supposed to allow him to return to his duties, even there were no official church proceedings against him. Under the terms of Werner’s arrangement, the *Land* Church still refused to allow Klemm to resume his duties officially but they decided they would no longer stop him from holding unofficial services. If parishioners in Burkhardswalde wanted a legal pastor for any official duties, one would be sent. Otherwise, they were on their own with Klemm. Eventually, the *Land* Church Office planned to instigate disciplinary measures against Klemm. In the meantime, however, Superintendent Zweynert and the *Land* Church government had decided to heed Pastor Werner’s warning not to try to appoint a vicar in Burkhardswalde, because Werner was convinced that nothing would change in the parish until Klemm was forced out of town.¹⁸⁰

Permission for Pastor Klemm to resume his duties as pastor was greeted with joy in Burkhardswalde, but it elicited an angry letter of protest from Mayor Schmidt of neighbouring Weesenstein. As well received as Klemm was in Burkhardswalde,

¹⁷⁸ Pastor Werner to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 June 1935; Pastor Werner of Dohna to the Amtshauptmannschaft Pirna, 23 June 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁷⁹ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 1 July 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸⁰ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde, 5 July 1935; Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Zweynert, 5 July 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

the congregation in Weesenstein wanted nothing to do with him. On Klemm's first Sunday back there, only six of the 450 residents of the town came to the service.¹⁸¹

Mayor Schmidt did not have to wait long for the *Land* Church to act. On 30 July 1935, the Saxon *Land* Church Office launched a formal disciplinary action against Pastor Klemm for withholding church collections, distributing an unauthorized parish newsletter and disrupting the authorized church services of Pastors Teichgräber, Werner and Börner. After suspending Klemm and reducing him to 40 percent salary, the *Land* Church Office dissolved the parish council at Burkhardswalde and appointed a new and politically reliable group of leaders.¹⁸² More than ever, though, Superintendent Zweynert had a difficult time finding substitute clergymen in Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein, despite assurances that the mayors would diligently work to forestall any interference from Klemm. Consequently, Zweynert pleaded with *Land* Church authorities to transfer Klemm out of Burkhardswalde, asserting that it was the only path to a lasting settlement of the church struggle in the parish.¹⁸³ Mayor Schmidt of Weesenstein, now appointed to head the parish council there, echoed Zweynert. His argument was a simple call to keep politics out of the church. "For if Klemm felt himself called to be a politician, then he should have known this already earlier and not only when he climbed up to the pulpit as a minister to souls."¹⁸⁴ In fact, the new parish council in Weesenstein voted never again to let Klemm or the Confessing Church vicar he had obtained enter any of the church facilities in their town.¹⁸⁵

Ironically, after Saxon church authorities had gone to all the work of suspending Klemm and rebuilding the parish councils in Burkhardswalde and

¹⁸¹ Mayor Schmidt of Weesenstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 10 July 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸² *Land* Church Office, "Beschluß" [against Pastor Klemm], 30 July 1935; *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert 30 July 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸³ Superintendent Zweynert to Pastor Werner of Dohna, 30 August 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸⁴ Mayor Schmidt of Weesenstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 11 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸⁵ Weesenstein Parish Council to the *Land* Church Office, 31 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

Weesenstein, the introduction of the Saxon *Land* Church Committee with its mandate to heal conflict-ridden parishes re-ignited the church-political quarrel in Klemm's parish. On 23 October 1935, *Land* Bishop Coch reinstated Klemm, and subsequently the *Land* Church Committee overturned all prior legal judgments against him. Once more the Burkhardswalde parish council was reshuffled, this time with new members loyal to the Confessing Church replacing Klemm's opponents who had only just been appointed.¹⁸⁶

The sudden reversal of fortunes must have left those hostile to the Confessing Church reeling. Once more Klemm's enemies attacked him. In mid-November 1935, the Pirna District School Councillor wrote to Superintendent Zweynert about Klemm's influence in Burkhardswalde. Having recently visited the school in Klemm's parish, the Councillor noted that only six children there were members of the state youth groups like the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls. Observing that Pastor Klemm and his allies openly opposed the state youth leaders, the Councillor wrote: "Apart from the fact that personally I can spare no understanding for the fact that a pastor who has been detained in custody—after serving a sentence in jail¹⁸⁷—would return to his former place of service and again perform his duties, I can now say that as a National Socialist, I cannot tolerate our work here being sabotaged from the side of the church; for it is sabotage, when the body of educators, parents and students are hindered in their positions from fulfilling the duty that their *Führer* has received from destiny and passed on to them."¹⁸⁸ The district school councillor demanded obedience to the demands of the National Socialist movement and warned Zweynert that the NSDAP in Pirna shared his views completely and had authorized him to write Zweynert.

¹⁸⁶ *Land* Bishop Coch to Pastor Klemm, 23 October 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to Cantor Aehnelt, 7 November 1935; *Land* Church Committee to Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde, 16 December 1935 (twice), Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

¹⁸⁷ This was the District School Councillor's way of describing Klemm's detention with the *Gestapo*.

¹⁸⁸ Bezirksschulrat zu Pirna (personally) to Superintendent Zweynert, 18 November 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

Next, the mayors of Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein and the district leadership of the NSDAP successfully agitated for the *Land Church Committee* to revisit Klemm's case. Although the *Land Church Committee* had recently amnestied Klemm, its members now informed Superintendent Zweynert that they had agreed to hear the complaints of the two mayors and district Party leadership. Needless to say, the news that his case was being reopened surprised Klemm, who wrote a sharp note questioning the legality the *Land Church Committee* decision and asking to have some allies with him if there was going to be another hearing.¹⁸⁹

Indeed, there was another hearing. Superintendent Zweynert attended the hearing and recorded no less than ten accusations against Klemm. Among other things, the mayors and Party leaders described the pastor as a disturber of the peace in the two communities of Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein, a saboteur of the NSDAP district leadership's measures, and an enemy of the state who made statements hostile to the Third *Reich*. In reply, Klemm denied that his ecclesiastical conduct was hostile to the state and argued that church and state were to be kept separate. Zweynert's notes catch the essence of Klemm's argument in his question to those gathered at his hearing: "Is the church there for God or for the *Volk*?" In the end, Klemm provided his own emphatic answer: "For God!"¹⁹⁰

The Saxon *Land Church Committee* appointed a three-member clerical committee to investigate church conditions in Burkhardswalde and Weesenstein, the result of which was the reshuffling of the resistant Weesenstein parish council, ridding it of Klemm's enemies and adding Klemm's allies, not least Confessing Church Cantor Theodor Aehnelt.¹⁹¹ That decision signalled the victory for Hermann Klemm over his local opponents within the church and the political leadership. Consequently, when Burkhardswalde National Socialist leader Heine protested the

¹⁸⁹ *Land Church Committee* to Superintendent Zweynert, 18 January 1936; Pastor Klemm of Burkhardswalde to the *Land Church Committee*, 20 January 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirm 816.

¹⁹⁰ Superintendent Zweynert, Handwritten notes from Pastor Klemm's hearing with the *Land Church Committee*, n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirm 816.

¹⁹¹ *Land Church Committee* to Superintendent Zweynert, 23 and 24 April 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pirm 816.

dismissal of politically reliable (i.e. National Socialist) members of the Weesenstein parish council, Superintendent Zweynert simply replied that he had nothing to do with the reconstruction of the parish council there and informed Heine that he would pass his complaint on up to the Saxon *Land* Church Committee.¹⁹²

With that, the matter was settled. Pastor Klemm had survived arrest by the *Gestapo* as well as the opposition of a host of opponents: local and district National Socialist leaders from Burkhardswalde, Weesenstein and Pima, school officials, two mayors, numerous parish councillors and parishioners, and even Superintendent Zweynert and three pastors who substituted in his parish.

Klemm had three factors going for him in his struggle to maintain control of his parish and guide it faithfully in the way of the Confessing Church. For one, the Confessing Church and its local members supported Klemm. Superintendent Zweynert had a difficult time finding substitute clergymen for Burkhardswalde in part because Klemm's neighbouring pastors, including Gustav Carl of Cotta and Kurt Hellner of Dohna, also belonged to the Confessing Church.¹⁹³ In Weesenstein, Cantor Theodor Aehnelt had refused to work when substitute clergymen came, asking for holidays instead.¹⁹⁴ As well, Retired Pastor Lieschke and a few lay people had regularly travelled from Dresden to hold unauthorized services, and other Confessing Church pastors and congregations had no doubt prayed for him during his arrest and suspension, as was their practice.

Second, Klemm's parish council and parishioners in Burkhardswalde remained steadfastly committed to his person and the cause of the Confessing Church. While Klemm was arrested, the parish councillors voted not to recognize the substitute authority of Pastor Werner of Dohna, and when Pastors Teichgräber of Pima, Werner of Dohna and Börner of Ottendorf came to conduct services in

¹⁹² Burkhardswalde NSDAP leader Heine to Superintendent Zweynert, 25 April 1936; Superintendent Zweynert to Heine, 29 April 1936, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁹³ Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Office, 3 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

¹⁹⁴ Mayor Erich Schmidt of Weesenstein to Superintendent Zweynert, 11 September 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pima 816.

Burkhardswalde, parishioners stayed away *en masse*, choosing instead to attend the illegal Confessing Church services in the parsonage or churchyard.

Finally, Klemm had good timing on his side. After he was suspended and his parish councillors ousted, in autumn 1935, the emergence of the moderate *Land* Church Committee in Dresden brought an end to plans in the *Land* Church Office to be rid of Klemm. Judicial measures were overturned and Klemm and his allies restored to their positions of leadership.

All this says much about the vagaries of church-political conflict in the Pirna district during the Third *Reich*. The careers of Pastors Schumann of Hohnstein, Carl of Cotta and Klemm of Burkhardswalde demonstrate that a determined resistance to the German Christian church leadership—even of the radical variety, as in Saxony—was possible. Grassroots support was a big factor in the survival of Schumann and Klemm, though less was done in Gustav Carl's defence. The patience of Superintendent Zweynert was an important factor in the early years of the church struggle in Pirna. Zweynert was willing to endure the complications of life with Confessing Church pastors as long they advanced his goal of church peace in Pirna. That Zweynert was less supportive of Klemm than of other Confessing Church pastors probably stems from Klemm's leading role among Confessing Church pastors in the district.

In the end, however, personal force of character played as great a role as any other factor. Only clergymen with strong characters willing to endure arrest, suspension, dockage of pay, tense confrontations with church-political opponents, and the harassment of local political leaders were likely to stand up to the growing infiltration of National Socialist ideology into the churches in Pirna or in other regions in which the Party was particularly anti-clerical or the higher church authorities particularly determined to root out the Confessing Church.

During the years 1934 to 1936, Pastors Schumann, Carl and Klemm were not alone in their conflict with the Saxon church authorities or the NSDAP. Pastor Hagar of Rosenthal, a National Socialist Party member, was arrested for calling *Reich* Youth Leader Baldur von Schirach a danger to the youth. Upon his release, he fought a running battle with the local schoolteacher and with National Socialists

in the Women's Aid.¹⁹⁵ Pastor Siegfried Meier fought with his parish council over the distribution of Confessing Church newsletters and the collection of voluntary contributions for the Confessing Church.¹⁹⁶ In Wehlen Stadt, Pastor Otto Scriba was fined for subversive comments about the official church government, and fined for refusing to hand in collections to the Saxon *Land* Church Office.¹⁹⁷ In Heidenau, Curate Scherffig took an unauthorized holiday granted by Confessing Church Pastor Klemm.¹⁹⁸ Pastor Johannes Herz of Berggießhübel fought with his neighbour, Pastor Walter Börner of Ottendorf, over Confessing Church and German Christian confirmation practices, and was also fined for refusing to submit voluntary church collections.¹⁹⁹ Pastor Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf and Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau (Luther) were both fined for non-compliance over church collections and non-recognition of the *Land* Church Office.²⁰⁰ Finally, Pastors Martin Vorwerk of Liebstadt, Kurt Hellner of Dohna and Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba all landed in legal trouble for refusing to submit voluntary church collections, as well as for disputes about funerals, unauthorized holidays and outlawed parish newsletters.²⁰¹

With conditions like these, even moderate pastors remained stuck in disillusionment and bitterness over the actions of German Christians in their parishes and in the Saxon *Land* Church government. The extent of the problem became

¹⁹⁵ Correspondence concerning Pastor Hagar's actions from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 1-32.

¹⁹⁶ Correspondence concerning Pastor Meier's actions from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 33-41.

¹⁹⁷ Correspondence concerning Pastor Scriba's actions from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 42-53.

¹⁹⁸ Correspondence concerning Curate Scherffig's actions from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 54-59.

¹⁹⁹ Correspondence concerning Pastor Herz's actions from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 139-158.

²⁰⁰ Correspondence concerning the actions of Pastors von Schmidt and Müller from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 344-393.

²⁰¹ Correspondence concerning the actions of Pastors Vorwerk, Hellner and Friedrich from 1934 to 1936 in Ephoralarchiv Pima 816, 396-454.

clearer in 1937, as pastors expressed their discouragement and scepticism more frequently. For instance, after the second set of police prohibitions of certain parish meetings—children’s church outings; churchwomen’s outings to non-church facilities such as gardening exhibits; parish trips into the country; and other women’s meetings in non-church facilities—in the past six months, Pastor Martin Meinel bemoaned the state of his Bad Schandau parish.²⁰² In spite of his withdrawal from the Pastors’ Emergency League in 1934, in order to avert a split in his parish, he faced a wave of German Christian agitation in Bad Schandau from February 1937 onward. The chief cause of this was a new curate in the parish, Pastor Spielmann, whose promise to abstain from church politics was quickly broken. In fact, Spielmann subscribed to the radical German Christian agenda for the Saxon *Land* Church, which he wanted “to fill with our spirit.” Spielmann helped plan a German Christian assembly in Bad Schandau in February 1937, at which Saxon *Land* Bishop Coch came to speak. About 160 people came to the event, including Meinel. Spielmann led the meeting, which took place in a local hotel, since Meinel refused to allow the German Christians to use his parish church. The young curate proclaimed that soon Bad Schandau would have its own German Christian group, then introduced *Land* Bishop Coch. Discussing the theme “One *Volk*, One Faith,” Coch looked forward to a time when National Socialism would subsume the church and there would no longer be any need for pastors or Sunday services. In a mocking, pseudo-Jewish tone of voice, Coch slandered the Apostle Paul, and then interpreted Jesus’ word to “Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s” as if Jesus had elevated secular political authority over the commandments of God. Rejecting the Old Testament and deriding pastors, professors and intellectuals, Coch anticipated a time when no one would care about confessional differences between

²⁰² Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau to Superintendent Zweynert, 6 February 1937; Superintendent Zweynert to the *Land* Church Committee, 24 June 1936; *Reich* governor for Saxony to the Saxon *Land* government [...], 26 January 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pima 818.

Protestants and Catholics, then advocated new forms for all the sacraments and ceremonies of the church.²⁰³

Meinel's sad experience was only a small taste of things to come, particularly once the Saxon church authorities installed Heinrich Leichte, the ardent National Socialist and German Christian from Königstein, as the new district superintendent in Pima in November 1937. Leichte, who was already unpopular among his fellow clergymen in the Pima district, completely abandoned former Superintendent Zweynert's conciliatory leadership style, and aggressively promoted the interests of the German Christian movement throughout the district. Church legal action against pastors continued. In February 1938, Pastors von Schmidt, Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba and Joachim Griebdorf of Porschdorf were all fined RM 200 by the *Land* Church Office for reading or distributing a Confessing Church pulpit declaration refusing obedience to the Saxon *Land* Church government.²⁰⁴ In May, Pastors Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf and Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde were both fined RM 300 for refusing to answer *Land* Church correspondence.²⁰⁵

Leichte's burning ambition as superintendent of the Pima district was forcing open the church doors of neutral and Confessing Church parishes for Thuringian German Christian meetings, celebrations, church services, confirmation instruction, baptisms and other ceremonies. From December 1937 to October 1939, Leichte and the *Land* Church authorities employed their legal right of access to Saxon parish churches and sent out no less than 116 notices to pastors and parish councils adhering to the Confessing Church or the Middle group, including Bad Schandau, Berggießhübel, Cotta, Dohna, Gottleuba, Heidenau, Helmsdorf, Hinterhermsdorf, Hohnstein, Liebstadt, Lohmen, Maxen, Neustadt, Ottendorf,

²⁰³ Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau, "Bericht über das Eindringen der Nationalkirchlichen Bewegung Deutsche Christen in Bad Schandau," 6 February 1937, Ephoralarchiv Pima 818.

²⁰⁴ *Land* Church Office to Pastors von Schmidt, Friedrich and Griebdorf, 27 July 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pima 817.

²⁰⁵ *Land* Church Office to Pastors von Schmidt and Klemm, 10 May 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pima 817.

Rathewalde, Saupsdorf and Sebnitz.²⁰⁶ In some cases, local clergymen or church leaders attempted to block these German Christian meetings. In Sebnitz, Pastor Gerhard Bahrmann complained to Superintendent Leichte that the date chosen for a German Christian assembly conflicted with a Women's Aid meeting scheduled four weeks earlier. When he could not stop Leichte's plan, he denounced the introduction of church political division in his parish in a declaration to his congregation.²⁰⁷ In Dohna and Heidenau, parish councils tried to charge the German Christians a fee, arguing it would cost more than they could afford to heat and light the church for an unofficial, church-political event. *Land* Church officials in Dresden also brushed that objection aside.²⁰⁸

In Liebstadt, Pastor Martin Vorwerk lodged a formal complaint with the *Reich* Minister for Church Affairs over the distasteful attempt by German Christians to work their way into his parish. Vorwerk described how a first attempt to hold a German Christian meeting only drew three or four people, none of whom were regular parishioners. German Christians then employed people who had withdrawn from the Lutheran church to distribute 800 leaflets, in preparation for a second meeting. Only 35 or so came to the meeting, many of whom Vorwerk knew had no interest at all in the welfare of the church. Vorwerk also protested the sale of German Christian pamphlets outside the church, and complained that when *Land* Bishop Coch came to conduct a German Christian church service, he failed to turn in any church collection to the parish.²⁰⁹ Superintendent Leichte rejected Vorwerk's charges, argued there were 60 or 70 in attendance at the German Christian meeting, and explained that his goal was to work towards the establishment of monthly

²⁰⁶ These notices are contained in Ephoralarchiv Pirna 817 and 819.

²⁰⁷ Pastor Bahrmann of Sebnitz to Superintendent Leichte, 17 October 1938; "Erklärung!" n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 819.

²⁰⁸ Herr Heinecke to the Dohna and Heidenau parish councils, 14 November 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 819.

²⁰⁹ Pastor Vorwerk of Liebstadt to the *Reich* Church Minister, 30 July 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 819.

German Christian meetings in Liebstadt.²¹⁰ He did not reply to the accusation that Coch had withheld the church collection from Vorwerk.

This new and higher level of conflict, in which Superintendent Leichte himself spearheaded the German Christian attack on neutral and Confessing Church parishes, stood in complete contrast to the patience and reserve employed by Superintendent Zweynert for so many years. For pastors who had hoped to find the middle road to peace in their parishes, Leichte's aggressive promotion of German Christian interests must have hurt deeply. For pastors in the Confessing Church, non-recognition of the higher church authorities was still the tactic of choice, and judging from Superintendent Leichte's growing frustration, an effect one at that. After transmitting instructions in a circular letter from November 1940, he added: "I ask [you] just once to observe this regulation."²¹¹

Fortunately for both neutral pastors who wanted to avoid church-political conflict and for Confessing Church pastors who were the chief targets of Leichte's advocacy of the German Christian Movement, the beginning of the Second World War in September 1939 brought an end to the worst of the *Land* Church interference in their parishes. Simply put, with the onset of war there was far less time for such church-political agitation in Pima, because replacing absent clergymen throughout the Pima district quickly overshadowed previous church-political conflicts.

A few statistics illustrate the scale of the problem of military enlistment and conscription among clergymen. At least 28 Pima district clergymen (and probably far more) were called up for military service between 1935 and 1942.²¹² By October 1939, only a month after the outbreak of war, seven pastors, three curates and a vicar were all serving in the military forces.²¹³ At least 13 more clergymen joined them at

²¹⁰ Superintendent Leichte to the *Land* Church Office, 30 September 1938, Ephoralarchiv Pima 819.

²¹¹ Superintendent's Instructions 23, 2 November 1940, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

²¹² This is based primarily on personnel updates provided in the regular circular letters sent by Superintendents Zweynert and Leichte to clergymen in the Pima district, in Ephoralarchiv Pima 80 and 81. For details, see Appendix 4: Clergymen in Nauen, Pima and Ravensburg.

²¹³ These were Pastors Carl of Cotta, Ebert of Pima, Quodbach of Pima, Ruhland of Königstein, Schwär of Pima, Gerhard Zweynert of Papstdorf, Heinrich Zweynert of Neustadt, Curates Naumann

the front before the end of 1942.²¹⁴ The absence of these men from their positions meant that Superintendent Leichte had to assign substitute clergymen from neighbouring parishes to administer these vacant pastorates. By May 1940, at least eight clergymen were administering multiple parishes, a trend that would continue as long as clergymen remained in military service.²¹⁵

These shortages and the continuation of conflicts between pastors and local schoolteachers and NSDAP leaders made pastoral ministry during the war extremely difficult. In 1941, Pastor Dr. Brunner of Heidenau (Christus) reported how religious instruction had not been given in Heidenau schools for two years. Pressure from the Party meant that the number of parishioners withdrawing from the church continued as before, only now even people who used to stand very near the church were leaving too. Conflicts over confirmation instruction had sharpened, thanks in no small part to the demands of the Party on local youth. The sad fact is that Pastor Dr. Brunner had little time to address any of these problems, for he was the sole clergyman responsible for a parish of around 10,000 souls.²¹⁶

In Neustadt, no fewer than seven different pastors, curates and vicars provided spiritual care during the turbulent year of 1940. Relations were also poor with local political leaders, who refused to grant the pastors access to municipal records so that they might keep track of the changes in the local Protestant

of Hohnstein, Schulze of Dohna and Stichel of Heidenau, as well as Vicar Meckert of Oelsen. Superintendent's Instructions 17, 13 October 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

²¹⁴ These were Pastors Dr. Brunner of Heidenau (Christus), Gartzke of Berggießhübel, Griebdorf of Porsdorf, Nestler of Bad Schandau, Steinhäuser of Dohna and Strauß of Reinhardtsdorf, Curate Schwerda of Berggießhübel, and Vicars Arnold of Stürza, Faber of Rosenthal, Günther of Eschdorf and Schindler of Lauterbach. For details, see Appendix 4: Clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

²¹⁵ Pastor Ploedterll of Königstein substituted in Rosenthal, as did Pastor Meinel of Bad Schandau in Porsdorf and Rathewalde, Pastor Strauß of Reinhardtsdorf in Papstdorf and Cunnersdorf, Pastor Börner of Ottendorf in Markersbach, Pastor Friedrich of Gottleuba in Oelsen, Esselbach of Stürza in Dittersbach and Eschdorf, Schneider of Rückersdorf in Lauterbach and Buhlau, and Bahrmann of Sebnitz in Neustadt and Pirna (children's service). Superintendent's Instructions 19, 10 May 1940, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²¹⁶ Pastor Dr. Brunner of Heidenau (Christus) to Superintendent Leichte, 26 February 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 915.

population.²¹⁷ In Dohna, Pastor Werner complained bitterly that the local schools no longer provided religious instruction to students, and wondered why the *Land* Church did not call on retired clergymen to come back and help with the overload of work faced by pastors. Local Party leaders continued their public attacks against the church (although public reaction was negative), and Party organizations continued to demand the time of Dohna children, so that children's church attendance had shrunk to one-third of what it had been in 1932. Church membership withdrawals had declined in 1940 in Dohna, but were on the way up again after renewed NSDAP agitation.²¹⁸

Church statistics from the Pirna district confirm these impressions of growing ideological and time pressure against public religious observance during the war. The number of parishioners who participated in the sacrament of communion dropped from well over thirty thousand in the first three years of the Third *Reich* down towards twenty thousand in 1938, then further to a low of 15401 in 1942. Communion-taking increased slightly to 18080 by 1944, but the number of males remained under five thousand throughout the war, less than half what it had been five years earlier.²¹⁹ The high percentage of men in the German military services no doubt accounts for much of this decline.

One note of hope was the change in church membership. Though few new members joined the church in the Pirna district during the war years, especially compared to the four thousand who flocked to the churches in 1933, the number did climb from a district low of 30 new members in 1941 to a total of 288 in 1945, a level not reached since 1936. Presumably, a growing number of Protestants returned to the church amid the military defeat and complete collapse of the Third *Reich*, many of them surely disillusioned with National Socialism and seeking solace from the tragic conclusion of the Second World War. Similarly, the number of parishioners withdrawing from the Lutheran *Land* Church dropped significantly

²¹⁷ Vicar Philipp of Neustadt to Superintendent Leichte, 20 February 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 915.

²¹⁸ Pastor Werner of Dohna to Superintendent Leichte, 13 February 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 915.

²¹⁹ For details and sources, please see Appendix 2: Statistics from the Pirna Church District.

during the war, from well over two thousand in 1939 to 163 in 1944 and 78 in 1945.

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Beyond the personnel shortages caused by the war, there were few other administrative inconveniences until well into the eastern campaign. Certainly, Superintendent Leichte was mindful of the conflict. In circular letters he sent out to clergymen at the end of 1939 and 1940, he included a prayer: "God keep and bless our *Führer*; may he grant our *Volk* victory and peace."²²¹ Leichte himself had to carry a greater load during part of the war. At the close of 1940, he informed the clergymen of the district that he had been ordered to serve part-time in the *Land* Church Office, in place of a church councillor called up into military service. Leichte announced that in future he would only be available Tuesdays and Fridays from 10 a.m. until noon.²²²

Starting in late 1941, Superintendent Leichte began transmitting a series of new instructions and regulations to pastors, a sign that the war was beginning to affect the administration of the Saxon Lutheran church. That November, he warned his clergymen against making unauthorized requests to the Military Service Offices or the Military District Pastor relating to conscription and the indispensability of certain clergymen. Only the superintendent, Leichte argued, was permitted to make such requests, so that the coordination of planning between the *Land* Church Office, the Military District Pastor and superintendent did not become confused.²²³ In June 1942, Leichte warned against using lay people as replacements for Lutheran pastors. Noting that the practice was only permitted in unusual cases where otherwise church services would not be held, Leichte reminded local clergymen that only the superintendent was permitted to approve lay replacements.²²⁴ In February 1944, the

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Superintendent's Instructions 18, 30 December 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pima 80; Superintendent's Instructions 25, 28 December 1940, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

²²² Superintendent's Instructions 25, 28 December 1940, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

²²³ Superintendent's Instructions 8, 10 November 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

²²⁴ Superintendent's Instructions 2/42, 26 June 1942, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

Pirna superintendent reminded pastors that the many children sent into the country from the cities ought not to go without confirmation instruction, despite the danger of that happening, due to the lack of pastoral staff and the increase in spiritual care needs. During this time, Leichte also passed on regulations about housing in the event of air raid destruction and about securing written church records from damage from bombing.²²⁵

With the downturn in the eastern campaign, the launch of a second front by the western Allies in France and the regular procession of air raids on German cities, 1944 brought with it new crises for the churches in the Pirna district as well. In September 1944, Superintendent Leichte reported to his clergymen that the Saxon *Land* Church had—like the rest of Germany—been summoned to ‘total war.’²²⁶ To aid the German war effort, higher church authorities had instituted eight new measures, severely curtailing the number of associations, meetings and church services in the parishes of the Pirna district: the cancellation of all public lectures for the duration of the war; the cancellation of all celebrations, special meetings, yearly assemblies pertaining to parish work and associations; the permission for clergymen to cancel special church services (except for so-called minority church services, prayer meetings and secondary church services on Sundays and workdays); the permission to introduce special celebrations or exceptional church events into the Sunday services; the extreme curtailment of church association work; the relegation of any weekday church events to times that would not disturb the working population; the cancellation of all unauthorized three-day holidays for clergymen for the duration of the war; and the processing of all correspondence through the superintendent’s offices (and not directly to the *Land* Church Office).²²⁷

²²⁵ Superintendent’s Instructions 1/44, 5 February 1944, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²²⁶ Leichte made his announcement one and a half years after Goebbels had announced the implementation of ‘total war’ on 18 February 1943, but was surely responding to new measures from 11 August 1944, which included the imposition of a total ban on vacations, the closure of theatres, coffee shops and schools, the mobilization of children for farm labour and anti-aircraft support and the establishment of the *Volkssturm*, a defense force consisting of underage boys and overage men. Jeremy Noakes, *Nazism 1919-1945*, vol. 4, *The German Home Front in World War II. A Documentary Reader* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1998), 247-249, 487-494.

²²⁷ Superintendent’s Instructions 4/44, 30 September 1944, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

Leichte added a request of his own, stemming from the changes introduced to the flow of written communications from the parishes to the Saxon *Land* Church Office. From then on, Leichte required clergymen to include an extra copy of any correspondence that he would have to pass on to the *Land* Church Office, to save his office having to recopy everything. Taken together, these measures expedited church ministry and administration significantly and amounted to the devolution of authority from the higher church offices down through the superintendents to the pastors themselves.²²⁸

Also in September 1944, there were signs that the threat of physical danger to Pima pastors and parishioners was growing greater. Superintendent Leichte asked pastors to report immediately any damage suffered in air raids, as well as any enemy propaganda encountered in the parishes, any change in their military service physical fitness rating or any change in their military postal address.²²⁹ Other significant war measures were introduced in early 1945. In order to preserve raw materials and protect against sighting during air raids, clergymen were not to burn candles in church services. Pastors were instructed to compile war chronicles for their parishes, and other new regulations governed the temporary employment of displaced Estonian, Latvian and German national clergymen from Eastern Europe.²³⁰

Leichte also chastised his clergymen to be more careful about official correspondence, arguing that order was vitally important in wartime. Reiterating the need to heed orders and save paper, Leichte added in frustration: “Unfortunately, many pastors still lack the necessary understanding.” The superintendent reiterated the importance of following every ordinance sent to the parishes, and added: “As soldiers of the homeland, we do not want to grouse about this, but rather to stand in

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Superintendent's Instructions 1/1945, 6 January 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

formation and also undertake our administration loyally and conscientiously, even as before.”²³¹

Matters grew far graver on 13 and 14 February 1945, when the city of Dresden was flattened in two days of massive bombing by Allied forces. American explosive bombs and British incendiary bombs flattened the central portion of the city and unleashed a firestorm that killed up to 100,000 Germans. The attack was especially painful because the city had been flooded by German refugees, many of them women and children fleeing the invading Soviet forces from the East, and because the destruction of Dresden held no significant military value.

The February 1945 circular letter from Superintendent Leichte to the clergymen in the Pima district focused almost entirely on the destruction of Dresden and its implications for ecclesiastical administration and record keeping. “Through the terrible air raid on Dresden, the city centre and even some suburbs were as much as completely destroyed. This fate has overtaken the *Land* Church Office, district church office and both superintendents’ offices, as well as almost all the churches. For the *Land* Church Office, an emergency work place has now been opened in the apartment of [Superior Church Council] President Klotzsche [...] for the most urgent and most important matters.” Leichte went on to list several other emergency quarters established by the higher church authorities in Dresden. He also instructed any clergymen and other church officials from the Saxon *Land* Church in the Pima district who had had to abandon their offices or homes on account of the air raid or other effects of the war to report to the *Land* Church president, including names, addresses, current position, damage, losses of family members, current family information, monetary losses and bank account numbers. Given the insecurity of the current conditions, Leichte added yet another emergency measure. “I ask for the greatest possible accommodation. If additional confiscation/impounding of office space is ordered [by military authorities], then parish business must be transferred to the parsonage or sacristy of the church. It must be left to the pastor to proceed charitably and resourcefully. All bureaucracy must now be fundamentally

²³¹ Ibid.

excluded.” Finally, Leichte concluded his circular letter with a prayer of hope and a challenge amid the collapse of the Third *Reich* he had so zealously worked for and believed in: “May the Lord God prevent additional disaster and grant us daily strength to hold out and persevere until the sun of his favour shines on us again. Everyone do his Christian duty to the utmost.”²³²

The growing confusion and disruption of church government in Dresden and pastoral ministry in the Pirna district necessitated another round of instructions and requests from Superintendent Leichte to Pirna clergymen in April 1945. Because of the destruction of *Land Church* records, the ecclesiastical authorities required new reports about the status of church bells, parish councils, parish treasurers in the Pirna district, as well as the military service records of the clergymen.²³³ In another circular, Leichte asked clergymen to report whether or not they could restore the *Land Church*’s destroyed collection of parish newsletters.²³⁴

At the parish level, the crisis of invading forces cut further into personnel for local church ministry. Organists, bell ringers and other personnel could no longer be released from the national defence force (*Volkssturm*) for Sunday services, and so Superintendent Leichte encouraged pastors to ask local women or older men for extra help.²³⁵

On 7 May 1945, General Jodl and Admiral von Friedeburg signed the unconditional surrender of the German armed forces to representatives of the Allied forces in the Western Allied headquarters at Reims, France. The ceremony was repeated the following day at the Soviet headquarters at Karlshorst, in Berlin. By this time, church administration in Pirna was severely disrupted. Most pastors had not yet responded to earlier requests for information and the superintendency itself was in flux. Superintendent Leichte was recalled and Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad

²³² Superintendent’s Instructions 2/1945, 28 February 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²³³ Superintendent’s Instructions 4/1945, 6 April 1945; Superintendent’s Instructions 5/1945, 30 April 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²³⁴ Superintendent’s Instructions 5/1945, 30 April 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²³⁵ Superintendent’s Instructions 4/1945, 6 April 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

Schandau assumed the interim superintendency on 2 July 1945. Meinel informed area clergymen that a new superintendent would be appointed in the course of the reconstruction of the Saxon *Land* Church administration, and invited clergymen to make appointments for any urgent discussions during his office hours on Tuesdays and Fridays. It is noteworthy that neither then nor later did Meinel issue instructions concerning Soviet occupation forces. Rather, he kept to his immediate task of re-establishing broken lines of communications and working to restore order in the Pirna district of the Saxon *Land* Church.²³⁶

One of Meinel's first tasks was to summon the pastors of the Pirna district together for a discussion of the pressing question: "How do we come together again in collegial fellowship?" In preparation for that meeting, Pastor Bahrmann of Sebnitz advanced a preliminary outline for discussion. Pointing towards the foundation of the Bible and confessions, Bahrmann suggested three steps towards re-establishing a community of clergymen in the district. First, pastors needed to look afresh to God to unlock the essence of the gospel for them. Christ had to become Lord again, and the Holy Spirit was needed to bind the clergymen together anew. Second, Bahrmann asserted that each Lutheran clergyman had to examine his own life, so that confession and forgiveness could break down walls between colleagues. Finally, Bahrmann called for a series of practical measures, including the renewal of the monthly pastoral conferences, the academic investigation of pressing theological questions and the fostering of community through the sacraments and prayer. As Bahrmann argued in his outline, the restoration of the brotherhood of clergymen would be the key to the renewal of the pastorate and ultimately the churches in the Pirna district.

Meinel was not alone in his attempts to rebuild local church life in 1945. Pastor Partecke of Sebnitz wrote a stirring letter summoning men to participate in the men's circle of the Pirna church district. Clergymen discussed the letter at the Pirna monthly pastoral conference of 18 July 1945. Partecke argued that Hitler had been the fulfillment of Nietzsche's prophecy, the result of which was the prostration

²³⁶ Superintendent's Instructions 6/1945, 12 July 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

of the German *Volk*, its future solely in God's hands. "Faith alone" would serve as the new foundation for the Christian German man, for "It is clear to all thinking people that the old Party slogans now no longer say anything to us." The new men's movement must be above parties, rooted in the Lutheran German sensibility.

"Today, all politics must stand before God. For God alone is now the hope of the German *Volk*." Partecke went on to explain that the small men's groups in the Pirna district had to start fresh into their work and think through the crisis of the day in the light of God's Word, "so that God himself puts an end to all mental confusion from worldview and Party through his Christ, the Lord of the world of nations [*Völkerwelt*]." With that, Partecke announced a meeting for 19 July 1945, to discuss the necessity of parish men's work.²³⁷

In addition to these efforts, Interim Superintendent Meinel called together a committee of pastors to help him guide the clergymen of the district back into collegial relations. Together with Pastors Bahrmann from Sebnitz, Carl from Cotta, Müller from Heidenau and Wagner from Pirna, Meinel hoped to undertake a preliminary sifting of the most difficult cases of German Christian clergymen on 8 August 1945, so that the *Land* Church Office would have clear guidance from Pirna about how to restore the clergymen of the Pirna district.²³⁸

In a letter to one of the pastors later that month, Meinel repeated his desire that God would help the clergymen "so that the church is really built upon the one foundation that remains there: Jesus Christ." Though he admitted that previous discussions among clergymen had wandered from the central issues of the church and political parties, Meinel reminded his colleague that the pastors' expressed wish was to discuss these questions as a group.²³⁹

²³⁷ "An die Führer der kirchlichen Männerkreise im Kreis Pirna!" 9 July 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 120.

²³⁸ Interim Superintendent Meinel to clergymen from the Pirna district, 31 July 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 180.

²³⁹ Interim Superintendent Meinel to a colleague, 23 August 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 292. For more details, please see pastoral correspondence relating to the question of new political parties in 1945, in Ephoralarchiv Pirna 234.

Meinel continued the difficult task of overseeing the Pima district during the chaotic transition through the surrender, political dissolution and Allied occupation of Germany. His circular letters advised local clergymen about matters as diverse as the reconstitution of local church leadership, the crisis in the Silesian Protestant churches, financial assistance for medical and funeral expenses, payment of clergymen salaries and expenses, mailing addresses for Silesian and other pastors, contact information for missing persons, reconstitution of the German Protestant Church in Germany, membership of clergymen in the former NSDAP, vacant pastorates, religious instruction, catechism, acceptable greetings in confirmation classes (to replace the "Heil Hitler!" and National Socialist salute) and the assigned passages for Repentance Day.²⁴⁰

In September 1945, preparations began towards elections for the creation of a new *Land Synod*. Candidates for parish councils were required to swear an oath similar to that used by the Confessing Church during the church struggle, affirming the unique lordship of Jesus Christ and the foundational authority of Scripture and Reformation Confessions. Meinel affirmed what other church leaders had declared, namely, the need:

to win men, who are prepared and in the condition to participate in the church in an explicitly religious sense and with an absolutely religious attitude, commitment and responsibility. We have no use for any church bodies in which politics is dragged in, especially so where the kind of political attitude with which there must now be an end creeps in [...]. The members of the district electoral committee are responsible to see that conditions that existed in 1933 do not repeat themselves. Much of the disaster that has come over the churches in the last 12 years goes back to the dreadful July election of 1933. Something similar must not come again. The church must show itself worthy again, not in the arrogant and repulsive but in the genuine sense of the word. It will essentially lie with the new parish councils to see that it happens.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Superintendent's Instructions 7/1945, 24 July 1945; 8/1945, 25 July 1945; 9/1945, 4 September 1945; 12/1945, 28 September 1945; 16/1945, 30 October 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

²⁴¹ Superintendent's Instructions 9/1945, 4 September 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pima 81.

By reducing the entire church struggle to a set of results from electing too many German Christian parish councillors in 1933, Meinel diverted scrutiny from the culpability of clergymen and focused it upon that of the voting parishioners. In doing so, Meinel demonstrated that he had not comprehended the extent to which he and his clerical colleagues had encouraged the German national renewal within their churches and had failed to properly critique the excesses of the National Socialists within the Protestant churches.

Nonetheless, Meinel did attempt to redress the past failings of local church leadership in Pirna. In September 1945, he ordered both active and retired clergymen to declare whether or not they had been members of the NSDAP or of one of its many organizations, as higher church authorities continued the work of 'denazifying' the Lutheran churches of Saxony.²⁴² One of the results of this process was the appointment of Pastor Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde as superintendent in Pirna, in November 1945.²⁴³ Klemm had been district pastor of the Confessing Church throughout the National Socialist era, and his oppositional stance then won him the position of successor to the ardent National Socialist, Superintendent Leichte. He had never been a member of the NSDAP, and only belonged to the National Socialist *Volk* Welfare agency (NSV), a membership ordered by the *Land* Church Office and expressly approved by the Saxon Confessing Church Council.²⁴⁴

The assumption of leadership in the Pirna district by men like Superintendent Hermann Klemm and pastors Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau and Gerhard Bahrmann and Karl Partecke of Sebnitz marked the victory of both the Confessing Church and Middle in Pirna. Preaching and teaching based exclusively on the Bible and Reformation Confessions were restored. Stable government by spiritually mature church leaders was re-established, and the influence of synodal bodies was returned. That victory, however, had come at great cost. A dozen years

²⁴² Superintendent's Instructions 12/1945, 28 September 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²⁴³ Superintendent's Instructions 19/1945, 23 November 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

²⁴⁴ Klemm to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 12 July 1945, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 180.

of church-political conflict had left many of the Pirna parishes divided, many parishioners distanced from the church, and many deep rifts between pastoral colleagues. Half a dozen years of war had left church buildings damaged, parish associations atrophied, administrative links with Dresden scrambled and at least one colleague, Pastor Schulze of Dohna, fallen in battle.²⁴⁵

More worrisome still was the future, though Superintendent Klemm probably had little time to ponder it amid the chaos and ruin of 1945. After surviving 12 years of National Socialist church struggle, he might have despaired had he realized that Communist Party secretaries would soon replace National Socialist *Führers*, that church-political strife would again replace the peace and tranquility, and that archive files in Pirna marked “Confessing Church” would not stop in 1945 but continue into the 1970s.

²⁴⁵ Superintendent's Instructions 1, 4 March 1942, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

CHAPTER 7
'INTACT' WÜRTTEMBERG:
PASTOR KARL STEGER AND THE RAVENSBURG CHURCH STRUGGLE

Where Protestant communities in the two Northern German districts of Nauen in Brandenburg and Pirna in Saxony embraced the German nationalist fervour of 1933 and flocked to their parish churches in record numbers, Protestants in the Ravensburg district of the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church were, on the whole, far more subdued about the National Socialist political transformation. Protestants comprised a small minority of about 20 percent of the population in Catholic Upper Swabia, where the Ravensburg district was located. Politically, the region was dominated by the Catholic Centre Party, which received the lion's share of the vote in the elections of the late Weimar era.¹ One ecclesiastical consequence of these political conditions was that Protestant pastors, churches and church holidays did not enjoy the same stature in Catholic Ravensburg as they did in the Protestant towns of northern Germany. As a result, Protestant churches were not significant public channels for religious nationalism. That is the first essential difference that set apart the church struggle in the Ravensburg district from that in Nauen and Pirna, and was most clearly reflected in the differences between the parish statistics in the districts from the first years of National Socialist rule.² The relative lack of public attention to Protestant nationalism in Ravensburg did not mean that local clergymen were not as nationally inclined as their counterparts in other areas of Germany or that their nationalism did not influence their practise of ministry, only that their churches were not loci for wider civic celebrations, as in the largely Lutheran communities in Nauen and Pirna.

Second, and related to the fact of Protestant minority status in Upper Swabia, the Ravensburg district was geographically larger but numerically smaller

¹ Please see chapter 2, Table 14 and note 130.

² For a comparison of the response of Protestant communities to the National Socialist political revolution, please see chapter 2. More detailed statistical breakdowns of religious activity are available in appendices 1-3.

than either Nauen or Pirna. With only 11 parishes and 17 pastorates, there were simply fewer opportunities for church conflict than in the other districts. Most pastorates were filled throughout the years of the Third *Reich*, often with clergymen of a very high calibre.³ Combined with the minority status of Protestants, the consistent presence of competent clergymen contributed to a general lack of church-political contention in Ravensburg, compared to Nauen and Pirna.

Along with those unique features of local church life, there was an important fact of *Land* Church politics in Württemberg that contributed to the settled church-political environment in Ravensburg, namely, the continuity of Württemberg church life under the leadership of *Land* Bishop Theophil Wurm. In contrast to the manner in which German Christians at the head of the Brandenburg and Saxon *Land* Churches radically transformed the theological, administrative and legal foundations of their church governments, Württemberg *Land* Bishop Wurm successfully opposed the attempt of German Christian *Reich* Bishop Müller to seize control of the Württemberg *Land* Church, to impose National Socialist political forms upon its church government and to incorporate it into the German Evangelical *Reich* Church. Because the Württemberg *Land* Church remained 'intact,' there were far fewer reasons for clerical opposition to the higher church authorities. This was chiefly due to the fact that the Scriptures and Reformation Confessions were not fundamentally abandoned as the basis for Christian teaching and church government, as in Brandenburg and Saxony. This stability not only prevented much church conflict in Ravensburg and area, it also meant that German Christians, not members of the Confessing Church, became the church-political dissidents in Württemberg. For that reason, the Ravensburg district provides a useful contrast to Nauen and Pirna—an opportunity to examine the church struggle in a context where the church-political roles were reversed. As the previous chapters and the following account

³ For instance, Württemberg *Land* Bishop Wurm, who had once served as pastor in Ravensburg, used the district as a temporary home for prominent theologians Helmut Thielicke and Günther Dehn. Wurm had previously recommended Pastor Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen, President of the *Land* Synod from 1933 to 1945, as an exceptional (if contentious) pastor. Please see chapter 3, pp. 125-126.

reveal, rebellious clergymen employed the same range of tactics whether they were Confessing Church pastors in German Christian *Land* churches, or German Christians in an intact *Land* Church like Württemberg.

In this connection, the most important figure in the Ravensburg church district throughout the National Socialist era was Pastor Dr. Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen. He was the only significant local opponent of the Wurm administration and created the vast majority of the religious controversy in the district. Because Steger stands out so conspicuously among the other clergymen in the scattered parishes of the Ravensburg district, his story will serve as the basis for understanding both the possibilities and limitations of pastoral influence in the local church struggle there. Other pastors and situations from neighbouring parishes will supplement conclusions drawn from Steger's career and the events of the church struggle in the Friedrichshafen parish, in order to round out the analysis of pastoral activity in the Ravensburg version of the church struggle.

Karl Steger (1889-1954) served as pastor in Massenbach, near Heilbronn, from 1916 to 1929, received his doctorate in 1923 from Tübingen, pastored in Friedrichshafen am Bodensee from 1929 to 1948, and sat as President of the Württemberg *Land* Synod from 1933 to 1945. A prominent speaker and organizer for the pro-National Socialist Faith Movement of the German Christians, Steger was also a key figure in the *Land* Church government in Stuttgart. As a parish pastor, he proved to be an eager promoter of the interests of the German Christians, both among his own parishioners who lived on the north shore of the Bodensee and throughout the Ravensburg church district.

The development of Karl Steger's nationalist and National Socialist political views predated the Third Reich by at least a decade. The influences of his university years in Tübingen and the experiences of his subsequent political career in Stuttgart nurtured his belief in National Socialism and paved the way for his intense participation in Württemberg church politics between 1933 and 1945. Early evidence of Steger's nationalist political views comes from his 1923 doctoral thesis, a study of the political thought of Moritz Mohl. Mohl was a Swabian economist

elected to the 1848 Frankfurt Parliament as a determined advocate of German unification. Steger argued that Mohl's political thought was relevant to the national upheaval in Germany after 1918. In the foreword of his thesis, Steger explained that enemies were threatening Germany, just as in 1848; after 1918, their goal was no longer to prevent German political unification, but rather to break apart Germany's age-old unity and to destroy its power and might.⁴ Like so many other academics of his day, Steger used his research to profess his intense nationalism, unabashed in his commitment to Germany's political recovery.

In 1924, Steger took his political nationalism into the public forum, winning a seat in the Württemberg parliament as a member of the "*Völkisch-Social Block*", also known as the National Socialist Freedom Party. This pastors group attacked the Versailles Treaty "as a violation of 'the spirit of Christian love and justice,' they swore fealty to Luther in his most militant guise, proclaimed 'honesty' and Christian charity as the essence of a genuine social policy, and, predictably, declared war on the alleged Jewish influences as inimical to true religion and a threat to the 'purity and rectitude of the German soul.'"⁵ In a 1925 *Landtag* debate, Steger protested the decision of the authorities in Stuttgart to refuse to allow Hitler to address a public rally in the city. He remained active as a secretary with the right wing group until its merger with the NSDAP in 1927, after which he served the final months of his term in parliament as a guest of the *Bürgerpartei*. According to his own testimony, Steger subsequently abandoned politics to focus exclusively on his ecclesiastical career.⁶

At the very outset of Steger's relationship with the Friedrichshafen parish,

⁴ Karl Steger, *Die politischen Gedanken Moritz Mohls*, Dissertation Tübingen 1923, quoted in Michael Jag, *Karl Steger: ein Pfarrer in Friedrichshafen als Deutscher Christ*, Prüfungsarbeit zur II. theologischen Dienstprüfung (1988/1989), June 1988, 1, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁵ Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 280.

⁶ Ibid., 280-281; *Aktennotiz*, 10, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; Jag, *Karl Steger*, 2, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen; *Bericht über unsere Reise am Ostersonntag bis einschl. Ostermontag 1929 nach Massenbach O/A. Brackenheim zu Herrn Pfarrer Dr. Steger, Massenbach, Herrn Dekan Metzger in Brackenheim, Herrn Prälat Wurm in Heilbronn und Herrn Stadtpfarrer Eifert in Heilbronn*, 5 April 1929, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

his nationalism emerged as a stumbling block. In 1929, two members of the Friedrichshafen parish council came to Steger's parish in Massenbach to interview him for their position of associate pastor. Trouble began when the two men informed Steger that the Friedrichshafen parish was searching for a politically liberal pastor.⁷ In response, Steger expressed regret at the failure of liberalism and at its lack of "inner light." More pointedly, he also insisted that he was the most extreme right wing pastor in all of Württemberg, and would not compromise on that.⁸

In spite of his clear rejection of liberal politics, Steger was appointed as the associate pastor in Friedrichshafen.⁹ He soon immersed himself in Württemberg church politics, working on behalf of the German Christian Movement. From 1933 until 1935, Steger acted as sponsor for the German Christian movement in Württemberg, responsible for relations between German Christian pastors and the *Land* Church government. He also served as leader for the southern organizational district, which encompassed the church districts of Ravensburg and Biberach.¹⁰ In July 1933, Steger was elected as the Ravensburg district representative to the Württemberg *Land* Synod as a member of the single "unity list" of candidates

⁷ One wonders how they could not have known of Steger's political radicalism. His reputation had spread widely enough that parishioners in Unterensingen who agreed with his political views convinced the Superior Church Council to transfer him to their parish. Although the transfer was approved, Steger declined the offer. Diephouse, *Pastors and Pluralism in Württemberg*, 295.

⁸ *Bericht über unsere Reise am Ostersonntag*, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

⁹ Ironically, given later battles between the two, Dr. Theophil Wurm, then Prelate in Heilbronn and later Württemberg Church President and Land Bishop, encouraged the Friedrichshafen delegation to appoint Steger as pastor. Recalling his own early ministry in Reutlingen, Wurm believed that Steger would eventually have fit in, even if at first the relationship would have been strained. Also, he told the Friedrichshafeners that the Land Church authorities had believed Steger was well acquainted with the working classes because of his political experience, a strength which could only help him among Friedrichshafen's industrial workers. Despite Steger's temperamental nature and conservative nationalist politics, Wurm argued that Steger was decisively above average as a pastor and would have been a strong presence in the Friedrichshafen parish. *Bericht über unsere Reise am Ostersonntag*; Prälat Wurm to "Lieber Freund!", 1 April 1929, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

¹⁰ Meier, *Deutschen Christen*, 328; Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg: eine Dokumentation zum Kirchenkampf*, vol. 2, *Um eine deutsche Reichskirche* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1972), 454.

agreed upon by the three leading church parties. The unity list gave Steger and his fellow German Christians a slim majority in the legislative body, a result their opponents were willing to concede, rather than risk losing an open election by a landslide.¹¹ The Synod then chose Steger as its president, an office he held until 1945.¹² As Synod President, Steger chaired the Standing Committee of the *Land* Synod and joined the powerful *Land* Church Committee, a three-member executive comprised of *Land* Bishop Wurm, Steger and a second German Christian.

Like so many other parish and higher clergymen, Steger was deeply moved by the prospect of national renewal and by Hitler's role as an agent for moral and spiritual revitalization. Not unlike other pastors, Steger detested communism and its threat to Protestant Christianity in Germany. And when Steger made forays into theology, he clearly affirmed the German *Volk* as a divinely created order and argued for practical political measures to cultivate the blood purity of the German racial community. Based on a combination of these motives, Karl Steger consistently advocated two German Christian ecclesiastical goals: the amalgamation of the 28 Protestant *Land* churches (and ultimately, the Roman Catholic church too) into a unitary Reich church led by a powerful Reich bishop, and the mobilization of the spiritual resources of German Protestantism on behalf of the National Socialist national renewal of Germany. Working for those goals, Steger acted on the conviction that their realization would place Protestantism in step with the political centralization and authoritarian leadership of the National Socialist movement.

An analysis of the National Socialist period of Karl Steger's ecclesiastical career is important for two reasons. On the one hand, it reveals an important ideological continuity, since at both levels of his church politics—as *Land* Synod

¹¹ *Zusammenstellung der Wahlbewerber für die Wahl zum Landeskirchentag am 23. Juli 1933, vorgeschlagen von der Glaubensbewegung Deutsche Christen, Gruppe I und Gruppe II*, 18 July 1933, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84a; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 304-306.

¹² Responses to Steger's election as President of the Land Synod were split along church-political lines. The German Christian *Deutsche Sonntag* praised Steger's leadership as calm and skilful, while the editor of the *Evangelische Kirchenblatt für Württemberg* described Steger's language as hurtful and saltless. Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 376-377, 527.

president in Stuttgart and parish pastor in Friedrichshafen—Steger relentlessly pursued his twin goals, the creation of a unitary Reich church and the ecclesiastical promotion of National Socialism. On the other hand, Steger's career demonstrates a discontinuity of methods, as he shifted between his various roles in the *Land Church* administration and in the Friedrichshafen parish. In both contexts, he spoke to groups of German Christians, encouraging the faithful and recruiting new members.

After that, the similarities ended. In the *Land Church* government, Steger exerted most of his influence as a political insider. For instance, he used the *Land Synod* Standing Committee to provoke a budget crisis and create the conditions for the intervention of the Reich church leadership from Prussia. Then, he campaigned for the dismissal of *Land* Bishop Wurm and defended the illegal takeover of the Württemberg *Land Church* in misleading letters sent to Württemberg clergymen. In contrast, in the Ravensburg church district, Steger was an ideological outsider, ostracized by the other Protestant clergymen. Forced to act independently, he used the local parish newsletter, confirmation instruction and other pastoral functions to propagate his nationalist and National Socialist political ideas.

Though Steger's personality and career dominated the Ravensburg church district during the National Socialist era, he was not the only local pastor forced to struggle with church-political opponents there. Thus, following an overview of Steger's *Land Church* political career and his activities in his Friedrichshafen parish, the analysis of the church struggle in the Ravensburg church district will consider the strife in the parishes of Leutkirch, Isny and Waldsee, where local clergymen faced pressure from the very German Christian groups Steger was serving.

As president of the *Land Synod* and Protector (*Schirmherr*) of the Württemberg German Christians, Steger received many opportunities to address groups of German Christians throughout Württemberg. Speaking before an assembly of German Christians in Reutlingen in October 1933, Steger explained Württemberg's need for the Faith Movement of German Christians. First, he called for the church and the state to co-operate in the upbringing of the youth and advocated the mobilization of German youth under Hitler's leadership. Then Steger

broadened his discussion to address the question of leadership in general. He asked where figures like Luther and Bismarck had gone—men who said they had a mission to Germany. Not surprisingly, Steger's longing for a strong leader led him to the conclusion that Hitler was the answer for Germany's current crisis. Through Hitler, Germans were again learning about faith and rediscovering their belief in the national community. That an idealistic German leader like Hitler might teach Germans about faith seemed natural to Steger, because each nation sought God in its own way. In Germany, that meant Christianity through national community.¹³ Not only was that theme of Germanic Christianity sponsored by Hitler the focus of Steger's speech in Reutlingen, but also in other speeches he gave that fall to German Christians in Göppingen and Heilbronn.¹⁴

During the same period, in October 1933, Karl Steger was engaged in the preparation of a German Christian reform programme, together with other leaders from Württemberg. In keeping with Steger's views, the programme advocated the entrance of the Württemberg *Land Church* into the new Reich church. With a view towards a nationalist transformation of Protestantism, the German Christians also proposed the formulation of an anti-liberal confession of faith and the creation of a German national Biblical reader. Steger and his colleagues planned for their reader to include only the 'un-Jewish' sections of the Old Testament relevant to German Christianity, as well as the entire New Testament, a short history of Christianity in Germany, character portraits of the early church fathers and the Christian confessions of great men, presumably important German Protestants.¹⁵

Next, the German Christian reform programme endorsed the existing

¹³ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 572.

¹⁴ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 3 March 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b; Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg und der Nationalsozialismus*, vol. 3, *Der Einbruch des Reichsbischofs in die Württembergische Landeskirche 1934* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1974), 442.

¹⁵ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 591-599. On the German Christians' radical approach to Scripture and theology, see Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, chapters 3, 8 and 9.

German political state, with its National Socialist world view, and vilified its enemies: Marxist materialism, theological liberalism, divisive sects, the "inherited German defects" of subjectivism, particularism, and egoism, and lastly, all other enemies of the Reformation heritage. In a more practical (if radical) vein, Steger and the others concluded by suggesting a reorganization of the *Land* Church aimed at levelling classes within the church and creating a more closely-knit community under authoritative leaders.¹⁶ As one of the few concrete products of German Christian theology, the reform programme depicted the way in which Steger and his colleagues hoped the Protestant church would act as a partner with the state in the campaign to unite and renew the nation.

In a subsequent appeal sent to all Württemberg clergymen, Steger and his fellow German Christian reformers reiterated their basic theological views. Taking it as self-evident that the coming of Hitler was the product of divine providence, they argued that Württemberg clergymen had to be as united as possible. Only then could their entire strength be given in service to the nation and the fatherland, and not least to the church. According to Steger and the others, service of this kind was just what the *Führer* expected of every true German.¹⁷

Consistent in his work as a theologian and ideologue, Steger also pursued his aims through direct action in the Württemberg church struggle. During the stormy period from mid-1933 until late 1934, Steger disputed with his fellow German Christians, fought battles with *Land* Bishop Wurm and the Superior Church Council and argued with clergymen throughout the Württemberg.

Already in September 1933, Steger was quarrelling with fellow German Christians from Württemberg about their loyalty to *Land* Bishop Wurm. While most chose loyalty to Wurm, Steger and a minority of the German Christians dissented. While they gave lip service to Wurm's leadership, they added a rider to their declaration of loyalty, saying that they felt bound "to go their own way under

¹⁶ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 591-599.

¹⁷ *Aktennotiz*, 1, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

this leadership."¹⁸ In October, further conflicts about Wurm's leadership divided the Württemberg German Christian leaders like Steger from fanatical supporters of the Reich leadership, who had even less use for Wurm.¹⁹

Into this growing church-political tension came Dr. Reinhold Krause's explosive Berlin Sport Palace speech. On 13 November, 20000 German Christians heard Krause, Berlin leader for the movement, call for the creation of a non-confessional German people's church purged of all Jewishness, including the entire Old Testament and the New Testament teachings of the "Rabbi Paul."²⁰ In Württemberg, as elsewhere, the reaction was immediate. Hundreds of clergymen abandoned the German Christian movement and pledged allegiance to *Land* Bishop Wurm. Up to 800 pastors joined Martin Niemöller's Pastors Emergency League. Within the Württemberg *Land* Synod, a secession of approximately 150 deputies from the German Christian faction left only 30 radicals, including Karl Steger, who refused to submit to Wurm. The secession eliminated the German Christian majority in the *Land* Synod and jeopardized the German Christian majorities on the *Land* Synod Standing Committee and the *Land* Church Committee. For Steger, any new summons of a plenary meeting of the *Land* Synod held the prospect of his dismissal from those committees and the total collapse of the German Christian plan to incorporate the Württemberg *Land* Church within the German Evangelical *Reich* Church.

Another fragment of the fall-out from that volcanic event in Berlin was a new dispute between Württemberg German Christians and *Reich* Leader Joachim Hossenfelder, which resulted in the expulsion of three Tübingen University theologians, Drs. Fezer, Weiser and Rückert from the national movement. As a

¹⁸ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 511.

¹⁹ *Aktennotiz*, 9, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger, Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 608-611.

²⁰ [Reinhold Krause], *Rede des Gauobmannes der Glaubensbewegung "Deutsche Christen" i. Groß-Berlin Dr Krause gehalten im Sportpalast am 13. November 1933*, 6-8; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 828-850; Cochrane, *Church's Confession under Hitler*, 111-113; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 551-553.

witness to conversations between Hossenfelder and Württemberg German Christian *Land* leader Wilhelm Rehm, Karl Steger confirmed charges of duplicity against the Reich leader, leading to a repudiation of Hossenfelder's authority in Württemberg.²¹

Not that this confrontation with the German Christian Reich leader placed Steger on better terms with *Land* Bishop Wurm, the Superior Church Council or the majority of Württemberg pastors sympathetic to the Confessing Church. That would have been next to impossible, since a good number of Württemberg clergymen considered Steger an unsavoury character who should never have been elected to the *Land* Synod.²²

Nor did negotiations to implement a peace pact among rival church-political groups in the Württemberg *Land* Church go well. The so-called '*Dorotheenpakt*' of January 1934 was to be an agreement of all church-political groups in Württemberg to respect the leadership of *Land* Bishop Wurm and work together with the Protestant Parish Service, the official body responsible for social programs in Württemberg parishes.²³ German Christians eventually abandoned the pact, frustrated with the lack of recognition of their chief demands: the cessation of the defamation of German Christians, the restoration of their freedom of assembly, and the expulsion of two leaders in the Parish Service who were opposed to the German Christians. As the spokesperson for the German Christians, Karl Steger brought these demands to the Superior Church Council on 1 February 1934, but was

²¹ Drs. Karl Fezer, Hanns Rückert and Artur Weiser were expelled at the command of Hossenfelder, though he later denied it. Karl Steger, present during a crucial phone conversation between Rehm and Hossenfelder, later confirmed that Hossenfelder had indeed ordered the expulsion. In spite of the controversy, Steger continued to work with both the Reich and Württemberg leadership. Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 853-858, 937-940; *ibid.*, 3: 112-115; Michael Jag, *Karl Steger*, 6-7, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen; Lächele, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Glaube*, 49-52; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 235 n. 49; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 562-563; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 150.

²² Pastor Lachemann in Stuttgart to Pastor Martin Niemöller of Berlin, Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 995-996.

²³ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 2: 1065-1067; Lächele, *Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Glaube*, 58.

rebuffed.²⁴

Consequently, Steger pursued the matter in a letter to Director Dr. Müller of the Superior Church Council. In it, Steger lamented the stagnation in negotiations with the *Land* Church and described the current state of affairs as a comedy. He then restated the three goals of the German Christians. First, they wanted to unify the Protestant Church of Germany by overcoming Württemberg particularism and the mistrust of many Württemberg clergymen towards their German Christian colleagues.²⁵

Second, according to Steger, German Christians yearned to use the gospel to deepen and give soul to the present political construction in the Third Reich and to deepen the National Socialist world of ideas through the alignment of that world view with the values of Christianity. As in Steger's opening point, unity was the key to achieving this ideological breakthrough, since unity would appeal to Hitler, while division and distance among the Christian confessions would naturally disincline Hitler to pay attention. Steger did not claim that an ecclesiastical legitimization of the Third Reich would help Hitler directly, but was very determined that all the forces of the churches be engaged on behalf of the National Socialist movement's lofty goal of national renewal. "Not as a subservient slave should the Protestant church fulfil its tasks in today's state, but in the free realization that our *Führer's* mission is God-willed and thereby deserves total dedication. If the Protestant church does not seize this task, then it will stand on the outside and its circle of activity will dwindle more and more, i.e. it will ultimately ruin itself."²⁶ As evidence for his threatening words, Steger suggested that the church had already lost its ancient duties of youth work, welfare and education because it had wasted so much time on endless negotiations within its own realm, rather than working together against the Roman Catholic threat and planning for the final battle against

²⁴ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 15, 37.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 3: 38-39.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 3: 40.

Rome. Moreover, Steger warned that if German Protestantism would not work to subdue Catholicism, then the National Socialist state would have to bring both confessions into line.²⁷

Finally, in his letter to Dr. Müller of the Superior Church Council, Steger stated that the third goal of German Christians in Württemberg was church reform, so that the forces of Protestantism could be marshalled on behalf of the nation. Without describing in detail the reforms he had in mind, Steger asserted that the Protestant church was duty-bound to propagate the will of God in its preaching, but also that it was duty-bound to the German *Volk*. This duty was based on the nature and uniqueness of the German *Volk* and the divine order of creation, and meant that the church must not fall out of touch with the current political developments or with the *Volk*.²⁸

In light of his argument for ecclesiastical reform, Steger proceeded to accuse *Land* Bishop Wurm of inaction, referring to his own experience in the Ravensburg district as evidence of the potential that Wurm was failing to exploit: "My experience in the Catholic *Oberland* [Upper Swabia], my own work in Friedrichshafen in miniature is for me proof that our way is the right one. My struggle from 1924 to 1927 as a National Socialist representative, where I have also spoken in the *Oberland*, has shown me in dozens of cases that the souls of our Catholic fellow citizens are largely open for [... German Christian] beliefs; this realization was not the least of the reasons why I went as pastor to Friedrichshafen."²⁹

The conclusion to that protest letter to Director Dr. Müller of the Superior Church Council in Stuttgart illustrates the shallow nature of German Christian thinking. Steger admitted avoiding any theological consideration of the conflict between the German Christians and the *Land* Church authorities, but defended his

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid., 3: 41.

²⁹ Ibid., 3: 42.

approach by asserting that "faith and life" served as the two poles around which ecclesiastical work ought to revolve.³⁰ This was nothing less than an attempt to justify the words and deeds of the German Christian movement in wholly existential terms, completely apart from the authority of Scripture and the Reformation Confessions. Building on that unstable foundation, Steger blithely ignored any principles on which his opponents stood. He simply insisted that German Protestantism unite itself with the National Socialist renewal of German society, disregarded the potential of a clash between National Socialist values and traditional church teachings and rebuked the existing ecclesiastical leadership.

In March 1934, Karl Steger's opposition to *Land* Bishop Wurm's church government reached a new level of intensity during the attempt of *Reich* Bishop Ludwig Müller to seize control of the Württemberg *Land* Church. Steger and three fellow German Christians formed a majority in the seven-member *Land* Synod Standing Committee. Thus, Steger was able to exploit a deadlock during the debate over the new *Land* Church budget. Steger and the other German Christians on the Standing Committee refused to approve the funding of the Protestant Parish Service, which they regarded as their organizational enemy at the parish level.³¹ Arguing that the Parish Service was competing with the social initiatives of the NSDAP, Steger and his German Christian colleagues demanded that a German Christian replace the existing head of the Protestant Parish Service. Then, they demanded that German Christians be given a majority among the clergymen on the Württemberg Superior Church Council, an outrageous proposal flatly rejected by the *Land* Bishop, members of the Superior Church Council and the other groups in the *Land* Synod, who accused the German Christians on the Standing Committee of playing church politics with the serious, objective business of church government.³²

³⁰ Ibid., 3: 38-42.

³¹ On the background of the conflict between the Protestant Parish Service (*Evangelische Gemeindedienst*, formerly *Evangelische Volksbund*) and the Faith Movement of the German Christians in Württemberg, see Lächele, *Ein Reich, ein Volk, ein Glaube*, 33-35.

³² Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 112-115; Jag, *Karl Steger*, 6-7, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

It was then that Steger and other German Christians appealed to Reich Bishop Müller to intervene in the governance of the Württemberg church. They sent a memo to Müller's assistant, Ministerial Director August Jäger, attacking *Land* Bishop Wurm for Württemberg particularism, for opposing the creation of the Reich church and for undermining the Reich Bishop's authority. In contrast, Steger and the German Christians reiterated their endorsement of a unitary Reich church and their conviction that the Reich Bishop was the embodiment of the union between National Socialism and the Reich church.³³ As a first step to an intervention, the Württemberg German Christians actively promoted Steger as a potential caretaker for the *Land* Church, an appointee to help direct the anticipated takeover by the Reich Bishop.³⁴

Though Steger was not chosen as *Reich* Bishop Müller's commissar in Württemberg, he did pave the way for Müller's assault by his obstinate refusal to approve the *Land* Church budget in the Standing Committee. The budget crisis came to a head when *Land* Bishop Wurm decided further debate within the Standing Committee was futile and summoned a plenary session of the *Land* Synod for 16 April, to settle the matter once and for all.

Wurm's action threatened to sweep Steger and his fellow German Christians from executive positions in the Württemberg Church government, since they could no longer enjoyed the protection of majority control of the *Land* Synod. To prevent this, Reich Bishop Müller called a meeting of the *Land* Synod Standing Committee for Sunday, 15 April 1934, one day before the full Synod was to meet. At Müller's request, Steger and the German Christians on the Standing Committee passed the *Land* Church budget, ostensibly removing the reason for plenary session called by Wurm. Then, the assistant to the Reich Bishop, Prussian Ministerial Secretary Jäger, produced an emergency decree for the regulation of church conditions in Württemberg. The decree was in final form—it had been pre-dated and pre-

³³ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 117-121.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 3: 127 n. 141, 128.

published as Reich church law by the time Jäger pulled it from his briefcase. Steger and the German Christian majority in the Standing Committee promptly ratified the decree, over protests from the Wurm's supporters that no emergency situation existed in the church. According to the decree, the Reich Bishop held sole power to summon and dismiss the *Land* Synod, power that he used to cancel the session scheduled for the following day. With the *Land* Synod thus neutralized, Steger and the other German Christians on the Standing Committee and the *Land* Church Committee were once more secure in their positions.³⁵

Steger endorsed the Reich Bishop's controversial intervention in two circular letters he wrote to the Württemberg clergymen in the following days. In the first circular, Steger portrayed the Reich Bishop's action as an emergency response to a crisis created by *Land* Bishop Wurm's disregard for the Württemberg German Christians and opposition to the creation of a Reich church. Steger then described his own impassioned attempt to convince the *Land* Bishop and *Land* Church leadership of the gravity of the situation, and their refusal to accept his judicious counsel. According to Steger, a public discussion (in the *Land* Synod!) of church-political conditions would have done damage to both the church and state in Württemberg and Germany. When Wurm refused to call off the plenary session of the *Land* Synod, Steger and his Prussian colleague Jäger had no choice but to implement the emergency decree.³⁶

In the second circular, Steger repeated his contention: "Only a united, uniform Reich church can fulfil the great duties to our *Volk* [...]"³⁷ The Friedrichshafen pastor took great pains to emphasize that this centralized church would not alter the long-standing confessional nature of the *Land* churches, only their external organization. Sounding frustrated, Steger wrote: "Up to this day, I have not understood what this entire complex of questions has to do with the gospel

³⁵ Ibid., 3: 145-157, especially 154, 156-157.

³⁶ Ibid., 3: 192-194.

³⁷ Ibid., 3: 195.

of Jesus Christ."³⁸ Focusing on Wurm as the leader of the opposition to the Reich church, Steger criticized the *Land* Bishop's "Württemberg eccentricity" and implied he lacked the gift of statesmanship. Steger declared he and other National Socialists in the German Christian Movement would not tolerate a particularist Reich church alongside Adolf Hitler's unitary state. Steger closed ominously, warning that if the *Land* Bishop would not adopt a new policy of support for the Reich church and the Reich Bishop, if he would not take steps to correct the stormy church-political atmosphere in Württemberg, then he was simply unfit for his high office: "It is somewhat different, whether one ascends the pulpit and preaches the Word of God, or whether one has to master the issues of the present and the future as an ecclesiastical statesman."³⁹

This view was echoed in the April 1934 edition of the German Christian circular letter for Württemberg, which repeated Steger's description and interpretation of the events in Stuttgart. Further, the German Christian leaders reaffirmed their interest was only the external organization of the Reich church, which they illustrated by drawing close comparisons between the leadership of Reich Bishop Müller and the *Führer* himself, Adolf Hitler. They also invoked Hitler's name to press their case for a quick dissolution of the *Land* churches: "The unitary Reich church is a law of the hour, our *Führer* also knows and wants that."⁴⁰

Steger's account was highly skewed. In a heated exchange of letters, the *Land* Synod, Superior Church Council, and various district superintendents all rejected his interpretation of the events.⁴¹ The Superior Church Council was

³⁸ *Aktennotiz*, 1-2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 195-197.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ *Aktennotiz*, 2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁴¹ The majority of delegates in the Land Synod published two declarations refuting Steger's arguments and affirming the loyalty of the majority in the Land Synod to the Land Bishop. Other vocal opponents included clergymen from the Öhringen, Sulz/Neckar and Tuttlingen districts. *Auszug aus der Chronik der Kirchenwirren von Dr. Joachim Gauger (Gotthard-Briefe)*, 1 and *Aktennotiz*, 2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; OKR A. 7983, 7 September 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in*

especially pointed in its rebuttal, contrasting the gradual development of National Socialist power and National Socialist legality with the hasty, arbitrary and illegal methods of the Reich church action. The Superior Church Council also took issue with Steger's artificial division between external structure and internal teachings and beliefs of the church, noting that the principle of the priesthood of all believers mandated an organizational co-responsibility of parish representation at all levels of church government. Finally, the Superior Church Council suggested that when the theological faculties (with their many committed National Socialists) disagreed so strongly with the German Christian position, there must be more at stake than merely the church's external organization.⁴²

Despite this opposition from within the church, Steger's version of the events of April 1934 was widely influential, and not only among the German Christians of Württemberg. The Württemberg state ministry, the *Reich* ministry of the interior, the *Reich* Bishop and the *Reich* church government all knew Steger's account as well. During this period, German Christians were influential in Württemberg governing circles, since it was believed that the NSDAP had closed its ears to clergymen from other church-political orientations.⁴³ One result of this demonstration of commitment to the Reich church and its leaders was Steger's speedy elevation into the highest levels of German church leadership. Invited by the Reich Bishop to participate in the Reich Church Constitutional Committee, Steger was also one of 59 delegates nominated by the Reich Church Office to attend the Second Reich Synod in Berlin in August 1934.⁴⁴

Back in Württemberg, *Reich* Bishop Müller's attempt to incorporate the

Württemberg, 3: 176-177, 203-208, and 216-221.

⁴² Württemberg Superior Church Council A. 3651, 23 April 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84a; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 199-200.

⁴³ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 232, 257, 272f, 285-286 n.23, 309-310 n.67, 454.

⁴⁴ Copy of *Gesetzblatt der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche*, Teil II, Nr. 56, 17 September 1934, 167, in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 406 n. 187, 493, 494.

Württemberg *Land* Church reached its climax in autumn 1934. First, on 3 September, the Reich Bishop reduced the status of the Württemberg church from *Land* Church to administrative province of the Reich church. Five days later, August Jäger led a sudden occupation of the offices of the Württemberg Superior Church Council. Accompanying him was a group of German Christians, including a new administrative commissar, the Berlin Consistory President Paul Walzer, a new clerical commissar, Ebingen pastor Eberhard Krauss, along with Steger and other leading German Christians. Members of the Superior Church Council linked to the Confessing Church were summarily dismissed and *Land* Bishop Wurm was suspended, pending a decision on his fate.⁴⁵

During those tumultuous days, Steger worked as an assistant to Administrative Commissar Walzer, and was appointed to the Superior Church Council on 10 September 1934, when it was reconstituted as a tool for the new masters of the Württemberg *Land* Church, the Reich church officials from Berlin and their juniors, the Württemberg German Christians.⁴⁶ Later in September, Steger accompanied Reich Bishop Müller to an important public reception in Ulm. Soon afterward, Steger was caught up in more controversy there, when the commissarial church government in Stuttgart appointed him to replace Prelate D.Dr. Konrad Hoffmann of Ulm, an adherent of the Confessing Church.⁴⁷

On 9 October 1934, a new and smaller "Protestant *Land* Synod" met, dominated by Steger and other German Christians appointed by the Reich church authorities following changes to the Württemberg church constitution.⁴⁸ The Synod promptly began to debate the fate of *Land* Bishop Wurm. Steger argued vigorously

⁴⁵ Pf. Reg. III C 27, 15 September 1934, and Württemberg Superior Church Council A. 8818, 5 October 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c.

⁴⁶ *Aktennotiz*, 2, and *Auszug aus der Chronik der Kirchenwirren von Dr. Joachim Gauger (Gotthard-Briefe)*, 1-3, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁴⁷ *Aktennotiz*, 2-3, and *Auszug aus der Chronik der Kirchenwirren von Dr. Joachim Gauger (Gotthard-Briefe)*, 3, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 597, n. 102, Band IV, 125, 130.

⁴⁸ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 351, 581-582.

and successfully for Wurm's forcible retirement, asserting that brute force was necessary to decide the issue. According to Steger, the confidence of Württemberg parishioners would only be regained once the insidious poison of Wurm was removed. Steger could only say of the *Land* Bishop: "He was too small for the important hour!"⁴⁹

While Steger expressed his frustration at the ongoing tumult in the churches—his reaction to the hardening of the church-political fronts was the outburst "Psychosis!"—he believed that eventually the *Reich* church would win over Württemberg particularism.⁵⁰ Within weeks, Steger's hopes were dashed. Two fatal blows ended the Reich Bishop's attempt to crush *Land* Bishop Wurm's intractable church government and to swallow the Württemberg church. First, in late October 1934, pressure from British, Scandinavian and French Protestants induced high-ranking National Socialists, Hitler included, to reinstate *Land* Bishop Wurm and other suspended church leaders. Then, in early November, the third district court in Stuttgart ruled that the occupation of the offices of the Superior Church Council undertaken by Jäger, Walzer, Steger and others had been based on illegal grounds. This substantiated the argument of Wurm and the other Confessing churchmen in the Württemberg church government, who had always asserted that there was no state of emergency necessitating the intervention of the Reich Bishop. As a result of the ruling, all actions associated with the *Reich* Bishop's intervention were repealed. *Land* Bishop Wurm was returned to his office, the previous Superior Church Council was reconstituted, the administrative commissar forced to return to Berlin, and the clerical commissar to return to his parish south of Stuttgart.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 592, 600-601. See also *Aktennotiz*, 3, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger, where Steger's words are recorded with a slight variation. The tone, however, is certainly in keeping with the description of a 4 October 1934 German Christian leadership meeting devoted to the subject of Wurm's future. Steger's contribution was not recorded, but his speech was characterized as "cynical and malicious." See Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 592.

⁵⁰ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 619.

⁵¹ The collapse of the Reich church attempt to incorporate the Württemberg *Land* Church is recorded in Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 524-672; Lächele, *Ein Volk, ein* 330

Steger was implicated in this ruling too, and compelled to give up both his illegal positions: first, on the Superior Church Council in Stuttgart, and second, in the place of the regional superintendent in Ulm. Additionally however, Steger was charged with the slander of Pastor Gotthilf Weber of Stuttgart, based on a verbal attack made during an October 1934 German Christian meeting in Ravensburg. The Special Court in Stuttgart eventually dropped that charge on 22 August 1935.⁵²

By then, the most dramatic portion of Steger's church-political career was over. *Land* Bishop Wurm had returned to his office, his authority strengthened by his survival of the onslaught from Berlin. Consequently, the German Christians became an outcast minority in Württemberg. Practically speaking, their status was not unlike that of members of the Confessing Church in Prussia, even if the German Christians had not been outlawed like their counterparts in the Confessing Church. Nonetheless, Steger's loss of both prestige and initiative did not divert him from his goal of creating a unitary Reich church employed in the service of National Socialism. For instance, Steger helped formulate a theological declaration for the Württemberg branch of the splinter Reich Movement of the German Christians. Released on 17 May 1935, the declaration enthusiastically affirmed the National Socialist form of political development as the God-given reality for the German nation.⁵³

Simultaneously, a report in the German Christian newspaper *Deutscher Sonntag* stated that Steger had assumed the "Office for Pastoral Questions" with the

Reich, ein Glaube, 62-64; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 170-175.

⁵² *Aktennotiz*, 3-4, and *Auszug aus der Chronik der Kirchenwirren von Dr. Joachim Gauger (Gotthard-Briefe)*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger, Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 635. Following his dismissal from his temporary positions in Stuttgart and Ulm, Steger secured a sick leave from his duties. Württemberg Superior Church Council A. 10430, 17 November 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b: *Aktennotiz*, 3, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁵³ Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg und der Nationalsozialismus: eine Dokumentation zum Kirchenkampf*, vol. 4, *Die Intakte Landeskirche 1935-1936* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1977), 680-681; Lächele, *Ein Volk, ein Reich, ein Glaube*, 85-86.

more radical National Church Movement of German Christians.⁵⁴ In response, the *Land* Bishop inquired about Steger's church-political status. Steger replied by affirming his formal independence from both the Reich Movement and National Church Movement of the German Christians, but stating that his duty as a German Christian was to maintain neutrality. In short, he would remain true to his old friends in the Reich Movement and serve the Reich and National Church movements with speeches whenever they asked him. Always at the ready to mediate for unity, Steger saw himself as a '*pontifex*' for the German Christians, a curious title given his anti-Catholic polemics.⁵⁵ From his position between the two wings of the movement, Karl Steger continued to work for the German Christians in Württemberg up to and throughout the Second World War, until the collapse of the movement in the wake of the destruction of the National Socialist regime. Always, his efforts were motivated by the twin beliefs in National Socialism and German Christianity.⁵⁶

Those same convictions formed the basis for Steger's parish ministry as well, creating an ideological continuity within Steger's career at different levels of the Württemberg *Land* Church. In contrast to this ideological continuity, however, was a methodological discontinuity. At the *Land* Church level, Steger was an insider, exploiting his church-political positions and his connections with other German Christian leaders in Stuttgart and Berlin. In the church district of Ravensburg, Steger developed a strong German Christian following in Friedrichshafen, but was otherwise the outsider, ostracized by the district clergymen and rejected by many of his parishioners.

Steger's support of the 1934 invasion of the Württemberg *Land* Church by the Reich Bishop and his Prussian associates was badly received by other pastors in the Ravensburg district, who rejected commissar rule in the church. In a terse note

⁵⁴ *Aktennotiz*, 5, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁵⁵ *Aktennotiz*, 6, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; Schäfer *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 4: 715.

⁵⁶ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 3: 42.

to Clerical Commissar Krauss, Superintendent Hermann Ströle of Ravensburg and his assistant, Pastor Ludwig Schmidt of Weingarten, declared their loyalty to *Land* Bishop Wurm and their refusal to deal with the commissar church government. In doing so, they sided with the overwhelming majority of pastors and parishes in Württemberg, not to mention the Tübingen Lutheran theological faculty, who also rejected the tumultuous takeover of the Württemberg church. Ströle and Schmidt took pains to point out that their opposition was not directed against the Third Reich or even the Reich church idea, implying that the illegality of the takeover and the ill treatment of Wurm were the catalysts for their decision.⁵⁷

Subsequently, when the commissars sent a circular letter to all Württemberg clergymen, seeking acceptance for the German Christian replacements of suspended clergymen, the Ravensburg superintendent replied forcefully. While he recognized that ordination vows and pastoral duties ultimately bound the clergymen to the gospel and the Lord Jesus Christ, not to church law or individual leaders, Ströle reiterated that Württemberg clergymen supported *Land* Bishop Wurm. In doing so, Ströle argued, the pastors possessed the guarantee that they were in agreement with the gospel of Christ and with their consciences. If however the pastors were to follow the commissars appointed by the Reich Bishop, they possessed no such guarantee.⁵⁸ Though understated, this was a clear reference to the Ravensburg clergymen's decision to base their church-political position on the authority of Scripture and the Reformation Confessions, a position they had in common with Confessing Church pastors in Nauen and Pirmas.

From his parish in Friedrichshafen, Karl Steger defended his participation in the Württemberg church struggle. Three weeks after Jäger's interference and publication of the emergency decree on 15 April 1934, Steger spoke at the

⁵⁷ Superintendent Ströle in Ravensburg and Pastor Schmidt in Weingarten to Pastor Krauss of Ebinger, 20 September 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c.

⁵⁸ "Auf dem Erlaß des kommissar. Oberkirchenrats vom 24.9 [...]," Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c. This language was similar to that used in a 16 September 1934 pulpit pronouncement, "Zur Verwendung im Gottesdienst am 16.9.," protesting the suspension of the Land Bishop. This pronouncement exists in three separate copies, all with notations, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c.

Protestant Men's Association in Friedrichshafen, where he underscored his primary goal to establish a unitary Reich church. He rejected accusations that the Reich Bishop, Reich church and the German Christians wanted to do away with the traditional church confessions, and lamented that the German Christians had been portrayed as heretics and fanatics. Steger summed up the work of the German Christians as a fight for the legacy of Martin Luther, captured in the slogan: "One God, one Christ, one *Volk*."⁵⁹

When the Reich Bishop's unlawful incorporation of the Württemberg *Land* Church collapsed, Steger lost the protection of the commissars in Stuttgart and suffered the effects of the ill will of his fellow clergymen in the Ravensburg district. On 29 November 1934, local pastors gathered to discuss Steger and other German Christian clergymen in their midst. As adherents of the Confessing community in Württemberg, Superintendent Ströle and the Ravensburg clergymen were angered by the participation of their colleagues in the illegal commissarial church government. While originally, five pastors from the Ravensburg district joined the German Christians, two had abandoned the movement after the Sport Palace affair of November 1933 and another had already renounced the radical German Christian leadership and declared himself for Wurm. Though a complete separation from the German Christians was preferred, Ströle and the other clergymen decided that a basic affinity with German Christian reform ideas was not enough to exclude two pastors from their fellowship.⁶⁰ In contrast, however, Ströle and his pastors unanimously rejected readmitting Steger into their midst. They described his attitude as overbearing and disrespectful towards the *Land* Bishop. They deemed his church-political combat methods dishonourable, irresponsible and contrary to the spirit of the church. Finally, they concluded that Steger had every intention of continuing to adhere to the fraudulent, dictatorial church government of the Reich Bishop, and that the insincerity of his character was so great that any further

⁵⁹ Jag, *Karl Steger*, 13-14, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁶⁰ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 4: 120.

confidence in him was impossible.⁶¹ Damning as those words were, they reflected not only the pastors' disapproval of Steger's church politics, but also their distrust of his disagreeable character. For Steger, holding to his deep commitment to German Christianity cost him both his relationship with the Württemberg church government and with his local circle of clerical colleagues.

For years, this remained the situation between Steger and the rest of the clergymen in the Ravensburg district. According to Steger, late in 1934 District Superintendent Ströle had instructed him to keep his distance from all clerical and church assemblies of the district, because his church-political activities were universally rejected and his presence intolerable. Steger claimed that he received no invitations to clerical gatherings of any kind after November 1934, nor did the other pastors attempt to discuss the division with him. At one point, *Land* Bishop Wurm tried to invite Steger to a gathering of pastors from the Bodensee region, but Steger refused because the clergymen of the Ravensburg district had not changed their position towards him. Thus, while Steger remained the Ravensburg district representative in the *Land* Synod throughout the Third Reich, he was ostracized by his clerical colleagues.⁶²

Steger also faced opposition from the lay people of the Friedrichshafen parish, particularly from the local chapter of the Protestant Men's Association. The Men's Association, which met monthly, held lectures and discussions that often revolved around church-political themes and regularly affirmed German nationalism. However, its leaders consistently affirmed the eternal Scriptures as the witness of Jesus Christ, and placed salvation through Christ alone, complete with the hope of eternal life, ahead of the pressing demand for service to the nation and state.⁶³

⁶¹ Ibid., 119-120.

⁶² Pastor Karl Steger in Friedrichshafen to Dekan Schnaufer, 4 November 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger; Schmid to OKR, 10 January 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

⁶³ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, July 1935, Protestant Men's Association of Friedrichshafen circular letter, October 1935, and Annual Report of the Friedrichshafen Protestant

Steger commanded a significant following among the other large church-political group in Friedrichshafen, the local branch of German Christians. Like the Men's Association, the German Christians held monthly meetings, often attended by over 250 people. Karl Steger was their patron, though not officially their leader. He often made speeches in their meetings and arranged for prominent German Christians to visit.

One of Steger's most significant local speeches was a May 1935 consideration of the work, prospects and goals of the German Christian movement. He began defensively, with a denial that German Christians were in combat against either the Roman Catholic or Protestant churches. Instead, he claimed German Christians were only struggling to deepen and enliven the National Socialist German nation. By uniting their Germanism with their Christianity, they could express their two-fold belief in Jesus Christ and the future of the German nation.⁶⁴

To that end, Steger listed principles by which the German Christians could achieve their goal of a unitary Reich church: faithfulness to the nation and the fatherland, faithfulness in parish work, readiness to explain the work of the German Christians, and the maintenance of a spirit of objectivity, co-operation and honour. While the blessings of the German Christian efforts might not be visible at the time, Steger concluded, it was enough to know that they were serving their nation and fatherland—the German soul—just as Christ had done.⁶⁵

Under Steger's care, the local branch of German Christians in Friedrichshafen grew into a zealous outpost for the movement in the Bodensee region. In 1935, the group withdrew from the Reich Movement of German Christians and drafted its own theological program, known as the

Men's Association, 1935 and 1938. Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d; *Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Friedrichshafen*, 1957, 17-18, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen AII2.

⁶⁴ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, July 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

⁶⁵ The meeting closed with a three-fold *Sieg-Heil* to the *Führer* and Reich Bishop, and Steger reported many applications for membership in the local branch of German Christians. *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, July 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 54d.

Oberlandprogramm. Most likely, this action occurred under Steger's guiding hand, since it mirrored many of Steger's extreme church-political views. The very act of independence by the Friedrichshafeners occurred not long after Steger's own personal withdrawal from the Reich movement and his commitment to support all German Christian groups. Just as Steger embraced more radical National Church movement leanings, so the *Oberlandprogramm* sounded the same note. Like Steger, the Friedrichshafen German Christians hailed Hitler in the highest style, thanking God for the divine miracle of Germany's national development that he had produced in the miracle year, 1933, by sending the *Führer*.⁶⁶

Just how radical the local branch of the German Christians in Friedrichshafen was growing became clear from their attack on the Confessing Church and Württemberg *Land* Church leadership. In April 1937, a Friedrichshafen German Christian circular letter characterized the Confessing Front⁶⁷ as a "popish orthodoxy, literalistic Christians, political reactionaries, Jews and associates of Jews."⁶⁸ *Land* Bishop Wurm demanded an explanation from Steger about his contribution to the circular and his opinion of its assertions.⁶⁹ Steger insisted that he had not written, dictated or inspired the article, adding that the Friedrichshafen German Christian group had its own existence. Steger cavalierly downplayed his

⁶⁶ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, 11, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁶⁷ The terminology of the Confessing Church varied somewhat, especially in the intact land churches whose governments were not controlled by German Christians. There, "Confessional Association" (*Bekennnisgemeinschaft*) was often used in lieu of "Confessing Church" (*Bekennende Kirche*), since the official church government adhered to the Confessing orientation, and no claim to form a separate church was necessary. "Confessing Front" was a pejorative used by German Christians and National Socialists who refused to recognize the Confessing Church's claim to be the sole legitimate church in Germany. Helmreich, "Nature and Structure of the Confessing Church," 406 n. 2; Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 563.

⁶⁸ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, 14, *Aktennotiz*, 7, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger. On the German Christian practise of slandering opponents with Jewish labels, see Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 31-38.

⁶⁹ Land Bishop A.3873, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b. In fact, the piece was taken from the *Flugblatt des Bundes für Deutsches Christentum*. See *Aktennotiz*, 7, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

role within the group, describing himself only as a regular member and minister there. When the pompous laymen of the branch happened to cross the line with their views, however, Steger did not feel compelled to cut his ties with them.⁷⁰

Steger stirred up other controversies in his local work for the German Christians in Friedrichshafen. In May 1935, Steger organized the Württemberg tour for Reich Bishop Müller, complete with a meeting in Friedrichshafen. When Steger scheduled a visit of the *Reich* Bishop to his Friedrichshafen parish, the centre of German Christian sentiment in the Ravensburg district, it met with the direct opposition of Ravensburg District Superintendent Ströle and eleven other pastors in the district. Ströle and the eleven wrote a joint letter to the *Reich* Bishop, hoping to dissuade him from coming to their district by arguing that Müller's visit would only disrupt the ecclesiastical peace in their remote church district and disturb the national community there. They declared that the great majority of their parishioners had rejected the force and injustice used in the name of the Reich Bishop during his interference in Württemberg, and wanted no part of him now either.⁷¹

Ströle's efforts did not prevent the fulfillment of Steger's plans for the *Reich* Bishop. Müller came to Friedrichshafen, where Steger hosted an assembly for him and introduced him as the bearer of the idea of a centralized Reich church. Steger added—optimistically, given the failure of Müller's efforts from the previous year—that the Friedrichshafen German Christians were convinced of the ultimate victory of the *Reich* church in Germany.⁷² By bringing *Reich* Bishop Müller to his parish, Steger was able to use his participation in the church struggle in Stuttgart and Berlin to further his local campaign on behalf of the German Christian Movement and to propagate his argument for the creation of a unitary *Reich* church for National Socialist Germany.

⁷⁰ *Aktennotiz*, 8, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁷¹ Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 4: 311.

⁷² *Aktennotiz*, 5, 9, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

The year 1935 also marked the beginning of Steger's work on behalf of the German Christians in the Bavarian city of Lindau, just east of Friedrichshafen on the Bodensee. Since Lindau was in the Bavarian *Land* Church, Steger's actions inevitably led to conflict with both the Bavarian church authorities and the Württemberg Superior Church Council. On 18 June 1935, Superior Church Council in Stuttgart notified Ravensburg Superintendent Ströle about a report from the Bavarians concerning Steger. Apparently, Steger had conducted an unauthorized German Christian worship service in the municipal concert hall in Lindau. About 350 people attended the event, which took place at the same time as the local Lutheran service. Not only was it illegal for Steger to serve in another *Land* Church without sanction, but he also baptized the child of a German Christian couple after permission had been expressly denied by the Lindau parish pastor.⁷³

Steger tried half-heartedly to justify his action, arguing that he had notified the parish in Lindau two days prior to the service and that he had merely wanted to save the family the expense of travelling to Friedrichshafen for the baptism. The Württemberg Superior Church Council responded with a primer in Bavarian church law, explaining that it demanded express permission from the parish pastor for any non-Bavarian clergymen to visit a Bavarian parish. Though he had acted in clear contravention of that church law, Steger tried to shift the blame onto the Lindau German Christians. He explained that he had been asked to hold a religious festival by the 250-member chapter of the German Christian movement in Lindau. He also claimed that he only learned about the conflict with the official church service when he arrived in Lindau, due to confusion about the time.⁷⁴

That this was only an attempt to evade responsibility became obvious when Steger did not cease conducting German Christian services or performing pastoral

⁷³ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.6046 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 18 June 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b; *Aktennotiz*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁷⁴ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.6046 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 18 June 1935, Württemberg Superior Church Council A.7385 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 23 July 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

functions in Lindau. On August 8, 1935, he married a German Christian couple in the municipal concert hall, with Lindau civic authorities and NSDAP representatives in attendance.⁷⁵ The Sunday before, a leading German Christian from Stuttgart, Dr. Schairer, had also conducted an unauthorized German Christian service in Lindau.⁷⁶ Then, in mid-October 1935, the German Christians of Lindau-Aeschach initiated their own confirmation classes, with Steger providing the instruction for nine children from various churches in Lindau. Both the Bavarian and Württemberg church authorities demanded explanations for the illegal confirmation instruction. Under this pressure, Steger finally promised to conclude his pastoral activities in Lindau once the confirmation class was completed.⁷⁷

Then, on 27 November 1935, almost immediately after Steger's promise to curtail his illegal work in Lindau, he spoke at another assembly there sponsored by the Reich Movement of the German Christians. In his speech, Steger compared German Christians to the "old fighters" of the NSDAP, who were looked down upon as dreamers in the earliest years of the movement. As those champions of the new Germany won the day, so too Steger believed that from the German South would begin a new march forward for the souls of Germans. Steger's goal was simple: "one God, one Christ, one German soul." More radical than other speeches he made in Württemberg, Steger went so far as to embrace the pagan German Faith movement, led by Tübingen Professor Jakob Wilhelm Hauer.⁷⁸ Reacting to criticism that the German Christians were edging to near to the pagan group, Steger declared that German Christians would work together with Hauer and NSDAP

⁷⁵ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.8473 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 23 August 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b; *Aktennotiz*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁷⁶ *Aktennotiz*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁷⁷ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.11644 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 22 November 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b; *Aktennotiz*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁷⁸ On the place of Hauer and the German Faith Movement, please see Scholder, *Churches and the Third Reich*, 1: 451-453.

ideologue Alfred Rosenberg, as long as their goals were similar. Steger affirmed Rosenberg's thinking in the *Myth of the 20th Century* as "throughout true," arguing other Protestants had said the same things themselves!⁷⁹

Thus, breaking his word, Steger continued his illegal German Christian activity in Bavaria. On 28 July 1936, the Bavarian *Land* Church informed the Württemberg Superior Church Council of more worship services conducted by Steger in Lindau. As late as April 1937, the *Deutscher Sonntag* reported a joint trip by Drs. Immanuel Schairer and Karl Steger to the German Christians in Lindau-Aeschach, and commented on the rich and selfless ministry of Dr. Steger in the city.⁸⁰ Entitled "The Watch on the Bodensee," the article described Steger's spirited words. Demanding "truth and justice", he protested the recent visit of Dr. Otto Dibelius (Berlin General Superintendent and enemy of German Christians) to the stately palace church in Friedrichshafen. Steger insisted on a reciprocal service in which a *Land* bishop sympathetic to the German Christians be permitted to preach in the same pulpit.⁸¹ Despite the protests of the Württemberg and Bavarian church governments, Steger remained an active speaker and organizer on behalf of the German Christian Movement throughout the Bodensee region.

In addition to all that speaking and organizing, the other important avenue through which Steger dispensed his German Christian and pro-National Socialist propaganda was the *Friedrichshafen Protestant Parish Newsletter*, which he edited from 1930 through 1941, when it ceased publication due to paper rationing. In April 1933, Steger greeted Hitler's ascent to the chancellorship with glee, declaring that the German nation had experienced a great piece of history in the preceding months. What was old had collapsed, and something new had taken its place. In pretence of keeping clear of politics, Steger maintained that it was not for the parish

⁷⁹ Helmut Witetschek, *Die kirchliche Lage in Bayern nach den Regierungspräsidentenberichten 1933-1943*, I, *Regierungsbezirk Oberbayern* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald, 1966), 114-115.

⁸⁰ *Aktennotiz*, 4, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁸¹ The local newsletter of the Friedrichshafen German Christians also reported on the assembly. *Aktennotiz*, 4, 8, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

newsletter to go into all the details of the events or, above all, to criticize them. He was not averse, however, from writing about the joyful view into the future and summoning his readers to participate fully in the national renewal of the National Socialists.⁸²

Two months later, Steger used the parish newsletter to describe the many recent changes in Germany: flags fluttered, celebrations erupted, millions had new hope for a better future for their beloved fatherland, and all because the modest, forthright, man of the people, whom millions had already viewed with full confidence for years, had become the *Führer* of the nation.⁸³ In the edition of November 1933, Steger celebrated the withdrawal of Germany from the League of Nations and portrayed the upcoming national election as an opportunity for the nation to display its approval of the National Socialist state.⁸⁴

In virtually every edition of his parish newsletter, Steger praised the many new developments in the Hitler state, including the suppression of the so-called Röhm Putsch in June 1934, the return of the Saar in January 1935, and the rearming of Germany in March 1935.⁸⁵ In September, 1937, Steger proclaimed that what Germany had become again was due to the Lord God and the man whom he had sent in Germany's final hour, Adolf Hitler.⁸⁶ In January 1938, Steger deflected criticism of the National Socialist regime's religious orientation, asserting that it was an injustice to hold that National Socialism was anti-Christian.⁸⁷ Finally, in the edition of May 1940, Steger reiterated his opinion that to Germans and to Christians, the coming of the *Führer* was obviously not a matter of chance—rather,

⁸² *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, April 1933, 3, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁸³ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, June 1933, 2, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁸⁴ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, November 1933, 3, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁸⁵ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, July 1934, p. 4, February 1935, p. 3; April 1935, p. 2, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen; Jag, *Karl Steger*, 36, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

⁸⁶ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, 12, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

the Lord God had brought it about by his will and his power.⁸⁸ Well into the Second World War, Steger used his parish newsletter to drive home his convictions that God had appointed Hitler as his instrument for the salvation of Germany and that German Protestants should eagerly participate in the National Socialist movement.⁸⁹

Even as Steger used his speeches, German Christian religious services and his parish newsletter to mobilize parishioners in support of the Reich church and the National Socialist state, three factors limited his effectiveness: his poor health, the opposition of *Land Church* and local clergymen, and the ravages of the Second World War, which drew energy away from the church-political conflict in favour of more vital parish concerns.

One of the constants of Steger's career in Friedrichshafen was his poor health. A heart condition alluded to as early as 1929 restricted his duties severely in 1931, and forced him to take leaves of absence in late 1934, 1937 and again in 1942, 1943 and 1944.⁹⁰ Over time, his inability, or unwillingness, to exert himself on behalf of his parishioners created a truly immense workload for the senior pastor in Friedrichshafen, Eugen Schmid. In May 1942, Schmid lamented the lack of pastoral care in his parish. Retired pastor Duisberg was still recovering from a hernia operation, Pastor Steger (whose heart Schmid described as "four-fifths spent") was about to leave for a cure at a sanatorium in Konstanz, and Pastor Spellenberg of Fischbach-Manzell was about to be called up into military service. Schmid called for the Württemberg church authorities to send some pastoral help to Manzell, asking in particular for a clergyman who could get around the large parish

⁸⁸ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, 12-13, *Aktennotiz*, 10, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 17 November 1934, 3 June 1937 and 22 March 1943; Pastor Schmid of Friedrichshafen to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 10 January 1944; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 14 April 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

on a bicycle.⁹¹

Two years later, the personnel shortage was even worse, not least because of Karl Steger's health, and Eugen Schmid's workload was becoming entirely unmanageable. Reporting to the Württemberg Superior Church Council in January 1944, Schmid complained that Steger had taken his doctor's instructions to "do what gives you pleasure!" to mean that he should perform no work after 4 p.m..

According to Schmid, since the previous spring, Steger had given no religious instruction in the local school, nor had he been involved in any confirmation classes or voluntary Christian instruction regularly offered in the parish. Steger had refused to take part in activities in the youth group, the men's association, or the women's aid, and conducted no Bible studies, hospital visitation, or funerals during the winter of 1943 to 1944. At one point, on top of all his other duties, Pastor Schmid conducted seven funerals in ten days. Steger had attended only one meeting of the Friedrichshafen parish council over the previous four years and on average, Schmid reported, Steger had given only one sermon a month in Friedrichshafen, two in the months with church feasts.⁹²

In addition to these medical absences and periods of unproductivity, Steger's many positions in the *Land* and Reich church often kept him away from Friedrichshafen, decreasing further the amount of energy he could give to local church activities. Already in November 1933, Steger asked the *Land* Church committee for a vicar for Friedrichshafen to help him, citing his heavy responsibilities in Stuttgart as the grounds for his request.⁹³ His absence from Friedrichshafen during the turning point of the Württemberg church struggle, in

⁹¹ Pastor Schmid of Friedrichshafen to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 15 May 1942, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53a.

⁹² Pastor Eugen Schmid in Friedrichshafen to Württemberg Superior Church Council, 10 January 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

⁹³ Württemberg Superior Church Council O. 12061 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 30 November 1933; Superintendent Ströle in Ravensburg to the Württemberg Superior Church Council and Regional Superintendent's Office, Ulm, 12 December 1933, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53c.

October 1934, necessitated the appointment of another vicar to replace him. Not only did Steger's absence diminish his own ability to propagate his German Christian and pro-National Socialist beliefs, but also, the Superior Church Council and Superintendent Ströle regularly appointed vicars who diametrically opposed Steger's church-political position, undoing some of his efforts.⁹⁴

In the vital area of religious instruction, Steger encountered the direct opposition of the *Land* Church, the substitute clergymen of his parish and the Friedrichshafen parish council. For instance, in August 1936, someone in Steger's parish sent *Land* Bishop Wurm a typed copy of a new confirmation booklet Steger had been working on. According to the *Land* Bishop, it not only altered the Württemberg church confirmation practise but also amounted to an intolerable abbreviation of the Württemberg Confession.⁹⁵ In reply to Wurm's demand for an explanation, Steger retorted that the booklet was only a draft and that after discussions with parents in the parish, the old booklet and practise remained in place.⁹⁶ Whether this was the truth or an expedient way out of trouble is not clear, but at the very least, Steger was forced by opponents in Friedrichshafen to account for his unorthodox ideas.

Steger's attempt to misuse confirmation instruction for the furtherance of his anti-confessional brand of Protestantism was not an isolated incident. Three young curates working in Friedrichshafen during one of Steger's absences testified that Steger's teaching of children regularly aroused controversy in his parish. In May 1938, they wrote to the *Land* Church authorities, concerned about the effect that Steger's impending return to the parish after one of his medical absences would have

⁹⁴ Superior Church Councillor Walzer to Pastor Karl Steger in Friedrichshafen, 10 September 1934; Steger to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 11 September 1934; Württemberg Superior Church Council A. 9462 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 29 October 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 84c.

⁹⁵ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.8866 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 19 August 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

⁹⁶ Pastor Steger in Friedrichshafen to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 21 August 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

on Protestants in Fischbach, a suburb of Friedrichshafen. The curate who had most recently substituted for Steger feared that if Steger resumed the religious instruction in Fischbach as expected, the German Christian pastor would try to use the opportunity to win over the community for his church-political cause. At the very least, the three curates believed he would seriously divide Fischbach, and proposed alternate solutions to keep him away.⁹⁷

If what occurred in the following year in Steger's confirmation class is any indication, the apprehension of the three young clergymen was well founded. In a class just after the outbreak of war in 1939, Steger asked his pupils one of the assigned questions pertaining to the greatest concern of the present day. One young girl answered that the greatest concern of the present was for the German *Volk* to emerge victorious from the war that had been forced upon it. Steger agreed, asserting that although the confirmation booklet had said something else, the girl had given the only right answer for the present day. Then, in the next edition of the parish newsletter, Steger used the exchange in an attempt to arouse the devotion of his parishioners to Adolf Hitler, their "eternally significant" *Führer*. Describing the relationship between the German *Volk* and Hitler, Steger announced: "What God has joined together [...] humans would not separate!"⁹⁸ In doing so, Steger twisted Jesus' advocacy of human marriage, which serves as a biblical symbol of the relationship between Christ and his bride, the church, into a symbol of the relationship between a totalitarian dictator and his subjects. As a champion of the cause of German nationalism with little regard for scriptural or confessional authority, Steger was indeed a dangerous presence among the impressionable minds of his confirmation class.

⁹⁷ The three young curates proposed that the Confessing Church pastor in Langenargen, just beyond Friedrichshafen, teach on one afternoon and that one of the vicars from Ravensburg could do the rest. Another alternative they proposed was the appointment of a new, fully qualified curate to tend to the parish on a full-time basis. Whatever solution the Superior Church Council decided on, the three hoped it did not involve Steger teaching the children of Fischbach. Curate Hauff to an unidentified Superior Church Councillor, on behalf of Curates Fleck and Fritz, 16 May 1938, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 53b.

⁹⁸ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, p. 13, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger. 346

In spite of many absences from Friedrichshafen because of poor health or church-political duties, in spite of the efforts of the *Land* Church and some of the other district clergymen, Steger maintained a high profile in Friedrichshafen throughout the National Socialist era. Despite the divisive effects of his ideas and activities, Steger retained much of his support in Friedrichshafen throughout the Second World War. In February 1945, fears for Steger's position were growing among his followers, given the clear signs that the National Socialist era and German Christian Movement were coming to an end. A petition circulated through Friedrichshafen-Ailingen calling on the *Land* Bishop to ensure that Steger would remain the pastor and religious instructor in their parish. Over 300 individuals and families signed the petition, some with comments: "Judge not, lest you be judged." Another threatened to withdraw his entire family from the church if Steger was "unjustly" dismissed.⁹⁹

In fact, the only initiative in 1945 to remove Steger from his post in Friedrichshafen was his own. Steger himself requested a transfer to a small parish close to a suitable doctor, in order to lighten his load (!) and ameliorate his worsening heart condition.¹⁰⁰ Almost a full year dragged on with no response from the Superior Church Council. Then, on 15 December 1946, the Friedrichshafen pastor made a pulpit declaration that changed the situation entirely. After a Sunday morning service, Steger attempted to justify to his parishioners his activities during the era of the church struggle. He admitted that during 1933 and 1934, he had indeed struggled for a unitary Reich church, but claimed that since 1935, he had expended all his efforts on behalf of the *Land* Church. This he supported with a letter from *Land* Bishop Wurm thanking him for his loyal service over a long period of time, and noting that Steger had intervened successfully with the Württemberg

⁹⁹ "Die Unterzeichneten bitten den Herrn Landesbischof...", February 1945, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

¹⁰⁰ 1st Pastor's Office in Friedrichshafen to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 4 December 1945. Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

political authorities on behalf of the church.¹⁰¹

The Friedrichshafen parish council quarrelled that Steger's declaration was both a misrepresentation of events after 1935 and a damaging statement bound to divide the parish once again. Consequently, they finally decided to request Steger's dismissal, not because of his German Christian views of pro-National Socialist attitude, but because he publicly lied about his past and threatened to stir up more trouble in Friedrichshafen.¹⁰² Technically, these were not grounds on which the Superior Church Council could dismiss Steger, so in the end, Stuttgart was forced to construct a case against Steger. For that purpose, church administrators began to delve into Steger's participation in the church struggle, quickly finding ample proof of Steger's divisiveness and theological heresy. After official hearings and a fruitless appeal by Steger, the Superior Church Council pensioned him off in January 1948.¹⁰³

Summing up this description of Steger's career, a closer analysis of Protestant nationalism and its effect upon the ecclesiastical career of Dr. Karl Steger offers a window into motivations, aims and methods employed by Protestants in the

¹⁰¹ Friedrichshafen Parish Council to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 27 December 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger. In fact, there is a grain of truth to Steger's outlandish claim. In late 1935 and early 1936, Steger was active (as a member of the three-person Land Church Committee) in attempts to mediate settlements in district conflicts involving other radical German Christians. In at least three cases—those of Superintendent Megerlin of Neuenbürg, Superintendent Rieder of Schorndorf and the Rottweil German Christian group—Steger tried in vain to convince the German Christians to moderate their demands, then sided with the Land Bishop in actions against them. Interestingly, Confessing Church pastors in Württemberg were critical of Steger's apparent moderation and Land Bishop Wurm's willingness to work with him. For instance, Pastor Mörike of Kirchheim/Teck referred to Steger as a "heretic" in a critical letter to Wurm. Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg*, 4: 143, 147-148, 160-161, 165, 366, 459.

¹⁰² Friedrichshafen Parish Council to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 27 December 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

¹⁰³ Württemberg Superior Church Council A.1570 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 4 February 1947, Land Bishop Wurm to retired State Undersecretary Dr. Gutbrod, Friedrichshafen, 10 February 1947, Württemberg Superior Church Council A.2161 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 18 February 1947, Württemberg Superior Church Council A.12078 to the District Superintendent's Office, Ravensburg, 2 October 1947, Württemberg Superior Church Council A.13415 to the Württemberg Land Church Court of Complaint, 31 October 1947, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Friedrichshafen, Steger.

church struggle in the parishes. Steger believed deeply in moral and ecclesiastical renewal as an aspect of the broader National Socialist renewal of German society. For the Friedrichshafen pastor, Hitler was the key to German renewal and a figure worthy of adulation. Along with a theology of orders that understood race as a divine institution, Steger's belief in Hitler and the future of Germany drove him to work fervently for the creation of a united, centralized and authoritarian Reich church modelled after the Third Reich itself. Ultimately, Steger hoped that Christianity, or at least Protestantism, would serve to deepen and strengthen the National Socialist political revolution sweeping across Germany.

While Steger carried those ideological goals with him wherever he laboured, his methods and success varied considerably from his role as *Land* Synod President and German Christian leader in Stuttgart to his role as parish pastor and local organizer for the German Christians in Friedrichshafen and area. Working as an insider in the *Land* Church government, Steger assisted the illegal attempt to incorporate the Württemberg church into Ludwig Müller's Reich church. He rose briefly to prominence in the Württemberg Superior Church Council and the Reich Church Synod, but soon fell from grace in the collapse of Müller's attempted takeover.

Ultimately, Steger came closer to achieving his goals as a pastor in Friedrichshafen than as a *Land* Synod President in Stuttgart. For one, in Friedrichshafen there was no opposing force as strong as *Land* Bishop Wurm. Moreover, Steger's involvement in the *Land* Church government and the German Christian Movement and his influential character and broad political experience made him a formidable figure in the Ravensburg church district. Though other clergymen condemned his unchristian political methods and ostracized him, Steger worked with local and regional German Christian groups to spread his vision of a revived and National Socialist form of Protestantism in Germany. Though chronically ill and often also absent for church-political reasons, Steger successfully attracted a significant number of parishioners in Friedrichshafen—perhaps 300—who supported him, even after the fall of National Socialism in 1945.

Steger's influence not only dominated the church struggle in his Friedrichshafen parish, but also helped advance other German Christian groups that created conflict in the parishes of Leutkirch, Isny and Waldsee. Pastors in those three parishes remained loyal to *Land* Bishop Wurm and worked with *Land* Church officials to thwart the noisy demands of local German Christians to subject their churches to a National Socialist form of Protestantism. Their successful defeat of local German Christian agitation contrasted both with Karl Steger's achievements on behalf of the German Christian Movement in Friedrichshafen and with the absence of significant church-political upheaval in other parishes in the Ravensburg church district.

Leutkirch was an especially important parish for German Christians, who hoped to turn the city into their centre of strength in the *Allgäu* region, west of Ravensburg.¹⁰⁴ To that end, prominent speakers came to spread the nationalist-Protestant vision of the German Christians, including Pastor Griesinger of Ulm, Superintendent Megerlin of Neuenbürg and Karl Steger. Griesinger appeared in Leutkirch during or before February 1935, and spoke to the German Christians there on themes like "Blood, Race, *Volk*, God."¹⁰⁵ Megerlin arrived in August 1935 with the message "We German Christians and the Bible."¹⁰⁶ Subsequently, Steger spoke in October 1935 on "Our Current Struggle, a Legacy of Luther."¹⁰⁷ That same month, Griesinger held morning services in Leutkirch, where he spoke to roughly 60 people on the themes "No Standstill in Religious Things" and "The Book of Nature," in which he departed from Scripture and attempted to present a reflection

¹⁰⁴ Willi Eberle, *400 Jahre Evangelische Gemeinde in Leutkirch (1546-1946)*, Sondernummer Trinitatis 1946, *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Leutkirch und seine Diaspora*, p. 30, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Leutkirch A II 1.

¹⁰⁵ German Christian Group in Leutkirch to the pastor in Leutkirch, 18 February 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e; Pastor Griesinger of Ulm to Pastor Siegle of Isny, 15 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹⁰⁶ German Christian notice, August 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

¹⁰⁷ German Christian postcard notice, October 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

on God out of nature and Greek and Roman gods.¹⁰⁸ In June 1936, Steger returned to Leutkirch to lead an Upper Swabian German Christian assembly¹⁰⁹ and both Megerlin and Griesinger led Easter celebrations for the Leutkirch German Christians in March 1937, even though Griesinger had been forced into retirement in late 1936 on moral and church-political grounds.¹¹⁰

The Württemberg *Land* Church authorities responded to this influx of German Christian propaganda by sending speakers of their own to Leutkirch, but when Superior Church Councillors Pressel and Eichler arrived, they soon encountered vocal protests against Leutkirch parish pastor Theodor Metzger, a veteran of 35 years in the pastorate.¹¹¹ One of the loudest critics was Mrs. Welte, who repeatedly wrote Stuttgart complaining about both Metzger and *Land* Bishop Wurm's government. In July 1935, she described the "Confessing Front" as "deceitful, treasonous, separatist and reactionary" and its efforts as "long since no

¹⁰⁸ Wolfgang Cramer to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 14 October 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

¹⁰⁹ *Reich* Movement of the German Christians in Leutkirch to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 4 June 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

¹¹⁰ Invitation from the Leutkirch National Church German Christian group, March 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e. Griesinger, a youth pastor from Ulm, had been censured for having an affair with a 22-year old during a children's vacation camp and a youth sport camp he led in 1933. After the Württemberg Superior Church Council found out in 1935, it started investigating Griesinger and found that he had been an active Marxist or Communist before 1933, then made an unlikely conversion to National Socialism after the national celebrations on 1 May 1933. More than that, Griesinger drifted into the National Church German Christian Movement, the racial-national branch of the wider movement, where he held unauthorized meetings, worked against his own *Land* Church and advocated a German racial "third church" to stand over and above the two existing confessions. As a result, he was forced into retirement in December 1936. Despite this, Manfred Müller of the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church Youth Office, who worked with Griesinger during this period, later claimed that Griesinger had not been a difficult partner, even though Müller recognized that Griesinger had moved decisively into the National Church wing of the German Christian Movement. Württemberg Superior Church Council to the *Reich* and Prussian Minister for Church Affairs, 22 February 1936, and Württemberg Protestant Church Disciplinary Court, "Decision of 9 December 1936..." Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e; Manfred Müller, *Jugend in Zerreißprobe. Persönliche Erinnerungen und Dokumente eines Jugendpfarrers im Dritten Reich* (Stuttgart: Quell Verlag, 1982), 19-21.

¹¹¹ Superior Church Councillor Pressel to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 2 March 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

longer Christian and not Protestant, but Jesuitical and Communistic.”¹¹²

After a request for more information from Wurm,¹¹³ Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg investigated church conditions in Leutkirch. He quickly discovered, however, that even Metzger’s church-political enemies were not so personally antipathetic to his ministry that Metzger needed to be transferred to some other parish. In fact, Ströle argued that the agitation against Metzger was led by “a couple of women,” and quoted the mayor, who declared that the whole business was “a personal matter of a few individuals.”¹¹⁴ Among them was the 11-year old son of the German Christian leader in Leutkirch, who publicly predicted to his friends that Pastor Metzger would soon have to leave the parish. In light of the agitation in Leutkirch, Ströle dismissed the controversy as “an example of what can be spoiled through the rigid, unforgiving attitude of the German Christian people.”¹¹⁵

Nonetheless, the German Christian campaign forged ahead there in three directions. First, ongoing complaints led to the decision of the Württemberg Superior Church Council to transfer Pastor Metzger to another parish and send a younger pastor to Leutkirch.¹¹⁶ As soon as that had been accomplished, local German Christian Leader Sailer wrote the Superior Church Council, requesting they send Metzger’s church-political opponent, Pastor Griesinger of Ulm, to be the new pastor in Leutkirch! Since the church authorities in Stuttgart were in the process of

¹¹² Mrs. Welte to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 4 July 1935; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 12 November 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹¹³ Land Bishop Wurm to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 14 March 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹¹⁴ Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 10 March 1936 and 12 April 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a. One year earlier, Ströle had reported similarly (also citing Mayor Ehrle) that the upheaval against Metzger was the result of the agitation of a few women and two men, without whom the whole affair would die down. Ströle to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 17 June 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64b.

¹¹⁵ Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 10 March 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹¹⁶ Regional Superintendent Mayer-List to Pastor Metzger of Leutkirch, 3 September 1936; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 19 October 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

forcing Griesinger into an early retirement from the pastorate, Sailer's request was out of the question. Instead, Pastor Hilmar Schieber, an energetic opponent of German Christianity, was appointed.¹¹⁷ In order to avoid a repetition of Metzger's troubles, Superior Church Councillor Eichler, head of the Württemberg Protestant Parish Service, suggested that Superintendent Ströle ask the *Land* Church authorities to send in prominent speakers to help Schieber combat the German Christians.¹¹⁸

Schieber would need all the help he could get in Leutkirch, because the German Christians—flushed with success from ousting Metzger—stepped up their campaign for permission to use one of two local church buildings for their own services. After a flurry of correspondence and several intense meetings, Ravensburg Superintendent Ströle, Curate Werner Herrlinger and Pastor Schieber managed to defend the exclusive rights of the *Land* Church to the churches, although only after a court in Ravensburg overturned the mayor's decision to give space to the German Christians.¹¹⁹

In this matter of access to the local churches, Schieber proved especially resolute in his opposition to his German Christian parishioners. When the German Christians renewed their request to use the Hospital Church—this time for a confirmation ceremony in March 1939—Schieber hurriedly wrote to the Superior Church Council, reminding Württemberg church leaders that they had only just

¹¹⁷ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 5 July 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹¹⁸ Superior Church Councillor Eichler to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 19 January 1938, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹¹⁹ Willi Eberle, *400 Jahre Evangelische Gemeinde in Leutkirch (1546-1946)*, Sondernummer Trinitatis 1946, *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Leutkirch und seine Diaspora*, p. 30, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Leutkirch A II 1. On the struggle over the right to control the Church of the Trinity and the Hospital Church, please see correspondence between Leutkirch German Christians, the Superior Church Council, Superintendent Ströle and Pastors Metzger and Schieber, from 24 December 1935 to 2 March 1939, including the minutes of a negotiation between Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, *Landrat* Dr. Zeller of Leutkirch, and Mayor Dr. Ehrle, dated 11 February 1937, in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

defended their exclusive right to the Leutkirch churches two years earlier. He went on to describe the manner in which Leutkirch German Christians had rejected the authority of the *Land* Church in religious instruction, pastoral ministry, church services and church taxes, and all but demanded the higher church authorities take a firm stand. After a positive reply from Stuttgart, Schieber wrote to the head of the German Christian group in Leutkirch, firmly rejecting the German Christian request for access to the church and laying down the strict conditions required before another request would be considered.¹²⁰

Finally, as Schieber's letter pointed out, German Christians in Leutkirch had separated themselves almost completely from the state church during the mid-1930s. For one, they grew more radical, making the shift to the racially oriented *Volk* Church Movement sometime in later 1936 or early 1937.¹²¹ Further, three German Christians on the parish council resigned their positions.¹²² German Christian parents withdrew their children from Schieber's religious instruction classes and established their own confirmation classes.¹²³ German Christians even quit paying their church taxes.¹²⁴ Ultimately, however, the group was unable to gain the upper hand in the parish. Loyal Protestants in Leutkirch grew tired of the polemics of the German Christians, and the group's failure to gain access to

¹²⁰ Pastor Schieber of Leutkirch to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 2 March 1939; Schieber to the leader of the German Christian Group in Leutkirch, 9 March 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e.

¹²¹ Please see Georg Sailor to the Leutkirch Pastor, 25 March 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e. On the letter from the Leutkirch German Christian leader is the new seal, "Volkskirche Deutsche Christen Gemeindegruppe Leutkirch."

¹²² Georg Hayn to the Leutkirch Pastor, 27 September 1936; E. Frauer to the Leutkirch Pastor, 25 September 1936; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 23 September 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64f.

¹²³ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 14 May 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 64e; Leutkirch Protestant Parish, "Excerpt from the Book of Minutes of the Parish Council, Volume 7, Page 224..." 18 May 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 63a.

¹²⁴ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 12 September 1935, 6 September 1938, 3 May 1939, and 14 June 1941, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 65b.

Leutkirch church buildings marked the beginning of their decline in the parish.¹²⁵

German Christian agitation also proved problematic for Pastor Siegle and his colleagues in the Isny parish. From early in his ministry in the parish, Siegle proved to be an outspoken supporter of the person and administration of *Land* Bishop Wurm, and thus a resolute opponent of local German Christians. For instance, in April 1934, Siegle collected 300 signatures for a protest telegram against the *Reich* Bishop Müller's emergency decree and suspension of Wurm, but the *Gestapo* seized them before he could send them to Stuttgart. Siegle lodged an official complaint and vowed to try to collect more signatures, but to no avail.¹²⁶ Undaunted, Siegle gathered another 210 signatures during the following year, in protest of *Reich* Bishop Müller's plan to tour Württemberg. This time Siegle was able to send his petition, which he directed to the *Reich* Ministry of the Interior in Berlin and the *Reich* Governor in Stuttgart.¹²⁷

Pastor Siegle was not, however, the only local clergyman to encounter opposition from local officials. Curate Karl Dipper's short career in Isny foundered on the ideological opposition of Director Diest of the Überrauch convalescent home, where Dipper was supposed to provide regular pastoral care. Diest became angered at Dipper's outspoken support for *Land* Bishop Wurm during the illegal takeover of the Württemberg church government by *Reich* Bishop Müller and Commissarial *Land* Bishop Krause, and prohibited Dipper from ministering in Überrauch.¹²⁸ The director accused the Isny curate of upsetting the patients and thus of impeding their medical recovery, but Dipper retorted that the director was acting out of church-

¹²⁵ Willi Eberle, *400 Jahre Evangelische Gemeinde in Leutkirch (1546-1946)*, Sondernummer Trinitatis 1946, *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt für Leutkirch und seine Diaspora*, p. 30, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Leutkirch A II 1.

¹²⁶ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 26 April 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57b.

¹²⁷ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 20 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹²⁸ Württemberg Superior Church Council to Curate Dipper of Isny, 29 September 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57c.

political motives rather than medical grounds.

In his own defence, Dipper claimed he had merely read letters describing Westphalian church renewals marked by forgiveness and the abandonment of revenge. Additionally, he had defended *Land* Bishop Wurm, explained the current state of Württemberg church politics and upheld the traditional confessions of faith that the German Christians had attacked. Finally, Dipper had affirmed that the Christian church's ultimate allegiance was to "a lord, who also stands above A. Hitler, namely Jesus Christ." Because he had only spoken of these matters within the small circle of his Bible study at Überrauch and not in the regular Sunday service there, Dipper rejected the accusations of the director that he was upsetting the patients.¹²⁹

In a letter to Director Diest, Dipper asserted that he would only be moved by Biblical truth, and not by a display of political power by the director of the convalescent home.¹³⁰ To Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, Dipper reported how the Diest had accused him of undermining the authority of Hitler, and then admitted to Dipper that Hitler was his conscience. Consequently, Dipper attempted to regain admittance into the convalescent home by exposing the political basis of the director's charges and undermining his medical argument, convinced as he was that Diest was only using the dispute as a means to get rid of him and work for the appointment of a German Christian.¹³¹ While Dipper may have been right about Director Diest's motives, he did not win the argument over access to Überrauch and was soon transferred from Isny, probably in late 1934.

Over the next three years, German Christians in Isny employed prominent speakers to attract new followers to their movement, just as the Leutkirch group was

¹²⁹ Curate Dipper of Isny to Director Diest of the Überrauch convalescent home, 8 October 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57c.

¹³⁰ Curate Dipper of Isny to Director Diest of the Überrauch convalescent home, 8 October 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57c.

¹³¹ Curate Dipper of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 8 October 1934, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57c.

doing. The most important of these was none other than Pastor Griesinger of Ulm, who came to Isny soon after his initial forays into Leutkirch. On Sunday, 5 May 1935, Griesinger spoke at a German Christian assembly in Isny, reviving false allegations of financial impropriety against *Land* Bishop Wurm.¹³² From 60 to 70 people were in attendance, with almost half of them from Isny. Others came from Wangen, Leutkirch and Übersruh.¹³³

Siegle, who was on holidays at the time, was incensed that Griesinger would dare speak in his parish without permission. He wrote Griesinger an angry letter defending his authority as parish pastor in Isny and criticizing Griesinger's German Christian church politics. Siegle charged that it was not in the spirit of Christ, the apostles or the reformers to introduce division into a parish that preached and adhered to the pure gospel. Rather, it was in the manner of sectarian preachers to preach without permission in other pastors' congregations. The fact that Griesinger had possessed the temerity to invite Siegle to the meeting only made the Isny clergyman angrier.¹³⁴

Griesinger replied to Siegle's letter, rejecting Siegle's interpretation of the exclusive rights of the parish pastor. Basically, Griesinger asserted he was free to lecture where he pleased. Griesinger went on to declare that the German Christian movement was taking the message of National Socialism—a gift of God that stood above the two Christian confessions—and proclaiming it as a great gift of grace for the Christian church in Germany. Sounding blasé, Griesinger expressed to Siegle his hope that all pastors in Württemberg would work together to build the church, and not “fight over small things.”¹³⁵ This was nothing less than an insult to Siegle

¹³² Württemberg Superior Church Council to Pastor Wertz of Isny, 11 June 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹³³ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 20 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹³⁴ Copy of Pastor Siegle of Isny to Pastor Griesinger of Ulm, 14 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹³⁵ Pastor Griesinger of Ulm to Pastor Siegle of Isny, 15 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

and his conviction about in the truth of the gospel and the error of German Christian teaching.

As in Leutkirch, the Württemberg church authorities responded to the German Christian challenge in Isny by sending representatives from Stuttgart into the parish to lecture or hold special services. For instance, within two weeks of Griesinger's lecture, Superior Church Councillor Dipper conducted a Confessing Church service, attended by 450 people. Siegle was pleased with the turnout, not least because it included 60 to 80 men, a significant number for a Thursday night event.¹³⁶

Apart from the struggle against Griesinger and other German Christians in Isny, Pastor Siegle and his colleague Adolf Wertz also clashed with the local SA leadership in 1935. For his part, Siegle was growing frustrated with the lack of consideration in the SA schedule of activities, which inhibited men from attending church services in Isny because Party-political events kept them out late the night before.¹³⁷ On their side, the SA men were critical of Siegle and Wertz's uncompromising support for *Land* Bishop Wurm and the Confessing Church forces. On 23 June 1935, the tension boiled over during the Sunday service, in full view of the other parishioners. Near the close of the service, Pastor Adolf Wertz began to read a declaration from the March 1935 Confessing Synod of Augsburg. As he did, a series of young men began to disrupt the event by standing and leaving, one by one, grumbling and slamming the church door on their way out. Shocked by the outburst, Isny parishioners were upset at the outrageous public display by the young men.¹³⁸

In his report to his ecclesiastical superiors, Pastor Siegle expressed an

¹³⁶ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 20 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹³⁷ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 30 March 1935 and 9 May 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹³⁸ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 26 June 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

unwillingness to press charges, since he was not entirely sure whether or not the local *NS Volkszeitung* editor (who led the mass exit) had suspected ahead of time that the pastors would read a Confessing Church document and had planned the action. Alternatively, as Siegle explained, it was possible that the protest related to recent trouble between the pastorate and the local SA Work Camp over the lack of participation of the SA in local church services.¹³⁹

Church-political conflicts with local Party officials and German Christians continued in Isny well into the later 1930s. For instance, in December 1937 Siegle was stripped of his right to teach religious instruction in the local school over remarks he had made the previous July.¹⁴⁰ In the following year, three parish councillors resigned their offices, “based on an order of the Deputy to the *Führer*” that prohibited Party political leaders from holding leadership positions in any kind of religious association.¹⁴¹ Ominously, the local German Christian group had become more radical, having joined the *Volk Church* wing of the German Christian movement along with their colleagues in Leutkirch.

In spite of these developments, the strength of the German Christians was on the wane in Isny and throughout the Allgäu region. An example of this decline was the poor response to a lecture in Isny in February 1937 by (former) Pastor Schneider from Stuttgart, a leading figure in German Christian circles in Württemberg and all Germany. Attendance was mediocre; the 40 who came consisted mainly of women from the National Socialist Welfare mothers’ convalescent home, Catholics and Red Cross sisters from Biberach.¹⁴² Thus, by the time of Siegle’s retirement in February

¹³⁹ Pastor Siegle of Isny to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 26 June 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61a.

¹⁴⁰ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Württemberg Education Minister, 30 December 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 57a.

¹⁴¹ Pastor Siegle of Isny to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 24 August 1938, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 61c. This was not in fact the case, but rather the interpretation that the parish councillors gave to *Reichsleiter* Martin Bormann’s order to gradually remove clergymen from positions of leadership in the NSDAP. Conway, *Nazi Persecution*, 160; Helmreich, *German Churches under Hitler*, 219.

¹⁴² Pastor Siegle of Isny to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 15 February 1937, Dekanatsarchiv

1938, the local German Christian group was no longer a significant concern, and his primary recommendation to his successor was work towards better relations with Isny civic authorities.¹⁴³

In Bad Waldsee, north of Ravensburg, Pastor W. Hartmann endured a turbulent nine years as pastor, before being driven from the parish in mid-1937, thanks in part to the efforts of local German Christians. Hartmann's troubles began in 1929, when he clashed with a prominent Waldsee family, the Birkmeyers. Paul Birkmeyer directed the local textile mill and sat on the Waldsee parish council, but was brought into disrepute when accusations surfaced that his wife had been engaged in an affair with another man in Waldsee. Controversy was no stranger to Mrs. Birkmeyer, however. The former pastor described her as a "psychopathic personality" and a "person with an unusually bad conscience" who stirred up all manner of trouble if she was not treated with special regard and referred to by her husband's title.¹⁴⁴

When Pastor Hartmann raised the question of the affair, the Birkmeyers and their allies in the church began to make trouble for him. Following informal accusations that Hartmann did not visit and spoke ill of certain parishioners, a 17-name petition was submitted to the Superior Church Council in February 1930, with the declaration that Hartmann had lost the confidence of many in the Waldsee parish.¹⁴⁵ In the face of Paul Birkmeyer's accusations against Hartmann, the parish council responded with a declaration of support signed by 184 parishioners and the request that the Superior Church Council investigate the conflict in Waldsee.¹⁴⁶

Ravensburg 61a.

¹⁴³ Parting Sermon from Pastor Siegle of Isny, 21 February 1938, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart PA S446.

¹⁴⁴ Former Pastor Raithelhuber of Waldsee, now in Göppingen, to Superintendent Ströle in Ravensburg, 17 March 1930, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71b.

¹⁴⁵ Paul Birkmeyer *et al.* to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 6 February 1930, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71b.

¹⁴⁶ Parish Councillor Heinrich Notz to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 22 June 1930, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71b.

After months of accusations and counteraccusations, Hartmann and the Birkmeyers eventually signed an agreement to put aside their conflict and respect each other.¹⁴⁷

While that did not put an end to all the trouble between the Birkmeyers and the parish—there was a subsequent accusation that the women's aid had shunned Mrs. Birkmeyer—the agreement did enable Pastor Hartmann to avert the threat of legal charges for slander.

Whether to spite Hartmann or out of conviction, sometime after 1933 the Birkmeyers joined the Waldsee German Christian circle, led by the Schoolteacher Walter Staib and his wife, the church organist.¹⁴⁸ While the German Christians in Waldsee brought in guest speakers such as Superintendent Megerlin of Neuenbürg,¹⁴⁹ who also spoke in Leutkirch, most of the trouble faced by Hartmann came from the influence of these two couples.

For instance, in March 1935, Schoolteacher Walter Staib caused a stir in Waldsee when he asked a Catholic teacher to take over his religious instruction classes while he would be on a short study leave. Protestants in Waldsee were incensed, and Hartmann, chairman of the local Protestant school board, sharply criticized Staib's decision, asserting that the schoolteacher did not have the consent of the Protestant school board to abandon religious instruction to a Catholic.¹⁵⁰ Subsequently, both the parish council and the Protestant school board warned Staib that he was not free to do whatever he pleased in his position.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁷ "Agreement!" 26 July 1930, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71b.

¹⁴⁸ Protestant Parish of Bad Waldsee, *Evangelische Kirche Bad Waldsee 1889-1989*, p. 37, Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart.

¹⁴⁹ Superintendent Megerlin of Neuenbürg to the pastor in Waldsee, March 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d.

¹⁵⁰ Pastor Hartmann of Waldsee to the District School Office in Saulgau, 18 March 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d.

¹⁵¹ Waldsee Parish Council (Hartmann) to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 19 March 1935; Pastor Hartmann of Waldsee to Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg, 20 March 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d.

Increasingly, Waldsee residents raised concerns about Schoolteacher Staib, which brought Hartmann into growing conflict with the Birkmeyer-Staib opposition in the parish.¹⁵² Meanwhile, in church, Hartmann clashed with Mrs. Staib. Accusing her of reporting his preaching to police officials (she admitted only to reading while sitting at the organ during services), Hartmann summarily dismissed Mrs. Staib from her organist position in March 1935. In response, she lodged a grievance with the Württemberg Superior Church Council and accused Hartmann of referring to her as a "Judas."¹⁵³ In its decision on the matter, the Superior Church Council criticized Hartmann for summarily firing Mrs. Staib without any proof that she was reporting him to the police. Because she refused to take up her position again, there was no other action to take in the matter, and so the Stuttgart authorities left unresolved the question of her actions. In Hartmann's defence, however, the Superior Church Council rejected Mrs. Staib's contention that he had called her a "Judas."¹⁵⁴

To be sure, none of this endeared Hartmann and the Staibs to each other. In fact, matters worsened in 1937, due to renewed conflicts in the local school. In July, other teachers began to interfere with Pastor Hartmann's own religious instruction, mocking the Old Testament as a book of scandals, questioning the Bible as a source of divine revelation and teaching from the Psalms at the same time Hartmann was trying to.¹⁵⁵ The fact that a number of Protestant parents grew so wary of Schoolteacher Staib's German Christian propagandizing that they refused to send

¹⁵² Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 26 March 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72b.

¹⁵³ Pastor Hartmann to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 3 March 1936; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 19 March 1936; Superintendent Ströle of Ravensburg to the Waldsee parish council, 28 April 1936; Ströle to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 15 May 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72f.

¹⁵⁴ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 2 June 1936, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72f.

¹⁵⁵ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Württemberg Education Ministry, 24 July 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d.

their children to him only increased tensions.¹⁵⁶

Before the end of 1937, the breach between the Waldsee parish and the Staibs was final. Walter Staib, his wife and their four children all withdrew their church membership in Waldsee, along with the leader of the Hitler Youth and other local notables, and the Waldsee German Christians no longer worked from inside the parish.¹⁵⁷ The Birkmeyers and other members of the *Volk Church* German Christian group who were still members of the *Land Church* in Waldsee refused to pay their church taxes. When Hartmann was transferred to another Württemberg parish,¹⁵⁸ presumably to relieve him of the conflict in Waldsee and try to make a new start there, Hartmann's successor, Pastor Gottfried Hoffmann, was left to sort out the church tax dispute. Ultimately, the Superior Church Council rejected temporary rulings by local political authorities that supported the Birkmeyers' claim that they did not have to pay church taxes because of the orientation of the parish pastor. In the spring of 1941, Paul Birkmeyer withdrew his church membership and the conflict between the German Christians and Waldsee parish ceased.¹⁵⁹

If German Christians in Leutkirch, Isny and Bad Waldsee stirred up trouble for local pastors during the 1930s, other parishes proved surprisingly quiet during the National Socialist era. In Ravensburg itself, for instance, one report in the district church archive estimated that a joint Ravensburg-Weingarten German Christian group existed with about 200 members, but it did not name a leader. Beyond that, there was little sign of German Christian agitation in the two communities that comprised the hub of the church district, except that the local SS

¹⁵⁶ Pastor Hartmann of Waldsee to the District School Office in Saulgau, 10 September 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d.

¹⁵⁷ Württemberg Superior Church Council to all Württemberg Superintendents, 19 January 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 93a.

¹⁵⁸ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 25 May 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 71a.

¹⁵⁹ Pastor Hoffmann of Waldsee to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 5 April 1941, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72d. On the church tax controversy, please see the correspondence in Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 72b.

leader, two SA leaders and two doctors from Weissenau and a local schoolteacher all withdrew their church memberships in 1937.¹⁶⁰ In neighbouring Weingarten, men in SA or SS uniforms could be seen in church already before 1933.

Confirmation students came for their instruction in their Hitler Youth uniforms and NSDAP members sat on the parish council. Because relations between the Weingarten parish and the local political leaders were positive, no German Christian group emerged to introduce church-political conflict into the parish. Indeed, Weingarteners generally rejected National Socialist substitute ceremonies in favour of traditional church baptisms, confirmations, weddings and funerals, and few Party members felt the need to withdraw from the church at all.¹⁶¹ The same story holds true in Wangen, where the parish council reported in 1939 that neither any sect nor the German Christian movement played any tangible role in the parish.¹⁶² Still, since 26 parish councillors from the Ravensburg district resigned their positions for ideological or political reasons during the National Socialist era, there were some Party-political or ideological conflicts apart from the ones that stand out from the archival record.¹⁶³

While fewer than half of Ravensburg pastors encountered any significant church-political conflict from German Christian groups in their parishes, several clergymen did face censure for their church-political actions during and after the Third Reich. In Ravensburg, Superintendent Eugen Kommerell, Hermann Ströle's

¹⁶⁰ Report on the presence of German Christian groups in the Ravensburg district, n.d., Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 115g; Württemberg Superior Church Council to all Württemberg Superintendents, 19 January 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 93a.

¹⁶¹ Weingarten Protestant Parish, *Evangelisches Stadtkirche Weingarten 1883-1983* (Weingarten: Franz Harder, 1983), 33-34. My thanks to Herr Pfeifer of the Ravensburg parish office for lending me a copy of this booklet.

¹⁶² Protestant Parish in Wangen im Allgäu, "Excerpt from the Book of Minutes of the Parish Council, Volume III, Page 377...." 18 November 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 73a.

¹⁶³ Ravensburg Superintendent to the Württemberg Superior Church Council, 4 March 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten B IV 1. Of the 26 parish councillors who resigned, four resigned in each of Leutkirch and Wangen, three in each of Ravensburg, Friedrichshafen, Isny, Tettnang and Weingarten, two in Langenargen and one in Waldsee.

successor, and Pastor Wolfram Gestrich both read out a "Word to the parishes" of *Land* Bishop Wurm on Sunday, 12 February 1939. They did so, along with two Weingarten clergymen (one of whom was presumably Pastor Ludwig Schmidt), despite the prohibition of the *Gestapo* and the threat of a fine of up to RM 1000.¹⁶⁴

Superintendent Kommerell, who had read Wurm's message to about 250 parishioners, had urged other clergymen in his district to read the "Word to the parishes" in their churches too. In a statement to the Ravensburg Criminal Police Department, Kommerell described receiving instructions from *Land* Bishop Wurm and passing them on to local clergymen, and testified that he urged but did not demand that his clergymen read the statement. Kommerell asserted that because the statement addressed current measures against Protestant religious instruction in Württemberg schools, and because Wurm had instructed that the statement be read (knowing it was prohibited), he felt compelled to read it to his congregation in Ravensburg, even though he knew he might be punished. Gestrich, who read the statement to about 50 parishioners at the early service, echoed his superintendent's words and added that he was motivated by his vow of ordination, which bound him to proclaim the gospel by preaching and teaching. Since the worldview instruction that Wurm's message discussed was a threat to Christian religious instruction, Gestrich chose to publicly read the "Word to the parishes" and inform his parishioners.¹⁶⁵ Whether Kommerell or Gestrich were punished for their actions is unclear.

Another pastor in trouble with political authorities in the Ravensburg district was Immanuel Spellenberg, who came to Friedrichshafen-Fischbach as a curate in June 1938 and became pastor of the parish in April 1940.¹⁶⁶ Spellenberg's past

¹⁶⁴ "Order of the Secret State Police," February 1939; Ravensburg Criminal Police Department to the mayor and the *Gestapo*, 13 February 1939, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg AI 3027.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ "Vikariatsbericht über Spellenberg, Immanuel," 1 February 1939; Minutes of the Manzell Church Administration, 5 March 1940; Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg District Superintendent, 11 April 1940, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

made him appear thoroughly nationalistic in nature. In 1936, he made a propaganda trip for the *Reich* (he was an SA man) to Romania. Earlier still, during the course of his formal studies Spellenberg had conducted research into the life of 19th century nationalist Ernst Moritz Arndt.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, he must have created some offence—most likely in his religious instruction—since he felt compelled to make a solemn declaration about his views about Jews and the Old Testament on 13 January 1939. In the statement, Spellenberg affirmed his commitment to the National Socialist view of the destructiveness of Jewish influence in Germany and to the racial struggle of the German nation. That said, he affirmed his intention to continue teaching and preaching from the Old Testament, as he sought to follow Jesus' teaching about the proper place of the Hebrew Scriptures in the life of the church.¹⁶⁸ Apparently, Spellenberg's statement fulfilled its purpose, for he remained in office. After surviving a subsequent investigation by the district NSDAP court in Friedrichshafen, Spellenberg was eventually called up into military service, where he was killed in action in March 1944.¹⁶⁹

Back in Ravensburg, two young vicars attracted the attention of the Württemberg Education Ministry for statements they had uttered during religious instruction. In 1935, students reported Vicar Werner Mauch for making six slanderous statements during a religious instruction class. First, Mauch had declared that the *Führer's* program of "common interest before self-interest" was impossible to fulfil. Though Mauch had been trying to point out that humans are not naturally so selfless, he was perceived to have slandered Hitler in the process. Second, Mauch had declared that the assertion of the power of Aryan people was a clear lie. Though he did not remember speaking that way, Mauch declared that if he

¹⁶⁷ "Vikariatsbericht über Spellenberg, Immanuel," 1 February 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

¹⁶⁸ Pastor Spellenberg of Fischbach to the Ravensburg Superintendent's Office, 13 January 1939, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

¹⁶⁹ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 22 May 1944, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

had, it would have been to point out the impossibility of racial pride before God. Other statements he was alleged to have made were critical of the lack of character in Germany and the fact that many people did not speak their minds. He had also declared that religious instruction was in danger (from the state), and was alleged to have asked the students not to repeat what he said, which he denied. On another occasion, students reported that Mauch warned that the time was coming when Christians would have to decide who belonged to their community and who did not. As well, he was to have declared that the highest calling of humans was the kingdom of God, and that there were stronger ties than blood. These statements Mauch defended by referring to Matthew 12:46-50, where Jesus declared that the fellowship of those in the kingdom of God was stronger than his human family. As both a Party member and a Christian, Mauch declared that he had said nothing in a manner hostile to the state, but rather with the intention of strengthening the foundational forces of the *Volk*.¹⁷⁰

While he was unwilling to draw the most far-reaching implications of his comments, Mauch's critique of the National Socialist state was still by far the most forceful reported among Ravensburg religious instructors, and all the more significant for coming in 1935, far earlier than many other clergymen were able to perceive the fundamental incompatibility of National Socialist ideology and Christian teaching. It was all the more significant for coming from an NSDAP member. Two years later, one of Mauch's successors, Vicar Lamparter, declared that the German *Volk* was a fair way towards doing away with Jesus. Accused by the Württemberg Education Minister of slandering the National Socialist state, Lamparter was prohibited from teaching religious instruction in any Württemberg schools.¹⁷¹

On the absolute opposite end of the church-political spectrum from Vicars

¹⁷⁰ Vicar Mauch of Ravensburg to the Württemberg Ministerial Department for the Higher Schools, 21 September 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 152b.

¹⁷¹ Copy of the Württemberg Education Minister to the Ministerial Department for the *Volk* Schools, 26 November 1937, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 152b.

Mauch and Lamparter was Pastor Martin Kinzler of Tett nang. In July 1938, Kinzler was reported as standing “with [his] whole heart on the basis on the new state” while his wife Helene, an NSDAP member, became the leader of the National Socialist Women’s League in Tett nang.¹⁷² For that reason, Kinzler did not encounter any political consequences for his church activities, at least until the end of the war. Then, however, French occupation forces arrested Helene Kinzler. Despite a report that Pastor Kinzler had been a “~~fanatical Nazi~~ [...] during the whole war,” always demanding the Hitler greeting from school children in Tett nang, and that Helene Kinzler had worked “with body and soul” for the National Socialist women’s movement, *Land* Bishop Wurm wrote a letter defending Kinzler and asking for the release of his wife from French detention.¹⁷³ In the end, however, Kinzler was sent into retirement in June 1946, to make way for a younger pastor to start afresh in Tett nang.¹⁷⁴

In the end, then, Pastor Martin Kinzler received the same fate as Pastors Griesinger of Ulm and Steger of Friedrichshafen. When their divisive behaviour or unsavoury ideas became too unbearable, the *Land* Church simply pensioned them off. If that was the worst that radical German Christians in the Ravensburg district received from the Wurm church administration, those clergymen who based their ministry on the Scriptures and Reformation confessions received no worse from the Education Ministry and *Gestapo* in Ravensburg. A far cry from the arrests, suspensions and fines suffered by clergymen in Nauen and Pirmas, clergymen in Ravensburg participated in a far less tumultuous or passionate version of the church struggle than their northern German counterparts.

That was not always the case in Württemberg, as the case of Oberlenningen

¹⁷² War Chronicle of the Protestant Parish of Tett nang, n.d., Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Tett nang A III 4.

¹⁷³ Elizabeth Jacquignon to *Land* Bishop Wurm, 24 October 1945; Wurm to the French Military Government in Tübingen, 25 March 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Tett nang A I 1.

¹⁷⁴ Württemberg Superior Church Council to the Ravensburg Superintendent, 25 June 1946 and 10 July 1946; Minutes of the Tett nang parish council, 16 August 1946, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Tett nang A I 1.

Pastor Julius von Jan demonstrated. Jan had condemned the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom of November 1938 in a Repentance Day sermon. He was harassed, beaten, tortured, robbed and arrested by National Socialists, and eventually sentenced by a Special Court (*Sondergericht*) in Stuttgart to a term in prison for an infraction of the Insidiousness Law of 1934, which prohibited any criticism of the government or the NSDAP. In other centres, National Socialists ridiculed and beat clergymen, fired shots and threw paving stones into a parsonage and vandalized other church property.¹⁷⁵

In Ravensburg, however, the church struggle was far less heated. In part, this was due the sparse Protestant population. Each of the parishes in the district contained tiny collections of parishioners scattered across the countryside near the towns and small cities in which the pastors lived. These '*diaspora*' parishes required pastors to travel more often, teach more classes of religious or confirmation instruction and conduct more church services. Such a diluted Protestant presence also militated against the development of strong church-political opposition groups, as evidenced by the distances German Christians sometimes traveled to their meetings.

More important, however, was the simple fact that the church struggle did not throw the Württemberg *Land* Church into the kind of upheaval that Protestants in Brandenburg (indeed, the entire Old Prussian Union Church) and Saxony experienced. The majority of the clergy, who were patriotic, conservative, and committed to the traditional teachings of the church, were entirely at home in the Württemberg *Land* Church led by *Land* Bishop Wurm. Only pastors, curates and vicars on either extreme of the church-political spectrum encountered any difficulties, whether their support of the Confessing Church led to clashes with local schoolteachers or civic officials, or whether their personal commitment to the co-ordination (*Gleichschaltung*) of Protestantism under National Socialism led them

¹⁷⁵ *Land* Bishop Wurm to all superintendents in Württemberg, 12 December 1938, in Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Die evangelische Landeskirche in Württemberg und der Nationalsozialismus: eine Dokumentation zum Kirchenkampf*, vol. 6, *Von der Reichskirche zur Evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland: 1938-1945* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1986), 113-116.

astray from the traditional Biblical and theological verities maintained by the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church. At no time—apart from the contentious period of *Reich* Bishop Müller's attempted incorporation of the Württemberg church—were Ravensburg district clergymen forced to respond to with heretical confessions of faith, deviant teaching or arbitrary administrative decisions from their ecclesiastical superiors. These pastors, curates and vicars could be thankful that they were spared some of the crises of conscience forced upon their counterparts in Nauen and Pirna.

Indeed, within the basic continuity of the Stuttgart church government, local clergymen were quite free to shape their own experiences. The forceful character of Pastor Karl Steger drew sections of the Friedrichshafen parish to the German Christian cause, even if his poor health, absences and clerical opponents curtailed some of his effectiveness. Most pastors in the district, however, simply tried to minister faithfully in the midst of immense political upheaval and fend off local attempts to turn Protestant religious life into another venue for the propagation of National Socialist values. In this endeavour, they were largely successful, even if they proved unable or unwilling to address the larger question of the ultimate incompatibility of National Socialist ideology and Christian faith in the community around them.

CHAPTER 8
CHRISTIAN CHARITY OR RACIAL REJECTION?
CLERICAL RESPONSES TO EUTHANASIA AND ANTISEMITISM

The pseudo-scientific notion of 'blood' purity was central to the National Socialist worldview. For Hitler, the NSDAP leaders, state bureaucrats, medical and military personnel, it justified the sterilization and euthanasia of physically and mentally handicapped Germans and the persecution and annihilation of European Jews. Because of the importance of race in National Socialist Germany, it is necessary to examine the response of German Protestant clergymen in the church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg to the policies of sterilization, euthanasia, antisemitism and genocide. Ideally, the attitudes and actions of Protestant clergymen in response to the extremes of National Socialist racial policy ought to act as a measurement of the extent to which they fundamentally accepted or rejected National Socialist racial values.

Hitler's antisemitic oratory and the thuggery of the SA toughs paved the way for the legal persecution of Jews after the *Führer's* seizure of power in 1933.¹ After an abortive attempt to boycott Jewish businesses across Germany,² the National Socialist government promulgated both laws and decrees that cut off Jews from public and higher education, as well as careers in the civil administration, in education, in agriculture, in culture and the media, in finance and management, in medicine and in law.

Alongside this social and economic marginalization of Jews in Germany, a more explicitly ideological attempt to cultivate blood purity was also pursued. In

¹ On Hitler, National Socialism and the Jews, please see Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews 1933-1945*, 3 vols. (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1985); Gellately, *Gestapo and German Society*; Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"*; Richard Breitman, *The Architect of Genocide: Himmler and the Final Solution* (New York: Knopf, 1991); David Bankier, *The Germans and the Final Solution: Public Opinion under Nazism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992).

² In Ravensburg, posts of about 20 men boycotted four Jewish stores, even though their owners had already shut the doors by 9:30 in the morning. In front of one, a sign read "Don't Buy From Department Stores" and in front of another, a sign read "Don't Buy From Jews." *NS-Kurier*, "Boykott-Posten. Abwehrkampf in Württemberg," 3 April 1933, in Paul Sauer, ed., *Dokumente über die Verfolgung der jüdischen Bürger in Baden-Württemberg durch das nationalsozialistische Regime 1933-1945*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1966), 11.

July 1933, a sterilization law was passed, providing for "voluntary" sterilization for those with incurable and inheritable diseases, mental as well as physical. In September 1935, the famous Nuremberg Laws redefined citizenship according to blood, stripping Jews of German citizenship and declaring them alien subjects. Further, sexual relations between Jews and "Aryan Germans" were forbidden. In 1936, Reich Leader of the SS Heinrich Himmler established the Fount of Life (*Lebensborn*) program to promote a higher birth rate among the SS, the supposed racial elite. Himmler flouted traditional marriage laws, arguing that military victories would be empty ones without a corresponding reproductive victory over the enemy.³

For Jews, the horizons darkened in 1938, the year they were publicly segregated and forced to change their first names to Abraham and Sara. On the pretext of the murder of a German embassy official in Paris by young Jew, Himmler and other SS leaders launched the '*Kristallnacht*' Pogrom of 9-10 November 1938, during which Jewish homes, businesses and synagogues were smashed, looted and burned.

With the onset of war in 1939, National Socialist racial policy evolved along two fronts. Within greater Germany itself, the SS established a special office at Tiergarten 4 in Berlin to organize and execute the euthanasic murder of thousands of handicapped Germans. Selected patients were transferred to one of six killing centres in order to be killed (usually by gas) and cremated: Grafeneck in Württemberg, Brandenburg near Berlin, Sonnenstein in Saxony, Bernburg in Saxony-Anhalt, Hadamar in Hesse and Hartheim in Austria. Between 1939 and 1941, over 70000 patients were killed at these centres, along with 1000s more in the "wild euthanasia" program that continued in health care institutions even after the official cessation of Action T4, the euthanasia program.⁴

³ Heinrich Himmler to SS Leaders, 13 September 1936, U.S. Chief of Counsel for the Prosecution of Axis Criminality, *Nazi Conspiracy and Aggression* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946), vol. 5, doc. No. 2825-PS, pp. 465-66, quoted in Sax and Kuntz, eds., *Inside Hitler's Germany*, 381-382.

⁴ Two examples of such 'wild' euthanasia were institutions previously used as collection centers for further transport, Zweifalten in Württemberg and Großschweidnitz in Saxony. Please see Martin Rexer and Bodo Rüdénburg, "Zweifalten as 'Halfway House' on the Road to Grafeneck,"

Meanwhile, in occupied Eastern Europe, the National Socialists began ghettoizing the Jews of Poland in 1939, and with the attack on the Soviet Union in June 1941, four SS Einsatzgruppen were unleashed in a murderous sweep behind the front lines, killing up to two million Jews and other victims. A wide network of concentration, work and death camps was established, where another four million Jews and other victims were brutally worked, beaten, starved, tortured, gassed or marched to death from 1942 to 1945.

Given the conservative nationalism common to Protestant clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg and their generally enthusiastic reception of Hitler's new regime in 1933, certain questions require asking. How did Protestant clergymen view German Jews? To what extent did pastors advocate, accept or oppose National Socialist racial policies? Did they approve of early exclusionary legislation? Did they react to the Nuremberg citizenship laws and the bureaucratic measures to determine so-called Aryan ancestry? Did they speak out against the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom of November 1938? Were they significantly involved in the opposition to the euthanasia program? Did they know of or have anything to say about the genocidal policy of their government in Eastern Europe?

Unfortunately, answers to these questions are few and far between. Though the National Socialist regime made racial policy its chief mandate⁵ and filled the print and radio media with antisemitic propaganda, there is relatively little resonance to the euthanasia and Jewish questions in the written records of the church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg.

Protestant pastors had the most to say about racial policy when they affirmed the uniqueness of and divine blessing upon the German *Volk*. Nauen Superintendent

in Ulrich Jockusch and Lothar Scholz, eds., *Administered Killings at the Time of National Socialism. Involvement – Suppression – Responsibility of Psychiatry and Judicial System* (Regensburg: Roderer Verlag, 1992), 110-146; Holm Krumpolt, "Die Landesheilanstalt Großschweidnitz als 'T4'-Zwischenanstalt und Tötungsanstalt (1939-1945)," in *Nationalsozialistische Euthanasie-Verbrechen in Sachsen. Beiträge zu ihrer Aufarbeitung*. (Dresden/Pirna: Kuratorium Gedenkstätte Sonnenstein e.V. und Sächsische Landeszentral für politische Bildung, 1993), 91-100.

⁵ On the subject of the conception and implementation of National Socialist racial policy, please see Gellately, *Gestapo and German Society*; Gordon, *Hitler, Germans and the "Jewish Question"*; Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich*.

Graßhoff spoke to that effect when he proclaimed to the annual district church assembly that God had “spoken to our German *Volk*” and “given our *Volk* a great opportunity” in the National Socialist political transformation.⁶ So did Pirna Superintendent Max Zweynert when he pledged that the church would support the National Socialist regime in its “national and moral renewal of our *Volk*.”⁷ Finally, just like his counterparts, Ravensburg Superintendent Hermann Ströle was caught up in the euphoria of 1933, and gave thanks to God for a “new recognition of our identity as a *Volk* ... a miracle of God.”⁸ On another occasion, during a lecture entitled “Our *Volk* Life in Light of the Bible,” Ströle explained that reverence of and devotion to God would ensure the survival of the *Volk* community, and added: “*Völkisch* character in its totality is and remains the basis of our common development and work, according to God's creative order.”⁹ These three statements were only indirect assertions of the importance of cultivating the national community and did not necessarily imply that the three superintendents would have endorsed more radical racial measures designed to realize *völkisch* unity in its fullest sense. Ströle, for instance, did not always speak in the same *völkisch* terms. At a missions festival in September 1933, he affirmed the equality of all races in a sermon he preached. His text for the occasion was Romans 1:16: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” If the implications of the passage were not self-evident to his audience, Ströle explained that the gospel was given according to the will of God for all races of the earth, without differentiation.¹⁰

⁶ “Kreiskirchentag in Nauen,” (newspaper clipping), n.d., Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 300/590.

⁷ “Ephoralkonferenz des Kirchenbezirks Pirna,” (newspaper clipping), n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

⁸ “Evangelischer Gemeindeabend zum Luthertag,” *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 21 November 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

⁹ *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 20 January 1932, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

¹⁰ *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 12 September 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

Over the three regional superintendents were higher church officials, who frequently reinforced the importance of race for German Protestants. In July 1933, for example, Württemberg Superior Church Councillor Pressel reminded a packed concert hall audience in Ravensburg of "the individuality of the races given by the creator, particularly of the German *Volk*, who are conditioned by blood and soil, spirit and history."¹¹ In Saxony, a conference of district church superintendents three months earlier greeted the victory of the National Socialist state and then outlined the role of state and church in a declaration to the Saxon church. The basis for much of the declaration—particularly its description of the roles of state and church—was a theology of orders. The Saxon superintendents asserted: "We will not forget about the fact that God has given the nations [*Völkern*] different blood, different languages and different customs, that he has assigned to each its own tasks, and that thus, the resolve for *Volk* and Fatherland is God-willed." The body of superintendents also affirmed that the church was called to serve the nationalist agenda and "to bless the fighter who has to defend the life and the honour of the Fatherland."¹²

Other local church leaders made stronger statements about the divine nature of the German *Volk* community. Church trustee David Kuhn of Kißlegg, near Ravensburg, expressed a deep longing for German Protestants to work for the "spiritual melding together of the nation" and to take up the fundamental priority of National Socialism: "the *Volk* community."¹³ Pastor Ernst Ranft of Helmsdorf, in the Pirna district, asserted that the highest duty of the church was service to the *Volk*, and implied that spiritual salvation through Christ was superseded by *völkisch* salvation through National Socialism.¹⁴

¹¹ *Oberschwäbischer Anzeiger*, 31 July 1933, Stadtarchiv Ravensburg.

¹² *Pirna Anzeiger*, 18 April 1933, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 814.

¹³ "Sehr geehrter Herr Dekan!" 27 February 1935, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 731.

¹⁴ "Bericht über die Sitzung der Stolpener Konferenz am 22. Januar 1934," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 290.

On another occasion later in 1934, Pastor Ranft of Helmsdorf returned to the relationship between the German *Volk* and the Christian faith. In the November Stolpen Pastoral Conference, Ranft spoke on the theme "The Importance of Race Research for Religion and Christianity." His starting point was not Scripture but the fundamental importance of the concept of race for the National Socialist worldview. Ranft then considered the idea of the racial specificity of religion and suggested that the universality of religion knew definite limits, when understood as a human phenomenon. Ultimately, the revelation of Christ was God's answer for humanity, and any demand for Christian preaching suited to a particular race could not be allowed to reduce the content of the gospel. Ranft then explained how Christian preaching for a particular race must be "a loving entrance into the special certainties of the life of a people [*Volk*] and a race, not least into the failures and peculiarities attached to it." The Christian sermon must always be a call to repentance, though the outworking of preaching in the practices of faith and piety "should and ought to be thoroughly racially specific." For Ranft, the life application of the preaching of the Word of God demanded the serious efforts of German Protestant clergymen in order that it might produce a renewed Christian-German community.¹⁵ What Ranft failed to mention was that much of the new preaching for German ears failed to point out any of the failures of the German *Volk*. Rather, it exalted Germany and its Lutheran legacy, conflating Protestant piety and German patriotism. More problematically, Ranft provided no answer for the implicit questions of how the gospel operated in other cultures or how the institutions of the Church could ever supersede culture and race.

Others approached the matter more directly. In 1936, Pastor Wertz of Isny, in the Ravensburg district, declared: "*Völkisch* uniformity of the blood, *völkisch* character is God-willed."¹⁶ His colleague in Friedrichshafen, Pastor Karl Steger,

¹⁵ Pastor H. Zweynert of Neustadt, "Bericht über die Sitzung der Stolpener Pfarrkonferenz am 26.11.1934." Ephoralarchiv Pirna 291.

¹⁶ This point was influenced by a lecture from Dr. Hartenstein, director of the Basel Mission, in which he described the creation of the three main branches of humankind, using the Genesis 10 account of Noah's descendants. Pastor Wertz of Isny, "Staat und Kirche," [November 1936], p. 2, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 83b.

summed up the veneration of the German racial community with the simple slogan "One God, one Christ, one *Volk*."¹⁷

In fairness, these and many other statements like them were made primarily between 1933 and 1935, when Protestant nationalism was at its height. A very few Protestant clergymen from Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg dared to question or even criticize the obsession of their colleagues with the spiritual significance of the German *Volk* community. They were, however, a minority within the nationalistically charged community of Protestant pastors.¹⁸

Amid the general nationalist rhetoric of the early stages of the Third *Reich*, a few of the more politically active German Christian clergymen spoke out against Judaism and its influence on German Protestantism. Pastor Paul Teichgräber of Eschdorf, in the Pirna district, commented on Jews and Judaism in the course of a 1934 report about the activities of the local Seventh Day Adventist sect. Above all, Teichgräber judged the Adventists harshly for their political subversion and their Jewish practices. He claimed that the sect followed "Jewish teaching and tendencies" even more closely than the outlawed Jehovah's Witnesses, and supported his contention with examples of "Sabbath-keeping, tithing, a materialistic view of salvation and law-keeping, and the exaltation of the Jewish people as the people of God."¹⁹

Teichgräber objected to the idea that the Jews were the bearers of Christ's message and that the experiences of Old Testament Israel either foreshadowed or served as a model for Christianity. He rejected the assertion that Old Testament sacrifices were similar to Jesus' death and that the Passover Feast and Christian sacrament of communion were essentially comparable. Teichgräber depicted the Adventists as "false leaders of the public" for their attempts to interpret prophetic literature in Daniel and the Revelation of John.²⁰

¹⁷ Jag, *Karl Steger*, p. 13-14, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

¹⁸ For a fuller discussion of clerical nationalism in and its limits, please see chapter 2, above.

¹⁹ "Bericht betr. die Adventistenbewegung und die von den Adventisten verbreiteten Schriften," n.d., Ephoralarchiv Pirna 196.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

Like Teichgräber, German Christian Pastor Friedrich Siems of Nauen rejected any connection between Judaism and Christianity. In late 1938, Siems asserted that German racial identity was God-given, and the German churches ought to contribute to that identity by encouraging their parishioners to cultivate blood purity. Since blood purity was a divine order, the presence of Jews in the German *Reich* posed for Siems not only a threat to the German racial community but also an obstacle to the fulfilment of God's Law. Siems attacked Jews as both the root and strength of Bolshevism and the high priests and servants of mammon, and asserted that it was a God-pleasing work to transfer them from Germany into their own colony somewhere else.²¹

Other pastors sent conflicting messages about Jews by attempting to hold onto traditional notions about the Jewish roots of the Christian faith and contemporary National Socialist racial ideology at the same time. Two instances illustrate their quandary. First, in January 1936, Vicar Priester of Lietzow, in the Nauen district, found himself in trouble for agitating too sharply against the Prussian church authorities in a sermon. First Priester—a protégé of radical Confessing Church Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge—accused the institutions of the Old Prussian Union Church of falsifying the Word of God, and then he took issue with the Church's racial policy. Priester criticized the application of the Aryan paragraph, the attempt to impose racial criteria upon the Protestant clergymen of Germany, in the Old Prussian Union Church and then took up the subject of Jews and Aryans. According to one report, Priester "cynically regarded the higher estimation of Aryans as [...] arrogance for utilization for selfish purposes." He then allegedly declared that everyone in the congregation was Abraham's seed and that the belittling of "the chosen people" before God was not valid.²²

²¹ Anna von Hofsten, "Det Andliga Livet I Tyskland," *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 8 February 1939. Von Hofsten had become acquainted with Siems during a visit to Nauen, had written an article describing his ministry, which she then translated from Swedish to German sent to Friedrich Siems of Nauen. The translation is in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Nau 26/21.

²² Voigt, schoolteacher and organist in Lietzow, and Städicke, Local Group Leader of the NSDAP to the Governing President in Potsdam and the Brandenburg Consistory, 12/13 January 1936, EZA 14/10859.

These comments incensed the local schoolteacher (who was also church organist) and the local NSDAP leader. They accused Priester of using confirmation classes and Sunday services to undermine the educational work they were doing at school and in the Hitler Youth.²³ By way of explanation to Pastor Posth, his supervisor, Priester insisted he was not agitating against the National Socialist state. No doubt he hoped to avoid any charges of treason under the Insidiousness Law of 1934. Priester did admit, however, that he was concerned that the worldview of the *Myth of the 20th Century* was publicly presented time and again as the only route to happiness for the German people, and that religion was regularly portrayed as bad for Germans. Boldly, Priester concluded: "If the warning and guiding word of the church is interpreted as agitation against the state, if the church is suspected and defamed as an enemy of the state in its care for the souls of the *Volk*, then it must suffer this reproach, but out of truthfulness towards its Lord must not be silent."²⁴

When forced to make a public statement about his sermon, Priester declared: "I have spoken out expressly for the solution of the race question in the National Socialist sense."²⁵ He then tried to account for the sermon he had preached on Galatians 3:26-29, which reads: "You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

First, Priester admitted that the passage "sounds strange in a time which shows us the importance of the difference between races, their various character attributes." Claiming that the Apostle Paul was not trying "to blur these differences" or "to speak the word of international brotherhood," Priester interpreted the passage so as to evade any practical application of the biblical depiction of the unity of believers under Christ: "The differences of the races, of the estates and occupations,

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Curate Priester to Pastor Posth of Berge, 10 September 1936, EZA 14/10859.

²⁵ "Erklärung des Vikars Priester [...] am 4. Februar 1936," EZA 14/10859.

the differences of the genders, they remain and must be respected, as long as this earth stands. Where the disregard, the dissolution of this ordinance leads, that our *Volk* has had to experience itself. We cannot arbitrarily bring about the unity and equality of which Paul speaks. It is realized, it is valid only in the living community of the church."²⁶ In other words, Priester believed in the spiritual unity of all Christians, but not their socio-political unity. With respect to the section in the Galatians passage about shared sonship through faith in Christ, Priester asserted that the meaning of his sermon was only that "we may say that we do not stand nearer to God than others based on earthly merits or qualities, rather only on account of his grace and love for him as our father."²⁷ Finally, Priester responded to the charge that he had said that everyone in his congregation was one of Abraham's seed. Priester explained that the connection to Abraham's seed was only an identification through faith, through trust in God's grace.²⁸ So, while Priester had challenged his congregation to consider both the Jewish roots of Christianity and the supra-racial implications of membership in God's family, he had also affirmed the exclusionary orientation of National Socialist racial policy in Germany.

The second cleric to send inconsistent messages about Jews was Curate Immanuel Spellenberg of Friedrichshafen, in the Ravensburg church district. On 13 January 1939, Spellenberg made a declaration of his views on Jews and the Old Testament, the reasons for which are not clear. In it, Spellenberg stated that, on the one hand, as a National Socialist and old SA leader he had always taught children about the destructive influence of godless Judaism and about the judgments of the Old Testament prophets. In the same way, he determined to continue teaching the Old Testament so that "the moral sensitivities of the German race are not hindered."²⁹ On the other hand, Spellenberg tempered his critique of the Jewish

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Immanuel Spellenberg, "Erklärung zu meiner Unterschrift am 13.I.39." Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 56h.

influence in Germany by pointing out that he could not completely reject the Old Testament, because of his belief in the New Testament. Since Jesus Christ had taught from the Old Testament and had proclaimed the fulfilment, not abolition of the Old Testament law, Spellenberg refused to part completely with the Hebrew Scriptures.³⁰ His statements cut to the core of the predicament faced by Christians in National Socialist Germany: as much as they might agree with the anti-Semitic ideology of the NSDAP, they could never escape the charges of Party extremists that Christianity was a Jewish religion. To do so would amount to the abandonment of the historical foundation of the Christian faith and the denial of the essential Jewishness of Jesus.

Ironically, three of the most ardent German Christian pastors in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg did deny those essential components of Christian orthodoxy, hoping to expunge Jews and Judaism from German Protestantism. In Nauen, Pastor Friedrich Siems corresponded with a Swedish tourist who then wrote an article about her experiences among Protestants in Hitler's Germany. In a letter to her from July 1939, Siems railed against "Judaism and its fearfully destructive influence" and then pronounced his church-political opinion about Jesus' relationship to the Jewish nation. "As German Christians, we have discerned that the founder of Christianity had nothing, really nothing at all to do with the Jewish people, rather they were always his sharpest opponents. [...] The personality of Christ is too great and too holy for us to bring it into connection with [Jews, who have] become a curse for the whole world."³¹ Siems' comments betrayed the fact that he sought a compromise between the historical account of Jesus in the gospels and the requirements of the antisemitic worldview of his German Christian Movement. In order to make Christianity palatable to German National Socialists, Siems was willing to defy all logic and ignore the traditional Jewish context in which the church was born.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Pastor Siems of Nauen to Anna von Hofsten of Upsala, Sweden, 12 July 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Nau 26/21. Susannah Heschel and Doris Bergen have recently pointed out that the questioning of Jesus' racial identity was a German Christian strategy for dismissing the Jewish roots of the Christian faith. Susannah Heschel, "Nazifying Christian Theology: Walter Grundmann and the Institute for the Study and Eradication of Jewish Influence on German Church Life," *Church History* 63 (1994): 587-605; Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 195.

In Pirmasheim, Pastor Dr. Ernst Rothe tackled the relationship between Christianity, National Socialism and racial questions in an October 1935 lecture on "The Christian and the Burning Questions of the Present."³² Rothe's speech is important because he delivered it to local pastors and church leaders at the annual district church assembly and because he was the pastor at the chapel attached to Sonnenstein, the large sanatorium and special care institution in Pirmasheim. In his speech, Rothe identified three pressing issues: the sterilization law designed to protect the blood of the German *Volk* from contamination by the hereditarily diseased blood of 'deviant' Germans; the Jewish Question in Germany; and the objectives of the National Socialist *Weltanschauung*, or worldview.³³

Rothe asserted that it was not contrary to Christian love to advocate sterilization—there was no other way to hinder those who were hereditarily diseased, capable of reproduction and therefore a danger to the strength of the German racial stock. In addition, he argued that even the Inner Mission, the national organization responsible for managing many Protestant special care institutions, recognized this fact and supported the sterilization program.³⁴

With respect to the Jewish question, Rothe discussed the recent passage of the Nuremberg Citizenship Law and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honour, which stripped Jews of their German citizenship and forbade them from having sexual relations with German 'Aryans'. These laws, Rothe argued, did not contradict the Christian duty of love, which builds God's Kingdom and preserves life. The expression of love that Rothe had in mind was quite simply the cultivation of the German racial community and its interests alone. Jews simply did not apply. This was a line of thought typical of the quasi-theology of the German Christian Movement—a complete separation of temporal and spiritual realms based on a stringent adherence to a theology of orders. God created earthly structures, or orders, the cultivation of which and obedience to which were Christian duties.

³² "Kreiskirchentag zu Pirmasheim," (newspaper clipping), 9 October 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 92.

³³ "Kreiskirchentag in Pirmasheim," (handwritten notes), 9 October 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 100.

³⁴ Ibid.

Among these orders were race, family, and the state. Thus, for instance, adherents of this theology gave priority to the order of race over the concept of Christian unity inherent in the Pauline assertion that "there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."³⁵ Since God had created the differences between humans listed by Paul—and there were still men and women on the earth, after all, as well as distinct nations and races—Christian unity was spiritualised. It was regarded as a metaphysical phenomenon that did not correspond to the concrete socio-political issue of race relations, where the Christian was required to maintain sharp distinctions between the races created by God. Rothe appealed to this same line of reasoning in his approach to Jews, based on his description of Jews as a wholly different race to which the dictates of Christian love did not apply.³⁶

Finally, in discussing the goals of the National Socialist worldview, Rothe stressed the popular notion that the interests of the *Volk* had to come before the interests of individuals. Rothe described this concept as similar but not identical to the ethical requirements of Christianity. Both great worldviews, National Socialism and Christianity, ought to advance together. The National Socialist worldview was practical in its approach, and did not, argued Rothe, bother with the ultimate questions of existence that concerned the Christian faith. Correspondingly, in the practical realm of this earth, the Christian worldview directs people to their duty to the Fatherland.³⁷

There is no record of how the pastors or lay leaders in attendance at the annual district church assembly received Rothe's message, nor any subsequent record of Rothe's response to the escalation of National Socialist racial policy at the Sonnenstein institution from 1939 to 1941.

Finally, Pastor Dr. Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen, near Ravensburg, spoke in terms similar to Pastor Siems of Nauen. Unlike Siems, he employed the parish

³⁵ Galatians 3:28 (NIV).

³⁶ "Kreiskirchentag in Pirmasheim," (handwritten notes), 9 October 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirmasheim 100.

³⁷ Ibid.

newsletter he edited to broadcast his antisemitic views to local Protestants. In the May 1936 edition, Steger reported on a speech he had recently given to Friedrichshafen German Christians on the theme “Was Jesus Jewish?”³⁸ In his speech, Steger introduced a series of specious arguments designed to create doubt about Jesus’ ethnic roots. First, Steger evaded the very question he posed by asserting that Jesus’ racial identity was less important than the subjective question of faith: “What is Jesus to you?” Steger compared Christian salvation through Jesus to medical cures brought over from other races, like Jews or Japanese. German doctors would never reject a remedy because it was not German, but would always use any cure that worked, regardless of its origin. For Steger, the same logic held true for human salvation. Even if there was a Jewish element to Christianity, Christ was still the bond between God and humanity. “In him we discern the whole glory and goodness of God, our Father,” Steger declared. He then asked: “Are we supposed to reject Christ, because perhaps his ancestry is not racially unambiguous?” Steger contended that the enemies of Christ were simply using antisemitic attacks on Christianity as a way to avoid the challenging claim of Christ on their lives, and lumped them together with “extreme Talmud Jews,” whose ongoing purpose was to render Christ as a picture of inferiority.³⁹

Steger noted that the same people who rejected Jewish intellectual, spiritual and material creations were quick to use those same products against Christ. He then turned to the work of Houston Stewart Chamberlain, “the precursor of the National Socialist world of thought [...] for whom Christ was an Aryan,” since it spoke directly to “all this filth and trash that is heaped up over Christ by these spiteful opponents of Christianity.” Steger quoted Chamberlain’s argument that science had repeatedly cleared up one religious question after another, and that it was naïve to believe that Christ was a mythological figure or an inferior Jew, or worse yet, to imitate the Jewish world press and its campaign to dig up anything to discredit Christianity.

³⁸ *Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt Friedrichshafen*, May 1936, Stadtarchiv Friedrichshafen.

³⁹ *Ibid.*

The Friedrichshafen pastor then explained Chamberlain's view that Christ had been raised as a Jew, but was probably not racially one, since he came from the racially mixed region of Galilee and since his opposition to Judaism and consequent death on a cross made it seem unlikely he could be Jewish himself. Steger buttressed this argument with words from President Graf Reventlow of the pagan German Faith Movement, whom he described as an honourable opponent of Christ, a thoroughly decent researcher and thinker and even a pious man. Reventlow held that Christ was so different from Jews that he could not possibly be Jewish. Where Jews were materialistic, Christ was heavenly minded. Where Christ proclaimed the kingdom of God as an attitude of the soul, Jews believed in an earthly kingdom. Where Christ rejected money, it ran counter to the Jewish mentality. Where Jews focused on a holy, Old Testament Law, Christ was indifferent to the Law. Where Christ preached love for others, Jews could not grasp it.⁴⁰

Finally, Steger quoted Dr. Hutten of the Protestant Press Association, who described Jewish opposition to Christ's virgin birth and argued that ancient sources depicted Jesus only as the son of Mary and Joseph. After raising a few other objections to the Jewishness of Jesus, Steger pronounced his verdict. For him, the notion of Jesus as a Jew was "very problematic," a conclusion greeted with applause by Steger's German Christian audience.⁴¹

Amid these attempts to evade the essentially Jewish roots of Christianity, a few pastors spoke and acted in ways that suggested they might be sympathetic to Jews. In all cases, they were members of the Confessing Church, primarily from the Nauen church district. Pastor Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz found himself in trouble with parishioners whose racial ideology did not correspond to that of their pastor. One of them was Groß Behnitz School Principal Lehmann, who accused Fritzsche of possessing an attitude like "an enemy of the state," mainly on account of Fritzsche's loyalty to the Confessing Church.⁴² On 11 November 1938, however,

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Schoolteacher Lehmann of Groß Behnitz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 14 November 1938, EZA 7/12233.

Fritzsche ran into trouble during a confirmation class he held immediately after the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom of 9-10 November. Evidently, Fritzsche spoke on behalf of Jewish Christians, perhaps even for Jews as Jews, as he discussed their responsibility for the pogrom. His students quoted him saying: "Jews are also people like us [...] the Jews of [Bible times] are not the Jews of today [...] the Jew from Paris is only one criminal."⁴³ When the children retorted blaming other Jews too, Fritzsche exclaimed: "That is not true!" One student quoted Principal Lehmann, Fritzsche's enemy, who had said that anyone who helped a Jew was not German, while others shouted along: "He is a Jew too!"⁴⁴ As a result of Fritzsche's outburst and the spectacle that followed, Lehmann forbade Fritzsche from using the school for any further confirmation instruction, based on an official prohibition against using schoolrooms for purposes that did not correspond with the ethos of the National Socialist state.⁴⁵ In addition, local Gestapo agents and officials from the Superior Church Council in Berlin both censured Fritzsche, but no further action was taken against him.⁴⁶

Two other clergymen from the Nauen district took a stand over the question of baptizing Jews who converted to Christianity. In 1936, Pastor Günther Harder of Fehrbellin baptized a Jewish woman, the wife of a Protestant, and permitted the couple's half-Jewish children to sing in the church choir. For this, the *Reich* Church Committee then governing the Old Prussian Church censured Harder.⁴⁷ In contrast to this, however, Harder and one of his assistants, Ms. Hebe Kohlbrugge, did fill out

⁴³ "Folgendes Protokoll ist durch freiwillige Aussagen der Schulkinder entstanden, die am 11.11.38 am Konfirmandenunterricht des Herrn Pfarrer Fritzsche teilnahmen." Groß Behnitz, 15 November 1938, EZA 7/12233. The last statement is a reference to the Jewish youth Herschel Grunzspan, who murdered a German embassy official in Paris and provided the pretext for the antisemitic pogrom.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Schoolteacher Lehmann of Groß Behnitz to Pastor Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, 13 November 1938, EZA 7/12233.

⁴⁶ Pastor Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz to the Brandenburg Consistory, 11 May 1939; EO.II 3278 II/39 Prussian Superior Church Council to the Brandenburg Consistory, September 1939, EZA 7/12233.

⁴⁷ Brandenburg Consistory to the Prussian Superior Church Council, 10 February 1937, EZA 7/12233; *Reich* Church Committee to the Prussian *Land* Church Committee, 4 December 1936, EZA 7/12127.

Proofs of Aryan Ancestry, though never was there a case in which the parishioner in question had unbaptized (i.e. 'non-Aryan') grandparents.⁴⁸

Subsequently, his colleague, Confessing Church Vicar Heidrich of Groß Behnitz, was expelled from the NSDAP in 1937, not because he was jailed for 10 weeks for refusing to turn in voluntary church collections to the Brandenburg Consistory, but because he stated he was ready to baptize Jews too. In the end, however, Heidrich went unpunished for his statement, since the NSDAP *Gau* court overturned Heidrich's expulsion.⁴⁹

Heidrich's supervisor, Pastor Herbert Posth of Berge, was one of several clergymen whose complaints to *Land* Church authorities over filling out Proofs of Aryan Ancestry may have stemmed from more fundamental disagreements with the antisemitic policy that lay behind them. Though presumably every pastor had to provide baptismal records for officials, NSDAP members and other German citizens who needed to prove the 'purity' of their Aryan blood, Posth was the only pastor with a substantial complaint in the district records for Nauen and Pirna. Posth grumbled to an official from the Brandenburg Consistory about filling out forms and undertaking background checks by telephone for a Thuringian couple whose family stemmed from Posth's parish. He argued that his parish council took the position "that the pastor is not bound to employ his time for the care of souls and parish visitation in this unheard of way, for paper work that has nothing to do with the parish office."⁵⁰

In Pirna, several pastors neglected to submit their own Proofs of Aryan Ancestry for over two years after the Saxon *Land* Church Office had requested the information in June 1939. When Superintendent Heinrich Leichte of Pirna repeated the demand in October 1941, nine pastors and two vicars still had not filled out their

⁴⁸ See and Weckerling, *Frauen im Kirchenkampf*, 127.

⁴⁹ "Aufstellung über Massnahmen gegen BK-Brüder Kirchenkreis Nauen," 11 September 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 142/944; Pastor Posth of Berge to Pastor Harder of Fehrbellin, 2 March 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 143/948.

⁵⁰ Pastor Posth of Berge to Mr. Hoppe, Financial Plenipotentiary for the Ribbeck parish, 13 June 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ri 5/11.

forms.⁵¹ Two of them, Vicars Kausch of Struppen and Philipp of Neustadt, were new to the Pirna district but all nine pastors had been in office since the time of the original request for information. Six of the nine—Pastors Rudolf Carl of Cotta, Johann Friedrich of Gottleuba, Dr. Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde, Gotthelf Müller of Heidenau-Luther, Georg von Schmidt of Langenhennersdorf and Martin Vorwerk of Liebstadt—were members of the Confessing Church in Pirna, while the church-political standpoint of the other three—Dr. Brunner of Heidenau-Christus, Gartzke of Berggießhübel and Joachim Griebßdorf of Porschdorf—is unknown. Although Superintendent Leichte of Pirna set a new deadline of 15 October 1941 for the submission of outstanding Proofs of Aryan Ancestry, Pastors Carl, Gartzke and Griebßdorf had still not submitted their forms as of 10 November.⁵² Though antipathy to National Socialist racial policy is only one of several possible reasons for their reticence to fill out the Proofs of Aryan Ancestry, at the very least, one can assume that these nine pastors were not eager to comply with the administrative burdens created by their government's racial policy.

Over time, the administrative burdens stemming from National Socialist racial policy grew increasingly ominous, particularly in Pirna. There, a series of regulations and inquiries relating to Jews passed through the hands of Superintendents Zweynert and Leichte, and on to area pastors. In March 1935, the *Land* Church government in Dresden sent out application forms for any pastors who wanted to be part of the local chapter of the German Society for Racial Hygiene. This society was led by the chief physician from the Sonnenstein asylum and special care institution, Dr. Nitsche, who went on to practise forced sterilizations after 1935 and who suggested the transformation of Sonnenstein into a killing centre in 1939. However, in 1935, none of the pastors from the Pirna district signed up for the local chapter of the German Society for Racial Hygiene.⁵³

⁵¹ Superintendent's Instructions 7, 1 October 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

⁵² Superintendent's Instructions 7 and 8, 1 October 1941 and 11 November 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

⁵³ Saxon *Land* Church Office to Superintendent Zweynert, 7 March 1935; Superintendent Zweynert to the Saxon *Land* Church Office, 8 May 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 403.

Next, on 28 August 1935, Superintendent Zweynert circulated a *Land* Church Office request for information about any requests pastors had received to baptize Jews, and about any cases in which such baptisms were performed.⁵⁴ Although Zweynert indicated he expected reports from all pastors, whether or not they had been asked to baptize Jews, there is no record of any response from local clergymen or Superintendent Zweynert in his files.

A more ominous request for information appeared in June 1939, originating with the Chancellery of the German Protestant Church in Berlin. It ordered all clergymen to report whether they and their spouses possessed German or alien blood.⁵⁵ As indicated, response to this order was mixed, and 11 local clergymen had still not submitted their answers over two years later.

In October 1939, Pirna Superintendent Leichte passed along another racially motivated request from higher church authorities. In a circular letter to clergymen throughout the district, Leichte asked them to report the presence of Old Testament symbols, figures, pictures, emblems, scriptural texts or other items of furniture either in or on the church buildings in their parishes. Pastors were instructed to include a short description and to include the date of origin of the element, if that were possible.⁵⁶ Again, the response was less than stellar. In spite of repeated reminders, many pastors had still not filed reports nine months later.

Leichte repeated his request for information on Old Testament symbols in local churches in July 1940. In his circular letter to them, he noted that pastors had portrayed his initial request as “an attack on religious faith and confession.” Leichte called upon the pastors to take stock of the situation, argued that the request for information did not revolve around their religious faith and confession, and warned that the *Land* Church authorities would take judicial action against pastors who

⁵⁴ Superintendent Zweynert to all clergymen in the Pirna district, 28 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁵⁵ Superintendent's Instructions 15, 8 June 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

⁵⁶ Superintendent's Instructions 17, 13 October 1939, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 80.

continued to refuse to answer.⁵⁷ Despite this warning, there is no available record of any responses from pastors.

The following year, higher church officials asked for information on Jews themselves, not just Jewish symbols and pictures. Superintendent Leichte transmitted an order for information about the number of Jews who had joined the Saxon *Land* Church in the Pirna district since 1934.⁵⁸ Though this request did not yet touch on the baptism of Protestant children from 'racially' mixed marriages, it clearly implied that the churches were to aid the National Socialist regime in identifying 'racial' Jews in their midst.

While the Saxon *Land* Church Office in Dresden continued to send racially-motivated inquiries to Superintendent Leichte and the clergymen of the Pirna district, a government policy of murder against German citizens—including Protestant parishioners from the Pirna church district—was implemented right on Leichte's doorstep. Only a five or ten minute walk up the hill from the offices of the Pirna church district and city parish stood Sonnenstein, the asylum and special care institution for the mentally ill and mentally handicapped. Established in 1811, it soon became one of the leading German mental health institutions in the 19th century.⁵⁹ A prominent landmark in almost every view of Pirna, Sonnenstein overlooked the both the Elbe River and Pirna city-centre from atop its stately perch.

The institution changed radically in 1939, however, when it was closed and subsequently reopened as a euthanasia killing centre. Under the National Socialist euthanasia program *Aktion T4*, named after its office address, Tiergarten 4 in Berlin, Sonnenstein became one of 6 killing centres in which mentally ill and mentally handicapped men, women and children were gassed to death and cremated. Between June 1939 and August 1941, at least 13720 Germans, many from the

⁵⁷ Superintendent's Instructions 20, 9 July 1940, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

⁵⁸ Superintendent's Instructions 1, 11 January 1941, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 81.

⁵⁹ Boris Böhm and Thomas Schilter, "Pirna-Sonnenstein. Von der Reformpsychiatrie zur Tötung psychisch Kranker," in *Nationalsozialistische Euthanasie-Verbrechen in Sachsen: Beiträge zu ihrer Aufarbeitung* (Dresden/Pirna: Kuratorium Gedenkstätte Sonnenstein e.V. und Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1993), 12-16.

surrounding region, were killed in a horrible realization of National Socialist racial policy.⁶⁰ During the height of the euthanasia action in July 1941, 2537 patients were killed, over 100 per working day.⁶¹

The euthanasia system at Sonnenstein operated essentially as follows. Patient records from all German special care institutions were sent to the central office in Berlin. Based on a cursory glance at each record, medical doctors in the employ of the SS selected the patients for euthanasia. Generally, these patients were transferred to a holding institution, then transferred again to the killing institution—in part to make it more difficult for families to trace records or to intervene on behalf of their loved ones. In the case of Sonnenstein, four institutions served as collection points for patients selected for killing: Arnsdorf, Großschweidnitz, Waldheim and Zschadrass.⁶² The transports in which victims rode were generally special grey buses with blacked out windows, which both the mental patients and local citizens came to know by sight.

When the patients arrived at Sonnenstein or any other killing centre, their records were verified. They were then told to undress for a shower, checked over (those with gold fillings got a cross marked on their chests), and sent into the shower cum gas chamber. Some of the dead were used for quasi-medical experiments. Those corpses with the cross on their chests had the gold fillings broken out of their mouths, and the bodies were cremated on site. Families were informed that their patient-relatives had succumbed to infectious diseases and that their bodies had been cremated, due to the medical danger of contagion. Relatives could have the urn sent to them if they wished.⁶³

⁶⁰ Ernst Klee, *Dokumente zur "Euthanasie"* (Frankfurt: Taschenbuch Verlag, 1985), 232-233; Willy Forner, *Das Verbrechen von La Mornasse. Berichte über faschistische Gewalttaten* (n.p.: Militärverlag der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1981), 45-50; F.K. Kaul, *Nazimordaktion T4. Ein Bericht über die erste industriemäßig durchgeführte Mordaktion des Naziregimes* (Berlin: VEB Verlag Volk und Gesundheit, 1973), *passim*.

⁶¹ Böhm and Schilter, "Pima-Sonnenstein. Von der Reformpsychiatrie zur Tötung psychisch Kranker", 28.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 29.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 31-35.

After protests from relatives of too many patients who were dying at the same time from the same 'causes,' Hitler ordered an official stop to the euthanasia program at the end of August 1941. In Sonnenstein and elsewhere, however, the killing continued even after this, with malnourishment and intentional overdoses of medication taking the place of the gas chamber. In Saxony, much of this subsequent killing was perpetrated not at Sonnenstein itself, but at holding institutions like Großschweidnitz, where 5717 patients were murdered between September 1939 and May 1945, and Waldheim, where another 800 patients died between 1940 and 1945 (rather than the usual three to seven deaths annually).⁶⁴ Meanwhile, in November 1941, SS leaders, doctors and other workers met at Sonnenstein to plan the transfer of personnel and technology east to Belzec (and later Sobibor and Treblinka), where euthanasia teams were set to work in death camps for European Jews.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, as far as the municipal and ecclesiastical history of Pirna goes, the euthanasia program at Sonnenstein has been something of a non-story. There is no sign of Sonnenstein and its crimes in the local church records, or for that matter in the local press or city archives.⁶⁶ This is so, despite the fact that those living in the city-centre saw the buses and the thick black smoke over Sonnenstein, smelt the foul stench from the incinerators, and understood that people were being killed in the institution. Older residents of the city have admitted so, as have personnel who worked in Sonnenstein but refused to participate in the killing action.⁶⁷ A former nurse at Sonnenstein, Dora Schumann, reported how her husband, a male nurse, was offered a position on the special commando that handled the patients as they came to be killed. Friends of theirs told them about the

⁶⁴ Krumpolt, "Die Landesheilanstalt Großschweidnitz als 'T4'-Zwischenanstalt und Tötungsanstalt (1939-1945)," 98; Sonja Schröter, "Waldheim als 'Euthanasie'-Zwischenanstalt von Kranken-Sammel-Transporten an die Tötungsanstalt Sonnenstein im Rahmen der sog. 'Aktion T4' in den Jahren 1940 und 1941," in *Nationalsozialistische Euthanasie-Verbrechen in Sachsen: Beiträge zu ihrer Aufarbeitung* (Dresden/Pirna: Kuratorium Gedenkstätte Sonnenstein e.V. und Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1993), 85.

⁶⁵ Klee, *Dokumente zur "Euthanasie"*, 66.

⁶⁶ Böhm and Schilter, "Pirna-Sonnenstein. Von der Reformpsychiatrie zur Tötung psychisch Kranker", 35.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

construction of the crematorium at Sonnenstein, about the patients in the blacked out buses waiting to enter and about the starvations and overdoses of the wild euthanasia at Großschweidnitz. According to Schumann, on one occasion great flames shot out of the chimney at Sonnenstein, but when the fire department rushed out there, no one would let them onto the grounds. Because the air smelt of burning flesh, it was obvious to people in the community that patients were being murdered and cremated there. "It smelled like hair and like bones. The commotion was great. People were not allowed to ask anyone [about it]."⁶⁸ As far as the Lutheran church was concerned, Sonnenstein and its small church were part of the Pirna parish until the institution was closed down in 1939, in preparation for its reopening as a killing centre. Neither before nor after that date was there any report of the goings on at Sonnenstein, and the chapel was closed in 1939. This both demands and defies explanation, given that there must have been hundreds of handicapped Lutherans from in and around the Pirna district who were killed at Sonnenstein and other smaller euthanasia centres in Saxony. One case has been recorded: A 43-year old Lutheran mother from the parish of Ottendorf was murdered in November 1940, although she only suffered from depression due to overwork. Because the death notice had been sent from the Hartheim killing centre in Linz, the woman's daughter did not discover until 1991 that her mother had been killed at Sonnenstein.⁶⁹

In the Ravensburg church district, the state psychiatric hospital at Weissenau endured a similar process. Located in a village on the outskirts of Ravensburg, the chapel at Weissenau was regularly served by one of the associate pastors from the city. In October 1939, doctors at the hospital received a stack of forms to complete concerning their patients, which they were told were for the purpose of facilitating wartime economy measures. No word of the confiscation and transformation of the

⁶⁸ Dora Schumann, "Erinnerungen an die Tötungsanstalt Pirna-Sonnenstein," in *Nationalsozialistische Euthanasie-Verbrechen in Sachsen: Beiträge zu ihrer Aufarbeitung*, (Dresden/Pirna: Kuratorium Gedenkstätte Sonnenstein e.V. und Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1993), 54-55.

⁶⁹ Lissa Flade, "Erinnerung an meine Mutter – ein Opfer der Tötungsanstalt Sonnenstein," in *Nationalsozialistische Euthanasie-Verbrechen in Sachsen: Beiträge zu ihrer Aufarbeitung*, (Dresden/Pirna: Kuratorium Gedenkstätte Sonnenstein e.V. und Sächsische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1993), 101-103.

Grafeneck special care institution had yet reached the doctors at Weissenau. In November 1939, Dr. Egon Stähle of the Württemberg Health Authority in the Ministry of the Interior issued orders to transfer large numbers of patients from various psychiatric hospitals, Weissenau included, accompanied only by the vague justification of the "current situation."⁷⁰ From late 1939 on, regular lists of 75 names arrived at the psychiatric hospitals, with instructions to prepare selected patients for transport to an "unknown destination," which proved to be Zweifalten, the holding institution from which patients would be forwarded to Grafeneck and thus to their deaths.

Provisional Director Sorg of Weissenau did not know what was going on, even when the first shipments left from Weissenau. Only when the driver of the transport shrugged off Sorg's warning about 17 patients who were permanent typhus-bacillus excretors did Sorg begin to wonder if something unusual was going on. When the driver told Sorg: "It doesn't matter to us," Sorg began to ponder the situation. Unfortunately, as he later explained: "I was, however, unable to realize the underlying significance of [the driver's] words."⁷¹

Gradually, though, rumours began to circulate through the public and the patient populations that many people were dying at Grafeneck, and from strange causes. In time, both patients and staff at Weissenau came to know of the euthanasia program, and it affected their work substantially. As one doctor explained:

Shock therapy was almost impossible, as the patients and their relatives suspected each injection of being the 'death injection'. Not one patient or relative believed anything we said any longer. We were embarrassed to face the relatives and it was seldom possible to create even the vaguest basis of trust.⁷²

⁷⁰ Tilman Steinert. "Reactions In Psychiatric Institutions to the Murder of their Patients in Grafeneck," in Ulrich Jockusch and Lothar Scholz (eds.). *Administered Killings at the Time of National Socialism. Involvement – Suppression – Responsibility of Psychiatry and Judicial System* (Regensburg: Roderer Verlag, 1992), 105.

⁷¹ Ibid., 106.

⁷² Ibid., 107.

The same doctor went on to describe the horrific effect this knowledge of their destiny had on patients on their way to Grafeneck:

Patients who slowly began to realize what was happening were led to the buses pale and shaking. I remember in this context the schizophrenics in Weissenau who awoke from their lethargy when they were collected and bade the other patients farewell with a pathos of which no-one would have thought them capable, as the condemned going to their deaths. These were fortunately few. Most of the acutely ill did not outwardly react. In hospitals which were confessionally bound the patients were religiously prepared for death the night before their collections were made. In state institutions this was forbidden.⁷³

Of the roughly 15000 patients killed in Grafeneck, 691 came in 11 transports from Weissenau, between 20 May 1940 and 13 March 1941. As they became aware of the crimes they were implicated with, doctors and medical staff at Weissenau and other hospitals generally chose to collaborate with the euthanasia program. T4 officials implicated the director of Weissenau by sending lists of more than 75 patients, the capacity of the transport buses, forcing him to choose which patients to keep back. After keeping back two patients who were good workers, the Weissenau director later suggested to the Württemberg Ministry of the Interior that they be included in the next shipment, since their condition had deteriorated. It was behaviour such as this that suggests doctors at Weissenau accepted the elimination of psychiatric illnesses through murder “alarmingly freely,” perhaps out of inner conviction of the inferiority of their patients and the necessity of eliminating them for the greater good of the German *Volk*.⁷⁴

Weissenau was not the only institution in the Ravensburg church district from which mentally ill or handicapped patients were transported to Grafeneck. On 1 February 1940, 13 patients were taken from the epileptic asylum Pfingstweide, near Tettnang. They were simply chosen (by officials from outside the institution)

⁷³ Ibid. Unfortunately, there is no ready explanation for how Roman Catholic or Protestant clergymen prepared these patients for their deaths. There was no law of any kind to cover these murders, and given the obvious violation of the Decalogue, one wonders how clergymen justified their participation.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 107-109.

from the names on the Pfingstweide patient list that began with the letters 'B' through 'H' and included veterans of the First World War who had suffered physical or psychological damage. When officials at Pfingstweide learned of the deaths of the 13, they protested to the Württemberg Interior Ministry and the Württemberg headquarters of the Inner Mission, the Protestant agency responsible for Pfingstweide.⁷⁵

Despite these protests, another transportation was planned for 3 October 1940, when another 15 patients were assigned for euthanasia. Knowing the Pfingstweide doctors opposed the transfer, representatives from the Württemberg Interior Ministry and doctors from Berlin came to ensure the success of the transport. For four hours, the transport bus waited on the grounds of Pfingstweide, while the doctors in the asylum worked to persuade superior officials from the Württemberg Interior Ministry to allow the patients to remain at Pfingstweide. Their efforts were partially successful: four men, two of them Jewish, were left behind while 11 others were transported to their deaths.⁷⁶

In order to prevent further transports, doctors from Pfingstweide informed the families of patients about the danger and appealed to high-ranking officials to secure the safety of the patients. Still, on 12 March 1941 five more patients were transported from the asylum to the state institution at Weinsberg, where they were murdered in spite of protests from the Pfingstweide doctors. Of the 75 patients in the asylum, 29 were murdered in the euthanasia programme of 1940 and 1941.⁷⁷

The Ziegler Institution at Wilhelmsdorf, an asylum for the deaf, mute and other special needs patients, faced similar pressures. On 1 August 1940, doctors there received word of planned transports. In response, Inspector Hermann of the Ziegler Institution wrote a firm letter of protest to thwart the transports: "I know the

⁷⁵ Hans Christoph von Hase, ed., *Evangelische Dokumente zur Ermordung der "unheilbar Kranken" unter der nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft in den Jahren 1939-1945* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1964), 69-70; Gerhard Schäfer, ed., *Landesbischof D. Wurm und der nationalsozialistische Staat, 1940-1945: Eine Dokumentation* (Stuttgart: Calwer Verlag, 1968) 115, 140.

⁷⁶ Hase, *Evangelische Dokumente*, 69-70.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 70.

purpose of this systematic requisition. I know of the many death notices ... I cannot in good conscience remain silent about that and take part ... I simply have the conviction, that *the authorities are committing an injustice with the killing of certain patients*. We humans do not have the right to the annihilation of life other than as the expiation for certain crimes or in war.” Warning that God would avenge the blood of those murdered by their fellow men, Inspector Hermann quoted 2 Samuel 14:14 as the basis for his decision:

“God does not want to take away life, but devises ways that the outcast will not be cast away from him.”—No family is secure, that one of its children will not become mentally handicapped through sickness or an accident. With the annihilation of such an ill or simply abnormal family member or patient we are acting against God’s will. That is why I cannot take part in this affair. I am sorry, but a person must obey God rather than man. I am prepared to accept the consequences of this my disobedience.⁷⁸

Thus, when the Württemberg Interior Ministry demanded a list of patients from the Ziegler Institution, Hermann sent in 45 patient names instead of all 110, and then informed the families of patients so they could take them home. During the inspection of patients, a member of the medical commission from the Württemberg Interior Ministry tore up three patients’ forms so that they would not be taken, an act of kindness for which Inspector Hermann was extremely grateful. In a letter of thanks to the medical commission, he appealed for the lives of his other patients as well. As at Pfingstweide, success was only partial. On 25 March 1941, there were 18 patients transported from Wilhelmsdorf and murdered. Through his efforts, however, Hermann had managed to save 92 other patients.⁷⁹ It was a more successful endeavour than that of doctors at the Roman Catholic hospital Liebenau, near Tettang, where 270 patients were transported to Grafeneck.⁸⁰

As in Pima, church records in Ravensburg are eerily silent about euthanasia. The one mention of the subject was a memorandum from the Württemberg Superior

⁷⁸ Ibid., 91.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 92; Schäfer, ed., *Landesbischof D. Wurm*, 116.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

Church Council to the district superintendents, noting the unrest among the populace in areas where mentally ill, mentally handicapped and epileptic patients had been killed in asylums. The note explained that *Land* Bishop Wurm had written a long letter to the *Reich* Interior Minister, explaining “why these measures must be judged as disastrous from the human and the Christian standpoint,” and encouraged pastors and family members of affected inmates to contact the *Reich* Interior Ministry themselves.⁸¹ There is no such correspondence in the Ravensburg church district archive. The only other reference to the asylums and special care institutions in Ravensburg Superintendent Kommerell’s correspondence during the era of the euthanasia program was a series of lengthy regulations governing the spiritual care of patients. These were simply passed down from the Württemberg Superior Church Council and circulated among local clergymen, just as regulations governing ministry to foreign labourers and prisoners of war were.⁸²

The same holds true for the Nauen church district, where, for the most part, pastors offered little evidence of involving themselves in conflicts beyond those created by the heated contests over pastoral appointments so central to the church struggle in the rural Havelland. Two notable exceptions stand out, however. First, in August 1942, Günther Harder of Fehrbellin chaired a committee comprised of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and four other Confessing Church theologians, whose purpose was to formulate a statement concerning the murder of handicapped Germans and German Jews. Bonhoeffer summed up the view of the committee concerning the essence of the church’s role in society:

‘Even the community [*Gemeinde*] in the catacombs will never diminish the universality of its commission. Since it preaches law and gospel, it professes this commission and with that holds alive the responsibility for the world. Never can the community be content with the care of its own inner life, without disowning its Lord ... In principle, there is no limiting the commission of the community;

⁸¹ Württemberg Superior Church Council to all district superintendents, 27 July 1940, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 88b.

⁸² Württemberg Superior Church Council to all district superintendents, 13 May 1941, 18 August 1941 and 19 February 1942, Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 88a.

occasionally, it must decide how it carries out [that commission] in view of the signs of the times.⁸³

Then, in October 1943, at the 12th Prussian Confessing Church Synod, both Pastors Günther Harder of Fehrbellin and Herbert Posth of Berge collaborated on the committee that wrote the "Word of the Church" concerning the 10 Commandments. Intended for use on Repentance Day, the Word began: "Throughout our *Volk* and even throughout our Protestant parishes and Christian families passes a great, ever growing insecurity about whether the holy 10 Commandments are still in effect." The declaration went on to answer the question affirmatively and with special reference to the prohibition against murder:

Woe to us and to our *Volk*, when God-given life is despised and the person, created in the image of God, is valued solely according to his utility; when it is considered justified to kill people because they are considered unworthy of life or belong to another race [Rasse], when hate and mercilessness parade about. Then God speaks: 'You shall not murder.'⁸⁴

Harder later remarked at the many warnings he had received against reading out the "Word of the Church" in his parish church. When he did so and faced no judicial consequences, he attributed it to the distraction of the bombing in Berlin.⁸⁵

Although neither of these bold statements from Harder and Posth was directed at local concerns about euthanasia in the Nauen district, their participation with Bonhoeffer and others in the Confessing Church demonstrated that at least two pastors from the Nauen district were willing to protest against the criminal effects of National Socialist racial policy.

In light of the forceful protest of Harder and Posth, how can one interpret the fearful silence about events at Sonnenstein and Weissenau among clergymen in Pirna and Ravensburg? It certainly appears that the existence of the euthanasia program was relatively common knowledge in these centres. This was certainly the

⁸³ Niesel, *Kirche unter dem Wort*, 259.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 275-276.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 277.

case in Pirna, where the deadly killing centre Sonnenstein stood in clear view of the city and its Lutheran inhabitants. It was also true, however, in the Ravensburg district, where several Protestant special care institutions faced repeated demands to give up their patients for transport to Grafeneck. At least three of them—Weissenau, Pfingstweide and the Ziegler Institution in Wilhelmsdorf—were within a few kilometres of Ravensburg and served by district pastors.

Disconcerting as the silence of the local church is, it does not constitute sufficient evidence from which to draw firm conclusions. Still, the absence of official inquiries or complaints about the murderous activities of *Aktion T4* from Pirna and Ravensburg district clergymen both demands and defies explanation. There are two main explanations arising out of the lack of archival evidence. Neither is offered as a conclusive answer.

First, it is possible that pastors and junior clergymen did not feel strongly enough about the euthanasia program to raise any public objections. In Pirna, many pastors were enthusiastic members of the NSDAP and its organizations, and even the most outspoken members of the Confessing Church stood solidly behind the National Socialist state, if Superintendent Zweynert's reports to that effect were true.⁸⁶ When they gathered together, Pirna pastors often discussed the concept of the German *Volk* and the necessity to support Hitler's national renewal. Their colleague who had the closest contact with Sonnenstein, Pastor Dr. Rothe, argued forcefully for forced sterilization, the exclusion of racial aliens (Jews), and the application of the National Socialist doctrine stating that individual interests needed to be sacrificed for the common good of the racial community. Based on the debates at their monthly pastoral conferences, Pirna pastors largely subscribed to the traditional Lutheran theological justification of political authority and did not generally criticize National Socialist domestic or foreign policy.⁸⁷ Given those ideological factors as well as the gradual increase of National Socialist antisemitic measures, the

⁸⁶ Superintendent Zweynert of Pirna to Land Bishop Coch, 6 February 1934, Ephoralarchiv 814; Superintendent Zweynert to the Land Church Office, 24 August 1935, Ephoralarchiv Pirna 816.

⁸⁷ For details about the political nationalism of clergymen in Pirna, Ravensburg and Nauen, please consult the discussion in chapter 2.

constancy of National Socialist racial propaganda and the burdens of pastoral ministry in wartime, it is possible (though it remains unproven by the archival silence) that pastors in Pirna were not sufficiently moved by the events at Sonnenstein to protest. Protestant clergymen in Pirna were often willing to speak and write critically when they believed that essential theological or confessional issues were at stake, such as the authority of a heterodox *Land* Church government or their freedom to preach the gospel as they understood it.⁸⁸ However, concerning the murder of innocent Germans, which was surely a graver spiritual issue, they did not choose to criticize either the policy of either the National Socialist state or their *Land* Church superiors.

In Ravensburg, the situation was quite similar with respect to pastors' national sympathies, their theological justification of existing political authority and the added burden of ministering during the Second World War. In contrast to the situation in Saxony, Württemberg *Land* Bishop Theophil Wurm boldly protested against the euthanasia program and encouraged pastors and parishioners to do likewise. However, there is no evidence from local church records to suggest that they acted on his suggestion.

The same holds true concerning the measures taken by the National Socialist state against German Jews. As with so many of their colleagues across Germany,⁸⁹ most of the Protestant clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg had so long absorbed the anti-Jewish teachings of the Church and antisemitic propaganda of the Third *Reich* that they had little to say about the plight of the Jews, save for three Confessing Church pastors in the Nauen district: Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz, Günther Harder of Fehrbellin and Herbert Posth of Berge.

⁸⁸ For details about the heated theological and confessional battles among Pirna clergymen, please consult chapter 4, particularly the accounts of Pastors Schumann, Carl and Klemm from the Confessing Church.

⁸⁹ Baranowski, *Confessing Church*, 84-86; Wolfgang Gerlach, "The Attitude of the Confessing Church Toward German Jews in the Third Reich, and the Way After," in Locke, ed., *Barmen Confession*, 105-108; Hans-Joachim Kandler, "Kirche und Juden während des deutsch-christlichen Kirchenregiments in Sachsen 1933-1945," *Theologische Versuche*, 14 (1985): 93-103; Doris Bergen, "Catholics, Protestants, and Antisemitism in Nazi Germany," *Central European History* 27 no. 3 (1994), 329-348.

The second explanation (which, again, remains unsupported from the silence of the local church archives) is that many local clergymen may have simply been too afraid of the consequences to make public or official statements concerning the euthanasia programme or the persecution and annihilation of German Jews, particularly if they felt powerless to stop the process from their humble positions. Dora Schumann's memory of the way that public turmoil over euthanasia at Sonnenstein was shrouded in a cloak of silence provides a window through which to see how Lutherans in Pirna might have responded to the murders and murderers in their midst by withdrawing in fear. Certainly, there were other times where local clergymen despaired of conditions in their parishes and felt helpless to struggle against the presence of the radical nationalist ideology held by National Socialists. Pastor Rudolf Peter of Pirna wrote of suffering silently in the face of unchristian political and ecclesiastical leaders, and Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau was only one of many clergymen who experienced despair about the upheaval in the Pirna district, and more generally, in Saxony.⁹⁰ Perhaps clergymen also felt unable to stop or even alleviate the suffering of patients at Sonnenstein and feared the consequences if they tried.

Under either of these two scenarios—ideological agreement or personal fear—the dearth of public protest among Protestant clergymen against the deadly implementation of National Socialist racial policy in the euthanasia of handicapped Germans is surely one of the blackest stains upon their record. It is a testimony to the force of their socio-political environment and the weakness of their theological and ethical training that they were either so ideologically maladjusted or psychologically intimidated that they could no longer respond to the divine injunction: "Defend the cause of the weak and fatherless; maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."⁹¹

⁹⁰ For details on the mood of these and other Pirna pastors in the church struggle, please see chapter 6, especially pp. 251-252, 289-291, *passim*.

⁹¹ Psalm 82:3-4 (NIV).

CHAPTER 9
CONCLUSION:
LEARNING FROM THE LOCAL CHURCH STRUGGLE

In this study, my goal has been to analyze the German church struggle as it filtered down from the church capitals of Berlin, Dresden and Stuttgart into the parishes of the church districts of Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. My plan was based on the conviction that the combination of a comparative approach and the perspective of writing history 'from below' would enhance the history of the German church struggle by providing fresh angles from which to view some its key events and debates. Ultimately, my hope has been to add some substantial details to the history of the Protestant churches in the Third *Reich* and to see whether these details would modify the received view of the church struggle. Thus, after a reiteration of the main conclusions of this study, which are summarized at the end of each chapter, I will turn to consider what I believe are its three primary historiographical implications.

After the Introduction, in the second chapter, I sought to understand the parish contexts in which the Protestant clergymen of the Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg districts ministered during the National Socialist era. I was particularly concerned to explain the effect of the National Socialist seizure of power upon German Protestantism and I was intrigued with the significant changes in some key parish statistics that seemed to provide a novel approach to understanding the initial phase of the church struggle at the local level. Indeed, the combination of parish statistical evidence with the anecdotal reports about the participation of National Socialist and community organizations in church services, the growing strength of the German Christian Movement and the happy reactions of nationally-minded clergymen strongly suggests that in many of the parishes of the Nauen and Pirna church districts, 1933 was a dramatic, transforming year in which the national renewal sparked and fuelled by the NSDAP manifested itself powerfully in the lives of many German Protestants. As I noted in the conclusion to that chapter, the Ravensburg district displayed a far more subdued response to the religious nationalism of 1933 than the Nauen and Pirna districts. I would argue that this was a

product of its largely Roman Catholic milieu, and look to the exception to prove the point: Pastor Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen greeted the emergent Third *Reich* with an enthusiasm matched only in Nauen and Pirna. His parish was the only one in the Ravensburg district that displayed an upsurge in Protestant religious observance similar to that in the northern German parishes in the districts of Nauen and Pirna.

If the parish contexts in which clergymen from Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg laboured differed significantly in response to the national renewal of 1933, the clergymen's own responses to the new political conditions did not. That was the thrust of the third chapter, in which I argued that pastors from all three districts lauded Adolf Hitler as the providential salvation from the degenerate conditions of Weimar Germany. Many of them firmly believed that the national renewal touched off by the NSDAP would spark an equally powerful moral renewal—that is why Pastor Lux of Groß Behnitz greeted the wave of public interest in his church with such optimism. Equally, it accounts for Sebnitz Pastor Karl Partecke's disillusionment with the shallowness and lack of commitment among the many Lutherans who had flocked to the Pirna district parishes in 1933, but then began to grow indifferent.

A smaller number of Protestant clergymen also responded positively to Adolf Hitler, his government and the national cause because they heard him calling them to participate in the restoration of their national community. One aspect of that restoration that appealed to many clergymen was the commitment of the NSDAP to crush the influence of Communism in Germany. Both Friedrich Siems of Nauen and Karl Steger asserted that Hitler had saved Germany from the brink of Communist disaster. Yet another aspect of the attraction of the national renewal to Protestant pastors, curates and vicars was the affinity of the national renewal to some of their theological tendencies toward authoritarianism and order. One or more of these motivations drew many, though not all, clergymen into a positive stance toward the national renewal promoted by the new National Socialist government of 1933.

Following that examination of nationalism among parishioners and pastors, in the fourth chapter, the focus of my research shifted to a vital issue in the local

church struggle, namely, the appointment of pastors. Here again, the three church districts displayed a marked diversity. In Pirna and Ravensburg, *Land* church authorities held sway over pastoral appointments, while the synodal system in the Brandenburg district of Nauen periodically turned the process of appointing new clergy into a raucous contest of wills that disrupted the continuity of pastoral care for months and even years at a time. Here the grassroots support enjoyed by Confessing Church pastors such as Herbert Posth of Berge and Günther Harder of Fehrbellin combined with the good will of parish patrons gave these pastors a base from which to challenge the Brandenburg Consistory for control over pastoral appointments.

Chapters five through seven presented the opportunity to examine the relationships among clergymen in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg. First, it must be noted that the differences in the *Land* church contexts of the three districts played a significant role in the intensity and manner in which each district and its pastors experienced the church struggle. In Nauen, pastors were simultaneously well informed about and somewhat distanced from the upheaval of the repeated attempts to create a German Evangelical *Reich* Church under the influence of the German Christian Movement. Because of the importance of pastoral appointments in Nauen, there seemed to be little energy for other issues, save for the violations of Prussian Church regulations that led to the periodic punishment of Confessing Church clergymen in the Old Prussian Union Church, and which affected Confessing Church pastors in the Nauen district, just as everywhere else.

In Pirna, pastors maintained very close contact with events in the Saxon *Land* Church government and experienced the church struggle with an immediacy lacking in Nauen and Ravensburg. Membership in the Pastors' Emergency League grew quickly, after which pastors faced the difficult decision of following the Confessing Church into illegality or working together with moderate Superintendent Max Zweynert for ecclesiastical peace. Although Zweynert established a strong moderate movement among district pastors, his retirement in 1937 and the succession of Pastor Friedrich Leichte to the position of superintendent shattered the peace and disillusioned dedicated moderates like Pastor Martin Meinel of Bad Schandau.

Altogether different were the conditions in the Ravensburg church district. Because *Land* Bishop Theophil Wurm of Württemberg survived the German Christian *Reich* Bishop's attempt to incorporate the Württemberg Evangelical *Land* Church into the *Reich* Church, Ravensburg pastors could enjoy a measure of theological and administrative continuity completely unlike that experienced by their colleagues in Nauen and Pirna. If that meant that local church life was often refreshingly mundane, it also meant that German Christians like Karl Steger found themselves in the church-political minority, not unlike members of the Confessing Church in the Prussian and Saxon Churches. It was precisely here that similarities between the three local church struggles began to re-emerge. Just as Confessing Church clergymen in Nauen and Pirna mobilized lay support for their church-political causes, so too did Karl Steger win the support of German Christian groups in Friedrichshafen and in other Upper Swabian and Bavarian communities. In all three districts, then, it was possible for dissident pastors to survive in hostile church-political environments. In reality, Steger enjoyed the practical advantage of possessing political and church-political opinions in keeping with those maintained by the National Socialist regime, and thus had little to fear from either the Party or its police.

Having examined the impact of the church struggle upon the relationship of clergymen with one another, with their superiors and to their parishes, I returned in the eighth chapter to the examination of the three districts as a whole, and to the subject of National Socialist racial policy. Despite the importance of race in the National Socialist worldview, there was surprisingly little indication of the views of clergymen toward either the policy of euthanasia or the persecution and then annihilation of German Jews. It was in Nauen, where the euthanasia programme was less visible, that its most principled opposition was to be found. Pastor Kurt Fritzsche of Groß Behnitz tried to convince his unruly confirmation students that the *Kristallnacht* Pogrom of 9-10 November 1938 was unjustified, while Günther Harder of Fehrbellin and Herbert Posth of Berge wrote a significant pulpit declaration against the racial crime of euthanasia and the murder of the Jews. Their colleagues in Pirna and Ravensburg wrote nothing into the district church records to

suggest that they too opposed the euthanasia programme unfolding around them. What they said is not a matter of record, and so the historical silence remains disturbing, while ultimately inconclusive.

It is my contention that these conclusions from the history of clergymen engaged in the diversity of local church struggles speak forcefully to three historiographical questions. First, they reinforce the now well-established interpretation that the will to political opposition among Protestant clergyman was a rare quality. Pastors from all three districts and all across the church-political spectrum were openly welcoming of the national renewal and some remained committed to the national and National Socialist cause for the duration of the Third *Reich*. Their public political messages were largely positive and their criticisms (whether spoken in public or written as private ecclesiastical correspondence) were few and far between. Neither the demand for clerical allegiance to the Hitler government nor the principle of employing the celebratory functions of the churches on behalf of the National Socialist state appeared to create much turmoil in the Nauen, Pirna or Ravensburg church districts. With a few exceptions, the statements of clergymen about Jews were ambivalent at best, hostile to the Jews at worst. In short, while quite a number of pastors were willing to go to jail for their other theological and internal-ecclesiastical causes, only the three committed Confessing Church members in Nauen—Pastors Fritzsche, Harder and Posth—appear to have been willing to take the steps that might have landed them in jail on behalf of either the handicapped or the Jews.

The church struggle in Nauen appears to shed the most light upon the second historiographical question, that of the relationship between various groups within and around the Confessing Church. Among the clergymen of the Nauen district, there was both sharp disagreement and sincere brotherhood between members of the Confessing Church and non-members who regularly lent their support to the Confessing Church. In spite of the constancy with which Confessing Church Pastors Herbert Posth and Günther Harder pursued the principle of appointing only Confessing Church pastoral candidates who refused to recognize the authority of the Old Prussian Union Church government, when necessary they worked very closely

with Interim Superintendent Ulrich Bettac, in order to ensure that German Christian pastoral candidates were not appointed.

Indeed, it was the very success of that collaboration and of the grassroots strength of the Confessing Church in parts of the Nauen district that permitted Confessing Church members and their supporters outside the movement to squabble over the question of recognizing higher church authority. Similarly, the patience with which Pirna Superintendent Max Zweynert supported dissenting pastors in his district within the Pastors' Emergency League made it possible for the more contrary of them to join the Confessing Church, to renounce the authority of their church superiors and to disregard the correspondence from Saxon *Land* Church officials. In light of these relationships, historians who seek to understand the theological and legal basis for the unique claims of the Confessing Church to legitimacy ought to be reminded of the very practical benefits that those Confessing Church clergymen enjoyed thanks to the support of moderates in the German Christian *Land* church governments.

That observation is directly related to the third historiographical question with which this study has been concerned: the importance of writing the history of the German church struggle not only from the perspective of the *Reich* and *Land* churches in Berlin, Dresden and Stuttgart, but also from the perspective of the church districts and the parishes lower down in the ecclesiastical hierarchy. When viewed through the variety of local church conditions and the patterns of parish church life, the church struggle takes on a very different shape. For one, many of the most important national issues—the creation of the *Reich* Church, the election of a *Reich* Bishop, the application of the Aryan paragraph to the Church, the attempt to forcibly incorporate the 28 *Land* churches into a single *Reich* Church, the apparent decline of the German Christians, the activities of the *Reich* and *Land* Church Committees, the question of the clerical oath to the *Führer*, the euthanasia programme and the antisemitic racial policy of the National Socialist Party-state—hardly resonate at all in the records of the church districts, except by means of the published circular letters sent from the *Land* church offices. Moreover, while pastors like Günther Harder of Fehrbellin, Hermann Klemm of Burkhardswalde and

Karl Steger of Friedrichshafen all made forays into the larger church-political arena, all three seemed to maintain a distinctly separate existence within their parishes, so that it is not always apparent how the high church activities of these clergymen shaped their conduct as parish pastors.

In contrast, the comparative history of the pastors in Nauen, Pirna and Ravensburg does reveal several gaps in the received tradition of German church struggle history. Three deserve to be addressed. First, while historians have concerned themselves with the relationship between national political events and national church conditions, it has not been as evident how deeply national or regional political events (or for that matter economic, military or cultural ones) touched the lives of Protestant lay people in Germany during the Third *Reich*. Local studies would illuminate the issue, to the extent that they would draw on the clerical correspondence, sermon books, district synod minutes, parish newsletters and local church statistics available not merely to understand what life was like in a particular locale, but in order to demonstrate the extent to which high church policy and politics influenced parish life under National Socialism.

The second gap revealed by the comparative study of these clergymen is the vital importance of the pastor in Protestant church life. If this amounts to stating the obvious, it is nonetheless intriguing that so little attention has been paid to the process by which pastors were appointed, or to its very mixed results. This holds especially true for the Old Prussian Union Church, with its strong synodal tradition. The fact that Confessing Church members and supporters in the Nauen district could effectively exclude most German Christian pastoral candidates belies the familiar historical image of radical German Christians in control of the Prussian Church and disadvantaged Confessing Church pastors merely fighting for survival. Their experiences also hint that a broad-based study of pastoral appointments in the Old Prussian Union Church might lead to a general reassessment of church conditions there. In short, the significance of the German Christian takeover of the Old Prussian Union Church government in Berlin remains unclear, when examined from the perspective of the church districts and parishes.

This in turn leads to my final point about the importance of the study of local church conditions within the German church struggle, namely, the influence of church polity. Simply put, how did the diverse structures of the various *Land* churches affect the course of events in Protestant districts and parishes throughout Germany? The success of the Confessing Church in the contest for pastoral appointments in Nauen, the ability of Confessing Church pastors to cling to their positions in Pirna and the continued success of the ostracized German Christian Pastor Karl Steger in Friedrichshafen imply that there was, in many cases, a fair degree of latitude in local church life. Decisive pastors, determined women's groups, local schoolteachers, mayors, Party leaders, church patrons, parish councils—all these individuals and groups collectively shaped the character of the local church struggle as it unfolded in the districts of Nauen, Pirna, and Ravensburg. The diversity that local and comparative histories provide is worthy of the attention of scholars, for it adds the textures and colours of humanity to the collective historical understanding of events like the church struggle. More importantly, the diversity of local and comparative history presents a challenge continually to rethink the assumptions that undergird our understanding of the past.

APPENDIX 1 **STATISTICS FROM THE NAUEN CHURCH DISTRICT**

All statistics are compiled from tables in "Statistische Übersichten über Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens im Kirchenkreis, 1929-1944" (Domstiftsarchiv Brandenburg NE 96/754).

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNION:

Based on annual totals of baptized members (Souls) and participants in communion services (Communicants) in the district, a measure of the annual change in the absolute number of souls and of communicants, then the overall participation rate (Participation (%)), and the annual change in the participation rate; based on the absolute number of male and female communicants (Male Communicants, Female Communicants), a measure of the percentage of all communicants who are male or female (Male Communicants (%), Female Communicants (%)) a measure of the annual changes in male and female participation rates.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNION IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Souls	41448	42371	43246	43068	43264	43264	43264	43867
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	2	0	0	0	0	1
Communicants	6279	6727	5937	6439	6154	5296	4668	4083
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-12	8	-4	-14	-12	-13
Participation (%)	15	16	14	15	14	12	11	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-14	9	-5	-14	-12	-14
Male Communicants	2518	2628	2441	2519	2319	1957	1690	1439
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	41	39	38	37	36	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	5	-5	-4	-2	-2	-3
Female Communicants	3761	4099	3496	3920	3835	3339	2978	2644
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	59	61	62	63	64	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-3	3	2	1	1	2

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS:

Based on annual district totals of new members, a measure of the annual rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church and then the absolute number of adults transferring from the Roman Catholic Church, from other Protestant (free) churches, from other religious movements outside the Christian churches, or from the Jewish faith.

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIP IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
New Members (total)	63	281	105	54	32	33	32	1
Change (%)	N/A	346	-63	-49	-41	3	-3	-97
From the Roman Catholic Church	12	14	15	9	9	19	16	0
From Other Protestant Churches	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0
From Other Religious Movements	49	264	90	44	23	14	16	1
From Judaism	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS:

Based on annual district totals of membership withdrawals, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church (Annual Change (%)), and the absolute number of adults transferring to the Roman Catholic Church (To RC Church), to other Protestant (free) churches (To Other Prot. Churches), to other religious movements outside the Christian churches (and almost invariably either "God-Believing," or the German Faith Movement or the German Christian Movement). There were no conversions to Judaism.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Members Withdrawing (total)	83	38	11	29	48	83	133	102
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-54	-71	164	66	73	60	-23
To the Roman Catholic Church	0	N/A	1	0	0	1	0	0
To Other Protestant Churches	13	N/A	0	0	0	0	0	0
To Other Religious Movements	70	N/A	10	29	48	82	133	102

BAPTISMS:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the absolute number of children baptized (Baptisms (total)), and subtotals of baptized children born of married Protestant parents (Protestant children), born of parents in Protestant/Roman Catholic mixed marriages (Prot./RC children), and born to unmarried parents, and then another subtotal, the number of children baptized when they were older than one year of age.

BAPTISMS IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Baptisms (total)	589	696	754	831	804	800	822	860
Protestant children	481	582	639	704	712	500	716	733
Prot./RC children	60	56	63	77	51	59	63	77
Children of Unmarried Parents	48	58	52	50	41	41	43	50
Children over 1 year of age	N/A	112	124	78	53	57	78	41

CHILDREN'S CHURCH SERVICES:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the absolute change in the number of children participating in children's church services.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH SERVICES IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Children in services (total)	1100	843	890	704	725	571	572	421
Change (%)	N/A	-21	6	-21	3	-21	0	-26

YOUTH CHURCH SERVICES:

Based on district statistics, the absolute number of parishes holding youth services (either Christian instruction or special youth church services).

YOUTH CHURCH SERVICES IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Parishes with youth services	8	9	5	6	4	2	2	1

CHURCH WEDDING CEREMONIES:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the absolute annual change in the number of civil marriages also celebrated as weddings in Protestant churches.

CHURCH WEDDINGS IN THE NAUEN DISTRICT								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Church Weddings (total)	235	354	473	356	326	296	276	224
Annual Change (%)	N/A	51	34	-25	-8	-9	-7	-19

RATIO OF CIVIL MARRIAGES TO CHURCH WEDDING CEREMONIES:

Based on incomplete parish totals (including filial churches) from around the Nauen district, a measure of the ratio (Ratio (%)) of civil marriages of Protestants (Marr.) also celebrated in Protestant churches (Ch. Wedd.), followed by cumulative percentages and rates of change.

Nauen District: Ratio of Marriages to Church Ceremonies									
	1935			1936			1939		
PARISH	Marr.	Ch. Wedd.	Ratio(%)	Marr.	Ch. Wedd.	Ratio (%)	Marr.	Ch. Wedd.	Ratio (%)
Beetz	19	15	79	17	14	82	20	14	70
Berge	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	13	4	31
Bötzow	23	22	96	18	18	100	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bredow	15	12	80	4	2	50	6	2	33
Flatow	13	13	100	19	19	100	10	10	100
Groß Behnitz	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11	7	64
Grünefeld	16	16	100	16	16	100	10	10	100
Hakenberg	5	5	100	7	7	100	6	5	83
Karwese	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1	1	100
Königshorst	18	18	100	15	15	100	9	7	78
Kremmen	38	38	100	21	16	76	24	10	42
Lentzke	2	2	100	8	9	113	9	9	100
Linum	9	8	89	8	8	100	9	7	78
Markau	14	11	79	19	13	68	4	3	75
Nauen	99	69	70	96	71	74	145	83	57
Paaren	6	6	100	11	5	45	6	6	100
Pessin	10	10	100	7	7	100	14	12	86
Retzow	12	12	100	7	6	86	4	4	100
Ribbeck	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	100
Schwante	6	5	83	4	5	125	6	2	33
Staffelde	6	6	100	10	10	100	10	8	80
Vehlefanz	25	24	96	18	18	100	6	4	67
Wansdorf	13	13	100	14	9	64	5	5	100
Zeestow	4	4	100	7	7	100	3	2	67
Totals	353	309	88	326	275	84	333	217	65
Change (%)				1935-1936:			1936-1939:		
				-4			-23		

PARISH STATISTICS:

Based on annual totals of baptized members (Souls) and participants in communion services (Communicants) in the pastorate or parish, a measure of the overall participation rate (Participation (%)), and the annual change in the participation rate; based on the absolute number of male and female communicants (Male Communicants, Female Communicants), a measure of the percentage of all communicants who are either male or female (Male Communicants (%), Female Communicants (%)) and the annual changes in male and female participation rates.

Parishes (filial churches):

Beetz (Sommerfeld)
Berge (Lietzow)
Bötzow (Schönwalde)
Bredow
Fehrbellin
Flatow (Tietzow)
Groß Behnitz (Klein Behnitz)
Grünefeld (Börnische, Kienberg)
Hakenberg (Tarmow, Dechtow)
Karweese (Betzin)
Königshorst
Kremmen
Lentzke/Brunne
Linum
Markau (Markee)
Nauen
Paaren im Glien (Pernewitz)
Pessin (Paulinenaue, Möthlow)
Retzow (Selbelang)
Ribbeck
Schwante (Klein Ziethen)
Staffelde (Groß Ziethen)
Vehlefanz (Bärenklau)
Wansdorf (Pausin)
Zeestow (Wernitz)

Nauen District Parish Statistics

BEETZ (Sommerfeld) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	2166	2596	2596	2694	2694	2625
Communicants	319	652	497	563	628	423
Participation (%)	15	25	19	21	23	16
Annual Change (%)	N/A	71	-24	9	12	-31
Male Communicants	127	233	152	256	170	89
Male Communicants (%)	40	36	31	45	27	21
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	-14	49	-40	-22
Female Communicants	192	419	345	307	458	334
Female Communicants (%)	60	64	69	55	73	79
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	8	-21	34	8

BEETZ						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1012	1012	1012	N/A	N/A	1068
Communicants	165	302	273	N/A	N/A	215
Participation (%)	16	30	27	N/A	N/A	20
Annual Change (%)	N/A	83	-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	65	96	86	N/A	N/A	53
Male Communicants (%)	39	32	32	N/A	N/A	25
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-19	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	100	206	187	N/A	N/A	162
Female Communicants (%)	61	68	68	N/A	N/A	75
Annual Change (%)	N/A	13	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

SOMMERFELD						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1154	1584	1584	N/A	N/A	1557
Communicants	154	350	224	N/A	N/A	208
Participation (%)	13	22	14	N/A	N/A	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	66	-36	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	62	137	66	N/A	N/A	36
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	29	N/A	N/A	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-25	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	92	213	158	N/A	N/A	172
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	71	N/A	N/A	83
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	16	N/A	N/A	N/A

BERGE						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1200	1267	1267	N/A	N/A	1187
Communicants	136	134	176	N/A	N/A	152
Participation (%)	11	11	14	N/A	N/A	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	31	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	58	52	78	N/A	N/A	68
Male Communicants (%)	43	39	44	N/A	N/A	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	14	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	78	82	98	N/A	N/A	84
Female Communicants (%)	57	61	56	N/A	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-9	N/A	N/A	N/A

LIETZOW (under BERGE)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	410	408	408	N/A	N/A	418
Communicants	59	25	33	N/A	N/A	23
Participation (%)	14	6	8	N/A	N/A	6
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-57	32	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	19	7	8	N/A	N/A	8
Male Communicants (%)	32	28	24	N/A	N/A	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	-13	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	40	18	25	N/A	N/A	15
Female Communicants (%)	68	72	76	N/A	N/A	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	5	N/A	N/A	N/A

BÖTZOW					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	1800	1800	2000	2200	2200
Communicants	320	450	260	300	214
Participation (%)	18	25	13	14	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	41	-48	5	-29
Male Communicants	130	200	105	125	96
Male Communicants (%)	41	44	40	42	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	9	-9	3	8
Female Communicants	190	250	155	175	118
Female Communicants (%)	59	56	60	58	55
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	7	-2	-5

SCHÖNWALDE (under BÖTZOW)					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	1400	1400	1400	1400	1400
Communicants	145	180	132	105	91
Participation (%)	10	13	9	8	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	-27	-20	-13
Male Communicants	60	80	61	40	42
Male Communicants (%)	41	44	46	38	46
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	4	-18	21
Female Communicants	85	100	71	65	49
Female Communicants (%)	59	56	54	62	54
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	-3	15	-13

BREDOW						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	868	868	950	870	870	890
Communicants	82	129	134	110	120	36
Participation (%)	9	15	14	13	14	4
Annual Change (%)	N/A	57	-5	-10	9	-71
Male Communicants	35	41	55	30	30	12
Male Communicants (%)	43	32	41	27	25	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-26	29	-34	-8	33
Female Communicants	47	88	79	80	90	24
Female Communicants (%)	57	68	59	73	75	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	19	-14	23	3	-11

FEHRBELLIN		
Year	1932	1933
Souls	1800	1930
Communicants	272	242
Participation (%)	15	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17
Male Communicants	84	79
Male Communicants (%)	31	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6
Female Communicants	188	163
Female Communicants (%)	69	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3

FLATOW					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	680	678	680	687	687
Communicants	190	236	203	82	286
Participation (%)	28	35	30	12	42
Annual Change (%)	N/A	25	-14	-60	249
Male Communicants	76	109	67	33	111
Male Communicants (%)	40	46	33	40	39
Annual Change (%)	N/A	15	-29	22	-4
Female Communicants	114	127	136	49	175
Female Communicants (%)	60	54	67	60	61
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	24	-11	2

TIETZOW (under FLATOW)			
Year	1932	1933	1934
Souls	452	452	452
Communicants	161	137	79
Participation (%)	36	30	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-15	-42
Male Communicants	76	59	36
Male Communicants (%)	47	43	46
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	6
Female Communicants	85	78	43
Female Communicants (%)	53	57	54
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	-4

GROß BEHNITZ						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	696	696	696	N/A	N/A	665
Communicants	193	231	273	N/A	N/A	74
Participation (%)	28	33	39	N/A	N/A	11
Annual Change (%)	N/A	20	18	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	93	92	118	N/A	N/A	26
Male Communicants (%)	48	40	43	N/A	N/A	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	100	118	155	N/A	N/A	48
Female Communicants (%)	52	51	57	N/A	N/A	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	11	N/A	N/A	N/A

KLEIN BEHNITZ (under GROß BEHNITZ)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	291	291	291	N/A	N/A	291
Communicants	84	68	89	N/A	N/A	42
Participation (%)	29	23	31	N/A	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-19	31	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	36	29	41	N/A	N/A	15
Male Communicants (%)	43	43	46	N/A	N/A	36
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	48	39	48	N/A	N/A	27
Female Communicants (%)	57	57	54	N/A	N/A	64
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-6	N/A	N/A	N/A

GRÜNEFELD (Boernicke, Kienberg) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1680	1680	1680	1650	1650	1640
Communicants	296	305	255	276	230	168
Participation (%)	18	18	15	17	14	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-16	10	-17	-27
Male Communicants	134	143	118	121	108	74
Male Communicants (%)	45	47	46	44	47	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-1	-5	7	-6
Female Communicants	162	162	137	155	122	94
Female Communicants (%)	55	53	54	56	53	56
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	1	5	-6	5

GRÜNEFELD						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	562	562	562	N/A	N/A	565
Communicants	154	144	155	N/A	N/A	97
Participation (%)	27	26	28	N/A	N/A	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	74	66	71	N/A	N/A	46
Male Communicants (%)	48	46	46	N/A	N/A	47
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	80	78	84	N/A	N/A	51
Female Communicants (%)	52	54	54	N/A	N/A	53
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

BÖRNICKE						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	600	600	600	N/A	N/A	600
Communicants	92	93	66	N/A	N/A	36
Participation (%)	15	16	11	N/A	N/A	6
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-29	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	43	43	30	N/A	N/A	16
Male Communicants (%)	47	46	45	N/A	N/A	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	49	50	36	N/A	N/A	20
Female Communicants (%)	53	54	55	N/A	N/A	56
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

KIENBERG						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	518	518	518	N/A	N/A	475
Communicants	50	68	34	N/A	N/A	35
Participation (%)	10	13	7	N/A	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	36	-50	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	17	34	17	N/A	N/A	12
Male Communicants (%)	34	50	50	N/A	N/A	34
Annual Change (%)	N/A	47	0	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	33	34	17	N/A	N/A	23
Female Communicants (%)	66	50	50	N/A	N/A	66
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-24	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

HAKENBERG/TARMOW Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	776	776	776	786	786	800
Communicants	200	117	218	134	221	134
Participation (%)	26	15	28	17	28	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-42	86	-39	65	-40
Male Communicants	96	48	72	58	87	45
Male Communicants (%)	48	41	33	43	39	34
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-15	-19	31	-9	-15
Female Communicants	104	69	146	76	134	89
Female Communicants (%)	52	59	67	57	61	66
Annual Change (%)	N/A	13	14	-15	7	10

HAKENBERG						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	386	386	386	N/A	N/A	400
Communicants	77	72	102	N/A	N/A	57
Participation (%)	20	19	26	N/A	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	42	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	42	29	29	N/A	N/A	22
Male Communicants (%)	55	40	28	N/A	N/A	39
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-26	-29	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	35	43	73	N/A	N/A	35
Female Communicants (%)	45	60	72	N/A	N/A	61
Annual Change (%)	N/A	31	20	N/A	N/A	N/A

TARMOW (under HAKENBERG)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	390	390	390	N/A	N/A	400
Communicants	123	45	116	N/A	N/A	77
Participation (%)	32	12	30	N/A	N/A	19
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-63	158	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	54	19	43	N/A	N/A	23
Male Communicants (%)	44	42	37	N/A	N/A	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	-12	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	69	26	73	N/A	N/A	54
Female Communicants (%)	56	58	63	N/A	N/A	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	9	N/A	N/A	N/A

DECHTOW (under HAKENBERG)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	372	400	N/A	N/A	N/A	400
Communicants	55	49	N/A	N/A	N/A	46
Participation (%)	15	12	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	25	14	N/A	N/A	N/A	13
Male Communicants (%)	45	29	N/A	N/A	N/A	28
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	30	25	N/A	N/A	N/A	33
Female Communicants (%)	55	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	72
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

KARWESEE						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	360	360	N/A	N/A	N/A	340
Communicants	65	71	N/A	N/A	N/A	73
Participation (%)	18	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	21
Annual Change (%)	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	26	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	23
Male Communicants (%)	40	42	N/A	N/A	N/A	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	39	41	N/A	N/A	N/A	50
Female Communicants (%)	60	58	N/A	N/A	N/A	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

BETZIN (under KARWESEE)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	275	280	N/A	N/A	N/A	275
Communicants	41	53	N/A	N/A	N/A	48
Participation (%)	15	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	27	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	13	23	N/A	N/A	N/A	16
Male Communicants (%)	32	43	N/A	N/A	N/A	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	37	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	28	30	N/A	N/A	N/A	32
Female Communicants (%)	68	57	N/A	N/A	N/A	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

KÖNIGSHORST						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1021	1199	1199	1479	1497	N/A
Communicants	83	N/A	360	345	401	242
Participation (%)	8	N/A	30	23	27	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	-22	15	N/A
Male Communicants	36	N/A	180	145	151	100
Male Communicants (%)	43	N/A	50	42	38	41
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	-16	-10	N/A
Female Communicants	47	N/A	180	200	250	142
Female Communicants (%)	57	N/A	50	58	62	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	16	8	N/A

KREMMEN						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	2710	2710	2710	2645	2645	2645
Communicants	154	187	216	191	190	93
Participation (%)	6	7	8	7	7	4
Annual Change (%)	N/A	21	16	-9	-1	-51
Male Communicants	53	78	88	68	63	30
Male Communicants (%)	34	42	41	36	33	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	21	-2	-13	-7	-3
Female Communicants	101	109	128	123	127	63
Female Communicants (%)	66	58	59	64	67	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	2	9	4	1

LENTZKE						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	678	630	630	638	638	677
Communicants	135	147	142	120	157	99
Participation (%)	20	23	23	19	25	15
Annual Change (%)	N/A	17	-3	-17	31	-41
Male Communicants	55	62	68	49	75	45
Male Communicants (%)	41	42	48	41	48	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	14	-15	17	-5
Female Communicants	80	85	74	71	82	54
Female Communicants (%)	59	58	52	59	52	55
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	-10	14	-12	4

BRUNNE (under LENTZKE)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	467	480	467	N/A	487	493
Communicants	101	84	63	N/A	48	45
Participation (%)	22	18	13	N/A	10	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-19	-23	N/A	N/A	-7
Male Communicants	37	30	28	N/A	18	15
Male Communicants (%)	37	36	44	N/A	38	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	24	N/A	N/A	-11
Female Communicants	64	54	35	N/A	30	30
Female Communicants (%)	63	64	56	N/A	63	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-14	N/A	N/A	7

LINUM						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200	1200
Communicants	173	176	228	185	131	107
Participation (%)	14	15	19	15	11	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	30	-19	-29	-18
Male Communicants	70	68	128	80	51	45
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	56	43	39	42
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	45	-23	-10	8
Female Communicants	103	108	100	105	80	62
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	44	57	61	58
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-29	29	8	-5

MARKAU (Markee) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	925	902	902	918	918	808
Communicants	151	153	157	60	45	118
Participation (%)	16	17	17	7	5	15
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	3	-62	-25	198
Male Communicants	61	55	64	20	20	51
Male Communicants (%)	40	36	41	33	44	43
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	13	-18	33	-3
Female Communicants	90	98	93	40	25	67
Female Communicants (%)	60	64	59	67	56	57
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-8	13	-17	2

MARKAU						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	513	530	530	N/A	N/A	466
Communicants	95	57	70	N/A	N/A	40
Participation (%)	19	11	13	N/A	N/A	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-42	23	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	41	22	28	N/A	N/A	15
Male Communicants (%)	43	39	40	N/A	N/A	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	54	35	42	N/A	N/A	25
Female Communicants (%)	57	61	60	N/A	N/A	63
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	-2	N/A	N/A	N/A

MARKEE (under MARKAU)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	412	372	372	N/A	N/A	342
Communicants	56	96	87	N/A	N/A	78
Participation (%)	14	26	23	N/A	N/A	23
Annual Change (%)	N/A	90	-9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	20	33	36	N/A	N/A	36
Male Communicants (%)	36	34	41	N/A	N/A	46
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	20	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	36	63	51	N/A	N/A	42
Female Communicants (%)	64	66	59	N/A	N/A	54
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-11	N/A	N/A	N/A

NAUEN						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	9490	9790	9790	9000	9000	11100
Communicants	953	998	774	982	927	790
Participation (%)	10	10	8	11	10	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-22	38	-6	-31
Male Communicants	316	318	267	304	331	243
Male Communicants (%)	33	32	34	31	36	31
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	8	-10	15	-14
Female Communicants	637	680	507	678	596	547
Female Communicants (%)	67	68	66	69	64	69
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-4	5	-7	8

PAAREN						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	520	523	533	548	548	528
Communicants	125	194	173	182	195	25
Participation (%)	24	37	32	33	36	5
Annual Change (%)	N/A	54	-12	2	7	-87
Male Communicants	54	77	66	75	82	8
Male Communicants (%)	43	40	38	41	42	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	-4	8	2	-24
Female Communicants	71	117	107	107	113	17
Female Communicants (%)	57	60	62	59	58	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	3	-5	-1	17

PERNEWITZ (under PAAREN)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	485	473	490	N/A	N/A	495
Communicants	144	124	125	N/A	N/A	89
Participation (%)	30	26	26	N/A	N/A	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-12	-3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	60	49	52	N/A	N/A	48
Male Communicants (%)	42	40	42	N/A	N/A	54
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	84	75	73	N/A	N/A	41
Female Communicants (%)	58	60	58	N/A	N/A	46
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-3	N/A	N/A	N/A

PESSIN (Paulinenaue, Möthlow) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1370	N/A	1580	1650	1650	1503
Communicants	249	N/A	352	390	390	130
Participation (%)	18	N/A	22	24	24	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	0	-63
Male Communicants	95	N/A	162	160	160	52
Male Communicants (%)	38	N/A	46	41	41	40
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	-11	0	-2
Female Communicants	154	N/A	190	230	230	78
Female Communicants (%)	62	N/A	54	59	59	60
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	0	2

PESSIN						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	548	650	650	N/A	N/A	638
Communicants	99	124	152	N/A	N/A	46
Participation (%)	18	19	23	N/A	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	23	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	38	50	62	N/A	N/A	19
Male Communicants (%)	38	40	41	N/A	N/A	41
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	61	74	90	N/A	N/A	27
Female Communicants (%)	62	60	59	N/A	N/A	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A

PAULINENAU (under PESSIN)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	541	650	650	N/A	N/A	634
Communicants	88	124	110	N/A	N/A	52
Participation (%)	16	19	17	N/A	N/A	8
Annual Change (%)	N/A	17	-11	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	32	50	55	N/A	N/A	19
Male Communicants (%)	36	40	50	N/A	N/A	37
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	24	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	56	74	55	N/A	N/A	33
Female Communicants (%)	64	60	50	N/A	N/A	63
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	-16	N/A	N/A	N/A

MOTHLOW (under PESSIN)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	281	N/A	280	N/A	N/A	231
Communicants	62	N/A	90	N/A	N/A	32
Participation (%)	22	N/A	32	N/A	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	25	N/A	45	N/A	N/A	14
Male Communicants (%)	40	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	37	N/A	45	N/A	N/A	18
Female Communicants (%)	60	N/A	50	N/A	N/A	56
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

RETZOW (Selbelang) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1020	1020	1100	1002	980	930
Communicants	180	206	187	200	155	139
Participation (%)	18	20	17	20	16	15
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	-16	17	-21	-6
Male Communicants	82	86	83	87	68	53
Male Communicants (%)	46	42	44	44	44	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	6	-2	1	-13
Female Communicants	98	120	104	113	87	86
Female Communicants (%)	54	58	56	57	56	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-5	2	-1	10

RETZOW						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	570	570	560	N/A	N/A	530
Communicants	123	151	106	N/A	N/A	92
Participation (%)	22	26	19	N/A	N/A	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	23	-29	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	57	63	45	N/A	N/A	35
Male Communicants (%)	46	42	42	N/A	N/A	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	66	88	61	N/A	N/A	57
Female Communicants (%)	54	58	58	N/A	N/A	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	9	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A

SELBELANG (under RETZOW)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	450	450	540	N/A	N/A	400
Communicants	57	55	81	N/A	N/A	47
Participation (%)	13	12	15	N/A	N/A	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	23	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	25	23	38	N/A	N/A	18
Male Communicants (%)	44	42	47	N/A	N/A	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	12	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	32	32	43	N/A	N/A	29
Female Communicants (%)	56	58	53	N/A	N/A	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-9	N/A	N/A	N/A

RIBBECK						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	470	470	470	N/A	N/A	412
Communicants	95	91	52	N/A	N/A	65
Participation (%)	20	19	11	N/A	N/A	16
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	-43	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	38	37	21	N/A	N/A	20
Male Communicants (%)	40	41	40	N/A	N/A	31
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	57	54	31	N/A	N/A	45
Female Communicants (%)	60	59	60	N/A	N/A	69
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	0	N/A	N/A	N/A

SCHWANTE (Klein Ziethen) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1264	1386	1386	1242	1222	1199
Communicants	179	164	166	195	158	171
Participation (%)	14	12	12	16	13	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-16	1	31	-18	10
Male Communicants	75	65	91	62	61	65
Male Communicants (%)	42	40	55	32	39	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	38	-42	21	-2
Female Communicants	104	98	75	133	97	106
Female Communicants (%)	58	60	45	68	61	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-24	51	-10	1

SCHWANTE						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1114	1236	1236	N/A	N/A	1067
Communicants	152	137	143	N/A	N/A	152
Participation (%)	14	11	12	N/A	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-19	4	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	62	53	80	N/A	N/A	58
Male Communicants (%)	41	39	56	N/A	N/A	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	45	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	90	84	63	N/A	N/A	94
Female Communicants (%)	59	61	44	N/A	N/A	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-28	N/A	N/A	N/A

KLEIN ZIETHEN (under SCHWANTE)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	150	150	150	N/A	N/A	132
Communicants	27	27	23	N/A	N/A	19
Participation (%)	18	18	15	N/A	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-15	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	13	13	11	N/A	N/A	7
Male Communicants (%)	48	48	48	N/A	N/A	37
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	14	14	12	N/A	N/A	12
Female Communicants (%)	52	52	52	N/A	N/A	63
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A

STAFFELDE (Groß Ziethen) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	971	971	971	935	935	931
Communicants	186	205	203	189	183	N/A
Participation (%)	19	21	21	20	20	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	10	-1	-3	-3	N/A
Male Communicants	78	87	79	79	68	N/A
Male Communicants (%)	42	42	39	42	37	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-8	7	-11	N/A
Female Communicants	108	118	124	110	115	N/A
Female Communicants (%)	58	58	61	58	63	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	6	-5	8	N/A

STAFFELDE			
Year	1932	1933	1934
Souls	508	508	508
Communicants	129	122	119
Participation (%)	25	24	23
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	-2
Male Communicants	59	54	52
Male Communicants (%)	46	44	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-1
Female Communicants	70	68	67
Female Communicants (%)	54	56	56
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	1

GROß ZIETHEN (under STAFFELDE)			
Year	1932	1933	1934
Souls	463	463	463
Communicants	57	83	84
Participation (%)	12	18	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	46	1
Male Communicants	19	33	27
Male Communicants (%)	33	40	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	19	-19
Female Communicants	38	50	57
Female Communicants (%)	67	60	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	13

VEHLEFANZ (Bärenklau) Total					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	1831	1750	1800	2350	2350
Communicants	272	196	241	415	383
Participation (%)	15	11	13	18	16
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-25	20	32	-8
Male Communicants	109	76	83	162	156
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	34	39	41
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-11	13	4
Female Communicants	163	120	158	253	227
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	66	61	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	7	-7	-3

VEHLEFANZ						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1176	1250	1250	N/A	N/A	1264
Communicants	210	154	176	N/A	N/A	110
Participation (%)	18	12	14	N/A	N/A	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-31	14	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	83	63	65	N/A	N/A	40
Male Communicants (%)	40	41	37	N/A	N/A	36
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-10	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	127	91	111	N/A	N/A	70
Female Communicants (%)	60	59	63	N/A	N/A	64
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	7	N/A	N/A	N/A

BÄRENKLAU (under VEHLEFANZ)			
Year	1932	1933	1934
Souls	655	500	550
Communicants	62	42	65
Participation (%)	9	8	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	41
Male Communicants	26	13	18
Male Communicants (%)	42	31	28
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-26	-11
Female Communicants	36	29	47
Female Communicants (%)	58	69	72
Annual Change (%)	N/A	19	5

WANSDORF (Pausin)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	1299	1362	1348	1350	1350	1350
Communicants	309	293	N/A	N/A	N/A	92
Participation (%)	24	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	138	113	N/A	N/A	N/A	32
Male Communicants (%)	45	39	N/A	N/A	N/A	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-14	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	171	180	N/A	N/A	N/A	60
Female Communicants (%)	55	61	N/A	N/A	N/A	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

WANSDORF						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	706	739	725	N/A	N/A	725
Communicants	148	154	N/A	N/A	N/A	48
Participation (%)	21	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	59	62	N/A	N/A	N/A	12
Male Communicants (%)	40	40	N/A	N/A	N/A	25
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	89	92	N/A	N/A	N/A	36
Female Communicants (%)	60	60	N/A	N/A	N/A	75
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

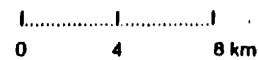
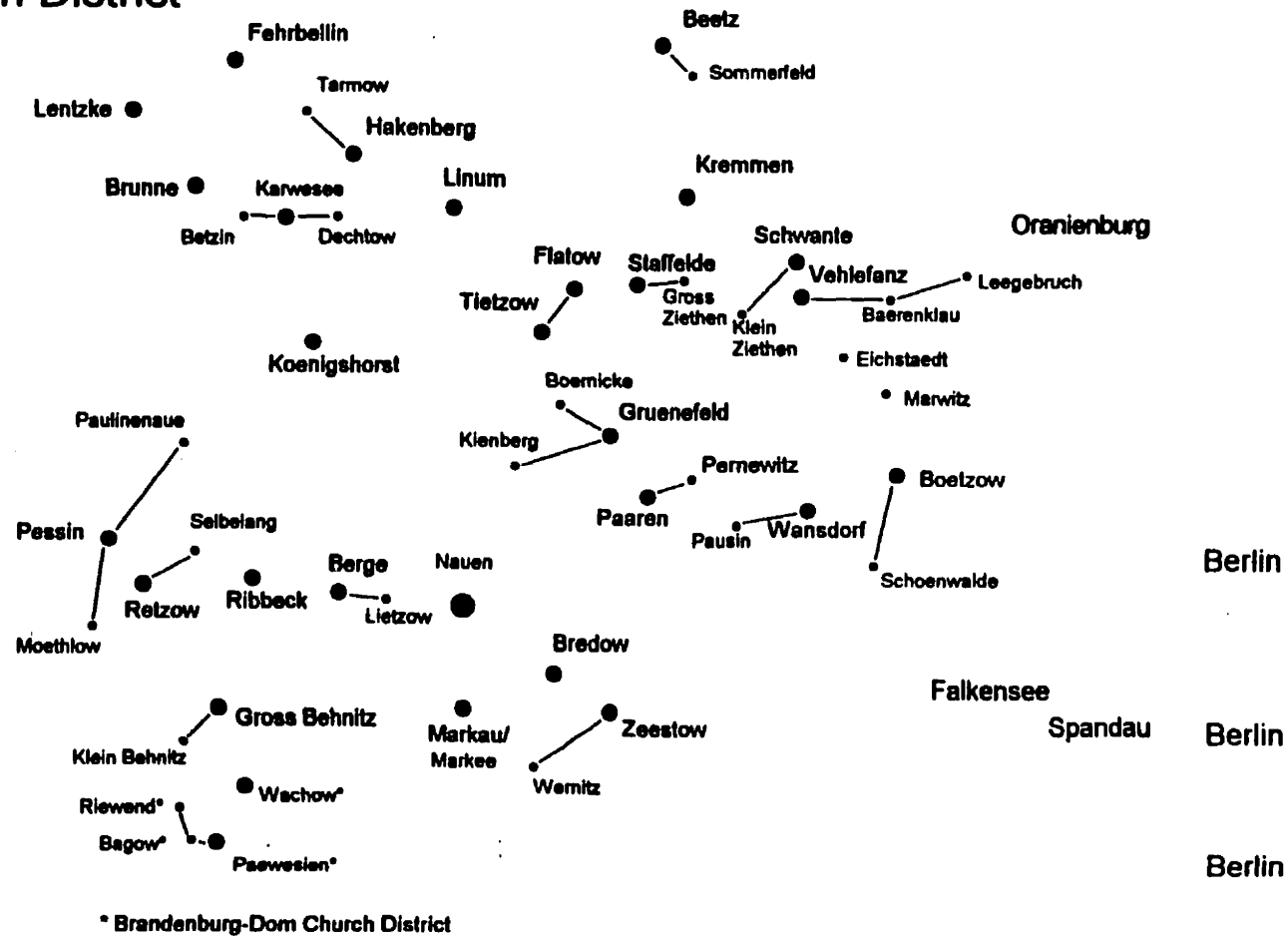
PAUSIN (under WANSDORF)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	593	623	623	N/A	N/A	625
Communicants	161	139	N/A	N/A	N/A	44
Participation (%)	27	22	N/A	N/A	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-18	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	79	51	N/A	N/A	N/A	20
Male Communicants (%)	49	37	N/A	N/A	N/A	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-25	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	82	88	N/A	N/A	N/A	24
Female Communicants (%)	51	63	N/A	N/A	N/A	55
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

ZEESTOW (Wernitz) Total						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	501	501	500	501	501	631
Communicants	162	192	149	80	85	62
Participation (%)	32	38	30	16	17	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	19	-22	-46	6	-42
Male Communicants	73	87	70	20	25	19
Male Communicants (%)	45	45	47	25	29	31
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	4	-47	18	4
Female Communicants	89	105	79	60	60	43
Female Communicants (%)	55	55	53	75	71	69
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-3	41	-6	-2

ZEESTOW						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	261	261	260	N/A	N/A	263
Communicants	69	76	49	N/A	N/A	22
Participation (%)	26	29	19	N/A	N/A	8
Annual Change (%)	N/A	10	-35	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	27	34	24	N/A	N/A	4
Male Communicants (%)	39	45	49	N/A	N/A	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	9	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	42	42	25	N/A	N/A	18
Female Communicants (%)	61	55	51	N/A	N/A	82
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	-8	N/A	N/A	N/A

WERNITZ (under ZEESTOW)						
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1939
Souls	240	240	240	N/A	N/A	368
Communicants	93	116	100	N/A	N/A	40
Participation (%)	39	48	42	N/A	N/A	11
Annual Change (%)	N/A	25	-14	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	46	53	46	N/A	N/A	15
Male Communicants (%)	49	46	46	N/A	N/A	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	47	63	54	N/A	N/A	25
Female Communicants (%)	51	54	54	N/A	N/A	63
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-1	N/A	N/A	N/A

Nauen District



APPENDIX 2

STATISTICS FROM THE PIRNA CHURCH DISTRICT

All statistics are compiled from tables in the following Ephoralarchiv Pirna files: 13, "Wiedereintrittsbewegung 1933;" 14, "Kirchenein- und Austrittsbewegung (Statistik) 1938-9;" 15, "Kirchenein- und Austrittsbewegung (Statistik) betr. 1939-1940;" 834, "Statistik kirchlicher Einrichtungen... 1928-1939;" 915, "Statistik..." and 925, "Statistik..."

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, 1932 –1933 (DISTRICT):

Based on monthly district totals of new members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church in the church district of Pirna on a monthly basis, from mid-1932 to mid-1933.

New Church Membership in the Pirna District, 1932 to 1933 (by month)													
Parish	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Totals	16	44	19	17	24	24	238	299	226	198	224	172	1574
Monthly Change (%)	N/A	175	-57	-11	41	0	892	26	-24	-12	13	-23	

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS, 1932-1933 (DISTRICT):

Based on monthly district totals of withdrawing members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church in the church district of Pirna on a monthly basis, from mid-1932 to mid-1933.

Church Membership Withdrawals in the Pirna District, 1932-1933 (by month)													
Parish	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Totals	31	57	54	45	42	96	43	12	3	3	2	0	388
Monthly Change (%)	N/A	84	-5	-17	-7	129	-55	-72	-75	0	-33	-100	388

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, 1932 -1933 (PARISHES):

Based on monthly parish totals of new members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church in the parishes of the Pirna church district on a monthly basis, from mid-1932 to mid-1933.

New Church Membership in Pirna District Parishes, 1932 to 1933 (by month)													
Parish	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Bad Schandau**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	25
Berggießhübel	0	1	0	1	2	1	1	3	3	4	0	0	16
Burkhardsw. (Weesensta.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	1	4	1	12
Cotta	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	11	0	0	1	13
Dittersbach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Dohna (Zuschendorf)^	0	6	2	1	0	1	16	39	20	9	18	12	131
Ehrenberg (Ulbersdorf)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	4
Eschdorf*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gottleuba*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heidenau-Christus	5	1	1	3	3	4	29	19	16	15	20	18	134
Heidenau-Luther	0	3	4	0	1	5	38	33	21	22	12	10	149
Helmsdorf (Altstadt)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	3
Hinterhermsdf. (Saupsdf.)	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	9	0	0	0	1	20
Hohnstein (Rathewalde)^^	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	6	2	1	0	24
Königstein	0	0	2	0	5	0	16	7	7	18	8	13	76
Langenhennersdorf**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	16
Langenwolmsdorf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3
Lauterbach (Bühlau)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Lichtenhain	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	2	11
Liebethal (Porschendorf)	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	3	0	6	3	17
Liebstadt (Borna)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Lohmen*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maxen*	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Neustadt	0	4	1	0	0	0	16	4	9	15	17	10	76
Olsen (Markersbach)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Ottendorf (Friedrichswalde)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	1	3	1	0	10
Papstsdorf (Cunnersdorf)	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	15	6	1	0	3	37
Pirna	7	18	4	6	5	6	50	51	48	60	41	38	334
Porschdorf	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	0	0	7
Reinhardtsdorf	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	5	0	0	0	0	10
Rosenthal**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4
Rückersdf. (Oberottendf.)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Schmiedefeld	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sebnitz	1	3	1	1	6	0	9	34	29	10	20	13	127
Stolpen	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	5	0	1	0	0	9
Struppen	0	7	0	0	0	0	2	2	5	3	2	0	21
Stürza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Wehlen Dorf	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	3	2	13
Wehlen Stadt**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Wilschdorf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Zschachwitz	2	1	3	3	2	4	26	49	34	27	61	43	255
Totals	16	44	19	17	24	24	238	299	226	198	224	172	1574

* no report submitted

** total provided, but no monthly breakdown

^ total includes 7 new members from Dohna (no monthly breakdown given)

^^ total includes 10 new members from Rathewalde (no monthly breakdown given)

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS, 1932-1933 (PARISHES):

Based on monthly parish totals of withdrawing members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church in the parishes of the Pirna church district on a monthly basis, from mid-1932 to mid-1933.

Church Membership Withdrawals in Pirna District Parishes, 1932-1933 (by month)													
Parish	Sep 1932	Oct 1932	Nov 1932	Dec 1932	Jan 1933	Feb 1933	Mar 1933	Apr 1933	May 1933	Jun 1933	Jul 1933	Aug 1933	Total
Bad Schandau	0	2	7	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	13
Berggießhübel	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Burkhardsw. (Weesenstn.)	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Cotta	1	3	0	1	0	5	1	0	0	0	0	0	11
Dittersbach	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	6
Dohna (Zuschendorf)	1	2	7	2	1	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	18
Ehrenberg (Ulbersdorf)	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Eschdorf	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gottleuba**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Heidenau-Christus	3	12	1	1	3	9	3	0	0	0	0	0	32
Heidenau-Luther	6	7	3	1	2	5	2	0	0	0	1	0	27
Helmsdorf (Altstadt)	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Hinterhermsdf. (Saupsdf.)	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hohnstein (Rathewalde)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Königstein	1	1	0	0	4	9	8	3	0	0	0	0	26
Langenhennersdorf**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Langenwolmsdorf**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lauterbach (Bühlau)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Lichtenhain	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Liebethal (Porschendorf)	0	3	1	0	2	7	1	1	0	0	0	0	15
Liebstadt (Borna)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lohmen**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Maxen**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Neustadt	1	1	3	9	4	7	2	0	0	0	0	0	27
Olsen (Markersbach)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Ottendorf (Friedrichswalde)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Papstorf (Cunnersdorf)	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Pirna	7	11	12	16	12	23	14	2	2	1	0	0	100
Porschdorf	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	8
Reinhardtsdorf	0	4	3	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	13
Rosenthal**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Rückersdf. (Oberottendf.)**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Schmiedefeld	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Sebnitz	1	3	13	7	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	34
Stolpen	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Struppen	0	3	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	9
Stürza	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3
Wehlen Dorf	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wehlen Stadt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wilschdorf**	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zschachwitz	1	4	3	2	4	4	1	1	0	2	1	0	23
Totals	31	57	54	45	42	96	43	12	3	3	2	0	388

* no report submitted

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, 1932-1940 (DISTRICT):

Based on annual district totals of new members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church in the Pirna church district on an annual basis, from 1932 to 1940.

New Church Memberships in the Pirna Church District, 1932-1940									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
New Memberships (total)	212	4005	1150	397	307	132	83	55	52
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1789	-71	-65	-23	-57	-37	-34	-5

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS, 1932-1940 (DISTRICT):

Based on annual district totals of withdrawing members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church in the Pirna church district on an annual basis, from 1932 to 1940.

Church Membership Withdrawals in the Pirna Church District, 1932-1940									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Totals	827	219	31	47	243	1093	1407	2473	1337
Change (%)	N/A	-74	-86	52	417	350	29	76	-46

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, 1932-1940 (PARISHES):

Based on annual parish totals of new members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church in the parishes of the Pirna church district on an annual basis, from 1932 to 1940.

New Church Memberships in Pirna District Parishes, 1932-1940									
Parish	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Bad Schandau	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0
Berggießhübel	4	36	7	5	3	1	0	0	0
Burkhardsw.(Weesenstn.)	1	23	4	0	0	1	2	0	0
Cotta	0	17	11	5	4	N/A	1	1	1
Dittersbach	2	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	1
Dohna (Zuschendorf)	17	404	75	25	13	4	6	2	4
Ehrenberg (Ulbersdorf)	0	4	5	0	0	1	0	0	0
Eschdorf	0	6	8	1	0	1	0	1	0
Gottleuba	3	28	25	6	4	4	0	0	0
Heidenau-Christus	24	480	94	32	33	12	9	7	4
Heidenau-Luther	10	370	50	22	21	5	2	5	4
Helmsdorf (Altstadt)	0	2	2	2	2	0	1	0	3
Hinterhermsdf. (Saupsdf.)	0	17	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
Hohnstein (Rathewalde)	1	24	0	2	0	0	3	1	N/A
Königstein	8	156	15	6	9	3	1	5	1
Langenhennersdorf	2	32	8	5	1	1	2	2	0
Langenwolmsdorf	1	4	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
Lauterbach (Bühlau)	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A
Lichtenhain	0	28	5	1	2	3	0	1	1
Liebenthal (Porschendorf)	0	57	20	11	3	2	0	2	N/A
Liebstadt (Borna)	0	12	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Lohmen	3	40	10	4	2	2	2	0	1
Maxen	1	23	14	5	0	3	0	1	0
Neustadt	6	116	38	15	15	7	2	1	5
Olsen (Markersbach)	1	10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ottendorf (Friedrichswalde)	0	50	15	4	10	1	0	3	1
Papstorf (Cunnersdorf)	0	48	12	2	3	10	0	0	0
Pirna	69	1018	324	133	99	34	27	3	10
Pirna-Sonnenstein	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	N/A	N/A
Porsdorf	6	11	6	2	1	0	0	2	1
Reinhardtsdorf	0	16	8	8	5	0	0	3	0
Rosenthal	0	6	2	0	1	3	2	0	0
Rückersdf. (Oberrottendf.)	3	3	0	1	2	1	0	1	2
Schmeidefeld	2	3	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sebnitz	11	292	131	33	36	14	11	6	8
Stolpen	0	17	6	3	2	0	0	0	2
Struppen	5	41	22	2	3	0	0	2	0
Stürza	0	2	1	1	0	1	N/A	1	N/A
Wehlen Dorf	7	50	12	1	2	3	2	0	2
Wehlen Stadt	0	10	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
Wilschdorf	0	1	2	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zschachwitz	24	546	208	53	26	13	8	3	1
Totals	212	4005	1150	397	307	132	83	55	52
Change (%)	N/A	1789	-71	-65	-23	-57	-37	-34	-5

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS, 1932-1940 (PARISHES):

Based on annual parish totals of withdrawing members, a measure of the rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church in the parishes of the Pirna church district on an annual basis, from 1932 to 1940.

Church Withdrawals in the Pirna District, 1932-1940									
Parish	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Bad Schandau	1	0	0	0	0	2	10	54	12
Berggießhübel	7	2	0	0	2	22	22	32	4
Burkhardsw.(Weesenstn.)	7	0	0	0	0	8	21	29	18
Cotta	23	5	0	0	7	N/A	0	49	0
Dittersbach	2	0	0	0	0	7	0	8	0
Dohna (Zuschendorf)	57	7	1	3	23	75	140	166	66
Ehrenberg (Ulbersdorf)	3	0	0	0	4	1	3	8	8
Eschdorf	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	8	1
Gottleuba	3	0	0	0	4	13	17	24	19
Heidenau-Christus	72	15	0	3	19	136	142	166	142
Heidenau-Luther	60	13	8	1	30	79	117	153	80
Helmsdorf (Altstadt)	0	6	0	0	0	0	15	0	1
Hinterhermsdf. (Saupsdf.)	9	1	0	0	1	7	16	31	1
Hohnstein (Rathewalde)	3	0	0	3	11	7	22	22	21
Königstein	46	24	10	4	8	49	43	68	36
Langenhenndorf	18	3	0	0	3	10	27	74	55
Langenwolmsdorf	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	9	0
Lauterbach (Bühlau)	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	0	N/A
Lichtenhain	8	0	0	6	3	9	3	75	10
Liebenthal (Porschendorf)	0	11	0	1	2	11	14	33	N/A
Liebstadt (Borna)	0	0	0	0	4	2	4	27	12
Lohmen	21	1	0	0	0	13	25	28	20
Maxen	3	0	0	0	0	2	9	15	12
Neustadt	29	20	1	1	2	33	42	96	91
Olsen (Markersbach)	0	3	0	0	0	3	4	19	0
Ottendorf (Friedrichswalde)	32	1	0	0	0	1	4	27	7
Papstdorf (Cunnersdorf)	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	17	16
Pirna	194	55	6	16	63	287	365	549	441
Pirna-Sonnenstein	0	0	1	0	13	8	0	N/A	N/A
Porsdorf	1	8	0	0	0	5	7	12	2
Reinhardtsdorf	22	5	0	2	1	19	24	32	12
Rosenthal	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	7	0
Rückersdf. (Oberottendf.)	9	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	6
Schmeidefeld	2	2	0	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sebnitz	83	10	0	1	12	76	98	151	72
Stolpen	3	1	0	0	0	0	12	17	8
Struppen	20	5	0	2	4	42	26	35	14
Stürza	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	1
Wehlen Dorf	3	0	0	0	0	6	12	15	4
Wehlen Stadt	20	0	0	0	1	8	7	48	19
Wilschdorf	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zschachwitz	62	13	4	3	25	143	141	369	126
Totals	827	219	31	47	243	1093	1407	2473	1337
Change (%)	N/A	-74	-86	52	417	350	29	76	-46

PARISH STATISTICS:

Based on annual totals of baptized members (Souls) and participants in communion services (Communicants) in the pastorate or parish, a measure of the overall participation rate and the annual change in the participation rate; and based on the absolute number of male and female-communicants (Male Communicants, Female Communicants), a measure of the percentage of all communicants who are either male or female and the annual changes in male and female participation rates.

Parishes (filial churches):

Bad Schandau
Berggießhübel
Burkhardswalde (Weesenstein)
Cotta
Dittersbach
Dohna (Zuschendorf)
Ehrenberg (Ulbersdorf)
Eschdorf
Gottleuba
Heidenau-Christus
Heidenau-Luther
Helmsdorf (Altstadt)
Hinterhermsdorf (Saupsdorf)
Hohnstein (Rathewalde)
Königstein
Langenhennersdorf
Langenwolmsdorf
Lauterbach (Bühlau)
Lichtenhain
Liebethal (Porschendorf)
Liebstadt (Borna)
Lohmen
Maxen
Neustadt
Ölsen (Markersbach)
Ottendorf (Friedrichswalde)
Papstdorf (Cunnersdorf)
Pirna
Pirna-Sonnenstein
Porschdorf
Reinhardtsdorf
Rosenthal
Rückersdorf (Oberottendorf)
Schmeidefeld
Sebnitz

Stolpen
Struppen
Stürza
Wehlen Dorf
Wehlen Stadt
Wilschdorf
Zschachwitz

Pirna District Parish Statistics

BAD SCHANDAU										
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	6168	6168	6168	6168	6168	6168	6168	6168	6168	6140
Communicants	146	188	70	178	178	150	150	810	N/A	780
Participation (%)	2	3	1	3	3	2	2	13	N/A	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	29	-63	154	0	-16	0	440	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	59	69	27	72	72	50	50	229	N/A	221
Male Communicants (%)	40	37	39	40	40	33	33	28	N/A	28
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	5	5	0	-18	0	-15	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	87	119	43	106	106	100	100	581	N/A	559
Female Communicants (%)	60	63	61	60	60	67	67	72	N/A	72
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	-3	-3	0	12	0	8	N/A	N/A

BERGGIEßHÜBEL										
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	1204	1250	1215	1400	1445	1420	1420	N/A	1445	1445
Communicants	243	276	340	356	289	196	186	88	N/A	120
Participation (%)	20	22	28	25	20	14	13	N/A	N/A	8
Annual Change (%)	N/A	9	27	-9	-21	-31	-5	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	85	120	116	121	91	61	49	18	N/A	18
Male Communicants (%)	35	43	34	34	31	31	26	20	N/A	15
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	-22	0	-7	-1	-15	-22	N/A	N/A
Female Communicants	158	156	224	235	198	135	137	70	N/A	102
Female Communicants (%)	65	57	66	66	69	69	74	80	N/A	85
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	17	0	4	1	7	8	N/A	N/A

BURKHARDSWALDE (Weesenstein)										
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886	1886
Communicants	492	480	536	452	496	453	339	308	285	225
Participation (%)	26	25	28	24	26	24	18	16	15	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	12	-16	10	-9	-25	-9	-7	-21
Male Communicants	203	191	222	182	178	180	129	122	90	81
Male Communicants (%)	41	40	41	40	36	40	38	40	32	36
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	4	-3	-11	11	-4	4	-20	14
Female Communicants	289	289	314	270	318	273	210	186	195	144
Female Communicants (%)	59	60	59	60	64	60	62	60	68	64
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-3	2	7	-6	3	-3	13	-6

COTTA

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	1988	1986	2100	2100	2100	N/A	2100	2100	2100	2110
Communicants	343	431	466	489	459	N/A	378	306	253	247
Participation (%)	17	22	22	23	22	N/A	18	15	12	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	26	2	5	-6	N/A	N/A	-19	-17	-3
Male Communicants	135	166	177	168	150	N/A	112	94	73	71
Male Communicants (%)	39	39	38	34	33	N/A	30	31	29	29
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	-1	-10	-5	N/A	N/A	4	-6	0
Female Communicants	208	265	289	321	309	N/A	266	212	180	176
Female Communicants (%)	61	61	62	66	67	N/A	70	69	71	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	1	6	3	N/A	N/A	-2	3	0

DITTERSBACH

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	2060	2060	2035	2156	2194	2189	2185	N/A	2227	2120
Communicants	530	470	605	837	651	567	525	420	429	445
Participation (%)	26	23	30	39	30	26	24	N/A	19	21
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	30	31	-24	-13	-7	N/A	N/A	9
Male Communicants	193	160	208	250	232	201	187	134	141	144
Male Communicants (%)	36	34	34	30	36	35	36	32	33	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	1	-13	19	-1	0	-10	3	-2
Female Communicants	337	310	397	587	419	366	338	286	288	301
Female Communicants (%)	64	66	66	70	64	65	64	68	67	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-1	7	-8	0	0	6	-1	1

DOHNA (Zuschendorf)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	7924	8074	8174	8174	7805	8374	8175	N/A	7775	8365
Communicants	988	1245	1551	1180	1187	1079	951	737	673	625
Participation (%)	12	15	19	14	15	13	12	N/A	9	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	23	-24	5	-15	-10	N/A	N/A	-14
Male Communicants	362	718	532	453	422	337	313	246	227	190
Male Communicants (%)	37	58	34	38	36	31	33	33	34	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	57	-41	12	-7	-12	5	1	1	-10
Female Communicants	626	527	1019	727	765	742	638	491	446	435
Female Communicants (%)	63	42	66	62	64	69	67	67	66	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-33	55	-6	5	7	-2	-1	-1	5

EHRENBERG (Ulbersdorf)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	1896	1798	1798	1798	1798	1798	1798	N/A	1798	1730
Communicants	461	711	732	717	663	549	533	455	456	416
Participation (%)	24	40	41	40	37	31	30	N/A	25	24
Annual Change (%)	N/A	63	3	-2	-8	-17	-3	N/A	N/A	-5
Male Communicants	293	313	298	284	282	219	199	181	185	167
Male Communicants (%)	64	44	41	40	43	40	37	40	41	40
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-31	-8	-3	7	-6	-6	7	2	-1
Female Communicants	368	201	434	433	381	330	334	274	271	249
Female Communicants (%)	80	28	59	60	57	60	63	60	59	60
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-65	110	2	-5	5	4	-4	-1	1

IESCHDORF

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	1098	1104	1104	1104	1104	1100	1086	N/A	1166	1140
Communicants	427	531	538	559	349	368	325	265	198	197
Participation (%)	39	48	49	51	32	33	30	N/A	17	17
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	1	4	-38	6	-11	N/A	N/A	2
Male Communicants	156	215	217	228	139	148	120	96	70	67
Male Communicants (%)	37	40	40	41	40	40	37	36	35	34
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	0	1	-2	1	-8	-2	-2	-4
Female Communicants	271	316	321	331	210	220	215	169	128	130
Female Communicants (%)	63	60	60	59	60	60	66	64	65	66
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	0	-1	2	-1	11	-4	1	2

GOTTLEUBA

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941
Souls	2184	2425	2425	2420	2420	2420	2383	N/A	2200	2295
Communicants	645	758	864	783	919	787	647	536	536	544
Participation (%)	30	31	36	32	38	33	27	N/A	24	24
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	14	-9	17	-14	-17	N/A	N/A	-3
Male Communicants	219	302	358	306	361	295	219	223	170	159
Male Communicants (%)	34	40	41	39	39	37	34	42	32	29
Annual Change (%)	N/A	17	4	-6	1	-5	-10	23	-24	-8
Female Communicants	426	456	501	477	558	492	428	313	366	385
Female Communicants (%)	66	60	58	61	61	63	66	58	68	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	-4	5	0	3	6	-12	17	4

HEIDENAU (Christus)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11500	N/A	N/A	10000
Communicants	749	1033	1204	1105	1021	991	861	628	524
Participation (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9	N/A	N/A	5
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	255	367	329	370	320	318	316	158	139
Male Communicants (%)	34	36	27	33	31	32	37	25	27
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-23	23	-6	2	14	-31	5
Female Communicants	494	666	875	735	701	673	545	470	385
Female Communicants (%)	66	64	73	67	69	68	63	75	73
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	13	-8	3	-1	-7	18	-2

HEIDENAU (Luther)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	4892	4892	4892	4892	4892	4892	4892	N/A	5600
Communicants	549	673	903	800	639	569	434	378	372
Participation (%)	11	14	18	16	13	12	9	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	23	34	-11	-20	-11	-24	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	163	234	298	313	187	140	99	83	89
Male Communicants (%)	30	35	33	39	29	25	23	22	24
Annual Change (%)	N/A	17	-5	19	-25	-16	-7	-4	9
Female Communicants	386	439	605	487	452	429	335	295	283
Female Communicants (%)	70	65	67	61	71	75	77	78	76
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	3	-9	16	7	2	1	-3

HELMSDORF (Altstadt)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1299	1299	1299	1299	1299	1307	N/A	N/A	1200
Communicants	504	542	481	535	435	347	268	210	197
Participation (%)	39	42	37	41	33	27	N/A	N/A	16
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	-11	11	-19	-21	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	204	214	203	243	178	160	130	95	85
Male Communicants (%)	40	39	42	45	41	46	49	45	43
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	7	8	-10	13	5	-7	-5
Female Communicants	300	328	278	290	257	187	138	115	112
Female Communicants (%)	60	61	58	54	59	54	51	55	57
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-4	-6	9	-9	-4	6	4

HINTERHERMSDORF (Saupsdorf)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1765	1753	1753	1753	1720	1720	1716	N/A	1530
Communicants	313	381	356	416	371	247	221	172	233
Participation (%)	18	22	20	24	22	14	13	N/A	15
Annual Change (%)	N/A	23	-7	17	-9	-33	-10	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	101	147	125	134	129	72	59	43	50
Male Communicants (%)	32	39	35	32	35	29	27	25	21
Annual Change (%)	N/A	20	-9	-8	8	-16	-8	-6	-14
Female Communicants	212	234	231	282	242	175	162	129	183
Female Communicants (%)	68	61	65	68	65	71	73	75	79
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	6	4	-4	9	3	2	5

HOHNSTEIN (Rathewalde)

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2454	N/A	N/A
Communicants	937	1051	668	1078	999	900	650	310	N/A
Participation (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	26	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	364	498	269	393	381	300	250	102	N/A
Male Communicants (%)	39	47	40	36	38	33	38	33	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	22	-15	-9	5	-13	15	-14	N/A
Female Communicants	573	553	399	685	618	600	400	208	N/A
Female Communicants (%)	61	53	60	64	62	67	62	67	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-14	14	6	-3	8	-8	9	N/A

KÖNIGSTEIN

Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	6670	6682	6630	6730	6610	7000	7000	N/A	7000
Communicants	1240	1506	1465	1259	1210	983	1049	808	730
Participation (%)	19	23	22	19	18	14	15	N/A	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	21	-2	-15	-2	-23	7	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	444	491	673	381	454	260	332	250	243
Male Communicants (%)	36	33	46	30	38	26	32	31	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	41	-34	24	-30	20	-2	8
Female Communicants	796	1015	792	878	756	723	717	558	487
Female Communicants (%)	64	67	54	70	62	74	68	69	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-20	29	-10	18	-7	1	-3

LANGENHENNERSDORF									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2540	2540	2540	2540	2540	2740	2740	N/A	2740
Communicants	394	425	509	438	448	332	328	258	248
Participation (%)	16	17	20	17	18	12	12	N/A	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	20	-14	2	-31	-1	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	153	165	190	182	165	113	115	88	74
Male Communicants (%)	39	39	37	42	37	34	35	34	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-4	11	-11	-8	3	-3	-13
Female Communicants	241	260	319	256	283	219	213	170	174
Female Communicants (%)	61	61	63	58	63	66	65	66	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	2	-7	8	4	-2	1	6

LANGENWOLMSDORF									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1343	1343	1343	1343	1216	1216	1216	N/A	1216
Communicants	509	524	553	521	502	407	436	222	236
Participation (%)	38	39	41	39	41	33	36	N/A	19
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	6	-6	6	-19	7	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	195	223	233	211	206	210	175	82	96
Male Communicants (%)	38	43	42	40	41	52	40	37	41
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	-1	-4	1	26	-22	-8	10
Female Communicants	314	301	320	310	296	197	261	140	140
Female Communicants (%)	62	57	58	60	59	48	60	63	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	1	3	-1	-18	24	5	-6

LAUTERBACH (Bühlau)								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Souls	1304	1270	1278	1280	1280	1280	1200	N/A
Communicants	1031	1052	1049	935	738	691	491	431
Participation (%)	79	83	82	73	58	54	41	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-1	-11	-21	-6	-24	N/A
Male Communicants	463	464	482	423	336	290	201	176
Male Communicants (%)	45	44	46	45	46	42	41	41
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	4	-2	1	-8	-2	0
Female Communicants	568	588	567	512	402	401	290	255
Female Communicants (%)	55	56	54	55	54	58	59	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-3	1	-1	7	2	0

LICHTENHAIN									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	1961	N/A	1961
Communicants	372	447	407	429	364	329	262	160	230
Participation (%)	19	23	21	22	19	17	13	N/A	12
Annual Change (%)	N/A	20	-9	5	-15	-10	-20	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	149	181	152	168	134	126	94	49	70
Male Communicants (%)	40	40	37	39	37	38	36	31	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-8	5	-6	4	-6	-15	-1
Female Communicants	223	266	255	261	230	203	168	111	160
Female Communicants (%)	60	60	63	61	63	62	64	69	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	5	-3	4	-2	4	8	0

LIEBETHAL (Porschendorf)								
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939
Souls	2959	3002	3000	3060	3000	3000	3000	N/A
Communicants	610	682	712	969	642	661	424	461
Participation (%)	21	23	24	32	21	22	14	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	10	4	33	-32	3	-36	N/A
Male Communicants	213	242	303	380	232	225	122	148
Male Communicants (%)	35	35	43	39	36	34	29	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	20	-8	-8	-6	-15	12
Female Communicants	391	440	409	579	430	436	302	313
Female Communicants (%)	64	65	57	60	67	66	71	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-11	4	12	-2	8	-5

LIEBSTADT (Borna)									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1525	1625	1625	1625	1595	1625	1625	N/A	1602
Communicants	487	688	655	724	570	603	444	364	315
Participation (%)	32	42	40	45	36	37	27	N/A	20
Annual Change (%)	N/A	33	-5	11	-20	4	-26	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	188	293	275	293	225	238	183	148	124
Male Communicants (%)	39	43	42	40	39	39	41	41	39
Annual Change (%)	N/A	10	-1	-4	-2	0	4	-1	-3
Female Communicants	299	395	380	431	345	365	261	216	191
Female Communicants (%)	61	57	58	60	61	61	59	59	61
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	1	3	2	0	-3	1	2

LOHMEN									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2380	2440	2509	2509	2509	2509	2509	N/A	2547
Communicants	428	439	483	501	517	426	278	360	234
Participation (%)	18	18	19	20	21	17	11	N/A	9
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	7	4	3	-18	-35	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	165	165	207	187	192	152	105	124	81
Male Communicants (%)	39	38	43	37	37	36	38	34	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	14	-13	-1	-4	6	-9	0
Female Communicants	283	274	276	324	325	274	173	236	153
Female Communicants (%)	66	62	57	65	63	64	62	66	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	-8	13	-3	2	-3	5	0

MAXEN									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1800	1904	1804	1804	1804	1804	1804	N/A	1804
Communicants	387	412	382	338	350	323	324	350	227
Participation (%)	22	22	21	19	19	18	18	N/A	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-2	-12	4	-8	0	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	162	180	170	193	145	135	118	120	75
Male Communicants (%)	42	44	45	57	41	42	36	34	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	2	28	-27	1	-13	-6	-4
Female Communicants	225	232	212	145	205	188	206	230	152
Female Communicants (%)	58	56	55	43	59	58	64	66	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-1	-23	37	-1	9	3	2

NEUSTADT									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	11200	11200	11200	11200	11200	11200	11200	N/A	11200
Communicants	2081	2226	2388	2195	1884	1643	1544	1403	1074
Participation (%)	19	20	21	20	17	15	14	N/A	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	7	-8	-14	-13	-6	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	739	791	896	749	634	522	515	443	318
Male Communicants (%)	36	36	38	34	34	32	33	32	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	6	-9	-1	-6	5	-5	-6
Female Communicants	1342	1435	1492	1386	1250	1121	1029	960	756
Female Communicants (%)	64	64	62	63	66	68	67	68	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-3	1	5	3	-2	3	3

OLSEN (Markersbach)									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	803	848	865	920	1200	958	905	N/A	816
Communicants	234	321	292	268	221	287	211	147	144
Participation (%)	29	38	34	29	18	30	23	N/A	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	30	-11	-14	-37	63	-22	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	93	146	124	115	104	123	91	58	58
Male Communicants (%)	40	45	42	43	47	43	43	39	40
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	-7	1	10	-9	1	-9	2
Female Communicants	141	175	168	153	117	164	120	89	86
Female Communicants (%)	60	55	58	57	53	57	57	61	60
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	6	-1	-7	8	0	6	-1

OTTENDORF (Friedrichswalde)									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2260	2262	2300	2300	2300	2300	2300	N/A	2530
Communicants	581	732	723	599	575	577	413	384	343
Participation (%)	26	32	31	26	25	25	18	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	26	-3	-17	-4	0	-28	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	240	323	297	238	241	237	164	152	129
Male Communicants (%)	41	44	41	40	42	41	40	40	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-7	-3	5	-2	-3	0	-5
Female Communicants	341	409	426	361	334	340	249	232	214
Female Communicants (%)	59	56	59	60	58	59	60	60	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	5	2	-4	1	2	0	3

PAPSTDORF (Cunnersdorf)									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1786	1786	1786	1786	1786	1786	1765	N/A	N/A
Communicants	389	477	606	602	466	485	400	278	N/A
Participation (%)	22	27	34	34	26	27	23	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	23	27	-1	-23	4	-17	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	166	188	271	235	188	190	142	108	N/A
Male Communicants (%)	43	39	45	39	40	39	36	39	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	13	-13	3	-3	-9	9	N/A
Female Communicants	223	289	335	367	278	295	258	170	N/A
Female Communicants (%)	57	61	55	61	60	61	65	61	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	-9	10	-2	2	6	-5	N/A

PIRNA									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	N/A	26062	31895	N/A	N/A	26143	N/A	N/A	30000
Communicants	3424	4260	5122	4276	4049	3446	3555	2716	998
Participation (%)	N/A	16	16	N/A	N/A	13	N/A	N/A	3
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	-2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	1145	1539	1827	1460	1383	1123	1239	797	235
Male Communicants (%)	33	36	36	34	34	33	35	29	24
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	-1	-4	0	-5	7	-16	-20
Female Communicants	2279	2721	3295	2876	2666	2323	2316	1919	750
Female Communicants (%)	67	64	64	67	66	67	65	71	75
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	1	5	-2	2	-3	8	6

PIRNA-SONNENSTEIN							
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Souls	1167	1177	1177	930	930	930	1280
Communicants	757	870	574	432	418	387	448
Participation (%)	65	74	49	46	45	42	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	-34	-5	-3	-7	-16
Male Communicants	347	451	267	174	203	160	198
Male Communicants (%)	46	52	47	40	49	41	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	13	-10	-13	21	-15	7
Female Communicants	389	419	307	258	215	221	250
Female Communicants (%)	51	48	53	60	51	57	56
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	11	12	-14	11	-2

PORSCHDORF									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1784	1784	1784	1784	1782	1784	1834	N/A	1834
Communicants	828	583	469	554	590	438	400	360	403
Participation (%)	46	33	26	31	33	25	22	N/A	22
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-30	-20	18	7	-26	-11	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	355	260	158	170	192	133	127	101	114
Male Communicants (%)	43	45	34	31	33	30	32	28	28
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-24	-9	6	-7	5	-12	1
Female Communicants	473	323	311	384	398	305	273	259	289
Female Communicants (%)	57	55	66	69	67	70	68	72	72
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	20	5	-3	3	-2	5	0

REINHARDTSDORF									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	3567	3567	3567	3567	3567	3567	3585	N/A	3660
Communicants	481	666	655	699	576	607	430	395	476
Participation (%)	13	19	18	20	16	17	12	N/A	13
Annual Change (%)	N/A	38	-2	7	-18	5	-30	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	173	238	221	245	179	409	150	131	121
Male Communicants (%)	36	36	34	35	31	67	35	33	25
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-6	4	-11	117	-48	-5	-23
Female Communicants	308	428	434	454	397	198	280	264	295
Female Communicants (%)	64	64	66	65	69	33	65	67	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	3	-2	6	-53	100	3	-7

ROSENTHAL									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1038	1038	1038	1038	1038	1038	1136	N/A	1050
Communicants	336	340	355	262	197	171	129	85	103
Participation (%)	32	33	34	25	19	16	11	N/A	10
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	4	-26	-25	-13	-31	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	149	140	150	92	82	76	53	42	33
Male Communicants (%)	44	41	42	35	42	44	41	49	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	3	-17	19	7	-8	20	-35
Female Communicants	187	200	205	170	115	95	76	43	70
Female Communicants (%)	56	59	58	65	58	56	59	51	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	-2	12	-10	-5	6	-14	34

RÜCKERSDORF (Oberottendorf)									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	2077	N/A	2077
Communicants	568	655	659	715	601	511	388	354	368
Participation (%)	27	32	32	34	29	25	19	N/A	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	15	1	8	-16	-15	-24	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	240	297	284	290	252	211	157	130	132
Male Communicants (%)	42	45	43	41	42	41	40	37	36
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-5	-6	3	-2	-2	-9	-2
Female Communicants	328	358	375	425	349	300	231	224	236
Female Communicants (%)	58	55	57	59	58	59	60	63	64
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	4	4	-2	1	1	6	1

SCHMEIDFELD					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	635	630	648	N/A	N/A
Communicants	442	493	424	425	233
Participation (%)	70	78	65	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	12	-16	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	196	225	198	211	104
Male Communicants (%)	44	46	47	50	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	2	6	-10
Female Communicants	246	268	226	214	129
Female Communicants (%)	56	54	53	50	55
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	-2	-6	10

SEBNITZ									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	12842	14000	14000	14000	14000	13000	13000	N/A	14000
Communicants	1218	1647	2027	1568	1567	1409	1396	1193	803
Participation (%)	9	12	14	11	11	11	11	N/A	6
Annual Change (%)	N/A	24	23	-23	0	-3	-1	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	382	520	682	485	501	409	408	328	226
Male Communicants (%)	31	32	34	31	32	29	29	27	28
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	7	-8	3	-9	1	-6	2
Female Communicants	836	1127	1345	1083	1066	1000	988	865	573
Female Communicants (%)	69	68	66	69	68	71	71	73	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	-3	4	-2	4	0	2	-2

STOLPEN									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2270	2270	2270	2270	2270	2270	2270	N/A	2246
Communicants	635	742	701	824	749	671	642	646	616
Participation (%)	28	33	31	36	33	30	28	N/A	27
Annual Change (%)	N/A	17	-6	18	-9	-10	-4	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	240	275	247	305	268	251	239	247	213
Male Communicants (%)	38	37	35	37	36	37	37	38	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	-5	5	-3	5	0	3	-10
Female Communicants	395	467	454	519	481	420	403	399	403
Female Communicants (%)	62	63	65	63	64	63	63	62	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	3	-3	2	-3	0	-2	6

STRUPPIN									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	2215	N/A	2451	2451	2451	2451	2451	N/A	2641
Communicants	354	448	540	418	446	345	239	170	N/A
Participation (%)	16	N/A	22	17	18	14	10	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	-23	7	-23	-31	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	128	175	203	160	168	136	84	41	N/A
Male Communicants (%)	36	39	38	38	38	39	35	24	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	8	-4	2	-2	5	-11	-31	N/A
Female Communicants	226	273	337	258	278	209	155	129	N/A
Female Communicants (%)	64	61	62	62	62	61	65	76	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	2	-1	1	-3	7	17	N/A

STÜRZA									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1179	1165	1165	1165	1126	1046	1124	N/A	1130
Communicants	406	513	437	480	467	407	186	306	398
Participation (%)	34	44	38	41	41	39	17	N/A	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	28	-15	10	1	-6	-57	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	161	206	190	195	172	139	68	103	115
Male Communicants (%)	40	40	43	41	37	34	37	34	29
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	8	-7	-9	-7	7	-8	-14
Female Communicants	245	307	247	285	295	268	118	203	283
Female Communicants (%)	60	60	57	59	63	66	63	66	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-6	5	6	4	-4	5	7

WEHLEN DORF									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1513	1513	1423	1423	1513	1513	1513	N/A	1513
Communicants	361	402	403	415	420	394	257	276	240
Participation (%)	24	27	28	29	28	26	17	N/A	16
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	7	3	-5	-6	-35	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	134	153	150	139	150	144	80	84	84
Male Communicants (%)	37	38	37	33	36	37	31	30	35
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-2	-10	7	2	-15	-2	15
Female Communicants	227	249	253	276	270	250	177	192	156
Female Communicants (%)	63	62	63	67	64	63	69	70	65
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	1	6	-3	-1	9	1	-7

WEHLEN STADT									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	1376	1400	1400	1450	1450	1450	1350	N/A	1655
Communicants	191	350	334	293	322	306	263	227	225
Participation (%)	14	25	24	20	22	21	19	N/A	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	80	-5	-15	10	-5	-8	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	50	127	108	85	85	83	64	55	47
Male Communicants (%)	26	36	32	29	26	27	24	24	21
Annual Change (%)	N/A	39	-11	-10	-9	3	-10	0	-14
Female Communicants	141	223	226	208	237	223	199	166	178
Female Communicants (%)	74	64	68	71	74	73	76	73	79
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-14	6	5	4	-1	4	-3	8

WILSCHDORF (to 1936, then lost to another district)					
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936
Souls	766	732	730	732	730
Communicants	501	467	476	490	430
Participation (%)	65	64	65	67	59
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	2	3	-12
Male Communicants	229	215	210	211	195
Male Communicants (%)	46	46	44	43	45
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-4	-2	5
Female Communicants	272	252	266	279	235
Female Communicants (%)	54	54	56	57	55
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	4	2	-4

ZSCHACHWITZ									
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940
Souls	7973	7973	7993	7993	7993	7993	7993	N/A	11000
Communicants	728	1163	1234	1035	871	707	1147	1296	780
Participation (%)	9	15	15	13	11	9	14	N/A	7
Annual Change (%)	N/A	60	6	-16	-16	-19	62	N/A	N/A
Male Communicants	261	413	473	347	315	262	339	441	214
Male Communicants (%)	36	36	38	34	36	37	30	34	27
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	8	-13	8	2	-20	15	-19
Female Communicants	467	750	761	688	556	445	808	855	566
Female Communicants (%)	64	64	62	66	64	63	70	66	73
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-4	8	-4	-1	12	-6	10

APPENDIX 3

STATISTICS FROM THE RAVENSBURG CHURCH DISTRICT

All statistics are compiled from annual parish and district tables in the file Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 89.

PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNION, 1932-1944:

Based on annual totals of participants in communion services (Communicants) in the district, a measure of the annual change in the absolute number of communicants, then of the overall participation rate (Communion Participation (%)), followed by communion participation rates, where available in the statistical tables, and the annual change in the participation rate. Then, based on the absolute number of male and female communicants (Male Communicants, Female Communicants), a measure of the percentage of all communicants who are male or female (Male Communicants (%), Female Communicants (%)) and a measure of the annual changes in male and female participation rates.

Participation In Communion In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	8884	9078	9183	8745	8847	8183	7573	7572	6641	6799	7406	7184	7639
Annual Change (%)	-4	2	1	-5	1	-8	-7	0	-12	2	9	-3	6
Communion Participation (%)	51	50	51	48	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	1	-5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Men	3786	3881	3925	3723	3817	3296	2975	2872	2439	2428	2570	2249	2189
Men (%)	43	43	43	43	43	40	39	38	37	36	35	31	29
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	1	-7	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	-10	-8
Women	5098	5197	5258	5022	5030	4887	4598	4700	4202	4371	4836	4835	5450
Women (%)	57	57	57	57	57	60	61	62	63	64	65	67	71
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	-1	5	2	2	2	2	2	3	6

NEW CHURCH MEMBERSHIPS, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals of new members, a measure of the annual rate of change of the number of adults transferring into the Protestant church, and then the absolute number of adults transferring from the Roman Catholic Church, from other Protestant (free) churches, or from other religious movements outside the Christian churches. Many in the last category will have been among those former church members re-entering the fellowship of the Protestant *Land* Church. There were no converts from Judaism.

New Church Membership In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
New Members (total)	21	29	16	11	33	24	13	17	14	15	10	9	11
Annual Change (%)	5	38	-45	-31	200	-27	-46	31	-18	7	-33	-10	22
From the RC Church	15	13	14	9	24	16	9	7	6	3	7	2	3
From Other Protestant Churches	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	4	1	1	1	0	3
From Other Religious Movements	6	14	1	2	8	6	4	6	7	11	2	7	5
Former members re-entering	4	14	0	2	8	7	2	8	3	10	2	3	4

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP WITHDRAWALS, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals of membership withdrawals, a measure of the annual rate of change of the number of adults transferring out of the Protestant church, and then the absolute number of adults transferring to the Roman Catholic Church, to other Protestant (free) churches, to other religious movements outside the Christian churches (and almost invariably either "God-Believing," or the German Faith Movement or the German Christian Movement). There were no conversions to Judaism.

Church Membership Withdrawals In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Members Withdrawing (total)	43	28	22	19	37	78	182	255	85	150	176	65	36
Annual Change (%)	-4	-35	-21	-14	95	111	133	40	-67	76	17	-63	-45
To the Roman Catholic Church	8	13	13	11	10	4	11	8	5	1	3	4	7
To Other Protestant Churches	18	5	5	0	3	2	8	23	4	32	1	1	0
To Other Religious Movements	17	10	4	8	24	72	163	224	76	117	172	60	29

BAPTISMS, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the absolute number of children born to at least one Protestant parent, then of those baptized as Protestants, the ratio of those two groups and the rate at which that changed from year to year. Then, subtotals of children born of married Protestant parents and baptized as Protestants, born of parents in Protestant/Roman Catholic (Prot./RC) mixed marriages and baptized as Protestants, and born to unmarried parents and baptized as Protestants. For each of those diads, ratios and rates of annual change are provided.

Baptisms Involving Protestants In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Births involving Protestants (total)	236	249	348	369	456	500	601	613	698	671	586	626	547
Protestant Baptisms (total)	182	167	238	261	337	366	398	404	454	438	389	371	425
Ratio (%)	77	67	68	71	74	73	66	66	65	65	66	59	78
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	2	3	4	-1	-10	0	-1	0	2	-11	31
Children of Protestant Parents	115	133	177	176	230	250	289	281	297	267	246	244	210
Those baptized as Protestants	117	126	165	179	233	239	263	274	276	278	236	221	225
Ratio (%)	102	95	93	102	101	96	91	98	93	104	96	91	107
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	-2	9	0	-6	-5	7	-5	12	-8	-6	18
Prot./RC Children	105	100	146	170	213	227	292	316	356	385	315	362	290
Those baptized as Protestants	50	31	54	65	93	108	117	116	163	145	140	136	150
Ratio (%)	48	31	37	38	44	48	40	37	46	38	44	38	52
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-35	19	3	14	9	-16	-8	25	-18	18	-15	38
Children of Unmarried Parents	14	12	21	18	13	23	19	16	45	19	13	20	46
Those baptized as Protestants	15	10	19	17	11	19	17	14	12	15	13	14	36
Ratio (%)	107	83	90	94	85	83	89	88	27	79	100	70	78
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-22	9	4	-10	-2	8	-2	-70	196	27	-30	12

CHILDREN'S CHURCH SERVICES, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the number of parishes with children's church services, the absolute number and annual rate of change in the number of children participating in children's church services.

Children's Church Participation In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Parishes with Children's Church	8	8	10	10	10	11	14	14	11	14	14	12	13
Participating Children (total)	800	840	820	745	635	610	568	525	515	673	750	815	775
Annual Change in Children (%)	19	5	-2	-9	-15	-4	-7	-8	-2	31	11	9	-5

CHURCH WEDDING CEREMONIES, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the absolute number and annual change in the number of civil marriages involving Protestants that were also celebrated as weddings in Protestant churches, with subsets for marriages between two Protestants, one Protestant and one Roman Catholic, and one Protestant and one from a Protestant free church or some other religious orientation.

Marriages And Church Weddings Among Protestants In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Marriages involving Prots. (total)	138	171	241	234	296	306	330	392	255	256	257	250	174
Prot. Church Weddings (total)	128	148	213	222	169	157	135	136	106	87	83	68	56
Ratio (%)	93	87	88	95	57	51	41	35	42	34	32	27	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	2	7	-40	-10	-20	-15	20	-18	-5	-16	18
Protestant Marriages	56	65	81	88	86	103	105	136	67	75	62	70	33
Those with Protestant Weddings	59	59	77	83	87	90	88	79	55	55	47	43	33
Ratio (%)	105	91	95	94	101	87	84	58	82	73	76	61	100
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-14	5	-1	7	-14	-4	-31	41	-11	3	-19	63
Protestant/RC Marriages	82	104	160	145	209	196	213	225	190	171	182	169	132
Those with Protestant Weddings	25	29	53	58	79	64	47	55	50	28	33	23	19
Ratio (%)	30	28	33	40	38	33	22	24	26	16	18	14	14
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-9	19	21	-6	-14	-32	11	8	-38	11	-25	6
Prot./Other Marriages	0	1	0	1	1	7	10	31	2	9	12	10	9
Those with Protestant Weddings	0	1	0	0	1	3	2	2	1	4	1	2	4
Ratio (%)	N/A	100	N/A	0	100	43	20	6	50	44	8	20	44
Annual Change (%)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	-57	-53	-68	675	-11	-81	140	122

CONTRIBUTIONS TO CHURCH COLLECTIONS, 1932-1944:

Based on annual district totals, a measure of the total contributions to and annual rates of change for voluntary church collections, with subsets for collections designated for parish use, for other local use and for *Land* Church purposes.

Church Collections (Reichsmarks) In The Ravensburg District													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Collections (total)	20025	18614	18137	17988	17882	19801	19708	21902	23027	32260	43647	64208	89185
Annual Change (%)	-9	-7	-3	-1	-1	11	0	11	5	40	35	47	39
Coll. for parish use	13633	11509	11652	10827	11082	9817	11007	12130	12455	15727	22232	30152	47716
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-16	1	-7	2	-11	12	10	3	26	41	36	58
Coll. for other local use	2840	3589	3257	3631	3036	2694	3474	3055	2618	4283	5650	9381	9104
Annual Change (%)	N/A	26	-9	11	-16	-11	29	-12	-14	64	32	66	-3
Coll. for <i>Land</i> Church use	3552	3516	3228	3530	3764	7290	5227	6717	7954	12250	15765	24675	32365
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-8	9	7	94	-28	29	18	54	29	57	31

PARISH STATISTICS, 1932-1939:

Based on annual totals of baptized members (Souls) and participants in communion services (Communicants) in the pastorate or parish, a measure of the overall participation rate and the annual change in the participation rate. Based on the absolute number of male and female communicants (Male Communicants, Female Communicants), a measure of the percentage of all communicants from each gender (Male Communicants (%), Female Communicants (%)) and the annual changes in gender participation rates. Then, a measure of the total contributions to and annual rates of change for voluntary church collections, then broken down into subsets of collections for parish use, for other local uses, and for *Land* Church purposes. Finally, the absolute numbers of new church members entering the Protestant *Land* Church in the Ravensburg district, and of parishioners withdrawing their memberships in the *Land* Church in the Ravensburg district. District totals for all categories follow at the end.

Parishes (filial churches or diaspora):

Atzenweiler (Vögt)

Friedrichshafen (Fischbach, Manzell...)

Isny

Langenargen (Kreßbronn...)

Leutkirch (and diaspora)

Ravensburg (and diaspora)

Tettnang

Wälde-Winterbach (Bavendorf)

Bad Waldsee (Alttau)

Wangen im Allgäu (Kißlegg)

Weingarten

RAVENSBURG DISTRICT PARISH STATISTICS

ATZENWEILER (Vogt)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	231	245	268	251	260	252	250	238	187	207	190	181	202
Annual Change (%)	N/A	6	9	-6	4	-3	-1	-5	-21	11	-8	-5	12
Men	116	121	128	133	128	113	118	112	81	78	64	73	76
Men (%)	50	49	48	53	49	45	47	47	43	38	34	40	38
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	-3	11	-7	-9	5	0	-8	-13	-11	20	-7
Women	115	124	140	118	132	139	132	126	106	129	126	108	126
Women (%)	50	51	52	47	51	55	53	53	57	62	66	60	62
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	3	-10	8	9	-4	0	7	10	6	-10	5
Collections (total) (RM)	585	456	548	962	783	717	609	724	668	772	1022	1566	2417
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-22	20	76	-19	-8	-15	19	-8	16	32	53	54
Coll. for parish use	448	348	400	458	475	386	404	513	417	465	715	1055	1728
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-22	15	15	4	-19	5	27	-19	12	54	48	64
Coll. for other local use	48	13	18	367	116	105	42	53	67	93	55	94	244
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-73	38	1939	-68	-9	-60	26	26	39	-41	71	160
Coll. for Land Church use	89	95	130	137	192	226	163	158	184	214	252	417	445
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	37	5	40	18	-28	-3	16	16	18	65	7
New Members	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawing Members	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN (Fischbach, Manzell...)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	1482	1689	1492	1353	1370	1038	1227	1182	1155	1414	1529	1509	1241
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	-12	-9	1	-24	18	-4	-2	22	8	-1	-18
Men	644	719	677	620	661	461	541	466	460	550	632	497	428
Men (%)	43	43	45	46	48	44	44	39	40	39	41	33	34
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	7	1	5	-8	-1	-11	1	-2	6	-20	5
Women	838	970	815	733	709	577	686	716	695	864	897	912	813
Women (%)	57	57	55	54	52	56	56	61	60	61	59	60	66
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-5	-1	-4	7	1	8	-1	2	-4	3	8
Collections (total) (RM)	3286	2502	2670	2199	2250	2211	2429	3148	5322	7994	11726	15074	13502
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-24	7	-18	2	-2	10	30	69	50	47	29	-10
Coll. for parish use	2430	1840	1925	1214	1401	1062	1121	1182	2552	3768	5395	6629	7987
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-24	5	-37	15	-24	6	5	116	48	43	23	20
Coll. for other local use	456	384	427	490	410	373	601	1245	1056	1529	2072	2554	556
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-16	11	15	-16	-9	61	107	-15	45	36	23	-78
Coll. for Land Church use	400	278	318	495	439	776	707	721	1714	2697	4259	5891	4959
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-31	14	56	-11	77	-9	2	138	57	58	38	-16
New Members	5	10	3	0	10	8	6	9	4	13	4	2	0
Withdrawing Members	10	10	12	10	17	38	89	93	44	67	108	30	6

ISNY													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	1192	1077	1109	1025	1116	1167	1014	955	884	870	837	849	1106
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	3	-8	9	5	-13	-6	-7	-2	-4	1	30
Men	301	315	307	306	298	281	240	241	230	232	203	175	195
Men (%)	25	29	28	30	27	24	24	25	26	27	24	21	18
Annual Change (%)	N/A	16	-5	8	-11	-10	-2	7	3	2	-9	-15	-14
Women	891	762	802	719	818	886	774	714	654	638	634	674	911
Women (%)	75	71	72	70	73	76	76	75	74	73	76	79	82
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	2	-3	4	4	1	-2	-1	-1	3	5	4
Collections (total) (RM)	2281	2330	2347	2264	2488	3071	2086	3096	2951	4035	4334	6048	9028
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	1	-4	10	23	-32	48	-5	37	7	40	49
Coll. for parish use	1374	1324	1357	1268	1267	1264	920	1410	1356	1587	1979	2882	4499
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	2	-7	0	0	-27	53	-4	17	25	46	56
Coll. for other local use	490	560	494	385	574	366	366	471	416	675	676	1138	1144
Annual Change (%)	N/A	14	-12	-22	49	-36	0	29	-12	62	0	68	1
Coll. for Land Church use	417	446	496	611	647	1441	800	1215	1179	1773	1679	2028	3385
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	11	23	6	123	-44	52	-3	50	-5	21	67
New Members	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Withdrawing Members	0	3	0	0	0	7	2	5	1	2	3	1	1

LANGENARGEN (Kreßbronn...)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	232	229	273	314	282	252	211	228	192	158	186	243	283
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	19	15	-10	-11	-16	8	-16	-18	18	31	16
Men	94	96	106	106	114	90	78	78	68	40	63	64	88
Men (%)	41	42	39	34	40	36	37	34	35	25	34	26	31
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-7	-13	20	-12	4	-7	4	-29	34	-22	18
Women	138	133	167	208	168	162	133	150	124	118	123	179	195
Women (%)	59	58	61	66	60	64	63	66	65	75	66	74	69
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	5	8	-10	8	-2	4	-2	16	-11	11	-6
Collections (total) (RM)	645	563	697	726	736	938	1072	1031	1024	1073	1588	3478	4410
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	24	4	1	27	14	-4	-1	5	48	119	27
Coll. for parish use	465	388	483	525	520	463	691	644	525	682	1020	1470	2512
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	24	9	-1	-11	49	-7	-18	30	50	44	71
Coll. for other local use	110	90	126	120	125	129	213	109	218	118	28	193	171
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-18	40	-5	4	3	65	-49	100	-46	-76	589	-11
Coll. for Land Church use	70	85	88	81	91	346	168	278	281	273	540	1815	1727
Annual Change (%)	N/A	21	4	-8	12	280	-51	65	1	-3	98	236	-5
New Members	2	3	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Withdrawing Members	4	4	0	0	5	6	13	14	4	2	5	0	0

LEUTKIRCH (and Diaspora)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	918	911	984	889	863	858	756	812	756	797	713	656	1127
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	8	-10	-3	-1	-12	7	-7	5	-11	-8	72
Men	397	385	421	385	368	346	306	312	265	276	234	167	265
Men (%)	43	42	43	43	43	40	40	38	35	35	33	25	24
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	1	1	-2	-5	0	-5	-9	-1	-5	-22	-8
Women	521	526	563	504	495	512	450	500	491	521	479	489	862
Women (%)	57	58	57	57	57	60	60	62	65	65	67	75	76
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-1	-1	1	4	0	3	5	1	3	11	3
Collections (total) (RM)	2695	2494	2288	2113	1918	2428	3021	3066	2557	3829	4498	6958	11499
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	-8	-8	-9	27	24	1	-17	50	17	55	65
Coll. for parish use	2037	1665	1671	1580	1418	1593	1889	1940	1454	1818	2341	3923	4748
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-18	0	-5	-10	12	19	3	-25	25	29	68	21
Coll. for other local use	222	439	219	257	138	195	268	298	244	567	486	576	3801
Annual Change (%)	N/A	98	-50	17	-46	41	37	11	-18	132	-14	19	560
Coll. for Land Church use	436	390	398	276	362	640	864	828	859	1444	1671	2459	2950
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-11	2	-31	31	77	35	-4	4	68	16	47	20
New Members	2	2	1	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	4	7
Withdrawing Members	1	1	0	1	1	1	10	11	3	35	4	3	1

RAVENSBURG (and Diaspora)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	1992	2049	2089	2112	2168	2028	1711	1737	1385	1566	1725	1490	1636
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	2	1	3	-6	-16	2	-20	13	10	-14	10
Men	823	793	805	843	885	815	647	620	489	579	553	464	489
Men (%)	41	39	39	40	41	40	38	36	35	37	32	31	30
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-6	0	4	2	-2	-6	-6	-1	5	-13	-3	-4
Women	1169	1256	1284	1269	1283	1213	1064	1117	896	987	1172	1026	1147
Women (%)	59	61	61	60	59	60	62	64	65	63	68	69	70
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	0	-2	-2	1	4	3	1	-3	8	1	2
Collections (total) (RM)	4063	3928	3723	4169	3721	4112	4858	4930	4837	8257	10515	14781	21410
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-5	12	-11	11	18	1	-2	71	27	41	45
Coll. for parish use	2702	2353	2385	2440	2384	2240	2997	2993	3110	4515	5485	7050	10853
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	1	2	-2	-6	34	0	4	45	21	29	54
Coll. for other local use	681	929	727	1209	691	430	1351	497	168	559	1334	1421	1405
Annual Change (%)	N/A	36	-22	66	-43	-38	214	-63	-66	233	139	7	-1
Coll. for Land Church use	680	646	611	520	646	1442	510	1440	1559	3183	3696	6310	9152
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	-5	-15	24	123	-65	182	8	104	16	71	45
New Members	8	7	3	6	10	8	5	0	5	2	3	1	1
Withdrawing Members	7	5	4	3	1	13	29	75	19	21	40	17	12

TETTNANG													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	490	504	497	502	460	470	382	435	430	498	487	510	570
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	-1	1	-8	2	-19	14	-1	16	-2	5	12
Men	256	282	280	271	273	254	174	235	203	185	159	207	190
Men (%)	52	56	56	54	59	54	46	54	47	37	33	41	33
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	1	-4	10	-9	-16	19	-13	-21	-12	24	-18
Women	234	222	217	231	187	216	208	200	227	313	328	303	380
Women (%)	48	44	44	46	41	46	54	46	53	63	67	59	67
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-8	-1	5	-12	13	18	-16	15	19	7	-12	12
Collections (total) (RM)	645	661	617	703	786	721	637	637	604	689	966	2009	3870
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	-7	14	12	-8	-12	0	-5	14	40	108	93
Coll. for parish use	357	342	310	384	450	393	394	397	300	308	428	593	1399
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	-9	24	17	-13	0	1	-24	3	39	39	136
Coll. for other local use	135	173	127	147	214	92	66	33	99	148	222	760	692
Annual Change (%)	N/A	28	-27	16	46	-57	-28	-50	200	49	50	242	-9
Coll. for Land Church use	153	146	180	172	122	236	177	207	205	233	316	656	1779
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	23	-4	-29	93	-25	17	-1	14	36	108	171
New Members	1	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Withdrawing Members	3	2	2	2	0	4	4	3	2	4	2	1	1

WÄLDE-WINTERBACH (Bavendorf)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	368	360	386	362	283	259	263	270	251	247	248	253	250
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-2	7	-6	-22	-8	2	3	-7	-2	0	2	-1
Men	167	183	196	176	136	121	120	121	111	106	104	100	90
Men (%)	45	51	51	49	48	47	46	45	44	43	42	40	36
Annual Change (%)	N/A	12	0	-4	-1	-3	-2	-2	-1	-3	-2	-6	-9
Women	201	177	190	186	147	138	143	149	140	141	144	153	160
Women (%)	55	49	49	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	60	64
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-10	0	4	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	4	6
Collections (total) (RM)	1006	851	812	819	858	782	661	674	710	888	1301	2242	3735
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-15	-5	1	5	-9	-15	2	5	25	47	72	67
Coll. for parish use	791	640	556	523	577	442	405	441	442	523	692	1206	2328
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-19	-13	-6	10	-23	-8	9	0	18	32	74	93
Coll. for other local use	81	94	122	165	99	156	120	48	54	32	73	225	124
Annual Change (%)	N/A	16	30	35	-40	58	-23	-60	13	-41	128	208	-45
Coll. for Land Church use	134	117	134	131	182	184	136	185	214	333	536	811	1283
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	15	-2	39	1	-26	36	16	56	61	51	58
New Members	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0
Withdrawing Members	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

BAD WALDSEE (Alttau)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	352	356	352	322	367	285	297	323	254	252	275	251	402
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	-1	-9	14	-22	4	9	-21	-1	9	-9	60
Men	177	170	175	151	164	130	139	126	108	92	106	83	105
Men (%)	50	48	50	47	45	46	47	39	43	37	39	33	26
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	4	-6	-5	2	3	-17	9	-14	6	-14	-21
Women	175	186	177	171	203	155	158	197	146	160	169	168	297
Women (%)	50	52	50	53	55	54	53	61	57	63	61	67	74
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-4	6	4	-2	-2	15	-6	10	-3	9	10
Collections (total) (RM)	851	845	822	777	729	993	1002	1239	1411	1913	2395	4410	5814
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-3	-5	-6	36	1	24	14	36	25	84	32
Coll. for parish use	567	530	507	464	443	450	525	660	716	821	1157	1565	2933
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	-4	-8	-5	2	17	26	8	15	41	35	87
Coll. for other local use	132	110	102	103	82	100	92	115	65	141	229	1066	50
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	-7	1	-20	22	-8	25	-43	117	62	366	-95
Coll. for Land Church use	152	205	213	210	204	443	385	464	630	951	1009	1779	2831
Annual Change (%)	N/A	35	4	-1	-3	117	-13	21	36	51	6	76	59
New Members	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
Withdrawing Members	3	0	1	0	4	2	9	17	0	6	5	0	2

WANGEN IM ALLGÄU (Kißlegg)													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	488	505	551	501	537	509	484	508	384	N/A	411	450	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	3	9	-9	7	-5	-5	5	-24	N/A	N/A	9	N/A
Men	235	255	249	211	244	194	195	192	119	N/A	145	181	N/A
Men (%)	48	50	45	42	45	38	40	38	31	N/A	35	40	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-11	-7	8	-16	6	-6	-18	N/A	N/A	14	N/A
Women	253	250	302	290	293	315	289	316	265	N/A	266	269	N/A
Women (%)	52	50	55	58	55	62	60	62	69	N/A	65	60	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-5	11	6	-6	13	-4	4	11	N/A	N/A	-8	N/A
Collections (total) (RM)	1578	1657	1613	1238	1228	1698	1347	1108	930	N/A	1412	2186	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	5	-3	-23	-1	38	-21	-18	-16	N/A	N/A	55	N/A
Coll. for parish use	901	784	850	709	574	529	573	582	546	N/A	923	1401	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-13	8	-17	-19	-8	8	2	-6	N/A	N/A	52	N/A
Coll. for other local use	254	403	493	202	232	343	177	0	0	N/A	7	152	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	59	22	-59	15	48	-48	-100	N/A	N/A	N/A	2071	N/A
Coll. for Land Church use	423	470	270	327	422	826	597	526	384	N/A	482	633	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	11	-43	21	29	96	-28	-12	-27	N/A	N/A	31	N/A
New Members	0	3	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	N/A	0	0	N/A
Withdrawing Members	6	0	1	1	3	4	14	20	6	N/A	2	5	N/A

WEINGARTEN													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	1139	1153	1182	1114	1141	1065	978	884	763	790	805	792	822
Annual Change (%)	N/A	1	3	-6	2	-7	-8	-10	-14	4	2	-2	4
Men	576	562	581	521	546	491	417	369	305	290	307	238	263
Men (%)	51	49	49	47	48	46	43	42	40	37	38	30	32
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-4	1	-5	2	-4	-8	-2	-4	-8	4	-21	6
Women	563	591	601	593	595	574	561	515	458	500	498	554	559
Women (%)	49	51	51	53	52	54	57	58	60	63	62	70	68
Annual Change (%)	N/A	4	-1	5	-2	3	6	2	3	5	-2	13	-3
Collections (total) (RM)	2390	2327	2000	2018	2385	2130	1986	2249	2013	2810	3890	5456	13500
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-3	-14	1	18	-11	-7	13	-10	40	38	40	147
Coll. for parish use	1561	1295	1208	1262	1573	995	1088	1368	1037	1240	2097	2378	8729
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-17	-7	4	25	-37	9	26	-24	20	69	13	267
Coll. for other local use	231	394	402	186	355	405	178	186	231	421	468	1202	917
Annual Change (%)	N/A	71	2	-54	91	14	-56	4	24	82	11	157	-24
Coll. for Land Church use	598	638	390	570	457	730	720	695	745	1149	1325	1876	3854
Annual Change (%)	N/A	7	-39	46	-20	60	-1	-3	7	54	15	42	105
New Members	3	3	4	2	2	1	2	2	2	0	1	2	1
Withdrawing Members	6	3	2	2	5	3	11	18	5	12	7	6	10

RAVENSBURG DISTRICT TOTALS:													
Year	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
Communicants	8884	9078	9183	8745	8847	8183	7573	7572	6641	N/A	7406	7184	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	2	1	-5	1	-8	-7	0	-12	N/A	N/A	-3	N/A
Men	3786	3881	3925	3723	3817	3296	2975	2872	2439	N/A	2570	2249	N/A
Men (%)	43	43	43	43	43	40	39	38	37	N/A	35	31	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	1	-7	-2	-3	-3	N/A	N/A	-10	N/A
Women	5098	5197	5258	5022	5030	4887	4598	4700	4202	N/A	4836	4835	N/A
Women (%)	57	57	57	57	57	60	61	62	63	N/A	65	67	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	0	0	0	-1	5	2	2	2	N/A	N/A	3	N/A
Collections (total) (RM)	20025	18614	18137	17988	17882	19801	19708	21902	23027	N/A	43647	64208	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-7	-3	-1	-1	11	0	11	5	N/A	N/A	47	N/A
Coll. for parish use	13633	11509	11652	10827	11082	9817	11007	12130	12455	N/A	22232	30152	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-16	1	-7	2	-11	12	10	3	N/A	N/A	36	N/A
Coll. for other local use	2840	3589	3257	3631	3036	2694	3474	3055	2618	N/A	5650	9381	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	26	-9	11	-16	-11	29	-12	-14	N/A	N/A	66	N/A
Coll. for Land Church use	3552	3516	3228	3530	3764	7290	5227	6717	7954	N/A	15765	24675	N/A
Annual Change (%)	N/A	-1	-8	9	7	94	-28	29	18	N/A	N/A	57	N/A
New Members	21	29	16	11	33	24	13	15	14	N/A	10	9	N/A
Withdrawing Members	43	28	22	19	36	78	181	256	85	N/A	176	65	N/A

APPENDIX 4

CLERGYMEN IN NAUEN, PIRNA AND RAVENSBURG

Nauen:

Information about the tenure of Nauen clergymen comes from four sources: (1) the *Pfarralmanach für die Kirchenprovinz Mark Brandenburg*, 1937, with a 1939 update, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg library collection; (2) the yearly reports from the Nauen District Church Office to the Brandenburg Consistory: 1934-1935 report, 30 September 1936, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 125/744; 1936 report, 11 February 1937, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 126/750; 1937 report, 18 March 1938, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 129/900; 1938 report, 11 May 1939, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 130/840; 1939 report, 22 July 1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 127/751; 1940 report, 5 March 1941, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 128/752; 1941 report, 10 March 1942, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 131/803; 1942 report, 9 March 1943, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 131/803; 1943 report, 7 March 1944, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 132/759; (3) monthly circular letters sent from the Nauen Superintendent to the clergymen of the district: 1931-1935 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 70/736; 1935-1938 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 71/737; and 1939-1944 circulars in Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg NE 72/738; (4) copies of the *Evang. Sonntagsblatt für den Kirchenkreis Nauen*, 1935-1940, Domstiftarchiv Brandenburg Ki 490.

Nauen District Clergymen During the Third Reich

The following table records clergymen who worked in the Nauen district during the Third Reich, as far as is known. It includes their position, parish (parentheses are used to denote multiple pastorates within one community), dates of services (year and month, if known) and church political orientation (if known). Asterisks in the 'From' and 'To' columns mean that the dates provided are the first and last references to individuals whose exact dates of service are unknown. Under 'Church Politics', 'DC' is for German Christian (*Deutsche Christen*), 'BK' is for Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) and the adjective 'mild' refers to supporters of each group who were not formal members.

NAUEN DISTRICT CLERGY DURING THE THIRD REICH					
Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Abraham	Vicar	Nauen (2)	02-37*	02-37*	unknown
Andrich, Hans Werner	Pastor	Vehlefan	05-34	03-43	DC
Becker, Willi	Pastor	Grünefeld	1926	04-45	DC
		Bötzow	02-35*	02-35*	
		Wansdorf	09-35*	10-36	
	Vicar	Pessin	09-36*	04-39	
Bedorf, Theodor	Pastor	Pessin	04-39	03-44*	Neutral
Bettac, Ulrich	Pastor	Beetz	1929	07-44*	mild BK
Böck	Vicar	Staffelde	12-38	05-39*	unknown
		Markau	09-35*	09-35*	
Bolle	Vicar	Zeestow	10-35*	10-35	unknown
	Curate	Vehlefan	12-39*	04-40*	
Born	Pastor	Linum	01-41	08-41*	mild BK
Cramer	Pastor	Kremmen	1913	10-35	Neutral
Daab	Pastor	Schwante	1912*	10-35	Neutral
Dreves	Vicar	Markau	05-35*	12-36	unknown
Dumont	Vicar	Groß Behnitz	1937	03-38	unknown
Ebeling, Gerhard	Vicar	Fehrbellin	1937*	1937*	BK
	Curate		01-33*	07-34	
Engelke, Johannes	Pastor	Königshorst	07-34	06-37	BK

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Feder	Pastor	Vehlefanz	1909	08-33	mild DC
Franck, Johannes	Curate	Vehlefanz	12-39*	10-43	mild BK
		Schwante	04-40*	04-40*	
Fritzsche, Kurt	Curate	Groß Behnitz	1937	03-38	BK
	Pastor		03-38	1941*	
Gädigk	Vicar	Nauen (2)	04-36	02-37	DC
Gartenschläger, Georg	Pastor	Bötzow	1930	1939	DC
Gentz	Curate	Pessin	12-38*	01-39	unknown
Glockner	Curate	Markau	10-40	07-42	unknown
	Pastor		07-42	07-42*	
Graßhoff	Superint.	Nauen (1)	06-32	04-35	Neutral
Grundmann	Vicar	Schwante	10-35*	06-37	unknown
Grütmacher	Curate	Retzow	06-36*	08-36	BK
Harder, Günther	Pastor	Fehrbellin	1929	1945*	BK
Hartmann	Vicar	Wansdorf	03-35*	03-35*	Neutral
		Paaren	03-35*	01-36	
	Curate	Paaren	02-36	10-36	
Heidrich	Vicar	Ribbeck	03-35*	03-35*	BK
		Groß Behnitz	1936*	02-37*	
Heidtmann	Pastor	Paaren	1933	12-34	DC
	Curate		03-35*	03-35*	
Heine	Pastor	Zeestow	1932*	09-34	Neutral
Herschenz	Vicar	Groß Behnitz	09-35*	09-35*	unknown
Herzog, Kurt	Pastor	Wansdorf	1937	1945*	mild DC
Hoffmann	Curate	Linum	04-40	12-40	BK
Höft, Ernst	Curate	Zeestow	1935	02-36	mild BK
	Pastor		02-36	10-39	
Ideler	Pastor	Markau	1924*	01-35	unknown
Isleib, Konrad	Pastor	Hakenberg	1929	08-36	DC
		Flatow	04-40	03-44*	
Kahle, Herbert	Pastor	Linum	1930	03-40	DC
Kludt	Vicar	Markau	10-35*	05-36	DC
Koch	Pastor	Retzow	1932*	12-35	DC
Kornrumpf	Vicar	Nauen (2)	1942*	03-44*	unknown
		Nauen (1)			
Krafft	Curate	Markau	10-37	03-38	BK
Krause	Vicar	Fehrbellin	1937*	1939*	BK
Kretschmar	Vicar	Markau	01-35	12-36	unknown
		Nauen (2)	03-35*	03-35*	
		Kremmen	10-35*	10-35*	
Kuschel	Vicar	Schwante	10-35	02-37*	Neutral
Lahde	Vicar	Staffelde	03-43*	03-43	unknown
Lehmann, Martin	Curate	Karweese	1936*	02-37*	BK
	Pastor		1938	03-44*	
Liebert, Dr.	Curate	Markau	12-38*	09-40	unknown

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Lux	Pastor	Groß Behnitz	1918	10-35	DC
Massat, Herbert	Vicar	unknown	09-39*	09-39*	BK
Mickley	Curate	Königshorst	1937*	09-39*	BK
Neitsch	Vicar	Nauen (2)	1942*	03-44*	unknown
		Nauen (1)			
Noske	Vicar	Markau	1939	03-44*	unknown
Oestreich, Max	Pastor	Lentzke	1927	03-44*	BK
Ossenkop, Gerhard	Curate	Fehrbellin	1939	1941*	BK
Pachali, Walter	Curate	Vehlefanz	06-36*	08-36	mild BK
		Retzow	08-36	02-37*	
	Pastor	Retzow	1937	03-44*	
Posth, Herbert	Pastor	Berge	05-33*	03-44*	BK
Priester	Vicar	Berge	09-35*	09-35*	BK
Raede	Curate	Paaren	10-36	10-36	unknown
Rehfeldt, Ewald	Pastor	Kremmen	01-36	03-44*	mild BK
Reichardt, Gustav	Pastor	Staffelde	1925	04-38	mild BK
Rendler	Vicar	Ribbeck	06-36*	06-36*	unknown
Rocha, Bogumil	Pastor	Pessin	1933	06-38	BK
Rumpf, Friedrich	Pastor	Schwante	1937	08-43	mild BK
Schmidt, Otto	Pastor	Flatow	1931	1938*	neutral
Schramm	Curate	Nauen (2)	11-34*	03-35*	BK
Schröder	Curate	Nauen (2)	03-40*	05-40	DC
Schulz	Pastor	Pessin	1932*	05-33	unknown
Schumann, Gerhard	Pastor	Nauen (2)	1931	09-35*	mild DC
		Nauen (1)	09-35*	07-38	
Siems, Friedrich	Vicar	Nauen (2)	03-35*	10-35	DC
	Curate		10-35	02-37*	
	Pastor		02-37*	07-38*	
	Pastor	Nauen (1)	07-38*	1945*	
Simon	Superint.	Nauen	12-40	03-44	unknown
Stehmann	Vicar	unknown	10-37*	10-37*	unknown
Wagner	Curate	Ribbeck	1936*	1937*	BK
Wallmann	Curate	Bötzow	03-35*	10-39	DC
	Pastor		10-39	1946	
Weicht	Pastor	Wansdorf	1932*	1934	DC
Weltersbach	Vicar	Nauen (2)	04-36*	1937*	DC
Werner	Pastor	Ribbeck	1932*	04-34*	DC
Wiese	Curate	Zeestow	01-40	06-40	BK
	Pastor		07-40	03-44	
Wilm	Vicar	Fehrbellin	1937*	1937*	BK
Zachow	Curate	Flatow	12-39*	12-39*	unknown
		Staffelde	01-40*	01-40*	
Ziegel	Pastor	Bredow	1933*	10-34	DC

Pirna:

Information about appointments in Pirna comes from Reinhold Grünberg (editor), *Sächsisches Pfarrerbuch. Die Parochien und Pfarrer der Ev.-luth. Landeskirche Sachsens (1539-1939)* (Dresden, 1939-1940), and "Besetzung des Pfarramtes und Superintendentamtes, 1934-1939," Ephoralarchiv Pirna 422.

Pirna District Clergymen During the Third Reich

The following table records clergymen who worked in the Nauen district during the Third Reich, as far as is known. It includes their position, parish (parentheses are used to denote multiple pastorates within one community), dates of services (year and month, if known) and church political orientation (if known). Asterisks in the 'From' and 'To' columns mean that the dates provided are the first and last references to individuals whose exact dates of service are unknown. Under 'Church Politics', 'DC' is for German Christian (*Deutsche Christen*), 'Thur DC' is for Thuringian German Christians, 'PNB' is for Pastors' Emergency League (*Pfarrernotbund*); 'BK' is for Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*) and 'Mitte' refers to the moderate group that formed out of supporters of the Emergency League who retained their connection to the Saxon Land Church and worked for reconciliation between the extremes.

PIRMA DISTRICT CLERGY DURING THE THIRD REICH					
Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Arnold	Vicar	Stürza	10-42	10-42*	unknown
Bahrmann, Gerhard	Pastor	Sebnitz (1)	09-36	1945*	unknown
Beyer	Vicar	Pirna	05-40	05-40*	unknown
Beyerlein	Vicar	Hohnstein	10-36	03-38*	unknown
Bömer, Walter	Pastor	Ottendorf	1916	12-41*	DC
Boettrich	Vicar	Hohnstein	03-38*	03-38*	unknown
Breutel, Rudolf	Pastor	Heidenau-Christus	12-34	03-39	unknown
Brunner, Dr.	Curate		06-39	04-40	
	Pastor	Heidenau-Christus	04-40	10-41*	unknown
Buch	Curate	Graupa	10-41*	10-41*	unknown
Carl, Gustav	Pastor	Cotta	1932	12-41*	PNB; BK
Dittmann, Herbert	Pastor	Ehrenberg	1915	12-41*	PNB
Drechsler, Kurt	Pastor	Zschachwitz (1)	1908	09-37	unknown
Droop	Vicar	Pirna	05-40	05-40*	unknown
Eberhardt	Curate	Pirna	05-40*	05-40	unknown
Ebert, Lothar	Pastor	Pirna (4)	1925	03-35	DC
		Pirna (3)	03-35	01-37	
		Pirna (2)	01-37	05-39*	
Esselbach	Pastor	Stürza	04-39	10-42	unknown
		Wehlen Dorf	10-42	10-42*	
Faber	Vicar	Pirna	11-38*	11-38*	unknown
	Vicar		12-39*	01-42	
	Pastor	Rosenthal	01-42	06-42*	
Falk	Curate	Liebenthal	04-39*	04-39	unknown
Friedrich, Johann	Pastor	Gottleuba	1925	12-41*	PNB; BK
Gartzke	Vicar		05-38	05-38*	unknown
	Pastor	Struppen	1939*	10-40	
	Pastor	Berggießhübel	10-40	11-41*	
Gebauer, Fritz	Pastor	Liebenthal	1904	08-34	unknown

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Gerlach	Pastor	unknown	1932*	10-34	unknown
Gödan	Curate	Pima (4)	07-35	10-36*	unknown
Grießdorf, Joachim	Vicar	Porschdorf	11-34*	01-37	BK
	Pastor		01-37	11-42*	
Gröschel, Robert	Pastor	Sebnitz (1)	1926	1933	unknown
Günther	Vicar	Eschdorf	06-39	06-42	unknown
	Pastor		06-42	06-42*	
Gutsche	Curate	Pima	09-44	02-45	unknown
Hagar, Friedrich	Pastor	Rosenthal	1932	11-34	BK
Häßner, Franz	Pastor	Eschdorf	1914	11-36	unknown
Hellner, Kurt	Pastor	Dittersbach (2)	1927	02-34	PNB; BK
		Dohna	02-34	06-37	
Hempel	Vicar	Rosenthal	01-38*	08-38	unknown
Herbst	Curate	Liebenthal	08-38*	10-38*	unknown
Hering, Richard	Pastor	Berggießhübel	1915	10-33	unknown
Hermann	Vicar	unknown	09-38*	09-38*	unknown
Herz, Johannes	Pastor	Berggießhübel	05-34	1939*	BK
Hesse, Arno	Pastor	Stürza	1911	11-38	unknown
Hilburg	Vicar	Pima	09-41*	01-45*	unknown
Hofmann, Friedrich	Pastor	Wilschdorf	1913	1933*	unknown
Höhnel, Richard	Pastor	Rathewalde	1896	1933*	unknown
Kapler	Pastor	Wehlen Dorf	06-42*	06-42	unknown
Kausch	Vicar	Zschachwitz	05-40	11-40*	unknown
		Struppen	10-41*	12-41*	
Kleeberg	Pastor	Schmiedefeld	1932*	10-34	unknown
Kleibert	Vicar	Pima	05-40	05-40*	unknown
Klemm, Hermann	Pastor	Burkhardswalde	1929	11-45	PNB; BK
	Superint.	Pima (1)	11-45	1946*	
Knoch, Max	Pastor	Langenwolmsdorf	1930	12-41*	unknown
König	Curate	Pima	09-44	01-45	unknown
Kühn, Albert	Pastor	Neustadt (2)	04-35	05-40	unknown
		Lichtenhain	05-40	05-40*	
Kühnel, Paul	Pastor	Zschachwitz (2)	1908	01-38	DC
		Zschachwitz (1)	01-38	1939	
Lange, Karl	Pastor	Wehlen Dorf	11-34	1939*	Thur DC
Leichte, Heinrich	Pastor	Königstein (1)	1932	11-37	DC
	Superint.	Pima (1)	11-37	06-45	
Leonard, Dr. Walter	Pastor	Stolpen	1930	01-34	unknown
Leydal	Vicar	Pima	10-36*	10-36*	unknown
Lotichius, Johannes	Pastor	Lauterbach	11-36	12-38	unknown
Meckert	Vicar	Oelsen	10-39*	10-39*	unknown
Meier, Siegfried	Pastor	Sebnitz (2)	1927	1933	PNB; BK
		Sebnitz (1)	1933	03-36	
Meinel	Curate	Liebethal	05-39	06-39	unknown
	Pastor		06-39	11-42*	

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Meinel, Martin	Pastor	Bad Schandau (1)	1932	06-45	PNB; Mitte
	Superint.	Pirna (1)	06-45	11-45	
Morgenstern	Curate	Dittersbach	08-34*	06-36	Unknown
	Pastor		06-36	12-41*	
Müller, Gotthelf	Pastor	Heidenau-Luther	1929	12-41*	DC; PNB; BK
Müller, Karl	Pastor	Neustadt (1)	1927	1935*	unknown
Nake	Curate	Pirna	12-36*	03-39	unknown
Naumann	Curate	Hohnstein	01-39	03-41	unknown
	Pastor		03-41	03-41*	
Nestler	Curate	Bad Schandau (2)	03-41*	03-41	unknown
	Pastor		03-41	11-42*	
Nicolai	Curate	Schmiedefeld	02-35	09-35	unknown
Niedner, Erwin	Pastor	Pirna-Sonnenstein	1929	1938*	unknown
Nitzsche	Pastor	Graupa (1)	06-42	06-42*	unknown
Nollau	Pastor	Graupa (1)	05-41*	05-41	unknown
Ohnesorge, Siegfried	Pastor	Lichtenhain	1917	10-39	unknown
Otto, Roland	Pastor	Hinterhermsdorf	1910	12-41*	unknown
Partecke, Karl	Pastor	Sebnitz (2)	1933	07-45*	PNB; BK
Peter, Rudolf	Pastor	Pirna (2)	1918	06-35	PNB; Mitte
Philipp	Vicar	Neustadt	10-41*	10-41*	unknown
Platz, Otto	Pastor	Lauterbach	1921	1936*	unknown
Ploedterll, Franz	Pastor	Königstein (2)	1932	12-41*	PNB; BK
Plotz, Walter	Pastor	Pirna-Hospital	1907	03-42	unknown
Polster, Gottfried	Pastor	Porschdorf	1926	1934	unknown
Quodbach, Joachim	Pastor	Pirna (3)	01-37	06-42*	unknown
Ranft, Ernst	Pastor	Helmsdorf	1904	12-41*	DC
Rasch, Max Martin	Pastor	Reinhardtsdorf	1930	12-38	PNB; Mitte
Richter, Heinrich	Pastor	Zschachwitz (2)	07-38	12-39	unknown
		Zschachwitz (1)	12-39	1939*	
Rieser	Curate	unknown	09-38*	09-38*	unknown
Rosenthal	Pastor	Lohmen	1927	1939*	unknown
Rothe, Dr. Ernst	Pastor	Pirna-Sonnenstein	08-36*	1939*	DC
Ruhland, Max	Pastor	Königstein (1)	09-38	06-42*	unknown
Satlow	Curate	Wehlen Stadt	08-38	10-38	unknown
Scherffig	Curate	Heidenau	01-34*	03-36	BK
Schindler	Vicar	Lauterbach	04-39*	06-42*	unknown
	Pastor		06-42*	06-42*	
Schmeißer, Adolf	Pastor	Struppen	1928	1938*	PNB; Mitte; BK
Schneider, Paul	Pastor	Rückersdorf	1926	12-41*	unknown
Schulze	Vicar	Dohna (2)	01-38*	01-38	unknown
	Curate		01-38	07-40	
	Pastor		07-40	12-41	
Schumann, Walter	Pastor	Hohnstein	1929	06-36	PNB; BK
Schüttoff, Raphael	Pastor	Wehlen Dorf	1928	09-34	unknown

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Schwär, Theodor	Pastor	Liebenthal	12-34	09-38	Thur DC
		Pirna (4)	09-38	1939*	
		Pirna	12-39*	09-41	
Schwerda	Curate	Berggießhübel	09-41	03-42	unknown
Scriba, Otto	Pastor	Wehlen Stadt	1925	1935*	PNB
Seydal	Pastor	unknown	03-37*	03-37*	DC
Spielmann	Vicar	Bad Schandau	02-37*	02-37*	Thur DC
Steinborn	Vicar	Pirna	09-41*	10-41*	unknown
Steinhäuffer	Pastor	Dohna (2)	08-42	08-42*	unknown
Stichel	Curate	Heidenau	10-39*	10-39*	unknown
Strauß	Curate	Markersbach	01-39*	01-39	unknown
	Curate	Reinhardtsdorf	01-39	04-39*	
	Pastor	Reinhardtsdorf	04-39*	10-41*	
Teichgräber, Paul	Pastor	Pirna (3)	1927	03-35	DC
		Pirna (2)	03-35	11-36	
		Eschdorf	11-36	05-39	
Thermann	Vicar	Rosenthal	11-38*	11-38	unknown
Thilo	Vicar	Pirna	11-40*	11-40	unknown
	Pastor	Pirna (4)	11-40	04-42*	
Ullrich, Rudolf	Curate	Wehlen Stadt	11-35	03-39	unknown
	Pastor		03-39	1939*	
Unkrig	Pastor	Lohmen	06-42	06-42*	unknown
Voigt, Otto	Pastor	Stolpen	04-34	12-41*	unknown
Voigtländer, Adolf	Pastor	Maxen	1932*	12-41*	unknown
von Funcke	Curate	Heidenau-Christus	10-41	12-41*	unknown
von Schmidt, Goerg	Pastor	Langenhennersdorf	1928	12-41*	PNB; BK
Vorwerk, Martin	Pastor	Liebstadt	1925	12-41*	PNB; BK
Wagner	Vicar	Pirna	05-41	09-41	unknown
	Curate	Pirna (3)	09-41	12-41*	
Werner, Gustav	Pastor	Dittersbach (1)	1925	1939*	unknown
Werner	Pastor	Dohna (1)	01-34*	06-39*	unknown
Wolff	Vicar	Reinhardtsdorf	05-39	05-39*	unknown
Zweynert, Gerhard	Pastor	Papstdorf	1930	1939*	PNB; Mitte
Zweynert, Heinrich	Pastor	Neustadt (2)	1931	04-35	unknown
		Neustadt (1)	04-35	1939*	
Zweynert, Dr. Max	Superint.	Pirna (1)	1916	06-37	DC; Mitte

Ravensburg:

Information on appointments in the Ravensburg district comes from four sources: 1) "Pfarrer" and "Unständige Geistliche" subfiles in both Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 52-77 and 151-152 parish files and Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg Neue Akten/Bad Waldsee to Weingarten parish files (the latter identified by name, not number); 2) "Pfarrbesoldung," Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 91; 3) "Verhandlungsbuch VI, 1929-1946" (minutes of the Ravensburg parish council), Dekanatsarchiv Ravensburg 125; 4) Correspondence concerning pastoral appointments in Landeskirchliches Archiv Stuttgart Alt. Reg. Ortsakten Ravensburg, Besetzung I, II, and III.

Ravensburg District Clergymen During the Third Reich

The following table records clergymen who worked in the Nauen district during the Third Reich, as far as is known. It includes their position, parish (parentheses are used to denote multiple pastorates within one community), dates of services (year and month, if known) and church political orientation (if known). Asterisks in the 'From' and 'To' columns mean that the dates provided are the first and last references to individuals whose exact dates of service are unknown. Under 'Church Politics', 'DC' is for German Christian (*Deutsche Christen*), 'BK' is for Confessing Church (*Bekennende Kirche*). Because the Württemberg Land Church left the Confessing Church under the leadership of Land Bishop Wurm, most clergymen did not identify themselves with either the Confessing Church or the German Christians.

RAVENSBURG DISTRICT CLERGY DURING THE THIRD REICH					
Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Ahner, Karl	Pastor	Wälde-Winterbach	08-37	03-44*	unknown
Armbruster	Pastor	Wälde-Winterbach	11-31	10-36	mild DC
		Wangen im Allgäu	01-40	01-40*	
Berron, Gerhard	Curate	Leutkirch (2)	04-35*	04-35	unknown
Bidlingmaier, Theodor	Pastor	Ravensburg (2)	10-33*	04-38*	unknown
Blank, Willy	Vicar	Isny (2)	11-36*	04-37*	unknown
Bracher, Walter	Curate	Tettnang	11-37	06-38*	unknown
Butz, Hans	Vicar	Ravensburg	01-39	01-39*	unknown
Daur, Alexander	Curate	Wälde-Winterbach	10-36*	05-37*	unknown
Daur, Reinhard	Pastor	Langenargen	02-31	02-37*	unknown
	Curate	Ravensburg (1)	12-39*	11-42*	
	Pastor	Ravensburg (2)	12-39*	11-42*	
Dehn, Dr. Günther	Curate	Ravensburg (3)	10-42	12-45	unknown
Dipper, Karl	Curate	Isny (2)	05-34	10-34*	unknown
Dreher	Vicar	Weingarten (2)	1938	1938	unknown
	Pastor	Friedrichshafen (1)	1932*	08-39	
		Friedrichshafen (3)	09-39	09-39*	
		Friedrichshafen (1)	11-39	11-39*	
		Langenargen	01-40	11-42*	
		Wangen im Allgäu	08-41	10-41	
		Ravensburg (2)	09-41*	09-41*	
Duisberg	Curate	Leutkirch (1)	02-43	10-43	mild DC
Eberle, Willi	Vicar	Leutkirch (2)	04-39	10-43*	unknown
Elsenhans	Pastor	Tettnang	1932*	10-37	DC
Fleck	Curate	Friedrichshafen (3)	05-38*	05-38*	unknown
Frick	Curate	Friedrichshafen (3)	N/A	N/A	unknown

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Fritz, Theodor	Curate	Friedrichshafen (3)	08-36	03-37	unknown
Friz, Hans	Vicar	Ravensburg	02-39	02-39*	unknown
Gaiser	Pastor	Wangen im Allgäu	1932*	10-39	unknown
Gestrich, Wolfram	Pastor	Ravensburg (3)	12-39*	1942*	unknown
Groß, Albert	Curate	Bad Waldsee	02-42	03-43*	unknown
Haerberle, Hermann	Pastor	Weingarten (1)	10-44*	1946*	unknown
Hartmann, Max	Curate	Wangen im Allgäu	10-40	01-41	unknown
Hartmann, W	Pastor	Bad Waldsee	04-28	05-37	unknown
	Curate	Wilhelmsdorf	10-38*	11-42	
Hauß, Eugen	Curate	Friedrichshafen (3)	05-38*	06-38	unknown
Hauser, Theophil	Curate	Wangen im Allgäu	11-38	10-40*	unknown
Herrlinger, Werner	Curate	Leutkirch (2)	04-35*	11-36	unknown
		Leutkirch (1)	11-36	03-37*	
		Ravensburg (2)	N/A	N/A	
Hoffmann, Gottfried	Pastor	Bad Waldsee	08-37*	11-43	BK
Kaiser	Vicar	Weingarten (2)	12-39*	02-40*	
Keller, Adolf	Vicar	Weingarten (2)	05-39*	05-39	unknown
Kinzler	Pastor	Tettmang	08-38	12-45*	unknown
Knapp	Pastor	Atzenweiler	1932*	10-38*	unknown
Knebel	Pastor	Isny (1)	1932*	04-34	unknown
Koch, Rudolf	Curate	Bad Waldsee	05-43	01-44	unknown
	Pastor		01-44	01-44*	
Kommerell, Eugen	Superint.	Ravensburg (1)	1937	10-45	unknown
Kömer, Georg	Curate	Weingarten	1945	1945	unknown
Krauß, Wilhelm	Pastor	Ravensburg (3)	07-33*	12-39	DC
Lamparter, Helmut	Vicar	Ravensburg (3)	05-36	12-37	unknown
Lang, Martin	Curate	Friedrichshafen (3)	06-42*	03-43	unknown
Langbein, Fritz	Vicar	Weingarten	04-33*	06-33*	unknown
Lutz, Werner	Vicar	Friedrichshafen (2)	04-34	11-34*	unknown
Mauch, Werner	Vicar	Ravensburg	02-36	09-35	unknown
Mayer, Immanuel	Curate	Wälde-Winterbach	08-37*	08-37	unknown
Merkle	Curate	Wangen im Allgäu	08-41	08-41*	unknown
Metzger, Theodor	Pastor	Leutkirch (1)	1932*	11-36	BK
		Wangen im Allgäu	06-41	06-41*	
Metzkes	Curate	Langenargen	01-40	02-43	unknown
Nething, Fritz	Curate	Friedrichshafen (2)	04-44*	04-44*	unknown
Palm, Hermann	Pastor	Wilhelmsdorf	06-43	1945*	unknown
Reik, Rudolf	Vicar	Ravensburg (3)	05-39*	05-39*	unknown
		Weingarten (2)	12-39*	12-39	
Rudlaff	Curate	Wälde-Winterbach	12-45*	12-45*	unknown
Schäfer, Fritz	Pastor	Wangen im Allgäu	07-40	12-44*	unknown
Schieber, Hilmar	Pastor	Leutkirch (1)	09-37	12-44*	BK
Schlack, Gerhard	Pastor	Isny (1)	01-39	11-44*	unknown
Schlaich, Martin	Vicar	Friedrichshafen (2)	05-37	06-37	unknown
Schmid, Eugen	Pastor	Friedrichshafen (1)	10-39	07-44*	unknown

Name	Position	Parish	From	To	Church Politics
Schmidt, Ludwig	Pastor	Weingarten (1)	1932	08-44	unknown
Schubert, Georg	Vicar	Friedrichshafen (2)	1934	04-35	unknown
Siegle	Pastor	Isny (1)	04-35*	07-38	BK
	Curate		06-38	04-40	
Spellenberg, Immanuel	Pastor	Friedrichshafen (3)	04-40	03-44	unknown
Steger, Dr. Karl	Pastor	Friedrichshafen (2)	1929	01-48	DC
Ströle, Dr. Hermann	Superint.	Ravensburg (1)	1932*	1937	unknown
Thielicke, Dr. Helmut	Curate	Ravensburg (3)	1940	09-42	BK
Wacker	Pastor	Leutkirch (2)	1933*	1933*	unknown
Waldbaur	Pastor	Langenargen	12-42	08-44*	unknown
Warth	Curate	Langenargen	12-39*	12-39	unknown
Wertz, Adolf	Pastor	Isny (2)	01-35	1945*	unknown
Wirth, Hans	Curate	Leutkirch (2)	11-36	08-38	unknown
Wurster, Karl	Curate	Wangen im Allgäu	10-41	12-44*	unknown

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VI. 114 - Kriegsschäden bei Ev.-luth. Pfarramt, Sebnitz

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