

REBUILDING THE SOUL:
CHURCHES AND RELIGION IN BAVARIA, 1945-1960

A Dissertation presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by
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MAY 2007

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REBUILDING THE SOUL:
CHURCHES AND RELIGION IN BAVARIA, 1945-1960

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe thanks to a number of individuals and institutions whose help, guidance, support, and friendship made the research and writing of this dissertation possible.

Two grants from the German Academic Exchange Service allowed me to spend considerable time in Germany. The first enabled me to attend a summer seminar at the Universität Regensburg. This experience greatly improved my German language skills and kindled my deep love of Bavaria. The second allowed me to spend a year in various archives throughout Bavaria collecting the raw material that serves as the basis for this dissertation. For this support, I am eternally grateful.

The generosity of the German Academic Exchange Service is matched only by that of the German Historical Institute. The GHI funded two short-term trips to Germany that proved critically important. The first was to take part in a summer seminar that helped familiarize me with the intricacies of German handwritten documents and the inner workings of German repository facilities. I would particularly like to thank Astrid Eckert, now at Emory University. She made the seminar a true joy and has since provided excellent advice and a receptive ear. The second allowed me to take part in the Trans-Atlantic Doctoral Seminar in Freiburg. Comments from Richard Wetzells, Roger Chickering, and Ulrich Hebert made there have considerably improved large sections of this dissertation. I thank them for their insight.

In Germany, a number of people deserve special thanks for their help with my research. Prof. Dr. Werner Blessing of the Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg agreed to be my *Betreuer* and shared his wealth of knowledge about Bavarian Catholicism. He also

worked to get an article of mine published in the *Jahrbuch für fränkische Landesforschung*. For this, I am especially grateful.

My research took me to a number of church archives across Bavaria and I am deeply indebted to the staffs of all of them. A few in particular must be noted. Dr. Jurgen König and Frau Annamarie Müller at the *Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg* helped make my descent into the often bizarre, labyrinth like world of German archives a smooth one. Dr. Johannes Merz at the *Diözesanarchiv Würzburg* pointed me to a treasure trove of unexplored documents and subsequently worked to get an article of mine published in the *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblatt*. Finally, Susanne Kornacker at the *Erzbischöfliches Archiv München* shared her wealth of information about the papers of Cardinal Faulhaber.

A year abroad can be a lonely time, but this was certainly not the case for us. We were befriended by a number of people, whose kindness, friendship, and concern was very much appreciated. Special thanks go to Volker Eggert and Isa Karbstein for letting two people they barely knew use their apartment and all their belongings for a whole year while they were off traveling the world. Mike Kirstein got more than he bargained for when he agreed to help us get things turned on and off, but he did it all without complaint and greatly smoothed over a number of potentially disastrous problems. Frank and Eriko Kraus and Karl and Chie Schneeberg also proved to be the best of friends. All together they made our year in Germany an incredibly rich and rewarding experience.

In Missouri, I have been greatly assisted by several people. Jonathan Sperber, my *Doktorvater*, has always been available and provided the soundest of advice. Without his confidence and help this project, and indeed this historian, would have never gotten off

the ground. One could not ask for a better advisor. John Frymire also deserves considerable thanks for reading over an endless number of my papers and letters of application and making excellent suggestions on how to improve them. His buoyant spirit has made my time in Columbia much more enjoyable. Chad Ross has served as a mentor in all things and for this I am deeply appreciative. Nancy Taube, John Bullion, Richard Bienvenu, Huayin Li, John Wigger have provided considerable guidance and support. I would also like to thank Rick Lee, Lawrence Hatter, Clayton Douglas, and Kyle Miller for helping keep me sane.

Finally, I would like to thank the people who have affected my life most deeply. The unconditional love and support of my parents has given me the confidence to pursue my dreams despite all those who said they were foolish or impossible. They also had the strength to step back and let me find out for myself that many really were foolish or impossible. Both are essential. They have also given me much more. From my father I learned that no matter what our beliefs about religion may be, we must accept that it is an important part of life and that people can and do take it seriously. From my mother I learned how to write, how to organize, and how to see something through to its completion. All of these have proved tremendously valuable during the course of this project. My brother has always shown me an open ear and open mind. Over the course of a few excellent beers at a quiet Passau street cafe he helped me sort through things during a particularly difficult time in my life. I deeply value his friendship and love. Most of all, I would like to thank my wife and son, Michiyo and Martin, for all the joy, love, and happiness they so freely give. Without them there would be only this, and that is very little indeed.

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A NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Unless otherwise noted, all translations are the author's own. In general, literal translations have been avoided in favor of idiomatic English. The exceptions to this are official words, offices, and office holders. These are consistently translated the same.

In the case of the Catholic Church, the title *Pfarrer* is translated as "priest." Where it is attached to the name of a particular priest, "Father" is used. For example, *Pfarrer* Franz Rathgeber is rendered as "Father Franz Rathgeber" or simply "Father Rathgeber. To clearly denote the confessional distinction, the term *Pfarrer* when referring to Protestants is translated as "Pastor." Where it is attached to the name of a particular pastor, "Pastor" is used. *Kaplan* or *Vikar*, both referring to young (and sometimes not so young) clergymen who did not have a permanent parish of their own, has been translated as "Curate" when talking about Catholics and "Vicar" when mentioning Protestants.

Distinctions must also be drawn when translating the title *Dekan*. In both cases, these were agents of a structure of ecclesiastical administration. For Catholics, it will be translated as "Dean." For Protestants, it is rendered as "District Superintendent." The subsequent term *Dekanat* is translated as "deanery" in regards to the Catholic Church and "district" for the Protestant Church.

In the case of both the Catholic and Protestant churches, the term *Pfarramt* is translated as "Pastorate." It refers to the office of the clergy in a given parish. The *Pfarramt* is represented by the member of the clergy who currently serves the parish, but it is not subsumed in that particular individual. Others can be assigned to the position. Denominational markers are always provided to ensure clarity.

Throughout this study, the German word *Evangelisch* is translated as “Protestant” rather than as “Evangelical.” This is done in order to distinguish German *evangelisch* churches from “Evangelical” churches in the United States. Whereas in the United States “Evangelical” usually refers to churches affiliated with the conservative and fundamentalist wing of Protestant Christianity, in Germany *evangelisch* refers broadly to the three main Protestant traditions in Germany: Lutheran, Reformed and United. Given this work’s focus on Bavaria, “Protestant” here, unless otherwise noted, should always be understood as “Lutheran.” Evangelical churches in the American sense of the word did exist in Germany at this time, the so-called *Freikirchen*, but their presence was quite small. As such, they have been excluded.

The Protestant term *Landeskirche* is translated as “Established Church.” This is done to avoid the confusion that the more literal translation of “State Church” might bring. Since the collapse of the national and state monarchies in 1918, *Landeskirche* has not meant “state church” in the English speaking sense of the term. Rather, it refers simply to one of the 27 autonomous regional churches that make up the entirety of German Protestantism. The supreme governing body of the Bavarian established church, the *Landeskirchenrat*, is thus translated as “Established Church Council.” The head of this body, the *Landesbischof*, is translated simply as “Bishop.” As there were only two Protestant bishops during the time period under study, Hans Meiser and Hermann Dietzfelbinger, the risk of confusion with the Catholic bishops seems minimal. *Kirchenrat* or *Oberkirchenrat*, both referencing to those who sat on the Established Church Council, have simply been translated as “Established Church Council Member.” The exceptions to this are the officials known as *Kreisdekans*. These officials sat on the

Established Church Council, but their chief duty was to oversee all the various administrative districts in a given region. Thus, their title is translated as “Regional Superintendent.”

Within the Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy, the title *Domkapitular* is translated as “Cathedral Canon.” *Generalvikariat* is rendered as “Vicar General.” *Bischöfliches Ordinariat* is translated as “diocesan authorities” and *Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat* as “archdiocesan authorities.” In the notes, these are often shortened through the use of an abbreviation. For example, the *Bischöfliches Ordinariat Würzburg* is referenced to as BOW. The *Erzbischöfliches Ordinariat Bamberg* becomes EOB. Other abbreviations used in the notes are all referenced to in the bibliography.

The originals of many others terms are given in parentheses to help specialists.

A consistent pattern is also employed regarding biblical passages. The Douay-Rheims Bible is cited for all Catholic references to scripture. This is further denoted by the abbreviation DRB next to passages drawn from this bible. The Douay-Rheims Bible is a word for word translation of the Latin Vulgate Bible of St. Jerome. Pope Pius XII, head of the Catholic Church during much of the period under study, was a great devotee of the Latin Vulgate Bible and strongly encouraged its use. As such, the word for word translation provided by the Douay-Rheims Bible seems to be the best choice for all Catholic references to the bible. The Luther Bible is cited for all Protestant references to scripture. This is further denoted by the abbreviation LB next to passages drawn from this bible. Translations have been made by the author, often with reference to the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

INTRODUCTION

Following the July 3, 1945 Corpus Christi Procession, Cardinal Faulhaber wrote a pastoral letter that was later read aloud in all Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising and published in the religious press. In it, he stated: “The path of this year’s Corpus Christi Procession led through the rubble left by the last years of the war. Some streets, such as those in the area of the bishop’s residence, stretch on like a desert. The blessing from the four altars was thus nothing less than a blessing for construction (*Aufbausegen*). In more than one respect. Uncountable material worth has sunk into rubble: houses, hospitals, and churches. But spiritual buildings have also sunk into rubble and they too must be rebuilt; the temple of God in the soul, the pillars of faith, and moral order.”¹ In his end of the year letter for the clergy under his supervision, Protestant Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich spoke in similar terms. He wrote: “The year that is now ending was without question one of the most difficult and painful that our people has ever experienced. Cities with rich, thousand year histories and uncountable cultural wealth lie in ash and rubble. The process of rebuilding them has already begun. But more than just material and economic life has sunk into ruin. The spiritual lives of many lie amidst the rubble of these times as well. These must also be rebuilt.”²

Following World War II, the Catholic and Protestant churches argued that Germany must be reconstructed both materially and spiritually. The latter was equally important, if not more so, as the former. Germans, and Europeans as a whole, had fallen

¹ Quoted in Suzanne Kornacker, “Bausteine des geistigen Wiederaufbaus: Die Fronleichnamspzession 1945 in München und die Wiedereinweihung der Mariensäule,” *Beiträge zur altbayerischen Kirchengeschichte* 47 (2003): 281.

² LKAN KrD München 91: End of year letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich to all Prot. pastors in the region of Munich, Dec. 21, 1945.

away from God. They had succumbed to materialism. Materialism was seen as the foundation of all the “isms” of modern European society: secularism, modernism, liberalism, nationalism, racism, fascism, socialism, communism, industrialism, capitalism, etc... Despite the seeming diversity of these social forces, they were, according to the churches, linked by the fact that they made human beings and material reality the measure of all things. Humans felt that they no longer needed to put their trust in God. They were convinced that they controlled their own fate and that they could master the intricacies of the universe to create a paradise on Earth. This embrace of materialism undermined the Christian worldview and social order on which Germany, and indeed the entire west, had been built. In the eyes of the churches, and indeed many others, this process of erosion had inevitably led to the rise of National Socialism.

God could not tolerate the blasphemy that was so inherent in materialism forever. It was a violation of the first commandment. Thus, he swept out his mighty hand and punished the Germans. Both churches extensively developed the idea of world history as God’s judgment. The destruction of Germany in the war and the suffering that Germans now faced was God’s punishment for falling away from him. But God did not punish simply to punish. God had created the world and loved all the creatures, including humans, in it. Proof of this love, the churches pointed out again and again, was that he sent his son Jesus to be sacrificed on the cross for the redemption of all mankind. Thus, God’s punishment had a much deeper purpose. The rubble and ruins were there to show Germans the folly of their ways and help them come to the decision that they must put their trust solely in God. Much like the prodigal son, they must return to the house of the father. They must return to God. But the only way to return to the father was through the

son. Germans, the churches made clear, must return to Christ. They must rededicate their lives to Christ. Through this, Germany itself would be re-Christianized and the materialistic roots that had led to the rise of National Socialism would be torn out. A new era of true peace and real prosperity would dawn.

The Catholic and Protestant churches saw it as their mission to ensure that Germans did indeed return to Christ. This was their postwar calling. Bringing people to Christ had always been the mission of the churches. Their long but uneven battle with all the many manifestations of materialism throughout the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century has been well documented by historians.³ But the devastation brought on by Nazism gave this task a whole new sense of urgency. *Now* was the time for them to stand up and make their voices heard. *Now* was the moment of truth. God had allowed them to persevere in the face of relentless Nazi persecution and wartime destruction in order that they might undertake this mission. They could not fail due to a lack of effort. They had to use all their resources and influence to clearly and resolutely point the way to Christ. They had to spread the message of Christ so that all would know to put their faith in him. They had to work to create a political, legal, social, and cultural context that encouraged people to rededicate their life to Christ. They had to speak out if

³ Much of this work has focused on the Catholic Church's revival in the nineteenth century and its dogged anti-modernism. See, Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth Century Germany* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984). Margaret Lavinia Anderson, "Historiographical Review. The Limits of Secularization: On the Problem of Catholic Revival in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *The Historical Journal* 38, 3 (1995): 647-670. Johannes Horstmann and Antonius Liedhegener, *Konfession, Milieu, Moderne: Konzeptionelle Positionen und Kontroversen zur Geschichte von Katholizismus und Kirche im 19. und 10. Jahrhundert* (Katholische Akademie Schwert, 2001). Karl-Egon Loenne, "Literaturbericht: Katholizismusforschung," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26, Heft I (2000): 128-170. For works that examine both the Catholic and the Protestant Church, see Jonathan Sperber, "Kirchengeschichte or the Social and Cultural History of Religion?," *Neue Politische Literatur* 43, 1 (1998): 13-35. Joel Harrington and Helmut Smith, "Confessionalization, Community and State Building in Germany, 1555-1870," *Journal of Modern History* 69 (1997): 77-101. Wolfgang Schieder (ed.), *Religion und Gesellschaft im 19. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart, 1993). Werner Blessing, *Staat und Kirche in der Gesellschaft. Institutionelle Autorität und mentaler Wandel in Bayern während des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982).

Germans continued to fall away from God. In short, they had to rebuild the soul of Germany.

This dissertation is an examination of these efforts to bring about postwar Christian renewal. It shows how the churches articulated their calls for Germans to repent of their materialistic ways and rededicate themselves to Christ in the immediate postwar era. It then looks at how this common understanding that materialism was the real problem and that a return to Christ was the only solution provided both churches with shared convictions that would shape their interpretation of and responses to new developments such as the Cold War and the “Economic Miracle.” It moves on to argue that each church outlined concrete steps for how one actually went about returning to Christ. While each church approached them differently, they both developed three meat and potato religious fundamentals above all else. First, Germans must attend worship services on Sundays and participate in special religious events. Second, parents must provide their children with a Christian education. In particular, this centered on the need for children to attend confessional schools. Third, marriage, as the foundation of the family, must be grounded on “God’s ordained order.” These were the three pillars on which both churches sought to build a re-Christianized Germany. Through a more in-depth study of these three respective themes, it looks at how the churches sought to put their ideas about them into action. In all three cases, this proved difficult as the churches were divided between those who wanted to adapt religious norms and church practices to the modern world and those who sought to retain traditional ways.

From here, this work moves on to address the important issue of reception. Lurking behind any study of the churches and religion in postwar West Germany is an

awareness of what was to come. The 1960s and 70s saw worship service participation rates plummet. The number of people who officially cancelled their membership in one of the two main churches skyrocketed. West Germany society in general became, and has remained, very secularized. Churches in Germany today, both Catholic and Protestant, are attended by only a handful of elderly people. As tempting as it might be, we must not look at such results and proceed to say that the churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal were a complete failure. Nor can we argue that secularization is a kind of linear and unalterable process that affects everyone. Throughout the period under study, many people reaffirmed ties to their church and their religious ideals or built completely new ones. This fact alone should ward off any talk of failure or the "death" of religion. But there are obvious signs that despite all their influence and activity during the so-called years of restoration in the late 40s and 50s the churches' struggled to find traction for their message on the need to return to Christ. This was caused by several different factors that, when mixed together, produced a heady brew that undercut the churches' efforts and helped lead to the disaster of the 1960s and 70s. First, the churches were not operating in a society without preconditions. Many people had pre-existing ideological commitments that led them to be militantly anti-church or had long, if not always, been religiously indifferent. Second, experiences from the Nazi period brought once commonly accepted religious practices and norms into question. This was particularly the case for young people. Third, the churches were increasingly at odds with their erstwhile political allies over fundamental concerns. Fourth, the churches undermined their own efforts at Christian renewal in ways both subtle and profound.

Fifth, a rising ethos of consumption and individualism undercut the authority and influence of the churches.

Finally, this dissertation explores the consequences that these efforts at re-Christianization had for inter-confessional relations. The churches faced a difficult balancing act when it came to their dealings with one another. On the one hand, they, along with many of their followers, realized that the joint persecution experienced during the Nazi period demanded that they work together to rebuild Germany both morally and physically so as to ward off any future calamities. On the other hand, both were intimately involved in efforts to rejuvenate religious traditions and beliefs that were inherently antagonistic. While the former did help pave the way for the ecumenical breakthroughs of the 1960s, the latter ensured that the postwar period was filled with inter-confessional tension. This work should serve to complicate the all too commonly accepted view that in terms of confessional relations, the years from 1945-1960 were simply the inevitable slide towards Vatican II.⁴

Much has been written about the role of the churches in postwar West German society and culture. While many scholars have broached the theme of these efforts to bring about Christian renewal, few have done so in any kind of systematic fashion. Usually it is approached in one of three ways. First, there are those who concentrate on what the churches *did not* do after World War II. Namely, they did not in any real way come to terms with the Nazi past. They failed to address their complicity in, or at least reserved sympathy for, the rise of the Nazis. They did not examine how their ingrained

⁴ See, for example, Golo Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, trans. Marian Jackson (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1968), 502, 523-529. Dennis L. Bark and David R. Gress, *A History of West Germany, Vol. 1: From Shadow to Substance, 1945-1963* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 337-339. Lothar Kettenacker, *Germany since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1997), 127-129.

antisemitism helped create an atmosphere of indifference to the persecution and eventual murder of the Jews. Nor did they attempt to denazify their own ranks or support the official denazification process. In fact, they sharply protested Allied tribunals and undermined denazification proceedings through the indiscriminate issuance of testimonials of good Christian character, so-called “Persilscheine,” which washed whiter than even the famous detergent, to defendants in denazification trials.⁵ These failures have led some historians to conclude that re-Christianization was really just an empty exercise done to avoid a serious working through of the very recent past. Supposedly vague comments about a falling away from God and the need to return to Christ was a way to cover over and ward off real punishment for the horrendous crimes committed by ordinary German Christians.⁶

A second and larger group of scholars have seen the churches’ efforts to bring about postwar Christian renewal as simply one part of a much wider attempt by conservatives in general to reestablish a quasi-authoritarian, patriarchal order. Most of the works in this vein have focused on how the churches, along with other conservative groups, attempted to influence the legal and political development of the new state and push it in a very conservative direction.⁷ Usually such studies concentrate on the national level. Others have looked at how the churches put pressure on federal, state, and local

⁵ Clemens Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung 1945-1949. Die Last der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1989). Lutz Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik. Die Entnazifizierung am Beispiel Bayerns* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz: 1982), 84-88, 170-171, 495-496. Eike Wolgast, *Die Wahrnehmung des Dritten Reiches in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 2001). Vera Bücker, *Die Schuld Diskussion im deutschen Katholizismus nach 1945* (Bochum, 1989).

⁶ In particular, see Matthew Hockenos, *A Church Divided: German Protestants Confront the Nazi Past* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 2004).

⁷ For example, see Elizabeth Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make: Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999), 142-151. Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1993). Frederic Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1973).

governments to crack down on “smut and filth” (*Schmutz und Schund*) and loose morality.⁸

Finally, there are a precious few that dig even deeper and look at how the churches attempted to influence not only politics, but public opinion and the individual conscience as well. They also probe into what kind of response these efforts found. While there are some incredibly rich pieces of this nature, they all invariably focus on a single confession.⁹

These works are all well placed but in a variety of ways they all fall short. First, no matter how well-researched and thought provoking, studies on religion in Germany that concentrate on a single confession are all inherently problematic. Aside from the very simple fact that they by their very nature exclude the no doubt significant portion of the population that was not of that confession, they also present a somewhat distorted view of the confession they do study. The Reformation is a fundamental element of German history. It powerfully influenced the development of German society. Confession was a critical prism through which Germans viewed each other and the world. It was also a long standing source of bitterness in Germany. As the churches’ very ideas of what Christianity was were so different, efforts at re-Christianization on the part of one had major ramifications for the other. Thus, to provide any kind of deeper understanding

⁸ For example, see Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2002), 116-136; 228-232. See also, Heide Fehrenbach, *Cinema in Democratizing Germany: Reconstructing National Identity after Hitler* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1995), 84-5; 92-4; 131-134.

⁹ Perhaps the three best works on churches and religion in the postwar era are: Mark Ruff, *The Wayward Flock: Catholic Youth in Postwar West Germany, 1945-1965* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2005). Werner Blessing, “Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben...’ Kirche und Kirchenvolk in einer katholischen Region 1933-1949,” in Martin Broszat, Klaus Dietmar-Henke, and Hans Woller (eds.), *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform. Zur Sozialgeschichte des Umbruchs in Deutschland* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1988), 3-111. Martin Greschat, *Die evangelische Christenheit und die deutsche Geschichte nach 1945: Weichenstellungen in der Nachkriegszeit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002).

of this theme of postwar Christian renewal, it is necessary to engage in a bi-confessional study. One must compare and contrast how the two major churches defined re-Christianization and went about their plans to actualize it. One must look at the different responses they found from their adherents. One must also examine what consequences their actions had for inter-confessional relations. Only in this way can we attain more of a whole picture. This thesis is the first to proceed on such a course of study across specifically cross-confessional contexts.

Second, while many historians have looked extensively at *how* the churches didn't come to terms with the past, few have delved more deeply into the question of *why* they didn't. When they do, they usually argue that the churches were led by recalcitrant, dyed-in-the-wool nationalists and antisemites who didn't have the will to truly consider how their beliefs and sentiments had helped create a context that paved the way for the rise of Nazism and the destruction of the Jews. Moreover, they say that this lack of will led the churches to delude themselves with talk about resistance to National Socialism that was grounded on a fragmentary and tendentious recollection of the past. This is certainly true. In no way should one try to downplay the really shameful failure on the part of clergy members and top church officials, and ordinary believers as well, to truly consider their part in the rise of National Socialism and the Holocaust. It is indeed highly dubious that the churches, who loudly proclaimed themselves to be the moral conscience of Germany, did not own up to the past more responsibly. But mono-causal explanations such as this obscure as much as they reveal. Another factor must be taken into consideration as well. While one must not approve of or agree with their beliefs, one must accept that these churchmen approached the world from a perspective that was

deeply imbued with their religious convictions. They viewed questions of guilt, suffering, and what should be done in response to them through a religious framework. Only with this in mind can one really begin to understand *why* the churches responded as they did. In the churches' eyes, bringing people to Christ was the only way to make good on the past. It was the only way to get at the true cause, not just the symptoms, of the problem that had brought Hitler to power in the first place. The roots of materialism that led to the rise of the Nazis, and later the threats of Soviet communism and consumer capitalism, could only be pulled out if Germans rededicated their lives to Christ. In working to bring this about, the churches no doubt felt that they were doing more good than all the Allied tribunals and denazification trials put together.

Third, lumping the churches into the general category of "conservatives" is inherently problematic. The churches were indeed deeply conservative elements of West German society. However, their actions and goals were often at odds with other conservatives. This is particularly the case with their relationship to the nominally conservative CDU (*Christlich-Demokratische Union*) political party and its Bavarian sister party the CSU (*Christlich-sozialen Union*). One must always seek to determine where the churches' contributions to the shaping of the society of the Federal Republic were distinct and where they were part of general trends.

Finally, fruitful avenues for exploration are closed off when the churches' actions in the postwar are viewed solely from the perspective of their efforts to shape the legal and political development of the developing West German state. One author who wrote such a study pointed out himself the main problem of such an approach when he wrote

that it: "...admittedly leaves aside their major purpose."¹⁰ The churches were deeply involved in matters of politics and law. They exerted tremendous influence over the formation of the Federal Republic's early political and constitutional structure. However, they were also, and one might say mostly, religious bodies that were intimately concerned with the spiritual lives of ordinary individuals. Efforts to bring about postwar Christian renewal certainly did take place in the realm of both high and local politics. The churches did put tremendous pressure on all levels of government to crack down on what they deemed to be indecent material and licentiousness. But they centered mostly on influencing the opinions and actions of regular people. First and foremost, the churches sought to convince their adherents of the need to rededicate their lives to Christ. Policy decisions in Bonn or the state capitals were a critical part of this, but much of the work had to be done at a more tangible, usually local, level. Thus, a study that truly wants to examine the churches and their efforts to re-Christianize German society after World War II must examine not only politics but also the nitty-gritty connection between the churches and ordinary Germans. One must get a view "from the trenches" so to speak. This dissertation is the first to proceed on such a course of study. Much of the source material – letters from ordinary lay people, pastors, priests, and ecclesiastical officials, synod notes and tape-scripts, minutes from conferences and committee meetings, pamphlets, fliers, etc... – on which it is based has only recently been opened for research and is used here for the first time.

In order to provide this view from the front lines, it is necessary to concentrate on a single region. Given the size and complexity of what would become West Germany, it would be impossible to maintain the necessary focus in a nationally based study. For a

¹⁰ Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, x.

variety of reasons, some unforeseen at the time this project began, Bavaria is an excellent choice.¹¹ First, unlike almost all other states in postwar Germany (both East and West) Bavaria was not a post 1945 construction. In fact, it has been a state entity with roughly the same borders since the time of Napoleon.¹² Bavarians were loyal Germans, but they nevertheless retained a strong sense of being part of a self-contained unit with its own traditions, culture, and identity. The institutional shape of the two dominant churches in Bavaria reflected this sense of cultural cohesiveness. While the territories included in most German dioceses cut across state boundaries, those of the two archdioceses (Munich/Freising and Bamberg) and the five dioceses (Augsburg, Eichstätt, Passau, Regensburg, and Würzburg) that covered Bavaria were all contained within it.¹³ Moreover, the Bavarian (arch-)bishops had long collaborated together as a regional block under the leadership of the archbishop of Munich/Freising. The latter was invariably made a cardinal and, along with the archbishop of Cologne, was one of the natural leaders of the Catholic Church in Germany. Unlike the Catholic Church, with its rigid hierarchy that runs directly to the pope, German Protestantism was and continues to be characterized by fragmentation. The Evangelical Church in Germany (*Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland - EKD*) is merely a federation of independent established churches (*Landeskirchen*). During the period this study covers, the Evangelical Church in Germany consisted of twenty-seven such churches, which included Lutheran, Reformed,

¹¹ “Bavaria” refers throughout this study to the state right of the Rhine River. The Palatinate has been excluded.

¹² The only major change occurred in 1920 when the area around Coburg, a heavily Protestant district that had previously been part of the Thuringian region, became part of Bavaria. Max Spindler (ed.), *Handbuch für bayerischen Geschichte*, Vol. 4, Part 2 (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1975), 902.

¹³ There was one minor exception to this rule. Following the war, a small piece of the state of Thuringia in the Soviet zone (later the German Democratic Republic) came under the jurisdiction of the diocese of Würzburg. The Catholic presence in this traditionally Protestant area was very weak. In 1972, the Catholic eastern dioceses were reorganized and this territory was incorporated into the Diocese of Meissen.

and United denominations or traditions. While many states or regions were composed of territory from various different established churches, each with its own hierarchy and traditions, the entire state of Bavaria was and continues to be covered by only one: The Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria (*Die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*). As such, Bavaria provides a stable frame of political, cultural, and ecclesiastical reference from which one can see the interplay of long term trends and new developments.

Second, and most importantly, a bi-confessional study must obviously center on a region where the two confessions have a legitimate presence. Bavaria provides this. The following chart shows the percentage of the population in all seven of Bavaria's administrative districts that at least nominally belonged to one of the two main confessions in 1933, 1946, and 1950. An average for Bavaria as a whole is also included. These years have been chosen to provide a representative sample of the confessional demography of Bavaria in the pre-Nazi period, the chaotic years immediately following World War II, and the more stable period of the 1950s.¹⁴

Region	1933	1933	1946	1946	1950	1950
	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant	Catholic	Protestant
Upper Bavaria	89.46%	8.76%	82.34%	14.14%	82.83%	14.50%
Lower Bavaria	98.82%	1.08%	86.82%	12.23%	88.49%	10.87%

¹⁴ StJBB (*Statistisches Jahrbuch für Bayern*), Vol. 20 (1934), 9; StJBB, Vol. 23 (1947), 17; StJBB, Vol. 24 (1952), 24-25. As they comprised such a small percentage of the population, usually no more than 1-2%, Jews, members of the *Freikirchen*, and those with no religious affiliations are not listed here.

Upper Palatinate	92.22%	7.51%	83.77%	14.53%	85.59%	13.67%
Upper Franconia	39.65%	59.71%	43.67%	54.59%	44.01%	54.84%
Middle Franconia	28.48%	68.72%	35.58%	61.79%	35.84%	61.81%
Lower Franconia	80.65%	17.99%	78.21%	20.76%	78.45%	20.81%
Swabia	86.06%	13.19%	81.96%	16.07%	82.30%	16.23%
Bavaria	69.92%	28.68%	71.35%	26.46%	71.84%	26.53%

As one can clearly see in this chart, the confessional makeup of the Bavarian population as a whole remained quite consistent over time. Catholics comprised roughly 70 – 75% percent of the population and Protestants filled in the other 25 – 30%. While the state was predominantly Catholic, Protestantism had an established and legitimate presence. One notices, however, that members of the two main confessions were not evenly dispersed throughout the state. The southern portion of Bavaria (roughly comprising Upper and Lower Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate, and a large piece of Swabia) was overwhelmingly Catholic. The region of Lower Franconia in the northern part of Bavaria was also heavily Catholic, albeit not to the extent of the Catholic south. Sandwiched in-between these two was the Protestant corridor. It stretched from the northeast corner of Upper Franconia through a tiny portion of Upper Palatinate to parts of Lower Franconia. From there it dipped southward to Middle Franconia and the northwest

corner of Swabia. Here Protestants were in the majority. But even within this corridor there remained strong Catholic enclaves in the southwest corner of Upper Franconia, centering on Bamberg, and the southern portion of Middle Franconia, centering on Eichstätt. The overall confessional breakdown of the population and the way it was distributed throughout the state had a profound impact on the character of the churches, their relations with one another, and the nature of religious practice in Bavaria.

Feeling that they were surrounded by Catholics on all sides, Bavarian Protestants had long developed a kind of siege mentality. While pale when compared to Catholicism in the state, Protestantism in Bavaria was marked by stronger identity feelings and intensity of faith than that of other regions. Moreover, the Bavarian established church maintained a fervent attachment to orthodox Lutheranism. The church was run by a very conservative hierarchy that eschewed theological conflicts in the name of internal unity. Most representative of this was Bishop Hans Meiser. Appointed bishop of the Bavarian established church in 1933, Meiser was an arch-conservative orthodox Lutheran. Using the wide executive powers that were endowed to his position, Bishop Meiser dominated the church's agenda until his retirement in 1955. In matters of doctrine he broached no dissent. He was determined to maintain the established church's strong Lutheran character. Bavarian Protestantism, he believed, had to literally crackle with the defiant spirit of Luther if it was not to be overwhelmed by the Catholic sea that surrounded it.¹⁵ As one can no doubt guess, militant Lutheranism of this sort had some very significant consequences for both intra- and inter-confessional relations. In the postwar period, Meiser continually argued that those who subscribed to the more reform-minded vision

¹⁵ This discussion of Bishop Meiser and Bavarian Protestantism in general is based on: Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria, 1933-1945* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 156-159. See also, Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 44-45.

being extolled by the influential Calvinist theologian Karl Barth were undermining the Lutheran heritage and opening the door for re-Catholicization. It took very little action on the part of the Catholic Church to provoke a furious response from Meiser, and indeed Bavarian Protestants as a whole. Despite all his intransigence, Bishop Meiser was quite popular amongst Bavarian Protestants and proved to be a real source of unity for the church. In 1939, a pastor from Brandenburg perhaps best summed up this relationship when he stated: “Bavarians believe only in the Trinity and their bishop.”¹⁶

The situation for the Catholic Church and Catholics in general was quite different. As the church of the majority of the people in the state, the Catholic Church could exert itself in a much more muscular fashion in Bavaria than it could in the rest of Germany. It had indeed long wielded enormous influence over Bavarian politics and public opinion. Individual Catholics living in the overwhelmingly Catholic south and north were subsumed within a whole Catholic world. Usually this was replete with Catholic schools, Catholic libraries, Catholic associations, Catholic festivals and processions, and even Catholic way-signs. Catholics in diaspora areas such as those around Bamberg and Eichstätt clung to a particularly fervent brand of traditional Catholicism. The Catholic Church’s position of strength in Bavaria led it to pursue more aggressive policies that, when coupled with the very traditional nature of Bavarian Catholicism in general, had profound consequences for inter-confessional relations.

Third, Bavaria’s society and economy modernized rapidly during the postwar period and one can see in crystallized form many of the challenges that such a development posed for the churches and religious practice in general. In 1945, Bavaria

¹⁶ Quoted in Hermann Blendinger, *Aufbruch die Kirche in der Moderne: Die Evang.-Luth. Kirche in Bayern, 1945-1990* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2000), 54.

was probably the most backward of the states that would come to make up the Federal Republic. Much of Germany had undergone a process of rapid industrialization in the latter half of the nineteenth century, but Bavaria remained primarily agricultural even through the Nazi and war years. Stagnant Bavaria had in fact long been the poorest state in Germany west of the Oder and Neisse rivers. Bavarians were looked down upon by other Germans, not always unjustifiably, as ignorant country-bumpkins. Over the course of the next 25 years, Bavaria underwent a profound transformation. From a slow start, the Bavarian economy grew rapidly. That it grew was only to be expected given the general “economic miracle” experienced in West Germany during this period. But what was quite exceptional was that it caught up to and eventually exceeded those of the other West German states. This was not an inevitable outcome, but a development that was dependent on the actions of major companies such as Siemens and the tireless efforts of politicians such as Franz Josef Strauß. Largely due to their influence, this growth centered not on traditional industrial sectors such as coal and steel, which would eventually collapse in much of Europe and the United States in the 1960s and 70s, but on the real growth industries of the future: aerospace, “big research,” atomic sciences, and energy. Bavaria is now one of Germany’s richest and most technologically advanced states.

Naturally, this rapid economic transformation had profound social consequences that often cut against the efforts of the churches. Farmers began to leave their fields and villages to find better employment opportunities in the cities. Once there, it was harder for the churches to keep them from falling through the holes in the pastoral care net. Urbanization also brought members of the two confessions into closer contact with one

another and increased the likelihood of mixed confessional marriages. The latter was a topic of no small concern for both churches. Parents and politicians began to call for better educational opportunities for children so that they could compete in the new economy. This seriously undermined support for confessional schools; which often had children of all ages mixed into one room. With better jobs, more people had money and could afford to make consumer purchases or indulge in the offerings of mass media. Businesses looked to tap into this growing wealth and worked to stir up demand for their products. A bustling mass consumer society began to develop. Radio, cinema, magazines, and increased motorization (mostly motorcycles at this point) spread trends that had once only been seen in the cities to even the smallest and most remote of villages. A new ethic of consumption that was fundamentally at odds with many of the churches' core principles began to take root. Comparable works suggest that similar changes in society and culture were taking place across the Federal Republic. However, they show up in quite stark relief in Bavaria given the lack of pre-condition.

Fourth, through a study of the situation in Bavaria one gains an excellent view of the staggering dimensions of the refugee crisis after the war and the effects it had on religion and the churches. In Article XIII of the Potsdam Agreement, the Allies recognized that nationalist fervor in Eastern Europe and the negative consequences of impoverishment in a rump-Reich behind Soviet lines necessitated the transfer of the German population that remained in countries like Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Although their zones of occupation were already struggling, the United States and Great Britain agreed to an "orderly and humane" transfer of the German population that would

follow a fixed schedule once necessary preparations had been made.¹⁷ Families and community groups were supposed to be kept together and the expellees were to be sufficiently clothed, given rations for several days, and allowed to bring set amounts of luggage and cash with them.¹⁸

In reality, the situation proved to be anything but orderly and humane. Seeking revenge for the recent German invasion and fearful that the Allies would change their minds and withdraw their support from the expulsions, the Polish, Czech, and Hungarian governments quickly sent troops to round up Germans into assembly camps. Here, the Germans were often robbed of their belongings by customs officials before being put on trains for the various zones of occupation. Poorly organized transportation schedules and the fact that many able-bodied men were held back for use as forced labor led to massive displacement and broken families. In the end, roughly 15 million ethnic Germans from Silesia, Pommerania, East Brandenburg, East Prussia, the Sudetenland, and various areas of German settlement throughout Eastern and Southeastern Europe were expelled.¹⁹

Because of its position on the southeastern border of Germany, Bavaria received an exceptionally high number of these refugees, roughly 1.92 million according to the census of Sept. 1950.²⁰ Geographical location was not the only reason for the immense influx of refugees into Bavaria. The already critical housing situation in large cities and the densely populated Rhineland and Ruhr areas of Germany made the small towns and villages of the relatively untouched Bavarian countryside a tantalizing prospect for

¹⁷ Theodore Schieder (ed.), *Documents of the Expulsion of the German Population from Czechoslovakia*, trans. G.H. de Sausmarez. (Bonn: Fed. Ministry for Expellees, Refugees and War Victims, 1960), 108.

¹⁸“Im Telegramstil: Kurz Nachrichten” *NN*, Nov. 24, 1945.

¹⁹ Josef Foschepoth, “Potsdam und danach: Die Westmächte, Adenauer, und die Vertriebenen,” in Wolfgang Benz (ed.), *Die Vertreibung der Deutschen aus dem Osten* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1995), 99.

²⁰ Franz Bauer, “Aufnahme und Eingliederung der Flüchtlinge und Vertriebenen: Das Beispiel Bayern 1945-1950,” in *Ibid.*, 201.

settlement officials. Thus, Bavarian peasants bore a heavy share of the brunt of accommodating the newcomers.

While the arrival of the refugees had numerous consequences for Bavaria, one of the most striking was the way it upset pre-existing confessional divisions. As was shown in the statistics displayed earlier, the general confessional demographics of Bavaria changed very little despite the arrival of the refugees. This seems to have stemmed largely from the nature of the expulsion itself. Most refugees either fled or were transported by the quickest possible route to the Western zones. This meant that they proceeded on fairly direct east to west line. The main areas of German settlement that were to the east of Bavaria were the entirety of the Sudetenland and a portion of Silesia. As the former was almost exclusively Catholic and the latter mostly Protestant, the arrival of the inhabitants of these regions did not fundamentally reshape the overall religious composition of Bavaria. What it did do, however, was break down the structure of traditional confessional boundaries in the state. Despite the requests of leading church figures that the refugees be settled along confessional lines, their overwhelming number and very sudden appearance left the state with few choices in terms of settlement. They were simply sent wherever there was space. Because of this, Protestant communities developed literally overnight in the deeply Catholic south and north and Catholics found themselves in heavily Protestant regions such as Upper Franconia. This largely random dispersal caused the number of confessionally homogenous communities in Bavaria to fall from 1,424 prior to the war to just nine in 1946.²¹ Religion proved to be a serious source of conflict between refugees and natives and one will find numerous examples of

²¹ Ian Connor, "Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria 1945-1949," *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 20, Nr. 3 (July 1985): 405.

mutual religious intolerance cited in the pages that follow. But while the arrival of religiously dissimilar refugees often bred animosity, it also increased familiarity. With this came greater opportunities for inter-confessional cooperation and the increased likelihood that men and women of different confessional backgrounds would find each other and decide to get married.

Finally, this concentration on the churches and religious life in Bavaria is particularly relevant in light of the recent election of Benedict XVI. Joseph Ratzinger was born in the tiny village of Marktl am Inn in deep southeast Bavaria. He was raised in a very devout Catholic family and, along with his brother Georg, decided to enter the seminary. In 1951 the two were ordained into the priesthood by Cardinal Faulhaber of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising. Before moving on to an illustrious career that eventually led all the way to the papal throne, Joseph Ratzinger served as a humble curate in a small town outside of Munich.²² Thus, the formative years of the eventual head of the world's 1 billion Catholics were profoundly shaped by the Bavarian Catholic milieu. The rhetoric used in many of his current speeches and sermons is strikingly similar to that employed by Bavarian Catholic priests and officials in the 1940s and 1950s. In particular, one cannot help but draw parallels between his focus on the dangers of "relativism" and the heavy warnings about "materialism" that emanated from the church during the period under study.

Obviously, a study which is regionally based cannot claim to be "typical" of Germany as a whole. This is particularly the case with a region like Bavaria which possesses, as all Bavarians will most readily admit, so many singular characteristics. But

²² Joseph Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth: Christianity and the Catholic Church at the End of the Millennium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997), 60-64.

it would be overly simplistic to argue that the attitudes and efforts of both churches and the responses they found from ordinary laypeople outlined in the following chapters were solely the result of Bavarian particularism and peculiarity. One must indeed ask if there is such a thing as typicality. Studies that focus on the national level are often so generalized that they show scant regard for important regional or local nuances. Nor can regional studies that center on, for example, the Rhineland or Westphalia claim to be any more “typical” of Germany than one that focuses on Bavaria. No matter how a study is set up, one will no doubt find issues that were common to most if not the whole of Germany and those that had a distinctly regional flair. Rather than try to shackle it in artificial constraints of uniformity, historians should accept that society is marked at the same time by representativeness and diversity. Therefore, a regional study of Bavaria has relevance for other parts of Germany even if it cannot claim to be “typical” of Germany as a whole.

A word too must be said about the time frame of this work. Its beginning point is no doubt clear enough. The collapse of the Nazi dictatorship and the formal surrender of the German military in May 1945 marked the very clear end of one era and the beginning of what will be dubbed throughout this dissertation as the “postwar period” or the “postwar era.” After years of intense persecution, the churches could once again operate in relative freedom. This being said, one must be wary of the view that 1945 marked a kind of “Zero Hour” (*Stunde Null*) that wiped Germany’s slate clean. The massive destruction brought by Allied bombings, the end of the war, the revelation of the Holocaust, the presence of the occupation forces, and the division of Germany fundamentally altered all aspects of German society. In turn, these raised a host of new

problems that the churches had to deal with. But the past could not be simply pushed aside. The churches also had to come face to face with issues that were in some cases quite old. Long term trends towards secularization did not simply disappear in 1945. The experience of joint persecution at the hands of the Nazis did serve to fundamentally alter much of the confessional animosity that had played such a central role in German society and culture since the time of the Reformation and Counter Reformation, but in no way did it get rid of it. Moreover, despite all the talk emanating from the churches and Germans in general about a return to the situation of 1933, no such thing could happen. The twelve years of Nazi rule left an indelible mark on German society that showed up in a variety of different ways. All in all, one can say that Germany did begin anew in 1945, but it certainly did not do so with a clean slate.

The end point of the time period under study is a bit more problematic. 1960 did not see any groundbreaking events of the variety seen in 1945. Thus, one must readily admit that 1960 is something of an arbitrary division point. But this should not suggest that it was chosen simply because it makes a nice chronological bookend. The year 1960 is representative of the real spirit of change that marked the late 1950s and early 1960s. During this period, many West Germans became aware that their country was entering a period of transition. Much of what had been destroyed in World War II had finally been cleaned up and rebuilt. More importantly, a critical generational change loomed as those who had stood in positions of power since the end of the war, most notably Chancellor Adenauer, began to retire or die. Germans need only read the newspaper to see that similar changes were taking place in Great Britain, France, and the United States. The Catholic and Protestant churches were certainly not immune to any of this. Both

experienced a key generational shift during this very short span of years. The death of Pope Pius XII in Oct. 1958 and the subsequent election of Pope John XXIII is perhaps most representative of this, but one also sees a passing of the torch in the Catholic Church in Bavaria. Cardinal Wendel of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising died in 1960.²³ After almost 30 years of service, Archbishop Buchberger of the Diocese of Regensburg died in 1961.²⁴ Both were replaced by younger men of a much different bent. Several influential vicar generals either retired or died around this period as well.²⁵ The major generational shift in the Protestant Church occurred in 1955 and 1956. These years saw the retirement and subsequent death of Bishop Meiser.²⁶ While his successor, Hermann Dietzfelbinger, was by no means liberal, he was less of a militant Lutheran and conservative than Meiser. The strong influence of Meiser, however, continued on through the presence of conservative top officials such as Regional Superintendent Julius Schieder of Nuremberg. Schieder retired in late 1958 and several members of his generational cohort either became pensioners or died around the same time.

With this change, both churches began to move in different directions. This was perhaps most visible in the Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council, which Pope John XXIII opened in 1962, fundamentally altered all aspects of Catholic life. While less noticeable, the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria began to shed much of its

²³ A biographical reference guide to the Bavarian episcopate can be found in Heinz Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, Vol. 3 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002): xxiii-xxiv.

²⁴ Ibid. In 1950, Pope Pius XII honored Bishop Buchberger for his work on the profoundly influential *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* by bestowing him with the title of archbishop. This was an honorary title and in no way elevated the status of the Diocese of Regensburg; which remained a regular bishopric. In many circles, the *Lexikon* was known simply as the Buchberger.

²⁵ For example, Vinzenz Fuchs of Würzburg, who was the mentor of the very young Bishop Döpfner, served as vicar general of the diocese from 1945 until his retirement in 1961. Johannes Merz, "Die Würzburger Diözesansynode 1954 und ihr Beschluß zur Ehevorbereitung," *Würzburger Diözesangeschichtsblätter* 67 (2005): 373.

²⁶ "Abschied von Landesbischof D. Meiser," *NEG*, June 17, 1956.

conservatism in the 1960s. By the 1970s it had moved steadily towards the center-left, where it largely still stands today. While these seismic shifts were profoundly influenced by events that took place before 1960, they represented new developments and shaped new realities. As such, they deserve to be studied in their own right. They should not be tacked on to a study that addresses the postwar period.

As important as all of these factors are, it was another concern that sealed the decision to end this study in 1960. It is of a very practical nature, but it is extremely important. Out of very legitimate concerns for privacy or simply because their limited staff has not had the time to sort through the tons of material, all church archives in Bavaria either heavily restrict or completely deny access to archival documents from after 1960. Without these primary sources, it is impossible to make any kind of definitive statements about what transpired and why.

This dissertation is organized as follows. Chapter 1 examines the theoretical framework of the churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal through an analysis of sermons and pastoral letters read aloud in Bavarian churches throughout the period under study. It shows how each church defined materialism and spoke about the need to return to Christ. It also looks at how they answered this question of how does one return to Christ by developing the three main points of worship, education, and marriage that were discussed earlier. Chapters 2, 3, and 4 pick up each of these themes respectively and examine how the churches sought to put their ideas about them into action. They also illustrate the disagreements that arose within the churches over just how to go about doing this. These chapters will also point to some of the ramifications that the churches' actions in each of these three fields had on inter-confessional relations. Finally, they will

move on to examine the important issue of reception and draw some preliminary conclusions as to why more and more people began to slip out of the churches' orbits during this period. Chapter 5 further develops the consequences that these efforts at re-Christianization had for inter-confessional relations. It does so by examining two case studies: the Ochsenfurt sugar factory incident of June 28, 1953 and the dedication of the "whole" of Germany to the Virgin Mary by Cardinal Frings of Cologne at the national assembly of Catholics in Fulda on September 4, 1954. While both cases were more extreme examples of confessional animosity, they were certainly not isolated incidents. Rather, they illuminate much broader patterns of confessional relations and bring developments discussed in other chapters into sharper relief.

In sum, this dissertation describes how the churches conceptualized their perceived mission to bring Germans back to Christ and the difficulties that arose when they sought to bring these ideas to fruition at the most tangible levels of society. It tells of the often negative ramifications that such efforts had for inter-confessional relations. Finally, it shows that, while far from complete failures, the churches' efforts to rebuild the soul of Germany struggled to find traction in a society which was undergoing rapid cultural, social, and ideological change.

CHAPTER 1

Materialism and the Return to Christ: Catholic and Protestant Understandings of the Past and Plans for the Present as Seen in Sermons

When World War II finally came to an end in May 1945, dazed and frightened Bavarians began to slowly emerge from their makeshift bunkers and shuttered rooms. Destruction, hunger, homelessness, loss, uncertainty, and want confronted them everywhere. As the Allies celebrated their victory over Hitler's murderous regime, Germans as a whole began the difficult process of clearing the rubble, finding food, securing a place to live, locating loved ones, and procuring basic necessities. They also sought answers to some very unsettling questions. How did this happen? What should we do now? The Allies offered answers to such questions, but they were not the ones most Germans wanted to hear. Few wanted to be reminded that Germany had started the most destructive war in history or that Germans had killed millions of Jews, Slavs, and others from groups deemed "undesirable." Rather than listen to the Allies, many Germans turned to the only native social institutions that survived the war intact, the Catholic and Protestant churches. This should not be all that surprising. The churches had long provided moral guidance, pastoral care, and spiritual comfort. Who better for Germans to turn to in their hour of need? Nor was this a one way process. High church officials and regular clergy members from both confessions felt it only natural that they had a duty to give Christian answers to the tough questions of their parishioners.

This chapter will begin with an analysis of the answers that pastors, priests, and ecclesiastical officials from both churches provided. All sides made it clear that materialism was the root cause of Germany's descent into National Socialism. Materialism was nothing less than a falling away from God. It was the attempt to live

without God. It was the belief that humans must put their sole trust in the things and ideas of this world. While they disagreed sharply over how long materialism had been at work, both churches argued that it had steadily ripped apart the Christian based moral and social order of not only Germany, but the whole of Europe as well. Without this, Hitler could have never risen to power. For his part, God could not and would not accept the blasphemy that was such an inherent part of materialism. Germany's destruction in the war was his punishment for this grievous sin against the first commandment. But God did not punish simply to punish. Both churches assured the faithful that God loved them. Proof of this was the sacrifice of his son Jesus on the cross. God's punishment was a reminder that Germans must put their full faith in him. The rubble and ruins were there to show Germans the folly of their ways and help them come to the decision that they must return to God. The only way to do this, however, was to first return to Jesus Christ. Only through the son could one reach the father. Germans must rededicate their lives to Christ. Germany must be re-Christianized. This was the only real response to the rise of National Socialism and Germany's destruction in the war. Allied tribunal, denazification trials, and talk of collective guilt could only address the symptoms of Germany's sickness. They could do nothing to get at the real cause. Only through a return to Christ, the churches argued, could Germans pull out the materialistic roots that had led to this disaster.

This chapter will then move on to explore how these answers provided in the immediate postwar period carried over in the churches' interpretation of and responses to new developments such as the Cold War and the so-called "Economic Miracle." Showing the centrality of this concept of materialism, both churches argued that Soviet

communism and consumer capitalism were merely different branches on the same materialist tree. As such, the perceived dangers that they posed could only be met and overcome through a return to Christ. While circumstances changes dramatically in Bavaria during the fifteen years being studied here, the churches' focus on materialism and the need for individuals to rededicate their lives to Christ remained remarkably consistent.

This chapter will conclude with an examination of the churches' answers to the subsequent question: how does one return to Christ? In some ways, the churches were quite vague as to what they meant by this term. At the same time, they provided a concrete agenda that centered on bread and butter religious fundamentals. While historical and theological differences caused the churches to develop them differently, three core themes were stressed above all else. First, Germans must attend worship services on Sundays and special occasions. Second, parents must provide their children with a Christian education. In particular, this centered on the need to ensure that children attended confessional schools. Third, marriage, as the foundation of the family, must be grounded on God's ordained order. These were the three pillars on which both churches sought to rebuild the soul of Germany.

This discussion of the churches' understandings of the past and their post 1945 plans is based upon sermons and pastoral letters (*Hirtenbrief*) read aloud before congregations across the state of Bavaria. These sources have been almost completely overlooked in the historiography of the postwar period. In their quest to expose "What really happened," most historians have focused on private letters, the minutes of high level meetings, political debates, and policy reports. While some historians have looked

at individual sermons and pastoral letters to provide a sample of the churches' opinions on a given point, to date no one has produced a systematic study of what was being preached from German pulpits after 1945. This is a tragic shortcoming. The sources mentioned above are crucially important. They provide an excellent window from which to view the internal convictions and developments that drove each of the churches. They will serve as the base of the next four chapters of this dissertation. However, they are all hindered by a common problem of reach. Private letters are usually only read by one person. Policy reports might be read by many more, but their denseness often made them incomprehensible for average readers. Meetings included only a small circle of participants. Thus, few people would have known anything about what was being discussed in them.

Sermons and pastoral letters on the other hand were heard by hundreds, if not thousands. While both churches actively employed mass media outlets such as newspapers and radio programming to disseminate their message, sermons and pastoral letters read aloud during worship services remained their principal conduit to the laity. They served as a critical bridge over which the institutional churches could bring their message to people. Church leaders were well aware of this and spoke often about the importance of sermons. In a New Year's letter to all Protestant pastors in Bavaria, Bishop Meiser wrote: "As Protestant pastors, I need not remind you that the sermon is and must remain at the center of our mission. If our church ever denies this, it is no longer of any worth."¹ In a pastoral letter read aloud before every parish in the Diocese of Passau, Bishop Landersdorfer commented: "Alongside the actualization of the sacrifice of our lord Jesus Christ in the mass, the word of God as preached in the sermon

¹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 42: New Year's letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. pastors, Jan. 1954.

stands at the center of the life of the church.”² Comments such as these illustrate just how seriously the churches considered sermons and pastoral letters. This suggests that a detailed and systematic examination of these sources is absolutely essential for any kind of deeper understanding of how the churches replied to the unsettling questions raised by the end of World War II and subsequent developments in Germany.

As rich a source as they may be, sermons and pastoral letters do carry with them certain methodological concerns. First and foremost among these is the question of subjectivity. As local conditions were often dramatically different, themes developed at length by some clergy members and church officials were often different than those of their co-religionists. With so many individual sermons being given by men with vastly different backgrounds and opinions, how can one make any definitive statements about what was “being preached” in Bavaria during this period? To lessen the impact of this very real danger several angles of approach must be implemented. First, one must develop as large a source base as possible. While it is impossible to read every sermon given in postwar Bavaria, a broad and deep sampling of them provides a good overview of the general themes developed and how they changed over time. To this end, the author has amassed a selection that encompasses the works of high church officials and regular clergymen alike.³ The sermons studied here were given at churches in all different parts of Bavaria before a wide range of congregations. More importantly, they run the gamut

² “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1955,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 6, 1955): 11-16.

³ While sermons from regular clergymen at all levels of the churches’ hierarchies were examined, privacy laws regarding private papers (*Nachlässe*), where most sermons from ordinary clergymen are found, make it very difficult to produce a sample base that adequately reflects generational differences. Private papers deposited in church archives are usually sealed for anywhere from 25 to 50 years after the person’s *death*. The 1960’s and 70’s saw the death of large numbers of the older generation of clergymen who were active during the postwar period. Hence, sufficient time has passed for their private papers to be opened. The younger generation of clergymen who were active in the postwar period, or who were ordained after the war, largely lived on until the 1980’s and 90’s. Therefore, their papers are still sealed.

from pieces delivered on major holidays when attendance would have been high to those given on regular Sundays when average turnouts could be expected.

Second, one must pay particularly close attention to the major sermons and pastoral letters that were given by high ranking ecclesiastical officials each year. For example, every Catholic (arch-) bishop in Germany gave a sermon for New Years and wrote a pastoral care letter for the first Sunday of Lent. These were then published in the official gazette (*Amtsblatt*) and instructions were given for them to be read in every church in the diocese on a particular Sunday in lieu of the sermon. After this, diocesan newspapers would include copies of the works or extensive commentary about them in their pages.⁴ While never on such a regular basis, Bishops Meiser and Dietzfelbinger and several other senior officials also distributed pastoral letters to be read aloud in front of all parishes in the Protestant Church. Knowing that they had the maximum audience possible, church officials used such pastoral letters to make programmatic remarks. Through an examination of these major works, one finds a summation of what church leaders felt to be the major dangers of the time as well as comments about what direction they felt their church needed to move in.

Third, one must examine standardized sermon guides released by the institutional churches. In their official gazettes, all seven of the Catholic dioceses in Bavaria and the Protestant Lutheran Church of Bavaria printed sermon guides that covered practically every Sunday on the liturgical calendar. These were usually written by a regular member of the clergy and then submitted for approval to ecclesiastical officials before being

⁴ Many of the sermons and pastoral letters referenced to in this chapter were found in either an official gazette or in a Catholic or Protestant newspaper. To avoid lengthy explanations, only the titles of the articles will be given in the footnote. Unless otherwise noted, all such articles contain either a verbatim copy of a sermon or extensive commentary (usually with lengthy quotes) about it.

printed. They discussed the traditions surrounding each Sunday, gave an exegesis of the lection reading for that week, made comments about what the sermon should and should not contain, addressed questions concerning the proper delivery of the message, and provided other practical advice. Sermon guides of this nature were produced for two reasons. First, the institutional churches were deeply aware of the fact that their clergy were terribly overburdened. Providing sermon guides helped ease sermon preparation and opened up more time for pastoral care and religious education. Second, and more importantly, the hierarchies of both churches were very concerned about uniformity and right doctrine. Standardized sermon guides were a way to control the message being preached before the laity and ensure that clergymen knew the correct “line” to take on any given topic. Similarities between the themes developed in these sermon guides and those extolled in actual sermons suggest that pastors and priests used these works extensively. Thus, an examination of them enables us to draw more definite conclusions about what was being preached from Bavarian pulpits.

Perhaps the biggest question facing Germans at the end of World War II was how did this happen. Who or what had led to the rise of National Socialism and Germany’s subsequent destruction in the war? While the two churches were grounded upon vastly different theological beliefs and cultural traditions, one sees a striking degree of commonality in their responses to this question. Neither church developed any kind of personalist interpretation of the origins of Nazism. The now quite common, if ultimately incomplete, argument that Germans fell prey to Hitler’s charisma and seductive rhetoric at a time of severe economic and ideological crisis was hardly developed at all. In fact,

Hitler's name was seldom mentioned. Instead, both churches offered a more functionalist interpretation of the origins of National Socialism.

The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 and the disaster of World War II were seen as the inevitable result of the rise of materialism. Materialism was the foundation of all the “isms” of modern European society: secularism, liberalism, nationalism, racism, fascism, socialism, communism, industrialism, capitalism, etc... Despite the seeming diversity of these social forces, they were, according to the churches, linked by the fact that they made human beings and material reality the measure of all things. As Father Franz Rathgeber stated in a sermon at the very end of the war: “Many have said: ‘Good’ is that which serves the people!’ Not the will of God, but the well being of the people became the measure of what was good. Therefore, truth and justice could be abandoned when it was in the interest of the people.”⁵ Not only Germans, but Europeans as a whole thought that they could control their own fate and master the intricacies of the universe. In essence, they thought they could create a paradise on Earth and secure their own salvation. Catholic Dean Michael Schütz summed this up best when he commented in a sermon: “Technical developments, particularly in the nineteenth century, led wide circles of people to believe that they could transform this earthly world into paradise. For these people, the old God of belief was dead. Modern man replaced him with the God of technology.”⁶

⁵ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Apr. 29, 1945.

⁶ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon from Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, Oct. 26, 1947. See also, “Die zehn Gebote Gottes,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 2, 1947): 9-19. For similar rhetoric from Protestants, see also “Predigt-Meditation für das Fest der Himmelfahrt Christi,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Apr. 27, 1948): 32-4.

With insurance, social welfare, and rapid advances in the natural sciences, people no longer felt that they had to look to God for assistance. As Protestant District Superintendent Otto Dietz stated: “For years man believed that he was self sufficient, that he was independent, that he did not need any help. He loudly proclaimed that his daily bread was not the product of God’s grace, but of his own work and achievement.”⁷ Bishop Buchberger of Regensburg echoed this sentiment saying: “An unchristian world view led many to place the worth of strength and power above all else. They laid more weight on developing strong muscles and bones than on developing the spirit and a deep, pure soul...With repulsive arrogance they often loudly proclaimed that they trusted only their own strength, not the help of God.”⁸ Materialism, however, went even deeper. With the rise of secular ideologies such as liberalism, socialism, and fascism, wide circles of people no longer saw Christianity as the foundation for societal order. Released from the Christian restrictions and obligations that formed the basis of morality in the West, Germans, and Europeans as a whole, had given free reign to their natural evil. In his sermon mentioned above, Otto Dietz continued on to say: “Man believed in every worldview that taught of his own strength; from those that spoke of freedom to those that preached of blood and soil. These presumptuous dreams were his undoing. They made him forget that one reaps what one sows.”⁹

⁷ “Du, Herr, hilfst mir.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz on Oct. 5, 1947 in Bamberg. All sermons from District Superintendent Dietz are part of an unpublished collection held in the library of the Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg. See also, “Predigtmeditation zum Buß- und Betttag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Jan. 31, 1948).

⁸ “Predigt des H.H. Bischofs Michael bei der Jahresschlußfeier im Dom,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, Dec. 1945): no page numbers.

⁹ “Du, Herr, hilfst mir.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in St. Stephanuskirche in Bamberg, Oct. 5, 1947. See also, “Meditation zur Sylvester- und Neujahrspredigt,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Dec. 19, 1947): 110-111. For similar rhetoric from Catholics, see: AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon given by Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, July 7, 1946.

This theme of materialism was further developed through the context of familiar bible stories. Three in particular stand out: the Tower of Babel, the Prodigal Son, and the foolish man who built his house upon the sand. Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated: “Man has sought once again to build a Tower of Babel. He has once again attempted to stand on his own; to say that he does not need the grace of God. He has tried to storm the heavens by his own power alone. But to try and live without the grace of God means to live against God. God will not stand for this. He closes the gates of heaven and the Tower of Babel collapses in ruin on top of all of mankind.”¹⁰ In his 1947 pastoral letter for Lent, Cardinal Faulhaber stated: “In trying to build a new edifice without the leadership of Christ, the construction workers threw out the cornerstone. Without this, no social order can stand. The Third Reich in fact collapsed just like the Tower of Babel.”¹¹

The story of the Prodigal son (Luke 15, 11-32) was also used extensively. In a sermon from 1946, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated: “The world is full of sin. The world stacks sin upon sin. And what is the basis of all sin? The world is like the son who left his father’s house to strike out on his own. He quickly spent his inheritance on food, drink, and whores. And now, much like the son, we have been reduced to the level of tending pigs. We too desire to fill our stomachs with the pods that

¹⁰ “Die verborgene Hand.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Julius Schieder of Nuremberg on Dec. 31, 1947. All sermons of Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder referenced to in this work are part of a private collection of duplicates that was generously given to the author by Dr. König at the Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg. Original copies can be found in Schieder’s private papers at the archive. See also, “Pfingstmeditation über Apostelgeschichte 2, 1-13,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum to edition from May 24, 1946): no page numbers. See also, “Predigt-Meditation für das Fest der Himmelfahrt Christi,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Apr. 27, 1948): 32-4.

¹¹ A copy of this pastoral letter can be found in Heinz Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, Vol. 3 (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2002): 271-276. See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1946,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 14, 1946): 13-17.

only pigs eat.”¹² In a sermon from 1946, Catholic Dean Michael Schütz commented: “Much as the Prodigal Son wasted his inheritance once he left the house of his father, mankind’s Christian inheritance is wasted once it leaves the house of the Father...And just as the Prodigal Son collapsed quickly into poverty we have sunk into despair and want.”¹³

The story of the foolish man who built his house upon the sand (Matt. 7, 24-27) was also developed extensively. In a sermon given on Dec. 31, 1945 in Nuremberg, Father Franz Rathgeber stated: “In the raging storms of these times, we have seen how the fruit of so many peoples’ hard labor has collapsed. This is because their home, their direction and their hopes, were built only on the sand of human, earthly understanding.”¹⁴

Materialism had thus led to a “falling away from God (*Abfall von Gott*).” This term was endlessly repeated by pastors, priests, and ecclesiastical. As Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated: “An overriding concern for the things of this world led to a falling away from God; to an imprisonment in the self; to Satan’s servitude.”¹⁵ As Catholic Dean Michael Schütz stated: “Modern times have thrown out prayer and placed everything on the works of man. Seeking to play the role of redeemer,

¹² “Der Herr ist nahe!” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder on Dec. 22, 1946 in Nuremberg. See also “Entscheidung und Verheissung im Jahr 1946.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder on Dec. 31, 1945.

¹³ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon given by Dean Schütz on July 7, 1946.

¹⁴ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. For Protestants, see “Predigthilfe für den Altjahrsabend,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum, Dec. 1946): no page numbers.

¹⁵ “Was ist dem Menschen das Wichtigste?” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, September, 1945. See also, “Predigtmeditation zum Buß- und Betttag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Jan. 31, 1948). “Das ‘Ja’ Gottes.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, Jan. 27, 1946. “Schicke unsere Herzen zu!” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Otto Dietz, Jan. 19, 1947.

they have removed God...Here in this falling away from God lies the deepest roots of the enormous world tragedy in which mankind finds itself.”¹⁶

One must note here that the churches were not alone in making such arguments. As Maria Mitchell has pointed out in her excellent articles on the CDU in the immediate postwar years, Catholic and Protestant politicians from the party, and from its Bavarian sister party the CSU, also spoke at great length about the evils of materialism and how it had pushed German society towards 1933. This overarching focus on materialism, she argues, helped bridge many of the ideological divides that had previously hindered the development of a bi-confessional party.¹⁷

The churches pointed out that materialism of this sort was nothing new. It had been undermining the Christian world view for quite some time. This process of erosion had inevitably led to the rise of Nazism. As Father Franz Rathgeber put it in a sermon from late April 1945, “Had this faith in man’s power alone, this rejection of the will of God, not cleared the way, National Socialism could have never come to power.”¹⁸ In a sermon from September 1945, Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder commented: “The belief that man can live without God’s help is certainly not new. It has long infected the

¹⁶ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon from Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, Oct. 26, 1947. See also, “Predigt des H.H. Bischofs Michael bei der Jahresschlußfeier im Dom,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, Dec. 1945). Verena von Wiczlinski, *Kirche in Trümmern? Krieg und Zusammenbruch 1945 in der Berichterstattung von Pfarrern des Bistums Würzburg* (Würzburg: Echter, 2005): 127.

¹⁷ Maria Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945-1949,” *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June, 1995): 278-308. See also, Maria Mitchell, “‘Antimaterialism’ in Early German Christian Democracy,” in Thomas Kselman and Joseph Buttigieg (eds.), *European Christian Democracy: Historical Legacies and Comparative Perspectives* (South Bend: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 2003): 164-198.

¹⁸ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Apr. 29, 1945.

Christian West (das *christliche Abendland*); weakening it; preparing the way for the disasters we have experienced.”¹⁹

While representatives from both confessions may have agreed that materialism had been at work for a long time, just how long was the source of much debate. Many looked to the Enlightenment as the beginning of this process. Bishop Buchberger perhaps best summed up the Catholic Church’s long tradition of anti-modernism when he stated in a New Year’s sermon: “The program of the liberty, equality, and fraternity of all men has been proclaimed as gospel for the last two hundred years. In reality, however, it has pushed us further in the opposite direction. It has put oppression and slavery in the place of freedom. It did so because it removed God’s authority and holy will from the governance of the world. This led some to become distant from the Lord. Others moved directly to godlessness or to a hatred of God. Either way, it led to a chasm of spiritual and economic nihilism and political despotism.”²⁰ Conservative Protestants, who were in the majority in the orthodox Lutheran established church of Bavaria, also condemned the Enlightenment. In their efforts to “demythologize the world,” the author of one Protestant sermon guide wrote, “Enlightenment thinkers and their spiritual progeny removed Christ from the center. When Christ is no longer the center, the hubris of power hungry man is released. He begins to build his own Tower of Babel.”²¹

¹⁹ “Jesus der Herr der Geschichte prägt Charakter.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, Sept. 1945.

²⁰ “Predigt des H.H. Bischofs im Dom zum Jahresschluß 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 11, 1949): 2-5. For other Catholic critiques of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution, see also: AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 28: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Mar. 31, 1946. “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1947,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 26, 1947): 5-10.

²¹ “Predigt-Meditation für das Fest der Himmelfahrt Christi,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Apr. 27, 1948): 32-4.

Others took a much longer view of the rise of materialism; tracing it all the way back to the Renaissance. In a sermon given in Bamberg on Pentecost in 1947, Apostolic Visitor (and later Apostolic Nuncio) Alois Muench spoke of the “great error of modern humanism.” “Since the time of the Renaissance,” he continued on, “this humanism has dethroned God and sought to put man in the place of God.”²² Protestants too pointed to the Renaissance as the origin of materialism’s rise. In a Protestant sermon guide for Reformation Day, the author wrote: “The slogan that man could live without God appeared before the year 1500, therefore before the Reformation, during the time of the so-called Renaissance. There many preached that man could do away with God. There one learned that man carried the divine in his breast; that he must develop what lies in his own soul and stay true only to himself. From this, a deadly germ entered the Christian West. In the 20th century, this deadly germ burst forth.”²³

As one can well imagine, it was what happened next that caused the most controversy. What role did the Reformation play in the rise of materialism? Many Catholics argued that in breaking down the unity of the Christian faith the Reformation weakened the dam holding back the flood of materialism. Some did so quite explicitly. In a sermon from July 1946, Dean Michael Schütz went on at length about “the faith, the beauty, the warmth, and the clear principle” of what he called the “Christian Middle Ages.” “But,” he went on, “as you know, in the 16th century, many of our sons left the father’s house...The infallible teachings of the fathers of Christendom were cast away as spiritual slavery. An arbitrary faith was heralded as a freeing of the gospels. And what was the end result? A man from the streets was put on the throne and proclaimed as

²² “Christentum und Menschenwürde,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (June 1, 1947): 1.

²³ “Predigtmeditation zum Reformationsfest 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Oct. 15, 1948): 93-4.

infallible. The fatherly shepherd's staff was broken and replaced with a dictator's scepter."²⁴ Others made such arguments more implicitly. Many Catholics blamed Protestants for setting a bad example. Not only had they turned away from God, but they encouraged others to do so as well. Claiming that inherent weaknesses in Protestantism led many of its adherents to turn away from God and embrace materialism, Bishop Landersdorfer stated: "The example set by these other Christians has all too often led Catholics to lapse in fulfilling their basic Christian responsibilities."²⁵ In either case, the message was clear. In destroying the unity of the Christian faith, the Reformation had opened the door to the forces of materialism and allowed them to take root. Without this toehold, the Enlightenment and all the evils that had sprung from it would have been impossible.

Not surprisingly, Protestants rejected this interpretation of the Reformation. Rather than unleash the forces of materialism, the Reformation, they argued, had held them in check for centuries. Returning to the Reformation Day sermon guide mentioned above, the author continued on to state: "Why did it take so long for this germ, which was planted before 1500, to fully infect the Christian West. The answer is the Reformation. God sent the Reformation to keep the germ from spreading. Through it, God reached out his hand once again to this dying and sinful world. Luther's message was a call to atonement for the people who thought they could live without the grace of God."²⁶

²⁴ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon given by Dean Michael Schütz, July 7, 1946.

²⁵ "Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1952," *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 31, 1952): 11-15.

²⁶ "Predigtmeditation zum Reformationsfest 1948," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Oct. 15, 1948): 93-4. See also, "Luthers reformatorische Botschaft von der Freiheit und vom Frieden," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Jan. 30, 1946): 8-9. "Die evangelische Freiheit." Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg on Reformation Day 1947. "Reformation – Weltgeschichte, Endgeschichte, Heilsgeschichte." Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg on Reformation Day 1951.

Thus, while the churches could agree on certain points concerning the roots of materialism, they sharply disagreed about others. Fundamental differences of opinion such as these proved to be a major inhibitor to inter-confessional cooperation. They illustrate the depth of confessional animosity that was still very much alive in the postwar Germany. Nor was this reserved for purely ecclesiastical matters. As Maria Mitchell has pointed out, an overarching focus on the evils of materialism did help to encourage inter-confessional cooperation in the political realm. However, these very different interpretations of the roots of materialism remained as a major stumbling block. They left many, particularly Protestants, feeling isolated from the party.²⁷

Whatever its origins, materialism was seen by both churches as the root cause of National Socialism. It had paved the road that ran directly to 1933. It had gradually broken down the Christian worldview of not only Germans, but Europeans as a whole. This in turn had made them all too receptive to anti-Christian radicals such as Hitler.

God could not and would not tolerate the blasphemy that was such an inherent part of this materialism. The extensive focus on storms, floods, famine, and collapse in sermons from this period is telling. It speaks of the second part of the churches' talk about materialism: God's judgment. God's patience was immeasurable, but it was not without end. Justice had to be rendered. And rendered it had been. Both churches extensively developed the concept of world history as God's judgment. In a pastoral letter for Lent, Cardinal Faulhaber spoke of Judgment Day and how it was supposed to be heralded by lightning and trumpet blasts. While a great and mighty Judgment Day would come, God's judgment was also doled out through historical events. Faulhaber said:

²⁷ Maria Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945-1949," *The Journal of Modern History*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (June, 1995): 298-99.

“What we have lived through in the past years was world history as last judgment (*Weltgericht*)...Whosoever has eyes can see in our times the lightning of last judgment. Whosoever has ears can hear in our times the trumpet blasts of last judgment...The thunder of God’s judgment rolls like a storm above our heads.”²⁸ In a sermon from 1945, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated: “Today we understand that world history is last judgment; it is God’s judgment. Today we understand the words of Psalms 2 about what becomes of our plots and conspiracies. ‘He who sits in the heavens laughs; the Lord has them in derision. Then he will speak to them in his wrath, and terrify them in his fury’.”²⁹ God had punished the Germans for the greatest sin of modern man: falling away from God. As the author of one Protestant sermon guide put it: “The very recent destruction of Germany and the suffering that we now face should remind people of the hubris of mankind to think that it could bring about its own salvation. It should remind mankind of its helplessness before God.”³⁰

The subtle shift in nouns and pronouns that one sees in this quote and in much of the churches’ talk about materialism and the suffering caused by God’s judgment is telling. When speaking about materialism and “falling away from God,” both churches consistently used more open ended terms such as “the world” (*die Welt*); “mankind” (*die Menschheit* or *die Menschen*); “countless people” (*ungezählte Menschen*); or “they” (*sie*). This suggests that both churches wanted to make it clear that materialism had infected not

²⁸ “Die Weltgeschichte als Weltgericht.” Lent pastoral letter written by Cardinal Faulhaber, Feb. 9, 1947. A copy can be found in Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, 271-276. See also, AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon from Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, Oct. 26, 1947.

²⁹ “Warum wir in Notzeiten Gott vertrauen.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, Sept. 1945. The quoted bible verse is Psalms 2,5. See also, “Das ‘Ja’ Gottes.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder on Jan. 27, 1946 in Nuremberg. See also, “Schicke unsere Herzen zu!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz on Jan. 19, 1947 in Bamberg.

³⁰ “Predigthilfe für den Altjahrsabend,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum to issue from Dec. 12, 1946): no page numbers.

only Germany, but all of Europe and perhaps the whole world as well. Thus, there was nothing particularly German about this sin. It was universal. All had succumbed to it. Therefore, other nations and peoples should not attempt to judge Germany for its shortcomings. They were just as guilty as Germany and the Germans.

When the topic shifted to suffering, the language of pastors, priests, and church officials all became very specific. Here, the focus was almost always on *we* and *our*. Again and again, one sees phrases such as: “our suffering” (*unser Leiden*); “our misery” (*unsere Not*); and “the suffering that we now face” (*der Leiden daß wir jetzt erfahren*). While materialism had been a universal phenomenon, suffering was uniquely German. Germans were the ones who had been bombed out. Germans were the ones starving. Germans were the ones being raped. Germans were the ones who had been expelled. The seemingly logical next question of why God had specifically punished the Germans for sins that were universal was neither raised nor answered.

Amidst all this talk about German suffering, one hears little about the suffering of others. In fact, one finds hardly any mention at all of the tremendous suffering *caused* by the Germans. From these sermons alone, one would hardly know that Germany had started World War II and that Germans had committed all manner of atrocities in it. When pastors, priests, and church officials did broach the topic they invariably employed vague terms and argued that it was the Nazis, not Germans, who had committed these crimes. Germans as a whole supposedly knew little of them. For example, in a message read aloud before all Protestant congregations in Bavaria in August 1946, Bishop Meiser, speaking on behalf of the Established Church Council and the Synod, stated: “Most knew nothing of the horrors and crimes committed in the name of the German people. The

spirit from which they stemmed is fully foreign to our people in its totality.”³¹ In a pastoral letter read aloud in all Catholic churches in Bavaria on July 22, 1945, the Bavarian bishops’ council stated: “The German people had little knowledge of the inhumanity that took place against mostly innocent people in the concentration camps.”³²

Even more noticeable is the striking absence of any specific talk about the persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust. In Catholic sermons, one finds hardly any mention of the Jews at all. When they were referenced to, it was almost invariably in the context of how the shortcomings of modern Christians paralleled the alleged shortcomings of the Jews. In a sermon from 1948, Cathedral Minister (*Domprediger*) Leo Maria Ort of Regensburg stated: “People have and continue to search for heaven in material and worldly things. That was the mistake of the Jews. They were looking for a kingdom of God on Earth; one that would fulfill the prophecies. They were looking for a worldly kingdom in the sense of David or Solomon.”³³

Protestants did address the Jews more frequently, but usually in the context of proselytism. On Luther’s old lection, the gospel reading for the tenth Sunday after Trinity Sunday was Luke 19, 41-48.³⁴ Jesus’ talk about the failure of the Jews to see the truth, his prophecy about the destruction of the temple, and his efforts to drive out the

³¹ “Kundgebung des Landesbischofs, des Landeskirchenamts und der Landessynode an die Gemeinden,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Aug. 16, 1946): 83-5.

³² A copy of this pastoral letter can be found in Ludwig Volk (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, Vol. 2 (Mainz: Matthias-Grünewald Verlag, 1978): 1080-84.

³³ BZAR OA 3752: Sermon given by Cathedral Preacher Father Leo Maria Ort of Regensburg, 1st Sunday of Advent, 1948.

³⁴ Luke 19, 41-48 (LB): “And when he drew near and saw the city (Jerusalem) he wept over it, saying, ‘Would that even today you knew the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. For the days shall come upon you, when your enemies will cast a trench about you and surround you, and hem you in on every side, and dash you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of our visitation.’ And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold, saying to them, ‘It is written, ‘My house shall be a house of prayer’; but you have made it a den of robbers.’ And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people sought to destroy him; but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people hung upon his words.”

money changers thus gave occasion to talk about what was still referred to as the “Jewish question (*Judenfrage*).” In a sermon guide from 1948 for this Sunday, Heinrich Riedel, a member of the Established Church Council, wrote: “The Jew did not pay heed to the redeemer in his midst; in fact he delivered Christ to his death. For this he was punished; cursed to wander the Earth for all time.”³⁵ Riedel went on to repeat a famous quote that Hans Meiser, now the bishop of Bavaria, had made in 1926. “The eternal Jew will always remain amongst the peoples of the world until the end of time. He does not die. We cannot free him from his curse. His fate is to remain without a home and without peace.” The curse that the Jews carried for refusing to accept Jesus as the Messiah could not be lifted. Riedel went on to make clear that Christians did still have a fundamental duty in regards to them. He stated: “On this Sunday we are reminded that this people (the Jews) remains among us; that we as Christians and as Germans still face the Jewish question.” This duty, however, was seen strictly in terms of evangelism. “The missionary responsibility of the church to the people of Israel must be proclaimed... The pastor must remind his parish at least once a year that God’s answer to the Jewish question is a call to join the evangelism work to the people of Israel.”³⁶ Quite simply, Jews had to be converted to Christianity. They had to hear the gospel. They had to be made aware that since the crucifixion of Christ, Christians had superseded the Jews as God’s chosen people. This was the only release from their endless suffering.³⁷

³⁵ “Predigtmeditation zum 10. Sonntag nach Trinitatis,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (July 22, 1948): 60-62.

³⁶ Comments such as these were made all throughout the postwar period. See, “Predigtmeditation zum 10. Sonntag nach Trinitatis,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (July 27, 1949): 73-4. See also, “Deutschland – wohin?” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder on the 10th Sunday after Trinity Sunday in 1955 (Aug. 14th) in Nuremberg.

³⁷ The work of German missionaries to the Jews and the overall lack of support that they found from the established churches, who refused to allocate funds for the mission, and ordinary laypeople is discussed in Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 135-70.

Thus, the only attention that the Jews received from the Protestant Church in the postwar era was as potential converts. The Holocaust and all the atrocities committed against the Jews *by* Germans in the very recent past were largely ignored. Traditional depictions of the Jews as a “cursed” people remained well established. Anti-Judaic comments such as those made by Bishop Meiser about how the Jews were always “amongst” the peoples of the world, and hence a subversive force as they were not “part” of any people, were referenced to quite openly. In light of this, one must conclude that despite all that had happened to the Jews during the Nazi period, the long legacy of antisemitism and anti-Judaism in the Christian tradition continued to influence attitudes within the church after 1945. Nor can this comment be reserved solely for the Protestant Church. Within both confessions, the number of people who devoted any serious time and energy to addressing how Christian anti-Judaism and antisemitism had created a context in which the Nazis could launch their campaign of terror against the Jews was incredibly small. Even fewer showed any inclination to examine how this anti-Judaism and antisemitism had led the institutional churches and ordinary lay people to show tremendous complacency toward the plight of Jews during the Nazi period.

From the perspective of the twenty-first century, attitudes such as these are unacceptable. It is indeed offensive that the churches, who loudly proclaimed themselves to be the moral conscience of Germany, said so little about the tremendous suffering that Germans had brought not only to the Jews but to the whole of Europe. In no way should one attempt to excuse such negligence. What we must do, however, is understand why the churches responded as they did. Why did they focus solely on the suffering of the Germans? Why didn't they engage in a more critical process of self-reflection about the

crimes committed by Germans in the very recent past and encourage their adherents to do the same? In the interaction of three elements one can begin to see an answer. They include: a general lack of will to reckon with the past, a self-identity that stressed resistance, and religiously based understandings of suffering and what should result from it.

In deeply conservative Bavaria, as in much of Germany, the will to engage the past more honestly was sorely lacking. Few seem to have been in the mood for self-criticism. With starvation, destruction, homelessness, poverty, and need all around, it was all too simple to focus solely on the depravation experienced by Germans. Feelings of victimization were widespread and these were picked up and encouraged by the churches through all their talk about German misery and suffering. Moreover, many top officials and ordinary clergymen from both churches, most of whom experienced the Third Reich as mature adults, failed to examine their empathy for the Nazis' nationalist, antisemitic, and authoritarian agenda. Unwilling to recant many of their deeply held convictions despite the mountain of corpses that attested to their destructive power, some would even go so far as to argue that the Allies were guilty of many of the same crimes that Germans were now being charged with.³⁸ The extent to which this unthinking spirit of self-pity influenced the churches and German society as a whole can be seen in the treatment of the few people who did call for a more open reckoning with the past. For example, Dr. Martin Niemöller, a fiery pastor from Berlin who had spent 1937-45 in a concentration camp for his opposition to the Nazis and later sought to break the silence about the crimes committed by Germans and the church's share of responsibility for the

³⁸ Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 55-62.

persecution of the Jews and the Holocaust, was marginalized and designated as pariah by not only the church hierarchy but ordinary lay people as well.³⁹

As it implied complicity, and thus guilt, self-criticism would have also contradicted the churches' self-identification as having been an essential part of the resistance to National Socialism. In the immediate postwar era, both churches spoke at great length about their resistance to the Nazis and the tremendous persecution that they and their adherents had suffered as a result. In the Catholic Church, this focus on resistance stemmed from the very top. Priests and church officials endlessly repeated Pope Pius XII's statement to the German bishops, "We (royal plural) know very well – and this is publicly acknowledged to your credit – that in dutiful observance of your office you withstood and resisted with complete conviction the insane teachings and methods of unbridled so-called 'Nationalism' and that you had the better part of your people at your side."⁴⁰

The pope's message served as justification for what had been said at lower levels since the very end of the war. In their first joint pastoral letter written after the war, which was read aloud in all Catholic churches in Bavaria on July 22, 1945, the Bavarian bishops stated: "From the very beginning, the German bishops, as you know, warned most seriously against the false teachings and false ways of National Socialism and always pointed out the terrible consequences that a war against belief, against Christianity and the church, against rights, against freedom, against truth inevitably

³⁹ Ibid. See in particular pages 55-62.

⁴⁰ A copy of this letter, sent on Nov. 1, 1945, can be found in Ludwig Volk (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, Vol. 2 (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1978): 818-825. As soon as it could be translated into German, this letter was read in full before all Catholic churches in Germany. See EAM NL Faulhaber 4303: Letter from Cardinal Faulhaber to all Bavarian (Arch-)Bishops, Dec. 18, 1945. This particular quote was marked off for special reference. It was later repeated in numerous sermons and pastoral letters. See, for example, "Fastenhirtenbrief 1947," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Feb. 13, 1947): 9-18.

brings.”⁴¹ Directly following this quote, the bishops moved on say that most Catholic laypeople had heard such calls and remained true to their Catholic principles. “Millions of brave Catholics, men and women, always stood by their bishops and, even in the last years of the war, courageously and with the utmost seriousness raised their voices to support them. They stood by their priests and helped them provide pastoral care amidst all the different emergencies and situations they had to face. To the end, they stood against the front of godlessness and against the attacks on faith, on prayer, and on the Catholic way of life and education. The majority of Catholics in Germany have suffered terribly in the war against Christ, faith, and the church, and they desired an end to this faith struggle (*Glaubenskampf*) as earnestly as they desired an end to the war.”⁴²

As priests and officials were well aware, just saying that the church had spoken out against National Socialism and that Catholics had stayed true to their principles was not enough. They also needed to provide proof of the church’s resistance credentials. They needed to show concrete examples. In the same pastoral letter mentioned above, the Bavarian bishops pointed to the 1937 papal letter “With burning concern (*Mit brennender Sorge*).” “In his letter ‘With burning concern,’ Holy Father Pius XI spoke in no uncertain terms about what National Socialism indeed was: ‘an arrogant falling away from Jesus Christ, the rejection of his teachings and his redemptive work, the cult of violence, the deification of race and blood, the undermining of human freedom and self-worth’.”⁴³ Reference to the priests and pious lay people who had been imprisoned or killed during the Nazi period provided even more proof of the church’s resistance. In a

⁴¹ A copy of this letter can be found in Ludwig Volk (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael von Faulhabers*, Vol. 2, 1080-1084.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

sermon from May 13, 1945, Bishop Buchberger spoke at great length about Cathedral Minister Dr. Johann Maier of Regensburg.⁴⁴ Maier was hung by Nazi authorities in the waning days of the war for his public comments about the futility of continued resistance. Buchberger said: “Maier’s great faith, his love for the endangered city of Regensburg, and his concern for its inhabitants led him to speak out to the people and for the people.” Buchberger closed his comments on Maier saying: “The mouth of the cathedral minister has been silenced, but his actions and his death preach on.” In his first pastoral letter for Lent after the war, Cardinal Faulhaber spoke of the hundreds of Catholic priests and pious laypeople who had been imprisoned or killed for speaking out against the Nazis.⁴⁵ He marveled at their tremendous faith, even in the face of certain death. He commented how a priest from the neighboring diocese of Augsburg “responded to his death sentence by making a witness to Christ the King in the courtroom itself.” Ordinary people had also committed truly heroic acts. He went on: “Women and girls put their life in danger to bring the necessary altar paraphernalia to imprisoned priests so that they could read the holy mass and dispense holy communion.” The church’s struggle to maintain Catholic schools and the outpourings of hostility from Catholic laypeople that accompanied state-led efforts to remove crucifixes from schools were also pointed to as concrete proof of resistance.⁴⁶ The message was clear. The Catholic Church and Catholics in general had

⁴⁴ “Ansprache des H.H. Bishofs beim Trauergottesdienst im Dom am 13. Mai 1945,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, May 1945): no page numbers. Similar comments were made by Father Leo Maria Ort (OFM), Maier’s successor, during his first sermon in the cathedral. See, BZAR OA 3752: Sermon entitled “Ich werde rufen” given by Father Leo Maria Ort, Aug. 5, 1945.

⁴⁵ A copy of this pastoral letter from Feb. 8, 1946, which was read aloud in all Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising on the first Sunday of Lent that year, can be found in Heinz Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Michael Von Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 100-106.

⁴⁶ See “Hirtenwort an die Eltern,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Oct. 7, 1947): 122-127. See also, “Kanzelverkündigung zum Schulsonntag 1949,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Addendum to Nr. 13, 1949): no page number.

done everything in their power to stand up against the Nazis. This resistance had simply been steamrolled by intense Nazi repression and violence.

Protestant pastors and officials also stressed that their church and their adherents had stood together and fought back against Nazi persecution. In the “Message to the Congregations,” read aloud in all Protestant churches in Germany in August 1945, leading Protestant officials from around the country, including Bishop Meiser from Bavaria, focused on resistance and Nazi repression. “Even when it meant suffering and death,” the statement assured, church leaders, pastors, and good Protestants alike had had the strength “to stand against injustice and the arbitrary use of power.”⁴⁷ This resistance, the message continued on, had been swept aside by the Nazis through the brutal misuse of state authority. “But churchmen were pushed into the remote sanctuaries of the church as if into a prison. Our people were separated from the church. The public was no longer allowed to hear its words; no one heard what was preached.” Similar comments were also made in the special announcement released by Bishop Meiser in August 1946 that was mentioned earlier. In it, he said: “We thank the pastors for staying true to their ordination vows through even the greatest of hardships... We thank the lay people for staying true to their church – even when it brought hostility, physical punishment, and material sacrifice to them.”⁴⁸

Protestant pastors also presented concrete examples of the church’s resistance to the Nazis. One might expect that there was a great deal of talk about the principled

⁴⁷ A translated copy of the “Message to the Congregations” can be found in Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, Appendix 3. This pastoral letter was the official statement released by the attendees of the famous Treysa conference held in July 1945. This was the first major meeting of top Protestant officials from around Germany after World War II.

⁴⁸ “Kundgebung des Landesbischofs, des Landeskirchenamts und der Landessynode an die Gemeinden,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Aug. 16, 1946): 83-5.

resistance of pastors like Martin Niemöller and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, their suffering at Dachau, or the murder of Bonhoeffer at the tail end of the war. This was not the case. In fact, they were hardly mentioned at all. This is not overly surprising seeing that Bonhoeffer came out of a different Protestant tradition and Niemöller was a thorn in the church's side after the war. Rather than these more problematic examples, Protestant churchmen from Bavaria focused on Bishop Meiser's fierce struggle in 1934 to preserve the independence of the established church and the way that Bavarian Protestants had rallied to his side and spoken out openly against the regime when he was placed under house arrest in October of that year.⁴⁹ In one sermon, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg commented: "Bishop Meiser's steady hand and his iron determination to stand up against injustice saved our beloved church in this its darkest hour...Loyal Protestants from around the state, particularly those from our city of Nuremberg, rallied to defend their beloved bishop against this unholy attack. How the people streamed to the churches to hear him preach when he was released."⁵⁰ Through their sermons on the church struggle of the mid-1930's, Protestant churchmen were emphasizing that they had resisted a complete takeover of the church by the Nazis and their allies in the church and continued to preach the word of God. In light of the Lutheran doctrine of two kingdoms, which stressed that the church must focus solely on its God-given commission to preach the gospel and administer the sacraments and leave politics to the state, this was, they believed, the appropriate response to Nazism. Their

⁴⁹ An extensive discussion of the highpoint of the Protestant church struggle in Bavaria can be found in Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 164-177

⁵⁰ "Falsche Lehre und rechtes Bekenntnis." Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Oct. 1945. See also, "Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch, gehalten in der St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach, Jan. 1946." All sermons from Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch are part of an unpublished collection held in the library of the Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg. See also, "Schicke unsere Herzen zu!" Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Jan. 19, 1947.

resistance was therefore not, and could never have been, against Nazi politics per se. Rather, it was against those who sought to interfere with a pastor's right and duty to preach the word of God and administer the sacraments. The Protestant Church had thus done all in its power to resist National Socialism. In their calls for the freeing of Bishop Meiser, the majority of Protestants had shown their support for this resistance.

Like all self-identities, this talk of resistance was partly based on fact and partly based on myth. The churches and a certainly not insignificant number of their adherents had stood up to the Nazis on numerous occasions. Some of the Nazis' most stinging setbacks came when they attacked the churches and traditional religious practices.⁵¹ Hundreds of pastors, priests, and pious laypeople were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and even killed for speaking out against the regime. None of this can or should be denied. But one must also accept that the churches' extensive talk about how they had resisted National Socialism from the outset and how the majority of their adherents had stood by them in these efforts rested upon a fragmentary and tendentious remembrance of events in the very recent past. While Catholic bishops may have talked about their dire warnings concerning the evils of National Socialism, they conveniently forgot their quite open hatred of the Weimar Republic and their deeply divided reactions to Hitler's ascension to power.⁵² In their first pastoral letter after the war, which was discussed earlier, the Bavarian bishops failed to mention that the citation used from the papal letter "With burning concern" was not an actual quote from that letter. "With burning concern" was a very ambiguous document that never spoke in such certain terms. The bishops

⁵¹ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 156-223.

⁵² A mountain of documents showing these antipathies and divisions began to be released in the 1960s. See in particular, Ludwig Volk (ed.), *Der bayerische Episkopat und der Nationalsozialismus 1930-1934* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1965).

seem to have blended bits and pieces of it together with a liberal degree of poetic license.⁵³ While Protestant pastors and church officials may have lauded Bishop Meiser's actions in 1934, they neglected to mention that only one year earlier he had all pastors in Bavaria read a statement from the pulpit on Easter Sunday that lauded the new state. "A state," he wrote, "which brings into being again government according to God's Laws should, in doing so, be assured not only the applause but also the glad and active cooperation of the church. With gratitude and joy the church takes note that the new state bans blasphemy, assails immorality, establishes discipline and order, with a strong hand, while at the same time calling upon man to fear God, espousing the sanctity of marriage and Christian training for the young, bringing into honor again the deeds of our fathers and kindling in thousands of hearts, in place of disparagement, an ardent love of the people and the Fatherland."⁵⁴ Moreover, to say that Bavarian Protestants, who had been some of the earliest and most ardent supporters of National Socialism, had resisted the Nazis strained all credibility. Once again, it appears that the will to more honestly approach and work through the past simply was not there.

Despite this, one must accept that the churches' self-identification as being an essential part of the resistance to National Socialism was very real in the decade and a half following the war. Such beliefs intimately shaped the way that the churches approached the matter of self-criticism, and through this guilt. In their first joint pastoral letter after the war, which was read aloud in every Catholic church in Germany in November 1945, the German bishops largely dismissed the question of guilt. After talking at length about their own resistance to the Nazis and that of their priests and

⁵³ A copy of "With burning concern" (in both English and German) can be found on the Vatican website. www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xi/encyclicals/documents.

⁵⁴ Quoted and translated in Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 17.

laypeople, the bishops went on to say: “We profoundly deplore the fact that many Germans, even some from our own ranks, allowed themselves to be deceived by the false teachings of National Socialism, remained indifferent to the crimes against human freedom and human dignity; many by their attitude lent support to the crimes, many became criminals themselves.”⁵⁵ While it may have appealed to anti-Christians, non-Catholics, and a few wayward members of the Catholic flock, National Socialism, this pastoral letter made clear, was something foreign to German Catholicism. Catholics had been in the resistance. They had been solidly against Hitler and abhorred the crimes committed by the Nazis. As such, there could be no talk of the collective guilt of the German people. The concept was being touted by many representatives of the Allies to imply that *all* Germans who had not actively and publicly resisted the Nazis were guilty of the crimes committed during the Nazi era – whether they had actually participated in the crimes or not. At all levels of the church, from the Pope on down, one heard comments such as those made by Father Franz Rathgeber in a sermon from Aug. 1945: “It is completely unjust for anyone to contend today that the entire German people has been made guilty through the crimes committed by certain members of our population during the war.”⁵⁶

While it fundamentally dismissed the idea that all Germans bore collective guilt for the crimes committed during the Nazi period, the Catholic Church in no way argued that all Germans were innocent. All bore guilt in one way or another. This guilt was an individual matter. It was one that must be confessed before God rather than man. This

⁵⁵ Quoted and translated in Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 89.

⁵⁶ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 45: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Aug. 5, 1945. The extent to which this argument was made in the church at large is discussed in Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 91-2.

was not only on account of the fact that Catholics, as the church argued so vociferously, had been in the resistance, but because in Catholic theology the very idea of collective guilt is impossible. Guilt in its deepest sense is a matter between the individual and God. It can only be dealt with through the sacrament of penance.⁵⁷ Therefore, the Allied courts and the denazification trials were wrongheaded and ended only in brutal victor's justice and self-righteousness.⁵⁸ They could do little to address the real problems that had led to the rise of National Socialism. As Cardinal Faulhaber stated in his pastoral letter for Lent in 1947: "The world cannot be cleansed and renewed through courts of high format alone. It comes about when individuals are released from the burden of their sins and reconciled with God through a truly contrite confession."⁵⁹ And just what was their "burden" of sin? Certainly, some individuals had been complicit in the crimes committed by the Nazis. They must confess these sins and seek absolution. But these were a limited few. The real sin that burdened all German Catholics, as all the church's talk about materialism made clear, was the sin that burdened all Christians. This was the sin of falling away from God. Each and every person carried it individually. All had put too much faith in their own power. All had helped in ways both small and great to build a new Tower of Babel. If each and every person had been a better Christian, National Socialism would have never come to power in the first place. This is the sin for which God had brought down his wrath. Thus, the only self-criticism that was needed was an

⁵⁷ An excellent discussion of pre-Vatican II Catholic theology concerning guilt and repentance can be found in George Smith (ed.), *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (London: Burns and Oates, 1948): 919-954.

⁵⁸ The disgust with which Catholic officials viewed Allied tribunals and denazification and the extent to which they tried to undermine them has been discussed at length. See, Spotts, *The Churches and Politics*, 89-116. Wolgast, *Die Wahrnehmung*, 216-225. Lutz Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik*, 84-88, 170-171, 495-496.

⁵⁹ A copy of this pastoral letter can be found in Hürten, *Akten Kardinal Faulhaber* Vol. 3, 271-276.

individual one; one which addressed this more fundamental guilt that burdened all Christian people.

The Protestant Church looked at guilt from a much different light. Much like their counterparts in the Catholic Church, Protestant churchmen focused on the guilt of anti-Christian radicals and a few black sheep from their own flocks. Anti-Christian radicals were singled out easily enough. In the disgraced German Christian Movement they also had an excellent target to talk about the latter. The German Christians were a group of pro-Nazi Protestants that sought to synthesize Christianity with National Socialism and purge it of its Jewish influence.⁶⁰ Despite the fact that the German Christian movement never amassed much of a membership base in Bavaria, Protestant pastors stated in the immediate postwar era that it was German Christians, not *real* Protestants, “who turned Luther into a hero of German nationalism and nationalized the Reformation message.”⁶¹ It was German Christian pastors, not *real* Protestant pastors, who had praised Hitler from the pulpits. *Real* Protestants had stood up to the German Christians and their allies in the Nazi regime and suffered as a result. *Real* Protestants had stood by Bishop Meiser when German Christian leaders tried to meld the Bavarian established church into a larger, thoroughly German Christianized national church. Thus, it was German Christians who bore the chief burden of guilt for colluding with the Nazis. *Real* Protestants had been in the resistance.⁶²

⁶⁰ For an excellent discussion of the German Christian Movement, see Doris Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996).

⁶¹ Predigtmeditation zum Reformationsfest 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Oct. 15, 1948): 93-4. See also, “Luther und die gegenwärtige Stunde der Kirche,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Adendum, Jan. 30, 1946): no page numbers.

⁶² The extent to which the Protestant churches used the German Christian Movement as an alibi is discussed at length in Vollnhals, *Evangelische Kirche und Entnazifizierung*, 133-48. See also Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 207-212.

As convenient as this argument was, the Protestant Church did not simply dispose of the guilt question here and move on as the Catholic Church had done after mentioning its own black sheep. It could not. Unlike the Catholic Church, which is a unified body under the pope, the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria was part of a body of churches that made up the Protestant Church in Germany. This in turn was part of a body of churches that made up a broader, ecumenical World Council of Churches (WCC). After the war, several foreign churchmen who played key roles in the WCC wanted the churches to lead the way in bridging the gap between former enemies. The first step in this process, they believed, was for the German church leaders to acknowledge that they had made mistakes in the past and publicly repent. Without this, the German churches could not expect to be welcomed back into the world ecumenical movement. Nor could they expect any material or financial aid to come from Protestants outside of Germany. In October 1945, a delegation of WCC leaders traveled to Stuttgart to meet with German church leaders, including Bishop Meiser of Bavaria, to encourage this act of repentance. While the German church leaders were reluctant, the lobbying of the foreign church leaders led to the issuing of the now famous Stuttgart declaration of guilt on October 19, 1945.⁶³

Here, one must freely admit that the signers of this document never intended for it to be read aloud in church. No provisions were ever made for it to be distributed to local churches or the press. This was primarily a document designed for a foreign audience.

⁶³ The historiography on the Stuttgart declaration of guilt has long since passed the point of critical mass. For a more in-depth examination of it and the events surrounding its signing and reception, see Martin Greschat, *Die evangelische Christenheit und die deutsche Geschichte nach 1945: Weichenstellungen in der Nachkriegszeit* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2002). John Conway, "How Shall Nations Repent? The Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt, Oct. 1945," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38, no. 4 (Oct. 1987): 596-622. Gerhard Besier and Gerhard Sauter (eds.), *Wie Christen ihre Schuld bekennen: Die Stuttgarter Erklärung 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1985). Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 75-100.

However, it did find its way to the press and German newspapers covered it extensively. Almost everyone in Germany knew of its existence. Thus, even though it was not technically a sermon or pastoral letter, it must be discussed in this chapter. It is simply too important to ignore and many subsequent sermons given by Protestant pastors and church officials don't make sense without a knowledge of it.

The second paragraph of the Stuttgart declaration of guilt is crucial. It bears being cited in full: "We are all the more thankful for this visit (of the WCC delegation), as we know ourselves to be with our people in a great community of suffering, but also in a great solidarity of guilt. With great anguish we state: through us has endless suffering been brought to many peoples and countries. What we have often borne witness to before our congregations, we now declare in the name of the whole Church. We have for many years struggled in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit which found its terrible expression in the National Socialist regime of tyranny, but we accuse ourselves for not witnessing more courageously, for not praying more faithfully, for not believing more joyously, and for not loving more ardently."

One cannot help but notice the ordering of statements used in the Stuttgart declaration. Before mentioning guilt, the church leaders spoke of German suffering. Before charging themselves with neglected prayer and a lack of belief and love, they touted their resistance. Through this careful wording, the majority of German church leaders, a few reformers like Martin Niemöller who saw the document in much broader terms aside, wanted to stress to the outside world that Germans were suffering and in need of assistance. They also wanted to stress the fact that they had resisted the Nazis. Thus, the churches' guilt was not political. In no way were the German churches saying

that they and the German people as a whole were solely guilty for the ashes, ruins, and corpses that littered Europe. In their opinion, too many Germans had been in the resistance to make such an argument. Rather, the guilt they carried was religious. They had not borne witness to God with sufficient strength. This was their sin. This was what they had to seek atonement for. Nor were they alone in seeing the document this way. Many of the WCC delegates reassured their German hosts that this was how they interpreted it and this was how they would present it to the people in their own countries.⁶⁴

While they had a very clear agenda and audience in mind when they signed the Stuttgart declaration, German church leaders did not make them clear to their flocks. As mentioned earlier, the document was not formally released to the parishes or the laity. No official explanation of the declaration was provided. As such, when newspapers in Germany began to cover it, German Protestants were completely unprepared. A firestorm of controversy ensued. Protestants from around the country, no doubt remembering the repercussions of the Ebert government's signing of the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, which declared that Germany bore sole guilt for World War I, feared that the victorious Allies would use this admission to once again punish Germany. Moreover, the phrase "solidarity of guilt" sounded all too similar to "collective guilt" for many Germans. Hundreds of Bavarian Protestants sent letters to Bishop Meiser deploring the declaration and the possibly disastrous repercussions that might stem from it.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 81-2.

⁶⁵ A sampling of these letters can be found in LKAN NL Hans Meiser 227. Grassroots Protestant objections to the Stuttgart declaration of guilt are also discussed in Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 84-90.

This outpouring of hostility to the Stuttgart declaration demanded clarification. In Bishop Meiser's official response and in subsequent sermons from Protestant churchmen, one can see how pastors and church officials in Bavaria explained and further elaborated upon the interpretation of German guilt and the need for atonement that had been implied in the Stuttgart declaration. In an announcement that was read aloud in all Protestant churches in Bavaria in March 1946, Bishop Meiser stated: "The Stuttgart declaration is a statement by Christians to Christians. From the beginning it was thought of as such and those who received it (the WCC delegates) understood it as such. The Stuttgart declaration is a statement to God. It ties those who express it and those who accept it to the same responsibility: to enter into a conversation with God. The Stuttgart declaration does not therefore speak in the name of the German people or its government. The church has neither the possibility nor the right to speak in their name. It confesses before God and Christian brothers the guilt of the churches and the Christians who are members of its (Germany's) people. The Stuttgart declaration does not take a position on the question of political war guilt. It does not wish to weigh the guilt question before the forum of the world or history, but rather, as said before, before God. Before God, however, we must admit that through us much suffering has been brought to the world. To express this before our Christian brothers was not wrong. It is even less so because from the ecumenical side there was already a statement that spoke of the total co-guilt (*Gesamtmitschuld*) of the whole of Christendom."⁶⁶

In this interpretation of the Stuttgart declaration, Bishop Meiser was clearly drawing a line between political guilt and religious guilt. He recognized that in the

⁶⁶ "Bekanntmachungen. Zur Stuttgarter Erklärung des Rates der EKD," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Mar. 15, 1946): 29.

political sphere Germans had caused much suffering. But this sphere had been governed and controlled by the Nazis for the last 12 years. It was not the place of the church, in light of Luther's doctrine of two kingdoms, to even get involved in the political sphere. The church had done its part to resist the incursions of the Nazis into the religious sphere and ensured that the word of God was still preached and the sacraments administered. In this the church had had the support of the majority of its followers. The church and its adherents had thus resisted the Nazis in the manner appropriate with the teachings of their faith. Therefore, neither could be held politically accountable for the crimes committed by the Nazis.

However, the church and its adherents were present when the Nazis carried out their crimes and as such were part of the "solidarity of guilt" that covered all German people. This guilt was not political. Rather, it was religious. The church, and Protestants as a whole, had sinned against the First Commandment. They had not, as the Stuttgart declaration declared, witnessed more courageously, prayed more faithfully, believed more joyously, and loved more ardently. In short, they had fallen away from God. They had succumbed to the evils of materialism. They had trusted in themselves alone. They had contributed in a variety of different ways to the building of a new Tower of Babel. If they had been better Christians then the Nazis would have never come to power in the first place.

The church and its adherents were thus guilty of Christian disobedience, not political misdeeds. This was certainly not something that could or even should be tried before the "forum of the world." Meiser here was clearly making a none-too-subtle stab at the Allied tribunals and denazification trials; both of which he saw, as he would

express more openly in other forums, as blatant examples of victor's justice.⁶⁷ Rather, it was something for which the church and its adherents would have to stand trial before God. Nor were they the only ones. All Christians bore this sin. All Christians, no matter which country they came from, had fallen prey to materialism. All Christians needed to confess their sins before God and seek his forgiveness. All Christians needed to reorganize their lives so that God was at the center.

Meiser's interpretation was echoed by several pastors and church officials in sermons and sermon guides for the spring Day of Atonement and Prayer (*Buß- und Betttag*) that same month. In one sermon guide, Regional Superintendent Schieder stated: "So many today speak of guilt and atonement. Some talk of collective guilt, of total guilt; that justice must be handed down in a court of law. Some look at their neighbor and say: he, he is guilty. He must atone for his sins, not I. Such talk is not right, it is not just. It does not speak of true atonement. It speaks only of atonement before man. Real atonement comes before God. Real atonement comes when we confess to God that our own sin, no matter how little, has divided us from him; that it has caused us to lose faith in him. The destiny of our people, our church, and our personal destinies as well hang on whether or not we commit to this atonement."⁶⁸ In a sermon for the Day of Atonement and Prayer, Pastor Georg Bell stated: "The pharisees of this world speak of 'collective guilt.' They see only the guilt of others, not their own guilt. They do not realize that all

⁶⁷ Meiser's protests against these trials is discussed in Niethammer, *Die Mitläuferfabrik*, 84,87,171,494-495. See also, Wolgast, *Die Wahrnehmung*, 270-279.

⁶⁸ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 60: Sermon guide from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder for the Day of Atonement and Prayer, Mar. 1946.

are guilty. All have distanced themselves from God. All are called to reckon before the one true Lord of the world.”⁶⁹

Thus, much like their counterparts in the Catholic Church, Protestant officials and pastors stressed that their struggle against the Nazis invalidated any talk of collective guilt. They and their adherents had stood up to Hitler in the appropriate manner and with all available means. Many had paid for this resistance with their lives. Therefore, they were not responsible for the actual crimes committed by the Nazis. There was no need for self-criticism over such atrocities because they had not been involved in them.

At the very same time, however, both churches stressed that Christians did bear religious guilt for what had happened. They had sinned against God. They had trusted in their own power alone. They had fallen away from God. This is what allowed these crimes to happen in the first place. What was very different between the confessions was how they viewed this guilt. For Catholics, it was a strictly individual matter. While they shared this sin with their fellow co-religionists, each and every Catholic man and woman had to confess and seek atonement for his or her individual part of it. The Protestant Church on the other hand argued that Protestants shared this guilt together. They were all part of a “solidarity of guilt.” Moreover, the Protestant Church admitted that it, as an institutional body, had also committed this sin. No such admission came from the Catholic Church. As the mystical body of Christ, it deemed itself infallible.⁷⁰ These subtle differences may seem trivial, but they had major repercussions for inter-confessional relations. They encouraged the already widespread Catholic belief that

⁶⁹ LKAN NL Georg Bell 112: Sermon entitled “Gott ruft zur Buße” given by Pastor Georg Bell on the Day of Atonement and Prayer, Mar. 1946.

⁷⁰ This belief is grounded on Paul’s words from Ephesians 5, 27 (DRB): “That he might present to it himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish.” See also, Smith, *Teaching of the Catholic Church*, 711-715.

Protestants had all been Nazis. As will be illustrated in Chapter 5, sentiments such as these made cross-confessional work very difficult.

In spite of this, one can see how both churches presented a double argument. They and the majority of their followers had been in the resistance. Hence, they were not guilty of the crimes committed by the Nazis. They did not need to engage in political self-criticism because they had done what was right. At the very same time, they said that all Germans bore religious guilt, be it individual or shared, for falling away from God. But the burden of this religious guilt was by no means uniquely German. It burdened all Christian people. All were guilty. No one individual or nation should assume that they had the right to judge another. That only led to self-righteousness or brutal victor's justice. God was the sole judge of man. Thus, for both churches, the only critical self-reflection that needed to take place was one before God. It was one that addressed this religious guilt; which was the root cause of the rise of National Socialism. Getting people to undertake this self-examination was the calling of the churches. When combined with religious understandings of the destruction of Germany and the suffering that Germans now faced, this calling to address the "real" roots of National Socialism energized an already well established set of beliefs and shaped the churches' actions and inaction in the immediate postwar years. In turn, these beliefs defined their interpretation of and response to subsequent developments that unfolded in the period under study.

While the churches talked about Germany's destruction and German suffering in a variety of different ways, their understandings of them were at the most basic level religious in nature. Certainly, sermons on all the travails of Germany reflected and encouraged strong feelings of self-pity and victimization present in German society at

large. They were also a political weapon. Talk of German suffering was a way to lash out at the perceived injustices of the Allied occupation and to demand more material assistance. Whatever these uses and abuses, one must accept that pastors, priests, and church officials were religious people. As such, they understood Germany's suffering in very religious terms. Their talk of suffering had religious significance.

As discussed earlier, both churches made it clear that the utter destruction of Germany and the miserable conditions that Germans now faced was God's judgment. God had stretched out his hand through the workings of the world to punish the Germans for falling away from him. But God had not done this simply because he was wrathful. God was not some sadist who enjoyed seeing humans suffer. He did not like to measure out judgment against the fruit of his creation with such a heavy hand. God loved the world. God loved man. Proof of this love, both churches pointed out, was the sacrifice of his only son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of all humans. The author of one Protestant sermon guide for Christmas best summed up this central point when he said: "Through the offering of his son, God opened his whole love to mankind. God seized the misery of the world by its roots. God came into the poverty of the world to bring salvation."⁷¹ Moreover, God showed his love for the world even as he handed down justice for its sins. In his first pastoral letter for Lent after the war, Cardinal Faulhaber talked at length about the many blessings that had taken place during Germany's darkest hour. Families had been kept together despite all odds. Loved ones thought lost had returned. Lives had been turned around. These "countless miracles of God's love" stood

⁷¹ "Meditation zur Weihnachtspredigt 1947," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum, Dec. 8, 1947): no page numbers.

as testament that God did indeed love the world and that one should have faith in his goodness.⁷²

God did not punish out of hatred and wrath, but rather out of love. In the destruction of Germany, God was calling Germans to return to him. He was calling on them to put their full faith in him. This call was not a sudden whim on the part of God. He had sent out warnings before through his church; each of the confessions claiming this distinction as their own. Sadly, Germans had not listened. They had, along with Christians everywhere, fallen prey to the allures of materialism and felt that they did not have to pay heed to God's word. God thus took everything away in order for them to hear his call more clearly. He humbled the Germans so that they might know the truth.

In a sermon from the very end of the war, Father Franz Rathgeber summed this up for Catholics saying: "Because the people (*das Volk*) would not listen to the ample and serious warnings of the church, it had to experience first hand the consequences of this degradation. It had to see for itself what becomes of attempts to base all sense of worth and duty on human whims and not on responsibility before an all-powerful and all-judging God... This experience, and the difficult experiences that will certainly come to pass, is a learning period. Through it, the people learns of its grievances and sees what must be done. It sees that it must return to God."⁷³ District Superintendent Otto Dietz spoke for Protestant when he said: "Through the sea of blood and tears God has spoken to

⁷² A copy of this pastoral letter from Feb. 8, 1946 can be found in Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 101-106.

⁷³ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 45: Sermon from Father Franz Rathgeber given in Nuremberg, Apr. 25, 1945. For similar rhetoric in the Catholic Church, see: AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon given by Dean Michael Schütz on Oct. 26, 1947. "Die zehn Gebote Gottes," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 2, 1947): 9-19. "Predigt des H.H. Bischofs Michael bei der Jahresschlußfeier im Dom," *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, Dec. 1945): no page number. BZAR OA 3752: "Selig die Trauernden – denn sie werden getröstet werden!" Sermon given by Cathedral Minister Father Leo Maria Ort in Regensburg, Dec. 5, 1948.

us; he continues to speak to us. He shows us the folly of believing in the works of our own hands alone. But, as Paul states (referring to the Epistle reading for the week, Romans 5, 1-5) ‘we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us’.⁷⁴ God had thus reduced Germans to nothing so that they might find their way back to him; so that they might see that only through him could their hopes be realized.

One of the more common ways that both churches developed this theme of suffering as a call to return to God was through reference to the story of the prodigal son. “What,” Catholic Dean Michael Schütz asked in a sermon from 1946, “opened the eyes of the prodigal son? What awoke in him the desire to return to the father’s house? His misery, his terrible hunger! (emphasis original).”⁷⁵ In a sermon given on Dec. 31, 1945, Protestant Regional Superintendent Julius Schieder stated: “As he lay among the pigs, desiring only to fill his belly on the miserable pods that they ate, the prodigal son came to know what he must do. He must return to his father and say: ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me

⁷⁴ “Gottes Meiserstück.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg on Mar. 16, 1947. For similar rhetoric from other Protestant ministers, see “Predigthilfe für den Altjahrsabend,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Adendum, Dec. 12, 1946): no page numbers. “Predigtmeditation zum Altjahresabend und Neujahr,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Dec. 23, 1949): 144-45. “Warum wir in Notzeiten Gott vertrauen.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Sept., 1945. “Die Bergpredigt.” Five part sermon series given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Oct.- Nov., 1947.

⁷⁵ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon from Cath. Dean Michael Schütz given on July 7, 1946.

as one of your hired servants’.”⁷⁶ The none-too-subtle message was that Germans too must come to this realization. They too must return to the father’s house.

The story of the prodigal son worked well because it also showed what awaited those who did return. In his sermon mentioned above, Schieder continued on: “Despite the fact that he had sinned so grievously against his father, the father was overjoyed at his return. He put the best clothes on him. He killed the fatted calf for him... There you have a picture of the father. This is how God will treat you... with overwhelming and unending goodness.”⁷⁷ God bore no grudges. He would welcome any and all back with open arms and with much rejoicing. He would provide.

Returning to God was thus the only way to rectify the real problem that had led to National Socialism. But, as both churches made resolutely clear, the only way to return to the father was through the son. Using the gospel passage Matthew 11, 25-28⁷⁸, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated in one sermon: “What is special about this passage? It is a prayer of Jesus. Jesus speaks with God. And imperceptibly this prayer in one word turns towards humans, those who labor and are heavy laden. The central part of this prayer is this obedient, affectionately humble ‘Yes, father.’ The soul of the address to humans is the phrase ‘I will give you rest.’ From the obedient yes that Christ spoke to God comes God’s good and merciful yes to humans... These are terrible

⁷⁶ “Entscheidung und Verheissung im Jahr 1946.” Sermon given by Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ This reading comes from the *Thomasianische* lection for the third Sunday after Epiphany. This was one of five lections that the Protestant Church officially sanctioned. See “Perikopenordnung,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche rechts des Rheins* (Addendum, Apr. 26, 1946): no page numbers. Matt. 11, 25-28 (LB) reads: “At that time Jesus declared, ‘I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and Earth, that thou has hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; Yes, Father, for such was thy gracious will. All things have been delivered to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’”

times. God's hand lies heavily over Germany. From the catastrophe that our people have just lived through, we can hear the NO of God (emphasis original). And God has made sure that we could hear it. All the smart and powerful thought that they could secure their own salvation. They thought they could make heaven on Earth. God has said NO to all such beliefs. But we need this NO. We need this NO so that we can hear the holy YES of God. What is this YES? Jesus Christ. Only the son knows the father and anyone to whom the son chooses to reveal him. Only these will he give rest. Only through Jesus can we find salvation. Christ here is saying: Trust only in me, stay by my word and let everything else go as it will. Have patience. I will make your burdens light so that you can bear them with ease."

In his first pastoral letter for Lent after the war, Bishop Buchberger talked about how Catholics must seriously consider the suffering and obedience of Christ.⁷⁹ "Christ knew the pain and suffering that awaited him, but he accepted it without complaint. How he prayed: 'Father, if thou wilt, remove this chalice from me: but yet not my will, but thine be done.'⁸⁰ ...Only in his final agony did he cry out 'My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me. But even in this sea of suffering and in the face of death, his vision, full of surrender and love, was directed to the father in heaven, to whom he gave up his soul with the words: 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.'⁸¹ ...We too have drunk from the chalice of pain and suffering. We too suffer: from physical pain, from hunger, from cold, from loss, from shallow judgments. In the midst of our suffering, however, we must always keep our eyes on the Savior. We must see that even when he

⁷⁹ "Hirtenwort zum Beginn der hl. Fastenzeit 1946," *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, Feb. 1946): no page numbers.

⁸⁰ Luke 22: 42 (DRB).

⁸¹ Luke 23: 46 (DRB)

was bloodied, wearing a crown of thorns, and dying on the cross, Christ trusted only in God... It is a holy duty for all Christians to sympathize with the suffering of Christ, to pray for his patience, and to follow his bloody footsteps to the Lord.”

Christ alone offered salvation. One need only look around at the sea of rubble in Germany to see what happened to the works of man. Only Christ could rise above these ruins. Christ alone offered hope for Germany. To a people starving, to a people who, as one newspaper columnist quipped: ‘Needed only one letter in their cookbooks: K (for *Kartoffeln* (potatoes)),’ Christ provided real sustenance.⁸² Again and again, pastors, priests and ecclesiastical officials dismissed the beliefs of those who felt that relief packages and foodstuffs shipped in from overseas were the only answer to the rampant hunger in Germany. Material assistance from overseas, they made clear, was an absolute necessity. It was a moral imperative for the Allies to provide it. But it could do little to address Germany’s real hunger. This was a spiritual hunger. In a pastoral letter for Lent, Cardinal Faulhaber talked about Jesus’ time in the wilderness and how he must have hungered; physically hungered. The devil came to him in his hunger and stated: “If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become bread.” But he answered: “It is written, not in bread alone doth man live, but in every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God’.”⁸³ Germans too, Faulhaber warned, had been and were continuing to be tempted. They were tempted to focus solely on physical bread; to secure sustenance by their hands alone. But this bread did not satisfy. It led only to ruin. Just as Jesus, despite all his physical hunger, had resisted this temptation and focused on the sustenance that

⁸² “Kartoffel – von A bis Z,” *SZ*, July 19, 1946.

⁸³ A copy of this sermon from Feb. 8, 1948 can be found in Hürten (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers* Vol. 3, 350-55. The bible passage used is Matt. 4, 3-4 (DRB). For similar Catholic sermons, see: AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 28: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Mar. 31, 1946. BZAR OA 3752: Sermon given by Cathedral Minister Father Leo Maria Ort in Regensburg, Dec. 5, 1948.

came from the word of God, good Catholics must seek only the real bread of God. This bread was none other than Jesus Christ. Only Christ provided “true nourishment for the soul.” Faulhaber rammed home this point by citing John 6, 48-52 (DRB): “I am the bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the desert, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven; that if any man eat of it, he may not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give, is my flesh, for the life of the world.” Citing the same bible verse, Protestant District Superintendent Otto Dietz stated: “Food shipments from abroad alone cannot save us from this catastrophe. At best, they can only stave off the worst of this crisis of existence. Only the true bread of Christ can sustain us. Only it will give us the strength we need to survive these dark days.”⁸⁴

For a people who had just endured six years of war, Christ provided real peace. The author of one Protestant sermon guide for Epiphany wrote: “There has been so much fighting since 1914. People just want peace. The fighting has now stopped and many feel that they can finally live in peace. But this is not true peace. It is only the peace of man, and that will never last.” The author went on to recount the story of how not only King Herod but all of Jerusalem was troubled when the three wise pronounced that they had come to worship the king of the Jews. Humans all too often looked to worldly kingdoms and sided with them. They rejected the supernatural kingdom of Christ. They believed that only worldly kingdoms could bring peace and security. But they do not. As the author concluded: “The two stand opposite from one another: Jesus and Herod. Herod seized power for himself. Jesus was given power from above. Herod had to spill

⁸⁴ Du, Herr, hilfst mir.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Oct. 5, 1947.

blood to maintain his kingdom. Jesus spilled his own blood for his. But the chosen people still decided to stay by Herod. Only the three wise men understood Jesus' kingdom. They knew that it is not of this world. It is not a kingdom that needs to be defended by the arms of man. It is an inner kingdom. Therefore, only this kingdom will remain when all others fall. Only in this kingdom can one find true peace.”⁸⁵

Catholics developed this theme to an even greater extent. In his first pastoral letter for Lent after the war, Bishop Landersdorfer stated: “The desire for peace now is overwhelming. Mankind dreams of an eternal peace...But what is peace? When people talk of peace, they think usually of an end to fighting. But an end to fighting is by no means peace in its fullest sense. Fighting has been at an end for several months now, but we still do not have peace. After the First World War there was an end to fighting but no real peace. There was only a latent war; one whose outbreak was only a question of time.”⁸⁶ “Even the most just attempts to bring about peace with guns or politics,” the bishop went on, “will collapse sooner or later. **This is because they are not undergirded with the peace of Christ** (emphasis original). What is the peace of Christ? When the bishop celebrates holy mass, he begins by greeting the Christian people with the words: *Pax vobis!* – Peace be with you. This was the greeting of the risen Lord to his disciples. **This peace is the fruit of his suffering and death.** This is the peace that the world can never give...It is a peace with God. Through Christ's sacrifice **all humans have been made children of God.**” Only when Christians repented of their sins, the bishop concluded, could they truly realize the significance of this concept and the duties

⁸⁵ “Predigtmeditation zum Epiphaniastag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum, Dec. 1946): no page numbers. For similar talk from Protestants about Christ providing real peace, see “Entscheidung und Verheissung im Jahr 1946.” Sermon given by Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder, Dec. 31, 1945.

⁸⁶ “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1946,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 14, 1946): 13-17.

of Christian love and charity that stemmed from it. This in turn was the only basis on which a true peace could ever stand.⁸⁷

For a people whose whole world had been destroyed, Christ provided a solid foundation on which to rebuild. Both churches made ample reference to the other half of the story about the foolish man who built upon the sand. Citing Matt. 7, 24-25 (DRB), Father Franz Rathgeber stated: “The savior said: ‘Every one therefore that heareth these my words, and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and they beat upon that house, and it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.’ The savior here was not talking about man’s earthly dwellings, rather the system of his worldviews, his strivings, and his hopes. He is saying that only the will of God and his own example of suffering provide a foundation for these which will last for all eternity. As we have seen so clearly, those grounded on an earthly foundation cannot stand up to the storms of these times. They all collapse like a house built upon the sand.”⁸⁸ In a sermon from the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany, when this gospel reading was on one of the major Protestant lections, Regional Superintendent Koch stated: “Many today talk of pan-Europa; they talk of laws and councils. They say that these are the foundations on which Germany must be rebuilt... But these are all the creations of man. They are like a house built upon the sand. They cannot stand up against the rain, the floods, and the wind. Only on the foundation of Christ can we build

⁸⁷ For similar talk from Catholics about Christ providing real peace, see: “Ansprache des H.H. Bischofs beim Dankgottesdiens im Dom am 6. Mai 1945,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, May 1945): no page numbers. “Hirtenwort des bayerischen Episkopats, 28. Juni 1945.” In Volk (ed.), *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 2, 1080-1084.

⁸⁸ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. See also, “Unser Glaube als Quelle des Trostes,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 11, 1948): 4. “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1947,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 26, 1947): 5-10.

our future. Only when we hear the words of Christ and act upon them do we build a house that can stand forever.”⁸⁹

The churches thus provided a very clear answer to the question: What do we do now? Germans must return to Christ. The works of their own hands had led only to ruin. The Allies could not help them. All the things of this world either had or would crumble into dust. But Christ would never fail them. Endlessly repeated were Jesus’ words from John 14, 6: “I am the way, the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but by me.”⁹⁰ Germans were lost in a maze of destruction. They didn’t know which way to go or where to turn. They had lied or been lied to for so long that they no longer knew what to believe. They existed in a world full of death and loss. Only Christ could save them from this misery. Christ alone could rise above the rubble and lead the way into a bright new future. Christ alone offered the truth. Christ alone offered certainty amidst all the doubt and anxiety of the time. Christ alone brought life. But most importantly, Christ alone led to God. Only through Christ could Germans return to the father. Therefore, Germans must choose Christ. They must rededicate their lives to Christ. Only by following Christ’s example of complete trust in God could they find salvation. Only by following his footsteps, which were stained with the blood of sacrifice, could they find their way to the Lord. In his very first address after the war, Bishop Buchberger perhaps summed this up best when he said: “There is only one cure for the wounds and

⁸⁹ “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am 5. Sonntag n. Epiphania 1947.” This gospel reading was part of the New Eisenach lection. See also, “Stark werden.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Feb. 1946. “Christus – die Antwort!” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, May 1947.

⁹⁰ See “Entscheidung und Verheissung im Jahr 1946.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. See also, AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Apr. 29, 1945. “Die Kraft des Christentums für unsere Zeit,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 19, 1947): 2. Predigt des H.H. Bischofs Michael bei der Jahresschlußfeier im Dom,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, Dec. 1945).

suffering of our time, the return to Christ; in whom, as the apostle Paul said, ‘our life, our salvation, and our hope is grounded’.”⁹¹

This theme was extensively developed through sermons that described the postwar period as a time of decision. God had punished the Germans for falling away from him. God had taken everything away so that they might better see that they must repent of their wicked ways and return to him by following the example of Christ. But God could not force the Germans to do so. As Apostolic Visitor Muench stated in a sermon given in Bamberg: “God does not treat us like slaves or as machines and work tools. He gives us freedom; the greatest sign of our likeness with God (*Gottähnlichkeit*). He desires, however, that we use this freedom according to his will and laws.”⁹² God wanted the Germans, and all humans, to choose Christ and did everything in his power to encourage them to make that choice. But they had to come to this conclusion out of their own free will. Now was the time for Germans to decide. Did they continue down the path that led away from Christ, and thus away from God, or did they rededicate themselves to Christ and return to God? Citing the bible passage mentioned above, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder stated in a New Year’s sermon: “We must take note that Jesus did not say: I know the way, the truth, and the life. He said: I am the way, the truth, and the life. And this ‘I’ is a very strongly stated ‘I’. Exactly translated it means: I alone am this. Christ made it so clear. He gave only two choices. Now the decision is up to us. Either we accept Christ and capitulate before him or we stand

⁹¹ “Ansprache des H.H. Bischofs beim Dankgottesdienst im Dom am 6. Mai 1945,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Addendum, May 1945): no page numbers.

⁹² “Christentum und Menschenwürde,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (June 1, 1947): 1.

against Christ. With him there is only a very clear yes or a very clear no.”⁹³ In a sermon concerning Jesus’ Sermon the Mount, Cathedral Minister Ort of Regensburg stated: “The Sermon on the Mount calls on us to trust in God; to put away our faith in all other forces and powers and trust unconditionally in God. He who does not trust in God sins. He serves mammon. But Jesus made it clear: ‘No one can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon’.”⁹⁴ One could not be neutral. One had to either choose Christ or stand against him. The consequences of this decision were profound. If Germans put their full trust in Christ and returned to the house of the father they would be met just as the prodigal son had been; with feasting and rejoicing. God would provide for them. If they rejected Christ and continued to trust only in themselves they could expect God to hand down even greater punishment. Having seen the awesome power of God’s judgment first hand, Germans should realize that they must choose the former. They must return to Christ. This was the only real answer to the pressing question: what do we do now?

Both churches saw it as their fundamental mission to ensure that Germans came to this conclusion. This was their postwar calling. Bringing people to Christ had always been the mission of the churches. But the devastation brought on by Nazism gave this task a whole new sense of urgency. *Now* was the time for them to stand up and make

⁹³ “Entscheidung und Verheissung im Jahr 1946.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. See also, “Schicke unsere Herzen zu.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Jan. 19, 1947. “Predigthilfe für den Altjahrsabend,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum, Dec. 12, 1946); no page numbers. “Die Bergpredigt.” Five part series on the Sermon on the Mount given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Oct.-Nov., 1947.

⁹⁴ BZAR OA 3752: Sermon given by Cathedral Minister Leo Maria Ort in Regensburg, Sept. 1946. The bible passage used is Matt. 6, 24 (DRB). See also, AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945.

their voices heard. They had to clearly and resolutely point the way to Christ. They had to spread the message of Christ so that all would know to put their trust in him. They had to work with their political allies in the CDU/CSU, many of whom, at this early stage, shared their convictions, to help create a social, political, legal, and cultural context that encouraged people to rededicate their life to Christ.⁹⁵ They had to speak out if Germans continued to fall away from Christ. In short, they had to do everything in their power to bring Germans to Christ. They had to re-Christianize Germany; one soul at a time.

Clergy members and officials talked about this role of the church(es) in very confession specific ways. Protestants likened their church to a voice. The author of one sermon guide for New Year's expressed this through a focus on the opening lines of the gospel of Mark, which, citing the prophet Isaiah, stated: "the voice of one crying in the desert: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."⁹⁶ The author wrote: "What is the desert? The desert is wherever Christ is not present. A spiritual, bodily, moral, ethical, external and internal desert. This is our miserable situation. It is not simply the result of the war, rather it came long before."⁹⁷ Humans had been wandering around in this desert like sheep for years trying to find their own way out. But they never could. "There is no way through the desert except the way of the Lord. Without the Lord, man only walks in circles." The author went on: "The voice of one crying in the desert, who is this? It is none other than the church; ringing out the voice of Isaiah and John the Baptist as it has done in the past. It reminds us that we are indeed in the desert and that we are lost. It reminds us that we must prepare the way of the Lord because only Christ

⁹⁵ On the CDU's antimaterialism and its agenda of re-Christianization see Mitchell, "Materialism and Secularism," 304-305.

⁹⁶ Mark 1, 3 (LB)

⁹⁷ "Meditation zur Sylvester- und Neujahrspredigt," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Dec. 19, 1947): 110-111.

can lead us out of the desert; out of our misery.”⁹⁸ Regional Superintendent Schieder expressed this even clearer when he said: “The task of the church today is to more vigorously pursue the task for which it was called into being. This is to proclaim to the world: Honor Christ (emphasis original)! This is what the church is here for. Many today speak of the public will (*Offentlichkeitswillen*) of the church. This is a bad choice of words. The church is not here to simply try and push the world and play a role in it. Rather, it is to tirelessly tell the people of the world that they must honor Christ.”⁹⁹

Catholics on the other hand spoke of the church as a mother. As one curate in Munich stated: “The church is our mother. We are her children. She loves us. She is concerned for our happiness. When she speaks harsh words to us it is always done out of love. She wants us to follow the path that leads to true happiness. She wants us to learn from her. From her words and examples of loving Christ we learn to love Christ ourselves.”¹⁰⁰ As Dean Michael Schütz commented: “The church, our loving and holy mother, removes the binds from our eyes and shows us the salvation of the world: Jesus Christ.”¹⁰¹ Individual Catholics, it was made clear, must respond accordingly. In his sermon discussed above, the curate from Munich continued on: “And just as we would never speak badly against our mother or disobey her, hateful attacks against the church and its rules must never cross our lips. We do not help our mother through unloving

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ “Die verborgene Hand.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1948. See also, “Schicke unsere Herzen zu!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz, Jan. 19, 1947. “Wort des Herrn Landesbischofs zum Pfingstsonntag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (May 31, 1949): 53-4.

¹⁰⁰ EAM NL Faulhaber 9430: “Die katholische Kirche Jesu Christi.” Sermon given by Cath. Curate Schwital at St. Johann Church in Munich, 1947.

¹⁰¹ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon given by Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, July 7, 1946. See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1948,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 20, 1948): 1-5. “Predigt des H.H. Bischofs im Dom zum Jahresschluß 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 11, 1949): 2-5.

critique, rather through true love and obedience.”¹⁰² The Catholic Church’s description of itself was thus all-together more inclusive and binding than that of the Protestant Church. While the two often shared a similar focus, this much broader self-definition led the Catholic Church to tackle the task of re-Christianization in a fundamentally more aggressive way than the Protestant Church. It also no doubt played a role in causing the Catholic Church’s efforts to find a stronger echo, which will be illustrated later on in this dissertation, from ordinary Catholics than those of the Protestant Church did from regular Protestants.

This sense of calling and these religiously based understandings of Germany’s destruction and what should happen as a result of it fundamentally shaped the churches’ actions and inaction in the postwar period. Only with these in mind can one begin to comprehend why the churches talked so much about German suffering and so little about self-criticism and guilt in the political sense. While it was based on a faulty remembrance of the past and encouraged feelings of self-pity and victimization, the churches’ talk of German suffering was also grounded on fundamental religious convictions. The depravation that Germans now experienced was seen as punishment from God for falling away from him. It was his judgment for their religious guilt. This burden of sin was the “real” problem facing not only Germany, but the whole of Christendom. It was the embrace of materialism that had inevitably led to the rise of National Socialism. For this blasphemy, God had rendered his justice. But God did not punish simply to punish. His punishment had a deeper meaning and purpose. God took everything away from the Germans so that they might clearly understand their folly. In

¹⁰² EAM NL Faulhaber 9430: “Die katholische Kirche Jesu Christi.” Sermon given by Cath. Curate Schwital at St. Johann Church in Munich, 1947. See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief 1950,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 13, 1950): 29-34.

essence, it was a teaching moment. Through it, Germans could see how all the works of their own hands crumbled to dust when they were not founded upon God. It was a chance for them to examine their own lives to see where and how they had fallen away from God.

This, in the churches' eyes, was *the* critical self-reflection that truly needed to take place in postwar Germany. Wallowing in guilt over the crimes of the Nazis would do nothing. In the first place, the churches and Christians in general had, according to their own views of the past, resisted the Nazis and knew little of the crimes they had committed. Hence, they could not be held responsible for them. More importantly, it would only address the symptom; not the real problem. Only from this religious self-criticism could Germans come to grips with this real problem and realize what must be done. Amidst all their suffering, Germans could see, they must see, that their only option was to follow the example of the prodigal son and return to the house of the father. They must put their full faith in God. They must see that the only way to the father is through the son. As such, they needed to make a conscious decision to follow Christ's example of complete obedience to God. If Germans as a whole rededicated themselves to Christ, Germany would once again be placed on a strong Christian foundation. With this, the context that had led to National Socialism in the first place would be removed. The roots of materialism would be pulled up. In their work to get Germans to make this decision to return to Christ, the churches were no doubt convinced that they were doing more than all the Allied tribunals and denazification trials put together. These could only address the symptoms of Germany's problems. Worse still, they all too often disintegrated into self-righteousness or victor's justice. What Germany needed, in their minds, was real

denazification. Real denazification came when Germans rededicated their lives to Christ and put their complete trust in God. This was the only way to address the real cause of the Nazi's rise to power. This was Germany's only hope for salvation.

In addition to offering Christian answers to many of the disturbing questions asked at the end of the war, this common understanding that materialism was the real problem and that a return to Christ was the only solution provided both churches with shared convictions that would shape their responses to new developments such as the Cold War and the "Economic Miracle."

As the Nazi past began to lose some of its immediacy and the Cold War began to heat up, Catholic and Protestant sermons started to change. One sees a sharp increase in anti-communist rhetoric starting around 1949. In his New Year's sermon for 1949, Catholic Bishop Landersdorfer talked about how peace in the world seemed farther away than ever "because the Bolsheviks reject good will, because they stand in the service of the devil, and because they deny the only basis of true world peace: namely the return to God's peace; to Christ and his laws."¹⁰³ In a sermon from July 1950, Protestant Regional Superintendent Koch lambasted communists as "heathens who sit in darkness and serve the power of Satan." He went on to deplore that "through their recklessness in Korea the world has once again been brought to the cusp of war."¹⁰⁴ Noticeable in such comments is the explicit mention of the evils of communism and communists. This

¹⁰³ "Der Beitrag des Christen zum Weltfrieden," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1949): 6. See also, DAW NL Vitus Brander 38: "Der Ruf der Stunde: Zurück zur Innerlichkeit!" Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Canon Vitus Brander of Würzburg, Dec. 31, 1949. "Herr, hilf, daß wir sehen, daß wir gehen!," *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1949): 5. "Kraft zur Weltbefriedung und Welterneuerung," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 8, 1950): 2.

¹⁰⁴ "Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach am 7. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 23. Juli 1950." See also, "Unter dem 'Aber' Gottes." Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Dec. 31, 1948. "Heilige deine Gedankenwelt!" Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, Aug. 13, 1950.

stands in stark contrast to the euphemisms and circumlocutions that the churches generally used when discussing Nazism.

All of this talk about the evils of communism was hardly new. Both churches had long expressed a deep antipathy towards Marxism in general. In fact, this is what had led to their early support of or at least openness to the Nazis that was evidenced in Bishop Meiser's comments read aloud on Easter 1933. The churches' anti-communism did take on a new sense of urgency in light of events from 1949 - most notably the news that the Soviet Union had detonated an atomic weapon. But, their understanding of communism and their beliefs about how it must be challenged were in fact quite familiar.

Showing the flexibility of this concept of materialism, both churches argued that communism, and indeed Marxism in general, emerged from the same materialist base as National Socialism. The churches commonly referred to communism using terms such as worldview materialism (*weltanschauliche Materialismus*) or dialectical materialism (*dialektische Materialismus*). In his pastoral letter for Lent in 1950, Bishop Landersdorfer described this materialism when he said: "Worldview materialism says that we live only in the physical world. We are merely matter in motion. There is no life after death; nor are there any higher powers. Any feelings of spirituality that we might have are only a reaction of our bodies to material surroundings. They are false consciousness."¹⁰⁵ Protestant District Superintendent Otto Dietz commented: "Dialectical materialism sees the world and all of its creatures, including humans, as machines. It dethrones God. It undermines human dignity because it comprehends the individual solely as an atom of the mass. It undermines morality through the denial of an immortal soul and judgment upon death. It gives free reign to raw and brutal egoism

¹⁰⁵ "Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1950," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Feb. 2, 1950): 5-9.

through its focus on this life alone.”¹⁰⁶ Thus, communism was just a more extreme version of the falling away from God that had led to National Socialism. At heart, however, the two were the same thing. While the churches talked about them in quite different tones, a phenomenon that no doubt stemmed from a general lack of will to address the past more honestly, their view of them was quite similar. Communism and National Socialism were both examples of man’s attempt to do away with God and live solely by the works of his own hands. As such, communism was a major threat to the re-Christianized Germany that the churches were seeking to bring about. It must be challenged with all possible means.

The churches were not the only ones to draw this link between National Socialism and communism. Nor were they the only ones who felt that Germany must take up the “Christian” struggle against Soviet communism. The CDU and CSU defined themselves in opposition to the “collapsing materialism of Hitler’s Reich as well as the materialistic threat of extreme Marxism.”¹⁰⁷ Anti-Marxism became the primary derivative of the anti-materialism that had welded the parties’ confessional halves together in the first place. It fundamentally shaped the parties’ ideologies and policies throughout their long period of political dominance. Through this, it profoundly marked the consolidational era of the Federal Republic.¹⁰⁸

While the churches and politicians from the CDU/CSU may have agreed that communism stemmed from the same materialist roots as National Socialism and that it must be resisted, they profoundly disagreed over the best way to do this. Although there

¹⁰⁶ “Unter dem ‘Aber’ Gottes.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Dec. 31, 1948.

¹⁰⁷ Quoted and translated in Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism,” 306.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

were considerable differences of opinion, politicians within the two parties generally stressed rearmament and military integration with the west. Security, they argued, could only come under America's nuclear umbrella. Armed deterrence alone could bring about peace.¹⁰⁹ In the churches' eyes, these plans were doomed to fail. Germany had put its sole faith in weapons before and the consequences had been disastrous. Defense was important and necessary, but real peace and security could never come from weapons alone. Usually, they only escalated conflicts and brought the world ever closer to complete destruction. Moreover, these plans were just an extension of the same grievous error that had brought about communism in the first place. This was the sin of trusting in the works of one's own hands alone. In its own way, it was a falling away from God. It showed a lack of faith in God. As evidenced by the ruins that still littered the German landscape, God's patience for such blasphemy had grown thin. Justice would be rendered on all – godless communist and nominally Christian alike. Thus, there was only one solution. Germans must rededicate their lives to Christ. Soviet communism could only be faced and overcome if Germans followed Christ's example of complete obedience to God. West Germany, and the west in general, had to literally pulse with the spirit of Christianity. Only in Christ could true peace and security be found.

In his New Year's sermon for 1950, Catholic Cathedral Canon Vitus Brander of Würzburg chastised politicians and government officials saying: "Great statesmen play

¹⁰⁹ There was considerable debate within the CDU/CSU over how to best stand up to the Soviet Union. Much of this centered on West German rearmament and whether or not American atomic weapons could be stationed in West Germany. While there was considerable resistance to both of these propositions, in the end they became reality. See, Ulrich Albrecht, *Wiederaufrüstung der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1984). Arnold Sywottek, "Die Sowjetunion aus westdeutscher Sicht," in Gottfried Niedhart (ed.), *Der Westen und die Sowjetunion: Einstellung und Politik gegenüber der UdSSR in Europa und den USA* (Paderborn: C.H. Beck, 1996). Mark Cioc, *Pax Atomica: The Nuclear Defense Debate in West Germany during the Adenauer Era* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988).

with atomic weapons like children with small bottle rockets.”¹¹⁰ He continued on: “Diplomats cannot bring real peace to the world...The peace they bring is only a reservoir for more fighting. This is because they do not see what the greatest threat to peace really is. The real player behind the curtain of the world stage is Satan; the tempter from beginning to end.” Satan was the one who tempted humans to believe that they could live without God; that they need trust only in themselves. This is what generated conflict. Brander went on: “Satan is a spiritual power and thus can only be met by an even greater spiritual power. Christ, who triumphed over death itself, is this power. Christ is the victor. He is triumphant. Only in Christ can mankind find salvation and true peace.”¹¹¹ After his strong words about the evils of communism and how Bolsheviks undermined peace that were discussed earlier, Bishop Landersdorfer talked about how to reply to this threat: “A decisive question for all of us is what can the individual Christian do to bring about world peace. Should we support those who say that only weapons can bring world peace? That is certainly not the answer. Should we go out in to the world preaching the laws of Christ and attempt to bring the Bolsheviks to Christ? That will no doubt bring only indifference. All Christians must preach the laws of Christ and carry them out; but in their personal lives. Through their personal example, the world they live in is changed. This personal apostleship is an essential element of true Christianity.” Landersdorfer went on to conclude: “Today the church of God reaches every corner of the world. The number of Catholic Christians stands at over 300 million. If even only part of these millions of Catholics faithfully and lovingly fulfilled their duties, no power

¹¹⁰ DAW NL Vitus Brander 38: “Der Ruf der Stunde: Zurück zur Innerlichkeit!” Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Canon Vitus Brander, Dec. 31, 1949.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

on the earth, not even the diabolical power of Bolshevism, could endanger the peace that comes from Christ.”¹¹²

Protestants also talked about how the threat of Soviet communism could only be met by a return to Christ. In a sermon entitled: “Fight correctly! (*Kämpft recht!*),” District Superintendent Otto Dietz challenged those who argued that the only way to win the fight against communism was to make more guns, planes, and tanks.¹¹³ “The results of this kind of fight lay before our eyes. Rubble and fields of ruins like the world has never seen before.” This should not, he continued on, lead to the belief that one didn’t need to stand up and join this fight. “A life without this fight is a godless life.” Rather, it was necessary to fight correctly. And how did one fight correctly? “Only when we put our full faith in Jesus Christ do we build a bulwark that can stand up to this devilish power. Only when we put our full faith in Jesus Christ will we be victorious. If we stay true to the word of God there is absolutely nothing that we must fear.” After his comments about the evils of communism in the sermon mentioned earlier, Protestant Regional Superintendent Koch went on to lay out his plan for peace: “When we hear the word of God and act according to it - when we look to Christ and commit ourselves to him; then we have done more for peace than all the statesmen, laws, and councils put together.”¹¹⁴

¹¹² “Der Beitrag des Christen zum Weltfrieden,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1949): 6. For similar sermons from Catholics, see: “Herr, hilf, daß wir sehen, daß wir gehen!,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1949): 5. “Kraft zur Weltbefriedung und Welterneuerung,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 8, 1950): 2. “Der Friede im Licht des Glaubens,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 11, 1959): 23-4.

¹¹³ “Kämpft recht!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Oct. 17, 1949.

¹¹⁴ “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach am 7. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 23. Juli 1950.” For similar sermons from Protestants, see “Der Griff Jesu.” Sermon given by Hermann Dietzfelbinger, later the Prot. bishop of Bavaria, on Aug. 2, 1953. This sermon can be found in Hermann Dietzfelbinger, *Das anvertraute Wort. Predigten* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1955): 40-46. “Reformation – Weltgeschichte, Endgeschichte, Heilsgeschichte.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Nov. 4, 1951.

Thus, while National Socialism and communism might seem like two of the most disparate movements in the world, the churches understood them as being one in the same. Both stemmed from the same root of materialism. And just as they had argued about National Socialism and Germany's destruction in the war, both churches contended that the only genuine response to Soviet communism was for each and every German to rededicate their life to Christ. This was the only way to address the real problem. Only in Christ could Germans find true peace and a secure foundation that would stand strong against the raging storms of the time.

Throughout the remainder of the 1950s, clergymen and ecclesiastical officials from both churches continued to decry the evils of "godless communism" and argue that it could only be overcome by a return to Christ.¹¹⁵ But even during the absolute peak of the Cold War, when the materialistic threat of extreme Marxism loomed so large, a more practical form of materialism at home drew increasing attention. Once again, we must note that, in contrast to the circumlocutions used to talk about Nazism, this form of evil was discussed in the most specific of terms. In his New Year's sermon for 1951, Archbishop Kolb stated: "We note that there is a rising secularization and de-Christianization of life in the whole world. An alarming materialism is the cause of this. It is fundamentally different from Russian materialism, the philosophy of communism, which denies God and seeks to root out Christianity. Our materialists still occasionally go to church and remain at least externally true to Christianity. But they want to live for themselves; they do not want to be led by the church like a band of children. It is a life that does not deny God, but that passes over him so that it can unreservedly seek the

¹¹⁵ See, for example, "'Erkennt den gottlosen Kommunismus!'," *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 11, 1959): 14. "Überwinde das Böse mit Gutem!" Sermon given by Bishop Dietzfelbinger in Munich, Jan. 26, 1958. A copy can be found in Dietzfelbinger, *Das anvertraute Wort*, 126-133.

pleasures of this world.”¹¹⁶ After laying out the evils of “worldview materialism” in his 1950 pastoral letter for Lent, Bishop Landersdorfer went on to say: “As dangerous as worldview materialism is, there is an ever more widespread form of materialism. This is practical materialism (*praktische Materialismus*). This is what influences the majority of people in the world today. They do not concern themselves with the fundamental, worldview side of materialism, but the material world has the decisive influence over their whole way of living...Christianity is contaminated and increasingly injured by Christians, most of whom still think of themselves as such, who build and order their lives according to the fundamentals of materialism. For them, the hereafter, if they even believe in it anymore, plays no role. In their rush for the things of this life, they think it nothing to break the commandments of God and the rules of Christ. Against the warnings of the Lord, they try to pull off the impossible trick of serving two lords, God and mammon. In reality, however, they have become the slave of mammon.”¹¹⁷

Protestant Regional Superintendent Koch stated: “There is so much in the world today to have anxiety over. What with the military buildup between east and west, the Russification and Americanization of our ways of thinking and living, and the march of anti-Christianity that is visible in the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). However, we also have every reason to fear the growing materialism that is developing in the Christianity of the West. We think of the rising indifference to and laziness in parish

¹¹⁶ “Markante Silvesterpredigt des Oberhirten,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 7, 1951).

¹¹⁷ “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1950,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 2, 1950): 5-9. See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief 1949,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 23, 1949): 31-6

life, even by ourselves... We think of how rising standards of living have led us to ignore our brothers and sisters in need.”¹¹⁸

Soviet communism was thus not the only form of materialism at work in the world. It was not the only evil that needed to be addressed and challenged with all possible means. A more practical form of materialism was infecting the west. This brand of materialism did not center on high ideals about the nature of the universe. Rather, it focused on the things of this world and the acquisition of them. While it was still somewhat inchoate at this early date, this practical materialism was none other than consumer capitalism.

At first it did not seem that consumerism would ever be a “problem.” In the immediate postwar years, economic conditions in Bavaria, and indeed in all of Germany, were dreadful to say the least. The war economy, which had been marked by state-directed production and provisioning, had been torn apart by the military occupation and division of Germany and, at least initially, nothing was put in its place. Wartime destruction and Bavaria’s long frozen border with the Soviet zone and Czechoslovakia disrupted the transportation network. Unemployment in Bavaria’s already underdeveloped industrial sector was rampant. On top of this, extreme weather conditions in 1946 and 1947 led to abysmal harvests that crippled the finances of Bavarian farmers and left millions on the brink of starvation. Bavaria, long the poor house of Germany, seemed set to sink ever further and further into economic oblivion.

But then the situation began to change. With the currency reform of June 1948, money and consumer items once again became available. The outbreak of the Korean

¹¹⁸ “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in den St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach am Erntedankfest, 4. Okt. 1953.”

War in 1950 gave strong impetus to economic recovery throughout West Germany. Economic assistance from the United States began to trickle down to all levels of society. Industry, with generous state support, began to put down deeper roots in Bavaria. Employment in the state began to rise. New materials such as pressboard and various plastics contributed to lower prices. All of this combined together to allow many more people to buy goods. And after years of economic depression, war, starvation, dislocation, and want, the appetite for material goods was near insatiable. Consumer purchases, starting with foodstuffs and clothing but increasingly focused on durables to outfit rebuilt homes, rose steadily. In turn, this fueled further economic growth. While the early 1950s were still years marked by scrimping and saving, a consumer society was clearly developing. The West German “Economic Miracle” had begun.¹¹⁹

While pastors, priests, and church officials obviously did not want to see their followers starve to death or have nothing in the way of household necessities, they were very concerned about the growth of consumer capitalism. In many ways, they saw this practical materialism as even more dangerous than eastern materialism. It was much more insidious in nature and affected even nominal Christians. They felt that it led people to see the increase in their standards of living as a moral virtue. It ripped apart the *Volk* in a variety of ways. It bred envy in those with greater material possessions. It led to an all-consuming and very unhealthy competition for the acquisition of goods (“Keeping up with the Schmidts” so to speak). It also led to greed and an increasing lack

¹¹⁹ The roots and nature of rapid economic growth in West Germany has been examined in considerable detail. See, Arnold Sywottek, “From Starvation to Excess? Trends in Consumer Society from the 1940s to the 1970s,” in Hanna Schissler (ed.), *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949-1969* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2001): 341-358. See also, Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany, 191-98*. Hartmut Kaelble (ed.), *Der Boom 1948-1973: Gesellschaftliche und wirtschaftliche Folgen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Europa* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1992). Werner Glastetter et al., *Die wirtschaftliche Entwicklung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1950-1980: Befunde, Aspekte, Hintergründe* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1983).

of concern for the less fortunate. The churches quite realistically feared that the more money people had the less they would be willing to donate to charitable causes. For all of these reasons, it was, they made clear, yet another example of the falling away from God that had brought so much misery in the past. Thus, consumer capitalism must be challenged. As the economic miracle began to gather pace, more and more sermons were devoted to declaring the evils of practical materialism.

In a Protestant sermon guide for the Day of Atonement and Prayer, the author wrote: “God in his infinite goodness has led us unbelievably quickly out of the chaos of the war. The German miracle is a miracle of God’s mercy, of God’s patience. He gave our people another chance. And how have we replied? From the miracle of God we made the ‘German economic miracle;’ which daily leads our people farther and farther away from God. Luxury, pleasure seeking, the hunt for a better standard of living, complacency, hard hearts! If we only knew how our indebtedness to God grows through this!”¹²⁰ In a New Year’s sermon titled “We must get off! (*Wir müssen umsteigen!*),” Protestant District Superintendent Otto Dietz likened West Germany to a runaway train that was headed for disaster. “Our energy has been sapped by work and the desire for more money. It has placed us under the tyranny of the clock and the calendar. In return we are impoverished by the tempo.” He went on: “This man-made train of materialism, of envy, of the endless search for a higher standard of living runs only to slavery and ruin. We must get off before it is too late!”¹²¹

¹²⁰ “Predigthilfen - Buß- und Betttag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Addendum, 1956): 5-7.

¹²¹ “Wir müssen umsteigen!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Dietz in Bamberg, Dec. 31, 1957. See also, “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in den St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am 15 Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 13. Sept. 1953.” “Wie wir reich werden können.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Sept. 30, 1956.

Catholic priests and officials spoke in much the same way. In his New Year's sermon for 1955, Bishop Döpfner stated: "We are thankful that our people in West Germany were able to recover from the complete collapse so quickly. However, increased standards of living have caused many to forget that week after week millions of people must still struggle to secure their daily bread...A brutal egoism has taken hold; hardening man against the needs of his fellow man."¹²² Referring to Gal. 5, 25-6, Cardinal Wendel stated in his New Year's sermon for 1956: "The world has become poor in love. Hate, greed, and discord reign supreme. They poison and destroy the ability of individuals and peoples to live together...We treat others with ill will and look on those with more material goods with envy. We see our fallen brothers, those who have failed or chosen the wrong path in life, and in the most self-conceited of terms we either say in public or think in private: 'Thank God I am not like him.' Then we move on, never thinking that what has happened to him today could happen to us tomorrow."¹²³

Not surprisingly, talk about the dangers of practical materialism reached a fever pitch around Christmas. In his Christmas sermon for 1954, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder talked about the improving economic situation led many to focus solely on material things at Christmas. While it was quite natural that people would want to provide their children with the things they couldn't have during the lean war and postwar years, he argued that it was leading to excess and undermining the true meaning of the holiday. "We must never lose sight of the poverty of the Nativity scene.

¹²² "Im Ansturm der Zeit tut eines not," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Seelsorgsbeilage, Jan. 15, 1955): 1-9.

¹²³ "Was haltet ihr von Christus?," *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 8, 1956): 23-4. Gal. 5, 25-6 (DRB): "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be made desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." For similar Catholic sermons, see: "Der Herr und das Heil der Welt," *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 11, 1953). "Der Christ darf kein Herdenmensch werden," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 13, 1952): 3.

God came to us in flesh and blood amidst of all our poverty and misery.” The depth of this love was the real spirit of the holidays and people should keep their focus on it.¹²⁴ In a New Year’s sermon, Bishop Döpfner commented on the Christmas season that had just passed saying: “Beloved Christmas carols and the image of the Christ child are used all season long by shops trying to lure in more customers. Through this the religious contents are kitschified... This and so much else warns us that our Christianity is lacking in belief, in living power and ardor. This is the true crisis of our time: the falling away from God.”¹²⁵

In making such arguments, the churches were breaking even further from their allies in the CDU/CSU. The parties had begun to take a decidedly more liberal turn in the late 1940’s. This was in many ways directly connected to their interpretation that anti-socialism was the logical progression of the anti-materialism on which they had been grounded. West Germany had to be made into a capitalist bulwark against the communist east. As such, they adopted Ludwig Erhard’s ideas for a social market economy. In Bavaria itself, this shift was marked by the rise of liberal minded, pro-business representatives such as Franz Joseph Strauß and Hanns Seidel. Throughout the remainder of the decade they would champion industrial modernization and consumer capitalism.¹²⁶ While the churches still looked to work with the CDU/CSU, largely due to a lack of other options, they clearly felt betrayed by this shift. In his New Year’s Sermon for 1953, Bishop Döpfner stated: “A word for the CDU/CSU: From a party that calls

¹²⁴ “‘Das Wort ward Fleisch’.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Christmas 1954. See also, “Meditation zu Predigten am Weihnachtsfest,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Dec. 12, 1949). “Der Eselsreiter Christus.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Dietz in Bamberg on the first Sunday of Advent, Nov. 28, 1954.

¹²⁵ “Christliche Tat in der Not der Zeit,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Seelsorgsbeilage, Jan. 1950): 1-10.

¹²⁶ This liberal shift has been examined in considerable detail. See, Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism,” 307-308. See also, Milosch, *Modernizing Bavaria*, 16-44. Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, 392-399.

itself Christian, which means that it has made a decision for Christ, we must expect work that is “Christian” in more than just name. We must constantly test these parties to ensure that their name is not simply an illusion used to gather votes. We must push them so that their practices do not stand against Christian beliefs.”¹²⁷ In a sermon given on the day of the 1957 Federal Parliament election, Protestant District Superintendent noted: “Unfortunately, we Protestants are not as committed as our Catholic brothers and sisters to our Christian duty and responsibility to elect only solidly Christian representatives.” “However,” he went on, “just because the word Christian is in his party’s name does not mean that a politician is Christian... We must always ask: do his words and actions correspond with the will of God as given in Scripture? Does he seek to uphold God’s ordained order for the world? Does his Christianity influence both his private and public life? Only when we have received satisfactory answers to these questions can we call someone a Christian representative.”¹²⁸ The none-too-subtle message was that in encouraging consumer capitalism and the economic miracle, West Germany’s “Christian” parties were in essence leading the country right back to the materialism that had brought about the rise of National Socialism. As will be illustrated at several points in this dissertation, this growing split with the CDU/CSU made it all the more difficult for the churches to put their plans for re-Christianization into motion.

The churches warned again and again that this passionate embrace of consumerism on the part of politicians and ordinary people alike carried with it heavy consequences. God would not allow such blasphemy to continue forever. Just as

¹²⁷ “Einheit der Katholiken,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Seelsorgsbeilage, Jan. 1953): 1-8. See also, “Aufgaben des Marien- und Bonifatiusjahres,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 10, 1954): 1-2. “Der Lebensweg des katholischen Christen,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1955): 14. “Wahrheiten Gottes nicht nur im Kirchenraum gültig,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 9, 1955): 19-20.

¹²⁸ “Hinein in die Welt!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Dietz in Bamberg, Sept. 15, 1957.

Germans had been punished in the past for falling away from God, they would be punished again if they did not mend their ways. In a sermon from 1958, Protestant Regional Superintendent Koch expounded upon the bible story about the master wanting to chop down the fig tree that didn't bear any fruit and the gardener pleading to give it one more year (Luke 13, 1-9).¹²⁹ The master, Koch argued, was obviously God. God had given Germany new life in 1945. He planted it in rich soil. He brought forth a great miracle to let it grow. "In those April days of 1945, not one of us could have imagined that in such a short amount of time we would be in the position we are in today." "But," he continued on, "have all the improvements in the external standard of living brought any internal improvements in our people? The statistics says that 95% of our people still belong to one of the two main confessions. But it is clear that these statistics are only good on paper." Koch then lamented about how even nominal Christians cared only about their standard of living. Germans were so caught up in material things that they had no time for God. Greed, corruption, and a lack of concern for one's neighbors was destroying Germany's Christian heritage. "Our tree isn't producing any fruit," he stated bluntly. The consequences of this were dire. "God has infinite patience with us humans. But even God's patience has limits. One day God will strike a last and definitive blow." Punishment, if not the end of the world, would indeed come. The only thing that stood between the tree and the master's blow was the gardener. This was none other than Jesus

¹²⁹ "Predigt des Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertuskirche-Ansbach am Bußtag, den 19. Nov. 1958." This reading come from the Württemberg A lection for the fall Buß- und Betttag. It was also on the Thomasianische lection for New Year's services and thus would have been used extensively. See also, "Predigtmeditation zum Altjahresabend und Neujahr," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Dec. 23, 1949): 144-45. For other Protestant sermons about God's forthcoming judgment for the sin of practical materialism, see "Predigthilfe – Letzter Sonntag im Kirchenjahr – Ewigkeitssonntag," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Addendum, 1956): 8-10. "Getrösteter Flüch." Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Feb. 23, 1958.

Christ. “Jesus steps in and says wait, let me take care of it a little more. Give it another year and we will see what happens. Then if it bears no fruit, chop it down...We have done nothing to earn this reprieve. It comes solely from the goodness of Christ.” But while his words were spoken in love, they were a stark reminder of the need to bear fruit - and soon. Germans had to atone for their sins and put full faith in the only source of salvation: Jesus Christ.

In his New Year’s sermon for 1958, Cardinal Wendel argued that rising standards of living were causing many Germans to lose their fear of God and his judgment.¹³⁰ “Blinded by their desire for material gain they think that they can violate any and all of God’s commandments without fear of reproach. They think that only human judgment must be feared.” Cardinal Wendel retorted to such beliefs by citing Jesus’ comment in Matt. 10,28 (DRB): “And fear ye not them that kill the body, and are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him that can destroy both soul and body in hell.” God could stretch out his awesome hand yet again; wiping out all that had been rebuilt and casting sinners into the jaws of hell where they would suffer for all eternity. Cardinal Wendel went on to talk about how this fear of God actually reduced human anxiety rather than increased it because it encouraged right behavior. But he concluded with the ominous phrase: “We have seen the disastrous consequences that result when public opinion is not built upon a fear of God.”¹³¹

¹³⁰ “Gottesfurcht gegen menschliche Angst,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 12, 1958): 23-4.

¹³¹ For other Catholic sermons that warned of future punishment if Germans continued to embrace practical materialism, see: “Hirtenwort zum Jahresschluß 1957,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 30, 1957): 98-100. “Hirtenbrief der deutschen Bischöfe zur Fastenzeit 1956,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Feb. 5, 1956): 37-45. This pastoral letter for Lent was read aloud in every Catholic church in Germany. See also, “Der Christ und die Welt – Silvesterpredigt Seiner Exzellenz des Hochwürdigsten Herrn Dr. Josef Stangl, Bischof von Würzburg,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Seelsorgsbeilage, Jan. 15, 1949):1-8.

And how could Germans avoid these “disastrous consequences?” The answer was once again clear. Germans must return to Christ. In his New Year’s sermon for 1957, Bishop Landersdorfer stated: “It is a fact that the religion of Christ finds itself at a moment of decision. On us, we who stand at this very moment, falls a great responsibility. In the coming centuries, history will hold us responsible for the fate of the kingdom of God... Therefore, we must not fail. We must turn our eyes to Christ. We must hold true to our Christian duties; not only in theory, but also in practice. We cannot fight one form of materialism in public but give free reign to another in our private lives. Through this we only seek to perform the trick, which none other than Christ himself said was impossible, of serving God and mammon at the same time. Rather, we must give ourselves up to Christ. We must put our lives completely in the hands of God.”¹³² In a New Year’s Sermon, Cardinal Wendel talked about how everything now was counted, weighed, and measured. People were keeping accounts about all aspects of life and their only concern was to see them grow. As Christ could not be counted, measured, or weighed, many people were pushing him out of their accounts. Cardinal Wendel retorted: “When we take Christ out of our accounts, they no longer balance. We sink further and further into debt.” With Christ, however, the accounts not only balanced, they ran a surplus. “Only when we seriously and faithfully include Christ in our accounts can we be truly rich.”¹³³

Protestants made similar comments. In his sermon mentioned earlier about West Germany being a train headed for disaster, Protestant District Superintendent Dietz

¹³² “Der Kirche Gottes in der Krise der Zeiten,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 6, 1957): 3-4. See also, “Silvester-Predigt,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 10, 1954): 18-19. “Für ein neues München!,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 13, 1957): 1.

¹³³ “Silvester-Predigt 1953,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 11, 1953): 1,18.

stressed: “We must decide to get off and begin again. We must have the courage to get off this train even when others around us stay on board. We must put our complete faith in God.”¹³⁴ No one could force people to make the decision for God. They had to do it of their own free will. But they had to get off; even if all those around mocked them. The consequences of staying on board were simply too dire. Dietz went on to point out that just stepping off the train was not enough though. “When we get off the train we have a lot of baggage. I believe that all of our packs are heavy. Heavy from sin against God and his instructions. Heavy from sins against our fellow man. How can we proceed to God’s house with such a heavy load?” The answer was waiting there on the platform. “Christ is the baggage handler who makes our burden light. We must seek him out and lay at his feet all our lies, greed, hate, envy, discord, and selfishness. He will gather up these terrible sins, which weigh on us heavier than a stone, and place them on his back. Then he will walk with us to the house of God. Only in this way can we truly begin anew.”¹³⁵ In a sermon for the first Sunday of Advent in 1954, Pastor, and later bishop, Hermann Dietzfelbinger expounded upon the Palm Sunday story in Matt. 21, 1-9.¹³⁶ He talked at length about how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a simple donkey. “He came poor, but he came with the word of God. With this, he made the poor rich.” Dietzfelbinger went on to compare the poverty of the people then with the spiritual

¹³⁴ “Wir müssen umsteigen!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Dec. 31, 1957.

¹³⁵ Ibid. See also: “Predigthilfen - Buß- und Bettag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Addendum, 1956): 5-7. “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in den St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am 15 Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 13. Sept. 1953.” “Predigt des Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertuskirche-Ansbach am Bußtag, den 19. Nov. 1958.” “Predigtmeditation zum Altjahresabend und Neujahr,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Dec. 23, 1949): 144-45.

¹³⁶ “Der arme König.” Sermon given by Hermann Dietzfelbinger at Neuendettelsau on Nov. 28, 1954. This reading was on the Old Church lection for the week. See also, “Wie wir reich werden können.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Sept. 30, 1956.

poverty of his compatriots in contemporary Germany. “How poor in spirit we are. How tired in life we have become. Most have no more idea than their neighbors over what is the right path to take... But into this poverty and emptiness comes Christ, riding on his donkey. The poor king who has the richness of the word of God... With this he makes all of his people rich, truly rich.” It was the duty of Christians, Dietzfelbinger concluded, to praise Christ and follow him on his donkey. Only in this way could they find true prosperity.

Through such comments, one can see how pastors, priests, and church officials of both confessions preached a very consistent line throughout the postwar period. This should not suggest that no real differences arose. Their references to what exactly Christ provided altered significantly to match the changing realities that the period from 1945 to 1960 brought. More importantly, one sees that while the churches generally reverted to euphemisms and circumlocutions when discussing Nazism they were quite explicit in naming the evils of communism and consumer capitalism. Still, their fundamental message remained remarkably similar. Materialism was the real root of all of Germany’s problems. It took on any number of seemingly incompatible guises, ranging from National Socialism to Soviet communism to consumer capitalism, but it was always the same. Materialism was the attempt to live without God; to do away with God. It was the belief that humans could redeem themselves and create a heaven on Earth. It was a falling away from God. God had already rendered his justice for this blasphemy once. He would do so again if Germans did not come to see their folly and decide to return to him. God did not like to punish. God loved all humans, despite their wickedness. But, the churches made absolutely clear, he would continue to hand down punishment until

Germans, and all Christians, finally came to see what must be done. They must examine their own lives to see how they had fallen away from God and seek to atone for this fundamental religious guilt. The only way to do this, the only way to return to the house of God, was for each and every person to rededicate their life to Christ. Only through the son could one reach the father. Only by following Christ's example of complete obedience to God could one hope to find salvation. If Germans as a whole rededicated themselves to Christ, West Germany would be placed on a strong Christian foundation that could weather any storm. The roots of materialism would be pulled up and a whole new era of real peace and true prosperity, not shallow worldly ones, would dawn.

Naturally, all of this talk about the need to return to Christ raised the very legitimate question of how exactly did one go about doing this. How did one put full trust in Christ? What kind of concrete steps needed to be taken? What did the churches mean when they spoke of rededicating one's life to Christ? More generally, one could ask: what were the main thrusts of their re-Christianization efforts?

In some regards, the churches themselves were not very clear about what it meant to return to Christ. Throughout the period under study, one can find any number of vague explanations emanating from pastors, priests, and ecclesiastical officials. The most common was talk about how the spirit of Christ must shine through in everything one does. In a sermon given in Bamberg in 1947, Apostolic Visitor Muench commented: "Whether at home, in the office, in the factory, or in our place of business, we must be conscious of the fact that we are children of God. We must bear witness to Christ in all aspects of our life. We must radiate the freedom that comes from being a child of

God.”¹³⁷ In a sermon guide from 1956 for the Day of Atonement and Prayer, one Protestant author used the story of the prodigal son to talk about the need to return to the house of God. “And what does a life that is directed back to the house of God look like? It is an obedient life. It is a life where faith in Jesus Christ shapes not only the relationship to God, but also personal activities and decisions, work, relations with others, and all other aspects of everyday life.”¹³⁸ While they no doubt sounded nice, comments such as these offered little in the way of practical application. They did nothing to provide a specific program. They raised more questions than they answered. The churches were certainly not alone in being so vague. As Maria Mitchell has pointed out, CDU and CSU representatives in the immediate postwar years talked a great deal about the need to reorganize Germany on a Christian foundation but provided little in the way of concrete plans for how to do this.¹³⁹ Vagueness of this nature is probably unavoidable given the limited amount of time afforded in a sermon or political speech. It is blameworthy though in light of the significance that was attached to the theme of returning to Christ. Moreover, it led some contemporaries and many subsequent historians to think that the whole project of re-Christianization was simply a farce or a smokescreen to cover up the churches’ complicity in the rise of the Nazis.

While CDU/CSU politicians never really did work to tighten up their definitions of how Germany should be re-Christianized, and subsequently dropped much of this talk

¹³⁷ “Christentum und Menschenwürde,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (June 1, 1947): 1. For similar comments from Catholics, see also: “Die Kraft des Christentums für unsere Zeit,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 19, 1947): 2. “Fastenhirtenbrief Faulhabers, 14. Feb. 1952,” in *Hürten, Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 643-649. “Bischofswort zum Jahresschluß,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 31, 1954): 111-112.

¹³⁸ “Predigthilfen- Buß- und Bettag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Addendum, 1956): 5-7. For similar comments from Protestants, see also: “Schicke unsere Herzen zu!” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, Jan. 19, 1947. “Das Ja Gottes im Nein der Welt.” Sermon given by Bishop Dietzfelbinger in Neuendettelsau, June 28, 1955. A copy can be found in Dietzfelbinger, *Das anvertraute Wort*, 17-23.

¹³⁹ Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism,” 305.

altogether to focus on anti-socialism and all the solid policy prescriptions that stemmed from it, the churches did provide a more concrete agenda at the same time that they were making these somewhat empty comments. Re-Christianization was not simply a farce or a smokescreen. The churches took it very seriously and made a major commitment in time and resources to explain how indeed one returned to Christ.

This being said, one must acknowledge that the two churches approached the question of how one returned to Christ from very different angles. Evidence of this can be seen in the wording of many of the sermons mentioned above. Catholics talked extensively about “duty” while Protestants repeatedly mentioned “faith.” These differences stemmed from the churches’ distinct theological and historical backgrounds. In the Catholic tradition, Christ himself inaugurated the Catholic Church through his preaching. He endowed it with a structure when he chose the twelve disciples with Peter as their head. From the very beginning, however, Jesus associated his disciples with his own life. He spoke at length about the intimate communion between him and those who followed him. They were indeed part of his body. One need think only of Jesus’ words from John 15,4-5 or John 6,57.¹⁴⁰ Christ’s physical presence was taken away from the disciples, but he remained with them in spirit. Through this spirit, Christ constituted himself a mystical body that was composed of all those who followed him and responded to God’s word. This body is the Catholic Church. The church is not simply gathered around Christ, it is indeed united with him. It is part of his body. Upon baptism, all Catholics become members of this body. Through this membership, all Catholics gain

¹⁴⁰ John 15, 4-5 (DRB): “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit: for without me you can do nothing.” John 6,57 (DRB): “He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him.”

the rights that come from being a Christian. The unity of this body does not dispose of the diversity of its members and their functions, but it is still one body. It is undivided. Christ is the head of this body. Christ loves his body and seeks all the best for it. But as the head of the body he must provide order to it and keep it moving towards God. Thus, the laws and instructions of the church, as the mystical body of Christ, are the laws of Christ himself. As members of the body of Christ, all Catholics have a duty to follow them. This is the other side of the rights that come with being a member of the body of Christ. In violating these laws and instructions, one begins to cut oneself off from the structure of the body. Just as the individual cell cannot survive on its own outside of the body, neither can the individual Catholic survive and progress towards salvation outside of the church.

Working from this theological structure, priests and church officials argued throughout the postwar era that in fulfilling church ordained duties Catholics were in a very real way returning to the body of Christ.¹⁴¹ In his New Year's sermon for 1949, Bishop Buchberger commented: "The misery of the time calls us to **Return to the Church of Christ** (emphasis original)! How diligently and passionately man searches for a league of peoples (*Völkerbund*); one that would bring all together through the bands of justice, true brotherliness, and love. The church is this league of peoples. It is a body which has one head, the Lord Jesus Christ. In it, all are bound by the same laws and have the same rights and duties."¹⁴² In his New Year's sermon for 1956, Cardinal Wendel stated: "The commandments of the church are not superfluous. They are like wayside

¹⁴¹ Smith, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church*, 691-732.

¹⁴² "Predigt des H.H. Bischofs im Dom zum Jahresschluß 1948," *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 11, 1949): 2-5. *Völkerbund* can also be translated as "league of nations." Buchberger here was no doubt making references to the calls for the creation of the UN, which would be realized that same year.

stones that keep Catholics on the path together behind the only one who will not lead them astray, Jesus Christ. Many have refused to heed these stones and wandered off on their own. Alone and lost in these dark hours, they suffer immeasurably. Their only hope for safety and sustenance is to rejoin their brothers and sisters on the path and faithfully follow the Lord.”¹⁴³

Dutifully carrying out one’s Christian responsibilities was thus the only way to remain in or return to the body of Christ. Moreover, the fulfillment of these Catholic duties was an objective obligation. It was not a matter of conscience. In his very first New Year’s sermon as the Archbishop of Munich and Freising, Cardinal Wendel stated: “It is not permissible to call it a subjective matter of conscience when our actions directly contradict an objective rule of God... We must once again learn to move from subjectivity to objectivity and know that our consciences must be oriented and arranged according to the laws of God. Living truer with God means that our actions must be truer to his will. Living truer to the will of God means living truer with the church of God. Jesus could not speak any clearer when he said: ‘He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me’.”¹⁴⁴

In the Lutheran tradition, which fundamentally shaped Bavarian Protestantism, all such talk about returning to Christ through the fulfillment of one’s duties and obligations alone was completely wrongheaded. It was an attempt to gain salvation through good

¹⁴³ “Was haltet ihr von Christus?” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 8, 1956): 23-4. For similar talk about upholding Catholic duties as the way to return to the body of Christ see: “Hirtenwort zur neuen Zeit,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (May 13, 1945): 27-32. “Unser Glaube als Quelle des Trostes,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 11, 1948): 4. AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945.

¹⁴⁴ “Silvester-Predigt 1953,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 11, 1953): 1,18. The biblical passage is Luke 10,16 (DRB). See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief 1958,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Feb. 16, 1958): 21-27. “Der Herr und das Heil der Welt,” *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 11, 1953). “Der Christ darf kein Herdenmensch werden,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 13, 1952): 3.

works or merit. According to Luther, this could never happen. In his view, the state of man is one of total depravity. Man has lost the free will to not sin. Good works are all done on false pretenses. They are simply an attempt to bargain with God and avoid damnation. While humans can do things to bring down the harsh judgment of God, as all the Protestant Church's talk about Germany's destruction made clear, they can never do anything to earn their way into heaven. Their sin is just too great. The stench of it offends the nose of God.

Despite this depravity, God in his infinite grace has offered free redemption. In one act of satisfaction, all the sins of man were covered over. This was Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This is the only thing that can save one's soul. Luther made certain to point out that that Christ's passion did not return man to a state of grace. The offensive sins are still very much present. Christ's passion simply threw a cloak of alien righteousness around them. God does not hold the sins hidden under this cloak against man. Thus, everyone is simultaneously justified and a sinner.

Nothing has been done and nothing can be done to earn this gift of free redemption. It is solely the result of God's grace. One must simply have faith in it. One must have complete faith that Christ died to fulfill God's promise of salvation. One must have absolute faith that Christ's passion atoned for the sins of the world. Through this faith, as District Superintendent Dietz pointed out in his sermon about Christ being the baggage handler, Protestants seek out Christ. They return to him. Christ then picks up their bags which are so heavily laden with sin and leads them to the house of God. Christ does all the work. One must simply trust in him.

In no way did this emphasis on faith remove good works and Christian duties and obligations. It simply redefined them. While the justified sinner knows that good works and obedience to the commandments of God and the laws of Christ will not get him/her into heaven, he/she will display them in a spirit of love. With full confidence in God's promise of salvation, people will want to go out and do good works and fulfill their Christian obligations. They will do so not out of a fear of damnation but out of love for Christ. It shows a lack of faith in Christ when one does not do these things.

As both Luther and modern Protestant pastors and officials made certain to point out, however, faith of this complete and absolute nature is no easy matter. Faith in and of itself is a gift of God, but Protestants cannot simply sit back and say that they have faith. That only leads to a shallow and empty faith that cannot stand up to the storms of the time and the doubts raised by sin. Real faith requires knowledge. Before you can completely and totally put your faith in something, you must know what it is. You must understand for yourself why you should put your absolute trust in it. Without knowledge there can be no faith. Real faith also requires more. It must be guarded and continually strengthened. In a sermon from 1945, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder extensively developed Paul's words from 2 Timothy 1, 14 (LB): "guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the Holy Spirit who dwells within us." Schieder concluded his sermon saying: "Just as Paul tells Timothy to guard the truth that had been entrusted to him, we must guard and strengthen our faith in God's mercy; in God's grace."¹⁴⁵

Quite naturally, this raised the question of what must Protestants do to acquire this knowledge that leads to faith? What must they do to guard and strengthen their faith? A

¹⁴⁵ "Warum wir in Notzeiten Gott vertrauen." Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Sept. 1945.

similar question arose for Catholics. What were the duties and obligations that they had an objective responsibility to fulfill? Despite the churches' very different theological and historical backgrounds, one sees considerable overlap in their answers. In their own unique ways, both churches focused on three meat and potato fundamentals. First, one must attend worship services on Sundays and participate in special religious events. Second, parents must educate their children in the ways of the faith. Third, one must ground one's marriage on what was referred to as "God's ordained order." The amount of attention devoted to these three topics far outstripped anything else. These were the concrete steps that one must take to return to Christ. They were without question the three pillars on which both churches' sought to rebuild the soul of Germany. To avoid confusion, this chapter will first examine how the Catholic Church developed all three of these points and then move on to the Protestant Church.

At the very top of every Catholic's list of duties to fulfill was attendance at worship services on Sundays and feast days. In his first sermon given after the end of the war, Bishop Ehrenfried stated: "It is now our first and foremost duty to bring the power of our Catholic worldview to its full development. We must actively stand up for Catholic beliefs. My dear diocesan children, stay true to your Catholic beliefs." The bishop then went on to name these beliefs; no doubt in what he felt to be the order of importance. He began: "Proceed zealously (*Eilt eifrig*) to worship services at your church. The veneration of the Sabbath must be returned to its pure form...Let all feel that hearing the words of God in the sermon is a matter of the heart. 'He that is of God, heareth the words of God'."¹⁴⁶ In his very first pastoral care letter for Lent, Bishop

¹⁴⁶ "Hirtenwort zur neuen Zeit," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (May 13, 1945): 27. The biblical passage is John 8, 47 (DRB).

Döpfner talked about the need for “inner transformation.” He said: “This is the call to repentance and return to the Lord. It means that one does not look around to see the norms of the time or what others are doing, but instead takes to heart the will of God and the instructions of the church.” Döpfner then went on to provide: “a few key points on how to actualize this call to return to Christ in your own life.” The very first one was: “See your religious activities as a duty of Christian life. Everything else relies on this. Participate in worship services on Sundays and feast days. Hear the word of God. Confess your sins. Receive holy communion.”¹⁴⁷

Catholic priests and officials spoke often about the need to go to church.¹⁴⁸ It was developed extensively in sermons about the Ten Commandments. In his 1947 pastoral letter for Lent, Bishop Ehrenfried stated: “The times compel us to engage in earnest retrospection and spiritual renewal. We must once again become whole Christians. If there ever was a time to once again give the world its Christian face then it is the present. We must return to the truth of Christian beliefs. We must return to the foundation of the Ten Commandments.”¹⁴⁹ Ehrenfried then discussed each commandment and its practical relevance in turn. His commentary on the commandment “Remember the Sabbath, to keep it holy” stretched on for a whole page and was by far the longest of the ten. Referencing to the Nazi past, he stated: “How difficult it was during the Third Reich to keep the Sabbath holy. Young and old alike were often tied up from early until late with

¹⁴⁷ “Fastenhirtenbrief 1949,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 23, 1949): 31-36.

¹⁴⁸ For just some of the numerous sermons that either centered on this topic or referenced to it, see: “Christus – die große Liebe unserer Herzen,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 8, 1956): 13. AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. “Silvester-Predigt 1953,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 11, 1953): 1,18. “Für ein neues München!,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 13, 1957): 1, 22-23. “Fastenhirtenbrief 1958,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Feb. 16, 1958): 21-27. “Das Christ darf kein Herdenmensch werden,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 13, 1952): 3. “Predigt des H.H. Bischofs im Dom zum Jahresschluß 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 11, 1949): 2-5.

¹⁴⁹ “Die zehn Gebote Gottes,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 2, 1947): 9-19.

meetings and rallies. Attending worship services became very difficult, in many cases impossible.” Directly after this he said: “My dear diocesan children. Do not let Sunday as a day of God and a day of rest be taken away again. Keep Sundays and holidays holy! Observing Sundays is our daily bread. God has given Sundays his blessing, and from God’s blessing comes all else. Go happily to worship services! Join with the rest of our diocese in song and prayer!”

Every Bavarian bishop and arch-bishop devoted the entirety of at least one major sermon or pastoral letter (be it for New Year’s or Lent) to this theme at some point during the period under study. Some devoted even more. In his 1949 pastoral letter for Lent, one of three such pastoral letters by him that were given over exclusively to this topic, Bishop Landersdorfer stated: “Sunday is a pillar of God’s order for the world, might I go so far as to say, the last pillar that remains. But Sunday is being profaned by the colorless and yet so meaningful term ‘weekend’ ...It is our task to protect the God ordained order of the world. We must therefore support this pillar of the Christian world order and not allow it to fall; we must ensure that Sunday retains its character as a day of the Lord.”¹⁵⁰

Landersdorfer then laid out how to defend Sunday. In one short paragraph, he talked about the need for specific legislation to ensure that no one was forced to work on Sunday. “Man should not be reduced to a beast of burden or a machine. He is created in the image of God. On Sunday, even the humblest of workers should be allowed to attend worship services and see his worth as a child of God.” Landersdorfer also talked about the need for legislation to protect the specific time of worship services so that there would be no distractions to shatter the peace. Following these more political comments,

¹⁵⁰ “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1949,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 9, 1949): 1-5. See also, “Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1955,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Feb. 6, 1955): 11-15. “Fastenhirtenbrief 1958,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 30, 1958): 5-9.

Landersdorfer spent the next two pages of double columned text reminding Catholics of their duty to attend church. “It would be completely foreign, however, if Sunday became an empty and boring day because no one has to work. It should be positively filled with wholesome rejuvenation, works of neighborly love, and piety. But in the middle of Sunday must stand the worship of God...Christ’s last words before being betrayed ‘Do this in remembrance of me (Luke 22,19)’ call the faithful to mass on all Sundays and feast days...It is shameful that so many people, even those who call themselves Christians, set aside so lackadaisically the last wish of the soon to be dead Lord.”¹⁵¹

The dual construction and relative weight of attention in these sermons is telling. As will be shown throughout the rest of this chapter, it was fairly typical of Catholic, and indeed Protestant, sermons from this period. Either through talk about not letting Sunday be taken away again like it was during the Nazi period or through reference to current political debates, church officials and ordinary priests showed that they were deeply attuned to political concerns. They made it clear that legislation needed to be enacted to protect worship. But the primary focus was always on convincing ordinary Catholics to fulfill their fundamental Christian obligations. Shaping politics was important, but shaping public opinion was even more so. This view had a profound impact on how the church went about trying to put its ideas into action.

Attending church on Sunday and feast days was not simply an individual duty.

One must do it with the whole family. This theme was developed extensively in

¹⁵¹ For other examples of major pastoral letters completely devoted to the topic of worship attendance, which also develop this dual construction of politics and public opinion, see: “Fastenhirtenbrief Faulhabers, 11. Feb. 1950,” in Hürten, *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 538-543. “Der Sonntag des Katholischen Christen,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 1, 1953): 13-20. “Hirtenwort für die hl. Fastenzeit 1957,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Feb. 18, 1957): 11-12. When speaking in terms of politics and legislation, these later pastoral letters stress the stricter enforcement of the Sunday and holiday protection laws that were passed in 1949. This theme will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

Christmas sermons. In his 1951 pastoral letter for Christmas, Bishop Döpfner talked about how Catholics must look at the crèche and organize their family the same way.¹⁵² “Christ is in the middle of the crèche. He should also be in the middle of your families... The child from Bethlehem and Nazareth lives in the holy Eucharist. In this is his incarnation and his redemptive work...In this sacrament the sacrifice on the cross is continually renewed. All members of the church are allowed to join with the priest in offering the immaculate sacrifice of Jesus Christ to the father. Now I call all members of the family to the altar. Father, mother, and children. Think of it this way. Your marriage was sealed with the sign of the sacrifice of the cross. Your union is a reflection of the sacrificial love of the crucified for his bride, the holy church. Your children thus stem from a union of the cross. Therefore, you all belong before the sacrificial altar together. What does this mean for your life? It means that on Sunday you should say to each other: Today we are going as a whole family to holy mass.”¹⁵³ Such comments provide a hint at just how closely connected these three themes were in the church’s eyes.

Catholic priests and officials also could not have been clearer about the second major duty that all Catholics must fulfill. In their first joint pastoral letter after the war, the Bavarian bishops stated: “We must once again become a Christian people, through and through. We must be courageous and brave in the confession of the faith and dependable and true in the fulfillment of our holy duties to God.” The bishops then went on to spell out what those duties were. Second on the list was: “Faithfully fulfilling their

¹⁵² “Weihnachtshirtenbrief 1951,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Dec. 15, 1951): 208-210.

¹⁵³ See also, “Hirtenwort zum Weihnachtsfest 1948,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 9, 1948): 5-6. “Weihnachtsgruß des Oberhirten,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 22, 1953): 99-100.

parental duties and exerting their parental rights, parents must give their children a solid Christian education in the home and ensure that they attend only Catholic schools.”¹⁵⁴

All throughout the period under study, Catholic parents in local parishes across the state heard a steady stream of sermons about the need to provide their children with a solid Christian education.¹⁵⁵ This education had to come from the home. Parents had to teach their children prayers and religious songs. They had to set a good example for them by going to church every Sunday. But they also had to ensure that this education continued once their children went to school. Heavy emphasis was brought to bear on this latter point. Every parent had the right and duty to choose Catholic confessional schools for their children.¹⁵⁶ As it was the time when parents registered their children for schools, the end of May saw a peak in such rhetoric. In a sermon given in Nuremberg, one priest stated: “By the will of nature and the will of God, children belong to the parents. They, not the state, are ultimately in charge of their education. Parents have the natural right and the duty to choose what kind of education they will receive.” The curate then went on to make clear: “If you want your children to grow up godly, then you must ensure that they are educated in the ways of our Catholic faith not only at home but also in school. The only school that can guarantee this is the Catholic confessional school.

¹⁵⁴ A copy of the pastoral letter from June 28, 1945, which was read aloud in all Catholic churches in Bavaria on July 22, 1945, can be found in Volk, *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 2, 1080-1084.

¹⁵⁵ For a sampling of some of these sermons, see: “Silvester-Predigt 1953,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 11, 1953): 1,18. “Silvester-Predigt,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 10, 1954): 18-19. “Gottesfurcht gegen menschlichen Angst,” *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung* (Jan. 12, 1958): 23-24. “Die zehn Gebote Gottes,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 2, 1947): 9-19. In this sermon, Bishop Ehrenfried talks about confessional schooling in reference to the first commandment. See also, “Die Kirche Gottes in der Krise der Zeiten,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 6, 1957): 3-4. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/8: “Gedanken zu einer Predigt über Bekenntnisschule,” 1955.

¹⁵⁶ Confessional schools, as well as their community school counterparts, will be defined in much greater detail in Chapter 3. For now it is suffice to say that confessional schools were primarily composed of students from the same confession and that religious education was blended into the whole curriculum. Community schools had mixed confessional classes and religious education was only provided in a special class.

Only here is the whole Christian personality developed. Thus, all Catholics are held by the same responsibility: register your children for Catholic confessional schools!”¹⁵⁷

Throughout most of this period, the fourth Sunday of Advent was known as School Sunday (*Schulsonntag*). Part of the lection for this week was Jesus’ words from Matt 19, 14 (DRB): “Suffer the little children, and forbid them not to come to me: for the kingdom of heaven is for such.” Working from this reading, numerous priests talked about how children could only come to Christ if they knew Christ. As one stated: “Only through a living faith can we come to know Christ. But for this living faith to develop, the spirit of Christianity must penetrate to the depths of our soul. This spirit comes from the Christian home, but also from the Christian school...The lack of living faith shown by so many today is the result of godless homes and godless schools...Education and teaching in the family and in the school must go hand in hand. It is a duty of the Christian conscience to support under any circumstances Christian, and in our case Catholic, schools.”¹⁵⁸ In a sermon guide from the diocese of Würzburg for School Sunday, the author wrote: “Religious ignorance is a major cause for the decay of religious practice that we see today. One can see this particularly in the youth. With the shrinking of the church’s realm of activity and the closing of Catholic confessional schools and during the so-called Third Reich, these youth did not receive a basis in the principles of the faith. They did not come to know Christ in their personal lives. Today they fall prey to the ideas of any and all who come before them; particularly those who

¹⁵⁷ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/13: Sermon concerning confessional schools given at St. Boniface Church in Nuremberg, May 31, 1953. In the same file, see also: Sermon by unidentified person given in Kulmbach, May 13, 1956. Sermon by unidentified person in Nuremberg, May 4, 1956.

¹⁵⁸ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Sermon given by Father Karl Ulrich, Dec. 1954. See also, “Kanzelverkündigung zum Schulsonntag 1949,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Addendum to Nr. 13, 1949). “Kanzelverkündigung zum Schulsonntag 1949,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Dec. 10, 1949): 245-248.

attack Christianity. It is impossible to completely repair this damage. But if the future of our people is to be placed on a solid foundation, then it is an urgent task to ensure that the children of today are provided with a Christian, that is, Catholic education. This education must go so wide and so deep that the young person will become a knowledgeable Christian and proceed in life as a conscious Catholic.”¹⁵⁹ The author then went on to discuss how this kind of education could only be provided at a confessional school. “Freely, religious education for young people is provided in all schools. But a few hours of religious education classes a week is not sufficient. The whole curriculum, just as their life at home, must be guided through and through by the Christian spirit and built upon the Catholic worldview. Parents have the right and the duty to ensure that the school they trust their children to fulfill these requirements.”

Church officials were no less adamant in stressing confessional schools. In his New Year’s sermon for 1956, Bishop Landersdorfer of Passau talked at length about the need to educate children in the ways of the faith. Despite the fact that no such schools even existed in his diocese, Landersdorfer strongly condemned community schools saying that they “shattered the connection between life and faith.”¹⁶⁰ In 1955, Cardinal Wendel devoted his entire pastoral letter for Lent to the topic of Christian education for children. After citing Matt. 19, 14, Wendel talked how parents first bring the children to Christ at baptism. “On this day they are born to heaven and become members of the body of Christ.” “What good however,” he went on to ask, “does it do to baptize a child if you aren’t going to educate it in the ways of the faith so that it can come to know

¹⁵⁹ “Predigtskizze zum Schulsonntag,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Seelsorgsbeilage, Dec. 1, 1955): 1-8. See also, “Christliche Schule und Elternrecht – Skizze,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Addendum to Nr. 10, 1954): 8-16.

¹⁶⁰ “Verantwortung für Leben und Erziehung des Kindes,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 6, 1956): 4.

Christ? ...It is the responsibility of all parents who bring their children for baptism to secure this Christian education. You have not only the duty to intimately concern yourself with the development of your child's faith, but also the right to demand that the school that your child is forced to attend by law is grounded on Christian principles."¹⁶¹ Quite naturally, the only schools that could claim this distinction were Catholic confessional schools. "Only in Catholic confessional schools is religion integrated into the whole curriculum; not simply left as one topic among many. Only in Catholic confessional schools do children receive a whole education." Community schools could never do this. Wendel condemned the division of religious education from regular courses that took place in community schools saying: "Through this, religion and life are separated in the hearts of children." After roughly eight and half pages, out of a total of ten, of talk about the merits of Catholic confessional schools and the need for Catholic parents to choose them for their children, Cardinal Wendel concluded with a discussion of more political concerns. In particular, he lashed out at the state government for assigning Protestant teachers to Catholic confessional schools. So too did he deride the government's efforts to force the Catholic Church to allow teachers who had not been trained in teaching academies affiliated with the church to teach in Catholic confessional schools. Once again, we can see that while the church did focus on political concerns it gave overwhelming primacy to talk about how Catholics as individuals and as members of a family must fulfill their religious duties.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ "Fastenhirtenbrief 1955," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Feb. 23, 1955): 39-49.

¹⁶² For similar constructions in major sermons from Catholic (arch-)bishops, see "Sozial und marianisch," *St. Heinrichsblatt* (Jan. 12, 1949): 3. This article contains a copy of Archbishop Kolb's New Year's sermon for 1949. See also, "Hirtenwort an die Eltern," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Oct. 7, 1947): 122-127. "Verantwortung für Leben und Erziehung des Kindes," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 6, 1956): 4.

This emphasis on family is essential. It leads to the third major duty that the Catholic Church stressed. All Catholics had an objective responsibility to follow what was referred to as God's ordained order for marriage. Father Franz Rathgeber summed up this essential connection between family and marriage best in his New Year's sermon for 1946. He stated: "Families are the cells from which all larger communities are built. A breakdown in these cells, such as the one we see today, causes cancer to spread throughout these communities; eventually killing them. The divine savior knew this and sought to bring about a renewal of the family. He reestablished and strengthened the unity and indissolubility of its foundation: marriage. He raised marriage to the level of a sacrament and filled it with holy and healing grace. Thus, couples seeking to marry and those who are already married must follow God's ordained order for marriage which Christ renewed and elevated. From this arises the power to overcome all the destructive forces that endanger the family. From this, husbands and wives can develop a higher and holier love for each other and the children that stem from their marriage."¹⁶³

The family was the bedrock of society. But the family was grounded on marriage. If marriage was sick then the family was sick and so on. And as Father Rathgeber and many others made clear, the whole institution of marriage in postwar Germany was dangerously ill. In his pastoral letter for Lent in 1951, Bishop Döpfner provided perhaps the best analogy of what was seen as a marriage crisis. "Two world wars and harsh living conditions have caused flames to leap from the sides of the building of marriage."¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ AEB Rep. 70 NL 15 (Franz Rathgeber) Nr. 44: Sermon given by Father Franz Rathgeber in Nuremberg, Dec. 31, 1945. See also, copy of the joint pastoral letter of the Bavarian bishops, June 28, 1945, in Volk, *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 2, 1080-1084. "Fastenhirtenbrief für das Jahr 1948," *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Jan. 20, 1948): 1-5. "Fastenhirtenbrief 1953," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Feb. 11, 1953): 37-47.

¹⁶⁴ "Rettung und Heiligung der Familie – Fastenhirtenbrief 1951," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 1, 1951): 17-25. For other references to the perceived marriage crisis, see "Belehrung über das heilige

Catholics, he went on, must respond the same way to this fire that they would if they saw flames erupt from their neighbor's house. They must rush in to save what remains and then work to rebuild what has been destroyed.

To do so, Catholics must ground their marital decisions and married life on God and Christ's order for marriage. This order could be found in the church's laws concerning marriage. First and foremost among them was that marriage is fundamentally indissoluble. In the Catholic tradition of this time, the second Sunday after Epiphany was referred to as Marriage Sunday. This is because the story of Jesus at the wedding in Cana from John 2, 1-11 was the gospel reading on the lection. Priests and church officials used this Sunday to seriously address marriage and marital concerns. In a special pastoral letter concerning marriage that was released in 1946 and read every year throughout the diocese on Marriage Sunday, Bishop Landersdorfer stated: "Marriage is a sacrament. It is not a contract that can be broken like any other. Remember always the words of the Savior: 'What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.' Once a marriage is properly sealed through the church, it is good until the death of one of the partners."¹⁶⁵ Marriage, the bishop made clear, was for life. Logical consequences stemmed from this. The bishop continued on: "Therefore, the church of God knows no divorce...Divorce is a violation of the sacred and thus is the same as robbing from the

Sakrament der Ehe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1949): 5-8. "Der Jungbrunnen der Menschheit nicht vergiften," *Passauer Bistumsblatt* (Jan. 9, 1955): 1-2. BZAR OA 3752: "Ursachen der Ehekrisis." Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Minister Ort of Regensburg, Jan. 16, 1955. AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon given by Cath. Dean Michael Schütz on St. Joseph's Day, 1947. AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 2: Sermon given by Cath. Dean Michael Schütz, July 4, 1948.

¹⁶⁵ "Hirtenwort über das Sakrament der Ehe und die christliche Familie," *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Dec. 7, 1945): 33-4. The bible verse cited is from Matt. 19, 6. Similar pastoral letters were produced by almost every (arch-)bishop in Bavaria. They were also read aloud every year on Marriage Sunday. For example, see: "Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1949): 5-8. "Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Jan. 7, 1950): 1-10.

church. It is a terrible sin against the God ordained social order... It hurts not only the marriage partners, but those around them as well. How often it is the case that children are the ones to suffer when parents destroy the family through divorce.” Nor was this a purely psychological suffering. Showing how interconnected these three major themes were in the eyes of the church, Landersdorfer went on to lament how the worship service attendance and religious education of children from broken homes suffered as well.

Talk about marriage and divorce were by no means limited to Marriage Sunday. Cardinal Wendel dedicated the entirety of his first pastoral letter for Lent to the topic of marriage. In it, he spoke at length about the indissolubility of marriage. He stated quite clearly: “We Catholics fundamentally reject divorce because it is in violation of God’s law!” He then went on to sharply condemn the fact that the Allied powers and the West German government had carried over eased divorce laws passed during the Nazi period.¹⁶⁶ These laws encouraged people to, in his words, “shop around for spouses.” Knowing that they could always get a divorce, people would marry whoever caught their fancy at the moment and then move on when that person bored or irritated them.¹⁶⁷ As this had such disastrous consequences for the family, these laws had to be rescinded. While his political comments were made quite clearly, Wendel went on to say: “But even the best marriage and family laws only affect the exterior ordering of marriage and family.” It was up to individuals to ensure that their marriage and family followed God’s given order. Once again, we can see how the focus on convincing ordinary Catholics of the need to fulfill their Christian duties took primacy over political considerations.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ This topic will be discussed at length in Chapter 4.

¹⁶⁷ “Fastenhirtenbrief 1953,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Feb. 9, 1953): 25-34.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* See also, “Hirtenwort für die Fastenzeit 1948 über die christliche Ehe und Familie,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 23, 1947): 77-80.

Inherently linked to the Catholic Church's condemnation of divorce was its disavowal of remarriage. In a sermon read aloud every year on Marriage Sunday throughout the diocese of Würzburg, Bishop Döpfner commented: "A civil divorce concerns only the civil side of marriage. The binding sacrament remains. Therefore, neither marriage partner can enter into a second marriage so long as their spouse remains alive. Think only of the words of our savior: "Whosoever shall put away his wife and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." Those who seek to enter into these second marriages cut themselves off from the means of grace offered by the church."¹⁶⁹ Others put it even more bluntly. "A properly conducted church marriage is good for life. So long as their spouse remains alive, no marriage partner can enter into a second, so-called 'purely civil marriage.' Those who do commit the sin of bigamy; punishment for which is excommunication."¹⁷⁰

The repeated mention of the term "properly conducted church marriage" in these statements is not a coincidence. By law, all marriages had to be registered with civil authorities before a church wedding could take place. But in no way should this be considered enough. Catholic priests and officials made certain to point out that a Catholic marriage could only be truly sealed in the church before a priest. The sermon guide from Bamberg concerning marriage preparation that was mentioned earlier

¹⁶⁹ "Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Jan. 7, 1950): 1-10. The biblical passage is Matt. 19,9 (DRB). Döpfner here conspicuously left out a piece of this verse. It reads in full: "And I say to you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, *except it be for fornication* (emphasis mine), and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery." As this no doubt opened up a host of other issues that would have required a much longer sermon, the bishop no doubt thought it best to simply move on. See also, "Die zehn Gebote Gottes," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 2, 1947): 9-19. "Hirtenwort über das Sakrament der Ehe und die christliche Familie," *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Dec. 7, 1945): 33-34.

¹⁷⁰ "Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1949): 5-8

concluded with the following warning: “God created marriage to serve as an indissoluble bond between a man and a woman. Jesus Christ raised it to the level of a sacrament. In the union of Christ and his church, all Christian marriages are sanctified and filled with supernatural grace. So-called purely civil marriages lack this grace and hence have no foundation. There is nothing in them to secure unity and indissolubility.”¹⁷¹ As such, purely civil marriages were a weak bond that would collapse amidst the storms of life and leave the people inside wet and miserable. In a sermon from 1947, Dean Michael Schütz spelled out what would become of those who entered into a purely civil marriage quite bluntly when he stated: “Catholics who content themselves with only a civil marriage have not sealed a marriage that is valid in the eyes of God and their conscience. If they proceed to live together as man and wife and do not secure a church marriage before a priest they commit a grave sin. Through this, they shut themselves off from the reception of the sacrament and endanger their eternal soul.”¹⁷² In the eyes of the Catholic Church, those who secured only a purely civil marriage were living in concubinage. The punishment should thus be the same.

While a purely civil marriage was not binding, a properly conducted Catholic marriage was for life. Catholics who were already married must know that their union was fundamentally indissoluble. From this stemmed all else. Because they were married for life, marriage partners had to work together to overcome the obstacles that they would inevitably have to face. Because they were married for life, they must love and care for one another no matter what animosities arose between them. Moreover, they must never

¹⁷¹ “Predigtskizze über die christliche Ehe – Vorbereitung auf die Ehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Ausgabe B, Oct. 15, 1948): 141-143.

¹⁷² AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon given by Dean Michael Schütz on St. Joseph’s Day, 1947.

seek out the company of another. This only brought hatred and spite into the marriage and turned it into a nightmare that neither person could escape from. In elevating it to a sacrament, Christ endowed marriage with supernatural grace. This provided all the strength that marriage partners needed to have a happy and holy life together. Couples must never forget this. No matter how bad their relationship got, they must know that their marriage was for life and that there was always a way to reconcile their differences. The mere thought of divorce only aggravated the situation and made them less willing to work towards this reconciliation.¹⁷³

But as Bishop Döpfner pointed out in his 1951 pastoral letter for Lent, “The best way to prevent an unhappy marriage is to prepare for a happy one.”¹⁷⁴ Young Catholics thus had a duty to seriously consider the sacrifices and responsibilities that went along with marriage before they entered into this lifelong commitment. They must better prepare themselves for marriage. First and foremost, this meant a careful selection of one’s marriage partner. In a five part sermon series entitled “The inner causes of the marriage crisis (*Innere Ursachen der Ehekrise*), Cathedral Minister Ort of Regensburg went on at length about how West Germany was facing a marriage crisis. Increases in the number of divorces, “invalid” second marriages, and cases of adultery were pointed to as evidence of this crisis. While he acknowledged in the first sermon that this crisis stemmed partly from the long term effects of the war, he felt that there were even deeper

¹⁷³ For a variety of works that come to such conclusions, see: “Hirtenwort für die Fastenzeit 1948 über die christliche Ehe und Familie,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Dec. 23, 1947): 77-80. AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 1: Sermon given by Cath. Dean Michael Schütz on St. Joseph’s Day, 1947. “Rettung und Heiligung der Familie – Fastenhirtenbrief 1951,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 1, 1951): 17-25.

¹⁷⁴ “Rettung und Heiligung der Familie – Fastenhirtenbrief 1951,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 1, 1951): 17-25.

“inner causes.”¹⁷⁵ One of the biggest of these was that young people were blindly rushing into marriage before truly getting to know the person they were marrying.

“Many young people today harbor romantic and unrealistic pictures of what marriage and love are really all about. Most get these false notions from novels and films. In these, they see and hear of a so-called ‘type of man’ or ‘type of woman.’ Again and again, I have heard youth directors complain that youth are all looking for their ‘type’ and when they think they have found it they immediately marry that person. But there is no such thing as a ‘type’ of person. There are only living human beings with all their complexities. Marriages based on the idea of ‘type’ start out well, but the romantic passion and enthusiasm quickly begins to wane as both are forced to confront the other person for who they truly are.”¹⁷⁶

At the same time that novels and films were filling young peoples’ minds with unrealistic notions about marriage, they were also exciting their libidos beyond control. Cathedral Minister Ort and numerous other priests and officials argued at length that the mass media of the day was only serving to titillate the public. As their hormones were already unbalanced this had a particularly negative effect on young people. Unable to reign in their urges, they rushed into marriage so that they could have sex. Only later would they come to realize that they had nothing in common or that they really didn’t like each other. By that point, it was too late. They were already in a marriage that was binding for life.¹⁷⁷ In his pastoral message that was read every year on Marriage Sunday,

¹⁷⁵ BZAR OA 3752: “Innere Ursachen der Ehekrise.” Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Minister Leo Maria Ort, Jan. 16, 1955.

¹⁷⁶ BZAR OA 3752: “Innere Ursachen der Ehekrise.” Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Minister Leo Ort, Jan. 23, 1955. For similar talk, see also: “Predigtsskizze über die christliche Ehe – Vorbereitung auf die Ehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Ausgabe B, Oct. 15, 1948): 141-143.

¹⁷⁷ BZAR OA 3752: “Innere Ursachen der Ehekrise.” Sermon given by Cath. Cathedral Minister Leo Ort, Jan. 30, 1955.

Bishop Döpfner summed up best what must be done to avoid such disastrous consequences. He said: “Both partners must be aware that happiness in love comes not from the fulfillment of sexual desires but in the support and concern for each other.”¹⁷⁸

All made it clear that Catholic young people must seriously consider their choice of marriage partners. They must not allow themselves to get carried away by hormones or mass media and make a decision that they would regret for their rest of their lives. They must ask: Is this someone I want to share my life with? Is this someone I want to raise children with? As the author of one sermon guide from the Archdiocese of Bamberg regarding marriage preparation put it: “The choice of a marriage partner is not one to be made lightly. It can only be arrived at after considerable thought, prayer, and discussion with your (the imagined young person) parents and priest... Before agreeing to marriage, you must inquire about the religious life of your partner and his or her views on fundamental duties and responsibilities such as the Catholic education of children. Knowing each other’s feelings now can prevent painful disagreements later.”¹⁷⁹

Confession was the single most important part of this “religious life” that must be examined. Marrying someone of a different confession was a surefire recipe for an unhappy marriage. In his series on the “inner causes of the marriage crisis,” Cathedral Minister Ort reserved an entire sermon to warn the faithful about the dangers of mixed confessional marriage. He stated: “In a mixed confessional marriage, two people give their affirmation to an internal and indissoluble relationship. However, in the most important and essential question of life, that of religion, they are not one. Such a

¹⁷⁸ “Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Jan. 7, 1950): 1-10.

¹⁷⁹ “Predigtskizze über die christliche Ehe – Vorbereitung auf die Ehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Ausgabe B, Oct. 15, 1948): 141-143.

marriage lacks a communal belief and a communal life of faith. Religion will always be an out of key note that disrupts the harmony of the hearts.”¹⁸⁰

One finds similar statements in almost every single Catholic sermon or pastoral letter that even remotely touched on the theme of marriage or family from this period. Bishop Döpfner stated: “If the family is to remain healthy and survive, and that is the cornerstone of the moral regeneration of our people, then it must be restored to holiness. That can only happen when man and wife are of the same heart and the same beliefs.”¹⁸¹ Despite the fact that Passau was one of the most heavily Catholic dioceses in all of Germany, Bishop Landersdorfer went on at length about the dangers of mixed confessional marriage in his pastoral letter that was read aloud every year on Marriage Sunday.¹⁸² He stated: “Catholics who take their faith seriously must never enter into marriage with a partner of another confession. Mixed confessional marriage destroys the harmony of the marriage.” But mixed confessional marriage did not only affect the married couple. Landersdorfer referred back to the first two major themes when he continued on to state: “It creates a painful separation for the children. Their religious life and religious education inevitably suffers from of the lack of faith unity at home.” Because of this, the bishop reminded his flock, the Catholic Church could only tolerate mixed confessional marriages, not accept them. Mixed partners who sought to get married at a Catholic church had to first fill out an oath saying that all children resulting from that union would be baptized and educated Catholic. The Catholic partner must also know that the church saw his or her marriage as binding for life even if the other

¹⁸⁰ BZAR OA 3752: “Die Mischehe.” Sermon given by Cathedral Minister Leo Ort, Feb. 6, 1955.

¹⁸¹ “Rettung und Heiligung der Familie – Fastenhirtenbrief 1951,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 1, 1951): 17-25.

¹⁸² “Hirtenwort über das Sakrament der Ehe und die christliche Familie,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Dec. 7, 1945): 33-4.

partner's church did not. If the two sought to marry at the non-Catholic spouse's church, the Catholic partner would be automatically excommunicated. Moreover, the Catholic Church would not recognize their marriage as valid. Quite simply, Catholics had a duty to choose a Catholic marriage partner. To do otherwise severely jeopardized not only the future harmony of the marriage, but the religious life and education of the children that stemmed from it.

Catholics should thus only decide to marry after this intense period of preparation in which they asked if the beliefs and lifestyles of their potential spouses were truly compatible with their own. Following this, they must seal their marriage before a priest. Only in this way could their union receive the supernatural grace endowed in the sacrament of marriage by Jesus Christ. Finally, they must always remember that their marriage was binding for life. Thus, they had to work together in a spirit of openness and with their spouses to overcome the difficulties and frustrations that would inevitably arise. They had to love and care for one another no matter what grievances arose between them. This was God's ordained order for marriage. If kept, the institution of marriage would once again become a stable foundation on which Christian families could be built. Without these, Germany had no future.

In its own unique way, the Protestant Church also developed these themes of worship, education, and marriage. In his very first pastoral letter after the war, which was read aloud in all Protestant churches in Bavaria on Pentecost Sunday, Bishop Meiser called on the faithful to return to God.¹⁸³ "Things will only get better for our people when it (*sic*) gives all its arrogance, its lies, its irreligion, and its idolatry over to the Lord

¹⁸³ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. Pastorates, May 22, 1945. This letter contains a notice saying that its contents should be read aloud in church on Pentecost Sunday, 1945.

and finds its way back to God. Therefore we call our people and our parishes to Return Home to God (emphasis original)!.. No longer listen to the siren's call of false prophets, but put your total trust and faith in the Lord!" Directly after this comment, Bishop Meiser went on to lay out three essential elements of this faith. First on the list was: "This faith comes from the sermon. Remember the words of the Apostle: 'So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ'."¹⁸⁴

Faith, the bishop made clear, is what allows one to return to Christ. This faith was acquired and strengthened through hearing the word of God as preached in the sermon. Other Protestant pastors and officials developed this central point as well. In a sermon for Pentecost in 1947, District Superintendent Otto Dietz stated: "The sermon is the word of God. In, with, and through the word of the sermon the Holy Spirit works on all those who hear it."¹⁸⁵ In a sermon for the last Sunday of the church year, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder expounded upon the warning from 2 Peter 3, 3-14 about how the end of the world will indeed come despite all those who deny it.¹⁸⁶ Schieder stressed verses 13 and 14 in particular: "But according to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells. Therefore, beloved, since you wait for these, be zealous to be found by him without spot or blemish, and at peace." Schieder continued on: "The sinfulness of man makes it impossible for him to be

¹⁸⁴ Romans 10, 17 (LB)

¹⁸⁵ "Die Kirche der Pfingsten." Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, May 25, 1947. See also, "Kundgebung des Landesbischofs, des Landeskirchenrats und der Landessynode an die Gemeinden," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Aug. 16, 1946): 83-5.

¹⁸⁶ "Es vergehe die Welt – es komme Dein Reich." Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, Nov. 24, 1946. This biblical passage was the Epistle reading for this week on the Old Church lection. An almost identical exegesis of this text and advice for a sermon can be found in "Predigthilfe – Letzter Sonntag im Kirchenjahr – Ewigkeitssonntag," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Addendum, 1956): 8-10. This would suggest that many Protestant pastors developed this biblical passage in a similar fashion.

without spot or blemish. But let us never forget the words of Hebrews 10, 10: ‘And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all.’ We must put our sole faith in this; that Christ secured our salvation with his death.” Schieder then went on to spell out how one acquires and maintains this faith. He did so by expounding upon the story of the young bride who kept oil in her lamps and waited by the door for the wedding party. “Are we the “clever virgin” or are we the foolish one whose lamps had no oil? We must be the former. We must ensure that our lamps are full. And what is this oil that we must fill our lamps with? It is not pious works or high moral performance. It is the word of God as given in the sermon. Only this can light our lamps and keep them burning until God comes for us.” Protestants must hear the word of God as preached in sermons. This is what planted and nourished their faith. But as the sermon was part of a broader worship service, they must attend church in order to receive this vital sustenance.

Pastors and church officials endlessly stressed the need for Protestants to attend worship services on Sundays and holidays. In a special “Word to the Parishes” that was read aloud before every Protestant congregation in Bavaria on the first Sunday of July in 1954, Bishop Meiser stated: “Sunday is a gift of God to man. The third commandment requires us to honor the Sabbath and invites us to hear the word of God and offer praise to God through prayer and song... We know that people in the city, in factories, and in the office need free time for rest and recovery. But we must point out with all seriousness that the first day of the week is more than a day of sport, travel, sociability and enjoyment. In the last few years we have looked on with growing concern as more and more people work in the house, in the garden, and in the fields on Sunday; work that

is not absolutely necessary or an act of charity. Therefore, we speak to all Christians with a plea and a warning: Do not disregard the gift that God has given us in his day.

Whosoever disregards Sunday will not be blessed during the work week. The bells call each and every one of you to hear the preaching of God's word."¹⁸⁷ Meiser then went on to make a dual construction that sounds quite similar to those made by Catholics. "State laws protect Sundays and holidays, but they are worthless if faithful Christians do not honor Sundays and holidays and do not help to limit or halt sports and other events from being held during the time of worship services."¹⁸⁸ Laws and politics were important. They must be present to provide protection for the preaching of the word. But they amounted to nothing if people didn't choose to go to church.

While it was emphasized throughout the year, the need for Protestants to come to this decision was particularly highlighted on Rogation Sunday (*Sonntag Rogate*). The sixth Sunday after Easter, Rogation Sunday had been used by long tradition as a day to call people to prayer.¹⁸⁹ In a Rogation Sunday sermon from 1951, Regional Superintendent Koch pointed this out when he stated: "This Sunday does a great pastoral

¹⁸⁷ "Wort an die Gemeinden zur Sonntagsheiligung," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (June 30, 1954): 65-6.

¹⁸⁸ For similar constructions, see: "Wort des Herrn Landesbischofs zum Pfingstsonntag," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (May 31, 1949): 53-4. "Der Stärkere." Sermon given by Hermann Dietzfelbinger in Neuendettelsau, Mar. 13, 1955. A copy of this sermon can be found in Dietzfelbinger, *Das anvertraute Wort*, 76-84.

¹⁸⁹ All of the major Protestant lections for Rogation Sunday focused on the need for prayer. Heavily used was the Eisenach lection Epistle reading of 1 Tim. 2, 1-6 (LB): "First of all, then, I desire that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and for all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time." See "Perikopenordnung," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum to issue from Apr. 26, 1946): no page numbers.

care service for us all. It can and wants to lead us back to the order of prayer.”¹⁹⁰ Koch continued on, however, to say: “This holds true for us as individual Christians as well as for us as a community. It is true that prayer is a very personal affair between God and the soul of an individual. But it is also true that there is a great power, comfort, and blessing in praying together with our brothers and sisters in the worship service.” Protestants thus needed to pray together in church. They had to attend worship services. Koch went on to spell out in greater detail the reasons why people must come to this conclusion. “What is the real meaning and purpose of our worship services? Why do we come together Sunday after Sunday in our church? Many people say: we are pious and religious and Christian; we believe in God and know what faith in the life of the individual and the people means. But we don’t see why we need a church and worship services to protect our pity and inner religious life. We can experience God outside the four walls of the church.” Koch went on to admit that this was true. Protestants could experience God in the world. They could have faith outside the church. “But,” he made clear, “we need more. We need a very personal word, a word that tells us who God is and how he stands towards us; a word that tells us he is our father, that he has showed this love to us through Jesus Christ, and that we are in his firm hands. This very personal word of our God is only said in our worship services.”¹⁹¹

Much like their Catholic counterparts, Protestant pastors and church officials stressed that families needed to go to church together. In a sermon from 1952, Regional

¹⁹⁰ “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am Sonntag Rogate, 29. April 1951. This sermon uses the Epistle reading of 1 Tim. 2, 1-6 that is quoted above.

¹⁹¹ For similar sermons from Rogation Sunday, see: “Anleitung zum Gebet.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, May 26, 1957. “Die Brücke.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg, May, 10, 1953. “Hören und Handeln!” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, May 6, 1956.

Superintendent Schieder used the story from Luke 10, 38-42 about Jesus coming to the house of Mary and Martha to develop this point.¹⁹² Schieder recounted how Mary sat at the feet of Jesus while Martha rushed around doing all the serving. Martha then went to Jesus and told him to tell Mary to get to work. Jesus replied: “Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; only one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her.”¹⁹³ Schieder went on to state: “Families today must take this message to heart. Families are being ripped apart by the hectic pace of these times. Everyone gets so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that they have little contact with each other anymore. They forget what is really important: listening to Christ.” Protestant families must follow the example of Mary and sit quietly at the feet of Jesus and listen. “The best chance to do this,” he pointed out, “is and always has been through our worship services. We cannot think highly enough of them. In the silence and reflection they provide, families can come together and share a sense of meaning and purpose.”¹⁹⁴ Just as was the case with the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church would reference back to these comments in its talk about education and marriage.

Directly following his talk about the need to go to church in the pastoral letter from after the war that was discussed earlier, Bishop Meiser went on to lay out the next key theme. He stated: “Lead your children through discipline and exhortation to the Lord and provide their souls not with the best that you can give them, but with that which they

¹⁹² “Alltag und Sonntag in der Gemeinde.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder on Septagesimae Sunday, Feb. 10, 1952. This bible passage is the gospel reading for the week on the Eisenach lection.

¹⁹³ Luke 10, 41-42 (LB).

¹⁹⁴ For an almost identical sermon that uses the same biblical passage, see “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach am Sonntag Septagesimae, den 29. Jan. 1956.” For other sermons that talked about the need for families to attend together, see “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am 15. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 13. Sept. 1953.”

truly need!”¹⁹⁵ Children must be educated about Christ so that they could come to know and have faith in him. This is what they truly needed. This would do more for them than any material purchase.

Throughout the year, parents were continually reminded that they had the express responsibility to provide this education. In a sermon guide from 1949, one author wrote: “Parents have a divine education mission, one that cannot be refused...Children are created by God, they are his property. They are only trusted to us for a limited time. Over every entrusted item there must be rules. This is all the more the case with an entrusted soul.”¹⁹⁶ Jesus, the author went on, laid out these responsibilities quite clearly. He cited Mark 10, 13-14 and Matt. 18, 5-7 as proof of this.¹⁹⁷ Once again, this responsibility had two sides. Parents must educate their child in the ways of faith at home. The author stated: “Spiritual life begins in the family. Parents must pray with their children. The family should sing religious songs on Sunday morning and on holidays. The family should attend worship services together. Parents must set a good example for their children. Someone once said: ‘Your sins are reflected in your children.’ That also holds true for religious life. If you cannot set a good example, then at least don’t stand in the way through mockery and stupid remarks when they want to go to worship service, read their bible, or participate in youth group.”

¹⁹⁵ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. Pastorates, May 22, 1945.

¹⁹⁶ “Material für die Eltern,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Jan. 14, 1949): 8-10.

¹⁹⁷ Mark 10, 13-14 (LB) reads: “And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God’.” Matt. 18, 5-7 (LB) reads: “‘Whosoever receives one such child in my name receives me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believes in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened round his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.’”

The divine education mission of parents did not end here though. The author went on to state: “Just because your children reach school age does not mean that your responsibility to educate them for Christ is lifted. You cannot pass them on to the state so easily. You must ensure that their education is grounded on Christian principles.” Then, using language striking similar to that employed by Catholics, the author made clear: “Only the confessional school can do this. In community schools, you can do nothing to stop your children from being taught by Catholic or non-believing teachers. The curriculum as a whole has a worldly character, to which religious education is added on as a foreign body. Only with confessional schools can you be assured that your child will have a Protestant teacher. In confessional schools the whole education is marked by our Protestant beliefs and thoughts. You have the right and the duty to choose such schools.”

The author then went on to more clearly define this concept of rights and duties in a dual construction that is by now quite familiar. He began by talking about rights. “We have had a total state. There, there were no parents’ rights. Education was solely the concern of the state. In the place of God stepped man in all his presumptuousness. The results of this are all around us... But the total state was not completely removed with the fall of Hitler. The new state also seeks to monopolize education. It also tries to take away the right of parents to choose the type of school their children attend.” The political nature of such comments is all too apparent. Parents had to fight for their political rights and elect representatives who supported confessional schools.

When combined with comments made in many of the previously discussed Catholic sermons on education, the author’s choice of rhetoric here points to an even more interesting development. As mentioned earlier, both churches were quite specific

when referencing to the evils of communism and consumer capitalism but commonly reverted to euphemisms or circumlocutions when discussing Nazism. The great exception to this general rule was the way that they discussed public education. In such instances they were willing and eager to explicitly mention both the Nazis and Hitler. This highly selective use of the Nazi past to further contemporary agendas will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

This point aside, one notices that the author abruptly ended talk about rights and moved quickly to talk about duty. “But,” he reminded, “parents’ rights and parents’ duty belong together. The last responsibility lies with the parents. No power on earth can unbind us from this duty. **When you stand before the throne of God and are asked what become of your child’s soul, you cannot say that what became of it is what the education minister decreed** (emphasis original).” Parents had the right, but more importantly the duty, to ensure that their child’s school education matched the Christian education they were supposed to be receiving at home. This could only be provided by a Protestant confessional school. Parents had to choose such schools.¹⁹⁸

The right and duty of Protestant parents to educate their children in the ways of the faith was further developed on the so-called Education Sunday (*Erziehungssonntag*). This was held every year on *Misericordias Domini* Sunday (the second Sunday after Easter). The gospel reading for this week on the Old Church lection was the story of the good shepherd from John 10, 12-16.¹⁹⁹ A sermon guide from 1947 illustrates how this

¹⁹⁸ For similar talk, see: “Die Not der Generationen.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Jan. 25, 1948. “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Johanniskirche-Ansbach am 20. Sonntag nach Trinitatis, 23. Okt. 1955.” “Wort des Herrn Landesbischofs zum Pfingstsonntag,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (May 31, 1949): 53-4.

¹⁹⁹ “Perikopenordnung,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Addendum to issue from Apr. 26, 1946): no page numbers. John 10, 12-16 (LB) reads: “He who is the hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and

story was used to talk about education and schools. The author began by talking about the wolf. “The wolf is danger for the sheep. He is the ruin of mankind. The power of darkness, the princely and the powerful, sin, death, and the devil are all the forces that are meant by the wolf.” He then asked: “Who will take up the fight against these powers? Who will triumph over them?” Certainly it was not the so-called “hirelings.” In a tone quite similar to much of the talk about materialism that was discussed earlier in this chapter he continued on to say: “The hirelings are all those people who seek to finish off the wolf with their own hands. The hireling is ‘man himself; who in every situation sees himself as lord and master’ (Karl Barth). But all hirelings flee before the wolf. Philosophers and poets, cultural and political propagandists all leave their followers alone when the wolf comes. Against this power of darkness they are helpless. Their sheep are snatched up by the wolf and destroyed.” There was only one who could stand up to the wolf. There was only one who would not leave his sheep to be ravaged. There was only one good shepherd. Obviously, this was Christ. “Only Christ is willing to lay down his life to protect his sheep, us, from the wolf. That is because we are his sheep (emphasis original). He is not a hireling, he is the true shepherd who will never leave us. He gave his life for the salvation of the many. Through this act, we are saved from the power of darkness.” Thus, Protestants must put their full faith in Christ. They must return to him.

Following this very typical construction about materialism and the return to Christ, the author went on to focus specifically on verse 14 (“I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me...”). He asked: “Jesus knows us, but do we really

flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.”

know Jesus?” This was the opening used to launch into an extended discussion of education. Adults had to bolster their own faith in Christ by attending worship services and reading their bible regularly. But more importantly, they had the responsibility to ensure that their children had a Christian education. The author made clear: “Only through a Christian education can children come to know who is the good shepherd and who is just a hireling. Only through a Christian education can they learn that Christ will never leave them; that they must put their faith totally in him.” From this, he developed many of the same points that were discussed earlier. This education had to come in both the home and the school. Confessional schools were the only schools that could provide this education as they were the only ones where religion was an integral part of the whole curriculum. And most importantly, parents had a right and a duty to choose such schools.²⁰⁰

Returning once again to the pastoral letter written by Bishop Meiser immediately after the war that was discussed earlier, one notes that directly after he talked about the need to provide children with a Christian education the bishop concluded his central paragraph about faith by saying: “Renew and protect the moral order of the family. Christian families are the only hope for our church and our people.”²⁰¹ While the bishop did not go on to spell out what he meant by the “moral order of the family”, this term no doubt referenced primarily to marriage. Marriage must be renewed and protected. This

²⁰⁰ For other sermon guides and sermons for Education Sunday that develop this bible verse in a similar manner, see: “Predigtmeditation für den Sonntag Misericordias Domini (Erziehungssonntag),” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Mar. 29, 1949): 33-4. “Predigtmeditation für den Sonntag Misericordias Domini,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (Apr. 14, 1950): 41-2. “Erziehung und Seelsorge.” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg on Education Sunday, 1951. For a slightly different development, but one that still emphasized the same key points, see “Wo bleibt das deutsche Erziehungswunder?” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Dietz in Bamberg, Apr. 15, 1956.

²⁰¹ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. Pastorates, May 22, 1945.

was the bedrock of Christian families. In turn, these were the only hope for Germany's future.

Speaking volumes about how important marriage was in the eyes of the Protestant Church, the very first sermon guide provided in its official gazette after the war was dedicated to the topic.²⁰² In it, all that Bishop Meiser had only alluded to was spelled out clearly. Using rhetoric almost identical to that employed by the Catholic Church, the author began by talking about the family. "The family is the stem-cell of society. If it is sick, then the rest of society is sick as well. One need only look around to see that the family today is desperately ill. Marriage, the cornerstone of the family, is endangered. Those sealed during the war collapse because the marital relationship was only partially developed or is completely lacking... Husbands ignore their wives and think only of schnapps and whores. Wives break their marriages while their husbands are away at the front. Venereal diseases run rampant. The youth have lost all discipline...All the consequences of the falling away from God are seen here with shocking force."

In the middle of this chaos stood the sixth²⁰³ commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." The author continued on: "With deep snow in winter, the farmers' way signs mark out the way through the altered landscape. The sixth commandment is such as way sign. In a territory whose paths and borders have been lost, it holds the unchanged and clear directive of God upright. It protects marriage, but it also covers the whole field concerning marriage. It reminds us with all seriousness that the relationship

²⁰² "Das sechste Gebot in der Gegenwart," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Nov. 29, 1945): 49-52.

²⁰³ The title of this sermon guide is a bit perplexing as the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is usually referred to as the seventh commandment. It is the seventh commandment listed in Exodus 20, 1-17 (Exodus is referred to as 2. *Mose* in the Luther Bible). Despite this, the sermon guide consistently refers to it as the sixth (*sechste*) commandment.

between a man and a woman is ordered through the word of God. Boundaries that God has laid out cannot be crossed unpunished...Those who truly have faith in Jesus Christ hear this commandment and are bound to it.”

Following the commandments of God, the author clearly implied, would not get one into heaven. Only complete faith that Jesus Christ’s sacrifice on the cross fulfilled God’s promise of free redemption could do that. But it showed a lack of faith in Christ if one did not follow the commandments of God which Christ himself held up and furthered.

Much like their Catholic counterparts, Protestant pastors and officials began their talk about marriage with reference to Jesus’ words from Matt. 19, 6 (LB): “What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder.” The similarities ended quickly. After citing this verse, the author of the sermon guide on marriage stated: “Therefore, wedlock is for Christians a holy order (*heiliger Stand*); one ordained by God, blessed by God, and also judged by God...Christians should not consider (*sollen nicht bedenken*) marriage as anything but one and indissoluble.” Unlike the Catholic Church, the Protestant Church did not view marriage as a sacrament. It was simply a holy order. This meant that while marriage was tremendously important to the Protestant Church, it did not have the same sacramental authority and binding characteristics that it did for the Catholic Church. One can particularly see this in how the author talked about the indissolubility of marriage. While Catholic priests and officials always said that their adherents must *know* (*wissen*) that their marriages were for life, the author here could only say that Protestants should *consider* their marriages to be binding for life. As will be illustrated in Chapter 4, this seemingly subtle difference had major ramifications.

Such points notwithstanding, the author then moved on argue, much like Catholics did, that since it was for life people should seriously consider the sacrifices and responsibilities that marriage entailed before jumping into one. First and foremost, he reminded, they must be wary of mixed confessional marriages. “It is not a trifling matter for a proper marriage if the partners are joined in the faith or not. A marriage between people of different beliefs always carries with it the greatest of dangers.” Moreover, good Protestant young people must never allow themselves to get carried away by their hormones and rush into marriage simply to have sex. The author here specifically pointed out that while a young man was dating he should always think about how his mother, the first love of his life, was once a young woman and how terrible it would be if his father only married her so that he could have sex. There had to be a stronger basis for the relationship. Finally, the author stressed that when a couple did decide to get married they should seek out a Christian wedding. “Standing together before the Lord and promising to be true to one another. It is so beautiful that all angels in heaven and creatures on the earth take joy in it.” The much softer tone used here stands in stark contrast to the heavy warnings from the Catholic Church about securing only a purely civil marriage. It suggests once again that very real differences existed underneath the outward similarities of the churches’ plans for postwar Christian renewal.

All throughout the period under study, Protestants heard a steady stream of sermons or pastoral letters that stressed many of the same elements that were developed in this sermon guide. This was particularly the case on *Reminiscere* Sunday (the fourth Sunday before Palm Sunday). While the Protestant Church did not have an official Marriage Sunday like the Catholic Church did, *Reminiscere* Sunday was often used to

talk extensively about marriage and the right preparation for it. This was largely due to the fact that 1 Thes. 4, 1-7 was the Epistle reading on the Old Church lection for that week.²⁰⁴ For *Reminiscere* Sunday in 1947, District Superintendent Otto Dietz developed this text in a sermon entitled “Holy Garden.”²⁰⁵ He began by stating: “Marriage, God’s holy garden, is endangered.” As evidence of this, he pointed out how broken marriages, VD, and infidelity were running rampant. Much of this, he acknowledged, was the result of the long war. But not all of it. “All too many people today approach marriage like a sugar candy. At the beginning it tastes sweet and people bite into it thinking that it will stay that way forever. However, the little bit of sugar quickly dissolves and they come to a piece of rhubarb that is bitter. Then they think they should spit it out.” Young people thinking about marriage, he went on, should know that the initial sweetness of their relationships would eventually fade. Thus, they should seriously consider who it was they were marrying and if they felt it was someone they could truly spend the rest of their life with. Once again, thoughts about the confession of the other partner played a significant role in this time of testing. Dietz commented: “The total melting of man and woman into one person that is required for a happy and loving marriage can never truly take place if the two are not of the same faith.” After giving advice to individuals thinking about marriage, Dietz went on to address those who were already married. “Real love,” he made clear, “continues on even when it tastes sour.” Couples had to consider their marriages to be indissoluble. Each partner had to be willing to forgive the

²⁰⁴ This passage reads (LB): “Finally, brethren, we beseech you and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that as you learned from us how you ought to live and to please God, just as you are doing, you do so more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you through the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you abstain from immorality; *that each one you know how to take a wife for himself in holiness and honor, not in the passion of lust like heathen who do not know God* (emphasis mine).”

²⁰⁵ “Heilige Gärten.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Otto Dietz in Bamberg on *Reminiscere* Sunday, Mar. 2, 1947.

failures of his or her spouse. Showing yet again how closely interconnected these three major themes were in the eyes of the church, Dietz stated: “So too must marriage partners work together in a spirit of openness and harmony to fulfill their Christian responsibilities. They must attend worship services on Sunday together. They must pray together. No meal without a prayer!...Children must be acquainted with holy scripture and the ways of our faith from the earliest days on so that they might come to know Christ.”²⁰⁶ A strong marriage, he made clear, created the stable family environment that was needed so that the partners and their children could develop and strengthen their faith in Christ.

From the terrible spring of 1945 to the heady days of the economic miracle, both churches developed these core themes of worship service attendance, Christian education for children, and living an ordained marital life. Each did so in its own unique way. The Catholic Church argued that by faithfully fulfilling their Christian responsibilities, of which it stressed those connected with these three points most of all, Catholics returned in a very real way to the mystic body of Christ. The Protestant Church centered more on faith. One must have complete faith that Christ died to fulfill God’s promise of free redemption. Through faith, one turned to Christ and put absolute trust in him. Total faith of this kind required knowledge. It also had to be guarded and nurtured. Individual Protestants did this for themselves when they attended worship services and heard the word of God as preached in the sermon. They did it for their children when they provided them with a solid Christian education. By grounding their marriages on God’s

²⁰⁶ For similar sermons from Reminiscere Sunday, see: “Du aber...” Sermon given by Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder in Nuremberg, Mar. 9, 1952. “Predigt von Herrn Oberkirchenrat Koch gehalten in der St. Gumbertskirche-Ansbach am Reminiscere Sonntag 1957.” “Der ganze Mensch.” Sermon given by Prot. District Superintendent Dietz in Bamberg, Feb. 26, 1956.

ordained order, Protestant couples created strong families. In this stable sphere, all could further develop their faith. Moreover, it showed a lack of faith in Christ to violate God's order for the world.

Whether by way of duty or faith, conscientious observances of the commandments of God, the laws of Christ, and the teachings of the church (whichever one it may be) on these three points was the way for Germans to return to Christ. This was how one rededicated one's life to Christ. These were the three essential pillars of both churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal. If they were faithfully restored and strengthened then the materialistic roots of all of (West)Germany's past and current problems would be torn out. From this, a whole new era of real peace and true prosperity, not shallow worldly ones, would dawn. Drastic consequences could be expected if they were not. God had already rendered his justice once for the blasphemy that was so inherent in the embrace of materialism. He would do so again if Germans did not come to see the folly of their ways and decide to rededicate themselves to Christ; the only one who could lead them to the house of God. As pastors, priests, and ecclesiastical officials from both churches reminded Germans again and again: the time for decision was upon them.

The churches were well aware, however, that they had to translate all this talk into the here and now if they hoped to find any kind of traction for their message. The next three chapters will thus focus on how both churches attempted to move their beliefs about these three points from the more airy realm of the sermon to the more concrete sphere of everyday life. As will be illustrated, this process was anything but easy and had many troubling consequences for inter-confessional relations.

CHAPTER 2

Back to Church

As evidenced by the sermons discussed in the previous chapter, both the Catholic and Protestant churches made it abundantly clear all believers must attend Sunday worship services and participate in special religious events whenever possible. In fact, calls for more regular attendance were a hallmark of each of their plans for postwar Christian renewal. The only way to rollback the spirit of materialism that had led to the rise of National Socialism and Germany's subsequent destruction, they argued, was to return to Christ. As the postwar period progressed, a return to Christ was described as the only way to ward off the looming threat of Soviet communism and the more insidious danger of western consumer capitalism. A renewed dedication to worship was a fundamental element of this re-Christianization. In worship, the faithful gathered together to strengthen its dedication to Christ and gave praise to God. Here they received the "real" sustenance that they so desperately needed.

Such arguments had to be translated into the here and now if they were to have any kind of resonance. This chapter will thus explore the means through which the churches sought to put their ideas concerning worship into action. It will also examine the response these efforts found from ordinary Bavarians. To better do so, this chapter will divide worship into two categories: regular Sunday worship services and "special" events such as religious holidays, festivals, pilgrimages, etc. Sunday services are no doubt the first thing that comes to mind when one talks of worship. They are perhaps the most traditional and best recognized way that people take part in the life of their church. As such they must be examined in considerable detail. On the other hand, an exclusive

focus on them would leave out other fruitful avenues of exploration. Obviously, religious holidays, festivals, and special events make up an important part of the worship experience as well. The rituals and practices associated with them can produce a profound sense of inclusion in a religious community. Moreover, as they are inherently special occasions they often have the power to reach beyond the ranks of those who attend worship services on a regular basis. There are no doubt several other ways that people can experience worship, but these two seem to be the most significant. While it is necessary to examine each one independently to provide the desired level of specificity, the two work in concert. When seen together they allow a much greater understanding of how the churches sought to implement their plans for postwar Christian renewal and what kind of reception they found.

The churches' actions in this regard took place in two distinct, but interrelated spheres. First, they set out to rectify the immediate damage done by the Nazi and war years. The Nazis seriously undermined participation in Sunday worship services and special religious events through bans, hooliganism, and, perhaps most effectively, the staging of mandatory alternatives. Working from this background, both churches sought to put their worship practices on a stronger legal, political, and material footing after the war. In these efforts, they were largely successful. Even as early as June 1945, the American occupation government granted the churches permission to hold their religious festivals and events according to traditional customs. In 1949, the Bavarian parliament (*Landtag*) passed a comprehensive package of Sunday and holiday laws that expressly protected the time and place of worship. Going further, the institutional churches made a major commitment in valuable time and resources to provide all of their adherents with

an adequate place for worship. By the early- to mid 1950s, they had repaired or completely rebuilt almost all of the church buildings that had been damaged during the war. Coming so soon after the experience of Nazi persecution and wartime destruction, these were major achievements that should not be downplayed in any way. When taken together, they speak of the influence wielded by the churches in postwar West Germany.

As the churches were well aware, all of these efforts were for naught if people didn't choose to take part in worship services. Thus, this chapter will focus extensively on the second sphere in which the churches had to work, the realm of popular opinion. It will do so by examining the various means through which church officials, regular clergy members, and active lay people attempted to encourage better attendance. It will also look at dialogue within both of the churches concerning the nature of worship itself. Most agreed that the best way to get people to come to church was to have services that were so moving that people would want to participate. Naturally, this raised the question of just what constituted a moving service. Debates on this topic within each of the churches proved fierce. As the external rituals of worship play such an important role in the meaning that people extract from it, few were willing to part from their deeply held beliefs about what a service *should* look like. Through an examination of such conflicts, we can see how difficult it was for the churches to transform generally accepted ideas into real life practice.

Given Germany's legacy of being the birthplace of the Reformation, these efforts to create a renewed dedication to worship had a strong corollary effect. One cannot help but notice that the sense of inclusion and involvement that worship generated was largely defined through exclusion. This was particularly the case with holidays, festivals, and

special religious events. Much to the irritation of Protestants, the Catholic Church increased its focus on Marian culture in the postwar era. Festivals and pilgrimages in honor of the Virgin Mary were always particularly well attended. For their part, Catholics did not find it amusing when Protestant pastors spoke at great length on anniversary dates of key events in the life of Martin Luther about his “triumphant” stand against the supposedly corrupt and decadent Catholic Church. Protestants who didn’t attend church all year would often show up for Reformation Day services. In short, the Christian traditions that both churches sought to restore and the worship practices that were most popular with lay people were loaded with confessional animosity. In deeply divided Bavaria, confessional tension was certainly nothing new. It was the circumstances in which such activities took place that had changed.

Many people, from both in and outside the churches, argued that the experience of joint persecution at the hands of the Nazis demanded that the two main confessions work together to rebuild the country both physically and spiritually. The churches, they argued, should stop focusing so much on the things that divided them and start stressing the things that brought them together. Toning down holidays and festivals, particularly those for controversial figures such as Martin Luther and the Virgin Mary, was seen as a good place to start.

Needless to say, this was quite problematic for the churches given their desire to re-Christianize Germany. How could the Protestant Church attempt to strengthen its Lutheran roots without celebrating the life of Luther and thereby offending Catholics? How could the Catholic Church attempt to deepen religious involvement through the use of Marian devotion without upsetting Protestants, who didn’t believe in the intercessory

powers of the Virgin Mary? The way that both churches went about answering such questions will be discussed in considerable detail in this chapter. What one finds is that both churches employed a rhetoric that focused on the so-called confessional peace. On the one hand, there was an open acknowledgement that the two confessions needed to work together. This was an important precursor to any kind of sustained ecumenical discussion. On the other hand, each side continued to attack the other in a variety of ways.

This study of the wide ranging efforts of the churches to encourage participation in the worship experience begs the question of response. Did lay people attend Sunday services? Were they observing special religious events? Answers are not always easy to find. This is certainly not helped by the fact that the historiography on this topic is sparse to say the least. As they invariably place discussion of the churches in a chapter concerning politics, many studies of West German history, even those that focus specifically on the role of the churches, say little to nothing about attendance levels. The churches usually come off sounding less like religious bodies and more like political lobby groups.¹

Others have been much more willing to talk about worship and attendance. The explosion in church attendance seen at the end of World War II has been discussed in considerable detail.² From here, however, a gap opens up. Apart from some notable exceptions, very few historians have spent any time at all talking about participation

¹ See, for example, Kettenacker, *Germany Since 1945*, 127-133. See also, Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, Vol. 1, 146-54. Spotts, *Churches and Politics in Germany*, x.

² Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 42-3. See also, Clemens Vollnhals, "Die Evangelische Kirche zwischen Traditionswahrung und Neuorientierung," in Broszat, et al., *Von Stalingrad zur Währungsreform*, 113-116. Wiczlinski, *Kirche in Trümmern*, 3-21. See also, Peter Pfister (ed.), *Das Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs im Erzbistum München und Freising*, Vol. I and II (Munich: Schriften des Archivs des Erzbistums München und Freising, 2005). See in particular the introduction in Vol. I written by Walter Ziegler, pg. 33-100.

levels during the remainder of the 1940s and the whole of the 1950s. Detlef Pollack is one of the few who has addressed this topic, but he simply labeled the period a “phase of stability of the established churches” and moved on.³ On the surface, there are seemingly good reasons for such categorizations. After the upheavals of the previous thirty years, the late 1940s and the 1950s appear like a placid calm. The churches were in a position of authority and few people formally left the church. Given the perceived desire for restoration and a sense of normalcy that existed during this period, it would be easy to assume that people were attending church on a regular basis. Further emphasizing this view, one cannot help but look ahead to the disaster that awaited the churches in the late 1960s and 70s. These years saw participation levels go into a free fall. There was also a huge increase in the number of people who formally left the churches.⁴ At a Sunday service in Germany today, be it Catholic or Protestant, one usually finds only a handful of elderly people. Town squares that were once packed to capacity for special religious events now have ample space on the same days. Adjectives such as “secularized” and “dechristianized” are commonly used when referring to German, and indeed European, society.⁵ In light of this, the late 1940s and 1950s seem to have been characterized by an unbelievable degree of piety.

Upon closer inspection, such views begin to crumble. Church attendance statistics from the 1950s show a clear downward trend beginning around the middle of the decade. Further emphasizing this, reports from pastors and priests concerning

³ Detlef Pollack, “Secularization in Germany after 1945,” in Christopher Klessmann, *The Divided Past: Rewriting Post-War German History* (Oxford: Berg Press, 2001): 105-25. See in particular, page 110.

⁴ Karl-Fritz Daiber, *Religion unter den Bedingungen der Moderne. Die Situation in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Marburg: Diagonal Verlag, 1995): 101-123.

⁵ Michael Ebertz, *Erosion der Gnadenstadt? Zum Wandel der Sozialgestalt der Kirche* (Frankfurt, 1999). See also, Hartmut Lehmann, *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa: Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Göttingen, 1997).

participation in worship services became increasingly grim as the 1950s progressed. This should not suggest that all was doom and gloom for the churches or that their efforts to encourage more active participation were a complete failure. They could still expect a solid core to turn up or tune in each and every Sunday. Moreover, holidays, festivals, and special events could still draw religious outliers back into the fold, even if only for a short time. While it is necessary to acknowledge these points, one also cannot deny that even during this period of so-called normalization more and more people were deciding to stay home.

Naturally, this raises questions of causality. Why did more and more people decide to not attend worship services? Several factors seem to be at work. First, many had pre-existing tendencies towards poor attendance or ideological commitments that left them completely at odds with the churches. While the churches' efforts to encourage more regular participation no doubt brought some of these people back into the fold, it would be somewhat naïve to expect those who had never attended church to suddenly start doing so simply because the churches told them to.

Second, the Nazi years left a long, dark shadow over postwar German society. While the heavy indoctrination in National Socialism's militantly anti-church ideology turned many people off religion, this was not its most lasting effect. More profoundly, it severed habitual connections that undergirded religious practices and patterns of involvement. The Nazis' use of bans and the conscious organization of a wide range of oftentimes mandatory activities, particularly for young people, caused a whole generation to grow up largely doing something other than participating in religious activities or services on Sundays and special religious occasions. As participation in such events had

simply not been a major element of their formative years of development, it did not seem to hold any kind of special place in their lives. They could and did still take part, but it was not the inherently “normal” thing to do.

Third, the new culture of consumption that developed during this period undercut participation in worship services and special religious events in a variety of ways. Mass consumerism provided a wealth of alternatives to involvement in religious activities. Rising standards of living meant that more people had the time and the money to take part in or imbibe such alternatives. The churches thus had to compete with movies, magazines, dance halls, motorcycles, and a host of other things for the time and commitment of their adherents. But mass consumerism worked in more profound ways. It encouraged the development of an ethos of individualism that led more and more people to see choices such as whether or not they would be religiously involved as personal decisions. This undercut not only the churches emphasis on the duty or need to attend worship services and special religious events, but also fundamental values on which the churches’ authority in general rested. Mass consumerism also began to fundamentally alter the nature of worship itself. One sees this particularly in the case of religious festivals. They took on an increasingly kitschy tone from the mid-1950s on as eager government officials and politicians looked to instrumentalize them in their efforts to encourage tourism.

Finally, the churches undermined their own message about the importance of worship and the duty of all believers to participate in a variety of subtle and profound ways. When taken together, these forces severely hindered the churches’ plans for bringing about postwar Christian renewal and laid the groundwork for the collapse of the

1960s and 70s. Through them, we can see that even during this period when the churches had a tremendous degree of authority there were profound limits on their influence.

Sunday is for Church

Participation in Sunday services is probably the first thing that comes to mind when one talks of worship. While it is not the only way that people can take part in the life of their church, it is by far the most traditional and well recognized. The Catholic and Protestant churches certainly looked at it this way and calls for regular attendance at Sunday worship services were a fundamental component of their attempt to bring about postwar Christian renewal. This section will examine how the churches sought to encourage participation in Sunday services and the response these efforts found amongst ordinary Bavarians.

As discussed in Chapter 1, both churches reminded their followers in no uncertain terms that they must regularly attend the main weekly service of their church. Their particular focus on this point is quite understandable in light of the significance of Sunday worship in the Christian tradition. But there was a whole new sense of urgency that drew from the experience of the very recent past. Sunday worship services had enjoyed legal protection in the past. Article 139 of the Weimar Constitution of 1919 stated: “Sunday and the public holidays recognized by the state shall remain under legal protection as days of rest from work and of spiritual edification (*seelischer Erhebung*).”⁶ “Spiritual edification” could take on a variety of forms, but, as the population of Germany was overwhelmingly Christian, it was generally understood as taking part in worship services. With the powers granted him by the Enabling Laws of March 1933,

⁶ Article 139 of the Weimar Constitution was formally attached to the 1949 Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany.

Hitler effectively did away with the Weimar Constitution and, with it, any kind of legal protection that Sunday worship services might have had. The following twelve years of Nazi rule showed the churches how disastrous this could be.

Initially, it did not seem that this would be the case. Bavarian Protestants had been quite supportive of the rise of National Socialism and many saw Hitler's seizure of power as a day of liberation. In a visitation report from 1934, the Protestant District Superintendent of Schwabach recounted the mood. "Unforgettable are the services of 1 May (1933) etc., when the crowds of people came in such numbers into our churches that the Houses of God seemed too small."⁷ Bavarian Catholics in general had proven much less enamored by the attractions of National Socialism, but by 1932-1933 there was a noticeable upswing in support for the Nazis in Catholic areas of the state.⁸

Both churches were almost immediately disappointed. While Nazi leaders and local party officials had tried to play down the strongly anti-clerical, anti-religious taint of National Socialism in an effort to get votes, they gave it full reign once in power. Seeking to break down religious ways of thinking and replace them with their own world view, the Nazis looked to sever the connection between Sunday and going to church.

Their efforts in this direction were mixed. More radical elements stressed a frontal assault. Bands of Nazi thugs threw rocks through church windows during Sunday services or rushed into the sanctuary to denounce the pastor or priest. SA units staged marches on Sunday morning that often culminated in very loud communal chanting, singing, or the playing of musical instruments outside the church during worship service hours. Inside, the pastor or priest could hardly be heard over the din. Actions such as

⁷ Quoted and translated in Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 163.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 191.

these often back-fired, as many churchgoers saw them as mere hooliganism and complained bitterly to state and party officials. Outright attacks of this nature led many to redouble their commitment to attend services regularly.⁹

Of a more sophisticated and ultimately more successful nature, Nazi groups consistently planned mandatory activities for Sunday morning so as to create an alternative to church attendance. The SA and the SS held drills and marches on Sunday. Youth groups such as the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls invariably planned hiking and camping trips or sports competitions that interfered with church attendance. Party rallies and meetings drew others away.¹⁰ Actions such as these on the part of the Nazis began to have a cumulative effect. In the same letter mentioned above, the Protestant District Superintendent of Schwabach continued on to write: “The complaints from all parishes became ever more pressing, that attendance at services was being increasingly harmed by Sunday activities of the Hitler Youth, SA, SS, and other Party organizations, and above all that the younger generation is being put off attendance at service.”¹¹ Catholic officials and clergy members made similar comments as well. Labor service and rising conscription levels in the late 1930s only exacerbated this problem as more and more young people, particularly young men, were put in a position where church attendance was either strongly frowned upon or simply impossible. While there is a great deal of evidence that church officials, ordinary pastors and priests, and active laypeople could form an effective protest against the Nazi regime in response to glaring cases of illegality or in instances where century old traditions seemed to be

⁹ Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler*, 286-96. See also, Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 174. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 200.

¹⁰ Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler*, 320.

¹¹ Quoted and translated in Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 163.

immediately threatened, it was much more difficult to do anything to stop the Nazis from holding events at the same time as Sunday worship. It was a very nebulous kind of threat that was difficult to rally people around. But for all its vagueness, it was very real. While the churches continued to protest until the end of the regime, they could only despair over the fact that an entire generation of young people had largely grown up doing something other than going to church on Sunday morning. The ramifications of this in the postwar era were profound.

Working from this background, the churches were understandably quite eager to ensure that Sunday would not only be officially designated as a day of “spiritual edification,” but that there would be specific laws protecting the regular time of Sunday worship. To do so, they became very active in the political sphere. Both argued forcefully that Article 139 was still valid and that the experience of the Nazi years demanded that the state protect the regular hours of Sunday worship service against any and all encroachment. This was the only way to place Germany back on a moral foundation and ward off any further slips into radicalism of either the left or right. Vicar General Buchwieser of Munich summed it up best when he wrote the government of Upper Bavaria saying: “Without the veneration of the Sabbath, a Christian upbringing for the youth of Germany is impossible.”¹² The disastrous consequences that this deficit would bring were left implied.

The legal precedent for the protection of Sundays and the arguments of the churches and their allies in the CSU strongly influenced debates on the topic taking place in the Bavarian Constituent Assembly. An article almost identical to that in the Weimar

¹² DAW Generalakten 621: Copy of letter from Vicar General Buchwieser to Regional Government of Upper Bavaria, no date.

Constitution was included in the final draft of the proposed constitution which was passed by public referendum on Dec. 1, 1946. Article 147 of the Bavarian Constitution of 1946 reads: “Sundays and holidays recognized by the state remain legally protected as days of spiritual edification and rest from work.”¹³

Despite the fact that Article 147 grounded protection of Sundays in the constitution, the churches were not satisfied. Specific laws that would halt other activities from taking place on Sunday were still not in place. Thus, they waged vigorous political battles throughout the late 1940’s to ensure that the time of Sunday worship services would be protected not just in theory, but in practice. Here, they encountered resistance from the SPD and various other associations. Soccer clubs were particularly vociferous in such debates as they stood to gain dramatically from an allowance for Sunday morning games. There were sharp discussions of just what “spiritual edification” entailed and what constituted “regular” worship service hours. In the end, however, the churches and their allies in the CSU were able to muscle through a package of wide-ranging Sunday and holiday protection laws in 1949. Paragraph 6 outlawed “public assemblies, public events, loud carousing (*larmendes Zechen*), plays and other forms of entertainment in the vicinity of a church, sport and gymnastic events, and hunting” on Sunday from 8am to 12pm.¹⁴

Only two years later, a portion of this law came under attack. The SPD proposed that sport and gymnastic events be struck from the list of banned activities on Sunday morning. Nominally, they argued that this was the only time that such events could be

¹³ A copy of the Bavarian Constitution of 1946 can be found in John Lane and James Pollock (eds.), *Source Materials on the Government and Politics of Germany* (Ann Arbor: Wahrs Publishing, 1964), 141-70.

¹⁴ DAW Generalakten 621: Report entitled “Begründung zum Entwurf eines Bayerischen Gesetzes über die Feiertage,” written by the Ministerial Director of the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, Dec. 30, 1948.

held without the participants suffering economic detriment, but it seems quite clear that they were mainly interested in challenging the CSU over what they viewed as the all too heavy influence of the churches in Bavarian, and indeed West German, politics. In June 1951, the Bavarian State Minister of Education and Culture wrote to all of the (arch-) diocesan authorities in Bavaria and the Protestant Established Church Council to ascertain their views on the proposed changes.¹⁵ Not surprisingly, the churches breathed defiance. Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg summed up the replies best when he wrote: “Sporting events in the earliest hours of the Sabbath only lead people away from worship services. This cannot be allowed! It would only aid in the destruction of the Christian spirit, which is and has been for over a thousand years the source of the Bavarian people’s strength, morality, and dignity...Therefore, in full consciousness of our responsibility before God and the people, we must energetically fight the proposed legal change and seek to encourage the state government to take up a similar position.”¹⁶ SPD officials and representatives of various sports clubs met with Wilhelm Hoegner, the Bavarian Minister of the Interior and a fellow member of the SPD, in Nov. 1951 to plead their case. Hoegner, however, made it clear that the proposal would cost too much political capital and had no chance of success given the sure to be fanatical opposition of the churches.¹⁷ The whole matter was finally put to rest in 1952 when the State Parliamentary Committee on Legal and Constitutional Questions declared that the

¹⁵ DAW Generalakten 621: Letter from Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture to all (arch-) diocesan authorities and the Established Church Council, June 6, 1951.

¹⁶ DAW Generalakten 621: Letter from Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg to Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, June 21, 1951. See also, BZAR Generalia 274.20: Letter from Vicar General Franz of Regensburg to Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, June 18, 1951.

¹⁷ “Sportverbände und Feiertagsgesetz,” *Volksfreund*, Nov. 30, 1951.

proposal was in violation of Article 147 of the Bavarian Constitution and therefore could not be passed into law.¹⁸

The churches were thus successful in their efforts to secure legal protection for the time of Sunday worship services. The constitution formally acknowledged that Sunday was a day reserved for “spiritual edification.” Sports matches, political rallies, and public gatherings of any kind were all specifically banned during regular Sunday worship service hours. Coming so soon after the Nazi attempts to undermine Sunday worship attendance, this was a major triumph for the churches; one that should not be overlooked. It shows the influence that they wielded during a crucial phase in the development of West German politics and society.

This being said, it is also quite obvious that worship needs not just a time, but a place. There must be some kind of physical building where the faithful can gather. While this is a seemingly banal point, in postwar Germany it took on epic proportions. Rural areas in Bavaria suffered little in the way of war damage. Many bridges had been blown up by the retreating German army, but this was often the only tangible sign that the war had actually been fought there. Parish churches in villages and small towns throughout the state remained largely intact and Sunday worship services could be held in the same place they had been for hundreds of years. Larger towns and cities across Bavaria had experienced the war in a much more immediate and visceral way. Allied bombing completely leveled major cities such as Munich, Nuremberg, Würzburg, and Augsburg and severally damaged a host of smaller ones such as Schweinfurt, Aschaffenburg, and Fürth. Although the Allies tried to prevent damage to churches and buildings of cultural import, the technology available at the time did not allow for the

¹⁸ “Keine Sportkämpfe an Sonntagsvormittagen,” *Würzburger Kath. Sonntagsblatt*, Mar. 23, 1952.

most precise of targeting. 50 Protestant Churches in Bavaria were completely destroyed and three times that many suffered damage ranging from moderate to severe.¹⁹ The Catholic Church witnessed even greater losses due to its stronger presence in Bavaria. How then could the inhabitants of these towns and cities fulfill their worship attendance duties if there were no churches? Despite limited resources and questions about the need to rebuild churches during a time of rampant poverty and homelessness, both churches set out with a tremendous sense of purpose to provide a solution to this pressing problem.

In heavily bombed towns and cities, the immediate postwar years saw services being held wherever there was space. During the summer months, congregations gathered out in the open or in churches whose roofs had been blown off. When it grew cold, pastors and priests scrambled to secure whatever buildings were available. Schools were particularly popular because of their larger rooms and the fact that many were already tied to the churches. Sharp competition and a deteriorating stock of buildings meant that venues often had to be changed. Religious newspapers such as the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* were quite short in 1945 and 1946, usually the front and back of one page, due to limited supplies of paper and printing presses. When reading them, one cannot help but realize the amount of space, often the entire back page, given to notices about where the various parishes were meeting that week.²⁰ In a world removed of its traditional landmarks, the churches knew that they had to work extremely hard just to ensure that people knew where to go for Sunday worship. A brief reading of these announcements also illustrates the pecking order of parishes in a given city. Large

¹⁹ “Betreff: Landeskirkensammlung für den Wiederaufbau zerstörter Kirchen,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Sept. 10, 1945): 24.

²⁰ These notices were included in every edition of the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* under the heading “Gottesdienste – Kirchliche Veranstaltungen.”

parishes, such as St. Sebald and St. Lorenz in Nuremberg, had the economic resources and political connections to secure more stable accommodations. Smaller parishes such as St. Egidien lacked such aids and had to move much more frequently.

This should hardly suggest that nothing was being done to secure more permanent quarters. As soon as the bombs stopped falling, the churches began the long and tedious process of clearing out, restoring, or completely rebuilding church buildings. As many churches were on the historic register, funds were provided by the government to assist in their restoration. However, the churches had to pay the lion's share of the cost for church reconstruction.²¹

Ironically, the institutional churches' efforts to rebuild church buildings proceeded more readily during the chaotic years immediately following the war than in the more stable periods that followed. This was due to a combination of several factors. Inflated currency levels allowed the churches to stretch their money farther and a dismal job market meant that they could find cheap labor. They could also use their connections and prestige to secure access to scarce building supplies. For example, construction work to repair the cathedral of Munich proceeded rapidly in late 1946 and throughout 1947. An army of workers used wood donated by Catholic farmers to construct a new ceiling. Although glass was a very scarce commodity in postwar Germany due to a lack of production capacity and high demand, enough was procured to fill the cathedral's enormous window bays. By late 1947, confident church officials estimated that restoration work would be completed by the end of 1949.²²

²¹ BZAR OA 2287: Letter from the Bavarian State Office for the Preservation of Historic Buildings and Monuments to all (arch-) diocesan authorities and the LkR, July 14, 1945.

²² "Wiederherstellung die Frauenkirche," *SZ*, Mar. 1, 1946. See also, "Der Dom ohne Dachstuhl," *SZ*, Nov. 5, 1946. "Das Dom-Floß von Lenggries," *SZ*, Apr. 12, 1947.

This degree of success would not have been possible without the efforts of ordinary Catholics and Protestants. Despite the chaos all around them and in addition to the already difficult task of merely securing a daily existence, many parishioners contributed hundreds of hours of labor and whatever resources they had to help rebuild their church. For example, Catholics in Munich worked tirelessly to ensure that the famous Bürgersaalkirche, which had suffered extensive damage, was ready for a special midnight mass led by Cardinal Faulhaber on Christmas 1945.²³ Protestants in Nuremberg contributed thousands of marks and volunteered their time to help stabilize the church of St. Lorenz and build an emergency roof so that the building did not completely collapse.²⁴ Nor was this effort reserved for only the most well-known of churches. Members of the quite ordinary Catholic parish of St. Gabriel in Munich turned out in force to help repair the moderate damage their church had suffered and, apart from more expensive but less urgent repairs to the roof, the building was fully restored by Sept. 1946.²⁵ Actions such as these bear witness to the tremendous pride that many Bavarians felt for their church buildings and the level of importance that they placed on securing a physical space deemed appropriate for worship services.

Donations from international religious institutions, be they confessionally based like the Papal Welfare Agency or nominally ecumenical like the World Council of Churches, also greatly assisted efforts to secure an adequate building for holding worship services. Working in tandem with the World Council of Churches, Swiss Protestants donated 21 barrack style “emergency churches” in 1947.²⁶ Citing fond memories of his

²³ “Christmette im Bürgersaal,” *SZ*, Dec. 21, 1945.

²⁴ “Notdach für St. Lorenz,” *NN*, Oct. 24, 1945.

²⁵ “Wiederherstellung der St. Gabrielskirche,” *SZ*, Sept. 17, 1946.

²⁶ “Aus dem kirchlichen Leben,” *SZ*, Jan. 11, 1947.

time as the Vatican representative for Bavaria, Pope Pius XII sent financial assistance and truckloads of building supplies to Munich through the auspices of the Papal Welfare Agency.²⁷ The *Evangelisches Hilfswerk*, a nationwide umbrella organization set up to bring order to the often haphazard structure of local Protestant charity associations, secured generous financial assistance from North American and British Protestants for new church construction. These resources were channeled primarily into building churches for Protestants living in overwhelmingly Catholic areas; a very common occurrence in Bavaria.²⁸

By early 1948, it was clear that a corner had been turned. Even in the most heavily bombed cities, church reconstruction had proceeded to the point where many of the damaged buildings had a roof and were considered structurally sound. While most lacked much in the way of decoration, they were at least serviceable and the congregation could once again gather in its traditional place for worship. Barrack style “emergency churches” and wooden churches, often built by the parishioners themselves using donated building supplies, provided temporary worship facilities for countless other parishes as they worked to build something more permanent.

But then, disaster struck. The Currency Reform of 1948 decimated the churches’ finances. The money that they did have was immediately devalued. Furthermore, with real money and an increasing number of products to spend it on ordinary Catholics and Protestants became much less willing to contribute money beyond their normal church taxes. As church tax money was mostly earmarked to cover the high cost of maintaining pastors and priests in almost every town and village in the state, the loss of this extra

²⁷ “Aus dem kirchlichen Leben,” SZ, Aug. 30, 1946.

²⁸ Zentralbüro des Hilfswerks der Evangelischen Kirchen in Deutschland, *Jahrbuch des Hilfswerks, 1945-1950* (Stuttgart: Evangelisches Verlagswerk, 1950), 14-15.

revenue meant that cuts had to be made. Building projects invariably felt the pinch. Returning to the example of the cathedral of Munich, well over half of the workers employed on the project had to be let go after the Currency Reform due to a lack of funds.²⁹ The pace of work slowed accordingly and the cathedral was not fully restored until the mid-1950s. Countless other building projects suffered a similar fate and many ambitious plans for church construction were either dramatically cut back or completely shelved.

Despite such setbacks, church restoration and construction continued. By the early- to mid 1950s most of the churches that had been damaged during the war had been either repaired or completely rebuilt. New churches were built to meet demands created by increasing urbanization and the development of the suburbs.³⁰ In short, the churches were quite successful in their efforts to provide an adequate physical space for worship services in places that had been heavily bombed during the war.

This should not suggest, however, that the institutional churches' intense focus on church construction was accepted without question. Some argued that the churches had lost sight of their original mission. Christian charity, not ornate houses of worship, should be the focus. The money and supplies being used to build churches should go to house the homeless.³¹ Only after the housing crisis in Germany had been relieved should they turn to church construction. In the eyes of church officials, ordinary clergy members, and many active laypeople, arguments such as these were completely

²⁹ "Das Wahrzeichen," *SZ*, Sept. 14, 1948.

³⁰ Evangelisch-Lutherischen Landeskirchenrat (ed.), *Evangelische Kirche in Bayern: Neubau und Wiederaufbau seit 1945* (Munich, 1959). See also, Erzbischöfliche Ordinariat Bamberg (ed.), *Neue Kirchen in der Erzdiözese Bamberg 1948 bis 1968* (Munich, 1970).

³¹ EAM NL Faulhaber 5422: Letter from P. Mueller to Cardinal Faulhaber, Dec. 3, 1945. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 5422: Letter from M. Braxtor to Cardinal Faulhaber, Aug. 2, 1946. "Wider Selbstzufriedenheit," *SZ*, Feb. 10, 1949.

incomprehensible. Christian charity and church construction could not be separated. Just as Jesus had said “Man lives not by bread alone,” the churches could not focus on purely physical assistance to the detriment of spiritual sustenance.³² This did not mean that they felt no duty to provide housing for the poor. Bishop Döpfner of Würzburg went so far as to say: “Housing construction today is in truth cathedral construction.”³³ Both churches expended considerable sums of time, money, and resources on housing construction. Between 1945 and 1955, the Catholic Church built some 9,989 new housing units in Bavaria.³⁴ From 1945 to 1958, the Protestant Church built 2,678 units (a proportional sum given the confessional demographics of Bavaria).³⁵ But it was always made quite clear that having an adequate space for worship was every bit as important as having a roof over one’s head.³⁶

Debates such as these were all the more pressing given a crisis brewing far away from the war damaged cities. As mentioned earlier, some two million ethnic Germans who had been expelled from Eastern Europe following the war were settled in Bavaria. Due to confusing transportation schedules, the sheer desperation of the refugees, and a chronic lack of housing, there was no organized settlement plan that took confession into account. This meant that large groups of Protestants were often sent to the deeply Catholic south and that Catholics wound up in the overwhelmingly Protestant region of Upper Franconia. In some areas, the closest church of their confession might be miles

³² Luke 4,4: DRB

³³ Robert Ernst Simon, *Wohnungsbau ist Heute in Wahrheit Dombau* (Neustadt a. d. Aisch: Verlag Degener & Co., 1995), 1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 277.

³⁵ Mona Langen, *Evangelischer Wohnungsbau in Bayern* (Neustadt a. d. Aisch: Verlag Degener & Co., 1997), 1.

³⁶ DAW Generalakten 646 Bd. 3: Article entitled “Zur Flüchtlingsfrage: Eine Auseinandersetzung mit der Süddeutschen Zeitung,” written by Alois Natterer of Starnberg in reply to the article “Wider Selbstzufriedenheit” in *SZ*. Included in the *Klerusblatt*, Mar. 1, 1949. See also, Zentralbüro des Hilfswerks, *Jahrbuch des Hilfswerks*, 39.

away. How then were the refugees supposed to attend worship services? Answers to this question proved exceptionally hard to come by and those that did exist were often deeply distasteful to both churches.

Providing adequate space for worship services in the diaspora presented an altogether different set of challenges to the churches than the situation faced in bombed out cities. Both had an established presence in all of the cities destroyed during the war. Even the heaviest bombing could not erase the fact that a church building had previously existed in a given place. Nor did it remove the organizational infrastructure that had gone along with those buildings. In short, there was something to rally around. There was the organizational backing needed to run and maintain a house of worship. In the diaspora, there was nothing. Many rural parts of southern Bavaria had never had a Protestant church and there hadn't been a Catholic church in many parts of Upper Franconia for 400 years. There were no local ties, no resources, and no traditions. Thus, the churches had to simply start where they could.

In towns and villages that were big enough to have a theater, a medium to large sized school, or some other building with spacious rooms, worship services of the minority confession could be held without much trouble. When a substantial number of Protestant refugees arrived in late 1945, the mayor of the small town of Velden in southern Bavaria convinced the owner of the local theater to allow them use of the facility on Sunday morning for worship. As the pastor, a refugee himself, noted several years later, Protestants could be seen on Sunday morning heading for the theater with pieces of wood under the arms to fire the small heating stove inside.³⁷ Many more met in schoolhouses. In an interview, one woman who experienced these schoolroom services

³⁷ LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. 2, Report 2: Report from Pastor Hans Friedrich Seichter, 1965.

as a little girl said that even to this day she felt strange attending worship without the smell of chalk in the background.³⁸ Finally, some met in the backrooms of bars and restaurants. After leading a service in his main parish of Neustadt am Kulm, one Protestant refugee pastor would walk to the village of Trabititz, 7.5 km away, to provide an afternoon service in a local restaurant for refugees living in the area. With only a thin curtain separating their room from the rest of the restaurant, the pastor said that he had to learn to speak very loud so that the congregation could hear him over the clinking of beer glasses and the chatter of card players.³⁹

Others communities were not as fortunate. In many of the predominantly rural areas where the refugees were settled, regular buildings large enough to accommodate a worship service simply did not exist. Where then were these minority religious communities supposed to gather for worship? A quick look around provided an obvious answer: the local church of the opposing confession.

Sharing church buildings was certainly not a new practice, but it was deeply controversial. Both of the institutional churches realized that the extent of the refugee crisis demanded that they allow worship services of the other confession to be held in their buildings. How could they ask to use the churches of the other confession if they did not open up their own? While acknowledging this point, it was clear that neither the churches nor their adherents were particularly keen on the idea. In fact, church sharing generated some of the most glaring examples of confessional spite from this period. At the same time, it also brought about some real acts of compassion and charity.

³⁸ Interview with Frau Dürschner, Oct. 24, 2004.

³⁹ LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. 2, Report 18: Report from Pastor Albert Drechsler, 1965.

At first, church sharing took place on a somewhat ad hoc basis. Pastors and priests who had been expelled along with the refugees would go to their religious counterpart in the area, almost always a native, and ask if they could use the church for worship. This was generally implied to mean Sunday afternoon services. Reports suggest that initial responses were quite mixed. Citing timing constraints, the presence of other buildings in the vicinity, or simply that they didn't want to see their sanctuaries profaned by outside worship, many pastors or priests adamantly refused.⁴⁰ Others said that the building could be used, but that the minority religious community would have to pay a fee every month for maintenance and upkeep.⁴¹ Some, on the other hand, were quite welcoming of the refugees. Protestants in one Catholic village were delighted to find that the local Catholic priest not only offered full access to his church, but secured the service of an organist and even rang the bell for the Protestant service.⁴² More commonly, Catholic priests would allow Protestant refugees basically unrestricted access to seldom used cemetery, forest, or devotional chapels.⁴³

These diverging answers inevitably produced bad blood as the unavoidable comparisons were drawn. Why was one pastor or priest so unwelcoming while his colleague in the next village was so friendly? Why was the fee higher in some churches

⁴⁰ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Arnbruck to Bishop Buchberger, May 7, 1948. Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Saal to Bishop Buchberger, Sept. 18, 1948. See also, BZAR Generalia 142.22: Copy of letter from Cath. Pastorate Fichtelberg to Cath. Pastorate of Wunsiedel, Feb. 10, 1950. This letter discusses a Protestant pastor's refusal to share his church with Catholic refugees settled in the mostly Protestant region along the northern boundary of the otherwise heavily Catholic diocese of Regensburg.

⁴¹ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 210: Copy of report entitled "Bericht über die Benutzung evang. -luth. Kirchen durch katholische Flüchtlingsgemeinden und kath. Kirchen durch evang. -luth. Flüchtlingsgemeinden" written by LkR assistant Wolfgang Link, Aug. 31, 1949. See also, DAW Generalakten 795: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to BOW, Feb. 16, 1950. In general, the Protestant Church was much more inclined to charge fees for the use of its buildings than was the Catholic Church.

⁴² LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. 2, Report 19.

⁴³ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Report concerning Protestant worship services held in Catholic churches in the diocese of Regensburg, Mar. 15, 1948. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Tegernbach to BOR, Aug. 11, 1948.

than in others? To stem such conflict, church officials began to try and bring structure to the process of church sharing. Authority for the decision to allow outside services was taken over by the church hierarchies.⁴⁴ Standardized application forms were drawn up, fees were regulated, schedules for the timing of services were laid out, and regulations on what kind of decorations could be brought in were set up. Pastors and priests were instructed on what kinds of information they needed to provide so that a decision could be made. Usually this was a statement on whether or not there were any other buildings that could be used for the minority community's worship services.⁴⁵

Tacit acceptance of church sharing such as this did not mean that church officials welcomed the idea. In what can hardly be described as a positive gesture of compassion for the plight of people with no church of their own, Archbishop Buchberger commented to the Apostolic Nuncio for Germany that: "It is a great sacrifice for me to have to make so many churches available for Protestant worship services, but the church shortage of our poor Catholics in the diaspora compels this."⁴⁶ At the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg, Buchberger commented that he would personally rather see Catholic services taking place in a beer hall than in the church of "other believers."⁴⁷ A Protestant woman of noble descent wrote to the Established Church Council in 1947 to complain about the decision to allow Catholic refugees to hold worship services in her parish

⁴⁴ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letters from BOR to Cath. Deaneries of Atting, Bogengerg, Deggendorf, Geiselhöring, Pilsting, and Pondorf, May 10, 1948 and July 12, 1948. See also, LKAN LkR XI 1438c Bd. II: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, July 20, 1947.

⁴⁵ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Application forms created by BOR concerning use of Catholic churches for Protestant worship services, no date. See also, DAW Generalakten 795: Application form created by BOW concerning use of Catholic churches for Protestant worship services, no date. LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, Feb. 17, 1950. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 63: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to all Prot. pastorates in his region, Nov. 13, 1951.

⁴⁶ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letter from Archbishop Buchberger to Apostolic Nuncio Muench, Feb. 19, 1953.

⁴⁷ BZAR OA 1130: Report concerning proceedings of the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg.

church. She wrote: “How is this possible? Are we not the church of the Reformation? What would Luther say to such requests?”⁴⁸ Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich wrote that while he too felt her pain, the Protestant Church had an obligation to open its churches to Catholics. Otherwise, Catholics in the south might close their doors to Protestants.⁴⁹

Begrudging acceptance of this kind served to encourage some particularly flagrant expressions of confessional spite by pastors, priests, and ordinary parishioners. Catholics in one church wiped down the seats after every Protestant worship service held there.⁵⁰ Protestant lay people complained that Catholics were making their churches “stink of frankincense.”⁵¹ Many pastors and priest were deeply concerned that church sharing might lead lay people to think that mixed confessional marriages were acceptable and they worked to isolate the two communities as much as possible.⁵² Each side accused the other of stealing church decorations, destroying church property, and generally leaving the building a mess.⁵³ While many reports speak of good relations, sacrifice on the part of the hosts, and genuine compassion for the plight of the refugees, it would be very hard to argue that church sharing created much in the way of cross-confessional sympathy and understanding. What it does show, however, is the intense seriousness with which the institutional churches took their responsibility to provide adequate space for worship. To

⁴⁸ LKAN KrD München 222: Letter from Berta von Thüngen of Rossbach über Brückenau to “meine Kirche,” May 1947.

⁴⁹ LKAN KrD München 222: Letter of reply from Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich, June 13, 1947.

⁵⁰ LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. 3, Report 58.

⁵¹ LKAN LkR XI 1438c Bd. II: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Pegnitz to LkR, Jan. 30, 1947.

⁵² BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Niederlauterbach to Bishop Buchberger, Apr. 10, 1948.

⁵³ BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Bogen to Bishop Buchberger, Apr. 1, 1948. See also, LKAN KrD München 213: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Ingolstadt to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Munich, June 13, 1947. LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Lichtenau to LkR, Feb. 23, 1948. In the same file, see also: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Sulzbach-Rosenberg to LkR, Dec. 3, 1949.

ensure that all of their adherents could fulfill their worship attendance duties, both were willing to engage in practices that they considered deeply distasteful.

By the early- to mid 1950's, the acute shortage of worship space that had led to church sharing in the first place began to be rectified. The institutional churches began to build churches in areas that had previously been considered diaspora. For example, in 1950 alone, 30 Protestant churches were built in areas that were once exclusively Catholic.⁵⁴ In these efforts they were greatly assisted by the refugees themselves. Often using donated supplies and volunteer labor, hundreds of refugee communities built churches so that they would have their "own" place for worship.⁵⁵ Such projects often rallied the refugees together and provided a major source of pride. Also contributing was the fact that many refugees began to move to larger cities or leave Bavaria altogether in the late 1940s and early 1950s to find better job prospects. Sometimes whole communities left and the matter resolved itself.

Through extraordinary sacrifice and dint of circumstance, the churches were able to fulfill their duty to provide the faithful with a place for worship. Intensive political lobbying had also guaranteed a protected time for those worship services to be held. The churches were able to secure the fundamental basics needed to hold worship services. In light of the difficult circumstances in which such efforts took place, this was certainly no mean accomplishment.

While no doubt important, this is in no way the full story. In an insightful end of year letter to the clergy in his region, Protestant Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach wrote: "What good does external construction and reconstruction do if it does

⁵⁴ LKAN LkR XI 1438c Bd. II: Report on church construction presented to the 1950 Prot. synod. In the same file, see also the reports for 1947, 1951, and 1953.

⁵⁵ Zentralbüro des Hilfswerk, *Jahrbuch des Hilfswerk*, 39.

not proceed hand in hand with an internal strengthening and consolidation of our parishes.”⁵⁶ Echoing this theme, a pamphlet sent to all Catholics in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising stated: “What good is a modern church building if it is only used by old people and children.”⁵⁷ In short, having a time and place for worship did not guarantee that people would come. Rather, the churches increasingly had to draw people in. Thus, it is necessary to examine the other ways that both churches sought to put their talk about the need for regular attendance at Sunday worship services into action.

To help sway public opinion the churches used not only the sermons discussed in Chapter 1, but a wide range of other medium. In 1949, Catholic churches around Munich distributed posters that bore the heading: “Why are our churches so poorly attended on Sunday?” The poster went on to dismiss typical replies. For example, to counter the response of “Because it lasts so long,” the poster reminded Catholics that God had given them life and sustained them through the deprivation of the war and immediate postwar years. Because of this, it was ungrateful to “...approach God with a watch in hand and try to bargain over a few minutes.” The poster concluded with the phrase: “Sunday worship service is the hour when the priest prays for his parish and with his parish. When we do not gather together at least one hour a week to join in prayer, where then is the community of Christ?”⁵⁸

A pamphlet originally produced by diocesan authorities in Aachen was distributed widely to Catholics across Bavaria. One page shows pictures of people dancing, putting on makeup, riding bikes and drinking beer, all bearing the label “I want to have *my*

⁵⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 53: End of year letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Heinrich Koch of Ansbach to all clergy in his region, Dec. 27, 1955.

⁵⁷ LKAN LkR 2378: Copy of Pamphlet entitled “Offene Tore” distributed by Catholic Action in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, 1958.

⁵⁸ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Copy of poster distributed by Catholic parishes in Munich, Dec. 15, 1949.

Sunday (emphasis original).” Over this was printed in bold red type: “Sunday belongs to God! No Sunday without Mass!” The pamphlet went on to explain how attending Sunday worship services was a fundamental duty of all Catholics and that those who didn’t come were committing a sin. It concluded with a quote from Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich: “Those who do not hear the church bells in this life will also not hear the trumpets of the second coming.”⁵⁹

Countless articles in church newspapers stressed the need to attend worship services regularly. Citing 1 Peter 2,2 (LB), which reads: “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby,” one article in the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* made clear that only by hearing the word of God as preached in church could one find true sustenance. “When there is a worship service, then he (the Christian) must go. There he will find all that he wants and needs.”⁶⁰

Articles in Catholic newspapers were worded in even stronger tones. In one titled simply “God’s property,” the author wrote: “Just as the sun is the most beautiful star in the sky, so is Sunday the most beautiful day of the week. Just as the sun brings new life and strength to nature, so too does Sunday bring a new and fresh life-essence to mankind.” The article went on to roundly condemn materialism, which, just as the thieves who had robbed the man walking to Jericho that was helped by the Good Samaritan, “robbed the day of the Lord of its beauty and brilliance.” It concluded: “**Amidst the unrest of our**

⁵⁹ DAW Generalakten 621: Copy of the pamphlet “Nach dem Sechstagerennen der Woche ein wohlverdienter Ruhetag.”

⁶⁰ “Von der Ernährung des inwendigen Menschen,” *NEG*, Oct. 19, 1947. See also, “Praktische Ratschläge zum Kirchenbesuch,” *NEG*, Sept. 1, 1946. “Brot oder Gott!,” *NEG*, Mar. 28, 1954. “Stille,” *NEG*, Feb. 17, 1957.

lives, Sunday must once again become a day of worship and reflection (emphasis original).”⁶¹

Newspaper articles were also used as part of a liturgical education campaign. Many church officials and regular clergy members felt that if laypeople understood the different elements of the service and the reasons for their inclusion they would be more interested in what was taking place and hence more willing to come.⁶²

At lecture nights hosted by the churches or church affiliated organizations, ecclesiastical officials, government representatives, and ordinary lay people all stressed the need for regular church attendance. Speaking before an audience of Catholic farmers in southern Bavaria, one local government official stated: “Sunday worship and the celebration of the liturgy must be a matter of the heart for rural people...The people must know that the beauty and richness of holy mass are a source of strength and aid not only for the individual, but for the family as well.”⁶³ In a series of well publicized lectures in Nuremberg, Protestant Bishop Lilje of Hannover discussed the problems of the “technological age.” The frenzied pace of everyday life that it created, he argued, left people with little time to consider the spiritual component of their existence. Also, as everyone was so busy focusing on their own work it crippled any sense of community. Because of this, attendance at Sunday worship services was now more important than ever. It created, if only for one hour a week, a space for reflection and communion with one’s fellows.⁶⁴

⁶¹ “Gottes Eigentum,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Sept. 26, 1954.

⁶² DAW Generalakten 752: Letter from Father Josef Ulbrich of Cath. Pastorate of Theinheim über Eltmann to Notary of the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, July 5, 1954. For an example of such articles, see the series “Zu unserer Liturgie,” run in every edition of the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* from Mar. 17, 1946 to June 2, 1946.

⁶³ “Von Altötting nach Ottobeuren,” *Deutsche Tagespost*, May 18, 1953.

⁶⁴ “Zwei Vorträge von Landesbischof D. Lilje,” *NEG*, Jan. 24, 1954.

Discussion primers for church association group nights also stressed the need for regular attendance at Sunday worship services. For example, the author of a series designed for Catholic women's associations in the Dioceses of Regensburg and Eichstätt argued at length that it was up to the woman, here described exclusively as a wife and mother, to nurture the religious sensibilities of her family. In addition to registering her children for confessional schools and helping them learn their songs and prayers, it was absolutely essential that she set a good role model and go with them to church every week. To avoid confusion that might lead the children to become religiously indifferent, she also must do everything in her power to convince her husband to come along as well.⁶⁵ An article in "The Scaffolding," a periodical designed to help Protestant youth group leaders, encouraged discussion of the reasons why young people didn't go to church regularly. First and foremost, these were seen as a lack of interest, a lack of time, as Sunday was the only day to catch up on chores and homework, and the wide variety of other things to do on Sunday. It then provided point by point challenges that the leader could provide to each. To those who said that there were better things to do on Sunday, it urged the reply: "We live too little when we don't go to church." The article concluded by saying that youth shouldn't grow up thinking, as one young man had put it, "Too little sun shone on my childhood."⁶⁶

Parents were particularly singled out as targets for this message concerning the need for regular church attendance. Both churches deemed it absolutely essential that they set a good example for their children. Through pamphlets, lectures, and a host of

⁶⁵ BZAR OA 1301: Series entitled "Zu den Glaubenstunden für Frauen," no date. See in particular the pamphlets entitled "Christus und die Frau" and "Die Frau im Plane Gottes."

⁶⁶ "Wenn der Sonntag fehlt," *Das Baugerüst* (Apr. 1957): 106-108. See also, "Von der Zucht in der Gemeindejugend," *Die Junge Gemeinde* (May 1948):10-12. *Die Junge Gemeinde* was the precursor of *Das Baugerüst*.

other means, the churches reminded parents again and again that active participation in Sunday worship services was part and parcel of their duty to educate their children in the ways of the faith. Religious education in confessional schools was critically important, but it was all for not if children did not see their parents truly engaged in the service. Only through the combination of these two could children come to consider worship a given part of the world around them. If neither parent attended church then they certainly couldn't expect their child to magically do so later on in life. If one parent participated but the other did not it sent a confusing message to the child. When faced with two legitimate choices, the child might choose neither and become religiously indifferent.⁶⁷

Better pastoral care was also seen as crucial. Pastors and priests were constantly reminded by their superiors that they needed to use every opportunity available to stress the importance of coming to church. In clerical literature and at clergy meetings, synods, and visitations, a variety of suggestions on how they should go about doing this were provided. Some were more general. To encourage attendance, many argued, the clergy needed to be visible. They had to stir up interest in what was going on at the church through private conversations and official pronouncements. They needed to educate the lay people about the different elements of the liturgy. It was hoped that if ordinary believers better understood what was going on in the service they might be more interested in attending. Pastors and priests also had to make house calls to people who did not attend regularly. It was up to them to talk about the need for regular church attendance with couples seeking a religious marriage. They needed to stress the

⁶⁷ See, for example, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled "Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern" written by Prot. Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Lecture entitled "Schüler und Lehrer aus einem Holz" given by Oberlandesgerichtsrat Dr. J. Grüb to meeting of the state meeting of the Catholic Parents' Association, Feb. 17, 1954.

importance of participation in Sunday worship services in religious education classes for children. Finally, they had to subtly, but firmly remind the laity that church law was quite clear about the need to attend regularly.⁶⁸

Some suggestions were more case specific. For example, there was a tremendous focus on ways to encourage men to come more regularly. This was particularly the case in the immediate postwar years as millions of former soldiers returned from the front. One Catholic report summed up the situation saying: “Pastoral care for men has become a matter of life or death for the Catholic Church. If we are successful in awakening in the men a desire to be good Catholics, then our church will bloom once again. If not, the ‘core troops’ of the church will be lost.”⁶⁹ Protestants spoke in equally apocalyptic terms. In a letter to all pastors under his jurisdiction, Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg wrote that if the church did not reach the men now they would become

⁶⁸ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 10: Report from the commission for pastoral care submitted in preparation for the archdiocesan synod of Bamberg, 1946. See also, BZAR OA 1127: Report entitled: “Anträge und Anregungen des Klerus der Diözese Regensburg für die Diözesansynode im Jahre 1948 zur Ergänzung der Bestimmungen der Synode vom Jahre 1938.” DAW Generalakten 761: Copy of report from diocesan synod in Passau, Sept. 3-5, 1946. DAW Generalakten 376: Report from Deans Conference in the Diocese of Würzburg, Mar. 6, 1951. DAW Generalakten 752: Report entitled “Richtlinien zur Gestaltung der Messfeier in der Diözese” written by P. Stephanus Amon (OSB), July 15, 1954. BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled: “Spendung der heilige Sakramente” written by Father Josef Erhardsburger for the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg. LKAN LkR 2378: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Oct. 19-21, 1948. LKAN LkR 2378: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Nov. 23-26, 1948. Both churches reminded their adherents that church law clearly stated that attendance was a duty. For the Catholic Church, Canon 1247 §1 made it clear that every Sunday was considered a feast day. Canon 1248 went on to state: “On feast days of precept, Mass is to be heard; there is an abstinence from servile work, legal acts, and likewise, unless there is a special indult or legitimate customs provide otherwise, from public trade, shopping, and other public buying and selling.” Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 423-424. The Regulations Governing the Administration of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria stated: “God gave all humans the commandment: ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.’ Therefore, the Christian community gathers together on Sunday, the day of the resurrection of our Lord, and on all its holidays for worship services...Barring an emergency, no Christian should stay away from parish worship services.” Section IV, Par. 3. “Kirchliches Lebensordnung,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (Dec. 15, 1922): 225.

⁶⁹ BZAR OA 2535: Report entitled: “Stellung des Priesters zu den heimgekehrten Soldaten,” no date. DAW Generalakten 678: Report entitled “Männer – Seelsorge” written by Father J. Pfister of Obernau, no date.

religiously indifferent or, worse still, militantly anti-church.⁷⁰ To avoid such disastrous consequences, pastors and priests were told to make every effort to actively welcome returning soldiers back to the life of the church. They had to visit the men in their homes shortly after their arrival and invite them to the parsonage for more private discussion. They needed to talk to loved ones about what to expect and how they could help the men transition back to regular life. It was up to them to provide whatever material assistance they could. They had to make special mention of the returnees in worship services and give them a place of honor to sit in the sanctuary. They needed to let the men know that somebody still cared about them and that while they had lost a great deal, they still had their faith and they still had their church to fall back on. Most importantly, they had to remind the men that while their military service might be over, they were not relieved from their sense of duty. This was particularly the case with their duty to attend church regularly.

Discussions concerning how to get men to come to worships services on a more regular basis continued on well past the immediate post war years. Pastors and priests were told to try and generate a sense of involvement in the church among men. They could do this through encouraging participation in church associations, asking men for assistance with small repairs to the church building, and the like. They also had to rebuke the now quite well established belief in many men's minds that church attendance was something only for women and children. Attending church had to be seen as a "manly" thing to do. In short, pastors and priest should do anything they could think of to get men

⁷⁰ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 60: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to all Prot. Pastorates in his region, July 31, 1945. See also, LKAN LkR 2459: Letter from Chancellery of the EKD to LkR, June 21, 1946.

to consider the church “theirs.” This sense of involvement and belonging would then hopefully translate over into a renewed desire to attend worship services.⁷¹

Refugees were also singled out as a group in need of special pastoral attention. According to many church officials, the way to influence the amorphous mass of refugees and prevent their slide into radicalism of either the left or right was to bring them into an “organic community” (*organische Gemeinschaft*) which would restore order to their lives.⁷² Local clergymen had a key role to play in this. They needed to visit the refugees and let them know what was going on in church. They had to stress that even though the refugees had lost their physical home, they had not lost their home in the church. Nor did the expulsion rescind their duty to regularly attend worship services.⁷³ The clergy also had to promote social harmony in the community. Church officials said that every opportunity to increase the Bavarian people’s understanding of the refugee problem must be seized. Pastors and priests were instructed to appeal to the congregation’s humanitarian feelings by pointing out that while natives had felt the adverse affects of the war, their suffering was nothing compared to the plight of the refugees. They also

⁷¹ DAW Generalakten 678: Report entitled: “Ein Vorschlag zum Aufbau der Männerseelsorge” written by Bishop Dietz of Fulda, July 1950. A copy of this report was sent to every diocese in Germany and appears to have disseminated quite widely in Bavarian church circles. See also, LKAN KrD München 651: Lecture entitled “Zur Problematik der Männerarbeit” given by Hans-Georg Lubkoll of Nuremberg at the Conference for Men’s Pastoral Care, Jan. 25-27, 1957. Lubkoll had been the LkR referee for pastoral care to men since 1955.

⁷² Connor, “The Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria,” 413.

⁷³ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 10: Report entitled “Die Seelsorge – heute und in nächster Zukunft” written for the 1946 archdiocesan synod in Bamberg. See also, BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Father Triller (Head of refugee pastoral care in the diocese of Regensburg) to Cath. Vicar General of Regensburg, Sept. 17, 1946. BZAR OA/NS 528: Pamphlet entitled “Die Flüchtlingsseelsorger – Skizzen und Mitteilungen” 1946. “Flüchtlingsfürsorge und –seelsorge,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (June 20, 1946). LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. I: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, Nov. 28, 1945. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. I: Report entitled “Gedanken über die Aufnahme evangelischer Flüchtlinge und ihrer Pfarrer in der evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern” written by Established Church Council member Christian Stoll, May 13, 1946. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. II: Pamphlet entitled “Grüßwort an unsere Flüchtlinge!” written by Bishop Meiser, 1946.

consciously reminded them to point out that western Germans had a special obligation to help the refugees because they were of German origin.⁷⁴

One can begin to see a general pattern developing. Clergymen were instructed to emphasize two key points. First, all Catholics and Protestants had to be reminded of the fundamental importance of regular church attendance. Only ill health or a dire emergency could release them from fulfilling their obligation to participate. In short, it had to be made absolutely clear that Sunday belonged to God. Second, pastors and priests had to generate interest and involvement in the church. They needed to educate people about what was taking place in worship services. It was hoped that if people felt a sense of belonging and identification with their church, they would be more inclined to attend worship services on a regular basis. The extent to which pastors and priests actually put such strategies into action will be discussed later in this section.

Posters, pamphlets, newspaper articles, lectures, discussion groups, and pastoral care were all key components of the churches attempts to encourage regular attendance. But as many agreed, the best solution was to have services that were so powerful and meaningful that people would want to come. Not surprisingly, opinions regarding what made a service “meaningful” were decidedly mixed and the topic became a source of considerable debate within each of the churches.

On some matters there was broad agreement. In both Protestant and Catholic sources, one finds repeated mention of the need for pastors and priests to truly engage in the service. As one Catholic official summed it up best: “The celebration of the Eucharist

⁷⁴ Ian Connor, “The Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria,” 414-15.

must be the absolute center-point of priestly life.”⁷⁵ Amidst all the hustle and bustle of teaching religious education classes, serving multiple parishes, providing basic pastoral care, and organizing religious charity, pastors and priests were forgetting that they set the tone for the Sunday service. If they performed the rituals in only a perfunctory manner and gave a dry and disorganized sermon that showed little effort, then the laity would grow bored and simply not attend anymore. If they showed a deep respect and love for the rituals and delivered sermons that were crisp, strongly grounded on scripture, and directed towards the concrete realities of the time, then the laity would feed off of their energy and be more inclined to come. While the service should not be a one-man-show, the pastor or priest had to set a personal example that would inspire others to more actively participate in worship.⁷⁶

Other concerns proved much more controversial. These were usually quite confession specific. Protestant worship services in Bavaria had changed little since the mid-nineteenth century. To bring its services in line with the spirit of rationalism that was so prevalent in German Protestantism at that time and to sharply set them off from their Catholic counterparts, the Bavarian established church adopted a new liturgy and order of worship in the 1820s.⁷⁷ Seeing transubstantiation as something altogether too medieval or, worse, too Catholic, the creators downplayed communion in favor of the

⁷⁵ BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Spendung der heilige Sakramente” written by Father Josef Erhardsburger for the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958.

⁷⁶ Ibid. See also, DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the diocesan synod in Würzburg, Oct. 11-14, 1954. See pgs. 25-29 in particular. For similar rhetoric from Protestants, see LKAN KrD Nürnberg 53: End of year letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach to all clergy in KrD Ansbach, Dec. 31, 1951.

⁷⁷ The liturgy received minor changes over the course of the next 30 years. In 1856, a more permanent version was released and this would become the standard Protestant liturgy in Bavaria for the next century. See LKAN KrD München 386: “Handreichung zu Agende I,” no date. See also, LKAN LkR 1920: Circular from Prot. Pastorate of Schonungen distributed to all Protestants in the area around Schweinfurt, Mar. 19, 1958.

supposedly more rationalistic sermon. Communion was largely removed from the main Sunday worship service and the time reserved for the sermon was greatly lengthened. Special communion services were established to provide access to the sacrament. In their desire to focus on the sermon, the writers of the rationalist liturgy even cut back on bible readings. While Luther himself had sometimes called for three or four readings in each service, the new liturgy allowed for only one (alternating between an Epistle and a Gospel reading).⁷⁸

A variety of factors combined during the early postwar years to bring about calls for a new liturgy and order of worship. First, the language of the old liturgy had become wooden over the years and many complained that they couldn't understand what was being said anymore.⁷⁹ Second, more and more laypeople began to complain that the heavy focus on the word had made Protestant services boring, sterile, and overly clergy-centric. Re-emphasizing communion was a way to breathe new life into them and encourage a stronger sense of lay participation.⁸⁰ Finally, the founding of the United Protestant Lutheran Church of Germany, a loose confederation comprising all of the Lutheran established churches, created a stimulus for a unified liturgy and order of worship that could be used in Lutheran churches across Germany.⁸¹

The United Protestant Lutheran Church of Germany picked up on these various threads and in the early 1950s it created a commission to address this theme. The commission finished its work in 1953 and its proposed liturgy and order of worship was

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ The file LKAN LkR 1919 contains several such complaints. See, for example, Letter from Dr. Hans Wendel of Munich to LkR, Jan. 11, 1951.

⁸⁰ For example, see LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from State Tax Inspector Johann Leibl of Munich to Established Church Council Member Daumiller of Munich, Sept. 9, 1949.

⁸¹ LKAN KrD München 386: "Handreichung zu Agende I," no date. See also, LKAN LkR 1920: Circular from Prot. Pastorate of Schonungen distributed to all Protestants in the area around Schweinfurt, Mar. 19, 1958.

dubbed Agenda I. It was then sent to the various established churches, which had final say over whether or not they chose to implement it in their areas of jurisdiction.⁸²

Agenda I was by no means revolutionary, but it did propose some major changes to the shape and style of Protestant worship services. Its authors argued that the old liturgies, like the one in Bavaria, were the lingering residue of the impoverishment of German Protestantism that the rationalism of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century had brought. The way forward, then, was to return the liturgy to its Lutheran roots. Rather than the so-called “iron ration” of one bible reading per week, the service should have at least an Epistle and a Gospel reading. The language of the liturgy was modernized, but the authors emphasized over and over again that the new liturgy was in fact more “Lutheran” than the previous ones. The authors of Agenda I also argued that while communion need not be served at every service as Luther had called for, it should be offered on a much more frequent basis. Moreover, communion should no be relegated to a separate service. Rather, it should take pride of place during the main worship service. To make time for these changes, sermon times would simply have to be reduced.⁸³

Debate within the Bavarian established church over the ratification of Agenda I was acrimonious to say the least. While stretching over the course of several years, they reached their highpoint at the 1956 state synod. Here, in a lengthy session that stretched well into the night, the pros and cons of the new liturgy and order of worship were

⁸² Liturgischen Auschuß der Vereinigten Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche Deutschlands, *Agende für evangelisch-lutherische Kirche und Gemeinden*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (Hannover, 1953), 3-7.

⁸³ This is a synthesis of the proposed changes. For a complete examination see all five parts of the volume listed above.

discussed.⁸⁴ Supporters argued that the long winded sermons and “one-man system” favored by the current system had sucked the life out of Protestant services. The cleaner, purer, more “Lutheran” Agenda I would generate a deeper sense of involvement and attachment to the worship service amongst the laity. This would in turn lead to better attendance rates. Others felt that adopting the new liturgy and order of worship would also promote a sense of pan-Lutheran identity amongst Bavarian Protestants; a consciousness of being part of a greater whole. Many top church officials, including Bishop Dietzfelbinger, argued that a vote against Agenda I was tantamount to a vote against the United Protestant Lutheran Church of Germany.

Detractors retorted that the emphasis on communion in the new order of worship would make Protestant services look all too much like Catholic mass. As Protestants were a distinct minority in Bavaria, they argued, Protestant services had to be palpably different from those offered by the Catholic Church. They had to be the source of a clearly defined Protestant identity. Services that were simply watered down versions of the mass could never do this. If Agenda I was passed, Bavarian Protestants had might as well give up the fight and simply become Catholic. Others argued that the new liturgy would not produce the sense of belonging that its promoters promised. Bavarian Protestantism, many particularists loved to argue, had a history and culture all its own. A standardized, pan-Lutheran liturgy would snuff out these essential traditions and undermine the sense of community that they nourished. Laypeople would feel alienated from their church and stop attending. Only a truly “Bavarian” liturgy, such as the one they had now, could attract Bavarian Protestants.

⁸⁴ Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern, *Verhandlungen der Landessynode* (Munich, 1956), 67-101. All subsequent points about the 1956 synod are taken from this source.

A compromise was eventually reached. Supporters of Agenda I saw that the opposition was still strong enough to block any move for complete, statewide ratification. Detractors knew that they couldn't hold off approval forever. This led to talk of voluntary acceptance. As the effects of the possible change would be felt most strongly at the local level, it was decided that the matter should rest in the hands of the individual parishes or, at most, the district superintendents.⁸⁵ Both sides readily agreed to such a settlement because they felt it played to their strengths. Supporters saw it as a chance to get Agenda I through the door. Once it had been accepted in some places, it would be easier to push for complete ratification. For detractors, this solution was at worst a chance to at least maintain the choice of having the old system. At best, it would lead to a flare up of Bavarian particularism and the whole project would be dumped due to lay protest.

The hopes of Agenda I's supporters were realized much quicker than most might have dared imagine. Throughout 1957, individual parishes and some whole districts began to use the new liturgy and order of worship.⁸⁶ While there were complaints, particularly from elderly lay people, many seemed to have liked the greater emphasis on communion and the more understandable language that the new liturgy brought. Agenda I began to gain momentum. This was readily apparent at the 1958 state synod when a proposal calling for complete ratification found wide ranging support. Resistance quickly melted away and on April 20, 1958, the state synod formally decided to accept Agenda I

⁸⁵ "Agende I und ihre Verwendung in der Landeskirche," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (June 21, 1956): Addendum, no page numbers.

⁸⁶ "Neue evang. Gottesdienstordnung," *Fränkischer Tag*, May 18, 1957

and rescinded the right of individual parishes to use the old liturgy and order of worship.⁸⁷

Questions concerning what constituted a moving Protestant worship service were certainly not reserved for the realm of high ecclesiastical politics. They were also negotiated at a much lower level. Protestant church officials repeatedly told pastors that no matter what their views concerning liturgical reform might be they must not deviate from approved forms of worship. They had a duty to stick to the prescribed forms until that time when they were rightly changed by the proper authorities. Worship services were not the time or place to experiment with individual initiatives. Not all pastors agreed. With attendance levels dropping, some felt that they had to do whatever they could to try and get people to come to church. Adding elements to the Sunday worship service to make it more meaningful seemed like a good place to start. An example from the small town of Baiersdorf, situated about 20km north of Nuremberg, provides us with an excellent look at the shape of such attempts and the reactions they generated.

In 1951, Pastor Knappe of Baiersdorf decided that he wanted to add an extra element to services held during Lent. Knappe had served on the Eastern Front during WWI and on his way back to Bavaria after the war he attended a service at a Protestant church in Berlin. One piece, a refrain sung by children that was accompanied by the organist, had particularly moved him and when he became a pastor he hoped to implement it into his services. The piece was not part of the accepted liturgy for the Bavarian established church so he refrained from using it. However, as Knappe later

⁸⁷ "Vollzug der Beschlüsse der Landessynode," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (May 28, 1958): 56-7. See also, LKAN KrD München 386: "Handreichung zu Agende I," 1958. Manfred Seitz, "Kirchliches Leben," in Gerhard Müller, Horst Weigelt, and Wolfgang Zorn (eds.), *Handbuch der Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirche in Bayern*, Vol. 2 (Erzabtei St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2000), 455-76.

wrote, the sight of more and more empty pews on Sunday morning led him to believe that something had to be done. In full knowledge that it was expressly forbidden to break from the accepted liturgy, Pastor Knappe went ahead and made plans for the inclusion of the piece. He taught the children how to sing the refrain during their religious education classes at the local Protestant confessional school and encouraged their parents, particularly the fathers, many of whom didn't attend anymore, to come to church and hear them sing. Sure enough, attendance at the services where the refrain was sung did go up, but not overwhelmingly so. Many parishioners, according to Knappe, commented that they liked the new piece and would be interested in incorporating other new elements into the service.⁸⁸ Others were not so enamored with it. Deeply resistant to change, older members of the congregation protested what they felt to be an "alien" presence in the service. Their cause was, interestingly enough, taken up by a young student at the established church's school for music in nearby Erlangen who was helping out with the music at the church in Baiersdorf. Without ever confronting Pastor Knappe about the piece, the young student asked the director of the school to write a letter of complaint to the church hierarchy. The director complied and, no doubt based upon the somewhat one-sided reports of the young student, composed a letter that spoke in the harshest of tones. Pastor Knappe, according to the professor, had willfully undermined not only the liturgy of the Bavarian established church but also its authority. His efforts had only served to stir up controversy, uncertainty, and prejudice in the parish and they set a dangerous precedence.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Baiersdorf to LkR, April 20, 1951.

⁸⁹ LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from Gerhard Weiß of Erlangen to LkR, April 10, 1951.

Heinrich Riedel, the Established Church Council member responsible for questions regarding worship services, wrote an official letter to Pastor Knappe the following week. He stated: “It is completely unacceptable to introduce a piece of such dubious worth into our Lutheran church. Changes that are not absolutely necessary and approved of bring only conflict in the parish. Therefore, we (the council) cannot understand why you have deviated from the ordained liturgy of our church, particularly at a time when individualism is wrecking havoc in our parishes. We therefore order that the liturgy in Baiersdorf be immediately brought back into line with the approved forms.”⁹⁰ In the letter cited earlier, Pastor Knappe wrote back saying that he would stop using the piece immediately and that the church could trust him to use only approved liturgical forms from then on. He went on to plead his case. As discussed earlier, he told Riedel that attendance had gone up at the services where the refrain was used and that many people had actually liked it. Didn’t this lead to the conclusion, he stated, that local clergymen should have more of a voice in matters concerning the liturgy? After all, they were the ones who interacted with the laity on the most regular basis. They were the ones who heard all the suggestions and complaints about services. In short, they were most in touch with what the laity wanted. To reject this first hand knowledge and this desire for new ideas out of a general fear of parish conflict or a lack of unity was foolhardy. He concluded somewhat boldly: “Rules that are not in touch with reality are ridiculous.”⁹¹

Riedel wrote a private letter in reply the following month. He began by saying that he knew Knappe had only the best of intentions and that the tone of his previous letter had been much too sharp. Despite this, it was absolutely essential to maintain the

⁹⁰ LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Baiersdorf, Apr. 17, 1951.

⁹¹ LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Baiersdorf to LkR, Apr. 20, 1951.

inner unity of the service. The church did not need to fear change or conflict with the laity out of hand, but it had to accept that worship was intimately bound up with traditional practices and familiar rhythms. As these played such a deciding role in the way people experienced and drew meaning from the service, alterations should only be made after extended and open deliberation.⁹²

The case of Baiersdorf is particularly illuminating because it illustrates just how complicated and controversial any attempt at worship service reform could be. Pastor Knappe's efforts show that there was a desire for change. Given that he was well into his 50's at the time of this occurrence, one must also assume that this impulse was not merely limited to the young. Even established members of the institutional church came to the conclusion that something had to be done to make services more meaningful if they wanted people to come. There was also an audience for change. Several parishioners commented that they liked the extra element and would like to see others. One also sees opposition. Church officials obviously feared a loss of unity and authority. But this incident is by no means simply an example of an out of touch and decrepit church hierarchy trying to pull in the reins. Heinrich Riedel took the time to respond personally to Pastor Knappe to explain why he felt it necessary to uphold the current liturgy. Worship, he argued, was indelibly caught up in tradition and rhythm. One should not simply throw these things out because they were seemingly out of touch with the times. To do so might cause irreparable harm to the worship experience and diminish the meaning people ascribed to it. In the end, this is a very valid argument.

The Baiersdorf incident shows that laypeople were often deeply resistant to change as well. Many considered any deviations to the norm to be suspect and

⁹² LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from Heinrich Riedel to Prot. Pastorate of Baiersdorf, May 8, 1951.

immediately protested. Nor was this limited to the elderly. In the case of Baiersdorf, it was a young man who first complained. While we know little of his motives, we cannot rule out that he launched his protest out of the conviction that Pastor Knappe's changes were detracting from the meaning of the service rather than adding to it.

In short then, change was maddeningly difficult. It had to be negotiated within this tightly drawn web of interaction. "Meaningful" could take on vastly different connotations to everyone involved. As the rituals themselves made up such an important part of the worship experience, few were willing to back down from their convictions about what a service "should" look like. Internecine conflicts such as this may have been unavoidable, but they carried a heavy cost. The years of infighting devoured time and energy which might have been used to carry out the original goal of all this focus on worship: bringing souls back to Christ.

The situation in the Catholic Church was quite different, but some parallels can also be seen. Liturgical reform had been a topic of keen debate within the church during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁹³ Serious studies of the origins and evolution of the Catholic liturgy were undertaken. Many began to argue that the liturgy had been corrupted over the years and must be returned to its "pure" and "ancient" form. Some priests went so far as to re-implement ancient rites into their services without permission from their superiors. Others argued that the liturgy needed to be made more modern, not more traditional. Archaic ceremonies and a dead language were only driving people away. The church, they argued, should allow use of the vernacular and remove bible readings from the lection that were "inappropriate" for modern times. While muted

⁹³ For a discussion of the liturgical reform movement see John Murphy, *The Mass and Liturgical Reform* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1956). See also "Über die Praxis der Opferfeier," *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 5, 1954.

to a great extent after 1914 because of war and economic chaos, the controversy surrounding what constituted “right” Catholic worship dragged on well into the middle of the century.

Arguing that he was duty bound “to give serious attention to this ‘revival’ (here referring to the scholarly interest in the liturgy) as it is advocated in some quarters and to take proper steps to preserve it at the outset from excess or outright perversion,” Pope Pius XII released the encyclical *Mediator Dei* in 1947.⁹⁴ In it, he welcomed the revival of interest in the liturgy and the fruits of scholarship that allowed: “The majestic ceremonies of the sacrifice of the altar [to] become better known, understood, and appreciated.”⁹⁵ In spite of this, “We (royal plural) observe with considerable anxiety and some misgiving that elsewhere certain enthusiasts, over-eager in their search for novelty, are straying beyond the path of sound doctrine and prudence.”⁹⁶ The pope then went on to address the arguments of both traditionalists and modernists. To the former, he stated: “Assuredly it is a wise and most laudable thing to return in spirit and affection to the sources of the sacred liturgy...But it is neither wise nor laudable to reduce everything to antiquity by every possible device.”⁹⁷ To those who wanted to modernize the services, particularly by implementing the vernacular, he stated: “The use of the Latin language, customary in a considerable portion of the Church, is a manifest and beautiful sign of unity, as well as an effective antidote for any corruption of doctrinal truth. In spite of this, the use of the mother tongue in connection with several of the rites may be of much

⁹⁴ Verse 7. All quotes from *Mediator Dei* are taken from the official English translation on the Vatican website. See http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, verse 5.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, verse 8.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, verse 62

advantage to the people.”⁹⁸ The pope here was not vacillating between both sides or merely refusing to make a decision, he was laying the groundwork for the main point of the encyclical. He wrote: “In every measure taken, then, let proper contact with the ecclesiastical hierarchy be maintained. Let no one arrogate to himself the right to make regulations and impose them on others at will. Only the Sovereign Pontiff...have (*sic*) the right and the duty to govern the Christian people.”⁹⁹ The Vatican alone had authority over matters pertaining to the liturgy. Any alterations implemented without express approval were strictly forbidden. Until that time when the Holy See decided to institute changes, every priest had the express duty of maintaining current liturgical forms. With the ultra-conservative Pius XII on the throne of St. Peter, those changes seemed a long way off.

While *Mediator Dei* effectively halted much of the talk about liturgical reform, there was still considerable room for debate about the nature of worship within its strict parameters. To make services more personalized, and hence more meaningful, church officials seemed to constantly announce that special prayers and songs, all naturally a part of the acceptable liturgy, be recited and sung during the main Sunday service. In what can hardly be described as an unusual example, Bishop Buchberger called for the addition of four Our Father’s (one for the POW’s, one for the missing in action, one for the war dead, and one for the dead of the parish), three Hail Mary’s, and one lengthy choral refrain to all main Sunday services in the diocese for the entire year of 1948.¹⁰⁰ This put the clergy in a difficult position. When added to the already lengthy regular

⁹⁸ Ibid., verse 60.

⁹⁹ Ibid., verse 60.

¹⁰⁰ “Proklamation,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 10, 1948): 5. Innumerable notices of this sort can be found in the various official publications of the dioceses throughout the period under study.

liturgy, these extra elements caused the service to run at least 90 minutes and sometimes longer. Naturally, lay people began to complain and some simply stopped coming. What had been designed as a move to encourage a sense of involvement in the service was in fact leading people away from it.

At a clergy conference, priests gathered to discuss possible solutions.¹⁰¹ Opinions were quite divided. Some argued that the additional elements should simply be cut. Packing a service full of extras didn't make it more meaningful. In fact, it led people to get less out of the service as they were constantly looking at their watches or listening to their stomachs growl. A clean, simple service that ran no more than 75 minutes was best. Others felt that the additions were absolutely necessary. The service had to offer something to everyone. The majority of laypeople, they argued, would be willing to stay a little longer if the service illustrated the church's concern over their particular struggles. Priests should not be so fearful of lay complaints. Still others argued that other parts of the service, most notably the sermon, should be greatly reduced to make way for the additional elements.

Unable to reach a compromise, the priests asked their dean to write to Bishop Buchberger for advice. Buchberger never responded to that letter, and, more generally, neither did the Catholic Church. *Mediator Dei* prohibited any changes to the regular liturgy. Bishops continued to add additional prayers and refrains to Sunday services in an effort to make them more personalized and, hence, more meaningful. As the 1950s progressed, church officials began to insist in ever stronger terms that priests provide a more substantial sermon so that the laity would have something to think about during the

¹⁰¹ BZAR OA 1129: Letter from Cath. Dean of Cham to Bishop Buchberger, Feb. 11, 1948. This letter includes a report of the clergy meeting. All subsequent discussion is referenced to this letter.

week.¹⁰² Catholic services could thus only get longer and longer. Lay people grew more and more frustrated and either took it out on their priests or simply stopped coming. Priests were divided over how to respond and looked to their superiors for answers. Church officials largely ignored the problem and continued to add more elements; thus starting the cycle all over again. While certainly not a new problem, it proved difficult for the Catholic Church in postwar Germany to find the delicate balance between providing a more personalized service that generated a palpable sense of belonging and meaning and providing a service that did not drag to the point of irritation.

Mediator Dei also left something of a question mark when it came to the language of the liturgy. Latin was still seen as the customary language for Catholic mass. However, there had been increasing acceptance of the use of the vernacular for certain elements of the liturgy. Pius XII reiterated this when he made his comments about the advantages of the vernacular. But directly after those words, he wrote: “But the Apostolic See alone is empowered to grant this permission. It is forbidden, therefore, to take any action whatever of this nature without having requested and obtained such consent...”¹⁰³ This authority was usually deferred to the bishop of a given diocese. It was up to him to decide the extent to which the vernacular would be incorporated into worship services. Naturally, the bishop’s decision on such an important issue was not made in a vacuum. Both supporters and detractors of the vernacular argued their case in variety of different forums to try and influence the outcome. One can see an excellent

¹⁰² BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Liturgie: Feier der Gottesdienste” written by Cath. Cathedral Canon Joseph Meindl of Regensburg for 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958. See also, DAW Generalakten 752: Report entitled “Richtlinien zur Gestaltung der Messfeier in der Diözese” written by Father Stephanus Amon (OSB) of Münsterschwarzach, July 15, 1954.

¹⁰³ Pope Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, verse 60.

example of this in the records concerning the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg.¹⁰⁴

While other dioceses in Bavaria had already accepted the so called German High Mass (*Deutsches Hochamt*), which contained some Latin but was predominantly in German, the Diocese of Regensburg still used the strictly Latin mass.¹⁰⁵ Archbishop Buchberger was deeply conservative and inclined to keep the old mass, but he wanted to know how the priests in his diocese felt on this matter so he raised it as a topic for discussion at the 1958 synod. The responses he received are illuminating. A strong majority of priests and deans in the diocese favored acceptance of the German High Mass. This was, they argued, an opportunity to better reach the laity. If it was in their native language, people would be able to more fully understand what was going in the service. This knowledge would produce a rising sense of interest in and attachment to the service that would translate over into better attendance. In short, having the service in German would make it more a meaningful experience; one that people would *want* to attend.¹⁰⁶

A loud minority sharply disagreed. One should not throw away the Latin mass and its centuries of tradition, they argued, simply because there was the possibility of having a German one. The Latin mass had a richness and internal unity that the German mass simply could not hope to match. The use of the vernacular would not generate the sense of belonging to the church that its supporters promised. Rather, it would lead to the collapse of this feeling of being part of something greater than oneself that was a true

¹⁰⁴ BZAR OA 1132: Report over the proceedings of the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958.

¹⁰⁵ The Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, for example, instituted the German High Mass in 1956. See BZAR Generalia 604.10: Letter from EOM to BOR, Apr. 23, 1956.

¹⁰⁶ BZAR OA 1145: Letter from Cath. Dean of Nabburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Mar. 11, 1958. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Dean of Neunberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Mar. 12, 1958. Letter from Cath. Dean of Weiden to BOR, Mar. 25, 1958. Letter from Cath. Dean of Pongdorf to BOR, Mar. 14, 1958. Letter from Cath. Dean of Riedenburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Mar. 14, 1958. See also, BZAR OA 2150: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Pastorate of Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 11, 1958. See also the speech of Cath. Cathedral Canon Josef Meindl during the synod in BZAR OA 1132: Report over the proceedings of the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958.

strength of the Catholic Church. The use of the vernacular would rob the service of its meaning, not add to it.¹⁰⁷

In the end, Archbishop Buchberger sided with the latter and refused to allow use of the German High Mass in his diocese. As tempting as it may be, we should not dismiss his decision as merely that of an old man who refused to get with the times. During the postwar era, there were serious calls within the Catholic Church for increased use of the vernacular. This was seen as a way to get people more involved in the service. Letters written by priests and deans in preparation for the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg and speeches given during it are evidence of how deeply convinced many Catholics were that the time had come for change. As we now know, these sentiments would find fruition in the groundbreaking reforms of the Second Vatican Council. On the other hand, there were also, and continue to be, a large number of Catholics who felt that abandoning the Latin Mass would be a tragic mistake. Centuries of tradition could not be simply jettisoned without dramatic and usually negative consequences. Both sides thus made legitimate claims that were argued with conviction. Much like the situation in the Protestant Church, there was a deep concern with the question of what constituted a moving service. What kind of service would people *want* to attend? Existential questions of this sort were certain to find no easy answers. As such, debate over them dragged on interminably; draining away valuable time and energy that could have been used to carry out the greater mission of bringing souls to Christ.

The arrival of the refugees added another dimension to these debates concerning the nature of worship. While stripped of most of their material possessions during the

¹⁰⁷ See the speech of Prof. Dr. Hubmann of Amberg during the synod in BZAR OA 1132: Report over the proceedings of the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958. See also, BZAR OA 1145: Letter from Cath. Dean of Tirschentreuth to Archbishop Buchberger, Mar. 14, 1958.

expulsion, the refugees had certainly not lost everything. They brought with them their own specific religious traditions and conceptions of what constituted a meaningful worship service. Often, these proved to be at odds with those of native Bavarians. Due to the confederative structure of Protestant churches in Germany, which stressed regional distinctiveness and lacked intercommunion, this was particularly the case for Protestant refugees. Most of the Protestant refugees settled in Bavaria came from Silesia. Ecclesiastically, this area had been apart of the Old Prussian Union, an established church of the reformed tradition. As mentioned in the introduction, Bavarian Protestantism was militantly Lutheran. Few may have understood these historical divisions within Protestantism, but they could grasp the meaningful differences in worship service traditions that existed between the two. An underlying desire for things familiar strengthened the refugees' allegiance to their own traditions and many wanted to continue to use the Old Prussian Union liturgy with which they were familiar.¹⁰⁸

This created something of a quandary for native Bavarian church officials. On the one hand, they wanted to reach out to the refugees in their time of need and encourage them to attend church regularly. Many refugee pastors were quick to argue that allowing refugees the use of their traditional liturgy, even if only on a limited basis, would greatly assist with this. Here was a way to provide a piece of their lost homeland in the worship service. Refugees were more likely to attend such services and through them they could be brought into the orbit of the church.¹⁰⁹ While there was a certain unspoken agenda

¹⁰⁸ Several such requests can be found in the file LKAN LkR 1919. See, for example, Letter from Herbert Herrmann of Buttenheim bei Bamberg to Bishop Meiser, April 23, 1949. See also, LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. 2, Report 2. The matter of refugees and differences between the Protestant established churches is discussed at length in Hartmut Rudolph, *Evangelische Kirche und Vertriebene, 1945-1972* Vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1984), 494-517.

¹⁰⁹ Joel Dark, *Religion and Refugees in Postwar West Germany* (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1998), 154-58.

behind such arguments, greatly assisted by the often invoked specter of refugees falling prey to religious indifference or radicalism of either the left or right if the church failed to do everything in its power to help them, they were certainly not unreasonable in light of the fact that refugees did attend such services in greater numbers. On the other hand, Bavarian Protestant officials were deeply concerned that their religious traditions might be overrun by the expellees. Even if it was unpopular with the refugees and many decided to not come to church, was it not necessary for the Protestant-Lutheran Church of *Bavaria* to stay true to its *Bavarian* roots? Allowing the use of a different liturgy was tantamount to having a church within the church.

In the end, the second concern proved far more pressing. Faced with the threat of unordered religious activity in its area, the church hierarchy worked vigorously to bring worship practices under its own oversight and regulation. Liturgy diverging from approved forms could only be used in special Sunday afternoon refugee services. Prior permission from the church hierarchy had to be attained to hold such services and it was made clear that they were not to become regular events. If communion was offered, it had to be held according to the Lutheran rites.¹¹⁰

Such administrative rigor seems to present the image that the Bavarian established church contradicted its mission of encouraging attendance at worship services and treated its refugee parishioners with a great deal of indifference. Some have argued that the church missed a great opportunity here to encourage a deeper sense of religious involvement among the refugees.¹¹¹ To do so, would be to ask the church to be

¹¹⁰ Rudolph, *Evangelische Kirche und Vertriebene*, 494-517.

¹¹¹ Lothar Albertin, "Flüchtlinge – Eine kirchenhistorische Chance für den Protestantismus nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg," in Rainer Schulze, Doris von der Brelie-Lewien and Helga Grabing (eds.), *Flüchtlinge*

something other than it really was. The Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria acted in a manner wholly consistent with its self-understanding as an institution responsible for Protestant religious life within its own administrative area. Welcoming the refugees and encouraging them to participate in worship services were seen as noble goals that the church must strive for, but they could not come at the expense of established traditions and practices.

Debates such as these were hardly heard in Catholic Church. In fact, the church argued that its universal liturgy given in a universal language was a key source of unity and strength. This should not suggest that regional differences simply didn't exist. Most Catholic refugees who were settled in Bavaria came from the Sudetenland. As such they had different patron saints and different folk songs. The latter proved particularly important as many complained that they missed their traditional folk songs and wanted to hear them in church. Priests began to write to their superiors asking for permission to hold Sunday afternoon services where such songs would figure prominently. This was a way, both native and refugee priests argued, to win the confidence of the refugees and encourage more regular attendance.¹¹² As one priest who had been expelled from the Sudetenland put it: "When the homeless know that consideration is being taken of them, they will once again become conscious of the fact that the Church is their mother, that it always has their best intentions in mind."¹¹³ Unlike their Protestant counterparts, Catholic officials did not see such services as a threat and could therefore readily accept

und Vertriebene in der westdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte (Hildesheim: Verlag August Lax, 1987), 288-301.

¹¹² BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Father and Dean Franz Joseph Amberger of Reidenburg to Bishop Buchberger, Nov. 16, 1946. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Weihmichl to BOR, Feb. 27, 1947. Letters from Cath. Caritas Association – Landshut to BOR, Feb. 8, 1947 and Aug. 12, 1947. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6187: Letter from Father Roth of Dachau to EOM, April 26, 1949.

¹¹³ BZAR OA/NS 532: Report from Father Triller (Head of refugee pastoral care in the Diocese of Regensburg) for the period from Jan. 1, 1947 to June 30, 1947.

such arguments. While making it clear that services of this nature should not take place every Sunday as they might preclude refugees from blending in with the native parish, diocesan authorities dispensed the right to hold multiple services and even suggested refugee priests who might be willing to offer a sermon.¹¹⁴

Any discussion of the wide variety of means through which the churches tried to encourage regular worship service attendance inevitably raises the question of reception. Did the Catholic Church's more open stance towards refugee services lead to more regular attendance on the part of Catholic refugees? More generally, did the churches' posters and pamphlets have any effect? Was anyone listening to their pleas to come to church? In essence, were the churches successful in their efforts to encourage people to attend Sunday services regularly? Like all questions regarding such loaded terms as "success" and "failure," the answer is not so clear.

Obviously the first place to look for information concerning worship service attendance is church statistical records. For the Catholic Church, there is ample documentation of two key markers. The first was the number of people fulfilling their duty to receive Easter communion. This was considered the absolute minimum attendance requirement for Catholics. Perhaps a better measure, the second was the number of people attending regular Sunday services. This was calculated according to attendance at two "counting Sundays" (*Zahlsonntag*) held during the year. The first was during Lent, usually Palm Sunday, and the second was in September. The reasoning behind this choice was to get an idea of attendance during a major holiday season, but not on a main holiday such as Christmas and Easter itself, and on a theoretically "normal"

¹¹⁴ BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from BOR to Cath. Pastorate of Weihmichl, Mar. 1, 1947. See also, Letter from BOR to Cath. Caritas Association – Landshut, date illegible.

Sunday. The totals were then added together and divided by two to generate an average attendance number. The following two charts provide a breakdown of these numbers for the seven Bavarian dioceses.

The first shows the total number of people receiving Easter communion in each diocese and what percentage of the total number of registered Catholics there that they comprised. The years were chosen to provide a comparison point to the pre-World War II period and a general overview of changes during the postwar era. The average for all German dioceses, which, for the postwar period, includes both East and West Germany, is also shown.¹¹⁵

	1935	1946	1948	1952	1954	1959
Augsburg	(70%)	775,371 (58%)	857,824 (62%)	(63%)	892,216 (64%)	882,341 (62%)
Bamberg	(59%)	338,195 (50%)	380,287 (52%)	(53%)	410,497 (53%)	408,101 (51%)
Eichstätt	(73%)	203,317 (61%)	228,961 (67%)	(73%)	231,462 (70%)	235,382 (69%)
Munich	(59%)	719,471 (42%)	784,483 (45%)	(47%)	854,717 (46%)	880,989 (45%)
Passau	(74%)	347,659 (72%)	390,700 (78%)	(78%)	382,352 (78%)	362,142 (76%)

¹¹⁵ Absolute totals for the years 1935 and 1952 could not be found, but percentages are available and have been included here for reference. All Catholic statistics are taken from *Kirchliches Handbuch: Amtliches statistisches Jahrbuch der katholischen Kirche Deutschlands*. This chart was compiled from statistics in Vol. 23 (1951), 400-01, 408-09; Vol. 24 (1957), 358, 436-37; Vol. 25 (1962), 636-37.

Regensburg	(76%)	1,108,591	892,504	(76%)	928,976	896,823
		(95%)	(73%)		(75%)	(72%)
Würzburg	(72%)	496,095	554,663	(68%)	607,980	604,634
		(59%)	(64%)		(70%)	(67%)
Germany	(61%)	11,997,937	13,129,868	(54%)	14,055,425	14,073,751
		(50%)	(53%)		(54%)	(52%)

The second chart show the averaged number of people who attended the two counting Sundays and their percentage of the total number of registered Catholics in the diocese. The same pattern of years has been kept. Once again, an average for Germany as a whole has also been provided.¹¹⁶

	1935	1946	1948	1952	1954	1959
Augsburg	(57%)	649,982	700,154	(50%)	712,317	688,574
		(49%)	(51%)		(51%)	(49%)
Bamberg	(52%)	303,153	334,011	(46%)	357,932	348,563
		(45%)	(46%)		(46%)	(43%)
Eichstätt	(63%)	-	180,695	(57%)	185,173	179,218
			(53%)		(56%)	(52%)
Munich	(46%)	601,732	655,715	(37%)	698,080	716,792
		(35%)	(38%)		(36%)	(35%)
Passau	(63%)	258,809	281,631	(56%)	277,562	258,471
		(54%)	(56%)		(56%)	(54%)

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

Regensburg	(69%)	-	-	(60%)	728,452 (59%)	706,709 (57%)
Würzburg	(65%)	485,271 (58%)	505,477 (59%)	(59%)	514,926 (59%)	502,524 (56%)
Germany	(56%)	10,136,629 (42%)	11,208,963 (45%)	(48%)	12,521,895 (48%)	12,364,819 (46%)

The situation for the Protestant Church is less clear. Unlike the Catholic Church, or even the other Protestant established churches, the Bavarian church did not keep records concerning worship service attendance. The church did keep statistics on the number of people who received communion on a special counting Sunday held once year. This usually took place during Lent but Protestants were loathe to call it Easter communion as that sounded all too Catholic. While far from ideal, it provides at least some kind of information concerning the number of Protestants who fulfilled even the most basic of attendance requirements. The following chart shows the total number of people who received communion in church on the counting Sunday; those receiving private communion have not been included. It then shows a breakdown by gender and, finally, what percentage of the total number of registered Protestants in Bavaria this number comprises. A similar pattern of years as those provided in the charts concerning the Catholic Church has been maintained. It must be noted that the Protestant Church significantly reshuffled its internal administrative divisions during this period. To maintain a consistent frame of reference, this chart will focus only on the state level. Given the highly fragmented nature of German Protestantism and the differing record

systems used by each established church, it would be very difficult to provide any kind of reliable average for Germany as a whole.¹¹⁷

	1933	1946	1948	1952	1954	1959
Total	922,380	944,968	1,089,485	1,106,079	1,162,252	1,145,800
Men	396,588	344,819	417,290	431,371	453,278	446,862
Women	525,792	600,149	672,195	674,708	708,974	698,938
%	56	41	46	47	46	42

Four key trends can be detected in these statistics. First, aside from the case of Easter communion in the diocese of Regensburg, a number which seems to warrant no small amount of skepticism, attendance and communion levels were dramatically lower in 1946 than they had been at the beginning of the Nazi period. This is particularly the case with attendance levels. In most instances the difference ranged from 10-15 percentage points. Given the instability of the time and the fact that many men were still working their way home from the front or serving as prisoners of war, these numbers should be looked at with a critical eye. The numbers from 1948, a point by which the situation in Bavaria had greatly stabilized, are perhaps more telling. Even here, though, one sees that attendance levels were between 5-10 percentage points lower than those of the early Nazi period. This lends credence to the argument that the Nazi era had particularly negative repercussions on church attendance.

¹¹⁷ “Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern r.d.R.* (Sept. 5, 1935): 107. “Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 16 (1949): no page numbers. “Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 21 (1951): 12. “Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 3 (1958): 5. “Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens in der ELKB,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (1962): 5.

Second, there was a noticeable recovery in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Yearly communion rates went up for both churches and all of the Catholic dioceses saw real growth in church attendance. While this rise can no doubt be attributed to a variety of different factors, one should certainly not rule out that part of it was due to the churches' efforts to promote regular church attendance. It is worth noting, however, that apart from Easter communion statistics in the dioceses of Passau and Regensburg, this growth never came close to returning church attendance statistics to their pre-Nazi levels.

Third, one sees a downward trend in the second half of the 1950s. While a large number of Catholics did continue to fulfill their yearly communion duties, Protestants increasingly did not do so. But one cannot help but notice Catholic attendance statistics from the end of the decade. Almost all have returned to the same low levels seen at the end of the Nazi period. This meant that they were roughly 10-15 percentage points lower than they had been at the beginning of the Nazi period. By no means does this represent a catastrophic fallout of the type that would be seen in the 1960s and 70s. However, it is quite clear that even during the 1950s fewer and fewer people were coming to church on any kind of a regular basis.

Finally, Catholics fulfilled their basic attendance requirements more readily than Protestants. While Catholic numbers saw a steady decline, much like those of the Protestants, they started from a higher mark and generally stayed well above Protestant levels.

Statistics of this sort are quite illuminating, but they often obscure as much as they reveal. First, they say nothing about the extraordinary situation in 1945. Church statistics were largely not filed for this year. Given the chaos and desperation of the time,

this is not overly surprising. It is quite regrettable though as by all accounts churches were packed to the seams in the immediate wake of the war. Some account of what took place in 1945 is needed. Second, they focus solely on the number of people who fulfilled the minimum attendance requirements set by the churches. As such, they say very little about regular attendance rates. Also, the laity were well aware that their attendance would be counted on the given dates. This may have encouraged a stronger turnout than could commonly be expected on a regular Sunday, thereby stiling the numbers. Finally, and most importantly, they provide little to no information on the attendance patterns of various age, gender, and social groups. Were young people attending church? Did refugees come? Were Catholic women, like their Protestant counterparts, more likely to take yearly communion than Catholic men? Statistics alone cannot answer these very legitimate questions. Obviously, more information is needed.

Letters and reports from ordinary pastors and priests to their superiors are perhaps the best place to look. One must openly admit that such sources are deeply problematic. Clergy members were certainly not above padding their reports to make the situation sound better than it might have actually been in order to avoid criticism or gain promotion. Nor were they averse to portraying parish life in the most apocalyptic of tones to try and gain sympathy or more resources. Moreover, as local conditions and traditions varied so sharply, they often have little resonance beyond the specific environment in which they were created. These factors must be taken into account. It is necessary to read such reports with a very critical eye; looking all the while for recurring constructions and rhetoric. While the labor is intense, the payoff is great. These sources provide a glimpse of parish life from the closest perspective available. In the particular

case of church attendance patterns, they generally uphold trends laid out in the previously discussed statistics. However, they also paint a much more nuanced and ultimately less flattering picture.

Several core themes become readily apparent when looking at these reports. First, the sharp rise in attendance seen at the end of the war did not last long. Numerous historians have commented that church attendance during the closing days of the war and the months that followed was particularly high.¹¹⁸ Reports from pastors and priests back this up. Churches were filled to capacity and people who had not been seen in years began to come regularly. Nor was this confession specific. The Protestant district superintendent of Hof commented in June 1945 that there had been record attendance at the seven local churches since March.¹¹⁹ The Catholic priest in Fürstenfeldbruck wrote to Cardinal Faulhaber saying that attendance had been very strong for much of the year. Almost every member of the parish received communion on the Sunday following Germany's surrender.¹²⁰ While concrete numbers from this period are few and far between, evidence such as this suggests that attendance in the wake of the war was quite high.

Opinions concerning this surge in attendance were quite mixed. Some were overjoyed and said it was the start of a new era of Christian piety in Germany. Dean Michael Schütz of the Archdiocese of Bamberg summed this up best when argued that it

¹¹⁸ Werner Blessing, "Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben..." 64-5. See also, Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 47-9. Hockenos, *A Church Divided*, 42-3.

¹¹⁹ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Hof to Bishop Meiser, June 26, 1945. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 6: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Georgensgmünd to Prot. District Superintendent of Roth, June 8, 1945.

¹²⁰ EAM NL Faulhaber 5364: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Fürstenfeldbruck to Cardinal Faulhaber, June 20, 1945. A wide range of reports such as this can be found in Verena von Wiczlinski (ed.), *Kirche in Trümmern?* See also, Peter Pfister (ed.), *Das Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges im Erzbistum München und Freising*.

was evidence that the people of Germany had finally come to the realization that materialism led only to ruin. Now there was a hunger for the medieval synthesis, a hunger for faith, a hunger for truth. Given the absolute destruction of Germany, this hunger would not be easily quenched and one could expect high attendance levels for years to come.¹²¹ Others were not so convinced. In his response to the report from the Protestant district superintendent of Hof that was mentioned above, Bishop Meiser wrote: “Worship services in general have been well attended, indeed, very well attended. I cannot help but question if this loyalty to the church will hold up through the tough tests that surely await us.”¹²²

Bishop Meiser’s comments seem to have been closer to the mark. By mid-1946 the postwar attendance boom was clearly fading out. Numerous reports mention that previously inactive members who had suddenly started attending church towards the end of the war were not coming anymore. Others came far less frequently.¹²³ As mentioned earlier, attendance and communion statistics from 1946 were on the whole quite low. One must conclude then that while the heady experience of the immediate postwar period may have convinced some people to make a more active and sustained commitment to attend church, it did not radically alter church attendance habits.

¹²¹ AEB Rep. 70 NL 60 (Michael Schütz) Nr. 10: Report written in preparation for the 1946 archdiocesan synod in Bamberg, no date. Probably written in late 1945.

¹²² LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from Bishop Meiser to Prot. District Superintendent of Hof, July 27, 1945. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 6: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, May 11, 1945.

¹²³ BZAR OA 2319: Letter from Cath. Dean Hearthe of Schmidmühlen to Bishop Buchberger, Sept. 9, 1946. In the same file, see Letter from Cath. Dean Kaller of Waldthurn to Bishop Buchberger, Dec. 30, 1946. Letter from Cath. Dean Maier of Neunberg to Bishop Buchberger, Nov. 28, 1946. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 193: Report from Prot. clergy meeting in Nuremberg, July 3, 1946. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 278: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Auferstehungskirche in Fürth to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Nuremberg, Apr. 1, 1946.

The second general theme that one finds in these reports is that more and more young people decided not to attend church on a regular basis. This being said, one must also note that there were sharp age and gender differences. Several pastors and priests commented that elementary school aged children, particularly those who attended a confessional school, attended either the main service or an earlier service for families with young children quite well.¹²⁴ This was one of the major reasons why both churches stressed confessional schooling to such a great extent. Here, teachers could remind children about the need to go to church and the children met a group of friends who were all of the same confession that they could attend with. As religion was not integrated into the whole lesson plan, teachers might be religiously indifferent or decidedly anti-church, and classmates might be of a different confession or come from religiously indifferent families, such things could not be done in a community school. Numerous pastors and priests noted that children coming from a mixed confessional house or from a broken home did not attend church as regularly as those who stemmed from “ordained marriages.”¹²⁵ This, in turn, strongly influenced the churches’ views concerning marriage.

A wall seemed to come down once the children left elementary school (which in the German system at that time went up to the equivalent of the eighth grade).

¹²⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-1: Yearly report concerning religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Amlingstadt, 1948. See also AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-2: Yearly report concerning religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Ansbach, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-1: Yearly report concerning religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Amlingstadt, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-3: Yearly report concerning religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Bamberg, 1951. BZAR OA 2149: Letter from Cath. Dean of Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 23, 1958.

¹²⁵ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) 4415/1-16: Yearly report for religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Nuremberg, 1951. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. VI: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Landshut to LkR, April 25, 1950. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Georg Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, Oct. 10, 1947.

Attendance levels among 14-20 year olds dropped quite dramatically. Reports from pastors and priests paint a common picture. In 1947, the priest in the small town of Marktleuthen wrote: “Of 350 youth (in the parish), 20 young men and 60 young women come on Sunday.”¹²⁶ One of his colleagues in the middle sized town of Plattling wrote: “Of around 1,000 youth roughly 130 come. Most have no interest in deepening their religious faith.”¹²⁷ In 1946, one Protestant pastor in a middle sized town wrote that on any given Sunday he could only expect about 5-10 young men and around 20-30 young women to come.¹²⁸ The strong gender difference here is telling. Almost every report from the period between 1946 and roughly 1954 comment that young women were anywhere from two to three times as likely to regularly attend church than young men.

The situation did not improve over time. Although they cover something of a special event, reports concerning yearly youth Sundays held by both churches are very valuable for the light they shed on the regular attendance patterns of young people. The day was usually celebrated with communion for the youth in the early morning followed by a main service that was specifically geared towards young people. In the afternoon, there would be some kind of festive gathering or, for Catholics, a pilgrimage to a local shrine. The event was always heavily advertised, so most young people, even if they were not active church goers, would have known that it was taking place. One finds

¹²⁶ BZAR Generalia 530.00: Report entitled “Jugendseelsorge” compiled by BOR, 1947. This report was written up based upon letters concerning youth pastoral care written by priests from around the diocese. Unfortunately, it appears that the original letters were not kept after this report was compiled. It does, however, quote generously from them. For similar comments, see also reports from Attenhofen, Bettbrunn, Biberbach, Chammünster, Dalking, Deggendorf, Perasdorf, Rötz, and Theissing.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ LKAN LkR VI 1180: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Windsheim to LkR, Feb. 19, 1946. See also, KrD Bayreuth 396: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Trebgast to LkR, Apr. 28, 1953.

repeated mention that attendance was usually quite high on youth Sundays.¹²⁹ While pastors and priests were quite pleased with these results, the way they talked about them suggests that problems lurked underneath. In 1952, the priest from the small town of Böbrach über Teisnach wrote: “Many parishioners were surprised to see so many young people, particularly young men, in church.”¹³⁰ His colleague in Pettentreuth wrote: “As one hardly sees them (the youth) during the rest of the year, the strong turnout was most welcome.”¹³¹ One Protestant pastor wrote in 1955: “The turnout has given us renewed hope that there are still Christian youth.”¹³² Comments such as these were even more pronounced in reports from the late 1950s. Seemingly surprised, one Catholic priest from Weiden wrote in 1956: “Even the young women from the nearby porcelain factory whom I never see at service decided to come.”¹³³ This suggests that while young people continued to participate in special events and fulfill their minimum church duties, they were not attending church on any kind of a regular basis.

Regular reports from pastors and priests in the latter half of the 1950s, as well as those concerning youth Sundays, also suggest that the gendered patterns of attendance began to change. In the early postwar period, young women had been decidedly more regular in their attendance than young men. Towards the end of the 1950s, young women also began to attend less frequently. In addition to the quote from the priest about the

¹²⁹ BZAR OA 2537: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Niederhöcking to BOR, Dec. 27, 1949. See also, BZAR Generalia 531.40: Report concerning Cath. Youth Sunday in the diocese of Regensburg, Sept. 23, 1946. See also, BZAR OA 1503: Report concerning Cath. Youth Sunday in the Diocese of Regensburg, 1954.

¹³⁰ BZAR OA 2537: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Böbrach über Teisnach to Archbishop Buchberger, July 8, 1952.

¹³¹ BZAR OA 2537: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Pettentreuth to Archbishop Buchberger, July 9, 1952.

¹³² LKAN LkR VI 1179: Report concerning youth work in the Prot. District of Feuchtwangen, Jan. 30, 1956. See also, LKAN LkR 1919: Letter from Prot. Youth Director Helbich to Prot. Established Church Council Member Heinrich Riedel, May 17, 1955.

¹³³ BZAR OA/NS 119: Report concerning Catholic Youth Sunday in the Diocese of Regensburg, Dec. 4, 1956. Diocesan authorities compiled this report from letters sent in from around the diocese. Unfortunately, those letters seem to have been destroyed after the report was filed. For similar comments, see also reports from Wiesau, Waldmünchen, and Cham.

young women from the porcelain factory, one finds multiple comments such as this one from a priest in a rural community: “The young women work all week. On Sunday they go to the city to see a movie or be with friends. I have no connection with them.”¹³⁴

Young women were still more likely to attend Sunday services on a regular basis than young men, but by the end of the decade more and more decided that there were better things to do on Sunday than go to church.

Building on these gender differences, the third main theme one sees is that men attended very poorly. As the statistics discussed earlier illustrate, roughly 1/3 less Protestant men received yearly communion than Protestant women. High Easter Communion rates suggest that Catholic men were somewhat more attentive to their most basic attendance duties. However, one finds repeated mention in reports from priests and officials that Catholic men were increasingly absent from church on Sunday. One priest commented bluntly: “We have a small core who attend regularly, but most of the men seem to prefer the pleasures of the tavern and the soccer field.”¹³⁵ Despite all the churches’ talk about encouraging a sense of belonging and keeping their “core troops,” they clearly struggled to reach men.

Attendance amongst refugees was decidedly more mixed. This was particularly the case during the years immediately following the expulsion. While no doubt

¹³⁴ Ibid. See here comments from the priest in Gleißberg. Similar comments can be found in BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Dean of Kötzing to Archbishop Buchberger, July 7, 1954. See also, BZAR OA 1502: Letter from Cath. Studienrat Ettenreich of Weiden to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 2, 1954. For similar comments from Protestant pastors, see LKAN LkR VI 1179: Report from Prot. Youth Minister Ehmcke of Sonnenfeld, May 1953. In the same file, see also: Report concerning Protestant youth work in the district of Feuchtwangen, Jan. 30, 1956.

¹³⁵ BZAR OA 2150: Report from Cath. Dean of Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 12, 1959. For similar comments, see also: BZAR OA 2139: Letter from Cath. Dean of Straubing to Bishop Buchberger, Jan. 7, 1947. BZAR OA 2150: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Pastorate of Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 11, 1958. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 318: Report from meeting of Protestant youth in Fürth, May 18, 1952. LKAN LkR 2460: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Munich-Laim to LkR, Mar. 14, 1947.

influenced by a strong measure of native bias, many pastors and priests commented that refugees in their area came to church either infrequently or simply not at all. One priest wrote: "I have repeatedly encouraged attendance at the Sunday services at 7am, 9am, and 10:30am. I must say, however, that the refugees have not fulfilled expectations."¹³⁶ One pastor wrote: "Embittered by the expulsion and distrustful of the native population, the parents (here referring to refugee parents) do not attend service and do not send their children either. A whole generation may be lost."¹³⁷ On the other hand, one finds evidence of what can only be called a religious revival amongst refugees. Wilhelm Koller has documented an intense outpouring religiosity between 1946 and 1950 amongst Protestant refugees living in overwhelmingly Catholic portions of eastern Bavaria.¹³⁸ Refugees sometimes walked for miles to attend Protestant services and in many settlements participation seems to have been taken for granted. One finds repeated mention of the fact that refugees were much more willing to attend services that were specifically catered to them. While many would not come to worship services run according to the Bavarian liturgy, Protestant refugees turned up in droves for special services which used the Old Prussian Union liturgy. Catholic services for refugees, which included traditional songs and a sermon especially for the refugees, were also well attended in the years immediately following the expulsion.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Cath. Dean Franz Joseph Amberger of Reidenburg to Bishop Buchberger, Nov. 16, 1946. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Weihmichl to BOR, Feb. 27, 1947.

¹³⁷ LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bad Reichenhall to LkR, May 3, 1946.

¹³⁸ Wilhelm Koller, "Die evangelische 'Flüchtlingsdiaspora' in Ostbayern nach 1945," *Zeitschrift für bayerische Kirchengeschichte* 40 (1971) 2-37. See also Dark, *Religion and Refugees*, 148-51.

¹³⁹ BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Cath. Caritas – Landshut to BOR, Feb. 8, 1957. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Caritas – Landshut to BOR, Aug. 12, 1947. See also, BZAR OA/NS 532: Report from Father Erwin Triller (Head of refugee pastoral care in the diocese of Regensburg) for period from Jan. 1, 1947 to June 30, 1947.

Church attendance rates amongst refugees became decidedly less mixed as the 1950s wore on. Reports speak of a consistent drop in refugee participation. Much of this seems to have stemmed from the simple fact that many refugees, particularly the young, left Bavaria in the early 1950s in search of better economic prospects. But those that remained also stopped attending as frequently. This was even the case for special refugee services. In 1953, the priest from the small town of Thüngen noted that in spite of the fact that the refugee population in the community had largely stabilized, attendance at the special refugee services was dropping rapidly. Even the services in June, when the weather was nice and more people were usually inclined to come, attracted less than 100 people. This was, he noted sadly, a far cry from the turnouts of 500-800 that he had seen only a few years before.¹⁴⁰ A similar pattern is also visible among Protestant refugees. Despite the considerable effort exerted to organize and advertise a special Sunday afternoon refugee service in Mühlendorf in 1954, only about 30 refugees actually showed up.¹⁴¹ If refugee attendance rates were this poor at special refugee services, then one can only imagine what they must have been like at regular services.

Reports such as these present something of a dismal picture, but one should not suggest that all was doom and gloom for the churches. Alongside all of the comments from pastors and priests about who wasn't coming to Sunday worship services, one also finds mention of who was. The elderly attended quite regularly.¹⁴² Middle aged women

¹⁴⁰ DAW Generalakten 647 Bd. 3: Yearly report from the head of refugee pastoral care in the diocese of Würzburg, 1954. This report contains summaries from several different parishes. See also comments from priests in Limbach bei Haßfurt, Kälberau bei Alzenau, and Engelberg bei Miltenberg.

¹⁴¹ LKAN LkR V 919e Bd. I: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Mühlendorf to LkR, Mar. 13, 1954.

¹⁴² BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Dean of Ensdorf to Archbishop Buchberger, Nov. 13, 1954. See also, BZAR OA 2150: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Pastorate of Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 11, 1958.

continued to constitute the core of the churches' active laity.¹⁴³ As mentioned before, children, particularly those who attended confessional schools, came to either the main service or, more commonly, special Sunday services designed for children or young families quite well. One also finds numerous cases of individual parishes bucking general trends. Some saw a strong male presence in the pews.¹⁴⁴ Others had excellent turnouts from young people all through the 1950s.¹⁴⁵

Examples such as these should caution us against making a sweeping assertion that the churches failed in their efforts to encourage people to attend Sunday worship services on a regular basis. So too should an awareness of the real growth in attendance and communion levels reported by both churches in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Throughout the period under study, they could still expect a loyal core to turn up on any given Sunday. Many inactive members still seem to have considered the performance of their minimum yearly attendance requirements as an express duty. In short, the churches' message concerning the need to attend worship services on a regular basis still had clout. This being said, one also cannot deny that ominous trends were afoot. More and more people weren't fulfilling even the most basic of attendance requirements.

This obviously raises the question of why. Why did an ever increasing number of people decide not to go Sunday worship services? Why did they ignore the churches'

¹⁴³ BZAR OA 2143: Letter from Cath. Dean of Schmidmühlen to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 18, 1950. See also, BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Dean of Ensdorf to Archbishop Buchberger, Nov. 13, 1954. See also, BZAR OA 2150: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Pastorate of Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 11, 1958. LKAN LkR V 948a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Vicar of Ahornis to LkR, Feb. 12, 1947.

¹⁴⁴ BZAR OA 2143: Letter from Cath. Dean of Hirschau to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 10, 1951.

¹⁴⁵ BZAR OA 2537: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Schnaittenbach to Archbishop Buchberger, July 1, 1952. See also, BZAR OA 1503: Report concerning Cath. Youth Sunday in the Diocese of Regensburg, 1954. In particular, see reports from Heilbrunn and Laaber. BZAR OA/NS 119: Report concerning Cath. Youth Sunday in the Diocese of Regensburg, 1956. In particular, see reports from Thalmassig, Untertraubenbach, and Schwarzenbach.

expressly stated message that regular attendance was a fundamental duty? Why did Protestants participate less frequently than Catholics? As decisions regarding religious involvement are so inherently personal, it is difficult to provide any objective, all-inclusive answers. In spite of this, some general reasons seem to be apparent.

First, there were pre-existing tendencies to not attend church. One can hardly argue that declining participation rates were an exclusively post- World War II phenomenon. Pre-1945 Bavaria, or even pre-1933 Bavaria for that matter, was not some fairytale kingdom where everyone went to church on Sunday. Many had decided to stop going to church long before the Nazis ever came to power. The differences between the two confessions in this regard were quite marked. As minorities in a Catholic dominated state, Protestants in Bavaria developed a much stronger sense religious identity in the nineteenth century than Protestants in the rest of the country. Despite this, attendance at worship services began to drop in the first half of the nineteenth century.¹⁴⁶ These declining fortunes were reversed by a particularly strong revivalist movement that developed in the mid-century years. A new generation of more charismatic pastors reinvigorated the church and parishes of all sizes saw real gains in church attendance.¹⁴⁷ By the end of the century, though, attendance levels had begun to drop again. This was particularly apparent in large cities such as Nuremberg and Munich and in the heavily industrialized areas of Franconia (which was predominantly Protestant). Here, the decidedly anti-church influence of the Social Democrats was quite strong and there was a plethora of other things to do on Sunday. One also sees a noticeable gendering of church attendance during this period. More and more Protestant men seem to have felt that

¹⁴⁶ Blessing, *Staat und Kirche*, 43, 50, 98.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 106.

religion was the sphere of women and children and subsequently didn't come to church.¹⁴⁸ Evangelizing missions in the early twentieth-century did help stem the tide and attendance remained much higher in areas where the Protestant population was greatly outnumbered by Catholics, but by the early 1930's fewer and fewer Bavarian Protestants were attending church regularly.¹⁴⁹ As shown earlier, at the beginning of the Nazi period, only 56% of all Protestants in Bavaria were fulfilling the minimum requirement of receiving communion once a year.¹⁵⁰ In the districts of Munich and Nuremberg these numbers were 40% and 25% respectively.¹⁵¹

The situation among Catholics was altogether different. Attendance began to wane in Catholic parishes across Bavaria during the early part of the nineteenth century, but certainly never to the degree seen in the Protestant Church. Following the revolutions of 1848, Catholic religious life underwent a remarkable turnaround. Diocesan authority became stronger, seminary education was greatly enhanced, thus better preparing priests for their pastoral role, popular missions were launched, and a dense network of Catholic clubs and associations was established. This intensification of pastoral care led to dramatic increases in regular church attendance.¹⁵² As a predominantly Catholic state, the effects of the *Kulturkampf* were not felt as strongly in Bavaria, but news of what was taking place across the rest of Germany did serve to harden Catholic identity and encourage attendance. The closing decade of the nineteenth century brought noticeable changes. A particularly vehement form of anti-clericalism, finding its main expression in

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 202, 256.

¹⁴⁹ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 156-57.

¹⁵⁰ "Kirchlich-statistische Tabelle der Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins für das Jahr 1933," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* 21 (Sept. 5, 1935): 103-107.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 105.

¹⁵² Blessing, *Staat und Kirche*, 193.

the Bavarian Peasant League, burst forth and led many, particularly men, to stop going to church. While still quite high when compared to Bavarian Protestants, Catholic attendance levels in Bavaria lagged behind those of strongly Catholic areas in western Germany.¹⁵³ The collapse of the Bavarian monarchy in 1918 and the bloody events of the next two years served to convince many wayward Catholics of the need to uphold their Catholic values and commitments. When combined with guarantees of freedom of religion by the Weimar Constitution and the continuance of generous state subsidies, this provided the climate for Catholic revival. By the late 1920's and early 1930's, the Catholic Church in Bavaria showed tremendous vitality and attendance rates began to eclipse those in the rest of Germany.¹⁵⁴ This should not suggest that Catholics were somehow not affected by the secularization tendencies that were so prominent among Protestants. When looking at the church attendance statistics from the early Nazi period, one cannot help but notice how much lower the numbers for the archdioceses of Bamberg and Munich, which contained Bavaria's two largest cities and much of its industrial core, were in comparison to the heavily rural dioceses of Eichstätt, Passau, Regensburg, and Würzburg.¹⁵⁵

In spite of this, it is quite clear that Catholics were not *as* affected by them as Protestants. Reasons for this are difficult to pin down with any certainty. Two general factors appear to be at work though. First, the Catholic Church's self-definition as a mother and its concentration on the duty of Catholics to fulfill basic obligations such as church attendance seems to have engendered a more active commitment than the

¹⁵³ Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 292.

¹⁵⁴ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 185-86.

¹⁵⁵ As per the chart shown before, church attendance statistics in 1935 were as follows: Bamberg – 52%, Munich – 46%, Eichstätt – 63%, Passau – 63%, Regensburg – 69%, Würzburg – 65%.

Protestant Church's self-definition as a voice and its emphasis on developing faith. People heard a million voices everyday, but they only had one mother. The connection was more intense. Faithful adherence to prescribed duties was a more concrete concept than the nebulous idea of developing one's faith. Catholicism thus exerted a more "total" claim on the beliefs and behavior of its adherents than Lutheranism did over most Protestants. Second, Catholics in much of Bavaria were subsumed within a whole Catholic world. This self-enclosed world was beginning to break down, but it still maintained a rich tapestry of customs and rituals that for many Catholics constituted nothing less than a way of life. Regular church attendance was certainly one of these traditions and many Catholics seem to have taken it for granted. Protestants were not, and probably never could be in light of Lutheran theology, bound up in such a world and as such were exposed to many other, oftentimes secular, influences. These same two factors no doubt caused Catholics to be more, but certainly not completely, resistant to some of the other causes for the decline in church attendance that will be outlined in this chapter.

These more confessionalized trends do not hold up as well for the Germans who were later expelled from Eastern Europe. Church attendance and yearly communion rates in both Silesia and the Sudetenland, the respective homelands for the vast majority of Protestant and Catholic refugees, had fallen substantially throughout the nineteenth century and were well below Bavarian averages at the beginning of the Nazi period.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Dark, *Religion and Refugees*, 173-76. See also, Friedrich Spiegel-Schmidt, "Religiöse Wandlungen und Probleme im evangelischen Bereich," in Eugen Lemberg and Friedrich Edding (eds.), *Die Vertriebenen in Westdeutschland*, Vol. 3 (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1959), 29. In the same volume, see also: Adolf Kindermann, "Religiöse Wandlungen und Probleme in katholischen Bereich," 94-97.

Thus, even before the traumas of the Nazi period and the war a considerable number of Bavarians and people who would wind up in Bavaria after 1945 were either not attending church at all or were only fulfilling their most basic attendance requirements. While some may have found their way back to church, it would be somewhat naïve to expect people who had not participated in Sunday services before to suddenly start attending regularly after the war.

Second, Nazi efforts to undermine worship service participation had lingering effects. Church attendance and yearly communion rates in 1946 and 1948 were significantly lower than they had been at the beginning of the Nazi period. There seem to be two explanations for this. First, heavy indoctrinations in the militantly anti-church ideology of National Socialism seem to have turned many people off religion. Following the complete collapse of Germany and the revelation of the full extent of the Holocaust, many rejected these ideas as morally bankrupt. Others did not or could not. This was particularly the case with young people. Having grown up hearing only the Nazi world view, they could not simply jettison it after the war. It was a fundamental part of their character. One finds repeated mention from pastors and priests that many of the young men who had been active in the Hitler Youth were not only refusing to go church but were staging events on Sunday to encourage others not to go as well.¹⁵⁷ Ideological training in the military also seems to have turned many against the churches. One priest summed up the situation best when he wrote in 1946: “The young men who left the

¹⁵⁷ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. See also, DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Frammersbach to BOW, May 6, 1950. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bad Reichenhall to LkR, May 3, 1946.

village in 1939 were not particularly strong in the faith, but they weren't bad either. The few that have returned never come to church and spread false accusations against me."¹⁵⁸

As disturbing as it was to the churches, overt hostility of this nature was not the main reason that the Nazi period was so deleterious to church attendance. Even more problematic was the way it had severed the connection between Sunday and the idea of going to church in the minds of many. As discussed earlier, the Nazis consciously organized a wide range of oftentimes mandatory activities on Sunday morning to keep people from going to church. While not limited to them, such efforts particularly focused on children and young people. Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls functions were invariably held on Sunday. The churches deeply resented such activities and in the immediate postwar years they successfully pushed for legislation to protect regular worship service hours from any intrusion. By that point, the damage had been done. A whole generation had grown up largely doing something other than going to church on Sunday morning. Moreover, the need to attend church was either not discussed at all or sharply criticized in the Nazified community schools.

Reports from pastors and priests give testament to the profound sense of disconnect that these actions produced. Many young people did find their way to Sunday services thanks to the influence of parents, teachers, friends, and the efforts of the institutional churches laid out in this section. Others remained somewhat distant. As Sunday worship service attendance had simply not been a major element of their formative years of development, it did not seem to hold any kind of special place in their lives. Several clergymen noted that young people were by and large not militantly

¹⁵⁸ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Keilburg über Aschaffenburg to BOW, Dec. 31, 1946. See also, DAW Generalakten 649: Letter from BOW to Cath. Curate of Obereschenbach, Dec. 13, 1947.

opposed to the idea of coming to church on Sunday and would usually come on special occasions. But having grown up doing all sorts of other things on Sunday, they did not in any way seem to feel that attending worship services was the “normal” thing to do.¹⁵⁹ This was, by the churches’ own admission, not solely the result of the Nazi attempts to undermine church attendance. Indifference due to broken homes or mixed confessional parents and the lack of Christian education, themes which will be discussed in considerable detail in the next two chapters, were also listed quite prominently. However, they pointed out again and again that the experience of the Nazi years was a major factor. A critical link had been broken and even the most basic of religious duties could not be taken for granted anymore.

Third, economic prosperity in the 1950s began to steadily change the traditional rhythms of everyday life. Given the war’s dramatic impact on Germany’s population there was an overwhelming need for labor once the economy starting rolling again. This meant that more people could get jobs. As their labor was in such strong demand, they could also demand better salaries and more time off. Thus, they had more money and more free time to spend it in. New options for entertainment and relaxation – sporting organizations, sports matches, dance halls, clubs, cinemas, motorcycles, and vacations – came within reach of more and more Bavarians. With improved transportation and communication, rural people could easily travel to the cities. Trends that had once been

¹⁵⁹ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Marktgraitz über Lichtenfels to EOB, Dec. 16, 1948. For similar comments, see also AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-2: Report concerning Catholic religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Ansbach for 1949-50. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-16: Yearly report concerning Catholic religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Nuremberg for 1950/51. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, Aug. 25, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Gostenhof to LkR, Nov. 26, 1946.

limited to large cities such as Munich and Nuremberg spread to even the tiniest of villages. An ethos of consumption began to set down roots.¹⁶⁰

These changes affected worship service participation in a variety of usually negative ways. First, it offered an often bewildering array of alternatives. While the Sunday and holiday laws passed in 1949 prohibited sports clubs from holding matches during regular church hours, neither they nor the churches could stem the ever increasing hunger for sport. Some clubs held their matches illegally. Most simply scheduled their matches for the first time available by law. Fearful of missing all of the pre-game festivities and drinking and at least a small part of the first half, many sports fans simply didn't go to church.¹⁶¹ Of an altogether more problematic nature for the churches, many of the larger clubs in the big cities began to cultivate a wide following in rural areas that were at times far removed from the city in which the team played. Fans, particularly young men, could keep up with their team via radio reports and through an ever growing range of newspapers and periodicals that focused exclusively on sports. With expendable money and free time, they could also go and see their favorite clubs play. Their church attendance no doubt suffered correspondingly.

This trend only increased during the 1950s as more and more people could afford motorcycles. The purchase of a motorcycle brought a greater sense of freedom and individuality. One was no longer tied down to the rigid schedule and plan of the railroad. It provided the means to take part in any activity that seemed appealing or interesting. This could be a sporting match, but it certainly was not limited to it. An article in a

¹⁶⁰ On the changes in culture, society, and daily life, see the collection of essays in Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek (eds.), *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn: J.H.W. Dietz, 1993). See also, Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der fünfziger Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995).

¹⁶¹ DAW Generalakten 621: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Waldbüttelbrunn to BOW, June 18, 1953.

Protestant youth periodical commented on how two teenage boys from Würzburg decided on a whim one Sunday morning that they would ride together on the motorcycle of one of them to Munich. Upon their return, friends asked what they did while in Munich. They replied: “Nothing. We each had a beer and then we had to head back.”¹⁶² Driving all the way to Munich for no apparent reason had become a more alluring choice than attending church. Nor was this an isolated example. Numerous pastors and priests commented that young people who bought a motorcycle were hardly ever seen in church again.¹⁶³

As illustrated by the comments made by pastors and priests in reports to their superiors discussed earlier, more and more people in traditionally rural areas decided that going to the city on Sunday was more important to them than attending church. Sunday was their only full day off and they wanted to enjoy it by savoring all the conveniences and attractions of the city. This was, no doubt, unbelievably damaging to church attendance. But it should not lead us to the conclusion that rural areas themselves remained static while people came and went. Village life was in fact changing quite rapidly. For example, theater owners found a welcome audience in rural areas and cinemas sprang up across the state. In 1949, there had been only 68 theaters in villages with a population less than 2,000. In 1953, there were 131 and by 1955 there were 224.¹⁶⁴ Owners began to run films all day on Sunday because they knew that people had the day off and might be inclined to watch a movie. While the churches protested saying that this was a violation of Sunday protection laws, they in fact could do little to stop

¹⁶² “Wenn der Sonntag fehlt,” *Das Baugerüst* (Apr. 1957): 107.

¹⁶³ See, for example, BZAR OA 1503: Report concerning Catholic Youth Sunday in the Diocese of Regensburg, 1954. In particular, see comments from priests in Ergolding, Rain bei Atting, and Kallmünz. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 318: Minutes from meeting of Protestant Youth in Fürth, May 18, 1952. See also, Mark Ruff, *Wayward Flock*, 126-28.

¹⁶⁴ StJBB vol. 24 (1952), 410. StJBB vol. 25 (1955), 106. StJBB vol. 26 (1958), 71.

such screenings. Nor it seems, despite all their best efforts to the contrary, could they convince an ever growing number of their adherents that they shouldn't go. For many, watching a movie was a more appealing activity than attending church and they made their decisions about what to do on Sunday accordingly. Trends that had once only affected urban parishes were now apparent across the state.

Mass consumerism did more than simply provide alternatives. It generated a whole ethos of consumption. At the heart of this ethos was the idea of choice. It stressed the right of people to pick and choose the activities that they would take part in and the freedom to make their own decisions. An embrace of this ethos of consumption meant adopting an ethos of individualism. As pastors and priests increasingly noted, more and more people came to see choices such as whether or not they would attend worship services as a personal decision. It was a matter that didn't involve the churches' opinions.¹⁶⁵ Thus, at the very same time that it provided alternatives to participation at worship services and special religious events, mass consumerism also encouraged the idea that people had the natural right to choose them. In a very profound way, this undercut the churches' argument that regular church attendance was a fundamental duty or need. It also undermined fundamental values such as obedience and hierarchy on which the churches' authority as a whole was grounded. As illustrated by the large numbers of people that still attended church on Sunday, many decided that it was an

¹⁶⁵ For example, see: BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. See also, BZAR OA 2150: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Pastorate of Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 11, 1958. LKAN LkR V 948a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Vicar of Ahornis to LkR, Feb. 12, 1947. LKAN KrD Bayreuth 396: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Trebgast to LkR, Apr. 28, 1953. This trend was also pointed out to the author by OKR i.R. Rudolf Meiser, son of Bishop Hans Meiser, and an influential Protestant figure in his own right during the 1970s and 80s, in an interview on Dec. 21, 2004.

activity worthy of their time. This should caution us against making sweeping statements about the “failure” of the churches’ efforts to encourage regular attendance. But it does not cover over the fact that despite all the churches’ emphasis on the need to attend Sunday services and all their work to produce a worship experience that people would want to participate in, more and more Bavarians decided in full freedom that they wanted to do something else on Sundays.

This being said, we should also be wary of setting up an oversimplified dichotomy that stresses church dictates on the one side and either lay acceptance or rejection on the other. In many ways, the churches themselves undermined their own efforts to encourage regular attendance at Sunday worship services. Some of these were under their control. As discussed earlier, the hierarchies of both churches talked a great deal about creating a sense of belonging to the church amongst men and the need to convince them that going to church was a “manly” thing to do. If men had stronger feelings of purpose and involvement in their religious communities, they would be more willing to attend church on a regular basis. This was no doubt a valid assumption that may have borne considerable fruit. What one sees, however, is that the message was seriously compromised in the transmission. For example, in 1946 the *Passauer Bistumsblatt* ran a full-length front page article entitled “Manly Christendom – Christendom of Men.” Quoting heavily from a sermon delivered by Bishop Landersdorfer, it went on to lay out how Christianity was not some touchy-feely affair for women. The way to heaven was fraught with danger and enemies of the faith lurked on all sides. Men could not simply follow women and children. They had to lead the way. They had to set the tone by fulfilling their religious duties. That was God’s ordained

order for the world. In the middle of all this bristling rhetoric was a large picture of a young girl putting flowers on a wayside crucifix.¹⁶⁶ The contrast could not be anymore stark. This would hardly seem to be an image that would convince men that going to church was a manly thing to do. Nor was this an isolated example. Three years later, the same paper ran a similar article entitled “The responsibility of Catholic men.” The picture at the bottom shows a group of men marching behind the bishop. One can’t help but notice that all the men are quite old and frail. Most have canes or are leaning on the person next to them.¹⁶⁷ Though they may have been the most solid of Catholics, such men certainly didn’t look like the “core troops” of Christendom who would lead the charge against the evils of materialism that the church talked so much about. Nor were such instances limited to the Catholic Church. In 1957, the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* ran an article entitled “We need role models.” In language quite similar to that used in the Catholic papers, it talked about how men had to set an example of religious activity for others to emulate. They had to ensure that their children attended church regularly and went to confessional schools. The picture on the page, however, shows a middle aged woman leading two children (implied to be her own) into a church. The role model here was not a man, but a woman.¹⁶⁸ Disparities such as these could have been easily fixed, but they were not. As such, they only served to reinforce the popular sentiment that religion was something for women, children, and the elderly.

Also, despite all the talk about creating a sense of “home” in the church, native church officials, regular clergy members, and lay people were often distinctly

¹⁶⁶ “Männliches Christentum – Christentum der Männer,” *Passauer Bistumblatt*, Sept. 15, 1946.

¹⁶⁷ “Des katholischen Mannes Verantwortung,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, May 29, 1949. For similar incongruities, see also: “Ein vorbildliche Männertum,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Mar. 21, 1954. “Für Friede und Freiheit,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, June 9, 1957.

¹⁶⁸ “Wir brauchen Vorbilder,” *NEG*, Sept. 22, 1957.

unwelcoming to the refugees. One of the most symbolic examples of this was the matter of church seats. Local Catholic and Protestant churches in Bavaria had long acknowledged what were known as “church seating rights” (*Kirchenstuhlrecht*). In this arrangement, seats or pews in the sanctuary became essentially the personal property of individual parishioners or families in recognition of their financial support of the church and deep connection with it. Most churches had a small bank of seats that were reserved for guests or beggars, but the rest of the sanctuary was by and large spoken for. While never designed to specifically exclude them, seating rights strongly reinforced a sense that the refugees were not welcome at church. Quite simply, it left them with nowhere to sit. Refugees were often asked to relinquish their seats in the event of their formal occupant appearing. Sometimes this took place in very loud and embarrassing incidents in front of the rest of the congregation. In one case, an incensed native tossed a refugee out of his seat yelling: “Get out of my seat you impudent bastard (*du frecher Kerl*)! Refugees belong outside.”¹⁶⁹ In several instances, people who had not attended church in years came simply to make sure that no one was sitting in their normally vacant seat.¹⁷⁰

For their part, local members of the clergy often sided with the natives. As such incidents commonly occurred while they were in the sacristy making preparations for the service, many pastors and priests simply chose to turn a blind eye to them. Those that did acknowledge the problem often pointed the refugees to the beggars’ pews or told them that they would simply have to wait at the back of the sanctuary until the service started. Only once it was clear that the formal occupant of a seat wasn’t coming could they use it.

¹⁶⁹ EAM NL Faulhaber 6185/1: Letter from Maria Dresel of Orthofen to Cardinal Faulhaber, Mar. 8, 1947.

¹⁷⁰ LKAN LkR X 1368h Bd. I: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Appetshofen über Donauwörth to LkR, Apr. 23, 1948. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 5422: Letter from Paul Mueller of Trapstadt to Cardinal Faulhaber, Dec. 3, 1945. In the same file, see also: Letter from C. Braxator of Partenkirchen to Cardinal Faulhaber, Aug. 2, 1946. See also, Dark, *Religion and Refugees*, 151.

Church officials largely took a similar view. In a pastoral care letter from 1946, Cardinal Faulhaber talked at length about how the refugees should be made to feel at home in the church. He went on to say, however, that seating rights was a longstanding tradition that should not be done away with. To avoid conflict with the natives on this matter, refugees should simply wait until the service started to take a seat or sit in those seats that were not formally claimed. If numbers warranted it, priests should hold a separate service for refugees later in the day where church seating rights would obviously not be enforced.¹⁷¹

Needless to say, actions and statements such as these did not make the refugees feel very welcome in church. Sitting in the beggars' seats had to have been a humiliating experience for people who felt that they had been stripped of everything out of no fault of their own. Waiting at the back of the sanctuary for the service to begin could only reinforce their feelings that natives viewed them as second class citizens. Special services may have been a viable alternative, but they highlighted the fact that the refugees were a group apart; one not welcome in the mainstream life of the community. In general, the churches' decision to maintain seating rights created a worship experience that was demeaning to the refugees. After all the talk about the refugees having a "home" in the church and a duty to attend, this had to be particularly painful. It should not be surprising then that many decided to stay home on Sunday.

Instances such as this are particularly glaring because they were within the control of the churches. Something could have been done to stop such practices from furthering the decline in church attendance. Other examples of the churches willfully shooting themselves in the foot could most certainly be pointed out. As interesting and tawdry as

¹⁷¹ EAM NL Faulhaber 618/1: Pastoral care letter written by Cardinal Faulhaber. Read before all parishes in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising on Dec. 8, 1946.

these might be, one must also accept that the churches undermined their own message about the need to attend church on a regular basis in ways that were largely outside of their control.

First and foremost among these was the shortage of clergy. To fulfill their ambitious plans to encourage more active involvement in worship services, the churches needed a large number of people on the ground. Someone had to get out and make house calls on people who didn't come to church. Someone had to go around and talk to people about what was going on in church to stir up interest. Someone had to organize and lead services themselves. While lay people could help with all of these things, it was obvious that what was needed most were more pastors and priests. There needed to be a stronger clerical presence in the everyday lives of ordinary Bavarians.

Unfortunately, clergymen were in short supply. The Nazi and war years had decimated the clerical ranks of both churches. Intense persecution, the removal of financial subsidies, and conscription all but emptied most seminaries during the 1930s.¹⁷² The distinct alienation of the youth from the churches that took place in the Nazi era also contributed to this.¹⁷³ In essence, a whole generation of young men who might have become pastors or priests was lost. Furthermore, the Nazis imprisoned dozens of pastors and, more commonly, priests in concentration camps for alleged acts of treason. Many there were either killed outright or died of deliberate neglect.¹⁷⁴ The war only exacerbated such losses as it took both potential candidates and existing clergymen away from the churches. 177 Bavarian Protestant pastors were killed during the war.¹⁷⁵ The

¹⁷² Blessing, "Deutschland in Not," 56, 66.

¹⁷³ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 219.

¹⁷⁴ Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, 209.

¹⁷⁵ Manfred Seitz, "Kirchliches Leben," 460.

diocese of Regensburg alone lost 30 priests, 52 graduates from the seminary who had not yet been ordained, and 34 seminarians.¹⁷⁶ The other Catholic dioceses and archdioceses certainly experienced similar losses.

A corollary effect of this was that those clergymen who remained were often quite old. A 1952 distribution chart for the age of priests shows that in all but two of the Bavarian dioceses (Passau and Würzburg), over 50% of the active Catholic clergy members were born before 1900. Nor could this situation be easily righted. Of those priests born after 1900, the numbers from the years 1915-1920, young men who would have been in the prime years of military service during World War II, were usually 25% to 50% lower than those from 1900 to 1914.¹⁷⁷ Protestant ranks were equally aged. At one point, church officials even asked several pastors to come out of retirement to fill shortages.¹⁷⁸ An aging clergy severely limited the reach and effectiveness of the churches. While they had more experience, these men suffered from more health problems and could not get around as well. Most were quite set in their ways by that point and not overly disposed to try new approaches to pastoral care. Worse still, they were often completely out of touch with young people or downright hostile to them. Upon the exhortation of his superiors to more actively engage in youth work, one priest wrote back simply: "I am 70 years old and have neither the experience nor the skill to work with the youth."¹⁷⁹ Many other pastors and priests no doubt felt the same way.

¹⁷⁶ BZAR OA 1130: Report concerning the proceedings of the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg. See here the report entitled "Unsere Lage und unsere Aufgabe" written by Suffragan Bishop Höcht.

¹⁷⁷ *Kirchliches Handbuch*, Vol. 24 (1956), 332.

¹⁷⁸ LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. V: Letter from Prot. Retired Pastor David Jurkat to LkR, Jan. 13, 1949.

¹⁷⁹ BZAR Generalia 530.00: Report entitled "Jugenseelsorge" compiled by BOR, 1947. See here the report from the priest in Theissing.

The losses experienced by the churches during the Nazi and war years were compounded during the postwar era by their increasing inability to attract new candidates to the ministry. Seminaries saw an increase in students in the late 1940s as men who had previously been unable to enter because of military service became available. Ordination levels in the years 1950, 1951, and 1952, accounting for those students who began their studies directly after the war, were noticeably larger. One noteworthy crop was the some 30 new priests ordained by Cardinal Faulhaber in 1951 for service in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising. Among them were two brothers from Traunstein: Georg and Joseph Ratzinger.¹⁸⁰ The former went on to become the longtime head of the famous Regensburg Sparrows choral group. The latter obviously worked his way a bit higher in the church hierarchy. Despite such successes, the number of men entering the seminary dropped consistently throughout the 1950s. The following chart breaks down the total number of men studying at the seminaries of each of the Catholic dioceses in the years between 1953 and 1957.¹⁸¹

	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957
Augsburg	157	188	156	150	140
Bamberg	81	82	63	74	73
Eichstätt	100	100	79	71	80
Munich	251	257	219	227	228
Passau	84	77	78	74	74
Regensburg	272	268	219	223	220

¹⁸⁰ "Erteilung der heiligen Priesterweihe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (May 23, 1951): 146.

¹⁸¹ *Kirchliches Handbuch*, Vol. 25 (1962), 527.

Würzburg	110	106	92	101	105
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These decreasing numbers would suggest that new candidates were not being found to replace those who either graduated or dropped out.

Unfortunately, statistics of this sort for the Protestant Church could not be found. Supplementary data, however, suggests that a similar pattern was at work. In 1947, the Protestant Church reported that it had 950 active pastors (not including vicars, deacons, and other helpers). In 1955, it had 957. By 1960, it had roughly 1,000.¹⁸² The fact that this number changed so little over time suggests that the Protestant Church was only capable of bringing in enough new candidates each year to barely maintain its ranks. As even the Protestant Church, which allowed for a married clergy, was struggling to find new pastors, the argument that the prospect of celibacy drove young men away from the priesthood seems unfounded.

The question thus becomes what was causing this decline in the number of young men deciding to enter the ministry. Choices of this sort are inherently subjective, but some general trends seem to be at work. First, massive wartime losses meant that there was a much smaller pool of men to start with. Second, the generation of young men who were of seminary age during the 1950s was perhaps the one most affected by Nazi youth organizations such as the Hitler Youth. With their formative years all marked by Nazi ideology, it should not be surprising that many were turned off from religion. Third, better economic prospects led many young men to enter the workforce rather than the seminary. Nowhere was this more apparent than in rural areas. Traditionally, farmers' sons, particularly those further down the line of family succession, had made up a

¹⁸² StJBB, Vol. 24 (1952), 413; StJBB, Vol. 26 (1958), 77; StJBB, Vol. 27 (1961), 74.

significant portion of the clergy of both churches in Bavaria. With no chance of inheriting the family farm and few job prospects, many had looked to the church for a stable livelihood. Industrialization in the late nineteenth century had allowed young men from rural areas in other parts of Germany to find jobs in the cities or in nearby factories. But given the somewhat limited nature of industrialization in Bavaria before World War II, this had not been as big of a factor. Finding a factory job often meant a very distant relocation, perhaps all the way to the Ruhr valley. For some this was no problem, but many others decided that they could do just as well as a clergyman and stay closer to home as well. The rapid industrialization that took place in Bavaria after the war changed all this. Factories sprung up in places that had once been decidedly rural. Wartime losses severely shrunk the labor pool so those who did survive had excellent job prospects. Thus, they could demand higher salaries and more free time. The long hours of clerical life and rigid hierarchical system of the churches looked less and less appealing. Fewer and fewer young men from farming areas decided to enter seminary. With this the churches lost what had traditionally been a major source of new recruits.¹⁸³

The shortage of clergy had particularly disastrous consequences. It did so in two ways. First, a drop in the number of clergy members brought about an increase in the number of lay people per minister. Parishes became so big that one clergyman couldn't possibly keep track of it. Worship services grew larger and more impersonal. Pastors and priests had less and less time for personal interaction with the laity. Nor could they expect much in the way of help as the men who had once served as associate pastors and

¹⁸³ Officials in both the Catholic and Protestant churches commented on this phenomenon. See, DAW Generalakten 752: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Theinheim über Eltmann to Notary for the diocesan synod in Würzburg, July 5, 1954. LKAN LkR VI 1178b: Minutes from the Protestant state synod meeting concerning youth and new pastoral candidates, Apr. 1954.

priests were all needed to cover parishes of their own. This problem was most apparent in heavily urban and industrialized areas such as Munich and Nuremberg. Some parishes there comprised over 14,000 souls and were served by only a handful of pastors and priests. With such limited coverage, it was very difficult to implement the kind of intensive pastoral care that church officials were calling for to encourage more regular attendance.

While this was a legitimate concern, one must readily admit that most Bavarian parishes were of a quite manageable size. Averages in almost every case were considerably lower than in the rest of Germany. For example, in 1948 the average size of a Catholic parish in Germany was 2,172 people. The averages for the Bavarian dioceses and archdioceses are as follows: Augsburg – 1,407; Bamberg – 2,575; Eichstätt – 1,399; Munich – 2,701; Passau – 1,724; Regensburg – 1,756; Würzburg – 1,444.¹⁸⁴ The higher numbers in Bamberg and Munich were heavily skewed by a few large parishes in Nuremberg and Munich. Protestant parishes in Bavaria were also smaller than their counterparts in the rest of the country. Rarely did the average size go above 2,000.¹⁸⁵ Thus, the main problem was not parishes that were too large. Quite the contrary, it was parishes that were too small. The Catholic dioceses in Bavaria and the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria had some of the highest number of parishes with only 1-499 people in all of Germany. In fact, with around 225 such parishes, the Diocese of Augsburg consistently posted *the* highest number.¹⁸⁶ Bavaria also had a heavy concentration of parishes with 500-999 people. This amounted to hundreds, if not

¹⁸⁴ *Kirchliches Handbuch*, Vol. 23 (1952), 253.

¹⁸⁵ StJBB, Vol. 24 (1952), 413; StJBB, Vol. 25 (1955), 117; StJBB, Vol. 26 (1958), 77; StJBB, Vol. 27 (1961), 74.

¹⁸⁶ *Kirchliches Handbuch*, Vol. 23 (1952), 257.

thousands, of tiny and usually quite isolated villages and hamlets whose inhabitants all needed to be provided access to worship services and the sacraments. Traditionally, pastoral care in these smaller parishes had been provided by young, and sometimes not so young, vicars and curates. But due to the reasons discussed earlier, these were in short supply. This left the churches in an intractable situation. While they didn't have the manpower to provide a full-time pastor or priest in such communities they couldn't simply ignore the pastoral needs of the people living there. The only solution was to ask the pastor or priest in a nearby area to cover these tiny parishes.

A deadening pace resulted. Two and three point charges became the norm. Pastors and priests had to rush off after the main service or services in their home parish to make it to the afternoon service in their second parish. Following this they usually had to head out once again to provide an evening service somewhere else. In the immediate postwar years most had to make the commute on foot or by bicycle. As conditions improved in the 1950s, motorcycles and automobiles became more accessible. While vastly increasing the clergy's mobility, it did not ease the emotional and physical strain brought on by performing sometimes up to five services a day. This was all the more so given the advancing age of most pastors and priests. Nor was there much in the way of relief. With all of their colleagues stretched equally thin, it was very difficult to find anyone to cover their services so that they could go on vacation. Also, as they had to provide religious education courses at various schools throughout their jurisdiction during the week they had little time to provide basic pastoral care or to prepare themselves for the next week.

Despite some almost superhuman exertions on the part of many pastors and priests, this grinding rhythm extracted a heavy toll. Pastoral care obviously suffered as clergymen had less and less time to get out and interact with their laypeople on a more personal basis. This meant that it was very difficult in many cases to implement the strategies for improving church attendance that were discussed earlier. Worship services also suffered. Pastors and priests had to hold back in their earlier services because they knew they still had a very long day ahead of them. By the time they got to the last services they were dead tired. Thus, they really weren't able to put their all into any service. Pastors and priests also had less and less time for the prayer, bible reading, and reflection that a fresh, original sermon that spoke to the concrete realities of the day required. Finally, the need to always rush off to another service left them with little time for the critically important after-service greetings and discussion.¹⁸⁷ Even dedicated lay people began to complain that all of this was diminishing the worship experience. What was the point of coming to church, they asked, if all they saw was an exhausted pastor or priest who spouted hackneyed clichés in his sermon and then didn't speak to them personally after the service.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Several pastors, priests, and church officials commented on these developments. See, DAW Generalakten 650: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Hammelburg to BOW, June 20, 1947. BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Cath. Expositor of Luitpoldhöhe to Bishop Buchberger, May 19, 1947. BZAR OA 1145: Letter from Cath. Dean of Dingolfing to Archbishop Buchberger, Mar. 14, 1958. In the same file, see also: Letter from Cath. Dean of Geiselhöring to BOR, Mar. 12, 1958. Letter from Cath. Dean of Pondorf to BOR, Mar. 14, 1958. LKAN LkR 2452: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Memmingberg to LkR, May 2, 1947. LKAN LkR 1687: Report entitled "Die gegenwärtige geistige und geistliche lage der Pfarerschaft in Westen" written by Prof. Dr. Hahn of Heidelberg. This report was delivered at a meeting of the heads of all pastoral seminaries from the respective established churches in the EKD, Nov. 16-17, 1951.

¹⁸⁸ Comments on such attitudes can be found in, LKAN KrD München 6: Yearly report from Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich, Aug. 6, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 53: End of year letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach to all pastors in KrD Ansbach, Dec. 31, 1951. DAW Generalakten 554: Report from clergy conference held at the Augustinian monastery in Würzburg, Aug. 1-2, 1950. DAW Generalakten 747: Tape-script of the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, 82-94. In particular, see Bishop Döpfner's comments on pg. 94. BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled "Liturgie: Feier

For their part, church officials were quite divided over how to respond to the shortage of clergy and the problems it produced. Some were quite hostile when pastors or priests complained of overwork. In reply to the repeated pleas for more assistance from one priest in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, a church official replied: “You spend far too much of the time and strength that you say are so limited writing letters. If all of the hundreds of priests in the archdiocese wrote as many letters as you do, then we would have to have 10 full time assistants to handle the post.”¹⁸⁹ The none too subtle message was for the priest to shut up and get to work. Most church officials were much more understanding. They realized that the clergy were stretched very thin. They tried to be as sympathetic as possible to their complaints and offered possible solutions. In 1956, Bishop Döpfner of Würzburg more systematically addressed the problem when he released the so-called “Guidelines for the simplification of pastoral care”. Here, Döpfner called for a major reexamination of all services provided in the diocese to determine if they should be continued, dropped, or consolidated into other services. Concrete coverage plans that would allow priests to take more vacation time were laid out. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the guidelines also called for a reduction in the number of religious education classes taught by priests every week.¹⁹⁰ In all of these things, the focus was on providing more time for prayer and reflection and less services so that pastors and priests could make those that they did lead as meaningful as possible. Döpfner’s precedent would be followed by other bishops in the 1960s.

der Gottesdienste” written by Cath. Cathedral Canon Joseph Meindl for the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg.

¹⁸⁹ EAM NL Faulhaber 5364: Letter from Secretariat of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising to Father Eberl of Oberteisendorf, Apr. 3, 1946.

¹⁹⁰ “Richtlinien zur Vereinfachung der Seelsorge,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt*, Seelsorgebeilage Nr. 3 (May 1, 1956): 64-5.

Actions of this nature were certainly a step in the right direction, but they could do little to address the fundamental problem. The churches were short on manpower but long on commitments. Unlike businesses, they could not simply reduce output to match their labor supply. They still had to fulfill their fundamental mission of providing worship services and access to the sacraments for all of their adherents, regardless of where they lived. Thus, the churches had no choice but to stretch their increasingly meager resources to the absolute limits. In so doing, however, pastoral care and worship services themselves were diminished. This compromised the churches' efforts to encourage a deeper commitment to regular attendance at Sunday worship amongst ordinary Bavarians.

It was thus the complex interaction of several factors that undermined the churches' efforts to bring about a renewed dedication to worship. They also no doubt paved the way for the disaster that awaited the churches in the 1960s and 70s. These included: pre-existing tendencies towards poor or non-existent church attendance, the experience of the Nazi era and the sense of alienation from the churches that it produced, particularly in young people, and the growth of an ethos of individualism and consumption. This being said, one must also accept that the churches themselves contributed in a variety of ways, not all of them under their control, to declining attendance rates. One should be very wary of saying that such results illustrate the failure of the churches' postwar plans for Christian renewal. Both could still count on a loyal core to attend church week in and week out. But one cannot deny that a clear downward trend was already apparent in the 1950s. Through this, we can see, as could

contemporary observers, that even during this so-called period of normalization, church influence in West German society had profound limits.

Holidays, Festivals, and Special Events

Worship is obviously not limited to Sunday services. Services on holidays, festivals, and special events make up an integral part of the religious experience as well. Their rituals, symbols, and words can produce a powerful sense of cohesion and inclusiveness in a religious community; affecting both core members and outliers alike. This section will examine the ways in which the churches looked to put their talk about holidays, festivals, and special events into practice. It will also look at some of the obstacles they had to face and what kind of response they found from the laity.

Religious holidays, festivals, and special events had long been a given part of the Bavarian landscape. For Catholics, there were a multitude of feast days, pilgrimages, particularly to the famous Marian site of Altötting in southeast Bavaria, and festivals honoring a variety of patron saints. Processions, most notably on Corpus Christi Day, had been carried out in small villages and large cities like Munich for over 400 years. Ever wary of being overwhelmed in this primarily Catholic state, Bavarian Protestants were keen to commemorate events from the life of Martin Luther such as the posting of the 95 Theses (Nov. 1) and his death (Feb. 18). Through their rituals and rhetoric, these special events all stressed continuity, tradition, and inclusion. In many ways, they were very persuasive. Catholics marching through the streets on Corpus Christi Day with thousands of other Catholics along the same route that their parents, grandparents, and great grandparents walked no doubt felt a sense of connection to their faith and their church. Stirring depictions of Martin Luther thundering out his protest against the

Catholic Church provided Protestants with a sense of identity, albeit one defined in the negative (we are not Catholic).

The Nazis were quick to realize that the sense of tradition and inclusion created by religious holidays, festivals, special events was a major obstacle to the dissemination of their own particular world view. More specifically, religious holidays and festivals were a source of competition for their nationalist ones. Thus, the Nazis moved forcefully to try and co-opt, restrict, or outright ban them. Given its limited repertoire of special occasions, this was not overly difficult when it came to the Protestant Church. There would be muted protest when top Protestant officials such as Bishop Meiser were prohibited from speaking on certain special occasions, but the desire to avoid conflict usually meant that little amounted from it in all but the most extraordinary of circumstances such as the church struggle of 1934.¹⁹¹ Anniversaries of events from the life of Martin Luther were still a key source of Lutheran identity and did pose a challenge to the establishment of the Nazi worldview. However, Luther could be co-opted by the Nazis, not always against the wishes of church officials and clergy members, through a focus on his anti-Semitic writings, his justification of authoritarianism, and claims that he had freed Germans from the tyranny of Rome and cleared the way for the creation of a German nation.¹⁹²

¹⁹¹ Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State Univ. Press, 1979), 187-88.

¹⁹² The uses and abuses of Martin Luther's legacy and writings are discussed in Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 23-28; 50-54; 158-161. The Nazis were particularly keen on citing Luther's antisemitic tract from 1543 "On the Jews and their Lies." For the original version, see: *D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Vol. 53 (Weimar: Hermann Böhlhaus Nachfolger, 1919), 417-552. They also cited "Admonition to Peace: A Reply to the Twelve Articles of the Peasants in Swabia" and "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants." In these works, Luther defended government authority during the Peasants' War of 1525. For the originals, see *D. Martin Luthers Werke*, Vol. 18, 291-334; 357-361

In the Catholic Church, the Nazis faced a more challenging foe. Wound up in the unified and firmly held structure of Catholic beliefs were a multitude of rituals, holidays, processions, and feasts that for many Catholics represented nothing short of a way of life. Because it would be seen as an open attack on established tradition, any attempt to penetrate and break down this world was sure to be an extremely difficult. Undeterred, the Nazis employed economic and social pressure, chicanery, legal restrictions, and outright bans in their efforts to break the back of the Catholic Church. Stringent limitations were placed on processions and pilgrimages. As early as 1935, the Bavarian Political Police ordered that Corpus Christi Day processions, a highlight on the Catholic liturgical calendar of Bavaria, be closely monitored. The following year, it was decreed that official buildings could no longer be decorated for the occasion and that public officials and civil servants could only march in the processions as private citizens, not as members of the government. From 1937 until 1944, the traditional routes followed during such processions in many towns and cities were altered, pushing them down back streets in the name of improving traffic flow. During the war years, the processions could also only take place on Sunday as taking time off on a weekday (Corpus Christi Day always falls on a Thursday) to march through the streets was said to hurt the war effort.¹⁹³ The Nazis altered holiday laws, removing traditional feast days such as All Saints Day (Nov. 1) and Epiphany (Jan. 6). They also made it illegal to wave the yellow and white church flag from one's home on a religious holiday, or any other day. In 1939, festivities for the first mass of a new priest (*Primizfeier*), which were usually a source of embarrassment to the party as they always attracted more people than local rallies, were

¹⁹³ Susanne Kornacker, "Bausteine des geistigen Wiederaufbaus," 274. See also, J.S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches 1933-1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 173-74. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 208.

restricted to the church building itself.¹⁹⁴ Intervention of this sort generated a tremendous amount of bitterness among ordinary Bavarian Catholics. Many simply continued to practice banned religious holidays and didn't go to work. In towns and villages where support for the Nazis was slim, church flags would be waved with impunity on religious holidays. Thousands of people would sometimes pack in to a village to celebrate the first mass of a new priest in what Nazi officials usually dubbed "a power display of the Church."¹⁹⁵ What conformity the Nazis did achieve came at a high price as the general Catholic populace became increasingly alienated from them and the position of the Church and the clergy were strengthened.

Working from this background, the churches were understandably quite eager to celebrate religious holidays, festivals, and special events according to traditional practices after the war. In this, they found welcome support from the American military government. On May 18, 1945, only 18 days after US troops had entered Munich, Cardinal Faulhaber wrote to the military government asking that they permit the church to hold the traditional Munich Corpus Christi Day procession on Thursday, May 31. In his conclusion, he gave the warning: "The population of Munich would not understand, that after the downfall of the National Socialist government the great Corpus Christi procession should not be allowed."¹⁹⁶ The answer came four days later when the Americans replied that the procession could be held according to the traditional route and that police escorts would be provided. Individual parishes would have to wait for the following Sunday to hold their local processions and the archbishop was asked to

¹⁹⁴ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 196-98.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Letter in English from Cardinal Faulhaber to American Military Government, May 18, 1945. In Hürten, *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 7-8.

encourage people to return home as soon as the procession was over. Despite such caveats, the Americans had agreed and the 1945 Corpus Christi Day procession would be the first major gathering allowed during the Occupation period. Similar allowances would be made for other religious holidays and festivals as well.

The American military government also declared that the pre-1933 ordinances governing holidays were to be restored.¹⁹⁷ These laws set up a double system. First, there were a series of base holidays for the whole state: New Year's Day, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May 1, Pentecost Monday, Assumption Day (*Mariä Himmelfahrt*), Corpus Christi Day, and two Christmas holidays. Second, in towns or villages that were deemed "predominantly Catholic" or "predominantly Protestant," defined as a place where 75% of the inhabitants were adherents of a certain church, the people could observe confession specific holidays. For Catholics, these were St. Joseph's Day, Peter and Paul's Day, Mary's Nativity (*Mariä Empfängnis*) and All Saint's Day. For Protestants, these were Reformation Day and the Day of Atonement and Prayer.¹⁹⁸ The decision to return to this system was part of a much larger belief that the 12 years of Nazi rule had been an aberration and that the best course of action was to pick up at the point where things had gone tragically wrong and begin anew. While the churches stressed that the rise of Nazism was a long term process deriving from the spread of materialism, they were not above making this same argument, as will be shown in the chapter concerning schools, when it suited their purposes.

In the case of holiday laws, however, postwar circumstances meant that simply returning to 1933 was unacceptable to the churches. Wartime dislocation and the arrival

¹⁹⁷ Kornacker, "Bausteine," 274.

¹⁹⁸ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 209: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, May 23, 1947.

of the refugees substantially altered the confessional dynamics of Bavaria. With large numbers of confessionally dissimilar refugees literally showing up overnight in areas that were once confessionally homogenous, it became harder and harder for both churches to clear the 75% hurdle. Fearing that their confession specific holidays would be lost, both churches began to exert pressure the political realm to defend what they felt was rightly theirs.

In this effort, the churches met a wide variety of powerful opponents. Left wing parties such as the SPD were quite hostile to the idea of such a large number of religious holidays. Pro-business parties such as the FDP claimed that religious holidays were bad for the economy as they kept stores and factories closed and workers were often hung-over the next day. Even the CSU was deeply divided over the issue. The progressive, liberal-conservative branch, which attracted more Protestants, was in favor of limiting the number of confessionally specific holidays in order to promote business and industry. The more traditional, ultra-conservative, ultra-Catholic branch was quite committed to retaining religious holidays.¹⁹⁹ Divisions across the political spectrum were only further enhanced by conflict between the confessions. Protestant officials complained bitterly about proposals for new holiday laws, claiming that the Catholic Church was using its connections to manipulate them to its favor. Amidst the profusion of Catholic holidays, Protestant ones were not being accorded equal treatment.²⁰⁰ For their part, Catholic officials claimed that both the Protestant Church and the government were trying to

¹⁹⁹ Peter James, *The Politics of Bavaria – an Exception to the Rule* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 95-6.

²⁰⁰ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 209: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, May 23, 1947. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 209: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. District Superintendents, July 30, 1947.

prevent Catholics from exercising their right to celebrate long established holidays. As such, they threatened to destroy an integral part of Bavarian tradition and culture.²⁰¹

Acrimonious debate of this type carried on for the better part of four years until a compromise was hammered out in 1949. Once again, a dual system was enacted. First, there was a set of legal holidays (*gesetzlicher Feiertage*) where everyone had the day off. These included: New Year's Day, Epiphany, Good Friday, Easter Monday, May 1, Pentecost Monday, and two Christmas holidays. Second, there were confessionally specific groups of full day, state protected holidays (*staatlich geschützte Feiertage*) that could be celebrated in areas that had a majority of one confession or the other. For Catholics these were St. Joseph's Day, Corpus Christi, Mary's Ascension, and All Saint's Day. For Protestants these were Reformation Day and the Day of Atonement and Prayer. In recognition of the substantial changes that had taken place to confessional dynamics in the state, the bar for a town or village to be declared "predominantly Catholic" or "predominantly Protestant" was lowered to 50%. As this meant that potentially up to 49% of the inhabitants of a given area might not be able to take the day off to celebrate the holidays of their particular church, ordinances were put in place that gave adherents of the minority confession in an area that was deemed predominantly of the other confession the legal right to take half of the day off to attend special services on that day. Much like the laws protecting Sunday morning worship, sports matches, rallies, and other organized gatherings could not be held in the morning, or during the time in which the main services were to take place, on these state protected holidays.²⁰²

²⁰¹ DAW Generalakten 621: Reply of Cath. Vicar General Fuchs of the Diocese of Würzburg to report entitled "Begründung zum Entwurf eines Bayerischen Gesetzes über die Feiertage" written by the Ministerial Director of the Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, Dec. 30, 1948.

²⁰² "Die Feiertage in Bayern," SZ, Mar 26, 1949.

Needless to say, this system was hopelessly confusing. Debate about it would continue on throughout the remainder of the time period under study and the whole system was eventually overhauled in the 1960's and 70's to create one with only standardized holidays that everyone enjoyed. Nor was it the definitive solution that each church desired. Protestant officials complained that the laws favored the Catholic Church while their holidays had been given short shrift. Due to the fact that Bavaria was overwhelmingly Catholic, large numbers of Protestants, they argued, would be stuck in areas deemed "predominantly Catholic" and would therefore only have a half day to celebrate Protestant holidays. Workers would no doubt be pressured by their employers to not take the half-day off and even if they could this was surely not enough time to create the proper sense of devotion and reflection. Catholics complained that important holidays such as Peter and Paul's Day and Mary's Nativity had been completely dropped and others, most notably Corpus Christi Day, had been demoted to merely state protected status. Neither side liked the fact that a razor thin difference in the confessional demographics of a town or district could decide which set of holidays were observed. Despite such disappointments, they could look on the holiday laws that enacted in 1949 with a sense of vindication. Less than a decade after the Nazis had used chicanery, legal restrictions, and outright bans to halt religious holidays and festivities, the churches had successfully lobbied the government to protect them. Protestants may have complained that they were all too often the minority confession whose holidays were left out, but they were emboldened by the fact that even if they lived in an overwhelmingly Catholic area they could at least have a half day off to celebrate special events like Reformation Day. Catholics didn't like that so many of their holidays had been demoted, but were heartened

to know that the state at least officially recognized and protected them. In light of the very recent past and the opposition the churches faced, these were significant accomplishments.

The churches were well aware that securing the right to hold their traditional holidays and festivals did not guarantee that people would actually come. While religious special events had long been a given part of the Bavarian landscape, the secularizing and anti-clerical tendencies, felt stronger amongst Protestants than Catholics, which were discussed earlier in this chapter had caused a decline in participation. More and more men came to see religious festivals and special events as the realm of women and children and didn't go, or, more commonly, headed straight for the adjoining beer tents. Thus, the churches knew that they also had to work in the sphere of popular opinion to try and convince people of the need to come and take an active part in the celebrations.

To do so, they utilized not only the sermons that were discussed in Chapter 1, but a wide range of other medium to spread the message. The diocese of Regensburg created a poster that informed workers that they had the legal right to celebrate state protected Catholic holidays such as Corpus Christi Day. Any attempt on the part of their employer to deny them this right should be reported. Going further, the poster reminded workers that they also had the moral duty to attend mass on all religious holidays. This included those that had not been granted state protection such as Peter and Paul's Day and Mary's Nativity. The poster concluded: "Catholic holidays in our Catholic land must maintain their Catholic character."²⁰³

²⁰³ BZAR Generalia 274.20: Poster entitled "Haltet alle katholischen Feiertage wie die Sonntage!," no date.

A Catholic lay group in the diocese of Passau produced a flyer to be distributed in rural areas entitled "More men in processions!" In it, the authors lamented that the last two decades had seen a significant decline in the number of men taking part in processions. A depiction of such events was offered as testament to this. After the clergy and school children, there was only a smattering of men before the large group of women that brought up the rear. Men, they argued, increasingly saw such processions as the realm of gullible women and naïve children. They no longer felt that they had to turn to God for help. Rather, they had insurance companies to protect them against crop failures and socialized medicine in case of injury. As the war had shown, the flyer concluded, all such things could be taken away. Putting one's faith in the creations of man had led to Germany's destruction. It was time for not only women and children to turn to God but men as well.²⁰⁴

Discussion primers for church association group nights also stressed the need to take an active role in religious festivities. For example, in a series designed for Catholic female youth groups, the author suggested that the young women offer to help decorate the church for special events. Furthermore, they should go out of their way to celebrate local religious festivals, take part in processions and pilgrimages, and honor the feast for their patron saint. Active and visible participation in such events, the author reminded, was a good way to recruit new members or welcome back lapsed ones. It also provided a sense of purpose that could help smooth over disputes that may have developed within the group.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ DAW Generalakten 674: Letter from BOP to BOW, Feb. 28, 1952. Includes a copy of the flyer "Mehr Männer bei den Bittprozessionen."

²⁰⁵ BZAR OA 2534: Pamphlet series entitled "Gruppenstunden für den Frauenjugend" written by Otilie Moßhammer, no date. Distributed in the dioceses of Regensburg and Eichstätt. See in particular the

Similar comments were made by Protestants as well. Every year, articles in “The Scaffolding” (*Das Baugerüst*), a periodical for youth group leaders, discussed the ways in which groups could prepare for major Protestant holidays such as Reformation Day. Reading select passages from Martin Luther was strongly encouraged, as were serious discussions concerning the ramifications of the posting of the 95 Theses and the continued relevance of Martin Luther. For the holiday itself, the group should help decorate the church with greenery and banners and make a point to attend the special services together.²⁰⁶

Articles and columns designed to generate awareness and interest for religious holidays and events were a staple of religious newspapers throughout this period. Every edition of the *St. Heinrichsblatt*, the Catholic newspaper for the Archdiocese of Bamberg, contained a section entitled “Crisscrossing our Archdiocese” (*Kreuz und Quer durch unserer Erzdiözese*) that announced upcoming processions, pilgrimages, and local religious festivals and provided contact information for interested parties.²⁰⁷ The Protestant *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* contained a similar column entitled “Calendar of Church Events” (*Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse*).²⁰⁸ In both newspapers, special events were elaborated on much further in subsequent articles. The churches found welcome support in such efforts from the secular press as well. Before

pamphlets entitled “Du bist Gruppenführerin – was mußt du über Gruppenarbeit wissen?” and “Wie steht es mit der Gemeinschaft in unserer Gruppe.”

²⁰⁶ “Martin Luther – Diener des höchsten Herren. Zum Reformationsfest am 31. Oktober 1947,” *Das Baugerüst* (Oct. 1947): 12-16. See also, “Jungkreis in Oktober,” *Das Baugerüst* (Oct. 1949): 263-64. “Wahrheit,” *Das Baugerüst* (Oct. 1957): 290-292.

²⁰⁷ For example, see the Pentecost 1954 edition of the *St. Heinrichsblatt*. The “Kreuz und Quer durch unserer Erzdiözese” column includes information concerning special Pentecost services, a Marian pilgrimage to a local shrine, and how to secure tickets to the upcoming National Assembly of Catholics in Fulda.

²⁰⁸ For example, see the Sept. 1, 1946 edition of the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt*. It provides information concerning the rededications of several churches whose wartime damages had been repaired, “Mission fests” being held in several parishes, complete with choral and band (*Posaunen*) music, and an upcoming assembly for Protestant male youth groups from the American zone.

major holidays and festivals, the Munich based *Süddeutsche Zeitung* always carried articles that explained the history and traditions surrounding such celebrations and the places and times of special services being held that year.²⁰⁹

As they played such a vital role in shaping the religious sensibilities of their children, parents were particularly singled out as targets for this message concerning participation in holidays, festivals, and special events. Both churches deemed it absolutely essential that they set a good example for their children. Through pamphlets, lectures, and a host of other means, the churches reminded parents again and again that active participation in special religious events was part and parcel of their duty to educate their children in the ways of the faith. Children needed to see both of their parents truly engaged in events of this kind for them to consider it a given part of the world around them. If neither parent took part in the festivities, then they certainly couldn't expect their child to magically do so later on in life. If only one parent was involved, or the other, often the father, headed straight for the beer tent, it sent a confusing message to the child. When faced with two legitimate choices, the child might choose neither and become religiously indifferent.²¹⁰ This was even more a danger for children who stemmed mixed confessional marriages. How could they be legitimately expected to honor both Catholic holidays and Protestant ones (such as Reformation Day)? This strained all credibility that either might have and led the children to believe in nothing. Fears of this sort were a major reason for the churches' heavy stance against such unions.

²⁰⁹ See, for example, the long running series "Aus dem kirchlichen Leben" in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

²¹⁰ See, for example, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled "Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern" written by Prot. Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Lecture entitled "Schüler und Lehrer aus einem Holz" given by Oberlandesgerichtsrat Dr. J. Grüb to meeting of the state meeting of the Catholic Parents' Association, Feb. 17, 1954.

One could go on and on about the various means through which both churches attempted to encourage their adherents to participate in special religious events. Lurking behind such discussions is always the matter of reception. What kind of echo did such concentrated efforts on the part of both churches find? The easiest, but by no means only, way to determine this is simply by looking at who showed up. Here, one notices major differences between the two confessions. While one should always be careful to avoid making value statements about which confession “did a better job,” it is quite clear that the Catholic Church was at a tremendous advantage due to the variety of its offerings.

While eventually moved back to the following Sunday due to heavy rain, the 1945 Corpus Christi Day procession in Munich that was discussed earlier turned out to be a major triumph for the Catholic Church. It took some four hours for the roughly 50,000 participants to wind their way through the rubble of Munich in an outward and visible sign that the church had triumphed over National Socialism.²¹¹ Similar scenes took place in Catholic communities across the state. In the small town of Fürstenfeldbruck, the Corpus Christi Day procession returned to its traditional route after years of being diverted down back roads. In a letter to Cardinal Faulhaber, the local priest commented that three young men from the town built a brand new, three tiered votive for the event and the whole town turned out to carry it through the streets. It now stood in a place of honor in the church.²¹² The rush of religious enthusiasm brought about by the physical destruction of Germany and the end of the war certainly contributed to the particular

²¹¹ Kornacker, “Bausteine,” 277-79.

²¹² EAM NL Faulhaber 5364: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Fürstenfeldbruck to Cardinal Faulhaber, June 20, 1945. See a host of other such reports in Peter Pfister (ed.), *Das Ende des Zweiten Weltkriegs im Erzbistum München und Freising*.

fervor of such events, but in no way should one see these examples as unusual. Turnout at the Munich Corpus Christi Day procession consistently ranged between 30,000 to 40,000 during the entire period under study.²¹³

Local festivals and dedications also drew enormous crowds. On July 14, 1946, 60,000 people filled the cathedral square in Bamberg to celebrate the 800th anniversary of the sainthood of the Heinrich II, the patron of both the city and the archdiocese.²¹⁴ 50,000 people attended the main service of the 1952 St. Kilian's Fest in Würzburg, the first held after the war.²¹⁵ At the parish level, feasts for patron saints and the anniversaries of church dedications were all met with great celebration. Even the tiniest of villages were often visited by high church officials on such occasions. While technically outside the realm of the church, Catholic officials and regular clergy members also took part in numerous dedication ceremonies for newly constructed, or reconstructed, bridges, buildings, and factories.²¹⁶ Perhaps the most high-profile example of this, one that will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 5, was Bishop Döpfner's dedication of the new sugar factory in Ochsenfurt.

The Catholic Church also launched a systematic campaign of popular missions (*Volksmissionen*) after World War II. Drawing on precedents from the nineteenth century, church officials envisioned such missionary activity as a way to deepen religious involvement and restore moral order among Catholics whose commitment to the church and the faith had grown lax. Nazi barbarism and war, they made clear, had been the

²¹³ "Der Fronleichnamstag," *SZ*, June 18, 1946. See also, "31,000 gingen mit der Prozession," *SZ*, May 29, 1948. "Prozession bei strahlenden Maiwetter," *SZ*, May 25, 1951.

²¹⁴ Blessing, "Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben..." 65.

²¹⁵ Barbara Stambolis, *Religiöse Festkultur*, 276.

²¹⁶ Blessing, "Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben..." 66. "Kleine Bayern-Chronik," *SZ*, May 19, 1948.

terrible consequences of this loss of religious zeal.²¹⁷ Teams of missionaries, primarily from the Jesuit, Franciscan, Redemptorist, and Capuchin monastic orders, fanned out across Bavaria between 1946 and 1950 and eventually visited every parish in the state. Following this intense period of activity, follow-up missions were conducted at a reduced pace throughout the remainder of the 1950's.

While not quite as swooning as their nineteenth-century predecessors, postwar popular missions were still extraordinary events. In the weeks and days before the missionaries arrived, local parish priests worked feverishly to whip up interest and excitement in the congregation.²¹⁸ The mission itself would always kick off on a Sunday with special services that introduced the missionaries and called the faithful to repent. During the week, the church opened at four or five a.m. for confession. Mass was held at six, followed by a sermon. Mass and sermons for specific groups, men, women, youth, children, were held in the afternoon. In the evening, there was a rosary service, followed by mass and a sermon. Then there was yet another chance for confession. On the middle Sunday of the two week mission, mass was held for a variety of different groups throughout the day. On the final Sunday, there was a mass communion followed by a procession bearing a commemorative cross that was usually planted in front of the church, thus bringing the mission to a close.²¹⁹

The missions saw a flurry of activity that, particularly in rural areas, broke through the tedium of everyday life. At the center of all this were the sermons. During

²¹⁷ For missionary activity in the nineteenth century, see Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 56-63. See also, Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*, 29-73. On the need for missions in the postwar era, see Vicar General Buchweiser, "Volksmissionen," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 15, 1946): 141-43.

²¹⁸ See, for example, EAM NL Faulhaber 6004: Flyer announcing a popular mission in Prien to be held from Sept. 22 – Oct. 6, 1946.

²¹⁹ Schedule found in *Ibid*.

the first week of the mission, the monks delivered dramatic hell-fire and brimstone sermons that reminded people of their unworthiness in the eyes of God. With titles such as “There is a Hell!,” these sermons drew vivid pictures of the infernal horror that awaited unrepentant sinners.²²⁰ “Hell is the place where fire and brimstone burn the flesh. Hell is the place where howling shrieks assault the ears... Hell is a place without hope, only eternal suffering!”²²¹ Those who denied the existence of hell or who thought that the fires of hell were merely metaphor were deluded. In a sermon entitled “Just as there is a world, there is a Hell!,” one missionary stated “Without Hell, the world and its evil would be incomprehensible.” Even if there weren’t a Hell, he went on, “a new one would be created everyday out of the slime of human depravity.”²²²

Ample space in these sermons concerning damnation was provided for references to the very recent German past. Missionaries reminded listeners again and again that their embrace of materialism and lax religiosity had helped lead to the rise of National Socialism. The terrible destruction rained down on Germany during the war was God’s punishment for such offenses, a kind of hell on earth that was but the weakest of precursors to the horrors that existed in the true infernal abyss. Now was the time to repent and renew one’s commitment to the faith and the church.²²³

After a week of sermons focusing on sin, judgment after death, and the punishment of hell, missionaries turned a corner on the middle Sunday and talk turned to redemption and salvation. In sermons with titles such as “God is merciful,” they stressed

²²⁰ An excellent collection of sermons given at popular missions between 1946-1952 can be found in DAW NL Vitus Brander 35. See here, “Es gibt eine Hölle!”

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid. See here, “Es gibt eine Hölle, so wahr es eine Welt gibt.”

²²³ Comments of this sort can be found in almost all of the sermons regarding damnation in DAW NL Vitus Brander 35.

that God took no joy from the sight of Germany bombed and ruined or sinners suffering in hell. If he had, he wouldn't have come down from heaven and died like a petty criminal on the cross to redeem the sins of the world. "God is merciful," they reminded, "unendingly, incomprehensibly merciful." Chaos and destruction in this life and damnation in the next were only the terrible punishments for rejecting this mercy.²²⁴

The attempts to improve popular morality through missionary activity will be discussed in much greater detail in the chapter concerning marriage, but here it is necessary to talk about what kind of response the missions found amongst ordinary Catholics. Post-mission reports from priests paint something of a mixed picture. Many speak in glowing terms about the missions, calling them a turning point in the religious life of the parish. There are several examples of towns and villages where 95-100% of the local Catholics confessed and took communion, some doing so multiple times.²²⁵ Many of these same reports mention that people who had been distant from the church for years came back and took communion. Some say that intense efforts directed at target groups such as returning soldiers and refugees paid dividends and they attended in large numbers.²²⁶ A few even comment that Protestants attended the services well.²²⁷

²²⁴ DAW NL Vitus Brander 35: Sermon for popular mission entitled "Gott ist barmherzig."

²²⁵ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Bischbrunn über Marktheidenfeld to BOW, Feb. 11, 1947. DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Mespelbrunn/Spessarf über Aschaffenburg to BOW, Mar. 10, 1950. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946. See here, reports from Niederbergkirchen and Gmund. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-50. See here, Tettenhausen.

²²⁶ EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946. See here, reports from Waging. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, reports from Walpertskirchen, Bad Tolz, and St. Wolfgang-München.

²²⁷ EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946. See here, Kirchdorf bei Haag. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Tettenhausen and Reithofen.

Others spoke in more qualified terms. A large number of the reports mention that while attendance amongst women and children was strong, men and young men largely stayed away.²²⁸ Numerous priests noted that while the native population turned out in force, refugees that had been settled in the area largely stayed away. Priests usually attributed this to poor religiosity on the part of the refugees and considered them to be a dangerous element that might set a bad example for the locals.²²⁹ In doing so, they completely failed to mention that church seating rules, which ostracized the refugees or confined them to beggar status, were still firmly in effect at the missions. This created a very unwelcoming atmosphere.²³⁰ Nor did they accept the proposition that missions, with their heavy talk about sin and the need for penance, might not be very appealing to people who felt that they had been unjustly wronged.

A much smaller group of post-mission reports speak of complete disaster. Priests stretched particularly thin from providing pastoral care and teaching religious education classes claimed that they had not had enough time to properly prepare for the mission and attendance levels reflected this deficit.²³¹ Pre-existing anti-clericalism in some towns and

²²⁸ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Maroldswesach über Bamberg to BOW, Jan. 2, 1947. In the same file, see also Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Haibach to BOW, April 28, 1948.

²²⁹ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Eussenhausen to BOW, Jan. 7, 1947. In the same file, see also Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Obernau über Aschaffenburg to BOW, Jan. 5, 1947. Letter from Cath. Expositor of Poppenhausen bei Schweinfurt to BOW, Dec. 18, 1946. Letter from Cath. Curate of Fabrikschleichach to BOW, Dec. 13, 1946. EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946. See here, Piding and Kirchdorf bei Haag. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Puchheim, St. Georgen, and Rappoltskirchen,

²³⁰ Showing the opposite of this, refugees turned out in droves when seating rules were abandoned during the mission in the village of Giebing in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising and refugees were given pride of place in the sanctuary. See EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946.

²³¹ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Maroldswesach über Bamberg to BOW, Jan. 2, 1947. EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Puchheim.

villages led to dismal turnouts. In some instances, this seems to have stemmed from the lasting influence of Nazism. For example, in the village of Überacker in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, attendance was so bad that the missionaries openly referred to it as a “Nazi village.”²³² In some towns and villages, teachers, who had often been some of the earliest recruits to National Socialism and served as the counter pole to the priest, openly discouraged their pupils from attending the mission.²³³ Without the children’s presence, the mission lost a great deal of its vitality and many adults stayed away. Other factors were also involved. Participation in urban parishes in large cities like Munich, particularly in the working class districts, was considerably less than in the countryside.²³⁴ Many priests also noted that young people, in particular young returning veterans, stayed away from the mission and went to soccer matches, dances, movies, and taverns instead.²³⁵

Despite negative examples such as these, the missions were seen by many as a triumph. Their mere presence had stirred up interest in and awareness of the church’s message concerning the need for Christian renewal in the wake of Germany’s descent into Nazism and war. While they may have lacked the weeping, fainting, and fervent swaying that accompanied popular missions in the nineteenth century, the postwar

²³² EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See also, DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Klingenberg am Main to BOW, Mar. 9, 1951.

²³³ EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Königin des Friedens-München, Siegsdorf,

²³⁴ EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, St. Emmermen-München, St. Albert-München, Hl. Kreuz-Giesing, and St. Gabriel-München.

²³⁵ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Keilberg über Aschaffenburg to BOW, Dec. 31, 1946. In the same file, see also Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Klingenberg am Main to BOW, Mar. 9, 1951. Letter from Cath. Pastorate Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Frammersbach to BOW, May 6, 1950. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1946. See here, Weyarn. EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Waakirchen-Marienstein.

missions still encouraged people to come and take a more active role in the life of their church.

At the same time that the Catholic missions were stressing the need to repent for the sins that had helped led to Nazism, Catholic officials looked to commemorate the perceived resistance of both the institutional church and Catholic laypeople to Nazism. The majority of Catholics, they argued, had stayed true to their faith and their church, even in the face of withering persecution. The crystalization point of such arguments came at ceremonies honoring the memory of martyrs. For example, in 1947 the city of Bamberg reinterred the body of Hans Wölfel with full honors. Wölfel had been a lawyer in Bamberg and was active in Catholic associations there. In July 1943, he was denounced for making comments about the futility of the war and Hitler's responsibility for it. Wölfel was taken to Berlin for questioning. While there, he openly confessed that his Christian beliefs prohibited him from following many National-Socialist teachings. He was subsequently sentenced to death and hung on July 3, 1944. At the reinterment service, Archbishop Kolb told the huge crowd that Wölfel was a "modern day witness to the faith and martyr for our archdiocese" He was a symbol of a better Bamberg, the Christian/Catholic Bamberg, which had stood fast through the "fiercest storm since the Reformation."²³⁶ In this way, the church reinforced the dual identity of guilt and resistance that was discussed earlier in the context of sermons.

In a country wracked by loss and grief, it should not be surprising that holidays and festivals of remembrance were particularly well attended. Thousands of people from Würzburg and the surrounding area attended a 1946 joint service of remembrance at a

²³⁶ Quoted in Blessing, "Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben...," 73-74. See also, Pressestelle des Erzbischöflichen Ordinariats, *Die Märtyrer des 20. Jahrhunderts aus dem Erzbistum Bamberg* (Bamberg: Schriftenreihe der Pressestelle des Erzbischöflichen Ordinariats, 2002), 15.

local cemetery that was led by Bishop Ehrenfried and Protestant District Superintendent Schadewitz.²³⁷ Catholic services at local cemeteries on All Saint's Day, the traditional day of remembrance in the Catholic liturgical calendar, were always particularly well attended. To accommodate the flood of people taking part in such services in the Munich area, the public transportation system put extra trams and buses on all its lines that passed by a cemetery. Private companies also ran buses that ran constantly from one cemetery to the next.²³⁸ While attendance at such services would decline in the 1950's as the war receded more and more into the past, a strong turnout could still always be expected.

Freed from Nazi restrictions, the number of Catholics undertaking pilgrimages skyrocketed. While a lack of train service and the generally chaotic situation immediately following the war crippled the 1945 summer pilgrimage season, the following year saw thousands of local and statewide pilgrimages. As ever, the most popular destination was the famous Marian site of Altötting in southeastern Bavaria. Some 200,000 people visited the site in 1946, almost 40,000 in the month of May, the highpoint of Marian devotion in the Catholic liturgical calendar, alone.²³⁹ These numbers only increased in 1947 and 1948. Groups of women, returning soldiers, refugees, youth, men, and members of all manner of church organizations all made major pilgrimages.²⁴⁰ In fact, so many people came that the infrastructure of the tiny town,

²³⁷ "Würzburg gedenkt seiner Toten," *Main Post*, April 25, 1946. Both were dressed in full liturgical garb and gave a prayer at this service. A picture of the service that adjoins this article would later be used by Protestants to denounce Bishop Döpfner in the wake of the Ochsenfurt incident. See Chapter 5.

²³⁸ "Totengedenkfeiern," *SZ*, Oct. 31, 1947. Turnouts were no less strong in other communities. See "Die göttliche Totenerwecker," *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Nov. 13, 1949.

²³⁹ "Quer durch Bayern," *Passauer Neue Presse*, Jan. 17, 1947. See also, No title, *Passauer Neue Presse*, May 24, 1946.

²⁴⁰ BZAR OA/NS 532: Report from Erwin Triller, head of refugee pastoral care for the diocese of Regensburg (*Diözesanflüchtlingsseelsorger für die Diözese Regensburg*), covering the period from Jan. 1, 1947 to June 30, 1947. EAM NL Faulhaber 6621: Yearly report from Bayrischen Landesverbandes des Katholischen Frauenbundes for 1946, July 7, 1947. See also, DAW Generalakten 209: Yearly report from

population roughly 3,400, broke down. A chronic shortage of accommodations and an overwhelmed sewer system led to a major outbreak of typhus in June 1948.²⁴¹ By July, 74 people had died and almost 1,000 were ill.²⁴² The Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior eventually had to step in and quarantine the whole area to halt the epidemic.²⁴³ Despite the fact that pilgrimages were turned away for the better part of three months, almost 400,000 people managed to visit the site in 1948.²⁴⁴ In subsequent years, these numbers would swell to roughly half a million. They would spike even higher in the Holy Year of 1950 and the Marian Year of 1954.²⁴⁵ The latter was called forth by Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Fulgens Corona* to commemorate the centenary of Pope Pius IX's proclamation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.²⁴⁶

These two years in particular saw devotion to Catholic festivals and special events reach new heights. To celebrate Pope Pius XII's dogmatization of the bodily assumption

Bayrischen Landesverbandes des Katholischen Frauenbundes, Aug. 1948. DAW Generalakten 209: Yearly report from Catholic Women's League in the Diocese of Würzburg, July 1949. BZAR Generalia 811.30: Yearly reports from Marianische Männerkongregation Landshut for the years 1948-1960.

²⁴¹ "Bayerisches Stadt in Quarantäne," *SZ*, June 8, 1948.

²⁴² "Noch keine Wallfahrt nach Altötting," *SZ*, July 24, 1948.

²⁴³ BZAR Generalia 512.00: Letter from Bavarian State Ministry of the Interior to regional government offices in Munich, Augsburg, Regensburg, Ansbach, and Würzburg, July 28, 1948. Copies of this letter were sent to every diocese asking for their assistance to help temporarily halt the flood of pilgrims.

²⁴⁴ "Bayern-Chronik der *SZ*," *SZ*, Mar. 3, 1949.

²⁴⁵ DAW Generalakten 647 Bd. 2: Yearly report from head of refugee pastoral care for the diocese of Würzburg, 1952. DAW Generalakten 647 Bd. 3: Yearly report from head of refugee pastoral care for the diocese of Würzburg, 1954. DAW Generalakten 209: Yearly report from the Cath. Women's League in the Diocese of Würzburg, 1955. DAW Generalakten 669: Yearly report from Bayrischen Landesverbandes des Katholischen Frauenbundes, July 30, 1959. BZAR Generalia 811.30: Yearly reports from Marianische Männerkongregation Landshut for the years 1948-1960.

²⁴⁶ A copy of *Fulgens Corona* can be found on the Vatican website.

http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents.

Pius XII was a tremendous supporter of Marian devotion. His reign marked the real highpoint of the so-called "Marian century." For an excellent discussion of the Catholic Church's focus on Marian culture and its somewhat problematic consequences, see: David Blackburn, *Marpingen: Apparitions of the Virgin Mary in a Nineteenth-Century German Village* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993). Pius XII's reign also marked the real end of the Marian century. Following his death, the Catholic Church began to seriously reconsider its focus on the Virgin Mary. In the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, released at the end of the Second Vatican Council, the council fathers defined Mary's role much more narrowly and reigned in some of the more extreme versions of Marian devotion. A copy of *Lumen Gentium* can be found on the Vatican website.

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents. See in particular Chap. 8.

of the Virgin Mary on Dec. 8, 1950, the real capstone of the Holy Year, Bishop Döpfner of Würzburg called for a massive procession through the streets of the still heavily damaged city on the following Sunday. In preparation, Catholics there rebuilt or refurbished every former and remaining statue of Mary in the city, decorated them with greenery, and lit candles in front of them.²⁴⁷ On the night of the procession, every church in the city was packed to maximum capacity. The doors of the famous Marian Chapel had to be closed over an hour before a special service was to be held there because it simply couldn't accommodate any more people. It took several hours for the subsequent candlelight procession to wind its way through the streets of the city. Nighttime photos from the Marienberg (the bishop's former castle) across the Main River show a city glowing with lights that stretch down seemingly every tiny alleyway.²⁴⁸ Nor was this an isolated occurrence. Reports from across Bavaria all comment on the tremendous turnouts for festivities honoring the Virgin Mary in both 1950 and 1954.²⁴⁹ One also sees much larger events, such as the dedication of Germany to the Virgin Mary at the National Assembly of Catholics (*Katholikentag*) held in Fulda in 1954, which will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 5.

Attendance levels such as these suggest that the variety of Catholic holidays, festivals, missions, pilgrimages, and holy years retained an integrative power throughout the time period under study. While it was becoming more and more difficult for the

²⁴⁷ If one has ever been to Würzburg, he or she will realize what an amazing feat this was given the unbelievably large number of Marian statues there. Title removed, *Main Post*, Dec. 11, 1950.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁹ “‘Dein sind wir jetzt – Herrin und Mutter...’,” *Fränkische Volksblatt*, Oct. 4, 1954. See also, “Das Herzogtum dein eigen ist,” *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Oct. 4, 1954. BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. In the same file, see Letter from Cath. Dean of Straubing to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 23, 1955. BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Jugendseelsorge” given at the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg by Msgr. Anton Maier, Apr. 22-23, 1958. In this report, Maier reports that 40,000 young people attended Marian pilgrimages in May 1954 alone.

Catholic Church to get people to attend regular worship services, special religious events could still draw core believers and religious outliers alike back into the orbit of the church, even if only for a short time. These were without question powerful sites of religious involvement.

The situation for the Protestant Church was quite different. As Protestantism is by its very definition a protest against the multitude of Catholic feasts, processions, and what not, the Protestant Church had a quite limited repertoire of special events outside of traditionally accepted holidays such as Easter and Christmas. Protestants were supposed to focus on the word of God as heard through sermons. This should not suggest that the Protestant Church had nothing to offer in the way of religious holidays and festivals or that they didn't want people to attend the events being held. The response they found, though, was decidedly more mixed than that of the Catholic Church.

To break up the traditional liturgical calendar and generate interest and awareness, Protestant parishes held so called Bible weeks (*Bibelwochen*) either yearly or bi-yearly. Before such events, pastors and dedicated lay people visited members of the parish, focusing particularly on those who didn't come regularly, and personally invited them to take part. Bible weeks invariably started on a Sunday with special services that called on the people to earnestly read their bible and think about the word of God. During the week, there were lectures on biblical themes, bible discussion and exegesis groups, and services in the evening that focused on key passages from the bible. Often, the Bible week as a whole was centered a common theme.²⁵⁰ On the following Sunday, there was a special service and a mass communion.²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ For example, in 1946/47 many focused, not so surprisingly in light of the times, on eschatology. See LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. I: Copy of letter from Amt für Gemeindedienst to all Prot. pastoral care providers

Reports concerning the Bible weeks all tell a similar story. The pastor of the Protestant church of St. Luke in Munich wrote to his district superintendent saying that attendance at the Sunday services had been strong and that the evening events had regularly attracted around 150 people. This was not a bad turnout for events during the week. The pastor continued on though: “The Bible week brought the core community of the church closer together, but, unfortunately, few outside this group accepted our numerous invitations.”²⁵² The situation was almost identical in heavily Protestant areas such as Upper Franconia. The pastor of the Protestant church of St. George in Bayreuth wrote to his district superintendent saying: “People distant from the life of the church were not reached. The week served first and foremost to deepen the commitment of those already dedicated to the word and sacrament.”²⁵³ While encouraging a core community of believers in the parish to take a more active role in the life of their church, it appears that special events such as Bible weeks had little appeal for Protestants who were not already religiously inclined.

Other Protestant holidays, festivals, and special events found a better reception. Bishop Meiser’s tours of the state were always met with great turnouts.²⁵⁴ Much like

in Bavaria, Oct. 29, 1946. In 1952/3, the focus was on confessional schooling. See, LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. I: Copy of letter from Amt für Gemeindedienst to all Prot. pastoral care providers in Bavaria, June 30, 1952.

²⁵¹ “Bibelwochen,” *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern rechts des Rheins* (July 8, 1948).

²⁵² LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. I: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of St. Lukas in Munich to Prot. District Superintendent of Munich, June 16, 1948. In the same file, see similar comments made by other Prot. pastors in Munich. Letter from Prot. Pastorate of München-Pasing to Prot. District Superintendent of Munich, June 23, 1948. Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Passionskirche in Munich to Prot. District Superintendent of Munich, June 19, 1948.

²⁵³ LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. I: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of St. Georgen in Bayreuth to Prot. District Superintendent of Bayreuth, April 24, 1946. In the same file, see also Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bayreuth Altstadt to Prot. District Superintendent of Bayreuth, May 27, 1946

²⁵⁴ See, for example, “Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse,” *NEG*, June 2, 1946. Here, over 2,500 people came to participate in a service led by Bishop Meiser in Hof (Upper Franconia). Churches were filled to capacity in all the churches Meiser stopped at on his subsequent tour of the region.

their Catholic counterparts, Protestant services of remembrance were well attended. Even as late as 1957, thousands turned up for the Protestant service led by Regional Superintendent Schabert of Munich during the dedication of a memorial to the war dead at Hohen Brendten bei Mittenwald.²⁵⁵ Annual mission festivals (*Missionsfest*) that generated awareness about and raised funds for Protestant mission work overseas were also quite well attended. Following a Sunday service that centered on Jesus' call to make disciples of the world, there was usually a special celebration, replete with music, food, and drink, where current or previous missionaries would discuss their activities. Children and young people, it was noted, particularly liked such events because they could hear stories of far away places and exotic foreign customs.²⁵⁶

Far and away the most popular Protestant holidays, festivals, and special events were those that revolved around the figure of Martin Luther. As it marked the 400th anniversary of the death of Martin Luther († Feb. 18, 1546), 1946 was declared the "Year of Luther" by the Protestant Church. To commemorate his death, special services were held in Protestant churches across the state on Sunday, Feb. 17th. Thousands of people traveled to Ansbach to hear Bishop Meiser extol the virtues of Luther.²⁵⁷ As most of the city's churches lay in ruin, Protestants in Nuremberg braved the cold and filled the city's main market square to capacity for a service led by several top Protestant officials.²⁵⁸

Other Luther themed events were also well received. A so-called "Luther week" was held in late April/early May 1946. Large crowds at lecture nights during the week

²⁵⁵ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. II: Report of District Superintendent Schabert of Munich on the dedication of a memorial to the war dead at Hohen Brendt bei Mittenwald, June 10, 1957.

²⁵⁶ "Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse," *NEG*, July 21, 1946. See also, "Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse," *NEG*, Sept. 1, 1946. "Unsere Sendung," *NEG*, July 5, 1953. "Kirchlicher Rundschau," *NEG*, Sept 15, 1957.

²⁵⁷ "Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse," *NEG*, April 28, 1946. A condensed version of Bishop Meiser's sermon can be found in "An die evangelische Christenheit in Deutschland," *NEG*, Feb. 17, 1946.

²⁵⁸ "Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse," *NEG*, April 28, 1946.

left pastors in Nuremberg scrambling to try and find larger venues.²⁵⁹ Over a thousand people packed into what was left of the famous church of St. Sebald in Nuremberg to celebrate a special service that ended the Luther week.²⁶⁰ Reformation Day services in Protestant parishes across the state that year were also particularly well attended.

Celebrations of the life and death of Martin Luther reached a high point during the “Year of Luther,” but this should not suggest that they were a non-presence in subsequent years. Quite the contrary, there was a seemingly endless variety of Luther based events during the period under study. The response they found was decidedly mixed. The Protestant men’s association in Munich reported on the dismal turnouts at their special lecture series concerning Luther and his relationship to Germany’s current situation.²⁶¹ However, the Protestant press association for Bavaria noted that interest in the American made film “Martin Luther” that was released in 1954 ran high. Bishop Meiser himself gave a glowing review of the film, calling it “true and reliable.” Protestant parishes across the state rented out theaters for special screenings of the film. Tickets usually sold out immediately.²⁶² While some pastors complained that Reformation Day festivities failed to draw much enthusiasm from local Protestants, many more said that Reformation Day attracted large crowds.²⁶³ Even Protestants who didn’t attend the whole rest of the year showed up to commemorate the posting of the 95 Theses.

²⁵⁹ “Kalendarium kirchlicher Ereignisse,” *NEG*, May 19, 1946.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁶¹ LKAN KrD München 683: Report concerning activities of the group “Evangelischen Männerwerk” in Munich for the period from Sept. 1949 to July 1951.

²⁶² LKAN LkR 2001: Letter from Prot. Press Association for Bavaria to Bishop Meiser, Mar. 12, 1954. See also, “Kann man Luthers Werk verfilmen?,” *NEG*, Feb. 28, 1954.

²⁶³ For the negative, see: LKAN KrD München 493: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Günzburg to LkR, Nov. 6, 1950. For the positive, see: LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Haßfurt am Main to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Bayreuth, Mar. 31, 1953. See also, “Kirchliche Rundschau,” *NEG*, Nov. 7, 1954. “Was bedeutet das Reformationsfest?,” *NEG*, Nov. 3, 1957. “In Glaubensdingen gibt es keine Mehrheitsbeschlüsse,” *NEG*, Nov. 10, 1957.

As mixed results such as these suggest, the Protestant Church had a much more difficult time encouraging its adherents to take part in religious special events than the Catholic Church. This is not overly surprising given the fact that Protestantism is by its very nature a denial of the multitude of festivals, processions, and feasts that so characterize the Catholic faith. Events of this nature simply do not play the same role in Protestantism that they do in Catholicism. But while special religious events did not attract the same attention or reception from Protestants as they did from Catholics, one should not say that the Protestant Church completely ignored them or failed to use them effectively. There are too many examples of Protestants showing up in large numbers for such occasions to be discredited. While acknowledging notable setbacks, one sees that commemorations of the life and death of Martin Luther were still a source of cohesion for many Protestant communities. If only for a short time, they could draw members of the core community and religious outliers alike back into the orbit of the church.

Truly striking, however, is the degree to which this sense of inclusion and involvement was defined through exclusion. Religious holidays, festivals, and special events were at their most effective when they helped define Catholic or Protestant identity over and against the other. One cannot help but notice that the most popular events were those in honor of the Virgin Mary and Martin Luther. These are without question two of the most confessionally specific and controversial figures in the joint Christian tradition. Celebration of one or the other by necessity excluded members of the other confession.

Other examples of this sense of inclusion through exclusion also exist. In 1950 there was talk of changing the route of the Regensburg Corpus Christi Day procession.

This was largely in regards to technical concerns such as avoiding narrow streets that slowed the pace of the procession and finding larger squares for the various rituals so that everyone could have a better view. Deadlock ensued at a meeting of the city's priests as some were in favor of the change while others wanted to keep the traditional route. Dean Erhardsberger of Regensburg wrote to Archbishop Buchberger asking for his advice. Along with the more technical arguments, he included another factor to be taken into consideration. The old course took the procession by the local Protestant hospital, the Protestant district superintendent's house, and the main Protestant school, whose entrance was bedecked with large statues of Luther and Melanchthon. As the buildings were on a quite narrow street, the proposed new course avoided them. Dean Erhardsberger reminded the bishop that the marching always got sharper and the singing louder as they went by these buildings. He described this as "a mighty display of the Catholic faith." He concluded: "The omission of this part of the procession would be seen by this side (Protestants) as a moral victory."²⁶⁴ Buchberger decided to keep the traditional course. While the bishop was more concerned about maintaining tradition and tapping the cohesive power of the old route, snubbing the Protestants was certainly not an opportunity to be missed.

On the Protestant side, several pastors scheduled Bible weeks to coincide with Catholic popular missions being planned for the same town or village. While irritating their Catholic counterparts was undoubtedly a factor in such decisions, it was certainly not the deciding one. Rather, pastors found that attendance at Bible weeks held at the same time as Catholic popular missions was always higher than at those held when there wasn't any competition. Not wanting to be shown up by their Catholic neighbors who

²⁶⁴ BZAR Generalia 604.25: Letter from Cath. Dean of Regensburg to Bishop Buchberger, Feb. 25, 1950.

were taking part in the mission, Protestants turned out in much greater numbers for their own special events.²⁶⁵

In the confessionally divided state of Bavaria actions such as these and the sense of identity through exclusion that they generated had a long history and were almost as much a part of the festivities as the religious event itself. The context in which they took place had certainly changed though. The joint experience of persecution at the hands of the Nazis led many from both inside and outside the churches to argue that it was time for the two churches to put aside their differences and work together to rebuild Germany both morally and physically. These calls were often articulated through a discussion of the so-called confessional peace. Petty bickering between the two had divided Germany and left the institutional churches too weak to counter the slide into Nazi barbarism. If the two could only work together in peace, than the mistakes of the past would not be repeated. To do so, both needed to focus more on the elements that they held in common and less on those that drove them apart. Toning down festivities and celebrations, particularly those that honored controversial characters like the Virgin Mary or Martin Luther, was seen as a good place to start.²⁶⁶

Arguments such as these were deeply problematic for the churches. On the one hand, the experience of Nazi persecution led them to the realization that they must work

²⁶⁵ LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. 1: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Aschbach-Hohn to LkR, May 29, 1949. In the same file, see also, Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Kipfenberg to Prot. District Superintendent of Pappenheim, July 10, 1950.

²⁶⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 324: Letter from Dr. Kosel of Nuremberg to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, Jan. 21, 1946. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 132: Letter from Johann Jungmaier of Windsbch to Bishop Meiser, June 20, 1947. LKAN KrD München 667: Letter from anonymous radio listener to Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich, Nov. 11, 1950. LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. II: Letter from Anton Rupert Sittl of Munich to LkR, Mar. 31, 1951. "Der konfessionelle Friede," *Münchner Merkur*, July 4-5, 1953. "Um den konfessionellen Frieden," *Bayerische Staatszeitung und Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger*, July 4, 1953. DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Mr. S to Bishop Döpfner, July 4, 1953. The ecumenical group *Una Sancta* was particularly active in this regard. See Leonard Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard: The History of the Una Sancta Movement* (Pittsburgh: Duquense Univ. Press, 1966), 17-24.

together to create a firm moral foundation for the new state. On the other hand, both were deeply involved in campaigns to re-Christianize Germans. In the birthplace of the Reformation, efforts of this kind were destined to stir up confessional animosity as both had very different and ultimately quite antagonistic ideas about the nature of German Christianity. How could the Protestant Church seek to strengthen its Lutheran roots without focusing heavily on Luther, whose accusation that the pope was the Antichrist still stung Catholic ears? How could the Catholic Church reinvigorate religious devotion without renewing its now century long focus on Marian culture, which was so maddening to Protestants? In short, they couldn't. The traditions and sense of identity that they sought to renew were too deeply intertwined with such controversial characters and practices. Feeling embattled, both churches looked to their roots and one sees a veritable explosion in references to the Virgin Mary and Martin Luther.

What one does see, however, is a rearticulation of the way that each church talked about the holidays, festivals, and special events of the other. Gone, or at least downplayed, were tried and true terms such as "superstition," "heresy," "intrusion," and "bigotry." In their place stood a new rhetoric that focused on the so-called confessional peace. For example, one Protestant pastor claimed in an article for his church's newsletter that the Catholic Church's renewed focus on Marian culture was a conscious provocation to Protestants and that it obstructed efforts to create a confessional peace.²⁶⁷ The local Catholic priest wrote a sharp letter of reply that argued that it was Protestants, not Catholics, who were endangering the confessional peace through their refusal to

²⁶⁷ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. II: Copy of "Wochenspruch," *Kirchenbote der Evang. Luth. Kirchengemeinde Kulmbach*, Dec. 20-27, 1953.

accept Catholics and their differing beliefs.²⁶⁸ As will be seen in Chapter 5, there was an even larger eruption of such animosity following Cardinal Frings' dedication of the whole of Germany to the Virgin Mary.

Other examples abound. Not surprisingly, Catholic officials and regular clergy members were quite hostile to the new American film "Martin Luther" that was released in Germany in 1954. Priests told their flocks to boycott the film and banned members of Catholic film associations from seeing it. Several Catholic newspapers ran articles that criticized both the film and Bishop Meiser's positive review of it. Their choice of words is telling. The article in the *Regensburger Bistumsblatt* concluded: "The presentation of this film offends the religious sensibilities of Catholics and endangers the confessional peace. In a period when the Christian faith as a whole is facing the most serious attacks, this should be avoided at all costs."²⁶⁹ A review of the film in the *St. Heinrichsblatt* concluded: "The one-sided selection of evidence and focus means that this cannot be considered a truly historical film. Its effect on the confessional peace will be ominous. Members of the Film-League are reminded of their promise."²⁷⁰

Nor were the Virgin Mary and Martin Luther the only sources for rhetoric of this kind. In 1947, the Protestant pastor in Kulmbach wrote to the mayor complaining of Catholic plans to expand the Corpus Christi Day procession. The pastor argued, unjustifiably in light of the arrival of a large number of Catholic refugees in the area, that the Catholic population in the town did not warrant a larger procession. Despite the fact that Kulmbach was overwhelmingly Protestant, the pastor went on to say that this

²⁶⁸ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. II: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Kulmbach to Prot. Pastorate of Kulmbach, Dec. 20, 1953.

²⁶⁹ "Martin Luther Film," *Regensburger Bistumsblatt*, Mar. 14, 1954.

²⁷⁰ "Der neue Martin-Luther-Film," *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Mar. 14, 1954. For similar comments, see "Der Martin Luther Film," *Bamberger Volksblatt*, Mar. 9, 1954.

procession was part of the Catholic Church's calculated plan for the reconversion of Germany that had been set in motion at the Council of Trent. As such, it was a conscious provocation to Protestants and its extension would only serve to threaten the confessional peace. The pastor summed up this letter saying: "The Protestant pastorate has always done its part to protect the confessional peace and it asks the mayor and the city council to support these efforts."²⁷¹ The tacit argument was that the Catholic Church was not doing its part to uphold the confessional peace or, worse, was willfully trying to undermine it.

Through such examples, one can see how religious holidays, festivals, and special events were a key source of confessional animosity. Indeed, given the confessional demographics of Bavaria the churches' strong emphasis on them seemingly could not help but stir up long standing confessional grievances. In this, one can see the often negative consequences that the churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal had for inter-confessional relations. This theme will be further examined in Chapter 5.

These controversies aside, both churches were careful to point out that merely showing up for special religious events was not enough. Nor was it acceptable to see them solely as a chance to socialize, dance, and drink heavily, activities that commonly accompanied such events. Rather, one needed to seriously consider the meaning and significance of such occasions and approach them with a proper spirit of reverence.

Echoing arguments that had been made for centuries, both churches thus embarked on

²⁷¹ LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Kulmbach to Mayor Hagen of Kulmbach, May 26, 1947. See also, BZAR Generalia 142.20: Copy of Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bischofsgrün to Cath. Pastorate of Fichtelberg. In this case, the local Protestant pastor accuses the Catholic priest of violating the confessional peace by holding processions during the time that regular Protestant worship services were held and encouraging people to sing louder and play more music as they passed the Protestant church to interrupt the service.

campaigns to encourage their adherents to not only attend special religious events, but to participate in the proper spirit.

Given its profusion of feasts, processions, pilgrimages, and holidays, this theme was particularly stressed by the Catholic Church. While encouraging lay people to take part in pilgrimages to holy sites such as Altötting, church officials and ordinary priests constantly repeated the need for discipline, order, and clerical supervision on such journeys. If these were lacking, they argued, the pilgrimage could all too easily descend into mere sightseeing or, worse still, heavy drinking and sexual licentiousness. The renewal of one's inner devotion, the true reason for undertaking a pilgrimage, would thus be negated.²⁷²

Strong turnouts for Corpus Christi processions were welcomed by church officials, but they wanted such events to stress the unity of the Catholic faith, not divisions within the laity. In church announcements, articles in religious newspapers, and radio announcements, regular clergy members and Catholic officials accepted that it was good for Catholic associations of all types to march behind their own banners and participate as their own distinct group. However, it was counterproductive if groups sang only their own songs, prayed only their own prayers, and heckled or tried to out-sing competing groups, common activities during such processions. This only served to undermine the sense of belonging and inclusion in the universal community of Catholicism that the processions were supposed to be encouraging.²⁷³

²⁷² DAW Generalakten 647 Bd. 2: Letter from BOW to all Cath. Deans in the Diocese of Würzburg, Oct. 11, 1950. See also, DAW Generalakten 267: Letter from Bishop Ehrenfried to Valentin Hart (Head of the Catholic Men's Association of Würzburg), April 18, 1948. BZAR OA/NS 532: Report from Erwin Triller (Head of refugee pastoral care in the diocese of Regensburg) for the period from Jan. 1, 1947 to June 31, 1947. "Geschmackssache," *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Pentecost 1954.

²⁷³ BZAR Generalia 604.25: Notice entitled "Fronleichnam's Prozession" written by BOR, June 3, 1946. See also, "Der Sinn unserer Prozession," *St. Heinrichsblatt*, June 16, 1957. BRHA HF/6306: Radio

Certain themes were stressed heavily by both churches. In pamphlets, lectures, and discussion groups, parents were reminded again and again that they not only needed to attend religious holidays, festivals, and special events with their children, they also needed to ensure that their children understood the meaning of such practices. They had to teach their children the proper prayers and songs that accompanied such events. It was up to them to create a proper mood of reverence. If both parents simply used the occasion as an excuse to socialize, get drunk, and dance, then of course their children would do the same when they grew up. If one parent participated devoutly and the other headed straight for the beer tent, it sent a confusing message that only encouraged religious indifference.²⁷⁴

Arguments such as these were also linked with the need for confessional schools. Children could only learn about the significance of religious holidays and festivals in confessional schools. Only here could they receive a “whole education,” one that blended religious education and practical learning together to create a unified Christian worldview. Children who attended community schools would be cut off from such events, as preparation and discussion of them was not part of the whole curriculum. Worse still, they might be prejudiced against them by teachers who were resentful of the churches or closet Nazis.²⁷⁵

Not surprisingly, Christmas attracted the most attention of the churches when it came to talk about understanding the true meaning of religious holidays. During the

message entitled “Bayern Heute: Die katholische Kirche in Bayern” written by Dr. Anton Mayer, Jan. 29, 1958.

²⁷⁴ See, for example, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled “Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern” written by Prot. Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Lecture entitled “Schüler und Lehrer aus einem Holz” given by Oberlandesgerichtsrat Dr. J. Grüb to meeting of the state meeting of the Catholic Parents’ Association, Feb. 17, 1954.

²⁷⁵ The sources for arguments of this sort will be examined at length in Chapter 4.

immediate postwar years, little need be said against the so-called commercialization of Christmas because few had any money and shops had little to offer. The currency reform of 1948 and the economic boom of the 1950s changed all that. With more discretionary income at their disposal and with shops full of goods, people began to buy ever more elaborate and expensive presents to celebrate the season.

The churches responded with a flood of sermons, lectures, group discussion primers, newspaper articles, and guidelines for businesses that all stressed that Christmas was more than just an excuse to go shopping. In his Christmas message for 1955, Bishop Landersdorfer of Passau stated in the strongest of terms that rampant consumerism was threatening to turn Christmas into a completely heathen holiday. Whereas the attempts of the Nazis to eliminate Christian holidays such as Christmas had failed, “the degeneration into immoderate and often senseless materialism, which result from consumer greed, hastens the death of its (Christmas) symbols and robs children’s souls of the Christmas spirit.” In all the hustle and bustle, people were forgetting that Christmas was all about the birth of Jesus. “God became human, he became like us, he came to free us from our shackles of sin, he came to make us his children. That is the meaning of Christmas, and it is in this sense that we should celebrate the birth of our Lord in our private and public lives.”²⁷⁶

A three part series in the *St. Heinrichsblatt*, the Catholic newspaper for the Archdiocese of Bamberg, titled “Celebrate Christmas, but how?,” stressed over and over that Christmas was about more than just buying presents for the children. In fact, the rush to buy presents was killing the joy of the whole season. “To earn more money, the

²⁷⁶ DAW Generalakten 618: Article entitled “Rettet das Weihnachtsfest!” sent out on KNA, Dec. 19, 1955. Contains copy of Christmas message from Bishop Landersdorfer of Passau that was read in all parishes in the diocese.

mother picks up part time work. The father works overtime. Advent becomes a very stressful time. But on Christmas there is a wonderful electric train set in the living room. The parents are certain that the children will be happy and thankful. But the children give only a smallest of thanks and usually within a few weeks the presents go untouched.” What children really wanted, the article continued, was the love of their parents. When parents worked overtime and stressed over money, they missed the chance to spend to sing Christmas carols, make decorations, read the Christmas story, and attend festivities at church with the children. These were the things that children truly desired and all the toys in the world could not make up for such a loss.²⁷⁷

Both churches distributed guidelines to businesses during the holiday season that explained what they felt to be suitable and unsuitable advertising. An example from the Protestant Church reads: “Advertisements must leave to the church that which belongs to the church. More general Christmas motives such as the Christmas tree, the advent calendar, and so forth can certainly be a part of a shop’s Christmas decorations. But a crèche belongs neither in a store nor in the display window.”²⁷⁸ The guidelines went on to say that Christian Christmas songs should not be used as part of a store’s advertising and that the ringing of bells should be forbidden as bells were designed to call people to church, not to shop.

Primers for discussion groups also stressed the need to stay focused on the true meaning of Christmas. Rather than sit around and daydream about what they wanted for

²⁷⁷ “Weihnachten feiern – aber wie?,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 1, Dec. 8, Dec. 15, 1957. See also, “Wahre Adventsfreude,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 12, 1954. For the Protestant Church, see “Mut zur Armut,” *NEG*, Dec. 12, 1954. See also, “Der kommende Herr,” *NEG*, Dec. 1, 1957.

²⁷⁸ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 209: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, July 31, 1953. Contains a copy of a set of guidelines to be sent out that year. The Established Church Council asked all District Superintendents to strongly encourage pastors to read these guidelines aloud in church and make note of any violations. A similar document from the Catholic Church can be found in DAW Generalakten 618: Pamphlet entitled “Schützt das christliche Weihnachtsfest,” 1957.

Christmas or go out shopping together, the author of one series designed for young Catholic women's groups argued, the members should work on a crèche for their group room and devote themselves to helping the less fortunate.²⁷⁹ Young men's groups should get out and hold charity drives to raise money so that refugees and orphans might have a special Christmas dinner and presents.²⁸⁰ In all things, the spirit of giving should permeate the Christmas season.

As religious involvement is such a subjective concept, this chapter will not attempt to determine if people were "really" taking such messages to heart. What one person may have considered an intense display of religious devotion may have been seen as complete religious indifference by another. It does seem fair to argue that the churches' fears were not completely unjustified. The Catholic Church's concern that pilgrimages would slip out of its control and degenerate into mere tourism or, worse, sexual debauchery, did have some merit. Careful not to specifically call them "pilgrimages" to avoid the wrath of the church, a host of private travel companies set up tourist packages to places like Altötting or Lourdes. Although it was not officially a pilgrimage, it offered a similar route and people drew their own conclusions. The "pilgrims" traveled by bus to the site, were shown around by a tour guide, and then left to their own devices for an extended period of time before being picked back up by the bus for the return journey. Trips of this nature seem to have been quite popular. Secular newspapers, and religious ones as well as we will see later on, carried dozens of advertisements for such trips. The national train system even wrote to the dioceses of

²⁷⁹ BZAR OA 2534: Pamphlet series titled "Gruppenstunden für den Frauenjugend" written by Ottilie Moßhammer, no date. See here the pamphlet entitled "Aufbau eine Gruppenabends."

²⁸⁰ BZAR OA 2542: Report from Richard Kröner of Cham (head of the local branch of the young men's association "Neudeutschland") to BOR, 1947.

Regensburg and Passau asking them to speak openly against such trips. While they listed a number of reasons for their plea, bus trips left the people exhausted, endangered their safety on busy roads, and ruined the tranquility of the site, it is quite clear that they were chiefly concerned about all the business they were losing.²⁸¹

The director of pilgrimages for the diocese of Regensburg summed up the situation saying: “The people are convinced that they have made a pilgrimage simply because they went to Altötting, even if there was no praying on the bus and the pause led not to high mass but to a schnapps mass (*schnapsmesse*).”²⁸² Comments such as these are certainly biased. One cannot argue that people who visited sites such as Altötting on a private tour were merely there to take pictures and were not motivated by any kind of “true” religious devotion. Many no doubt found their faith reinvigorated by the trip and decided to attend church services and events more regularly. But without clerical supervision, such trips had an all-together different flavor and it was all the easier to minimize or completely ignore the religious aspect of the journey.

Concerns expressed about the nature of Corpus Christi Day processions were also well founded. While Catholic officials and regular clergy members talked at length about how such processions should promote a sense of unity and inclusiveness in the universal body of the Church, the events themselves projected almost the opposite. Articles concerning Corpus Christi Day processions in secular newspapers all paint a similar picture. Instead of talk about a united body of Catholics, one reads detailed descriptions

²⁸¹ BZAR Generalia 512.00: Letter from Deutsche Reichsbahn-Reichsbahndirektion Regensburg to BOR and BOP, Mar. 9, 1949.

²⁸² BZAR Generalia 512.10: Report from the head of pilgrimages for the diocese of Regensburg (*Diözesanpilgerleiter*), 1957.

of the hierarchy of the procession and where various groups fit within it.²⁸³ Rather than Catholics being joined in song and prayer, one reads of a “symphony of hymns and prayers” emanating from the various groups.²⁸⁴ In fact, the actual rituals of the processions themselves are presented as something of an afterthought to the “...large number of different flags and banners” that were so characteristic of them.²⁸⁵ Even if we take editorial bias into account, it would be difficult to deny that processions of this nature, which were supposed to be an outward and visible sign of the united body of believers, did a great deal to highlight divisions within the Catholic laity.

Despite such justifiable concerns, it seems clear that religious holidays, festivals, and special events did still have the power to create a strong sense of religious involvement during this period. Protestants might not go to church the whole rest of the year, but they would show up for Reformation Day services. Catholic officials and ordinary priests may not have liked all the divisions and hostilities expressed in Corpus Christi Day processions, but they had to be heartened by the fact that so many Catholics consistently turned out for such events. In short, special religious events still had a tremendous amount of pull.

This being said, one must also accept that ominous trends were afoot. The collapse in participation at special religious events that took place in the 1960s and 70s was not the result of some sudden, unexplainable shift in public opinion. Rather, it

²⁸³ “Der Fronleichnamstag,” *SZ*, June 18, 1946. See also, “Die große Prozession,” *SZ*, June 7, 1947. “Die Fronleichnamsprozession,” *SZ*, June 6, 1950. “Fronleichnam,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung Regensburg Umschau*, June 18, 1946.

²⁸⁴ “34,000 gingen mit der Münchner Fronleichnamsprozession,” *SZ*, June 18, 1949.

²⁸⁵ “31,000 gingen mit der Prozession,” *SZ*, May 29, 1948. See also, “Das Fronleichnamfest,” *SZ*, June 16, 1949. “Prozession bei strahlenden Maiwetter,” *SZ*, May 25, 1951. “Fronleichnamsprozession,” *Main-Post*, June 22, 1946. “Fronleichnamstag 1946,” *Mittelbayerische Zeitung Regensburg Umschau*, June 25, 1946.

stemmed from a variety of factors that combined during the course of the postwar period. When put together, they began to slowly erode the drawing power of such occasions.

On the surface, it might appear that the Nazi years had little impact on religious holidays, festivals, and special events. Nazi attempts to ban or intrude upon such events generated waves of protest and resentment, particularly among Catholics. In many cases, religious special events were more popular than Nazi ones or continued on despite being officially outlawed. Following World War II, the churches successfully lobbied for far reaching holiday laws. Large numbers of people consistently turned out to celebrate religious holidays and festivities and they proved to be a rallying point for both churches. Underneath all of this, however, the 12 years of Nazi rule left a long shadow.

One should not fall into the naïve belief that pre-1933 Bavaria was some magical place where everyone turned out and actively took part in their particular church's special events simply because they were taking place. As mentioned earlier, attendance among Protestants had been waning since the nineteenth century and a particularly vehement and long lasting form of anti-clericalism had broken out in the deeply Catholic south in the 1890s. While acknowledging this point, one must also say that religious holidays, festivals and special events had still made up a fundamental part of the backdrop of everyday life in pre-1933 Bavaria. Attendance may have gone up and down, but the events were always there. This does not mean that they were unchanging. In his book *Popular Catholicism in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, Jonathan Sperber illuminates a major shift in Catholic processions and pilgrimages in the Rhineland during the nineteenth century. More specifically, he shows how these events were altered to bring

them into line with the Catholic Church's increasing focus on Marian devotion.²⁸⁶

Similar changes took place in Bavaria as well. In spite of such obvious alterations in form and content, they were still of a religious nature and quickly came to be seen as part of an unbroken heritage that stretched into the distant and murky past. In short, religious special events remained, for better or worse, an elemental part of the background of Bavarian life.

As deeply unpopular as they may have been, Nazi restrictions and bans on religious holidays, festivals, and special events broke this link. Suddenly, such occasions were severely limited (and thus less visible), replaced by Nazified substitutes, or simply removed. Nor had they been talked about in the Nazified community schools. This led a large number of people to hang on to the special religious events of their particular church with renewed vigor. Once the war was over, they celebrated them again with an intensified sense of purpose. Others looked on them from a much different perspective. This was particularly the case with the young people who had grown up during the Nazi period. As religious special events had disappeared or simply not existed during their formative years of development they did not hold them to be some timeless and given part of Bavarian life. The habitual connection between event and participation broke down.

Evidence of this broken link can be found in many of the reports concerning religious holidays, festivals, and special events written by ordinary pastors and priests to their superiors. While these are no doubt bias sources that must be read with a great deal of caution, one sees a consistent pattern developing. Many complained that young people who had been active in the Hitler Youth or the League of German Girls were particularly

²⁸⁶ Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*, 64-5

hostile to special religious events and intentionally tried to disrupt them or stage events to counter them.²⁸⁷ Others commented on the strong anti-clericalism of returning veterans.²⁸⁸ Prejudices of this sort were certainly disturbing to the churches, but they were nothing new. What truly struck many pastors and priests, however, was the lack of knowledge about and the degree of indifference to religious holidays, festivals, and special events. Outside of a few major holidays, many young people simply didn't know what was being celebrated. As such, they didn't feel any kind of special commitment to the events. Nor did they have a sense of obligation to attend.²⁸⁹ While a variety of different reasons for such attitudes were given, a lack of confessional schooling and religious indifference due to mixed confessional parents being one of the most prominent, almost all of the pastors or priests stated that they were in no small measure a lasting testament of the Nazi attempts to undermine or replace Christian holidays, festivals, and special events. As will be shown in the next two chapters, concerns over this development led both churches to push hard for confessional schooling and stronger marriages as they felt these were the only way to remedy this lack of information and interest. Here it is suffice to say that the Nazi period led to a sense of distancing from the

²⁸⁷ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Frammersbach to BOW, May 6, 1950. EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning Catholic popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising in 1946. See here, Piding. EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning popular missions held in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising from 1948-1950. See here, Waakirchen-Marienstein. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bad Reichenhall to LkR, May 3, 1946.

²⁸⁸ DAW Generalakten 623 Bd. 1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Keilburg über Aschaffenburg to BOW, Dec. 31, 1946. DAW Generalakten 649: Letter from BOW to Cath. Curate of Obereschenbach, Dec. 13, 1947.

²⁸⁹ For comments on attitudes of this sort, see AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Marktgraitz über Lichtenfels to EOB, Dec. 16, 1948. See also AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-2: Report concerning Catholic religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Ansbach for 1949-50. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-16: Yearly report concerning Catholic religious education in the Cath. Deanery of Nuremberg for 1950/51. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, Aug. 25, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Gostenhof to LkR, Nov. 26, 1946. See also, BZAR OA 1502: Letter from Cath. Youth Minister (*Jugendseelsorger*) for the Deanery of Weiden to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 2, 1954.

church. This felt particularly strongly amongst the youth. A gap had been opened up and nothing could be taken for granted anymore.

Mass consumerism also undermined the draw of religious holidays, festivals, and special events. It did so in several ways. First, it generated a bewildering array of alternatives to participation in such events. Second, it encouraged the development of an ethos of individualism that undermined the idea that one “should” participate in such events or that one had a “duty” to. Involvement increasingly came to be seen as a personal choice; one outside the realm of church influence. As these two factors worked in much the same way as they did in the case of Sunday worship services, it would seem repetitive to go into detail on this point here. Suffice to say, an increasing number of people felt empowered to decide that there were more interesting and appealing things to do than celebrate religious holidays, festivals, and special events. Subsequently, they stayed away.

Mass consumerism also began to fundamentally alter the nature of the festivities themselves. In her book *Religiöse Festkultur. Tradition und Neuformierung katholischer Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Barbara Stambolis examines the way that the festival honoring St. Kilian in Würzburg changed during the course of the postwar period. She points out that the religious component of the festival had always taken something of a backseat to its secular ones. In the nineteenth century, it was largely a pageant about the medieval origins of the German nation. During the Nazi period, it became a more racialized version of this. However, the religious side of the festivities had always been there and the religious services were well attended. In the mid-1950s, the festival began to take on yet another character. In light of its multiple permutations in

the past, this was nothing new. It was the nature of the changes that was radically different. Eager to attract tourists and increase tax revenues, industrious civic leaders, government officials, and politicians began to tout the festival as a chance to come out and “see the locals” dancing traditional jigs, singing traditional songs, and wearing traditional costumes. All the while, tourists could peruse local shops and savor the local beer, wine, and food.²⁹⁰ In essence, the festival began to take on something of a folksy character reminiscent of the *Oktoberfest* in Munich. The religious component of the festival, Stambolis points out, began to fade further and further into the background. While traditionally beginning on a Sunday with a service in the cathedral, the festival now began on a Saturday when the mayor cracked open the first keg of beer. Whereas the traditional religious festival had lasted only eight days, the new folksy/tourist one stretched on for two whole weeks.²⁹¹

Such developments were by no means limited to the St. Kilian festival in Würzburg. As the 1950s progressed, more and more priests and Catholic officials, this being a much greater problem for the Catholic Church given its numerous feast days, commented that civic officials and local politicians seemed ever more interested in trumping up local religious festivities to encourage tourism.²⁹² Invariably, the religious component of the event was given second billing to the opportunities for shopping, eating, and drinking that were available in the town. Devoid of its original context, the festival usually morphed into a sentimental and boozy affair that was hardly

²⁹⁰ Barbara Stambolis, *Religiöse Festkultur. Tradition und Neuformierung katholischer Frömmigkeit im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Das Liborifest in Paderborn und das Kilianifest in Würzburg in Vergleich* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2000), 145-158, 269-280.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 305-10.

²⁹² BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Martin in Amberg to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 10, 1955. See also, BZAR OA 1132: Report over the proceedings of the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg. See also, DAW Generalakten 556: Minutes from clergy conference in Würzburg, June 13-15, 1961.

distinguishable from the festivals being trumpeted in other towns. One would be hard pressed to disagree with the argument, no doubt maintained by many of the officials involved in such instances, that traditions can only be maintained through modernization. But one must also acknowledge that nothing can destroy a tradition more thoroughly than well-meaning representatives who instrumentalize, and therefore kitschify, it.

Changes of this sort bear testament to the major political shift that took place in the early 1950s that was discussed in the previous chapter. As it has been the dominant party in Bavarian politics since its inception at the end of the war, the civic leaders, government officials, and local politicians in question here would have most likely been members of the CSU. While the CSU had originally defined itself as a party devoted to the defense of Bavaria's Christian heritage, which was generally interpreted in a rather ascetic fashion, top politicians such as Franz Josef Strauß and Hanns Seidel began to change the party into one that endorsed industrial modernization and consumer capitalism. In so doing, it came into ever greater conflict with the churches and their resolutely anti-materialist message. Without a strong political ally, the churches' efforts to reinvigorate religious traditions and deepen religious identity and involvement became all the more difficult.²⁹³

Finally, one should not argue that the churches were simply innocent victims of societal forces and shifting politics. In many ways they were partly accountable for changing perceptions of religious holidays, festivals, and special events. They played a fundamental role in undermining their own message that people needed to seriously consider the meaning of such events rather than just see them as excuses to take a

²⁹³ Milosch, *Modernizing Bavaria*, 17-48. See also, Maria Mitchell, "'Antimaterialism' in Early German Christian Democracy," 164-98.

vacation or go shopping and drinking. Nowhere was this more apparent than in the advertisements run in church newspapers. Both churches had long since realized that a pulpit ministry alone would simply not suffice anymore. If they wanted their message to have any kind of impact, they would have to use mass media outlets such as newspapers. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, each Bavarian diocese, the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria, and confessional communities in large cities such as Nuremberg and Munich all set up weekly papers.²⁹⁴ Newspapers of this sort were a very costly undertaking, so it became necessary to sell advertising space to generate revenue. In the immediate postwar years, there were no advertisements in either religious or secular newspapers. This was largely due to the fact that there was nothing to buy and no one had any money. In the case of religious newspapers, such shortfalls could be overcome in the short term due to the inflated financial reserves of the churches and the guaranteed rations of paper that they received at low cost from the American military government. The currency reform of 1948 dramatically changed all this. Stores now had things to sell and needed to attract customers, who had real money to spend. While good for business, the currency reform wrecked the finances of the churches and both had to significantly cut back on the amount of money they contributed to religious newspapers. Stuck with collapsing bottom lines, the editors of such newspapers started a mad dash to find advertising revenue. Since these were indeed “church” newspapers, any such move had tremendous ramifications, particularly when it came to holidays, festivals, and special events.

²⁹⁴ See, for example, Paul Rieger, “Kirchliche Publizistik,” in Gerhard Müller, Horst Weigelt, Wolfgang Zorn (eds.), *Handbuch der Geschichte der Evangelischen Kirchen in Bayern Bd. 2* (Erzabtei St. Ottilien: EOS Verlag, 2000): 415-37.

As discussed earlier in this section, the Catholic Church stressed over and over again that pilgrimages needed to more than just religiously hued excuses to take a vacation. Catholics should only undertake pilgrimages that were organized and chaperoned by a member of the clergy, ideally their own or one from a neighboring parish. Private pilgrimages did not encourage the sense of inner devotion that was the main purpose of the whole ritual. Worse still, they often disintegrated into bouts of drinking and carousing. Despite such tough talk, Catholic newspapers literally brimmed with advertisements from private tour companies offering packages to places such as Altötting and Lourdes. These packages were invariably cheaper and more inclusive than the church sponsored ones which were oftentimes advertised on the same page.²⁹⁵ One could not help but draw unfavorable comparisons.

During the Christmas season, embarrassing contradictions of this sort became more glaring. Weekly Catholic newspapers such as the *St. Heinrichsblatt* for the Archdiocese of Bamberg were traditionally between 15-20 pages in length. Throughout much of the year, this included 2-3 pages of full page advertisements and roughly 4-6 pages containing advertisements in the margins. This meant that anywhere from a quarter to almost half of the pages had some kind of advertising. During the Christmas season, this increased dramatically. While the overall number of pages increased only slightly, usually in the range of 20-22, the number of full page advertisements increased

²⁹⁵ One example of the multitude of such instances can be found on the back page of the July 11, 1954 edition of *St. Heinrichsblatt*, the newspaper for the Archdiocese of Bamberg. Situated directly next to an advertisement for a pilgrimage to Lourdes sponsored by the Cath. Pastorate of St. Johannis in Kitzingen, which was in the Diocese of Würzburg, there is an advertisement for a special tour of Lourdes organized by a travel agency from Würzburg. The church sponsored trip is more expensive. In no way should this be seen as a solitary example. See also the *St. Heinrichsblatt* from July 8, 1951, May 23, 1954 and Aug. 18, 1957.

to 5-6 and the number of pages with advertisements in the margins was between 10-12. One half to three-fourths of the pages had some kind of advertisement.

Catholics were certainly not alone in such regards. The *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt*, the second largest Protestant newspaper in Bavaria behind that produced by the Established Church in general, was traditionally between 10-12 pages. During much of the year, these would include 2-3 page advertisements and 4-5 pages with advertisements in the margin. At Christmas, the newspaper would usually expand to encompass around 15 pages. 4-5 of these would be filled with full page advertisements and anywhere from 6-8 would have advertisements in the margin.

Statistics such as these in and of themselves are in no way surprising. Newspapers in traditionally Christian countries the world over are full of advertisements during the Christmas season. What is interesting is how these advertisements often stood at odds with what was being said in the newspapers' articles. For example, in the December 12, 1954 edition of the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt*, Protestant Regional Superintendent Schabert of Munich wrote an article called "The Courage to Be Poor" (*Mut zur Armut*). In it, he lashed out against the so-called "empty materialism" that he felt had pervaded the holiday season and said that the "unthinking orgy" of consumerism was obscuring the inner devotion that Advent was supposed to produce. One needed the courage to be poor in things, he concluded, to be rich in the spirit. On the very next page, one finds a full length advertisement for the major clothing store Wöhrl showing the season's hottest fashions.²⁹⁶ Nor were such contradictions reserved for Protestants. In the Dec. 12, 1954 edition of *St. Heinrichsblatt*, the lead story was entitled

²⁹⁶ See also, "Der kommende Herr," *NEG*, Dec. 1, 1957.

“The true joy of Advent” (*Wahre Adventsfreude*). In it, the author wrote how the real joy of the season was not finding the perfect gift or eating delicious food, but rather it was spending time with family and anticipating the coming of the Christ Child. Children did not need or even want an unending supply of toys. Rather, they craved simply the love and attention of their parents. Flipping to the back of the paper, one would be hard pressed to miss the full page advertisement of a department store showing the year’s most popular toys. At the top of the page is a drawing of a happy young girl gratefully kissing her mother in front of the Christmas tree while holding a new doll that she has just unwrapped.²⁹⁷ Children, it appears, really did want toys.

These are by no means isolated examples or editorial mistakes. One finds similar incongruities in almost every religious newspaper printed during this period. While no doubt unavoidable given the newspapers’ need for revenue, such contradictions were never corrected and one finds no mention of them from church authorities. Despite all their desperate warnings, this tacit legitimization of consumerism served to undermine the churches’ message that religious holidays, festivals, and special events were more than just excuses to take a vacation, go shopping, or get drunk.

As part of their efforts at postwar Christian renewal, both churches looked to tap the power of their holidays, festivals, and special events. In general, they did so with great effect. Less than ten years after such occasions had been co-opted, restricted or banned by the Nazis, the churches successfully lobbied for a package of protective holiday laws. While it was becoming increasingly difficult for the churches to convince them of the need to attend regular Sunday morning worship services, people did still turn

²⁹⁷ See also, the three part series “Weihnachten feiern – aber wie?,” in *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 1, Dec. 8, Dec. 15, 1957 that was discussed earlier. All were followed by a wide range of advertisements.

out for special events. Sometimes they did so in truly massive numbers. Through their rituals, images, and words, these events spoke of inclusion, belonging, and tradition. They could, if only for a short while, draw people back into the orbit of the churches.

As illustrated throughout this section, however, this sense of inclusion was largely defined through exclusion. Celebrations of the life and death of Martin Luther drew Protestants closer together, but they infuriated Catholics. Marian holidays, festivals, and pilgrimages were a key source of unity for Catholics, but they alienated Protestants. Despite the calls of those who said that the joint experience of persecution during the Nazi period demanded a confessional peace, the efforts of both churches to renew religious traditions generated a tremendous amount of confessional animosity. In an attempt to balance these opposing demands, the churches began to rearticulate the rhetoric of confessional difference. Even as they acknowledging the benefits of a confessional peace, both sides used such talk as a way to attack their religious counterparts.

Aside from encouraging people to participate at religious holidays, festivals, and special events, both churches stressed the need to celebrate them in the proper spirit. While this section will refrain from commenting on whether or not people “really” took this message to heart, one must at least concur that there were legitimate reasons for such calls. Despite this, special religious events maintained a tremendous drawing power throughout this period. They could still produce a profound sense of religious identity and a desire for greater involvement in the life of the church.

This being said, one cannot deny that menacing clouds were on the horizon. Pre-existing tendencies to not participate, the long legacy of the Nazi period, mass-

consumerism, the harm done by well-meaning city officials and politicians, and a confusing message emanating from the churches' themselves combined to slowly erode the efficacy of special religious events. In these, we can clearly see some of the limits of church influence in the postwar period and some of the reasons for the precipitous decline in attendance at such events that took place in the 1960s and 70s.

CHAPTER 3

Parental Duty: Confessional Schooling and the Next Generation of the Faith

Perhaps no other theme aroused as much of the churches' attention in the postwar era as confessional schooling for elementary school aged children.¹ On the day before Germany's total surrender, Protestant Bishop Hans Meiser, who had fled to Ansbach with what remained of the Established Church Council after the destruction of Munich, sent a poorly printed and badly smudged memo to all district superintendents in which he outlined what he saw to be the key themes that the Protestant Church should focus on in the postwar period. Second only to providing adequate opportunities and spaces for worship was the reestablishment of confessional schools.² Catholics were no less motivated. In a message read before all Catholic parishes in the diocese of Würzburg on May 3, 1945, Bishop Ehrenfried called on the faithful to remain true to their Catholic beliefs, to attend worship services regularly, and to "strengthen your children through religious education."³

Some historians have labeled the churches' incessant focus on confessional schooling as "obsessive."⁴ However, in light of their rancorous school battles with the

¹ The churches were very involved in matters of secondary school education. However, the author has decided to exclude these schools from discussion for reasons of space and due to the overwhelming focus of the churches on elementary schools. It must be briefly mentioned that secondary schools in West Germany were not divided up by confession. Rather, they followed a multi-track system. By dividing children from their peers after eight years of elementary school, this system worked with Germany's starkly class stratified society and provided very different economic and social skills to children. Basically there were two different and separate types of education. One was designed to give the masses a minimum of education and one was designed for an elite, largely middle class, minority. Once a child entered into the higher structure of Gymnasia, they were removed from the masses who usually attended a two year trade school after finishing their elementary education. American education officials during the Occupation period tried to alter this system, but their attempts were eventually unsuccessful. See, James Tent, *Mission on the Rhine: Reeducation and Denazification in American-Occupied Germany* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982).

² LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Letter from LkR to all Prot. district superintendents, May 7, 1945.

³ "Hirtenwort zur neuen Zeit," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (May 13, 1945): 27.

⁴ Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 212.

Nazis and Germany's complete destruction in the war, such utter seriousness on the part of the churches seems quite comprehensible. Only an elementary education grounded on the fundamentals of Christianity, they argued, could counteract Nazi indoctrination and prevent the youth from succumbing to radicalism of the right or left as a result of miserable postwar conditions. While consumerism became the main concern as West Germany's social and economic situation improved over the course of the 1950's, the general thrust of the church's argument remained. By no means could an education of this sort be provided in the so-called community schools, where students of both confessions were mixed together and religious education was merely one of many different subjects. Rather, all Bavarian children must attend a confessional school. Only here could they receive a "whole education," one that blended religious education and practical learning together to create a unified, Christian worldview.

As discussed in Chapter 1, the churches' efforts to reestablish confessional schooling centered on the concepts of parents' rights (*Elternrecht*) and parents' duty (*Elternpflicht*). Parents had not only the legal right, but the moral duty to choose confessional schools. Any other choice was a violation of the promises made at their wedding and their child's baptism. However, arguments such as these could not simply be left in sermons. They had to be translated into the here and now if the churches hoped to find any kind of resonance for their message. This chapter will thus explore the means through which the churches sought to put their ideas about confessional schooling into action. This took place in two distinct, but interrelated spheres. First, the churches had to wage lengthy political battles to reestablish confessional schools and secure them, along with the principle of parents' rights, in law. There is an extensive body of research on the

tremendous influence that the churches had on the politics of schooling during the Occupation period.⁵ These works are very well placed and show how the churches were ultimately successful in their efforts. Confessional schools and parents' rights were grounded in the 1946 Bavarian Constitution and the state aggressively defended them against would be challengers. Coming a mere 10 years after the Nazi state had used chicanery and force to convert all confessional schools into community schools, these were major achievements that should not be downplayed in any way.

This is the point, however, at which all existing histories of the postwar Bavarian elementary school system end. In so doing, several questions are left unanswered. Most importantly, why did the churches feel it necessary to dedicate such large amounts of time and resources to the theme of confessional schooling and parents' rights long after they had both been secured in law? Why all this talk of parents' duty? Something larger seems to be at work. Thus, while the politics behind the reestablishment of confessional schools is extremely important and will be discussed at some length, it is not the major focus of this chapter. Rather, the chapter will center on the second sphere in which the churches had to work to reestablish confessional schools, the realm of popular opinion. We should not fall prey to a naïve belief that parents in the 1940's and 50's blindly followed the churches' lead and placed their children in confessional schools simply because they were of "their" confession. Rather, we must take into account the multitude of voices that were present in West Germany's increasingly pluralistic, mass consumer society and what kind of influence they had on the decision making process of ordinary

⁵ Winfried Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern im Spannungsfeld von Kultusbürokratie und Besatzungsmacht 1945-1949* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1995), 190-226. See also Isa Heulz, *Schulpolitik in Bayern Zwischen Demokratisierung und Restauration in den Jahren 1945-1949* (Hamburg: Hartmut Lüdke Verlag, 1970). Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 208-214. Hans Merkt (ed.), *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern* (Munich: Richard Pflaum Verlag, 1952).

people. More specifically, we must look at the paradox created by the churches' focus on parents' rights. Both quickly discovered that securing the right of parents to choose confessional schooling in law was one thing, getting them to make that choice was wholly another. In short, an ever increasing number of parents openly flouted the churches' teachings and freely chose to place their children in community schools.

It is necessary then to examine how the churches sought to put their ideas concerning confessional schooling into practice within this framework of parents' choice. School registration drives will be examined in considerable detail to determine the means through which the churches sought to encourage parents to choose confessional schools. This will also illuminate the organizations and arguments that they had to face. From this, the chapter will move on to explore some of the reasons why more and more parents came to support community schools. These include: preexisting ideological commitments to community schools, the experience of community schooling during the Nazi period, the breakdown of traditional confessional boundaries brought on by refugee settlement policies and urbanization, the differing traditions of the refugees in regards to school matters, and the increasing desire for children to have a broader range of educational opportunities. However, one should not set up an oversimplified duality that stresses church dictates and either lay approval or disapproval. In many ways, the churches contributed to the growth of community schools through internal disagreements and unfulfilled promises. Throughout such discussions, one will also see the major ramifications that confessional schooling had for inter-confessional relations. Once again, the churches struggled to balance their desire to reinvigorate religious traditions,

which inherently carried the seeds of confessional tension, with an acknowledgement of the need for improved confessional relations.

One key point should be made clear. In the support that confessional schooling continued to find during this period, one can see the tremendous influence that the churches possessed in postwar West German society. At least 90% of all Bavarian elementary school aged children attended a confessional school in each of the years under study. However, in the ever increasing number of children who did not, one can see the limits of that influence.

Before moving on to examine the politics of reestablishing confessional schooling in Bavaria after the war, some background knowledge is necessary. In 1883, King Ludwig II signed a decree that made confessional schools the norm in Bavaria. Each district's elementary school would take the character of the dominant confession there. Children not of that confession could attend, but only as "guest students." This ruling did allow for the creation of community schools in areas that were confessionally mixed (by and large a reference to the cities of Munich and Nuremberg).⁶ Confessional schooling was further developed in 1902 when laws were passed concerning confessional minorities. If, for example, 50 Protestants students were present in a primarily Catholic area and there was not a Protestant school within a 3.5 km radius, then a Protestant confessional school could be established. This allowed for the creation of oftentimes tiny, one-room school houses that catered to a very limited population.⁷

⁶ Werner Blessing (ed.), *Dokumente zur Geschichte von Staat und Gesellschaft in Bayern*, Vol. 8 (Munich: C.H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1983), 232-33. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 191.

⁷ Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 191. 50 students was seen as the absolute minimum number of students needed to justify a separate school. This number would later be dropped to 25.

The collapse of the monarchy in 1918 led to disarray in the Bavarian school system. In 1919, Minister of Education Johannes Hoffmann (SPD) signed into effect a law that gave parents the right to choose what kind of school their children would attend. Social Democrats, long time proponents of the secularization of schools, felt that his focus on parents' rights was a way to open the door to community schooling in Bavaria without overtly arousing the ire of the churches and their substantial following. In cities with a population over 15,000, confessional and community schools would be established according to the proportion of children registered for each type. In communities with a population under 15,000, only one school would be established based upon majority rule. Also included was a clause that said that a vote for community schools was binding for 10 years while votes for confessional schools had to be renewed every year.⁸ Elements such as this last one were quickly struck down once conservatives returned to power in 1920, but the basic principle of parents' rights remained. In practice, however, community schools only existed in Nuremberg and Munich.

Both churches confirmed the idea of parents' rights in 1924 through contracts made with the State of Bavaria. While they had certain misgivings about parents' rights, they were both of the belief that this was the best way to legally demand the provision of religious education. They were also confident that they could count on their adherents to choose them. Article 6 of the Concordat between the Catholic Church and the State of Bavaria read: "In all communities, upon the application of parents or other legal guardians, Catholic confessional schools – even in the form of one class schools - must

⁸ Blessing (ed.), *Dokumente*, vol. 8, 246-48. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 191-192.

be established if a preordained number of students in a school district warrants them.”⁹ The 1933 Concordat between Germany and the Vatican only further secured parents’ rights in law as both sides agreed that the 1924 Bavarian Concordat remained in effect. Furthermore, Article 23 stated: “The retention of Catholic confessional schools and the establishment of new ones is guaranteed. In all parishes in which parents or guardians request it, Catholic elementary schools will be established, provided that the number of pupils available appears to be sufficient for a school managed and administered in accordance with the standards prescribed by the State, due regard being had to the local conditions of school organizations.”¹⁰ Thus, at the beginning of the Nazi period, confessional schooling and parents’ rights seemed to be well anchored.

Keen observers of the ultimately unsuccessful attempts of the Social Democrats in the same direction, the Nazis moved forcefully to use parents’ rights as a way to legally demand the creation of community schools. At the annual school registration, propaganda, intimidation, blackmail, economic pressure, and vote rigging were all employed to ensure that parents “voted” for community schools.¹¹ This strategy found considerable success when it was first employed in the large cities of Munich and Nuremberg in 1935. In 1934, only 15.7% of all children in Munich were registered for community schools. By 1937, the number had risen to 91%. In Nuremberg, where attachment to confessional schools was already weaker, the swing to community schools

⁹ Quoted in Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 192. An almost identical ordinance was included in the contract between the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria and the State of Bavaria made that same year.

¹⁰ For a translated copy of the Concordat, see *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich: Facts and Documents translated from the German* (London: Burns Oates, 1940), 516-521.

¹¹ Due to the immense amount of historical work on the topic, the school battles of the 1930’s will only be discussed in passing here. For the best introduction in English, see Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933-1945* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 180-184, 209-219, 340-357.

came much faster.¹² Extended beyond Munich and Nuremberg in 1936, similar votes were taken across Bavaria with similar sorts of results. Massive state propaganda drives with the catchphrase: “One People, One Leader, One School,” were carried out. Parents known to support confessional schools were subjected to heavy intimidation. Threatened with dismissal from their jobs and withdrawal from Winter Aid if they chose confessional schooling for their children, even the most religiously dedicated of parents felt they had no choice. Blatant chicanery also took place during the vote itself. Parents who protested against Nazi methods by simply refusing to vote were invariably marked down on community school lists.¹³ By early 1938, almost all schools in Bavaria had been converted. The remaining few were transformed by decree later that year. Confessional schools had effectively ceased to exist.

Church leaders and ordinary pastors and priests fought tirelessly against the creation of community schools during the Nazi period. Through the media of pastoral letters, sermons, exhortations, and petitions they condemned Nazi tactics and attempted to bolster support for confessional schools among the faithful. Despite such efforts, the schools were still converted. Two reasons can be seen for the churches’ resounding defeat in the school battles of the 1930’s. First, the churches were simply overpowered by the sheer magnitude of the Nazi campaign and the way it swept aside all protest and fabricated the results it wanted. Second, the churches, particularly the Catholic Church, were caught in a dilemma of their own making. Both continued to see the legal agreements made in 1924 and 1933 as binding and accepted the barriers between affairs of church and state established in them. For their part, the Nazis proved again and again

¹² Ibid., 213-214. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 193.

¹³ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 214-215. Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 193-94.

that they were wholly unwilling to accept their half of the bargain. To this, the churches made only muted accusations of illegality and focused on the “unpolitical” defense of church institutions and practices. This passivity on the part of the churches gravely disappointed many people and led to an increased sense of resignation concerning schools.

With the collapse of Nazi Germany in 1945, the churches moved swiftly to ensure that the perceived mistakes of the past would not be repeated. The reconessionalization of elementary schools became a central component of their political activity during the immediate postwar years. The churches, as well as conservatives in general, saw the reestablishment of confessional schools as a way to counteract Nazi indoctrination, to reconnect with Bavarian traditions, and to prevent children from succumbing to radicalism as a result of the miserable postwar conditions. This was expressed through a call to get back to the situation before 1933. When Bishop Meiser met with American occupation officials on May 24, 1945, he informed them of his desire to return all church/state relations, and in particular school affairs, to their pre-1933 legal basis.¹⁴ Cardinal Faulhaber made similar comments in a letter to Bavarian government officials from July 7, 1945. In it, he demanded: “All laws, ordinances, and directives passed since Jan. 30, 1933, which are in violation of the Concordat, should be removed and schools should be returned to the legal standing of Jan. 29, 1933.”¹⁵

Church officials were not the only ones talking of a return to 1933. As early as July 3, 1945, Bavarian Education Minister Dr. Otto Hipp met with American military

¹⁴ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 212: Report concerning meeting between Bishop Meiser and Col. Keegan of US Military Government, May 24, 1945.

¹⁵ Letter from Cardinal Faulhaber to Minister President Schäffer and Education Minister Hipp, July 7, 1945. In *Hürten, Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 19.

officials to discuss schools.¹⁶ At this meeting: “He pointed out that it would be the most logical thing to rebuild the schools on the legal foundation of pre-1933, which provided confessional schools in Bavaria.”¹⁷ Many of the education officers in the occupation government disagreed with this proposition because they felt that confessional schools could not adequately cope with the breakdown of traditional confessional boundaries brought on by population movements during the war and the projected arrival of the refugees. Despite such beliefs, they didn’t want to slow down the reopening of schools with lengthy debates over fundamental principles. Returning to the situation of 1933 seemed like the best choice at the time. This was seen, however, as only a temporary solution. Hipp was told: “It will be up to the people of Bavaria at some later time to make up their minds and to decide if they want to re-establish the system prevailing before 1933, based on confessional schools, or if they want to introduce a new system, founded on schools without a definite religious character.”¹⁸ While the American military government became deeply involved in questions of secondary school reform, where it wanted to do away with Germany’s multi-track system, it largely held to this principle of popular sovereignty in regards to elementary schools. Requests from confessional and community school supporters alike for some kind of overarching, zone-wide decision were all rebuffed. There were two main reasons for this. First, the concept of parents’ choice fit in with their plans for the democratization of Germany. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the Americans saw the churches as an important partner in

¹⁶ Hipp was a long time supporter of the *Bayerische Volkspartei* (the Bavarian equivalent of the Center Party). He was a part of the cabinet of Minister President Fritz Schäffer, who was put in place by the Americans largely because of the recommendation given by Cardinal Faulhaber. Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 195.

¹⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*

their moral renewal efforts. Knowledgeable of the animosity that the school issue had produced between the churches and the state during the Nazi period, the Americans realized that this could be a major sticking point and decided that a renewal of this conflict was not in their best interest.

Hipp had no way of knowing this and, fearing fickle American opinions, moved quickly to reestablish confessional schools. On July 23, 1945 he officially decreed that the changes made during the Nazi period were illegal and that the entire Bavarian elementary school system would henceforth be put back on the legal grounding established in 1883 and 1919. Schools in place before the Nazi era would simply revert back to their pre-1933 type. Schools established during the Nazi period would either take on the characteristics of the dominant confession in the area or remain as community schools if a majority of parents in the district registered for them.¹⁹

Hipp knew that, at least for the short term, it was almost impossible to establish confessional schools in many areas due to wartime damage, a shortage of teachers, and the breakdown of traditional confessional boundaries. He sent a letter to Cardinal Faulhaber and Bishop Meiser on the day the decree was released acknowledging as much, but continued on to ask for the understanding and support of the churches.²⁰ While aware of such difficulties, church leaders were deeply concerned about matters of precedence. Community schools attended by students of both confessions might be the only option available given the prevailing chaos of the time, but they didn't want to grant such schools tacit legitimacy. Hence, both churches refused to make public announcements that could in any way be seen as support for such schools. The clergy of

¹⁹ For a copy of this decree, see Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 15-19.

²⁰ Letter from Minister Dr. Otto Hipp to Cardinal Faulhaber, July 23, 1945 in Hürten, *Akten Kardinal Faulhabers*, Vol. 3, 29-30. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 197.

both churches were informed that every effort should be made to reestablish confessional schools along the lines of the July 23rd decree, or, if that was fundamentally impossible, to press for them at the earliest possible date.²¹

Education Minister Hipp, along with Minister President Schäffer and the rest of his cabinet, was removed from office by the Americans in September of 1945 for allegedly sabotaging the denazification program. His successor was Dr. Franz Fendt, a Social Democrat who strongly supported the party's stance on the secularization of schools. Church leaders were incensed at the change. Cardinal Faulhaber reportedly said that all the good work that had been done to restore order in Bavaria had been undone with the stroke of a pen.²² Their fears were confirmed on Nov. 26, 1945, when Fendt rescinded Hipp's decree from July 23, 1945 on the ground that changes made to the Bavarian legal system by the Americans since that time rendered it void. Until the Bavarian people decided the future shape of elementary schools through a public referendum, the laws passed during the Nazi period, with due revision, had to be followed.²³ Community schools were once again the norm.

Not surprisingly, the churches vigorously protested this move. Cardinal Faulhaber wrote to Fendt on December 13, saying that the decree was "an unacceptable return to National Socialist perversions of justice."²⁴ He insisted that the Hipp declaration from the previous July was still binding and that confessional schools were the norm in Bavaria. Catholics should not be once again forced against their will to

²¹ See, for example, LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: "Memorandum zur Neugestaltung des Schulwesens," Aug. 22, 1945.

²² Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 98.

²³ A copy of this decree can be found in, Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 30-1. Fendt was referring to legal changes approved by General Eisenhower on Sept. 28, 1945.

²⁴ A copy of this letter can be found in, Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 31-3.

violate Canon Law and the papal encyclical “*Divini Illius Magistri*,” both of which stated that Catholic parents had the fundamental duty to place their children in Catholic schools. Reestablishing confessional schools, he concluded, was the only way to undo the injustices of the very recent past and ensure that Germany would not slip into radicalism yet again.²⁵ While the two were usually at odds with each other, Bishop Meiser wholeheartedly agreed with Cardinal Faulhaber in this instance. The two met to discuss common strategies and Meiser also made it clear to the government that the Protestant Church considered confessional schools to be both a religious principal and a way to make good on the Nazi past.²⁶ Protest of this sort continued well into the next year and keenly influenced school debates being held in the Bavarian Constituent Assembly.

Ironically, the churches had an unlikely ally in Wilhelm Hoegner, the new Minister President. While he was a committed Social Democrat, Hoegner was not opposed to confessional schools in principal. Rather, he simply wanted all districts to have the opportunity to set up a community school if a majority of the inhabitants so desired. Because of this stance, Hoegner was willing to enter into discussion with the churches and make concessions.²⁷ For their part, the churches increasingly sought to bypass the Ministry of Education and work with Hoegner directly. Throughout the summer of 1946, representatives of the churches met with Hoegner regularly and the two sides hammered out an agreement. Both confessional schools *and* community schools would be considered the norm in Bavaria. Parents alone had the right to chose between the two. Community schools, however, could only be established upon the application of parents or legal guardians, and then only in areas that were considered confessionally

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 199. Huelsz, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 74-76.

²⁷ Huelsz, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 56-7.

mixed to a pre-determined degree. Both sides accepted this arrangement because they felt it played to their strengths. The churches received legal acceptance of confessional schooling and, as before, were of the belief that they could count on their adherents to choose them. Hoegner secured the opportunity for community schools to be established and was convinced that pre-existing support and the arrival of the refugees would put a great deal of weight behind them.²⁸ In the end, both opinions were eventually proved correct.

While Hoegner moved ever closer to the churches, his education minister continued to agitate in the background. Fendt worked feverishly throughout the summer to create what he called “General Christian Elementary Schools” (*Allgemeinen christlichen Volksschulen*). These would be confessionally mixed schools where religious education was an established part of the curriculum. He even held out the possibility that such schools could have confessionally homogenous classes. This was a distant cry from the fully secularized schools he so desperately wanted, but it was better, in his opinion, than the reestablishment of confessional schools. On Sept. 26, 1946, he released a memorandum calling for the creation of such schools and said that he had secured the agreement of church leaders and the military government for them.²⁹ In fact, he had done no such thing. The hierarchies of both churches erupted in protest. Fearing that his compromise was in danger, Minister President Hoegner put enormous pressure on Fendt to retract the decree. He did so on October 19, 1946.³⁰

²⁸ Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 200-01.

²⁹ A copy can be found in, Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 38.

³⁰ A copy can be found in, Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 41. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 201.

By this point, Fendt's attempts to hold off the official reestablishment of confessional schools were becoming irrelevant. Debate over the character of elementary schools had been taking place in the Constituent Assembly all summer. Despite numerous ins and outs, Hoegner's compromise found general acceptance in both CSU and SPD circles. It would eventually make its way into the final draft of the proposed constitution which was passed by public referendum on Dec. 1, 1946. Article 135, Par. 1 of the 1946 Bavarian Constitution read: "Public elementary schools are either confessional or non-confessional. Parents and legal guardians are free to choose the type of school. However, non-confessional schools are to be established only in places with a population of mixed religious faiths upon the application of the parents or legal guardians."³¹

Despite the fact that Article 135 anchored confessional schools and the principle of parents' rights in the constitution, school organization laws that would actualize them were not yet in place. Thus, both churches had to wage vigorous battles in the late 1940's to ensure that confessional schools and parents' rights became established practice. By far the most contentious of these conflicts occurred in Nuremberg in 1949. Community schools had a long tradition in Bavaria's second largest city and civic leaders, school officials, and many of the city's inhabitants felt that they were the optimal school choice. Part of this had to do with the strong presence of the SPD in this heavily industrialized city and part was Franconian particularism. Minister Hipp's decree from July 23, 1945 and the appointment of Dr. Alois Hundhammer, an ultra-conservative, ultra-Catholic CSU representative, as education minister in December of 1946 had

³¹ A copy of the Bavarian Constitution of 1946 can be found in Lane and Pollock (eds.), *Source Materials on the Government and Politics of Germany*, 141-70. Here, see page 162.

particularly inflamed an already well established sense of mistrust of all things “Bavarian” among many Franconians. Due to this background, the city leaders of Nuremberg were not willing to reconfessionalize schools that had been converted during the Nazi period or allow parents the right to choose confessional schools. Wartime devastation and an acute shortage of teachers made schools of any kind, much less confessional ones, almost impossible to establish in the immediate postwar years so the matter was largely mute. However, by 1948, demands made by the churches and confessional school supporters in general that confessional schools be reestablished and that parents be given their constitutional right to choose their children’s school type could no longer be ignored.³² City school officials, however, did their best to do just that. Church inquiries into the nature of school registration that year were all met with vague answers.³³ The actual registration itself was not held until September, right before classes were scheduled to begin. Supposedly due to the above mentioned difficulties, school officials announced at the very last minute that the city simply didn’t have the resources to enact confessional schooling. Parents were not given the option of choosing confessional schools for their children. By the time the churches could mount any kind of protest, the students had already begun classes.³⁴ Protestant officials sent a letter of complaint to Education Minister Alois Hundhammer and asked him to get involved.³⁵ Hundhammer responded by saying that it would be too difficult to take children out of

³² LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to Nuremberg city school officials, May 7, 1948.

³³ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Report on meeting of Prot. officials and clergy from Nuremberg over schools, July 26, 1948.

³⁴ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, Sept. 10, 1948.

³⁵ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Copy of letter from LkR to Education Minister Dr. Alois Hundhammer, Sept. 21, 1948.

classes now that they had already started. Confessional schools and parents' rights would simply have to wait until the following year.³⁶

The churches were well aware that the Nuremberg city government would employ similar tactics in the school registration of 1949, this time scheduled for June 20th, and they were determined to not lie down so quietly. As the school registration neared, political pressure was increasingly brought to bear on the Nuremberg city government to force them to allow for the creation of confessional schools. Church leaders such as Protestant Regional Superintendent Schieder and the heads of lay groups like Protestant Parents wrote to civic officials arguing that the city's methods were a nasty hangover from the Nazi era. The churches, they concluded, did not want another school battle, but they were willing to engage in one to ensure that parents could exercise their constitutional right to choose their child's school type.³⁷ Catholic Cathedral Canon Zinkel of Munich, the top Catholic official in Bavaria for school matters, and members of the Protestant Established Church Council spoke directly with the Ministry of Education. Nuremberg, they insisted, was violating the constitution and had to be brought back in line.³⁸

For his part, Hundhammer didn't need much motivation. Nuremberg was a most disagreeable stumbling block in his plan to expand the influence of the Education Ministry and he was looking to set an example. On May 16, 1949, he sent a strongly

³⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Minister of Education Dr. Hundhammer to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, Oct. 25, 1948.

³⁷ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of letter from Chairman of Protestant Parents (*Evang. Elternschaft*) in Nuremberg to Mayor Dr. Ziebill, June 2, 1949. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to Mayor Dr. Ziebill, June 3, 1949.

³⁸ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Report concerning schools in Munich and Nuremberg written by Kurt Frör (the top Protestant official for school matters), May 9, 1949. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-3: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Zinkel of Munich to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, June 23, 1949.

worded letter to the regional government of Middle Franconia in Ansbach, under whose authority lie the city of Nuremberg, which spelled out the legal basis of confessional schools and parents' rights and demanded compliance to Article 135 of the constitution.³⁹ Nuremberg continued to balk. The city council met on May 31st and decided to ignore Hundhammer's decree on the grounds that adequate facilities and teachers still could not be provided for confessional schools. Moreover, the state government did not have jurisdiction over city affairs. Until that time when school organization laws were enacted, the city would not change its school system. Children would be registered for school on June 20th, but parents would not be given the option of confessional schools.⁴⁰ Hundhammer wrote back on June 13 with a stinging rebuttal. If Nuremberg chose to proceed on such a course, the case would be brought before the state constitutional court.⁴¹ Despite such threats, Nuremberg went ahead with its plans and carried out the school registration of June 20th according to the previous year's model.⁴²

True to his word, Hundhammer ensured that the Nuremberg case was brought before the state constitutional court. In a very rapid decision, the court announced on June 25th that the Nuremberg school registration conducted on June 20th was illegal and had to be redone according to the principles laid out by the constitution. This new vote

³⁹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of letter from Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture to the Government of Middle Franconia in Ansbach, May 16, 1949. Copies of this letter were sent to the archdiocesan authorities of Bamberg and the Prot. Established Church Council. The churches would use it as part of their publicity drive.

⁴⁰ "Schiedlich-friedlicher' Schulkrieg," *NN*, June 13, 1949.

⁴¹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of letter from Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture to the Government of Middle Franconia in Ansbach, June 13, 1949.

⁴² LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Flyer entitled "Bekanntmachung des Stadtrats Nürnberg," written by Mayor Dr. Ziebill, June 17, 1949. See also, "Heute Anmeldung für die Nürnberger Volksschulen," *NN*, June 20, 1949. "Schulanmeldung fast 100-prozentig," *NN*, June 22, 1949.

would be held on June 30th.⁴³ City officials released a notice that vilified Hundhammer and the court's decision. The good people of Nuremberg, they explained, were being put to all the trouble of reregistering, even when confessional schools didn't exist in the city.⁴⁴ The circular logic of such arguments was all too apparent. Parents wouldn't have had to reregister if the city had properly conducted the school registration in the first place and confessional schools didn't exist because the city government had willfully removed them as an option. In their hatred for Hundhammer and the centralization efforts of the state government in Munich, many residents of the city were willing to overlook such logical fallacies. A mass protest was organized for June 28th on the city's Kornmarkt. A crowd of roughly 5,000 – 7,000 showed up to hear speeches made by top city officials and SPD, KPD, and FDP representatives that railed against both confessional schools and Hundhammer. Replies from the crowd included: "Less religion, more writing and mathematics", "What do we need religion in the schools for anyway?"

Strong anti-clericalism was also expressed at the rally. Some commented: "Religion belongs in the churches, what are the clergy (*Pfaffen*) doing in the schools?"⁴⁵ Upon voicing his support for confessional schools, one Catholic priest in attendance was beaten up by several men while onlookers chanted phrases such as: "Go back to the monastery", "Liar", "Hang the priests", "Tomorrow I will leave the church", and "Too bad that Hitler didn't straighten out the priests better. Too bad he didn't stick them all in the concentration camps."⁴⁶ When a Protestant deacon made similar comments, a worker

⁴³ "Morgen wieder Schulanmeldungen: Eltern entscheiden zwischen Bekenntnis- und Gemeinschaftsschule," *NN*, June 29, 1949.

⁴⁴ LKAN KrD Nuremberg 238: Flyer entitled "Bekanntmachung" written by Mayor Dr. Ziebill and Nuremberg city school representative Dr. Korff, June 1949.

⁴⁵ "Der Tag der Abrechnung wird kommen," *Abendzeitung*, June 29, 1949.

⁴⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Report on the gathering of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Nürnberger Schulfrieden on the Kornmarkt in Nuremberg, June 29, 1949. The author could not determine who wrote

standing behind him punched him in the back of the head, causing a great deal of bleeding.⁴⁷ Actions of this sort and constant heckling led many confessional school supporters to leave out of fear for their personal safety. After the last speech, many in the crowd began to chant: “Where is the representative of the CSU, we want to hear a priest (*Schwarzen*). One city official replied sarcastically, “unfortunately, none registered.”⁴⁸ When combined with the approving references to the concentration camps and the use of violence to suppress dissenting voices, the stark anti-clericalism expressed on the Kornmarkt illustrates that support for many of the guiding principles of National Socialism survived the collapse of 1945 quite well intact. While incidents such as this should have caused the churches, particularly the Protestant Church, to rethink their talk about how the bulk of their adherents had joined them in their resistance to National Socialism and were thus not guilty of the crimes committed by the Nazis, it sadly did not.

Despite such militancy, an impasse had been reached. Unlike the situation a mere 10 years earlier, the state came down firmly on the side of confessional schools in the Nuremberg school controversy. The city was forced to back down. At the second registration on June 30th, parents were given the choice of placing their child in either a confessional or a community school. Confessional schools began operation that fall.⁴⁹ This political victory for the churches was further cemented the following year when the Law Concerning the Organization of Elementary Schools (the so-called School Organization Law of 1950) was passed by the Bavarian State Parliament. Debate over

this report, but it obviously comes from a supporter of confessional schools, if not a member of the Protestant clergy.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ “Schulanmeldung unter Dach und Fach: Zwei Drittel Gemeinschafts- ein Drittel Bekenntnis-Schule,” *NN*, July 2, 1949.

the laws had been heated and certain concessions had been worked out. Two were particularly notable. First, the number of people who needed to apply for community schools in order for them to be put on the ballot was reduced to five. Conservatives wanted a much higher number in order to make it more difficult to create a community school while their detractors obviously wanted the opposite. Second, the bar for a community to be declared “confessionally mixed” was dropped to a mere one percent of the population having a different faith.⁵⁰ As will be discussed in more detail later in the this chapter, these two caveats came back to haunt the churches. Despite this, the School Organization Law of 1950 guaranteed that confessional schools could be set up and that parents had the freedom to choose them if they so desired.⁵¹

In essence then, the churches were successful in their attempts to realign school policy after 1945. While not quite living up to the dream of putting every child in a confessional school, Article 135 of the Bavarian Constitution and the School Organization Law of 1950 did fundamentally secure confessional schooling and parents’ rights in law. After the bitter school battles of the Nazi years, church leaders had every right to feel that they had been vindicated. One should not downplay the significance of this accomplishment. It clearly shows the tremendous influence that the churches had in postwar West Germany.

This is usually the point at which studies of the Bavarian school system in the postwar era end. There are a variety of reasons for this. After the passage of the School Organization Law of 1950, one sees little serious political debate over confessional schooling for the remainder of the decade. School battles like the one that played out in

⁵⁰ § 5 Abs. 2-4, 10a-c: “Gesetz über die Organisation der Volksschulen,” *Amtsblatt des Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus* 23 (Dec. 15, 1950): 410.

⁵¹ § 5: *Ibid.*

Nuremberg ceased to exist. Confessional schools became the standard means of schooling for over 90% of Bavarian children until 1968. All of this leads to the impression that the 1950's was a decade of normalization; a golden age of confessional schools in which nothing of any real interest in the field took place. Several factors suggest that this story is much more complex.

First, both churches continued to focus on the theme of confessional schooling long after parents' rights had been anchored in law. Throughout the 1950's, sermons, flyers, pamphlets, School Sundays, and a host of other means were repeatedly employed to discuss the need for confessional schools. One can even find this in places like the Diocese of Passau, where community schools didn't even exist during the whole period under study. If the 1950's really was the golden age of confessional schooling, one would not expect militancy of this nature to continue. Obviously, something much larger was at stake.

Second, the results from the Nuremberg school controversy of 1949 are telling. Of the 4,257 children registered for Nuremberg schools on June 30, 1949, 2821 (66.3%) were signed up for community schools. 742 (17.5%) were placed in Protestant confessional schools and 685 (16%) were registered for Catholic confessional schools. Nine parents (0.2%) did not make their preference clear and, following the ordinances of the Education ministry, their children were placed in the schools of their confession.⁵² Thus, in full freedom, a significant number of parents in the city of Nuremberg chose community schooling for their children. While this speaks more of the long tradition of

⁵² "Schulanmeldung unter Dach und Fach: Zwei Drittel Gemeinschafts- ein Drittel Bekenntnis-Schule," *NN*, July 2, 1949.

anti-clericalism and community schooling in Nuremberg, it shows some of the limits of church influence in the postwar period.

After all their efforts, this was a particularly bitter pill for the churches to swallow. Protestant leaders felt betrayed by the Protestant population, roughly 2/3 of the city's inhabitants. In an article published in the *Nürnberger Evangelische Gemeindeblatt*, Regional Superintendent Schieder commented on how he was glad that at least some Protestants realized that, "we don't have *humans* to educate, rather *Christians*."⁵³ Schieder and others would be continually disappointed through the 1950's as the number of children registered for Protestant schools in Nuremberg continued to decline. In 1952, 585 out of a total of 3,758 first year students were put in Protestant confessional schools (15.57%). In 1956, 456 out of a total of 4,124 were (11.06%). By 1960, the number was down to 357 out of 4,588, a mere 7.78%.⁵⁴ Such statistics were all the more galling in light of the consistent, if still unsatisfactory in the eyes of Catholic officials, turn out of Catholics for confessional schools. The following is a list of the number of children enrolled in Catholic confessional schools in Nuremberg for the same years listed above: 1952: 571 (15.19%); 1956: 721 (17.48%); 1960: 819 (17.85%).⁵⁵ Similar results appear in other medium to large sized towns in Middle and Upper Franconia.⁵⁶

When given a choice, a growing number of parents registered their children for community schools. This should not suggest that no chicanery was taking place. There are examples of teachers and school officials who attempted to tilt the vote in favor of

⁵³ Emphasis mine. "Schlußwort zm Schulkampf," *NEG*, July 17, 1949.

⁵⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Report on school registration in Nuremberg written by Cath. School Superintendent (*Schuldekan*) Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg, June 12, 1953. In same file, see also the reports from May 29, 1956 and May 16, 1961.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ See for example, "Schüleraufnahme," *Erlanger Tagblatt*, June 8, 1951. See also "Neustädter Gemeinschaftsschule bleibt," *Neustädter Tagblatt*, May 15, 1951.

community schools in ways that bear a striking resemblance to the tactics of the Nazis. In Treuchtlingen, parents who wanted to take their children out of the community school so that they could attend the school of their confession were told by a school official that they had to come back later in the afternoon to talk to a certain teacher. Some couldn't come back and later discovered that their children had been automatically reenrolled in the community school. Those who did come back in the afternoon were met by a teacher who harangued them with accusations of choosing ignorance for their child. After this, the school official that they had spoken with in the morning informed them that the registration period ended at noon and it was now too late to take their children out the community school.⁵⁷ Such occurrences became increasingly rare as the government stepped in to make sure that parents really did have the opportunity to make their own choice.

Nor should one overemphasize the number of children being registered for community schools. The vast majority of Bavarian children during this time period received their elementary education in a confessional school. This can be seen by looking at the number of schools available. In 1951, there were 6,712 elementary schools operating in Bavaria. 4,922 of them were Catholic confessional schools, 1,518 were Protestant confessional schools, and 272 were community schools. Of the latter, 150 were in Middle and Upper Franconia alone.⁵⁸ By 1957, there were 7,017 schools. 5,201 of them were Catholic, 1,558 were Protestant, and 258 were community schools. 189 of

⁵⁷ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Treuchtlingen to LkR, Oct. 12, 1951. See also AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Herz Jesu in Nuremberg to Suffragan Bishop Dr. Arthur Michael Landgraf of Bamberg, May 26, 1955.

⁵⁸ StJBB, Vol. 24 (1952), 394.

the community schools were in Middle and Upper Franconia.⁵⁹ Vast stretches of the state simply didn't have community schools.

However, one can definitely see a growing trend towards community schools. Two patterns illustrate this. First, while the number of community schools declined during the 1950's, the number of classes in community schools rose.⁶⁰ This suggests that community schools were consolidated and enlarged as more people moved to the cities, where community schools found their greatest support. Second, and more importantly, there was a drop in the overall number of students attending confessional schools. In 1948, at which point most schools were up and running again, roughly 96.5% of all Bavarian children attended confessional schools. By 1954, that number had dropped to 91.6%.⁶¹ By the end of the decade, it was slightly under 90%.⁶² The difference went entirely into community schools. That such a large number of students still attended confessional schools cautions us against making sweeping assertions about the churches "failing" in one of their key missions for the postwar, but one can definitely denote the beginning of a downward spiral.

Finally, there was the rapid breakdown of confessional schooling in Bavaria in the late 1960's. In 1967, the CSU backed an initiative by the FDP that called for the transformation of all Bavarian elementary schools into "Christian schools." These schools would be attended by children of both confessions and provide separate religious education classes. For all intents and purposes, they were community schools. However,

⁵⁹ StJBB, Vol. 26 (1958), 57.

⁶⁰ Ibid. In 1955, there were 2,160 community school classes. By 1957, the number was 2,382. By comparison, there were 18,856 Catholic and 4,620 Protestant confessional school classes in 1955 and 18,724 Catholic and 4,490 Protestant school classes in 1957.

⁶¹ For 1948, see StJBB, vol. 24 (1952), 395. For 1954, see "Die bayerischen Volksschulen," *Main Post*, Feb. 2, 1954.

⁶² StJBB, vol. 27 (1961), 53-4.

the key difference was that the principle of parents' rights was ruled out. While private confessional schools were allowed for and the government agreed to support them, they were to be the exception, not the norm. Franz Josef Strauß put enormous pressure on Cardinal Döpfner of Munich to accept the measure. Despite serious reservations, he did so. Döpfner went on to secure the consent of the other Bavarian bishops. With the support of the Protestant Church, which Strauß had also secured, the legislation moved forward quickly. A public referendum held in July 1968 over whether the Bavarian Constitution should be amended to permit such a change was overwhelmingly approved.⁶³ With this, centuries of confessional schooling in Bavaria came to a rather abrupt end.

Historians of the Bavarian school system have argued that intellectual currents in the 1960's alone presaged this momentous change. Under their weight, the whole system suddenly crumbled all at once.⁶⁴ Such interpretations are at a loss to explain why the churches felt it necessary to expend such a large amount of time and resources to the cause of confessional schooling in the 1950's. Nor do they offer much of an explanation for why so many parents freely chose to put their children in community schools during the 1950's. These breakdowns seem to stem from the fact that historians have approached the topic of schools strictly through an examination of high politics. While the political maneuverings of the assorted parties and the means through which the churches sought to influence them are interesting and no doubt important, an overarching focus on high politics obscures our view of the lived experience of common people and how they went about making decisions concerning what type of school to choose for their children.

⁶³ Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 227-28.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 219. See also, Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 223-226. Huelsz, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 191-203.

To really approach these more everyday concerns, a more inclusive framework is needed. More specifically, one must examine this idea of parental choice and how it created something of a paradox for the churches. Both insisted that decisions regarding the type of school a child attended were solely up to the parents. This was, they concluded, the best way to secure confessional schooling. But in making this case they set the stage for yearly battles over school registration. While intimidation and chicanery that harked back to the Nazi era definitely still existed, this was not the main concern of the churches, particularly after 1950. Rather, they soon discovered that securing the right of parents to choose confessional schooling in law was one thing; getting them to make that choice was wholly another.

Thus, it is necessary to study how the churches sought to put their ideas concerning confessional schooling into action within this framework of parental choice. Here, their focus was on parental duty. As discussed in Chapter 1, both churches made clear that parents had not only the right, but the duty to choose confessional schools. Any other choice was a violation of the promises made at their wedding and their child's baptism. Abstract arguments such as these had to be translated into the here and now if the churches hoped to have any kind of success. An examination of how school registration drives actually played out at the local level illuminates the means employed by the churches in their efforts to influence parental choice. It also shows the forces and arguments that they were up against. From this, conclusions can be drawn about how common people responded to such efforts.

School registration for first year students was usually held in either May or June. As confessional schools were considered the standard means of schooling in the Bavarian

Constitution, they were automatically offered as the primary choice. One need only mark one's confessional preference. However, as mentioned earlier, community schools also had to be offered as a choice if two conditions were met. First, at least five parents or legal guardians of school age children in the school district had to petition local officials for the creation of a community school. Second, the population of the school district had to be considered sufficiently "mixed" in order to justify the existence of a community school. 1% of the people having a different confession than the rest was deemed enough.⁶⁵ Due to the arrival of the refugees, even the smallest and most isolated of villages could usually clear this bar. Nor was it overly difficult to find such a minimal number of people who supported community schools. Thus, school registration battles became quite common events in many communities as both sides sought to secure the minimum of 25 students that had to be enrolled for a certain type of school in order for it to be set up.⁶⁶

From the reports of pastors and priests concerning school registration drives, one can see a similar pattern of activities and rhetoric developing from community school supporters.⁶⁷ Local conditions may have changed certain elements, but by and large the

⁶⁵ § 5 Abs. 2-4, 10a-c: "Gesetz über die Organisation der Volksschulen," *Amtsblatt des Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus* 23 (Dec. 15, 1950): 410.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 25 students was only the minimum required for a classroom and did not guarantee that it would in fact be set up. In most cases, it took roughly 35-40 students to ensure a classroom would be established. This came as a result of government attempts at consolidation, but more commonly because parents would change their vote if they felt their child would be in a small class that lacked resources.

⁶⁷ For a sample of these reports, see AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent for Nuremberg, Karl Ulrich, to EOB, June 6, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Dr. Heinrich Kuen of Erlangen to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt in Bamberg, June 13, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Stockheim to EOB, Aug. 31, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1. Letter from Cath. Pastorate St. Ludwig of Nuremberg to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, May 20, 1953. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Windsheim to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, June 2, 1956. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Treuchtlingen to LkR, Oct. 12, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, June 8, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 42: Report from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of

general thrust was the same. These ideas were perhaps best summed up in a bulletin concerning community schools from the Nuremberg office of the SPD that was sent to local branches across Franconia in the spring of 1951. In the very first paragraph, it makes clear: “The decision lies in the parent’s hands alone (emphasis original).”⁶⁸ After the School Organization Law of 1950, all sides seemed to have accepted the fact that their actions had to remain within the bounds of legality lest the results be drawn into question. The bulletin then went on to provide a step by step guide for running a community school drive.

First, the local SPD chapter should try to join forces with like minded groups to form a “Working Committee for the Introduction of Community Schools” (*Arbeitsausschuß für Einführung der Gemeinschaftsschule*). The bulletin suggested that supporters of the FDP, most often professionals, administrators, and bureaucrats, were usually sympathetic to the cause. Depending on local conditions, refugees and members of predominantly refugee parties such as the WAV (*Wirtschaftliche Aufbauvereinigung*) or BHE (*Block der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten*) should also be invited as they often came from areas that had a tradition of community schooling. Writers and editors for local newspapers should be courted as they were generally disposed to support community schools and could guarantee favorable coverage in the secular press. Most importantly, however, the attitude of local school officials and teachers should be gauged

Nuremberg to Bishop Meiser, Feb. 1955. LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz to LkR, Sept. 27, 1955.

⁶⁸ Showing its importance and widespread distribution, copies of the SPD “Mitteilungsblatt für Franken und Nürnberg,” Mar 15, 1951, can be found in BZAR Generalia 710.30; DAW Generalakten 802; and LKAN KrD Nürnberg 63. Numerous comments about clergy members using terror to influence parental choice led to complaints from top church officials. See LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: Letter from Meiser to Waldemar von Knöringen (Head of Bavarian SPD), April 26, 1951. See also, BZAR Generalia 710.30: Letter from BOW to BOR, April 3, 1951. However, the churches took notice of the ideas contained in the bulletin and copies were sent to the clergy so they would know what they were up against. See LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, April 26, 1951.

as they were often opposed to confessional schools and had a great deal of influence in the area. CSU supporters, it ensured the reader, would always be the main adversary.

This working committee would then organize a parent's association, raise money, stage rallies and meetings, make house calls, run signature drives, distribute flyers and other advertisements, and ensure that the vote was handled correctly. Local representatives were told to collect materials for potential legal proceedings "if clergy members proceeded to terrorize (the people) with pressure and threats."⁶⁹ The bulletin acknowledged that setting up such a campaign was expensive and labor intensive and that all out drives of this nature simply couldn't be undertaken every year in each individual community. But, it reminded them, all it took was one successful push to ensure the creation of a community school. From there, momentum would take hold. This strategy helps explain the somewhat spotty nature of school registration battles. A school district that rung with speeches and was covered in flyers one year might be extremely quiet the next. As will be discussed in more detail later on, this made it extremely difficult for the churches to mount sustained counter-drives.

The bulletin went on to stress four key themes for development: community schools were larger and could provide better resources and education; community schools pooled the resources of a community and were therefore cheaper in terms of taxes; community schools were Christian; community schools promoted religious tolerance through joint education. Flyers and newspaper articles from a variety of different locales and years show a remarkable consistency in rhetoric and one should conclude that these were *the* main points made by community school supporters throughout this period.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

Pooling a district's resources, community school supporters argued, allowed for better teachers, up to date teaching materials, libraries, and bigger buildings. These would in turn facilitate the learning process and produce well-educated children who could go on to lead Bavaria to a brighter future. The alternative was deemed unacceptable. Tiny confessional schools were said to fill a child's head with nothing but religious songs and superstitious nonsense. Catholic teachers in particular were singled out for using supposedly antiquated methods such as: "If there are two saints in Heaven and two more are added, how many saints are there in Heaven?"⁷⁰ More damning were predictions of the future shape of confessional schooling. Changes brought on by urbanization, industrialization, and the arrival of the refugees meant that more and more confessional schools had to be built. As they arbitrarily divided the students by confession, many were hardly viable and increasingly lumped students of all grades together into one or two room school houses. Statistics were used to paint a bleak picture of elementary education in Bavaria. In 1947, there were 6,160 elementary schools in Bavaria. 1,245 of them were undivided and 2,071 had only two classes. In 1950, there were 6,635 schools. 1,105 were undivided and 2,176 had two classes. By 1956, there were 6,940 schools. 2,089 were undivided and 1,787 had only two classes. Where, they asked, would this alarming trend end?⁷¹ The churches alone, they concluded, were responsible for this proliferation of one and two room schoolhouses. Doggedly adhering

⁷⁰ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Flyer entitled "Zurück ins Mittelalter?" distributed by Eltern Vereinigung der Gemeinschaftsschule, 1949.

⁷¹ Rough versions of these statistics are included in "Die Dorfschule hat ausgelernt," *SZ*, Feb. 21, 1956. For the official numbers, those reported here, see *StJBB*, vol. 23 (1947), 240; *StJBB*, vol. 24 (1952), 394; *StJBB*, vol. 26 (1958), 57.

to an antiquated system, the churches were punishing children by locking them into dwarf schools where they couldn't acquire the skills needed to succeed in the modern world.⁷²

Confessional schooling also meant that, at least theoretically, residents in each school district had to pay for separate school facilities and teachers. In some cases, this was necessitated by a mere 25-30 students. Community school supporters were quick to point out that there were not two forms of arithmetic or grammar, one for Catholics and another for Protestants. Rather, they were all the same. Thus, didn't it make more sense to simply have one school and one teaching staff. This would eliminate redundancy and bring about lower taxes.⁷³

Community school supporters also realized that they had something of an image problem. Schools of this sort were indelibly linked with the Nazis. The chicanery and blunt coercion used by the Nazis during the school battles of the 1930's were still very fresh in many people's minds. Thus, it was necessary to create a sense of distance between the two. The SPD bulletin reads: "The National Socialist 'community schools' were not community schools, rather they were ideology schools (*Weltanschauungsschule*). They were National Socialist confessional schools. Everything that has been said against them holds true for the other confessional schools as well."⁷⁴ Supporters then went on to lay out the argument that community schools were Christian and that confession specific religious education classes for those students whose parents wanted them were still available.

⁷² "Die Dorfschule hat ausgelernt," *SZ*, Feb. 21, 1956. See also, DAW Generalakten 802: Flyer entitled "Liebe Eltern" written by Freunde der Gemeinschaftsschule in Schweinfurt, 1954.

⁷³ "Eltern für Gemeinschaftsschule," *NN*, July 17, 1948. See also, "Ohrfeigen um die Bekenntnisschule," *SZ*, Mar. 13, 1950. DAW Generalakten 802: Flyer entitled "Liebe Eltern" written by Freunde der Gemeinschaftsschule in Schweinfurt, 1954.

⁷⁴ "Mitteilungsblatt für Franken und Nürnberg," Mar. 15, 1951.

Building on this last point, community schools were also said to promote tolerance between the confessions. A flyer in Nuremberg read: “We do not wish to be guilty of creating a lack of unity amongst our people. Just as we parents can live together without confessional rancor, so should our children be trained in religious tolerance and acceptance as they were earlier in the simultaneous schools.”⁷⁵ Most confessional schools, they pointed out, were either attended by students of both confessions or were part of a joint use facility that mixed the two confessions together in every place except the classroom. This somewhat arbitrary separation only served to generate a sense of division between the students. Moreover, why should students be divided up by confession at the elementary school level, only to be put in joint classes when they entered secondary school? Finally, weren’t such divisions contrary to Christian principles? One flyer from Schweinfurt concluded with the following: “Jesus, the friend of children, didn’t make distinctions between Catholic and Protestant children. Why then does the clergyman do it? Are we not already divided enough into zones, parties, classes, and confessions? Unity begins in the school!”⁷⁶

If the churches wanted to ensure the continued existence of confessional schooling, they had to counter organizations and arguments such as these. In larger cities such as Nuremberg and Munich and in the industrial centers of Franconia where community schooling was more entrenched, the churches knew that they faced a yearly struggle over school registration and they allocated extra resources and secured well-

⁷⁵ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Flyer entitled “Zurück ins Mittelalter?” distributed by Eltern Vereinigung der Gemeinschaftsschule, 1949. “Simultaneous schools” (*Simultanschule*) was another word used for community schools.

⁷⁶ DAW Generalakten 802: Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern,” distributed by Freunde der Gemeinschaftsschule in Schweinfurt, 1954. Similar comments were made in almost every flyer viewed. See also the remarks made at a meeting of community school supporters in Munich in 1951. “Religion und Schule,” SZ, May 16, 1951.

known speakers to bolster their side. The somewhat random nature of community school drives meant that such assistance could not be provided in every case. This was due to the mere fact that no one knew where it would be needed most. Pastors and priests often found themselves embroiled quite suddenly in a school registration battle and they had to simply make do with the available means. This should not suggest that they were on their own. Much like the SPD bulletin, church officials sent out guides for running a school registration drive.⁷⁷ While each necessarily contained confession specific elements, the similarities between the Catholic and Protestant versions are striking. An examination of these guides shows how the churches sought to put their ideas regarding confessional schooling into action. These will then be compared to the reports of pastors and priests written either during or after school registration drives to see how things played out in reality. One quickly sees that while such plans were usually followed to the letter, noticeable breakdowns emerged.

First and foremost, members of the clergy were reminded that the decision rested with the parents. Any hint of impropriety was counterproductive as it would bring the results into question draw the unwanted attention of anti-church elements. The vote needed to be free and fair and pastors and priests were instructed to carefully observe the actual registration itself and report any violations on the part of either community school activists or supporters of the other confession's schools to their superiors. Going further with this idea of parental choice, the guides all stressed that the work to secure the

⁷⁷ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Pastorates, Oct. 21, 1947. LKAN KrD München 493: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. District Superintendents, Feb. 27, 1951. LKAN NL Julius Schieder 15: "Merkblatt zur Schulfrage," Nov. 22, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Letter from EOB to all Cath. School Superintendents (*Schuldekan*) in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Aug. 5, 1948. BZAR OA 1127: Published report entitled "Schule – Religionsunterricht und Jugendseelsorge" from the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg. EAM NL Faulhaber 5194: Report from 1950 archdiocesan synod in Munich given by Cathedral Canon Dr. Johann Zinkl, Oct. 10, 1950.

reestablishment of confessional schooling was in vain if parents did not choose them for their children. Protestant Bishop Hans Meiser summed this up best in 1951 when he said: “Only when we awaken in the broad majority of parents an understanding of the importance of Protestant religious education in general and Protestant schools in specific can we conclude that our political wishes for schooling will be realized.”⁷⁸ It was up to the local pastor or priest to generate and maintain this consensus.

To do so, clergy members needed to be visible. They had to talk about confessional schooling with couples seeking a religious marriage. They needed to make house calls to parents with children entering school for the first time. They must attend the rallies and gatherings of community school supporters to provide counter arguments. They needed to meet with local government and school officials to clearly express the desires of the churches and to ensure that the vote would be handled correctly. If such actions could be done in tandem with the local clergy member of the other confession it was all the better as this would show that the churches stood together when it came to confessional schooling. Most importantly, clergymen had to present an unwavering message of support for confessional schools in sermons, lectures, bible weeks, missions, and individual conversations with regular people.⁷⁹ This message had to be tactful, yet firm. Clergymen were instructed to emphasize two key points. First, people needed to be reminded of the need for confessional schools. Particularly as the 1950’s wore on and

⁷⁸ LKAN KrD München 493: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. District Superintendents, Feb. 27, 1951.

⁷⁹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Pastorates, Oct. 21, 1947. LKAN KrD München 493: Letter from Bishop Meiser to all Prot. District Superintendents, Feb. 27, 1951. LKAN NL Julius Schieder 15: “Merkblatt zur Schulfrage,” Nov. 22, 1951. LKAN LkR z. V 948 Bd. I: Letter from Amt für Gemeindedienst to all Prot. pastorates, June 30, 1952. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Letter from EOB to all Cath. School Superintendents in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Aug. 5, 1948. BZAR OA 1127: Published report entitled “Schule – Religionsunterricht und Jugendseelsorge” from the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg. EAM NL Faulhaber 5194: Report from 1950 archdiocesan synod in Munich given by Cathedral Canon Dr. Johann Zinkl, Oct. 10, 1950.

West Germany's economic situation improved, many people, it was feared, were beginning to forget why the churches continued to take confessional schooling so seriously. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg commented: "Many do not understand our school battles, because they vaguely believe in the 'Christian West.' While being careful not to turn them away with depictions of apocalyptic horror, one must always remind such people that the biblical world view is under attack from anti-Christian forces and that what we have today is only a pause to catch our breath."⁸⁰ Second, and more importantly, pastors and priests needed to clearly inform parents that it was not only their right, but also their duty to ensure that their children attended confessional schools. Anything else would be a violation of the vows they made at their wedding and at each child's baptism. In suggestions for a pastoral letter concerning schools made to the Protestant Established Church Council, Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg wrote: "Perhaps one can say a word about parents' rights – no: parents' duty. The word parents' duty should not remain stuck in the imperative, rather strongly brought into the indicative. The indicative of baptism with the call: No one will tear you out of my hands."⁸¹ While the Protestant Church didn't have any sanctions in place to back up such statements, Catholic priests were to very subtly remind parents that in all but the most extenuating of circumstances, registering one's child for a non-Catholic school was seen as an offence worthy of the denial of a church burial.⁸²

By and large, it appears that most pastors and priests put such plans into motion quite vigorously and were very active in confessional school campaigns. Many went

⁸⁰ LKAN NL Julius Schieder 15: "Merkblatt zur Schulfrage," Nov. 22, 1951.

⁸¹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 42: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder to LkR, Mar. 4, 1949.

⁸² BZAR OA 1129. Reply to a list of questions posed by Catholic clergy members for the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg, no date.

door to door distributing propaganda and met with literally hundreds of parents.⁸³ Others engaged in lively debates at community school rallies and some, as was seen at the 1949 Kornmarkt gathering in Nuremberg, even suffered violence to their person as a result.⁸⁴ Annual “School Sundays” were held to generate awareness for confessional schools.⁸⁵ In general, pastors and priests spoke tirelessly of the need for confessional schools both in and outside the church. The protection of confessional schooling could also serve as a cross confessional rallying point for clergy and laity alike and many cases of fruitful work across confessional boundaries can be found. For example, community school supporters in the town of Stockheim launched a school registration drive under the slogan “Christians are separated and estranged from each other through confessional schools.” The local pastor and priest realized that only common action and a clear, joint message of unity could counteract such claims. Thus, the two attended parent meetings together, made house calls, and printed collaborative flyers and open letters. The clergymen even went so far as to attend a meeting of the local SPD group to show that they were a unified front. These efforts produced tangible results. Of the 231 children registered, 147 were signed up for Catholic-, 47 for Protestant-, and 37 for community schools. Fearful that

⁸³ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Augustin in Coburg to EOB, May 20, 1951. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Stockheim to EOB, Aug. 31, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Dr. Heinrich Kuen of Erlangen to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, June 13, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Treuchtlingen to LkR, Oct. 12, 1951. LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Kaufbeuren-Neugablonz to LkR, Sept. 27, 1955.

⁸⁴ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Report on the gathering of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Nürnberger Schulfrieden at the Kornmarkt, June 29, 1949.

⁸⁵ “Darum ermahnen wir euch...,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 12, 1954. “Schule – Advent des Lebens,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Dec. 15, 1957. For the Catholic Church, “School Sundays” were traditionally held in December. Numerous priests and diocesan authorities began to ask why special services of this sort were not held closer to the actual date of school registration in order to maximize their efficiency. By the late 1950’s, most dioceses had adopted such a change. See BZAR Generalia 712.70: Letter from Catholic School Commission for Bavaria to BOR, Feb. 13, 1958. As mentioned in Chapter 1, the Protestant Church devoted the *Misericordias Domini* Sunday (the second Sunday after Easter) to talk about schools.

their children might wind up in a dwarf school, several parents who had registered their children for the community school subsequently changed their vote.⁸⁶

Given that the clergy of both churches were stretched unbelievably thin throughout this period due to manpower shortages, actions of this nature illustrate their strong commitment to confessional schooling. This high level of clerical involvement no doubt influenced many parents to place their children in a confessional school and contributed to the institution's continued viability.

Church officials quickly pointed out, however, that the pastor or priest could not, and should not, act alone. One man could not possibly hope to speak above the din of voices present in West Germany's increasingly pluralistic society and have any kind of impact on parental choice.⁸⁷ Attempts to do so would only bring about accusations of clericalism. Rather, the laity needed to be engaged in the cause of confessional schooling. Often citing Mark 6,7, where Jesus sent the 12 disciples off to challenge "unclean spirits," church officials told the clergy to gather a nucleus of dedicated lay people to head up confessional school registration drives.⁸⁸ These representatives were then to conduct house visits, particularly in urban parishes where it was simply impossible for the pastor or priest to visit all parents with elementary school aged children, raise funds, distribute flyers and other propaganda, write articles for the secular

⁸⁶ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Stockheim to EOB, Aug. 31, 1951. In same file, see also Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Marktgraitz über Lichtenfels to EOB, Dec. 16, 1948.

⁸⁷ DAW Generalakten 758: Minutes from the second preparatory meeting of the 9th Committee of the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, June 8, 1954. DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, Oct. 11-14, 1954, 124-127.

⁸⁸ Mark 6,7 (LB): "And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth two by two; and gave them power over unclean spirits,". See LKAN NL Julius Schieder 15: "Merkblatt zur Schulfrage," Nov. 22, 1951.

and religious press, and stage pro-confessional school rallies.⁸⁹ Finally, they were to work in conjunction with the clergy to run signature drives and activate parents' associations. This last point was crucial because the focus on parental rights demanded that larger segments of the general population be mobilized behind the cause of confessional schooling.

Finding a core of religiously inclined lay people to lead school registration drives was usually not too difficult. In fact, church officials warned the clergy to be quite careful in their selection as sometimes the people who volunteered for such positions were a bit too motivated for their own good. In their zeal, they inadvertently offended parents and actually hurt the cause of confessional schooling.⁹⁰ Such concerns aside, the reports of pastors and priests illustrate how these individuals, most often women, canvassed towns and individual neighborhoods in an effort to drum up support for confessional schools. They were particularly active in areas that were considered "endangered."⁹¹ Such efforts served to greatly amplify the message of the churches.

It often proved difficult to translate the enthusiasm and dedication of these small groups into something larger and more inclusive. Signature drives were a quite well established way to secure a backing for one's cause. The Catholic clergy in particular had used them very successfully in the nineteenth century as part of political campaigns

⁸⁹ Primers were even drawn up to help lay people make more productive house calls. See AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Report entitled "Beispiel für die Vorbereitung katholischer Laien auf Hausbesuche in Angelegenheit der Schuleinschreibung," no date.

⁹⁰ DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, Oct. 11-14, 1954, 124-127.

⁹¹ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent for Nuremberg, Karl Ulrich, to EOB, June 6, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Dr. Heinrich Kuen of Erlangen to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt in Bamberg, June 13, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1. Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Ludwig in Nuremberg to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, May 20, 1953. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, June 8, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 42: Report from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to Bishop Meiser, Feb. 1955.

for the Center Party.⁹² These were not legally binding documents, but a request for support. Despite being a very small act, giving one's signature established a relationship. In essence, it gave one a sense of agency. However, a great deal had changed since the days when priests first put this strategy to work. While liberals and other anti-church elements had originally declared that such practices were treacherous and deceiving, they quickly learned how effective they could be and began to employ them as well. Thus, by the time of the postwar school registration drives, both community and confessional school supporters were out in force collecting signatures. What the churches, and no doubt community school supporters as well, soon found was that this plurality compromised the effectiveness of such campaigns. Quite simply, people often signed both lists.⁹³ Whether this was indicative of fickle popular opinion concerning schools or that people had learned that the quickest way to get rid of canvassers was to sign their list is difficult to tell, but it left the churches and confessional school supporters at wit's end. Signature drives continued to be part of their arsenal for school registration drives throughout the 1950's, but much greater focus was placed on associations, which they felt generated a stronger sense of involvement and responsibility.

Groups such as the Catholic Parents' Association (*Katholische Elternvereinigung*) and Protestant Parents (*Evangelische Elternschaft*) were created in the immediate postwar

⁹² Margaret Lavinia Anderson, *Practicing Democracy: Elections and Political Culture in Imperial Germany* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2000), 84-85.

⁹³ LKAN NL Julius Schieder 15: "Merkblatt zur Schulfrage," Nov. 22, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Marktgraitz über Lichtenfels to EOB, Dec. 16, 1948. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Report from Cath. School Superintendent Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg to EOB, June 6, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Dr. Heinrich Kuen of Erlangen to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt in Bamberg, June 13, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-2: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg to EOB, June 28, 1958.

years as part of the churches' efforts to reestablish confessional schooling.⁹⁴ These groups were designed to provide an institutional framework in which parents of young children could express their concerns about school related issues, receive useful information at periodic meetings, lectures, and retreats, and engage in service projects. They were to serve two main purposes. First, they would act as a counterbalance to similar organizations set up by community school supporters and provide the churches with a large base of popular support for the political and legal battles over parents' rights and in school registration drives. Second, it was hoped that these groups would raise awareness of the need for confessional schooling in society at large.⁹⁵

Protestant Parents stumbled from the outset. Attendance was usually limited to a small core of already religiously inclined laypeople and it seems to have had little draw in larger Protestant circles.⁹⁶ Some Protestant Parent groups remained active and contributed a great deal to confessional school drives, but in general their organizational strength and impact was always quite limited. While other factors certainly played a role in this lack of success, which will be examined in more detail in discussions of Catholic associations, the traditionally lukewarm stance of Bavarian Protestants towards church associations was probably the most influential.

The Catholic Parents' Association got off to a much better start. While it fell far short of the goal of 282 groups, one for every parish, and 50,000 new members set by church officials, a campaign in the archdiocese of Bamberg in 1948 saw the creation of

⁹⁴ "Gründung von katholischen Elternvereinigungen," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Oct. 7, 1947): 127-30. "Hirtenwort an die Eltern," *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (July 25, 1947): 42. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. pastorates, Oct. 21, 1947.

⁹⁵ BZAR OA 2504: Report entitled "Richtlinien für die Fortführung des Aufbaues der Katholischen Elternvereinigungen, für die Organisations- und Werbearbeit" written by the Catholic Parent's Association organizational office in Regensburg, no date (but probably from 1947).

⁹⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 62: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Nuremberg to all Prot. pastorates in the district of Nuremberg, Oct. 4, 1950.

180 new groups and the enrollment of 34,597 members.⁹⁷ In the diocese of Regensburg, 319 associations had been set up and 73,147 members enrolled by the end of 1947.⁹⁸ Strong turnouts such as these buoyed the hopes of many within the church as they felt that in the Catholic Parents' Association they had a powerful lay organization that could champion the cause of confessional schooling. In some ways, they were right. Members of some Catholic Parents' Association groups were quite active in bitter school battles like the one that occurred in Nuremberg and openly decried any perceived violations of the laws of parent's rights.⁹⁹ In subsequent school registration drives, they helped distribute flyers, made house calls, canvassed neighborhoods, and performed a host of other activities.

Despite such successes, ominous signs began to appear quickly. Even as early as 1949, it appears that many Catholic Parents' Association groups existed solely on paper or had only a handful of active members.¹⁰⁰ Nor was this an exclusively urban phenomenon. Groups in rural areas such as the Diocese of Regensburg disintegrated just as fast as those in the more industrialized corridors of the Archdiocese of Bamberg. Tellingly, periodicals such as the "Bulletin for the Catholic Parents' Associations of the Diocese of Regensburg," which had been printed monthly throughout 1948 and the early

⁹⁷ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Letter from Catholic Parent's Association of Bavaria to all Catholic Parent's Association groups in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Oct. 1, 1948.

⁹⁸ BZAR OA 2504: Report on membership in the Catholic Parent's Association for the diocese of Regensburg, Dec. 30, 1947.

⁹⁹ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-3: Letter from Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Zinkel of Munich (also head of the Catholic School Commission of Bavaria) to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, June 23, 1949.

¹⁰⁰ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Letter from Cath. School Organization of Bavaria (*Katholische Schulorganisation in Bayern*) – Office for the Archdiocese of Bamberg to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, Feb. 27, 1950. BZAR OA 2504: Report from Josef Hopfner, head of the Catholic Parent's Association in the diocese of Regensburg, Nov. 15, 1951.

part of 1949, vanished, making only infrequent reappearances.¹⁰¹ Attempts to reinvigorate the group in the mid-1950's all met with limited success.¹⁰² When pressed by their diocesan superiors to explain the group's demise, Catholic Parents' Association leaders and ordinary priests gave very specific and also more general replies. First, they argued that a lack of finances had crippled their efforts. Church officials had decreed that the groups should be self-financing as this was the only way to engender a sense of involvement. With their limited resources, many lay people simply couldn't afford to give anything or didn't feel that they should have to. Without any money, the groups couldn't secure speakers, hold rallies, or publish bulletins. This created a vicious downward spiral as the absence of publicity only caused the groups to drop further and further out of view, meaning less members and less money.¹⁰³ Second, the creation of the Family League of German Catholics (*Familienbund Deutscher Katholiken*), a group designed to influence the creation of economic, social, and family legislation, divided the church's attention and presented an unclear image to the laity over the necessity of the Catholic Parent's Association.¹⁰⁴

More generally, lay leaders and priests commented that ordinary Catholics increasingly lacked interest in church associations. Active groups, they accepted, did still exist and people were still willing to sign their names on a membership list or take part in a special group activity, but they didn't want to get overly involved or play any kind of leadership role. This was felt all the more painfully in the Catholic Parents' Association

¹⁰¹ Copies can be found in BZAR OA 2504. There were two editions in 1951 and one in 1953.

¹⁰² BZAR Generalia 830.00: Letter from Josef Hopfner to Archbishop Buchberger, Nov. 22, 1953. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Letter from main office of the Catholic School Organization in Bavaria to all (arch-)diocesan authorities in Bavaria, Jan. 11, 1955. In the same file, see Letter from EOB to all Cath. Pastorates in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, Jan. 21, 1955.

¹⁰³ BZAR Generalia 830.00: Letter from Josef Hopfner to Archbishop Buchberger, Nov. 22, 1953. In the same file, see Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Mossbach to BOR, Feb. 27, 1955.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

because many didn't feel the group was needed. While some had developed sympathies for community schooling during the Nazi period, many more, particularly after parent's rights had been secured in law, simply didn't understand why the church was still making such a big fuss about confessional schools. This crippled interest in the organization and undermined any hope church leader's might have held for it. Perhaps more dangerous was the plethora of alternatives that were increasingly within reach of even the humblest of villagers. Priests and lay organizers noted that people could increasingly pick and choose what they wanted to be involved in and it was proving difficult to motivate people to become active in any kind of church association, much less one devoted to confessional schooling.¹⁰⁵ Thus, while the churches talked a great deal about activating wider elements of the laity in campaigns for confessional schools through the use of signature drives and parent's associations, they quickly found that such means had lost their effectiveness.

Despite such setbacks, the churches were well aware that they had to counter not only the organizations of community school supporters, but their rhetoric as well. In particular, they needed to reply to the four main arguments made in behalf of community schooling that were mentioned earlier. While each church employed several confession specific arguments, their answers were generally quite similar. They included: only confessional schools provided a "whole education"; community schools were not significantly cheaper when certain hidden costs were factored in; confessional schools had a long tradition in Bavaria and community schools were all a product of the Nazi era; only confessional schools promoted a true sense of religious tolerance. These points

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. See also, BZAR Generalia 830.00: Letter from Josef Hopfner to Archbishop Buchberger, Feb. 2, 1956.

were expressed continuously in flyers, pamphlets, discussion primers for lay people making house calls, and newspaper articles (usually in the religious press) that were distributed throughout the period.

Challenging those who said that community schools provided children with a better education because of their greater resources, confessional school supporters argued that such schools did not provide a “whole education.”¹⁰⁶ Both churches repeatedly drove home the point that in community schools, religion was only one subject among many. The material taught in religious education class was not reinforced, and sometimes even harshly dismissed, in regular classes. As elementary school age children did not yet possess the capacity for truly critical thought, such incongruence only created confusion and pain. Worse still, it might lead to religious indifference as children presented with two legitimate choices of religion often chose neither. Pre-pubescent children, they argued, needed to be taught a unified system of values in the home, church, and school that was based on God’s commandments. With this background, they could then go on to more critically assess different understandings of religion and its importance when their mental facilities developed with age.

Both churches went on to acknowledge that reading, writing, and arithmetic were the same for Catholic, Protestant, and non-religious children. But, they argued, the Nazi

¹⁰⁶ The term “ganzheitliche Erziehung” is referred to in almost every piece of confessional school propaganda. See LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled “Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern” written by Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of Catholic flyer entitled “Schulanmeldung in Nürnberg,” June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 62: Letter entitled “Warum Bekenntnisschule?” sent to parents in Nuremberg, June 1950. Hermann Kleinknecht, *Warum Bekenntnisschule?* (Munich: Evang. Presseverband für Bayern, 1955), 16. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Flyer entitled “Katholische Eltern!,” no date. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Flyer entitled “Bekenntnisschule WARUM?” distributed by Catholic Parent’s Association in Munich, June 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12. Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern!,” May 1955. DAW Generalakten 798: Letter from Father Brandsetter of Würzburg to Catholic parents in Würzburg, May 10, 1958. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Report entitled “Beispiel für die Vorbereitung katholischer Laien auf Hausbesuche in Angelegenheit der Schuleinschreibung,” no date.

period had shown how the spirit of the lesson was also of critical import. It was just as easy for community schools to teach that two Aryans plus two Aryans equaled four Aryans as it was for confessional schools to teach that two saints plus two saints equaled four saints.¹⁰⁷

The charge that confessional schools were locking children into dwarf schools with overburdened teachers who could do little more than provide a rudimentary education grew increasingly difficult to counter. Even some church officials and clergy members expressed concern over the proliferation of one-room school houses.¹⁰⁸ Still, most argued emphatically that one-room school houses were perfectly fine if staffed by a skilled teacher. In fact, having children of mixed ages was actually beneficial as it informally taught them how to interact with people who were older and younger than themselves.¹⁰⁹

The argument that community schools were cheaper in terms of taxes had found a great deal of resonance in the population at large, particularly among men. Confessional school supporters acknowledged that the larger community schools might indeed be more cost effective, but pointed out that a number of hidden costs also needed to be factored in. Foremost among these was transportation. In predominantly rural parts of the state, the closure of local confessional schools in favor of more centralized community schools

¹⁰⁷ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Flyer entitled "Katholische Eltern!," no date.

¹⁰⁸ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Dr. Josef Grüb of Nuremberg to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, Mar. 11, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Regional Superintendents, July 17, 1950. Here written by Bezzel. Such worries seemed to have been motivated more out of a concern that such schools left the churches open to attacks from community school supporters than a sense that the children were not getting a good education.

¹⁰⁹ DAW Generalakten 801: Report entitled "Neue Gefahr für das unterfränkische Dorf und seine Schule!" written by Catholic Teacher's Association (*Katholische Erziehergemeinschaft*) of Lower Franconia, Mar. 14, 1956. This report was written in reply to the article "Die Dorfschule hat ausgelernt," in SZ, Feb. 21, 1956. Copies were distributed to parents throughout the region. Similar arguments can also be found in "Schulkasernen für Dorfkinder?," *Würzburger Katholische Sonntagsblatt*, April 1, 1956.

would mean that children from the surrounding area would all have to be bussed in. The high cost of this offset any financial benefits that community schooling might bring.¹¹⁰ Other, less visible costs also needed to be taken into account. A village without a school was doomed. With no means to pass on their customs and heritage, such villages would lose their hold on the youth as they would all leave for the cities. This led to the drab proletarianization of life and the breakdown of Bavarian culture.¹¹¹

It was against the last two arguments of community school supporters that the churches launched their greatest attacks. One flyer stated: “Even a community school with the epithet ‘Christian’ cannot in reality be called Christian because **education in the spirit of Christianity** cannot be guaranteed there. We have already seen how the so-called “Christian community schools” are only the first step on the way to **non-religious schools**, which themselves are only a way station to **anti-religious schools** (emphasis original).”¹¹² While community school supporters tried to distance themselves from the Nazi years, confessional school supporters sought to keep the memory fresh. Outside of the large cities of Nuremberg and Munich, confessional schools, they reminded, had been *the* standard for centuries and were cemented in both law and custom. Community schools were solely a product of the Nazi era. Parents choosing to register their children for community schools amounted to nothing less than a posthumous victory for the Nazis.

¹¹⁰ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Copy of flyer entitled “Katholische Eltern!,” no date. See also, “Schulkasernen für Dorfkinder?,” *Würzburger Katholische Sonntagsblatt*, April 1, 1956.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Copy of flyer entitled “Katholische Eltern!,” no date. Similar comments can be found in LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled “Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern” written by Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of Catholic flyer entitled “Schulanmeldung in Nürnberg,” June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 62: Letter entitled “Warum Bekenntnisschule?” sent to parents in Nuremberg, June 1950. Hermann Kleinknecht, *Warum Bekenntnisschule?*, 14-15. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Flyer entitled “Bekenntnisschule WARUM?” distributed by Catholic Parent’s Association in Munich, June 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern!,” May 1955. DAW Generalakten 798: Letter from Father Brandsetter of Würzburg to Catholic Parents in Würzburg, May 10, 1958.

One flyer spelled this out in the clearest of terms: “In the Third Reich, against the will of the parents and against all those who respect rule of law, confessional schools were attacked... The rhetoric for community schools has not changed and we can still hear ‘One People, One Leader, One School’ ringing in our ears.”¹¹³ In such comments, one sees again how the churches were willing and eager to mention the Nazis by name when discussing public education. They no doubt did so because it helped further their contemporary agendas. However, it stands in stark contrast to the euphemisms and circumlocutions that they generally reverted to when discussing the sins of the Nazi period and the guilt that stemmed from it.

To be sure, tough rhetoric such as this did not go unchallenged within the churches themselves. Clergy members and lay representatives from larger cities like Nuremberg wrote to church officials calling for moderation. Flyers and pamphlets that hammered home the message that community schools were a hangover from the Nazi period or were anti-religious consciously provoked teachers, many of whom considered themselves to be good Christians. It was in the best interest of the churches to encourage good relations between teachers and the clergy.¹¹⁴ The consistency and coherence of confessional school propaganda throughout this period, however, suggests that such warnings such as these went largely unheeded.

The argument that confessional schools bred inter-confessional tension was also dismissed. One Catholic flyer commented: “Do you really fear that confessional schools

¹¹³ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Flyer entitled “Bekanntnisschule WARUM?” distributed by Catholic Parent’s Association in Munich, June 1951

¹¹⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/9: Letter from Father Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg to EOB, Nov. 2, 1949. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Dr. Josef Grüb of Nuremberg (Head of Catholic Parent’s Association in Nuremberg) to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, Nov. 8, 1949.

will endanger the confessional peace? What incidences in the last few years have led you to this concern? Do you really believe that teachers in Catholic schools would sow hate and discord in the hearts of children? You can be certain that teachers who are true to the church will respect the convictions of those who think differently (*Andersdenkenden*) and ensure that the other children are instructed to do so as well.”¹¹⁵ Going further, confessional schools were portrayed as the only way to guarantee “real” tolerance. Only a child who truly understood and accepted his/her own faith could respect the beliefs of others. This could only take place in an environment where the teacher and religious education instructor worked in unison. One Protestant pamphlet stated that Protestants who attended Protestant schools up through confirmation learned how the Gospels were relevant to the “concrete situation of the German people.” Because of this, they were able “to see the human in all population groups, regardless of confessional adherence, class or race.”¹¹⁶ Rather than promote tolerance, community schools only strengthened the confessional divide as students, who attended all other classes together, were divided up to attend religious education classes. Painful separations or harassment and taunting resulted.¹¹⁷

Statements such as these were often undermined by the churches themselves. In the same flyers that discussed confessional schools bringing about “real” tolerance, Catholic parents were often warned that community schools were usually taught by either

¹¹⁵ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern!,” May 1955.

¹¹⁶ Kleinknecht, *Warum Bekenntnisschule?*, 20.

¹¹⁷ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Pamphlet entitled “Dein Kind kommt in die Schule. Ein Wort an die Eltern” written by Pastor Kurt Frör, June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of Catholic flyer entitled “Schulanmeldung in Nürnberg,” June 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 62: Letter entitled “Warum Bekenntnisschule?” sent to parents in Nuremberg, June 1950. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: Flyer entitled “Katholische Eltern!,” no date. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Flyer entitled “Bekenntnisschule WARUM?” distributed by Catholic Parent’s Association in Munich, June 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12. Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern!,” May 1955.

nihilists or Protestants and that the Catholic world view would not be passed on to the next generation if they did not choose Catholic confessional schools. In the eyes of Catholic officials and clergy members, it was always Protestants, or wayward Protestants, who supported the push for community schools and lured Catholics away with empty promises of lower taxes and better resources.¹¹⁸ While such accusations were not always based on the most solid of evidence, they reinforced the belief of many Catholics that Protestantism was a negative element in German society that had helped lead to the rise of the Nazis.

Given the large number of Protestant students who had to attend Catholic confessional schools due to a lack of other options, Protestant officials were constantly on guard lest these children be “lost.” Protestant pastors and parents repeatedly complained that Catholic teachers and priests were using the schools as a stage to indoctrinate Protestant children.¹¹⁹ The accusations were usually of a quite similar nature. Protestant students were forced to remain in the classroom during Catholic religious education and had to learn Catholic songs and prayers. Catholic priests spelled out in minute detail how Protestantism was inferior to Catholicism. Finally, priests made open comments to Protestant children such as: “I will make you Catholic.”¹²⁰ The mistrust expressed in such claims is best summed up in a quote from one Protestant engineering professor. He

¹¹⁸ See, for example, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Flyer entitled “Bekenntnisschule WARUM?” distributed by Catholic Parent’s Association in Munich, June 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12. Flyer entitled “Liebe Eltern!,” May 1955. BZAR OA 2503: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Metten bei Deggendorf to BOR, Jan. 31, 1951. DAW Generalakten 792: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Grosseubach/Main to Bishop Stangl of Würzburg, Feb. 14, 1960.

¹¹⁹ Kleinknecht, *Warum Bekenntnisschule?*, 26-27.

¹²⁰ LKAN KrD München 213: Copy of letter from Karl Bräuer of Friedberg to Prot. District Superintendent of Augsburg, April 11, 1947. For other examples, see LKAN KrD München 215: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Fürstenfeldbruck to Prot. District Superintendent of Weilheim, Oct. 22, 1953. LKAN KrD München 215: Letter from Anna Siebenlist of Neuesting to Prot. Pastorate of Olching, Oct. 15, 1953.

said: “In the eyes of the Catholic Church we Protestants are only heretics, for which nothing other than unconditional submission will suffice.”¹²¹

Whether or not such actions actually transpired is difficult to tell, but Protestant officials certainly believed that they were. The Established Church Council complained bitterly of such practices to the Ministry of Education and demanded that they be stopped.¹²² The state did make certain pronouncements to this end, but Protestant pastors were exhorted by their superiors to be ever vigilant in the protection of Protestant students in Catholic schools and given detailed explanations of the legal rights of confessional minorities in the classroom.¹²³ Any accusations of Catholic priests or teachers attempting to exert undue influence on Protestant children were to be reported to church officials and responded to with the utmost seriousness.

Officially, the Catholic Church was opposed to such efforts as they did not stand in the church’s best interest. While Catholics may have been in the majority in much of Bavaria, they were in the minority in Middle and Upper Franconia. Archdiocesan authorities in Bamberg were quick to remind the other dioceses of this. They argued that such actions only encouraged Protestant pastors and teachers to do the same for Catholic children who attended Protestant confessional schools. Until Catholic confessional schools could be provided for all Catholic children, it was better to adhere to the rules

¹²¹ LKAN KrD München 213: Copy of letter from Prof. Dr. Otto Kirschmer of Wallgau to Pastor Dr. Satzinger of Murnau, Aug. 13, 1947.

¹²² Such correspondences are discussed in AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/5: Copy of letter from Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture to Government of Upper Bavaria in Munich, Sept. 22, 1951. Here, the state said that the rules concerning confessional minorities in schools laid down by the School Organization Law from 1950 must be followed.

¹²³ “Berücksichtigung der Minderheit beim Religionsunterricht,” *Amtsblatt des Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus* 23 (Dec. 15, 1950): 415. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Pastorates and Vicarages, June 3, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, April 12, 1950. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Regional Superintendents, July 28, 1953.

concerning confessional minorities in the classroom that were laid out in the School Organization Law of 1950. This was the only way to ensure parity for Catholic children in Protestant confessional schools.¹²⁴ Authorities in several dioceses wrote back saying that they whole heartedly agreed with Bamberg's proposal given the confessional demographics of Bavaria.¹²⁵

In spite of this, such activities continued. By no means innocent themselves, Protestant pastors and teachers behaved in a similar fashion. They did so even after the church's calls for parity and adherence to the law. It is readily apparent that actions and attitudes of this nature were almost impossible to stop at the local level. When refracted through the already tense confessional atmosphere in Bavaria, a snide comment by a clergy member or a simple explanation of the differences between the two confessions could lead the children themselves to single each other out. Catholic children would tell their Protestant counterparts: "We Catholics have more faith" or "Protestant live easier, but die harder." Protestant children accused Catholics of being "superstitious" and "backwards." This usually led to one of two responses. First, children of the minority confession felt inferior and came home crying to their parents. Some wished they were of the other confession so they could fit in.¹²⁶ Others responded much differently. They looked to their local pastor, priest, or teacher for answers. One Protestant refugee who taught in a very Catholic region of southern Bavaria recalled that a number of her students came to her after hearing several of the above mentioned accusations from local

¹²⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4414/4: Letter from EOB to all (Arch-)Diocesan Authorities in Bavaria, Aug. 4, 1953.

¹²⁵ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4414/4: Letter from BOR to EOB, Aug. 26, 1953. In same file, see also Letter from BOA to EOB, Aug. 19, 1953. Letter from BOP to EOB, Aug. 18, 1953.

¹²⁶ For example, see LKAN KrD München 215: Copy of letter from Anna Siebenlist of Neuesting to Prot. Pastorate of Olching, Oct. 15, 1953.

Catholic children. How should they reply? For her class that day she discussed the merits of Protestantism and noted: “It was an especially stimulating hour, the children were very eager.”¹²⁷ In such reports, one can see the lasting imprint of confessional identity in German society and how rifts between Catholics and Protestants played out in everyday life settings such as the school.

The placement of teachers also led to sharp controversies. Leading Catholic and Protestant officials put enormous pressure on the state government immediately following the war in an effort to get only Protestant teachers in Protestant confessional schools and only Catholic teachers in Catholic confessional schools.¹²⁸ Due to denazification trials, which fell heavily on teachers, and the heavy toll of the war, it was often impossible for the government to maintain such a policy. Cardinal Faulhaber and Bishop Meiser reluctantly accepted this fact in an agreement signed with the state government on Dec. 21, 1946. With this document, the two sides concurred that while every effort should be made to ensure confessional similarity between teachers and students in confessional schools, the churches had to accept that this might not be an option. The churches then had to allow teachers of the other confession to work in “their” schools.¹²⁹

Neither church liked this arrangement. Protestants were particularly suspicious of it as they felt that their schools in the predominantly Catholic south would all be staffed with Catholics.¹³⁰ Both went to great lengths to see if each individual case was in some

¹²⁷ LKAN Koller Documents, Vol. II, Report 13 (Hedwig Beckert).

¹²⁸ DAW Generalakten 796: Letter from Cardinal Michael Faulhaber to all Bavarian bishops, Oct. 5, 1946.

¹²⁹ Merkt, *Dokumente zur Schulreform in Bayern*, 50-52.

¹³⁰ LKAN KrD München 491: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich to LkR, Feb. 1, 1946. In same file, see also Letter from Daumiller to Regional Governor Matthes of Augsburg, Feb. 16, 1946.

way correctable.¹³¹ Elaborate plans were also proposed for the transfer of teachers to schools of their own confession.¹³² Government officials saw such schemes as wholly unrealistic in light of the state's limited budget and tight housing market.¹³³

This problem was by no means limited to the chaotic years immediately following the war. Even after the denazification trials were over, a mixture of factors, most notably low pay and poor housing, combined to produce a chronic deficit in elementary school teachers. Because of this, the government often had no choice but to assign Catholic teachers to Protestant confessional schools and vice versa. With no natural solution in sight and facing what they saw as the blatant misuse of state authority, many clergy members and parents of school age children decided to take the matter into their own hands.

Periodic school strikes broke out in a number of towns and villages across Bavaria. Often with the tacit, and sometimes quite open, support of the local pastor or priest, parents refused to send their children to school if they were to be taught by a teacher of the other confession. As a further insult, some would allow their children to attend the religious education courses held by the local pastor or priest and then have the children come home directly thereafter.¹³⁴

¹³¹ For example, see DAW Generalakten 798: Letter from BOW to regional government of Lower Franconia, Sept. 5, 1947.

¹³² Ibid. See also LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, Aug. 30, 1949. In same file, see also Letter from Schieder to all District Superintendents in the region of Nuremberg, Oct. 15, 1949.

¹³³ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256: Copy of letter from Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture to LkR, Nov. 15, 1949. See also, DAW Generalakten 798: Letter from regional government of Lower Franconia to BOW, Oct. 15, 1947.

¹³⁴ LKAN KrD München 213: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Ingolstadt to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Munich, June 13, 1947. See also, "Ein Dorf beschloß: Streik der Schulkinder," *SZ*, Jan. 17, 1950. "SZ Kommentare: Es geht auch ohne Schulstreiks," *SZ*, Mar. 1, 1951. "Wenn Eltern ihre Kinder streiken lassen...," *SZ*, Mar. 16, 1951.

School strikes were often motivated just as much by a mistrust of state involvement in local affairs as they were by confessional identity. Nor did they last very long. Government threats to punish the parents for violating Article 129 of the Bavarian Constitution were usually enough to bring most into line.¹³⁵ Church officials were also quick to reprimand clergy members involved in such cases as their actions cast an unfavorable light on confessional schooling in general. Despite these caveats, strikes of this nature had lasting implications as confessional relations in the communities involved were inevitably soured. The children who were not attending school would sometimes commit acts of vandalism or abuse against members of the other confession. Both sides accused the other of using the schools as an instrument for conversion. In general, an already well established atmosphere of mistrust was strengthened and people were all the more willing to listen to either confessional fanatics or those pushing for community schools.¹³⁶

In all of these actions, one can see how the churches contradicted much of their own message about confessional schools not breeding confessional animosity. Indeed, given the confessional demographics of Bavaria their strong focus on confessional schooling in the postwar era seemingly could not help but stir up long standing confessional grievances. In this, one can see the often negative consequences that the churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal had for inter-confessional relations. This theme will be further examined in Chapter 5.

¹³⁵ Constitution of the Free State of Bavaria (1946), Art. 129, Par. 1. It reads: "Attendance at elementary and vocational schools is compulsory for all children."

¹³⁶ "Briefe an die SZ: Der Staudacher Schulstreik," SZ, Jan. 21, 1950. See also, "Der abgeblasene Schulstreik," SZ, Jan. 25, 1950.

Despite this setback, almost all confessional school propaganda contained, in one form or another, the striking phrase: “Exercise your right and fulfill your duty!”¹³⁷ This focus on both parents’ rights and parents’ duty is telling. It shows that the churches had an astute awareness of the fact that they had to work within the framework of parental choice. In West Germany’s increasingly pluralistic society, simply securing the right for parents to choose confessional schooling did not guarantee that they would in fact do so. In short, confessional schooling could no longer be taken for granted. This explains why the churches continued to focus on them long after the initial postwar school battles had been won and in places where no community schools existed. To stem the growth of community schools, or prevent them from being founded in the first place, the churches had to get their adherents to freely choose confessional schooling for their children. The multi-faceted attempts of the churches to reach this end centered on the concept of duty. In securing a religious marriage and in bringing their children for baptism, couples took on the solemn responsibility of educating their offspring in the both the ways of the world and the faith. This kind of “whole education” could only be guaranteed in a confessional school. The mere fact that at least 90% of all Bavarian children in each of the years under study were registered for confessional schools shows that the churches found no small measure of support in this central aspect of their plans for postwar Christian renewal. Questions remain though as to why more and more parents registered their children for community schools against the wishes of the churches. This necessitates an examination of some of the reasons for such a choice and an exploration of why Protestants were more inclined to make it than Catholics.

¹³⁷ Usually expressed as “Fordert Euer Recht und erfüllt Eure Pflicht!”. Also used were phrases such as: “Ihr habt ein unbedingtes Recht auf die Bekenntnisschule,” and “Seid Euch Eurer Verantwortung bewußt!”

One detects a note of fantasy in all of the churches' talk of getting back to 1933. While confessional schools may have been the norm, this does not mean that the years before 1933 were some idyllic age when everyone agreed that such schools were best. The churches and confessional school supporters in general seem to have conveniently forgotten that community schooling found a great deal of support in some parts of Bavaria even before the rise of the Nazis.¹³⁸ This was particularly the case among Protestants in Upper and Middle Franconia. Workers living in industrial centers such as Nuremberg had traditionally voted socialist. Social Democrats had long opposed confessional schooling as they felt it gave the churches, reactionary elements in their eyes, too much influence over the youth. Farmers, civil servants, administrators, and members of the petty-bourgeois in and around the small to medium sized towns that dotted this region were fervent in their support of National Socialism. While its outright opposition to confessional schooling largely developed later, this movement's radical nationalism and authoritarianism was by its very nature inimical to something as divisive and parochial as confessional schools. Julius Streicher, head of the Nazi party in Franconia and a one time elementary school teacher, summed this up saying: "One need not always say to a child: you are Catholic and you are Protestant. Rather, we must tell the children: you are Germans."¹³⁹

One quickly notices that the conversion to community schooling in these regions, probably as a result of these pre-existing ideological commitments, was nowhere near as rancorous a process as it was in more rural, Catholic areas such as Lower Franconia and

¹³⁸ Müller, *Schulpolitik in Bayern*, 194.

¹³⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 193.

southern Bavaria.¹⁴⁰ It would seem foolish to argue that this support for community schooling simply vanished in 1945. This would only bolster the now largely debunked belief that the end of the war was a kind of “zero-hour” that wiped Germany’s slate clean. Rather, such ideas resurfaced after the war, albeit in somewhat different forms to match the new context. It should not be surprising then that Upper and Middle Franconia were the regions with the highest concentration of community schools throughout the period under study.

Aside from these pre-existing commitments, the experience of community schooling during the Nazi period influenced postwar opinions on school affairs in a myriad of ways. Memories of the blackmail, intimidation, chicanery, and outright force used by the Nazis to transform all Bavarian elementary schools into community schools in 1936 and 1937 were still fresh in people’s minds after the war.¹⁴¹ Many, no doubt, felt that such schools had been established illegally and that the whole experience was an aberration. Judging by the fact that so many parents registered their children for confessional schools, voting with their feet so to speak, one could say that sentiments such as these were quite common and that the churches’ calls to return to the situation of 1933, when confessional schooling was the norm, found a receptive audience.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 193-94. See also, Helmut Witetschek (ed.), *Die kirchliche Lage in Bayern nach den Regierungspräsidentenberichten, 1933-1943*, Vol. II *Regierungsbezirk Ober- und Mittelfranken* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1967), 75. In this report from March 1936, a government official in Middle Franconia commented to his superiors in Munich that community schools were well supported in Nuremberg, Ansbach, Weißenburg, Lauf, Hersbruck, Zirndorf, and Gunzenhausen. See also, Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 180. Kershaw’s discussion of the school controversy in general is indicative of this. While his examination of Catholic resistance to the transformation of schools is very detailed and points to several excellent examples, one hears only vague comments about Protestant protest and the general phrase: “which we will consider more fully in the Catholic context during the next chapter.” One should be wary of lumping the two together.

¹⁴¹ Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 180-184, 209-219, 340-357.

However, as much as the churches, and perhaps many others, wanted to get back to 1933, the Nazi years couldn't simply be erased. They had left an indelible mark on the consciousness of ordinary Germans. While many deeply resented the means through which community schools had been established and remained resolutely opposed to them throughout the Nazi period, others gradually grew to support them, or, at the very least, were resigned to their existence. In particular, arguments that the transformation was largely one of nomenclature, as the teachers and clientele all remained the same, and that the move simply brought Bavaria in line with the rest of Germany began to find increased resonance. Many began to question why the churches were campaigning so feverishly for confessional schools when the state had given its guarantee that religious education would be left untouched in the community schools.¹⁴² Were these not then, they asked, *Christian* schools? Intimidation, coercion, and economic pressure certainly contributed to such beliefs and no doubt played a significant role in the decision of many parents to register their children for community schools, but they cannot account for everything. Some degree of popular affirmation was also needed.

Ironically, it is in the popular protest to the attempts of more radical Nazis to remove crucifixes from the schools in the early 1940's that this level of acceptance is best illuminated. Without consulting any higher authorities, Bavarian Education Minister Adolf Wagner decreed in April of 1941 that all religious symbols should be removed from community schools over the summer and replaced with "pictures suitable to the present time."¹⁴³ The "crucifix action" turned into a huge debacle as both Protestants and Catholics rallied to keep the crosses in the schools or return them if they had already been

¹⁴² Ibid., 218.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 341.

removed. Civil disobedience reached a greater extent during the crucifix affair than perhaps at any other time during the Nazi period. The decree was eventually rescinded, but the damage to the party's reputation in Bavaria had already been done. Here was proof that Nazi influence was not without its limits. One must be careful to keep such opposition in perspective. These were not conflicts *over* community schooling, rather they were ones *within* it. While the shape and religious character of community schools was sharply drawn into debate, the fundamental existence of community schools was not. By this point, that seems to have been taken for granted. Perhaps more interesting, people who in every other way considered themselves to be good National Socialists took part in the protests as they felt the action was brought about by a few hotheads who did not speak for the party as a whole. Their participation shows the limited framework of such opposition. Once a set of very narrow aims, here being the replacement of the crosses, had been reached, all protest stopped. Thus, such conflicts never brought about any wider calls for a return to confessional schooling.

One could summarize the effect of the Nazi years on attitudes towards schools by saying that they gave community schooling a sense of momentum. Before 1933, only a handful of such schools existed, and then only in large cities such as Nuremberg and Munich. This should not suggest that confessional schooling was uniformly agreed upon. Rather, it was simply an accepted part of Bavaria's school landscape. A tremendous amount of inertia had to be overcome for community schools to find common appeal. While deeply controversial, the transformation of all elementary schools into community schools during the Nazi period provided the necessary push and gave such schools a sense of tradition, even if it was one fundamentally linked with the Nazis. Neither the

collapse of 1945 nor the mighty efforts of the churches in the postwar era could erase the fact that there were now two legitimate types of schools from which parents could choose.

While not mentioned in any of the guides for confessional school drives, a noticeable omission on the part of the churches, the attitude of refugees towards confessional schooling must also be taken into account. Although they had been stripped of all their material possessions, the refugees arrived with a considerable amount of cultural baggage in tow. In particular, Silesian and Sudeten Germans, the two largest groups of refugees that were settled in Bavaria, came from areas that had a long tradition of community schooling.¹⁴⁴ Only fueling the suspicion of native clergy members, refugees were often among the first to petition local officials for the creation of a community school and openly supported community school registration drives. Community schools were established in many of the refugee camps that were established directly after the expulsion.¹⁴⁵ While many of these schools closed as the camps were phased out or simply didn't have any students anymore once all the young adults of childbearing age left in search of better economic prospects, this commitment to community schooling on the part of refugees remained. For example, in the predominantly refugee settlement of Neugablonz, parents voted overwhelmingly in 1955 for the creation of a community school.¹⁴⁶ Speaking volumes about the ambiguous feelings of many church leaders towards the refugees, the Protestant Established Church

¹⁴⁴ Adolf Kindermann, "Religiöse Wandlungen und Probleme im katholischen Bereich," in Eugen Lemberg and Friedrich Edding (eds.), *Die Vertriebenen in Westdeutschland*, vol. 3 (Kiel: Ferdinand Hirt, 1959), 148. Joel Dark, *Religion and Refugees in Postwar West Germany*, 189-193.

¹⁴⁵ LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Bad Reichenhall to LkR, May 3, 1946. See also, BZAR OA/NS 528: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Peter in Straubing to Bishop Buchberger, Jan. 3, 1947.

¹⁴⁶ LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Government of Schwabia to LkR, Sept. 10, 1955.

Council sent its letter of inquiry not to the vicar of the settlement, a refugee pastor from Silesia, but rather to the native Bavarian pastor for the nearby town of Kaufbeuren.¹⁴⁷ It asked the pastor to ensure that the vote had been handled fairly and correctly. Implying that the vicar had not done enough to halt the creation of the community school, the letter informed the pastor that he should explain the church's stance on the need for confessional schooling to the vicar once again. "Obviously," it concluded, "he is not yet acquainted enough with Bavarian school conditions."¹⁴⁸

No doubt after this meeting, the vicar wrote a letter to his superiors explaining the reasons for the creation of the community school. The vote had been carried out in full freedom. "But," he went on, "things here are particularly difficult because this is a purely refugee settlement. The push for the creation of a community school came from the wish of the parents to set up a school that would have the same communal characteristics as those in the old homeland. The parents have little understanding for Bavarian school relations."¹⁴⁹ The vicar's letter seems primarily aimed at exonerating himself, but it raises some excellent points. The some two million refugees that were settled in Bavaria came from quite different cultures and had their own ideas about how things should work. While certainly not universal, there was a strong measure of support for community schooling in refugee circles. This had far-reaching significance against the backdrop of parental choice because it left the churches facing an uphill battle to convince the refugees of the need for confessional schools. In situations where refugees were largely left to their own devices, such as in the camps and in the settlements that gradually replaced them, they went about establishing community schools. More

¹⁴⁷ LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Kaufbeuren, Sept. 23, 1955.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Neugablonz to LkR, Sept. 27, 1955.

problematic, the refugees were a ready source of support for community school drives in more mixed districts. Their vote could be a deciding factor in the creation of a community school.¹⁵⁰ One can summarize by saying that, in regards to the refugees, the focus on parental choice came back to haunt the churches as many were more than willing to put their child in a community school. Actions and attitudes such as these only contributed to the suspicion and negativity shown to refugees by native church officials and clergy. Here was, in their eyes, all the more proof that the refugees were poor Christians who were leading faithful Bavarians away from central aspects of the faith such as confessional schooling.

For their part, Bavarians were increasingly doing so on their own. Reasons for this include transportation problems, a fear of dwarf schools and a concomitant desire for larger schools with better access to resources, and, finally, a growing sense that decisions concerning schooling were a personal matter. In the cities, school transportation became a growing concern for many parents. Particularly in working class families, both parents had to work to make ends meet. This meant that their children had to get to school on their own. City streets, parents rightly argued, were over-congested and outright dangerous for unattended children. A child's school should thus be close to home. In areas where confessional schools had good coverage and it was easy to send children to them, many parents were more than willing to do so.¹⁵¹ Opinions began to change

¹⁵⁰ DAW Generalakten 647/2: Letter from BOW to all Cath. District Superintendents in the Diocese of Würzburg, Oct. 11, 1950. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256: Letter from Dr. Rückert of Ansbach (Regierungsschulrat) to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, June 23, 1947. LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. VI: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent of Bayreuth to LkR, July 16, 1950. LKAN LkR V 919e Bd. I: Report from the "Landesgeschäftsstelle für kirchliche Vertriebenenarbeit in der ELKB," Jan. 1, 1953 – Nov. 30, 1954.

¹⁵¹ An excellent example of this was the south side of Nuremberg. This was a predominantly Catholic, working class area. Several Catholic confessional schools existed in this area and between 50-75% of the children were consistently registered for them. The Catholic Church had a much less success in the old city

quickly if a community school was closer or if sending one's child to a confessional school meant that he/she would have to cross a particularly hazardous interchange. Despite all the activities and rhetoric of the churches to convince them differently, an increasing number of parents decided that convenience was much more important to them than confession.¹⁵² Thus, they registered their children for community schools. This was even more the case when their child's friends all attended the nearby community school.¹⁵³ This should not suggest that all parents made this choice automatically. Many told their local pastor or priest that they wanted to send their children to confessional schools, but it was simply too far or too dangerous. Could the church not provide some kind of transportation?¹⁵⁴ In most instances, the answer was no. Providing a school bus or paying for mini-cabs to take children to confessional schools was an expensive undertaking that the churches simply couldn't afford. Nor was money from the state for such an endeavor forthcoming. Half-hearted suggestions such as finding responsible mothers to walk groups of children to and from school everyday were raised, but never panned out in reality.¹⁵⁵ This lack of structural support, which was not entirely the churches' fault, lost confessional schools hundreds of students each year.

and on the western side of town where Catholic schools were less prevalent. See AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-3: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg to Cath. Prelate Franz Rathgeber in Bamberg, June 6, 1956.

¹⁵² Ibid. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Bayreuth to EOB, June 9, 1956. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-2: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Bonifaz in Nuremberg to EOB, July 2, 1959. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Forchheim, Mar. 22, 1949.

¹⁵³ "Ohne Lehrer wäre das Schulzimmer schöner..." SZ, June 14, 1950.

¹⁵⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-3: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent Karl Ulrich of Nuremberg to Cath. Prelate Franz Rathgeber in Bamberg, June 6, 1956. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Bayreuth to EOB, June 9, 1956. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-2: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Bonifaz in Nuremberg to EOB, July 2, 1959. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Forchheim, Mar. 22, 1949.

¹⁵⁵ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4416/1-2: Letter from EOB to Cath. Pastorate of St. Bonifaz in Nuremberg, July 9, 1959. Reply from Cath. Pastorate of St. Bonifaz in Nuremberg, Aug. 1, 1959.

Perhaps a bigger problem for the churches and confessional school supporters in general was that parents were increasingly reluctant to place their children in a school simply because it was of “their” confession. Other factors, most notably a school’s size and access to resources, began to play a more prominent role in many people’s decision making process. In general, there was a growing concern about so-called dwarf schools. These were small schools where students of all ages were lumped together in either one or two classes. As illustrated earlier through statistics marshaled by community school supporters, schools of this type were common across Bavaria. Urbanization, the arrival of the refugees, and population transfers for socio-economic reasons only contributed to their proliferation. These separate phenomena worked together to blur Bavaria’s traditional confessional boundaries. To maintain the confessional school system in Bavaria, new schools had to be created to adequately reflect these changes. However, having enough adherents of a given church in a particular area to warrant a confessional school didn’t always mean that it would be a big one. Drawing from a smaller pool of students, many confessional schools were in fact dwarf schools.

Both churches insisted that schools of this sort were fine if staffed by a skilled teacher. More generally, only confessional schools, no matter their size, could provide a “whole education.” Despite these arguments and even in light of all the efforts of the churches to convince people of the need for confessional schools, pastors and priests increasingly noted that many parents felt that their child’s education would suffer as a result of attending such a school.¹⁵⁶ This was particularly the case among parents in the

¹⁵⁶ LKAN KrD München 213: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Sonthofen to Prot. District Superintendent of Kempten, May 13, 1947. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Regional Superintendents, July 17, 1950. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Treuchtlingen to LkR, Oct. 12, 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Dr. Josef Grüb

growing suburbs of large cities such as Nuremberg and Munich and in the more industrialized areas of Upper and Middle Franconia. Overworked teachers with no access to outside resources, it was argued, simply couldn't provide children with the basic skills needed to succeed in the modern world. Part and parcel of such concerns was an increased desire for larger schools with better resources.¹⁵⁷ Sentiments like these played directly into the hands of community school supporters. With seemingly no end in sight to the creation of ever more one-room confessional schools, they argued that the whole confessional school system should be junked in favor of something more rational, more modern. As the 1950's progressed, an increasingly large number of parents began to agree. Certainly not all confessional schools were dwarf schools. Some, in fact, were quite large and well staffed. This no doubt contributed to the continued support they found among many parents. But this focus on the quality of education, rather than its confessional characteristics, pulled out a key pillar on which the whole system of confessional schooling was based.

Parents were not the only ones to make such arguments. Even some of the churches' erstwhile political allies in the CSU began to rethink their support for confessional schools. While the CSU had originally been a party devoted to defending Bavaria's Christian heritage, of which confessional schooling was a key element, in the early 1950s it began to change into a party that endorsed industry and consumer

of Nuremberg to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, Mar. 11, 1951. DAW Generalakten 801: Letter from BOW to Cath. District Superintendent of Kitzingen, May 4, 1956. LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Treuchtlingen, July 19, 1959. See also the views expressed in reply to an article about dismal conditions in many small confessional schools in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. "Die 'Pest in der Dorfschule'," *SZ*, June 6, 1950. "Briefe an die SZ: Die Pest in der Dorfschule," *SZ*, June 17, 1950. "Schuljugend in Gefahr," *SZ*, June 17, 1950.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Mögeldorf to Prot. District Superintendent of Nuremberg, Feb. 3, 1948. LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Rehau to LkR, 1931.

capitalism. As the decade progressed, key leaders such as Hanns Seidel and Franz Josef Strauß came more and more to the conclusion that Bavaria's educational system was holding back their efforts to put Bavaria at the forefront of industry. Quite simply, it was not producing the kinds of people who could go on to work in the most advanced sectors of the economy. Tiny confessional schools that lacked adequate teachers and resources were seen as one of the main reasons for this. Thus, these leaders began to cut their ties to the churches in matters of education and pressed for school consolidation. In the 1960s, this would change into a full-out campaign to end confessional schooling. One should remember that it was Strauß of the CSU, not leaders of the nominally anti-church SPD or the more liberal FDP, who eventually pressured Cardinal Döpfner into accepting community schools. This political sea-change pulled the ground out from underneath the churches and made it all the more difficult for them to maintain support for confessional schools.¹⁵⁸

Perhaps ultimately more explanatory in the end, if somewhat difficult to document, a growing ethos of individualism led to a sense of indifference to the churches' message concerning confessional schools. Church officials and ordinary pastors and priests increasingly pointed out that more and more lay people regarded the decision about what type of school their children would attend as a personal matter. It was one that didn't involve the churches. Talking about schools in an advance report for the 1953 German Bishop's Conference in Fulda, Prelate Böhler of Bonn, a leading Catholic authority on school issues, summed this sentiment up best with the following:

¹⁵⁸ Milosch, *Modernizing Bavaria*, 135-36. For a much broader examination of this political change, see Maria Mitchell, "Antimaterialism in Early German Christian Democracy," 164-198.

“Catholic parents throughout the Federal Republic are not as clear and strong in representing their principles as they once were.”¹⁵⁹

Attitudes of this nature fundamentally undercut all of the churches’ talk about parental duty. If such decisions were regarded as a personal matter, then one need not submit or even feel beholden to the churches’ moral authority. One should not overlay this sentiment. Too many children were still registered in confessional schools during this period for it to be labeled as universally accepted. Nevertheless, it was a very real phenomenon. While a large percentage of Bavarians remained dedicated, or at least sympathetic, to confessional schooling, the 1950’s saw more and more people beginning to freely ignore the churches and move away from them. This trend was only accelerated, not created, in the 1960’s. This was a particularly tough blow for the churches in light of their tremendous efforts to reestablish confessional schooling after the war. It called into question the structural stability of not only one of the main pillars on which they hoped to build a re-Christianized Germany, but also of many of the fundamental values that undergirded church authority.

On the whole, the Catholic Church was much more successful in convincing its adherents of the need for confessional schooling. Some simple statistics bear this out. Even as late as 1957, 93.2% of all Catholic children in Bavaria attended confessional schools. In contrast, only 62.1% of Protestant children did.¹⁶⁰ In the deeply Catholic south, the support for confessional schooling among Catholics was overwhelming. In the

¹⁵⁹ BZAR Generalia 710.10: Report written by Prelate Böhler of Bonn concerning confessional schools written for the 1953 German Bishop’s Conference in Fulda, Aug. 12, 1953. Similar comments can be found in AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. School Superintendent for Nuremberg, Karl Ulrich, to EOB, June 6, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to LkR, June 8, 1951. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 42: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to Bishop Meiser, Feb. 1955. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 241: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Treuchtlingen to LkR, Oct. 12, 1951.

¹⁶⁰ StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 58.

government districts of Upper Bavaria, Lower Bavaria, and the Upper Palatinate (roughly covered by the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising and the Dioceses of Passau and Regensburg), 96.9%, 100%, and 99.8% of Catholic children attended confessional schools respectively.¹⁶¹ Two factors help explain this level of dedication. First, the unified world view of the Catholic Church and its unswerving dedication to confessional schooling were very persuasive. Canon Law spelled out the responsibilities of Catholic parents in regards to their children's education in the clearest of terms. Church representatives, from local priests all the way up to the pope, all spoke in unison about confessional schooling being an "irreplaceable good."¹⁶² The church also committed considerable time and resources to ensure that all Catholic children in the Federal Republic had access to a Catholic confessional school, no matter where they lived. In the majority Catholic states of Bavaria, Rhineland-Palatinate, and North Rhine-Westphalia, confessional schooling became the norm. In states where Catholics were in the minority, generous financial support from the state for private Catholic schools was secured.¹⁶³ Consistency of this sort clearly demonstrated the sincerity of the church's message concerning confessional schools and gave it a great deal of legitimacy in the eyes of Catholic laypeople.

Second, the social breakdown of the population of Bavaria lent itself to such a development. Community schools found their greatest support in urban, industrialized areas. Bavarian Catholics, however, mostly lived in rural areas. While it began to

¹⁶¹ Ibid.

¹⁶² This is the phrase Pope Pius XII used to describe confessional schools. See LKAN KrD Nürnberg 238: Copy of Catholic flyer entitled "Schulanmeldung in Nürnberg," June 1949. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/12: Flyer entitled "Liebe Eltern!," May 1955. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Report entitled "Beispiel für die Vorbereitung katholischer Laien auf Hausbesuche in Angelegenheit der Schuleinschreibung," no date.

¹⁶³ Spotts, *The Churches and Politics in Germany*, 212-13.

industrialize rapidly during this period, the Catholic south remained heavily agricultural. The region of Lower Franconia in Northern Bavaria, also a predominantly Catholic area, had large industrial centers such as Schweinfurt and Würzburg, but it too remained tied to the land. Catholic confessional schools were deeply interwoven in the fabric of daily life in the villages that dotted these regions and they found a tremendous degree of support.

One should definitely not suggest that Catholics were somehow less enlightened or more docile than Protestants. The Catholic Church was equally hard pressed on occasions to convince its adherents of the need for confessional schooling. Several factors illustrate this. There was no shortage of complaints from Catholic parents that their church was fostering one room school houses that hindered the development of their children. As discussed earlier, such concerns were usually voiced by Catholics living in large cities such as Nuremberg and Munich or those in more industrialized areas such as Upper and Middle Franconia. A look at school registration statistics shows that it was these same people who were putting their children in community schools. As opposed to 91.2% in small to medium sized towns and 96% in rural areas, only 78.8% of Catholic children living in large cities were registered for confessional schools in 1957. The governmental regions of Upper and Middle Franconia saw the lowest number of Catholic children in confessional schools: 82% and 49.1% respectively.¹⁶⁴ This trend only increased as urbanization and industrialization began to spread throughout the state.

Perhaps even more noticeable was the breakdown of groups like the Catholic Parents' Association. While they could rally parents against any obvious violations of parent's rights, they had a difficult time generating support during periods of perceived normalization. More often than not, such groups only existed on paper. This does not

¹⁶⁴ StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 58.

mean that all those who grew disinterested in or left groups such as the Catholic Parents' Association subsequently registered their children for community schools. But the fact that this disintegration occurred statewide, and across socio-economic boundaries, shows how Catholic laypeople of all stripes, not just those living in the cities, were beginning to tune out the church's message concerning confessional schools.

Protestants were much more likely to put their children in community schools. The social breakdown of the population of Bavaria worked against the Protestant Church. The heartland of Bavarian Protestantism straddles Franconia, and as such, most Protestants were Franconian. Franconia was much more urban and industrialized than southern Bavaria. The reasons for this are somewhat difficult to determine. Max Weber's thesis that Protestantism creates an ideological context and a set of moral values that encourage the development of capitalism, which in turn led to the growth of industry, certainly has some degree of merit.¹⁶⁵ Other factors should also be considered. Since well before the Reformation, Nuremberg and the surrounding regions were famous for the quality of metalwork they produced. It does not seem to be too far of a leap to think that the industrialization that took place in the nineteenth century may have built upon pre-existing traditions in core sectors. Whatever its origins, Franconia had been and remained more modernized than the rest of Bavaria. As such, Franconians were more likely to work in "modern occupations" – industry, professions, services, and civil service. Traditionally, these were the groups that were most impacted by secularizing trends and, hence, most supported community schooling. This would seem to account for the large number of Protestant (Franconian) parents who chose such schools for their

¹⁶⁵ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Trans. Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

children. The fact that Catholics in Franconia were more likely to choose confessional schooling than their co-religionists in the primarily rural north and south gives credence to this.

The argument that urbanization and industrialization inevitably lead to a diminishing sense of religious identity and demands for better education, an idea fundamentally grounded in modernization theory, should only be pushed so far. This is illustrated by the fact that in 1957, only 70% of Protestant children living in rural areas were registered for confessional schools.¹⁶⁶ If modernization theory is to be seen as fully explanatory, then this number should have been closer to its Catholic equivalent. This leads one to believe that a more fundamental issue relating to the nature of Protestantism itself might be involved. While Protestant officials from across West Germany felt that education needed to be influenced by Christianity, they lacked a clear theological justification for confessional schools. This led to inconsistent policies as the various established churches all showed differing opinions on the need for confessional schooling. In most cases, for example the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Hannover and the Protestant Church of Hesse and Nassau, they came down on the side of community schools that included religious education in the required curriculum. The fact that the Bavarian established church was one of the few that aggressively pursued confessional schools was not lost on either community school supporters or average Protestants. Rebukes such as “Are Hannoverian and Hessian pastors and lay people less Christian and less Protestant than their Bavarian brothers and sisters” were commonly hurled at

¹⁶⁶ StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 58.

Protestant church officials and ordinary pastors in Bavaria.¹⁶⁷ To their credit, they replied in a common voice. The militancy and overwhelming influence of the Catholic Church in Bavaria demanded Protestant confessional schools as they were the only way to ensure that Protestant children did not succumb to “a long, but unstoppable Catholicization.”¹⁶⁸ However, in the harsh light of comparison, inconsistencies of this nature made the Bavarian established church’s position seem untenable to many Bavarian Protestant parents.

One should be wary, however, of oversimplified dichotomies that stress church dictates and either lay acceptance or rejection. In several ways, the churches themselves contributed to this changing perception of the need for confessional schooling. While the Catholic Church remained fundamentally opposed to community schooling throughout the period under study, the Protestant Church came to present something of a mixed message on the topic. At the same time that the merits of confessional schooling were being extolled through sermons, lectures, group work, and flyers, Protestant officials were quietly accepting the development of community schools.

In the late 1950’s, several school districts were rezoned and reorganized to reflect changes in the population. This was seen particularly in the growing suburbs that developed around larger cities like Augsburg and Munich. In cases where there had previously been a small, and perhaps unviable, Protestant confessional school in the vicinity of a large Catholic confessional school, the Protestant hierarchy welcomed the

¹⁶⁷ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: Letter from Mayor Georg Hahn of Kulmbach to Bishop Meiser, April 12, 1949. Such questions were also posed in community school propaganda. See, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 63: Copy of SPD “Mitteilungsblatt für Franken und Nürnberg,” Mar. 15, 1951.

¹⁶⁸ LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: Letter from Bishop Meiser to Mayor Georg Hahn of Kulmbach, May 9, 1949. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 63: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to all Prot. pastorates in the region of Nuremberg, May 2, 1951. LKAN NL Hans Meiser 219: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, April 26, 1951. In the same file, see letter from Bishop Meiser to Waldemar von Knöringen in Munich (Head of Bavarian SPD), April 26, 1951.

creation of a new community school.¹⁶⁹ They did so in recognition of the fact that many Protestant parents were enrolling their children in the larger Catholic school with its better resources. Church officials reasoned that the religious education of the Protestant children could be better secured if they were in a community school than if they were guest students in a Catholic school. To its credit, the Established Church Council did inquire into whether or not Protestant religious education in the community school could be ensured. Nor did it fundamentally give up on the prospects of continued Protestant confessional schooling in such areas.¹⁷⁰ However, this tacit acceptance of community schools at the ground level only served to legitimize such schools in the eyes of many Protestants and ensured that more would come into existence.

Also, despite all their focus on the need for confessional schooling and religious education in schools, the churches oftentimes couldn't deliver on their promises. While the reports from visitations to confessional schools clearly show a noticeable improvement in religious education over the course of the 1950's, no small accomplishment given the fact that the Nazis had completely removed it from the curriculum, problems still existed. In much of Bavaria, the local pastor or priest had to teach the religious education classes in all the elementary schools of his parish. However, the shortage of clergy and the changes brought on by the arrival of the refugees and increased urbanization often meant that there were more and more classes to be taught.

¹⁶⁹ LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from LkR to Augsburg City School Office, Nov. 13, 1957. In the same file, see also Letter from LkR to Munich City School Office, Aug. 22, 1958.

¹⁷⁰ LKAN LkR VI 1100d Bd. II: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Augsburg to LkR, Nov. 4, 1957. In same file, see also Letter from Prot. Pastorate München-Milbertshofen to LkR, July 21, 1958.

An already tightly stretched clergy was thus pushed even further. Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI, commented that as a young curate serving outside of Munich he had to teach 16 hours of religious education a week to classes ranging from the 2nd to the 8th grades. This was on top of his already heavy load of performing three masses every Sunday, running youth work, and officiating at most marriages and funerals in the parish.¹⁷¹ Schedules such as these meant that pastors and priests had to rush from one school to the next and often missed classes all together.¹⁷² In diaspora regions, the situation was even worse. While the churches felt that religious education for the refugees was absolutely essential, they simply didn't have the infrastructure in place to provide it. One Catholic curate working in a diaspora region of the Diocese of Würzburg reported that in order to provide religious education in the five village schools he was assigned to he had to make a 45 km trip by bicycle three times a week over very hilly terrain. The curate confessed that this demanding regimen was beginning to damage his health and that he doubted it could be kept up for long.¹⁷³ One Protestant pastor in his 50's who had been given a similar task wrote in saying that he couldn't keep up such a schedule because of his health and that Protestant children in several villages simply weren't getting Protestant religious education.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Ratzinger, *Salt of the Earth*, 63-4.

¹⁷² Reports of 18-22 hours of religious education a week were not uncommon. See DAW Generalakten 755: Minutes from third preparatory meeting of the 7th committee for the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, Aug. 22, 1954. BZAR OA 1499: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Marktleuthen to BOR, Dec. 1, 1945. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 257: Copy of letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Nuremberg to LkR, Mar. 8, 1955.

¹⁷³ DAW Generalakten 647/1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Wargolshaufen über Mellrichstadt to BOW, July 17, 1946.

¹⁷⁴ LKAN LkR XI 1438c Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Burghausen to LkR, Dec. 12, 1945. In same file, see also Letter from Prot. Pastorate Freising to LkR, Dec. 28, 1945. Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Ingolstadt to LkR, Jan. 7, 1946. See also, LKAN KrD München 6: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Daumiller of Munich to LkR, Aug. 6, 1951.

Allowing regular classroom teachers to instruct religious education classes or hiring local people to serve as catechists were presented as possible solutions to this untenable situation. For a variety of reasons, these were both problematic. First, many teachers didn't want to lead religious education classes for ideological or professional reasons. Both churches were also concerned, not always unjustly, that these same teachers might have been Nazi sympathizers in the past. Such individuals, it was felt, could not be trusted to present religious education in the manner the churches intended.¹⁷⁵ Training pious local people to teach religious education classes was seen in a much more favorable light, but it was expensive. While catechists were increasingly employed, the cash strapped churches simply couldn't afford to implement such a strategy on a wide scale and efforts to secure additional funding from the state were all turned down.¹⁷⁶

Demographic changes and improving economic conditions in the 1950's helped alleviate some of these problems. The dramatic decrease in the number of children born during the hard years between 1941 and 1948 began to make itself felt in the early 50's as there were simply less children in the school system. Also, many young refugees, particularly those with children, who had been living in diaspora regions across Bavaria moved to areas like the Ruhr valley in the early 1950's in search of better economic

¹⁷⁵ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 245. Letter from L. Rückert of Nuremberg to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder, June 8, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256. Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, Oct. 2, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 257. Letter from Prof. Kurt Frör to all Prot. District Superintendents, Dec. 1, 1949. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3. Letter from Michael Spachholz (Instructor at the teacher training academy in Bamberg) to all Cath. School Superintendents in the Archdiocese of Bamberg, July 27, 1947. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/9. Copy of letter from Dr. Heinrich Kuen of Erlangen to State Minister of Education and Culture Dr. Alois Hundhammer, Jan. 31, 1949. DAW Generalakten 747. Tape script from the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, 32-47.

¹⁷⁶ BZAR Generalia 710.20: Copy of letter from BOP to Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, May 7, 1947. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4414/7: Copy of letter from BOP to Bavarian State Ministry for Education and Culture, Sept. 25, 1948. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4414/7: Letter from EOB to Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture, May 19, 1949.

prospects. Many hastily erected confessional schools were either closed or consolidated with a neighboring school as there simply weren't enough students left to justify their existence. Perhaps more importantly, the economic turnaround of the 1950's meant that an increasing number of clergy members were able to buy a motorcycle or an automobile. This gave them a great deal more mobility and made their commutes much less strenuous.

Such changes did not make the problems associated with providing religious education simply go away. In fact, internal debate on the topic only increased as the 1950's progressed. Many pastors and priests continued to complain about how the long hours of religious education were hindering their ability to provide pastoral care. Some went so far as to call it "school slavery."¹⁷⁷ This eventually led to calls for school consolidation. Small one room schools spread across the parish, many argued, were difficult to reach, particularly for those without a car. Larger, centralized schools, naturally still of the confessionalized sort, would eliminate this problem.¹⁷⁸ Others disagreed. Centralization, they claimed, killed any chance of reaching children in rural areas as it took them out of the village.¹⁷⁹ Clergy members simply needed to work harder and get past the notion that religious education was only a secondary component of their job. Of a similar nature were discussions surrounding limitations on the number of hours of religious education a clergyman provided per week. Many Catholic priests pointed out that Cardinal Frings of the Archdiocese of Cologne had decreed that priests should

¹⁷⁷ DAW Generalakten 755: Minutes from the third preparatory meeting of the 7th committee for the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, Aug. 24, 1954.

¹⁷⁸ For example, see BZAR Generalia 710.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Wiesenfelden to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 1, 1959.

¹⁷⁹ For example, see BZAR Generalia 710.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Walkertshofen to BOR, Jan. 12, 1960.

teach a maximum of seven hours of religious education a week and curates no more than 14.¹⁸⁰ Such proposals were raised in a number of different Bavarian dioceses but were usually dismissed due to some of the arguments mentioned above or because there simply weren't any other options. Only the diocese of Würzburg approached this problem in any kind of systematic way. The "Guidelines for the Simplification of Pastoral Care" released by Bishop Döpfner in 1956 decreed that no one should be assigned to instruct more than 18 hours of religious education per week. It was strongly recommended that priests should only perform six hours a week and curates no more than 12. In extreme cases, district school superintendents could petition diocesan authorities to assign more.¹⁸¹

Even guidelines such as this could do little to address the fundamental problem facing the churches in regard to providing religious education in the schools. They simply didn't have enough people to carry out their plans of giving every child a thorough religious education. Overburdened pastors and priests had to rush from one class room to the next and were oftentimes either late or simply didn't make it at all. This had several negative consequences. First, they often had to rely on outdated materials and methods as they had little time to think of fresh and innovative ways to teach a new generation, who had grown up amidst very different circumstances, about the mysteries of the faith.¹⁸² Second, regular teachers and parents showed little understanding for pastors and priests who were habitually late or didn't show up, no

¹⁸⁰ DAW Generalakten 376: Letter from the Cath. clergy of the District of Miltenburg to BOW, Feb. 1951.

¹⁸¹ "Richtlinien zur Vereinfachung der Seelsorge," *Würzburger Diözesanblatt*, Seelsorgebeilage Nr. 3 (May 1, 1956): 65.

¹⁸² Recognizing this problem, Cath. Cathedral Canon Deubzer of Regensburg wrote in his report for the 1958 diocesan synod there that priests, and in particular older priests, should work extensively with catechists and pious laypeople to get new ideas on how to improve their lessons. Telling bible stories or having the children sing songs was simply not enough any more. BZAR OA 1145: "Religionsunterricht."

matter how legitimate the reasons might have been, and it often became a source of discord in the parish.¹⁸³

Other issues followed pastors and priests into the classroom as well. While many Catholic priests and curates fully enjoyed teaching young children, others dreaded the experience. Single men by the nature of their profession, several Catholic priests openly admitted at diocesan synods that they felt uncomfortable around the children. In particular, they disliked religious education classes for first and second year students because they didn't know how to react to the children's vivaciousness.¹⁸⁴ Such disquiet no doubt expressed itself in the priest's lessons. Noticeably, one does not find such complaints from Protestant ministers, who could get married and have children.

More disconcerting are the occasional accusations of clerical sexual misconduct. Whether true or not, such instances severely undermined parent confidence in clergy activity in the schools and often drew the unwanted attention of anti-church elements. For example, one young curate serving in the Diocese of Regensburg was accused of groping a girl after class. The SPD newspaper in Regensburg used the case to denounce the church and religious education in general. The local priest who sponsored the curate was then subjected to intense criticism from laypeople who feared for the safety of their children. In a disturbing parallel to more recent clergy abuse scandals, diocesan authorities dismissed the girl's claims out of hand and quietly moved the curate to a different parish to calm the situation.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ BZAR Generalia 710.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Wiesenfelden to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 1, 1959.

¹⁸⁴ DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, 32-47. See also, BZAR OA 1145: "Religionsunterricht," written by Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Deubzer for the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, April 22-23, 1958.

¹⁸⁵ BZAR OA 2147: Letter from Cath. District Superintendent of Straubing to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 23, 1955.

There was also the problem of teachers. Training academies for elementary school teachers in Bavaria were state sponsored and run, but were usually affiliated with one confession or the other. Low pay and poor housing led to a chronic shortage of instructors for confessional schools throughout this period. However, both churches wanted teachers in their schools to have been trained in an academy that was tied to their confession. This was very much in line with the idea of the confessional school providing children with a “whole education.” Regular teachers, they argued, had to instruct their courses in a way that would supplement the material learned in religious education classes. Without this critical support, the children would quickly forget what the pastor, priest, or catechist had taught them. Catholic or Protestant teachers could not be expected to do this sufficiently if they had been trained in an academy affiliated with a confession other than their own. In a lecture for Catholic parents in Munich entitled “Students and teachers from the same wood,” one high state official summed up this sentiment saying: “Teacher training must have the same character as the school in which the teacher will work...”¹⁸⁶

This stance raised something of a problem. There were many individuals who wanted to become confessional school teachers who simply couldn't attend the training academy of their confession. For some, this was the result of personal concerns. Others faced a more systematic problem. Large numbers of refugees had been settled in areas where the population was almost uniformly of the other confession. This meant that academies of their confession were usually far away. Desperately poor, many were eager

¹⁸⁶ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/3: “Schüler und Lehrer aus einem Holz,” given by Oberstlandesgerichtsrat Dr. J. Grüb given at the state meeting of the Catholic Parents Association in Munich, Feb. 17, 1954. For similar comments from Protestants, see LKAN KrD Nürnberg 240: Notice from LkR, Jan. 16, 1954.

to become teachers for the economic security and social status it brought. But most simply couldn't afford to live in a far off town while they studied, even if their tuition was paid for by the government. Naturally, some began to ask if they could attend the teacher training schools of the other confession that were more readily available in the area. They could then receive the religious component of their training from a local pastor or priest.¹⁸⁷

Church responses to such queries say a great deal about both their hopes and concerns for teacher training. Protestant officials were dead set against the idea. Catholic influence at such schools was simply too great and local pastors didn't have enough time to ensure that the candidates were well grounded in Protestant education practices. Such teachers could not be counted on to provide a clear Protestant message to their students. Protestant confessional schools were dissuaded from hiring them. There were discussions of providing stipends for prospective teachers in these circumstances so that they could live near a Protestant affiliated academy, but it appears that nothing became of them.¹⁸⁸

Opinions in the Catholic Church varied. Officials of the Archdiocese of Bamberg, the main place where this became an issue, were originally more open to the idea. As long as the religious component of the teacher's education could be secured, usually through classes with the local priest, then Catholics could attend Protestant teacher training academies and still receive the certification needed to teach in Catholic

¹⁸⁷ Several requests can be found in AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/13. For example, see Letter from Anna-Maria Reinlein of Coburg to EOB, Aug. 1952; Letter from Elisabeth Bauer of Bayreuth to EOB, Oct. 10, 1952. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 240: Letter from Friedrich Wolf to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, Feb. 18, 1953.

¹⁸⁸ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 240: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, Mar. 27, 1953.

confessional schools.¹⁸⁹ Church leaders in Bamberg no doubt saw this as an opportunity to increase their presence in heavily Protestant areas of the archdiocese and better serve Catholics living in the diaspora.

Catholic officials in Munich did not share the same sentiment. In 1956, the Catholic School Superintendent for Bavaria, Dr. Fackler, argued that: “For confessional teacher training, a grasp of not only religious education methods, but of how faith and morals affect all subjects is very important.”¹⁹⁰ Therefore, only an education grounded on Catholic principals could be considered satisfactory for teachers seeking employment in Catholic confessional schools. Catholics could still attend Protestant training academies, but they would not be allowed to teach in Catholic schools. Under this kind of pressure, the Archdiocese of Bamberg quickly got in line. A letter to this effect was sent to the Ministry of Education and Culture the following day.¹⁹¹ Catholics studying at Protestant teacher training academies began to transfer or drop out when they were informed that their studies would not lead to them being certified to teach in Catholic confessional schools. Dr. Meinzolt, the State Secretary of Education and Culture, sent letters to archdiocesan authorities in both Bamberg and Munich in which he accused them of being irresponsibly obstinate at a time when the state was in desperate need of

¹⁸⁹ Such permission was granted on a case by case basis and only after the local priest agreed to provide such classes. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/13: Letter from teacher training academy in Coburg to EOB, Aug. 27, 1952. In same file, see Letter from EOB to teacher training academy in Coburg, Sept. 4, 1952; Letter from EOB to teacher training academy in Bayreuth, Oct. 13, 1952.

¹⁹⁰ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/12: Report from Dr. Fackler of Munich sent to EOB, Oct. 27, 1956. In same file, see a similar note from Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Fischer of Munich to Cath. Vicar General Dr. Lenhardt of Bamberg, Nov. 8, 1956.

¹⁹¹ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/12: Letter from EOB to Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture, Oct. 28, 1956.

teachers.¹⁹² This only served to stiffen the resolve of church officials and no compromise was reached during the remainder of the 1950's. The Catholic Church was much better about providing subsidies for candidates who needed to relocate to complete their studies, but even this was still not enough for most.

Two main reasons can be given for such responses. First, the churches feared using refugee teachers on any kind of widespread scale. Echoing common prejudices, church officials and ordinary clergy members of both confessions felt that the refugees as a whole were confessionally lax and that they were undermining traditional Bavarian culture.¹⁹³ More specifically, natives argued that the confusion and lack of documentation that resulted from the rapid expulsion meant there was no way to examine a prospective refugee teacher's past. Thus, individuals with Nazi or communist leanings might inadvertently be hired to teach in confessional schools.¹⁹⁴ As teachers had such a tremendous amount of influence in the community, the convergence of these factors could be disastrous. Second, there was the very genuine belief that teachers needed to have a secure grounding in the religious principles of their confession if they were to pass on the faith to the next generation. This could not be ensured if teachers attended training academies affiliated with the opposing confession. While these two arguments were

¹⁹² AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/12: Letter from State Secretary Dr. Meinzolt to EOB, Nov. 2, 1956. In same file, see Letter from State Secretary Dr. Meinzolt to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Hubert Fischer of Munich, Nov. 7, 1956.

¹⁹³ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256: Letter from government school inspector (*Regierungsschulrat*) Dr. Rückert of Ansbach to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, June 23, 1947. In the same file, see letter from LkR to Prot. District Superintendent of Regensburg, May 31, 1948. See also, AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/2: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Hartenstein to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt in Bamberg, Jan. 13, 1948. BZAR Generalia 710.50: Letter from BOR to government school inspector Dr. Stadler of Regensburg, Sept. 27, 1945.

¹⁹⁴ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4413/2: Letter from city school office (*Stadtschulamt*) of Bamberg to EOB, June 26, 1948. Reply of EOB, July 7, 1948. See also, LKAN KrD Nürnberg 245: Letter from L. Rückert of Nuremberg to Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg, June 8, 1947. Reply of Schieder, June 15, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 256: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Weisendorf über Erlangen to Prot. District Superintendent of Münchaurach, June 5, 1948.

based on very real concerns or, at the very least, commonly accepted stereotypes, they lost the churches many potential teachers and compromised their hopes for improved confessional schooling.

It was thus the complex interplay of five factors against the backdrop of parental choice that eventually undermined the churches' efforts to ensure confessional schooling for all children. First, many people had pre-existing ideological commitments to community schooling. These were often deeply ingrained and the churches could do little reverse them. Second, the experience of community schooling during the Nazi period bred familiarity. The forced creation of community schools by the Nazis may have been deeply confrontational, but it generated a sense of momentum. Parents became increasingly receptive to the idea of community schools and this carried over into the postwar era. Despite all the churches' talk of returning to the standards of 1933, the twelve years of Nazi rule had fundamentally changed German society and there simply was no going back. Third, parents and politicians increasingly demanded a broader range of educational choices and improved resources for children. The quality of education, rather than its confessional character, became the overriding concern. Fourth, more and more people came to consider the decision over what type of school their children would attend as a personal matter. It didn't involve the churches. This attitude undercut the churches' talk about parental duty. Finally, internal discord, contradictory policies, and unfulfilled promises on the part of the churches themselves created something of a self-defeating dynamic.

The fact that at least 90% of Bavarian children attended confessional schools in each of the years under study should caution us against making any kind general

statements about the “failure” of the churches to enact one of their key pillars for postwar Christian renewal. An overwhelming percentage of parents freely chose to heed the call of the churches and registered their children for confessional schools. This shows the tremendous authority that the churches still retained. However, in the growing number of those who did not, one can clearly see the limitations of that influence.

CHAPTER 4

Marriage and Marital Status

In the wake of Nazi alterations to marriage laws and six years of total war that had left millions of soldiers and civilians dead, it should not be surprising that marriage and marital status were particularly sensitive issues for the churches in the postwar era. Many observers from both inside and outside the churches felt that the institution of marriage itself faced an existential crisis. A simple look at the disproportion between the number of men and women living in West Germany and the massive number of war widows and broken families only encouraged this view. Many asked how a democratic state could ever be built when marriage, a fundamental building block of society, was so endangered. As evidenced by the sermons of church leaders and ordinary clergy members that were discussed in Chapter 1, reestablishing what was referred to as God's ordained order for marital life was a central component of both churches' efforts at postwar Christian renewal. Without strong marriages, they argued, there could be no strong families. Without these, Germany had no future.

The churches both stressed a similar message. Rather than listen to their hormones or mass media, couples needed to seriously consider the sacrifices and responsibilities that marriage entailed. They needed to accept that marriage was fundamentally indissoluble. Also, they should understand how religious beliefs played an intimate role in married life. Therefore, couples whose marriage was not sealed in the church or who were confessionally dissimilar would inevitably suffer from the pain these rifts produced. To root out the forces of materialism that had led to Germany's descent into Nazi barbarism and its terrible consequences, strong marriages that were grounded

on the rock of Christian faith were needed. Only these could lay the foundation for a truly peaceful and prosperous society.

Rhetoric such as this raises the question of how the churches went about putting these ideas into action. There is an increasingly large and fruitful body of historical work on marriage and marital status in postwar West Germany. Robert Moeller's *Protecting Motherhood* and Elizabeth Heineman's *What Difference Does a Husband Make?* immediately come to mind.¹ Moeller focuses on public policy debates over gender equality, protective legislation for woman, and family-law reform. While looking at a host of different groups, he spends a great deal of time talking about how church leaders and church affiliated organizations sought to influence the process of redefining how marriage and family *should* be. This included efforts to repeal eased Nazi divorce laws and, at least for the Catholic Church, a renewed push to put religious and civil marriages on equal footing. Heineman examines the shifting boundaries of marital status during the Nazi and postwar periods through her study of women "standing alone." The war created a huge surplus of women in both Germanies and there was a general concern that they would take jobs away from men or succumb to the temptation of prostitution or unrestrained consumerism. Heineman sheds a tremendous amount of light on the efforts of conservative politicians, the churches, and church affiliated organizations in West Germany to get women to stop working and take up their so-called natural place in the home.

Both of these books are well placed. The churches and church affiliated organizations such as the Family League for German Catholics (*Familienbund für*

¹ Robert Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1993). Elizabeth Heineman, *What Difference Does a Husband Make? Women and Marital Status in Nazi and Postwar Germany* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999).

deutsche Katholiken) and the Inner Mission (*Innere Mission*) did work extensively at the national and state level to influence the process of revising marriage and family laws. However, this focus on high politics closes off other fruitful avenues of examination. One quickly notices that the churches failed in most of their attempts to bring legal codes in line with their views concerning marriage. But churches are much more than just special interest groups. Despite their lack of success in changing policy, the churches had to continue on with their primary mission of administering the sacraments and providing pastoral care for their adherents. The debates taking place in Bonn and Munich had far reaching significance over definitions of marriage and marital status, but they were often a world away from the everyday lived reality of church life and religious belief. From the point of contact between ordinary Germans and church representatives, there was a much greater focus on themes such as the timing of marriage, the selection of partners, whether to have a purely civil service or a religious one, wedding celebrations, uncle-marriages, divorce and second marriages, and, most importantly, mixed confessional marriages.

Most representative of this difference are the files in the church archives themselves. Those concerning legal and political struggles to reform marriage laws are quite thin and largely filled with somewhat arid reports and policy statements that were circulated to only a limited number of people. However, files on topics such as remarriage or mixed marriage are rich and detailed. Here one sees internal church debates and conflict with the laity that efforts to reestablish “God’s ordained order for marriage” often produced. One also sees this in the focus of local church leaders. The sermons of bishops and regular clergymen alike say little about legal battles or women

standing alone. On the other hand, they brim with references to the danger of marriages carried out for the wrong reasons, purely civil marriages, or mixed confessional marriages. This last theme even inspired a special pastoral care letter from the German Bishop's Conference in 1958, the top authority for all German Catholics.

Following these sources, this chapter will focus less on the high politics of marriage and more on how the churches sought to implement their ideas about marriage and family life at the ground level against the complicated backdrop of a society wracked by years of Nazi repression and total war. This will be done through an examination of five aspects of marriage and marital status that were particularly relevant in the postwar era: marriage preparation, purely civil marriage and “renting the hall” (a term used to describe those who simply wanted a religious wedding for show), uncle marriage, divorce and remarriage, and mixed confessional marriage.

Five key points will continuously emerge in this chapter. First, fundamental religious differences shaped the way the two churches discussed and implemented policies concerning marriage. The Catholic Church considers marriage to be a sacrament. As such, the 1917 Code of Canon Law had no less than 131 regulations in the section concerning marriage.² These rules defined the parameters of Catholic debate on the topic of marriage and often necessitated policies that brought the church into conflict with both the state and the Protestant Church. For their part, Protestants viewed marriage quite differently. Marriage was very important to the Protestant Church and was subject to numerous church regulations, but it was not a sacrament. God's perfect gift of marriage had been corrupted by the inherent sinfulness of humanity. Because of this, the

² Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, Canons 1012-1143, pg. 351-392. A host of other laws touch on marriage as well.

rules of the state had to be followed in order to ensure the survival of the institution itself. Inherent consequences followed from this. While the Catholic Church held, and continues to hold, that a properly ordained marriage could only be terminated by the death of one of the partners, the Protestant Church, in accordance with civil law, allowed for divorce and remarriage. This and many other differences stemmed from these distinctive views on the sacramental nature of marriage.

Second, one can see the tremendous importance of religious wedding rituals for the laity. Attempts on the part of either church to show their displeasure with a couple's marriage choices by restricting access to such rituals were met with often unbearable scorn. Many clergy members began to question whether the rituals themselves were hindering the inner religious devotion that they were supposed to be inspiring.

Third, and often intimately connected to the second point, the churches were not monolithic institutions with all members marching in lock step. Serious debates arose within both churches over what the reestablishment of God's ordained order for marital life really meant and how they were to go about doing it. Some church leaders and clergy members felt that no matter how unpopular they might be with the laity, tough measures were needed to rectify the existential crisis facing the institution of marriage. Even if they agreed that marriage was endangered, others feared controversy with the laity and argued that such policies only drove people away from the church. These internal disagreements often led to compromise policies that usually pleased no one or to the inconsistent application of church regulations. As their lives were touched in a very intimate way by these variations, lay people were very sensitive to them and were quick to draw oftentimes unfavorable comparisons.

Fourth, the chaotic years following World War II left a deep mark on the psyche of many church leaders and clergy members. Dramatic increases in the number of divorces, couples living out of wedlock or in purely civil marriages, and mixed confessional marriages all created a sense that the institution of marriage itself faced an existential crisis. Such perceptions often carried on well into the 1950's when improving social and economic conditions led most, but not all, of these levels to drop.

Finally, the growing number of people whose marital choices ran contrary to the official line of the churches speaks a great deal about the limits of church influence in West German society. One should not push this argument too far. Many apparently continued to feel that marriage was something inherently bound up with the churches and listened to them when it came time to make their own marriage decisions. Others went to great lengths to try and stay in good graces with the churches when they didn't. However, there seems to have been an increasing sense that marriage was a personal affair and not a matter for the church. Reasons for this are difficult to determine as marital choices are inherently subjective. Some general factors can be determined though. These include the distancing from the churches that many experienced during the Nazi years, the profusion of voices present in West Germany's increasingly individualistic, mass consumer society, and confusion emanating from the churches themselves.

Marriage Preparation

An enormous "marriage boom" followed World War II. The years between 1946 and 1952 witnessed a spike in the number of marriages whose only comparison are the

years following the First World War.³ Feeling that many couples married too young or for the wrong reasons, the churches had very mixed feelings about this rising tide of marriages. As discussed in Chapter 1, the churches spoke at great length about people marrying not out of a sense of love and commitment, but instead because a partner was their “type” (ideas largely drawn from movies and novels) or because they wanted to have sex. Few, they argued, were willing to consider the gravity of marriage, the sacrifices it entailed, or the fact that it was a lifetime commitment. This was only abetted by eased divorce laws that supposedly allowed people to “shop around” for spouses and simply throw them away when they grew tired of them. For both churches, this “marriage crisis” was the result of the materialism that had so infected German society.

Better marriage preparation was seen as the only solution to these problems. In particular, it should focus on youth and young couples. Rather than let themselves be carried away by the mass media or their hormones, young people needed to be better educated so that they could make informed decisions about their choice of marriage partners, the timing of their marriage, and whether or not they indeed wanted to get married. Young couples who had recently married needed to be reminded that their union was for life and that they had to work together to overcome the inevitable differences that would arise between them. Yet, for all their talk about the dangers facing the institution of marriage and the necessity of correcting them, both churches were very slow to get past the idea that marriage preparation should entail anything more than a talk with the local priest or pastor.

³ The number of civil marriages registered in the state of Bavaria each year since 1825 can be found in StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), pg. 23. For the postwar, 1946: 86,183 marriages; 1947: 93,874; 1948: 95,252; 1949: 90,060; 1950: 91,823; 1951: 88,183; 1952: 82,929. From 1953 to 1960 the numbers dropped to the mid 70,000's and stayed fairly constant. Only the years 1919 and 1920, saw a higher number of marriages than the period from 1946-1952. 1919: 105,002 marriages; 1920: 100,131.

The Catholic Church in particular had something of a problem when it came to marriage preparation. Despite all their best intentions and education, Catholic priests were in fact single men. Many lay people felt that the last person they wanted to talk to about sensitive topics like marriage and sex was their priest. How should he know how to choose a marriage partner? How could he understand the everyday trials and annoyances of married life? Catholic officials and priest were certainly not unaware that they faced a problem of perception.⁴ However, their responses to such criticism often came very slowly and were in most cases poorly organized.

For most Catholics during this time period, marriage preparation consisted solely of a mandatory examination by the local priest. Every diocese had a general application form that had to be filled out by the officiating priest and signed by the couple before the wedding could take place. The questions were designed to determine if there were any impediments that would invalidate the marriage. These included: age (c. 1067), impotence (c. 1068), prior marriage (c.1069), lack of a Catholic baptism (c. 1070), kidnapping (c. 1074), consanguinity (c. 1076 and 1077), lack of desire for children (c. 1081 and 1082), and, most importantly, mixed confessional partners (c. 1061). Usually, there was one question that read: “Have you been informed as to the nature of Catholic marriage (unity, indissolubility, procreation of children)? With this information, do you still wish to enter this marriage?”⁵ This provided the priest with a final opportunity to inform the couple as to Catholic policies concerning marriage and answer any questions that they might have.

⁴ LKAN LkR 2001: Catholic radio address written by Father Dr. Karl Fröhlich for *Bayerische Rundfunk* Sunday morning service entitled: “Die Ehenot von Heute und die Antwort der Kirche,” April 22, 1951. See also “Pfarrer können leicht reden – sie heiraten nicht,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Jan. 16, 1955.

⁵ EAM NL Faulhaber 5040: Copy of “Brautexamens-Protokoll” for the Archdiocese of Munich, no date.

This examination process had something of a bad reputation. There were, no doubt, inquisitorial priests who used it as an opportunity to pry into the private lives of their lay members. However, the overburdening of the clergy, the increasing anonymity that resulted from urbanization and the arrival of the refugees, and the repeated requests from diocesan authorities that more information be included on these applications suggest that the process was often cursory and that the priest's comments were largely formulaic.⁶

Catholic officials were not oblivious to this fact. Nor were they unaware that the rising number of divorces and mixed confessional marriages suggested that more substantial marriage preparation was needed. But early attempts in this direction showed little imagination. The topic of better marriage preparation was raised at the 1950 archdiocesan synod in Munich. Citing the example of a layman who told him that if he had only had a good, Catholic book on marriage before he had gotten married a host of problems could have been avoided, one representative asked if any such book existed and if it could be distributed to prospective couples. Cardinal Faulhaber recommended a book entitled *The Girl (Das Mädchen)* that had been published in Switzerland in the mid 1930's.⁷ In particular, he felt that the chapter on the theme of virginity was quite good. Collected speeches by Pope Pius XII and other titles were suggested by members of the session, but all agreed that it was difficult to find such a book as specialists often did not share the ideas of the church or speak in the proper tone that they were looking for. The discussion was closed by a representative who suggested that this topic be handled more

⁶ Bischöfliches Ordinariat Würzburg (ed.), *Diözesansynode Würzburg 1954* (Würzburg: Fränkische Gesellschaftsdruckerei, 1955), 35-6, Nr. 103. See also BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled "Ehe und Familie" given by Cath. Cathedral Canon Franz Günther at the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, April 22, 1958.

⁷ *Das Mädchen* (Luzerne: Rex Verlag, 1935).

in youth work.⁸ After all the talk about the crisis of marriage, out of date books, speeches by the pope, and vague comments about youth work were the best the church had to offer. These would hardly seem to be the tools needed to shore up an institution that had been racked by Nazi legal changes and years of war and displacement.

More concrete solutions did not come until the mid-1950's. Catholic associations such as the Catholic Women's League, Caritas, and the League of German Catholic Youth moved in to fill the void by setting up marriage seminars. Targeting an audience of young single adults and recently married couples, marriage seminars were usually set up as either a weekend retreat or as a series of lecture nights. Here, doctors, lawyers, social workers, priests, and even regular married couples were invited to give lectures on themes revolving around marriage and family. Common titles included: "Can love be a sin?"; "The mixed confessional marriage problem"; "Premarital love, marital love"; "Sex in the marriage"; "Parents are the destiny of their children."⁹ The seminars were usually advertised in the secular and religious press, through leaflet campaigns, and by announcements in church. For larger meetings, transportation was sometimes provided to encourage people from outlying parishes to attend. Tickets were sold to help defray some of the costs, but usually the sponsoring association had to pay the bulk of the expenses from its own coffers.¹⁰

Initial public interest in these marriage seminars often caught organizers by surprise. There was standing room only at the first night of the initial marriage seminar

⁸ EAM NL Faulhaber 5194: Minutes from the 1950 archdiocesan synod in Munich, Oct. 10, 1950.

⁹ BZAR Generalia 524.40: This file includes flyers for several marriage seminars in the 1950's.

¹⁰ "Nun auch Eheseminare im Bistum Passau," *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Nov. 7, 1954 "Exerzitionen für Brautpaare und Jungverheiratete," *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Oct. 9, 1955. See also BZAR Generalia 524.40: Letter from Archbishop Buchberger to Father Alois Obermeier of Mainburg, Nov. 22, 1957.

in Passau as the projected crowd of 300-400 quickly blossomed into 750.¹¹ Marriage seminars in smaller towns across the diocese also got off to much better starts than expected.¹² During one of the first marriage seminars to be held in the diocese of Regensburg, diocesan youth minister Msgr. Anton Maier drew audiences of over 1,500 people for each of his two lectures.¹³ Positive results such as these buoyed the hopes of many church leaders. Here was tangible proof that the church's message concerning marriage was still seen as relevant.

Problems inherent in their very makeup began to significantly dull the effectiveness of marriage seminars over time. First, it was very difficult to find doctors, lawyers, and prominent officials who were considered "trustworthy" to talk before a church sanctioned event as many were seen to hold views that were unacceptable. This often left organizers scrambling to fill holes in their schedules. Usually, they had no choice but to ask regular lay people from the community to give a lecture. Whether eloquent or not, such speakers lacked the drawing power to attract anything more than those who were already religiously inclined.

Second, as these seminars were organized by independent minded church associations, there was little centralization and oftentimes poor planning. This led to overlapping seminars, limited advertising, inter-associational conflict, and, most importantly, a lack of resources. Larger seminars in the cities continued to draw respectable turnouts as they could tap into greater finances and attract more popular

¹¹ "Eheseminar in Passau überfüllt," *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Nov. 14, 1954.

¹² "Eheseminar ganz gross," *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Nov. 21, 1954.

¹³ "Eheseminar," *Mainbürger Nachrichten*, Nov. 13, 1957.

speakers.¹⁴ Smaller seminars suffered. Unable to afford much in the way of speakers, advertising, or transportation, seminar organizers quickly found that no one showed up.¹⁵ There were simply too many alternatives outside of the church that young people found more alluring. Requests for more centralized financing from the diocese were usually turned down due to a lack of funds.¹⁶

Third, the church hierarchy itself was often suspicious of such seminars. This was particularly the case with Archbishop Buchberger of Regensburg. In reply to the report of one priest who had helped organize a marriage seminar, he wrote: "Marriage seminars have two sides. On the one hand, a discrete discussion with young men and women about marriage is certainly not unnecessary in these times. On the other, much can be lost through a deficit of tact and sensitivity."¹⁷ If the speaker came down too strongly, there was the risk of turning people away from the church's message. More dangerously, a lack of sensitivity could turn the whole affair into nothing but a titillating sexual education course. This would only arouse the interest of people to have sex and get married younger, thereby counteracting the whole purpose of the seminar. At the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, Buchberger further undermined support for marriage seminars when he announced: "Certainly, the marriage seminar is no radical

¹⁴ For example, over 1,000 people purchased tickets for the full course of lectures given at the 1955 marriage seminar in Lindau. "Glänzender Erfolg der Eheseminare," *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Nov. 20, 1955. See also, "600 waren beim Ehevorbereitungskurs," *Fränkische Volksblatt*, Mar. 24, 1956.

¹⁵ BZAR Generalia 524.30: Letter from Diocesan Youth Minister Msgr. Anton Maier to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 31, 1959.

¹⁶ BZAR OA 1145: Letters from Cath. Deans of Riedenburg, Cham, Dingolfing, Nabburg, and Tirschenreuth to Archbishop Buchberger in preparation for the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, Mar. 1958.

¹⁷ BZAR Generalia 524.40: Letter from Archbishop Buchberger to Father Alois Obermeier of Mainburg, Nov. 22, 1957.

device, rather, it is something that may help a little bit.”¹⁸ Other Bavarian bishops no doubt held similar views.

The diocese of Würzburg took a much different path. During the period under study, it was the only diocese in Bavaria to approach marriage preparation in any kind of systematic way.¹⁹ This largely took place as a result of the 1954 diocesan synod. Because it was only a three day assembly and there was limited time for discussion, much of the work was done in preparatory sessions. The seventh commission of the synod was designated with the task of preparing for the theme “Marriage and Family.” Sitting on the committee were Vicar General Vinzenz Fuchs, three theology professors, two priests, one layman who was a lawyer, and the diocesan coordinator for the Catholic Women’s League. Despite the very traditional background of most of its members, the committee made some very bold and concrete plans for a centralized, church funded, and professionalized marriage preparation school that would hold regular and traveling classes across the diocese.²⁰ This was, they rightly concluded, the only way to overcome the fundamental problems of organization, finding speakers, and securing financial backing that plagued other marriage seminars.

Thinking more in terms of the traditional marriage examination, one of the priests felt that such classes should be made compulsory. The other members strongly disagreed as they felt this would only drive people away. In the end, the committee decided that while it was still mandatory for prospective couples to meet with their local priest to determine whether any marriage impediments existed, marriage preparation classes were

¹⁸ BZAR OA 1132: Report from the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, April 22-23, 1958.

¹⁹ It was only the second diocese in all of Germany to enact such a program, after Limburg. Bischöfliche Ordinariat Limburg (ed.), *1951 Diözesansynode Limburg* (Limburg: Lahn Verlag, 1952), Decree Nr. 44.

²⁰ Bischöfliches Ordinariat Würzburg (ed.), *Diözesansynode Würzburg 1954*, pg. 38, Nr. 118.

voluntary. The school should draw people in with its contemporary and professional knowledge of all aspects of marriage, not by force.²¹

Unlike Archbishop Buchberger, Bishop Julius Döpfner wholeheartedly supported marriage preparation classes as he felt new solutions were needed to meet the current crisis of marriage. Döpfner made only marginal changes to the committee's suggestions and ensured that they were passed by the synod. These efforts paid off as the school was well attended throughout the rest of the decade and became a model for the other dioceses to follow in the 1960's.²²

Bishop Döpfner's youthful dynamism no doubt played a significant role in this rather dramatic turn away from traditional notions of marriage preparation and pastoral care. But one must also remember that even the conservative minded Vicar General Fuchs backed the creation of such schools. This would seem to undermine the argument that the pre-Vatican II Catholic Church was some moribund institution that simply couldn't adapt to the times. Certain figures were indeed deeply resistant to change, but groups of engaged and dedicated church figures and laypeople were striking out in new directions.

In some ways, the Protestant Church was in a much better position to talk about marriage. As Protestant clergy members could get married, they knew first hand the trials and tribulations that prospective couples faced. This led many laypeople to trust their advice in regards to marriage more willingly. Also, the pastor's wife could provide a sympathetic ear to women in need of counsel or help. Such basic differences were

²¹ DAW Generalakten 755: Minutes from the second preparatory meeting of the 7th Committee, July 12, 1954.

²² Josef Pretscher (ed.), *Würzburgs Domschule in alter und neuer Zeit* (Würzburg: Echter, 1990), 73-105.

readily pointed to as a strongpoint of the Protestant Church. However, they also led to a false sense of security.

As was the case for Catholics, marriage preparation for Protestants during the period under study consisted almost solely of a meeting with the local pastor. Here, the pastor checked to see if at least one of the partners had been baptized in the Protestant Church and the couple filled out a marriage application form. The pastor was also supposed to provide the couple with a “clear understanding of marriage and its duties.”²³ While guarding against “unchasteness and prudery,” he was to point out what the Bible said about marriage (with reference to Matt. 19, 4; 1 Cor. 6, 19-20; Eph. 5, 22-33; 1 Peter 3, 7), discuss what Christian faith meant for marriage, explore sex and its place in marriage, and talk about children. This discussion was, in the words of the Established Church Council, “an important opportunity for pastoral care that the couple should readily agree to.” The council went on to say that it was “particularly important in cases of a mixed confessional marriage.”²⁴

Once again, the overburdening of the clergy seriously undermined these traditional ideas of marriage preparation. Rushing to keep up with their busy schedule of services and religious education classes, many pastors had little time for anything more than quick, formulaic comments to couples seeking to get married. Increasing anonymity brought on by urbanization and the arrival of the refugees only compounded this. Protestant leaders were well aware that the clergy was stretched unbelievably thin. They also knew of the large numbers of divorces and mixed confessional marriages taking

²³ Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern. *Verhandlungen der Landessynode*. 4 Tagung XIV, Sept. 13-18, 1951. “Die kirchliche Trauung,” 99.

²⁴ *Ibid.* See also Evang. Presseverband für Bayern, *Zur kirchlichen Lebensordnung* (Munich: Riedel-Druck, 1949), 30-33. LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. Dist. Superintendent of Kulmbach to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Bayreuth, Mar. 6, 1946.

place. They simply didn't put the two together. Locked into established ways of thinking, the Protestant hierarchy continued to believe that they not only had a built in marriage preparation scheme due to the mere fact that their pastors could marry, but also that they had a decisive advantage over the Catholic Church. Because of this, the Protestant Church was very slow in implementing any kind of systematic marriage preparation. This was all the worse in light of the traditionally weak associational life of Bavarian Protestantism.

Something more substantial did not come until the mid-1950's. In October 1954, the Protestant youth association of Nuremberg in conjunction with the CVJM, the German version of the YMCA, which was independent but loosely affiliated with the Protestant church, held a week-long marriage seminar with the theme "Youth on the way to marriage". Catering to a target audience of youth 17 years and older, lectures were held once a night by pastors, professors, lawyers, and doctors. Themes included: "Why always monogamy?"; "The meeting of the sexes"; "Family or practical union for an increased standard of living"; and "A word about the mixed confessional marriage question and the task of raising children."²⁵ Much like similar seminars held by the Catholic Church, advertising was done through announcements in church, articles in the secular and religious press, and flyer campaigns.

Attendance levels surprised many of the seminar's organizers. Roughly 600-700 young people showed up for most of the lectures and there was standing room only for the meeting discussing sex when over 1,100 arrived. Even more promising, many young people actively sought out clergy members before the lectures to ask questions and stayed

²⁵ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from Prot. Youth Minister for the District of Nuremberg to LkR, Dec. 18, 1954.

for the post-lecture discussion sessions.²⁶ Organizers also noted that while a significant proportion of those in attendance were already members of organized Protestant youth groups, many unaffiliated youth came as well.

While the Nuremberg marriage seminar was a great success and showed that there was interest in the Protestant message concerning marriage, it ran into many of the same problems that plagued similar Catholic efforts. First, it had been very difficult to secure speakers. The seminar's organizers didn't want to have only church figures give the lectures, but they were hard pressed to find doctors, lawyers, and professors whom they considered trustworthy enough to talk at a church sponsored function. Suitable persons had been found on this occasion, but the Protestant youth director in charge commented that this would be a major stumbling block if they wished to expand the seminars. Second, the seminar was very expensive. Renting a hall and paying for advertising and speakers seriously taxed the finances of the Protestant youth association. The Established Church Council did earmark money to assist with the event, but it was a paltry sum.²⁷ Largely due to this lack of finances, an event of this scale was not held again for several years.²⁸

The 1954 marriage seminar in Nuremberg did raise awareness within Protestant circles of the need for better marriage preparation. The following year, the Established Church Council commissioned a series of publications entitled "Our way in marriage" (*Unser Weg in die Ehe*). The result was a collection of 12 pamphlets written by various experts and well-known church figures that discussed a variety of topics concerning

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Only DM 200. LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from Prot. Youth Minister for the District of Nuremberg to LkR, Jan. 28, 1955.

²⁸ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to Kurt Winter of Fall/Isar, Feb. 21, 1956.

marriage.²⁹ The pamphlets were then distributed free of charge to all pastors, Protestant religious education teachers, and seminarians in Bavaria. Additional copies were printed for sale to the public. In a letter to its clergy, the Established Church Council wrote that the series was designed “not only for dissemination to prospective couples, but also to provide the courage to hold special marriage courses in the community.”³⁰ Such courses must be led by the pastor, they continued, but should involve active lay people, and when possible, “trustworthy doctors, lawyers, and teachers.”³¹ Individual themes examined in each of the pamphlets could thus be expanded upon and further discussed. The lectures could be set up either in a week long block, like at the 1954 Nuremberg seminar, or spread out over the period of a month or more. Most important, however, was the need for adequate preparation and advertising. To reach beyond the circle of those already religiously involved, young people from the community at large needed to be made aware of the seminar through newspaper articles, flyer campaigns, and word of mouth. Poor organization, they concluded, only led to embarrassing and expensive disasters that would ensure that no future seminars were held.

The publication of the “Our way in marriage” series was a significant step forward for Protestant marriage preparation. Here was the message of the church in a clear, professionally written format. It also showed a major philosophical and economic

²⁹ *Unser Weg in die Ehe* (Munich: Claudius Verlag, 1955). Vol. 1, “Suche Treuen Lebensgefährten!” Friedrich Wolf (Youth minister in Nuremberg); Vol. 2, “Ich Bin Ja So In Dich Verliebt!” Prof. Dr. Karl Seiler of Erlangen; Vol. 3, “Verliebt, Verlobt, Verheiratet!” Pastor Leonhard Henninger of Munich; Vol. 4, “Heute Ist Unser Hochzeitstag!” Established Church Council Member Hans Schmidt; Vol. 5, “Glück in die Ehe,” Hans Schmidt; Vol. 6, “Sollen Wir Uns Kinder Wünschen?” Pastor Rudolf Sebald of Munich; Vol. 7, “Ehe In Einer Veränderten Welt,” Dr. Käthe Truhel of Nuremberg; Vol. 8, “Ehe Als Glaubensgemeinschaft,” Pastor Georg Weiß of Nuremberg; Vol. 9, “Mischehe?” Pastor Wilhelm Horkel of Lindau; Vol. 10, “Geschlecht Und Ehe – Hier Spricht Der Arzt,” Dr. Hans Rummel of Nuremberg; Vol. 11, “Der Rechtsschutz Der Ehe Und Die Gleichberechtigung Von Mann und Frau,” Fritz Francke (city official in Nuremberg); Vol. 12, “Ehe – Ein Geheimnis?” Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg.

³⁰ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to all Prot. clergy members, Oct. 21, 1955.

³¹ *Ibid.*

commitment on the part of the church hierarchy. Significant effort went into the creation of these pamphlets and it was no doubt very expensive to print and distribute thousands of copies of them. When thinking in terms of comparison to the Catholic Church, only the diocese of Würzburg embarked on anything nearly as ambitious and expensive as this. But while official support of this nature was crucial, it did little to alleviate two of the fundamental problems facing marriage seminars.

Reports from various Protestant marriage seminars held across Bavaria in the late 1950's all tell a similar tale. Despite initial interest and the dedication of the pastor and active laypeople, many marriage seminars either never got off the ground or were less than successful because of the difficulty in finding speakers. Much like their Catholic counterparts, organizers complained again and again of how their efforts to secure the services of a local doctor or lawyer for lectures concerning topics such as sex or the legal ramifications of marriage were confounded by the lack of ones considered "trustworthy" enough to speak at a church sponsored event.³² This meant that many lectures had to be given by neighboring clergy members and pious laypeople from the community. No matter how eloquent they might have been, such people simply didn't have the drawing power to attract those who were not already religiously motivated.

Intimately connected to this was the problem of money. Better speakers could be found, but they were not cheap. When added to the cost of renting a hall and advertising, such expenses put large or sustained marriage seminars out of financial reach for most parishes. Attempts to pool the resources of multiple parishes or even a whole district to carry out a larger seminar that would attract more people usually broke down due to poor

³² LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from Prot. Dist. Superintendent of Neu-Ulm to LkR, April 10, 1957. See also LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from German Prot. Women's League of Lindau to LkR, July 8, 1958. LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from Prot. Working Committee for Social Questions to LkR, Mar. 9, 1957.

communication and overlapping leadership.³³ For its part, the Established Church Council was not very forthcoming with resources. On several occasions they turned down requests for money to help pay for a marriage seminar.³⁴ Tight pockets could be loosened a bit through unfavorable comparisons to the Catholics. After having her first request turned down, the head of the German Protestant Women's League in Lindau received DM 500 from the Established Church Council after she informed them how successful the Catholic marriage seminar held there three years earlier had been.³⁵

The ability of Protestant ministers to get married did give the Protestant Church a tremendous advantage when it came to marriage preparation. Pastors knew first hand the trials and tribulations that awaited prospective couples and could provide practical advice. This was a source of strength for the Protestant Church. However, it also inhibited the development of other forms of marriage preparation that may have helped better disseminate the church's message concerning marriage to a broader audience.

Both the Protestant and Catholic churches talked a great deal about the need for young people to be more aware of the trials and sacrifices that marriage entailed. Rather than listen to mass media or their hormones, they needed to make educated and informed decisions about their choice of partners, the timing of their marriage, and whether or not they should indeed get married. Despite this, both churches had surprisingly little to offer in the way of marriage preparation. Only in the diocese of Würzburg does one see any kind of systematically organized and centrally financed plan for marriage preparation

³³ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to German Prot. Women's League of Lindau, July 30, 1958.

³⁴ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to Prot. Dist. Superintendent of Neu-Ulm, April 30, 1957. See also LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to German Prot. Women's League of Lindau, July 30, 1958. LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from LkR to Prot. Working Committee for Social Questions, June 18, 1957.

³⁵ LKAN LkR 2310: Letter from German Prot. Women's League of Lindau to LkR, Aug. 7, 1958. LKAN LkR 2310: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Aug. 11-12, 1958.

classes. There remained a strong degree of deference to the idea that marriage preparation consisted of nothing more than a discussion with the local priest or pastor. Due to the overburdening of the clergy and the anonymity of everyday life brought on by increased urbanization and the arrival of the refugees, such traditional notions of pastoral care struggled to provide answers for questions concerning the nature of marriage after years of Nazi barbarism and war. The example set in the diocese of Würzburg cautions us against making sweeping assertions that the churches simply couldn't adapt to the changes taking place in postwar German society. But it does seem safe to say that, at least in the field of marriage preparation, they struggled to find direction.

Civil Marriages and “Renting the Hall”

For both churches, marriage was much more than simply a contract between two partners. Rather, it was a union between them and Christ. For this reason, the Protestant and Catholic churches, albeit to varying degrees, were against the idea of purely civil marriages. Registering the marriage at the local government office may have been obligatory, but it was seen as only a formality on the way to the true bond that was sealed in the church. In this regard, the churches were at a tremendous advantage. Whether people were religious or not, a church wedding, with all its symbols and pageantry, was something that a purely civil service simply could not match. The vast majority of marriages carried out in Bavaria between 1945 and 1960 were consecrated in either a Catholic or Protestant church. After long years of Nazi led efforts to disassociate marriage from religion, the churches were most agreeable to the widespread acceptance of the need for a religious wedding. However, they disliked the way that many were carried out. In their eyes, the magnitude of the occasion called for a wedding to be

something more than just a religiously colored excuse to get dressed up and drink heavily. Many clergy members deeply resented the idea of couples essentially “renting the hall” for a church wedding. The true meaning of marriage, they argued, was being lost in all the revelry. Worse still was when festivities such as these affected regular devotional and worship practices. Saturday marriages proved to be a very controversial topic throughout this period. Through an examination of the problems of purely civil marriages and “renting the hall,” one can see how the churches viewed marriage, how attempts to implement policies based on those views were often inconsistent due to internal disagreements, and how the laity played an intimate role in determining both.

Before a discussion of each church’s stance on purely civil marriage can take place, it is necessary to determine how many people were entering such unions. The following chart shows the number of civil marriages registered in the state of Bavaria for the years 1946, 1948, 1950, 1954, and 1959. It then shows the total number of marriages that were carried out by the Catholic and Protestant churches in Bavaria and their percentage of the whole. Jewish and “other” (mostly Protestant sectarian groups) marriages are then subtracted. Whether or not these marriages were religious or only civil is hard to determine, but they are being counted here under the category of the former so as to determine at least the minimum number of purely civil marriages. The remaining number gives us a fairly good estimate of how many purely civil marriages were filed in the state of Bavaria for the given years.³⁶

³⁶ Civil marriages - StJBB, vol. 27 (1961), 21. Jewish and other – StJBB, vol. 23 (1947), 46; StJBB, vol. 24 (1952), 40; StJBB, vol. 25 (1955), 36; StJBB, vol. 27 (1961), 24. Prot. marriages – “Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern r.d.R.* (Sept. 5, 1935): 107; “Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelische-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 16, 1949; “Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 3, 1958; “Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens in der ELKB,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, (1962): 4. Cath. marriages – *Kirchliches Handbuch: Amtliches statistisches Jahrbuch*

Year	1946	1948	1950	1954	1959
Civil Marriages	86,183	95,252	91,823	77,637	85,948
Catholic Marriages	52,676	55,950	57,758	51,657	58,821
Protestant Marriages	16,127	18,995	17,902	14,760	16,918
Total # of Marriages	68,803	74,945	75,660	66,417	75,739
Prot./Cath. Marriages	80%	79%	82%	86%	88%
Jewish and “other”	4,399	3,035	916	456	474
Purely civil Marriages	12,981 15%	17,272 18%	15,247 16.6%	10,494 13.5%	9,735 11.3%

These numbers are very revealing, but must be read carefully. One notices a peak in the number of purely civil marriages between 1948 and 1950. This corresponds quite accurately to the “marriage boom” that took place in West Germany following the war. Ideological differences, a lack of money, personal dislike of the clergy, and the general distancing of many people from the church that took place during the Nazi and war years are but a few of the common reasons given for not having a religious wedding. As the social and economic situation improved in the 1950’s and the “boom” died down, more

der katholische Kirche Deutschland, vol. 23 (1951), 398-401, 406; vol. 24 (1957), 418-421, 434-437; vol. 25 (1962), 656-659.

and more couples decided that marriage was something that should be started in the church. Unfortunately, what is missing is any kind of confessional marker for purely civil marriages. One simply cannot determine if Protestants were more likely to have a purely civil service than Catholics or vice versa.

Both churches viewed questions pertaining to civil marriages through their confession-specific lenses. As it considered marriage to be a sacrament, the Catholic Church took a particularly dim view of purely civil marriages. The church made clear that while legitimate state authorities could regulate the purely civil effects of marriage, it was first and foremost ruled by divine- and canon law.³⁷ Catholics who entered into purely civil unions were considered “public sinners” that should be denied access to the sacraments and a church burial.³⁸ The reasoning behind this was that they were cohabitating while not officially married in the eyes of God. Therefore, they were living in concubinage.³⁹

The church knew quite well that simply punishing people for entering purely civil unions was not enough. Positive reinforcement for having a religious service was also needed. In its widely disseminated “Teachings on the Holy Sacrament of Marriage,” the diocesan authorities of Würzburg wrote: “Marriage has been raised to the level of a sacrament because it is a reflection of the union between Christ and the church. There is only one Christ and only one church and they are forever bound together. That is why the sacrament of marriage makes the indissoluble union of a Christian man and a

³⁷ Canon #1016. Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 353.

³⁸ “Oberhirtliche Weisung,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Feb. 13, 1950): 35.

³⁹ Canon #2356. Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 748.

Christian woman stronger than a purely civil marriage bond.”⁴⁰ Religious marriages were, they argued, simply more stable as they had God’s blessing.

The Catholic Church attempted to resolve the problem of purely civil marriages in two ways. First, it tried to undermine the necessity of civil marriages. Obligatory civil marriages were introduced in Germany in 1874 as part of the *Kulturkampf*.⁴¹ Catholic resistance to this change was as old as the measure itself but had been to no avail.

Renewed attempts after 1945 also met with little success. Deeply conservative/Catholic politicians like Alois Hundhammer (CSU) did make comments such as: “Christians of both confessions who have sealed their marriage in the church should not be forced to go to the government office.”⁴² That church marriages were not considered binding in the eyes of the state, others argued, was a violation of Christian people’s freedom of conscience. It was also an example of the state’s all too heavy involvement in matters of individual choice.⁴³ By and large though, sentiments such as these received little support in the Federal Parliament. Highlighting the very real differences between the church and its nominally conservative allies, most CDU and CSU politicians were much more concerned with determining how the equal rights policy of Article 3 of the Basic Law would be put into practice than they were about status of church and civil marriages.⁴⁴

Other attempts at political reform were equally unsuccessful. A pamphlet written by the diocesan authorities in Würzburg entitled “Save Marriage and the Family,” was

⁴⁰ “Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Jan. 7, 1950): 4-5. This text was read in every church in the diocese each year on Marriage Sunday, the 2nd Sunday after Epiphany. Other (arch-)dioceses had a similar text. See also, “Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Dec. 15, 1953): 279-86.

⁴¹ Michael Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*, 252-257.

⁴² LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Summary of comments made by Cardinal Wendel and Alois Hundhammer at the annual assembly of the Catholic men’s association of Tuntehausen, May 1953.

⁴³ “Kritik am geltenden Eherecht,” *SZ*, Sept. 1, 1951.

⁴⁴ Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 85-6.

distributed to every Catholic in the diocese. Along with a host of other complaints about marriage and divorce laws, questions were asked as to the necessity of a civil marriage. “Why isn’t it possible in Germany, as it is in many other countries, for every couple to make their own decision as to whether they want their marriage to be sealed in purely church or civil form? Article 4 of the Basic Law declares that freedom of belief, of conscience, and of religion are inviolable. Why then in Germany is one forced to file for a civil marriage...?”⁴⁵ Such views were largely silenced when Federal Minister of Justice Dehler concluded: “Church and civil marriages being on an equal footing is unthinkable.”⁴⁶

Efforts to bring about political change were not the only way that the Catholic Church tried to stop its adherents from entering into purely civil marriages. Education and pastoral care for the laity were seen as more effective solutions. First, all Catholics who were even remotely connected with the church were to be informed of Catholic policies concerning civil marriage. In this way, none could say that they didn’t know a religious marriage was necessary. Every year on the first Sunday of Lent, the (arch-) bishop’s pastoral letter would be read. Following this, a list of church commandments and orders were listed. Always mentioned was the fact that: “Catholics can only seal a marriage valid in the eyes of God and their consciences before their priest or his representative.”⁴⁷ To further disseminate the church’s message, youth leaders were encouraged to discuss the need for a religious marriage in youth groups and in lectures

⁴⁵ DAW Generalakten 672/2: “Rettet Ehe und die Familie,” written by BOW, Feb. 20, 1953.

⁴⁶ Quoted in ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Memo from Vicar General Riemer, July 13, 1953.

⁴⁷ For examples, see “Kirchliche Gebot,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Jan. 31, 1947): 14-15. “Oberhirtliche Verordnungen 1945,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Feb. 4, 1945). Similar comments were made in each of the years under study in all Bavarian dioceses.

geared for young people.⁴⁸ When marriage seminars for prospective couples were held, purely civil marriages were always roundly condemned.⁴⁹

Second, better pastoral care was needed in order to prevent couples from entering purely civil unions in the first place or to “right” the marriages of those who had. At diocesan synods and assemblies, the clergy were exhorted to spare no effort in the campaign against purely civil marriages.⁵⁰ Priests were told: “The sacramental nature of marriage cannot be mentioned enough today. Even many good Catholics consider the civil marriage to be sufficient...This necessitates more instruction for young people who are thinking of getting married...In the interest of pastoral care, a short, gripping speech rather than the reading of something pre-printed is required.”⁵¹ While they were to deny couples living in a purely civil union access to the sacraments, priests were instructed to encourage them to still attend worship. This was done for two reasons. First, the church hoped that if the door was left open to them the couple would one day secure a Catholic marriage. Second, and even more importantly, the church wanted to ensure that children of such marriages would be given a Catholic religious education.⁵²

⁴⁸ BZAR OA 596: Yearly report from rural youth leader Dr. Emmeran Scharl of Munich, Jan. 1952. See also, BZAR OA 2534: Pamphlet entitled “Hochzeit.” Part of the “Gruppenstunden für die Frauenjugend” series written by Otilie Moßhammer, no date. Pamphlet has a US occupation printing license on the outer cover so it was produced sometime between 1945 and 1949. This series was distributed in the dioceses of Regensburg and Eichstätt. Bishops and clergy members made reference to the series throughout the 1950’s and it seems that the author updated it regularly. BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Jugendseelsorge” given at the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg by Msgr. Anton Maier, April 22-23, 1958.

⁴⁹ “Eheseminar in Passau überfüllt,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Nov. 14, 1954. BZAR Generalia 524.40: Letter from Archbishop Buchberger to Father Alois Obermeier of Mainburg, Nov. 22, 1957.

⁵⁰ DAW Generalakten 755: Minutes of the second preparatory meeting of the 7th committee of the diocesan synod of Würzburg, July 12, 1954. BZAR OA 1127: Report entitled “Anträge und Anregungen des Klerus der Diözese Regensburg,” read at the 1948 diocesan synod in Regensburg. BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Spendung der heilige Sakramente,” written by Father Josef Erhardsburger for the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958.

⁵¹ BZAR OA 1145: Report entitled “Spendung der heilige Sakramente,” written by Father Josef Erhardsburger for the diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958.

⁵² BZAR OA 1132: Proceedings of the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, Apr. 22-23, 1958. Archbishop Buchberger himself made this point.

Missionaries were used in an effort to reach those who had fallen away from the church. As part of their preparation for a popular mission, priests were expected to make a list of all Catholic individuals in the parish who were living in a purely civil marriage (be it with another Catholic or with a member of another confession).⁵³ The monks leading the mission would then visit them on several occasions during their stay. With tactics ranging from heartfelt pleas to grisly depictions of the torments of hell that awaited them should they stay in such a union, the missionaries attempted to “right” the marriage. Reports from the missions show a mixed bag of results. It appears that most couples living in a purely civil union had strong reasons for doing so and they largely stayed away from the missions and refused to talk to the missionaries. On the other hand, many of the reports mention that one or two, and sometimes up to five or six, such marriages were “put in order.”⁵⁴

Such wide ranging efforts demonstrate the seriousness with which the Catholic Church viewed purely civil marriages. What is interesting is that the fear of purely civil unions carried on, and even increased, into the mid- to late 1950’s when it was becoming increasingly clear that the number of such marriages was dropping dramatically. As will be better illustrated in discussions of divorce and remarriage later in the chapter, the instability and disruption that the war and immediate postwar years brought to marriage and marital status left a lasting imprint. This was the matrix through which church leaders and clergy members viewed marriage and it shaped their subsequent actions.

⁵³ For example, see “Volksmissionen,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 15, 1946): 141-43.

⁵⁴ DAW Generalakten 623/1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Bischbrunn über Marktheidenfeld to BOW, Feb. 11, 1947. DAW Generalakten 623/1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. DAW Generalakten 623/1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Kitzingen to BOW, Nov. 22, 1949. EAM NL Faulhaber 6093: Report concerning popular missions carried out in the Archdiocese of Munich/Freising in 1946. EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning popular missions carried out in the Archdiocese of Munich/Freising from 1948-1950.

Civil marriage meant something altogether different in the Protestant tradition. As God's perfect gift of marriage had been tainted by the sin of humanity, the Protestant Church held that it was necessary to follow the external forms dictated by the state in order to secure the survival of the institution of marriage. Thus, if the state considered a civil marriage to be binding, then so must the Protestant Church. In his contribution to the marriage preparation series "Our Way in Marriage," Established Church Council member Hans Schmidt wrote: "Marriage is one of the most important building blocks in the life of the people. Because of this, we must acknowledge that the government has the right and the power to protect marriage and to bring order to the marriage bond. So we see the civil marriage not only as a formal matter, but rather as an act in which the government representative serves as God's official."⁵⁵ Unlike their Catholic counterparts, Protestant laypeople could enter into a purely civil union and still receive the sacraments, have a church burial, and expect to be treated the same as those who had also secured a religious service. In fact, the Protestant established churches in general all worked to block Catholic efforts to put church and civil marriages on equal footing.⁵⁶

This should in no way suggest that the Protestant Church didn't want its members to also have their marriage sealed in the church. Immediately following his comments about civil marriage quoted above, Hans Schmidt wrote: "We must remember that our marriage will be missing a main point if we do not know that 'everything relies on God's blessing.' Therefore we wish to place our young marriage from the very beginning under God's word, prayer, and blessing. This takes place in the church marriage when we,

⁵⁵ Hans Schmidt, "Heute ist unser Hochzeitstag!," 3-4.

⁵⁶ "Evangelische Kirche bleibt bei Zivilehen," *Volksfreund*, Dec. 2, 1953. "Evangelische Kirche zur Ehe," *Main Post*, Mar. 23, 1954. "Eheschließung und kirchliche Trauung," *NEG*, Mar. 21, 1954. DAW Generalakten 628/2: Report written by Prelate Böhler of Bonn to all (Arch)Bishops in the Federal Republic, April 25, 1957.

before the assembled congregation, meet in front of the altar, listen to his word, lift up our prayers, and receive his blessing. It is crucial for our whole married life that God himself says yes when we take our marriage vows and that we know his guiding hand will lead us on our way.”⁵⁷ Countless other sermons and religious publications all struck home the same theme. A civil marriage was acceptable, but a church marriage was the only way to truly cement a couple’s love.

As illustrated earlier, anywhere from 80-90% of all marriages carried out in Bavaria between 1945 and 1960 were consecrated in either a Catholic or Protestant church. Neither church liked the fact that so many couples were choosing purely civil unions, but after years of Nazi repression and wartime displacement they took a measure of hope from the widespread acceptance of the need for a religious marriage. They were often suspicious of the reasons for one though. The symbols and pageantry of church weddings were, in the eyes of many clergy members, both the sources of its strength and its degradation. Wedding rituals were powerful, but a single-minded focus on them often precluded any kind of deeper understanding of their meaning. In essence, many clergy members felt that prospective couples simply wanted to “rent the hall” for a religiously hued festivity. Amidst all the plans for flowers and organ music, few were stopping to seriously consider the significance of marriage, the sacrifices it entailed, or that it was an indissoluble union. Such views were only heightened when couples who had little to no contact with the church, and who showed little interest in forging such links in the future, applied for a church wedding. Instances such as these put the clergy in a very awkward position. While they believed that all marriages should be consecrated in the church, they did not want to see religious weddings reduced to nothing more than just colorful shows.

⁵⁷ Hans Schmidt, “Heute ist unser Hochzeitstag!,” 4.

Alongside their efforts to convince the laity of the need to have a religious marriage, both churches attempted to stress the seriousness of the event. A pamphlet series designed to assist the leaders of Catholic female youth groups discussed the “proper” way to celebrate marriage. It especially encouraged this theme any time one of the group’s members was about to get married. On the night before the wedding, instead of simply thinking about her clothes or going out drinking and dancing, the bride should read her bible (Eph. 5, 8-20 in particular) and join her partner at the parsonage or church for “sincere discussion, hymns, and readings, all pertaining to love and marriage.”⁵⁸ The wedding itself should not be a pompous affair, but focus on the solemnity of the union and the sacrifice of Jesus reenacted in the mass. The bride should not dissolve into tears or hysterics. At the following reception, she should have only one toast of wine and encourage others to not taint the occasion by getting drunk and dancing.⁵⁹

The Protestant Church also tried to emphasize the seriousness of the church marriage to its laity. While acknowledging that “marriage is a celebration...and humor and happiness have a place in it,” Established Church Council member Hans Schmidt went on to say in his pamphlet for the “Our way in marriage” series that “celebration should not be confused with wild exuberance and loose morals.” He continued: “A wedding reception that has already gotten out of hand is not a good prelude to a wedding.”⁶⁰ Further stressing the solemnity of the event, the Protestant Church refused to allow recordings to be made of wedding services. Several companies sought

⁵⁸ BZAR OA 2534: Pamphlet entitled “Hochzeit.” Part of the “Gruppenstunden für die Frauenjugend” series written by Otilie Moßhammer, no date.

⁵⁹ Similar suggestions can be found in “Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Jan. 7, 1950): 9.

⁶⁰ Hans Schmidt, “Heute ist unser Hochzeitstag!,” 1.

permission to provide such services to interested couples.⁶¹ The Established Church Council denied them after an inquiry into the matter received negative replies from top officials around the state. Most of the objections related to problems of space, potential equipment problems, or that the recording might not be used in the proper spirit.⁶² However, the primary reason given in the subsequent pronouncement of the Established Church Council was that "...tape recordings can lead to a devaluation of the service."⁶³

This tension between the desire for religious marriages on the part of the laity and the concerns of the clergy that couples were simply "renting the hall" and not taking marriage seriously is best seen in discussions concerning Saturday marriages. While commonplace today, Saturday marriages were traditionally not allowed in either of the churches in all but the most necessary of cases. This was done in an effort to protect the holiness of the Sabbath. Weddings were often cause for lengthy bouts of dancing, eating, and drinking that would stretch well into the next morning. In the case of a Saturday marriage, this would leave a substantial portion of the congregation either too drunk or hung-over to attend Sunday morning worship. For many clergy members, this was a classic example of lay people seeing marriage as only an excuse to have a party and the damaging repercussions of this lack of seriousness.

Concessions had been made in the 1920's and 30's for working couples in the cities to have a Saturday marriage as it was quite often the only time they had available

⁶¹ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Hofer Tonarchiv to LkR, May 22, 1954. In the same file, see also, Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Augsburg to LkR, Aug. 10, 1954.

⁶² LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent of Regensburg to LkR, June 8, 1954. In the same file, Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent of Munich to LkR, June 5, 1954. Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent of Nuremberg to LkR, June 10, 1954.

⁶³ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, Sept. 27, 1954.

for a wedding that would not bring along financial detriment.⁶⁴ However, both churches tried to maintain their policy of no Saturday weddings in rural, predominantly farming communities well into the 1950's.

Lay rancor and the blurring of lines between urban and rural life brought on by increased urbanization and improved transportation made it quite difficult to implement this plan. In the immediate postwar years, few had the money or resources to have an elaborate wedding or reception party. As conditions improved, the desire for them returned. In tones strikingly similar to those from earlier periods of German history, pastors and priests who refused to hold the service or who allowed for the wedding but tried to limit the following festivities were publicly scorned by the laity for not being community oriented.⁶⁵ Many rural parishioners were also quick to point out that while they might be farmers, other members of the wedding party were from the city and could only come on a Saturday. By refusing to hold the service on that day, the pastor or priest was damaging familial relations.⁶⁶ Then there was the question of what to do about factory workers who lived in rural areas.⁶⁷

Clergy members usually reacted to such complaints in one of two ways. Some acknowledged that the rural/urban divide was not so clear anymore and, no doubt seeing drunk or hung-over lay members as a lesser evil than irate ones, allowed for Saturday

⁶⁴ BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Ihrlenstein to Bishop Buchberger, Oct. 25, 1947. See also LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Memmingen to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951.

⁶⁵ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Memmingen to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951. BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Schmidgaden to Bishop Buchberger, Feb. 1, 1949. Similar comments can be found from the Reformation period. See C. Scott Dixon, *The Reformation and Rural Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 108-109, 118-124.

⁶⁶ BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rattenberg to Bishop Buchberger, June 19, 1949.

⁶⁷ BZAR Generalia 521.20: Copy of letter from Cath. Pastorate of Königfeld über Pfaffenhofen to Cath. Dean of Geisenfeld, Oct. 17, 1955.

marriages.⁶⁸ Others stuck to a harder line in an effort to halt what they saw as the devaluation of marriage and a disavowal of the need to go to Sunday morning worship.⁶⁹ The inconsistency that this generated only made the situation worse as the inevitable comparisons were quickly made.

In the mid to late 1950's, both churches came to the conclusion that their policy did not adequately reflect the social conditions of the time and that it was generating a great deal of bitterness. Saturday marriages were eventually approved for both rural and urban areas.⁷⁰ In both cases, the churches made it clear that while Saturday marriages were acceptable, every effort should be made to hold the service on another day. Also, both contained the caveat that prospective couples could only attain approval for a Saturday marriage if they signed an oath ahead of time saying that they would leave any festivities that followed the service before midnight so as to not diminish the Sabbath. It was reasoned that if the guests wished to keep drinking and miss church the next day that was their problem, but they shouldn't be encouraged to do so by the presence of a bride and groom to toast to. The Catholic Church was only willing to go so far in accommodating such requests. It continued to hold to its policy that mixed confessional couples could not have a Saturday marriage under any circumstance.⁷¹

Through the controversies surrounding Saturday marriages, we can determine a great deal about how the churches viewed marriage. Despite disagreements over its

⁶⁸ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Memmingen to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951.

⁶⁹ BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Ihrlersstein to Bishop Buchberger, Oct. 25, 1947. DAW Generalakten 376: Letter from Cath. Dean of Miltenberg to Bishop Döpfner, Dec. 16, 1952. LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Breitnau to LkR, Jan. 22, 1952.

⁷⁰ "Sonntagshheiligung," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (June 30, 1954): 1. BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from BOR to all Cath. Deans in the Diocese of Regensburg, Jan. 10, 1958. The latter includes a copy of pronouncements from the Bavarian Bishops' Conference concerning Saturday marriages.

⁷¹ BZAR OA 1259: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Irlbach to BOR, Nov. 21, 1949. BZAR Generalia 521.20: Letter from BOR to Cath. Pastorate of Sollern, Jan 4, 1958.

sacramental nature, both churches considered marriage to be a fundamental building block of society. It was more than just a contract between two people that could be made and broken like any other. Rather, it was a union between them and Christ. As such, it should be entered into in the church. But simply renting out the church to have a religious wedding was not enough. Couples needed to seriously consider the gravity of marriage and realize that it was something more than just a religiously colored excuse to get dressed up and go drinking.

It was on this last point that the churches faced a wall of lay resentment. One should not argue that the laity did not take marriage seriously or simply wanted to get drunk. Many couples, no doubt, heeded the warning of their churches and only entered into marriage after a period of earnest reflection, prayer, and discussion with the clergy. However, subjective designations such as these are impossible to quantify or prove. What one can say is that the rituals involved in a religious wedding and the traditions surrounding the event were important to the laity. This helps explain why such a large percentage of Bavarians chose to have a church marriage as opposed to a purely civil one. It also accounts for many of the excesses that clergy members complained about.

The clergy itself, however, bear a measure of responsibility for this by no means new development. Some pastors and priests were noticeably less strict in their interpretation of church rules concerning the nature and timing of wedding festivities. A good number probably joined in the revelry and some may have had just as hard a time getting to church the next morning as members of their congregation.⁷² Inconsistency of

⁷² One can find several complaints of clergy members being a bit too fond of the drink at weddings. BZAR OA 2536: Report written by diocesan female youth leader Martha Schmid of Regensburg concerning her visit to Feldkirchen on 25 Jan. 1950, 3 Feb. 1950. See also EAM NL Faulhaber 5422: Anonymous letter

this nature could not be avoided in institutions with the size and importance of the churches, but it only encouraged lay complaints and opposition.

Uncle-Marriage

The war widow was a ubiquitous figure in the early years of the Federal Republic. Even as West Germany began to rebuild and the economy roared ahead, their presence was a constant reminder of the war and the millions of war dead. While war widows were discussed intensely in terms of marriage law, compensation packages, and employment, they were also the topic of much scandal. Nothing brought them more public attention than the matter of so-called “uncle marriages” (*Onkel-Ehen*). An uncle marriage (also referred to as pension concubinage) was defined as a couple who lived together and shared all the trappings of married life, but who chose not to pursue an official civil marriage. More often than not, this was because the woman would lose her widow’s pension if they married. Thus, the man was commonly referred to, sometimes even by the children of the woman from the first marriage, as “uncle.” Both the Catholic and Protestant churches strongly disliked the prospect of thousands of their parishioners living in what they deemed to be concubinage, but their reactions to the problem of uncle marriage were completely different. Once again, this stems from their very different conceptions of the institution of marriage.

In 1950, an enormous package of social legislation was passed that became known as the Law to Aid Victims of War. Serving as one of the pillars of the West German welfare state, it provided benefits and services to roughly four million wounded veterans, widows, orphans, and dependent parents. By 1954, it is estimated that around

from a member of the Catholic parish of Wasserburg to Cardinal Faulhaber, Nov. 29, 1949. EAM NL Faulhaber 5422: Letter from the mayor of Rottenbuch to Cardinal Faulhaber, June 19, 1950.

1.2 million women were eligible to receive benefits as war widows.⁷³ These benefits were subject to a number of provisions. First, the pensions usually did not provide enough money for widows to live on them exclusively, but outside income, unless small, led to a reduction in the pension. Thus, many war widows were forced to take on part-time, poorly paid work such as cleaning or laundering. The other major provision concerned remarriage. A war widow who remarried subsequently lost her right to claim assistance from the state. In the words of the Minister of Family Affairs, Franz-Josef Würmeling, “The purpose of a widow’s pension is to provide, for the duration of the widowhood, economic compensation for the loss of the husband as breadwinner. When the widow enters a new marriage, the purpose of the aid falls away. It corresponds to the natural order of our society that, with the establishment of marriage, the husband regularly takes over financial responsibility for his wife.”⁷⁴ The state would pay a final “marriage settlement”, something akin to a dowry, but after that, the couple was expected to live on the husband’s income. If this new marriage ended in divorce or with the death of the husband, it was, initially, quite difficult for the woman to reclaim her widow benefits.

Oftentimes it was the case that the husband’s earnings were too small to live on. This was particularly true for men who could not work, usually due to war injuries, and for older men, who were living on fixed pensions themselves. Faced with these hard economic facts, many couples decided that they simply could not afford to lose the woman’s widow pension. Added to this was the fear of many widows that the new

⁷³ Heineman, *What Difference*, 163.

⁷⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 170.

marriage would abruptly end and she would be left with nothing. All of this led many couples to choose cohabitation over marriage.

In the hard years immediately after the war, unmarried couples living together were not all that uncommon. Many observers, and even some participants, viewed such relationships as temporary or merely the product of difficult times. What is striking is how long this practice persisted and how much it was discussed by contemporaries. Reminding West Germans that not all were able to partake in the country's growing prosperity, Heinrich Böll addressed the topic of widowhood and uncle marriage in his 1954 novel *Haus ohne Hüter*.⁷⁵ One of the main characters of this book is Wilma Brielach, an impoverished widow who works part time at a bakery. She has a son, Heinrich, but was never married long enough to set up a conventional marriage relationship. In the novel, she lives with "uncle" Leo, a tram conductor. She never considers marriage with him, nor has she with any of the other "husbands" she has lived with, for fear of losing her widow's pension. Desperate to maintain the attractiveness to men that has enabled her to keep finding new "husbands" to help support her, she undergoes an expensive dental treatment that eventually cripples her finances and leads to her ruin.

Couples who chose cohabitation over marriage out of financial concerns often faced public disapproval and criticism. While it usually had no bearing to the grim realities of their lives, war widows, it was often argued, had base motives in choosing to live with a man but not get married. Some felt that they simply wanted to keep their pensions so that they could make frivolous purchases and maintain an all too high standard of living. Such perceptions began to change as the 1950's wore on. Many

⁷⁵ Heinrich Böll, *Haus ohne Hüter* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1954).

cohabitating couples perceived their relationship as permanent and genuine. Pension rules meant that they couldn't afford to get married, but in every other way they saw themselves as man and wife. Neighbors and relatives often viewed the cohabitants as a respectable couple and called the woman by the man's last name. While this informal recognition was enough for many couples, others felt that more concrete steps needed to be taken to legitimize such relationships.

These efforts were carried out in two distinct, but interrelated, spheres. First, human rights organizations, social welfare groups, war victims' associations, and ordinary Germans petitioned the government to ease widow pension policy. Reform proposals included continuation of the widow's pension, if at a reduced rate, after remarriage, reinstatement of the pension if the second marriage failed due to divorce or death, and a higher marriage settlement. Debate over such changes stretched well into the 1950's and eventually received official recognition. In 1956, the marriage settlement was increased and it became easier to reactivate a pension after the end of a second marriage.⁷⁶ Even the Catholic Church became involved in such efforts at political reform. Cardinal Frings of Cologne wrote to Chancellor Adenauer in 1955 to complain that government policy was forcing people into concubinage. This would have, the Cardinal argued, disastrous consequences on the youth of Germany. Speaking in grim tones, he said: "More than 1/3 of all convicted minors and almost 2/3 of youth needing public assistance come from incomplete families, for the most part from 'uncle marriages'." Frings went on to mention several of the reform proposals mentioned

⁷⁶ Heineman, *What Difference*, 170.

above and concluded: “The politician with a sense of responsibility may disapprove of this attitude (to cohabit), but he must reckon with it.”⁷⁷

Historians have produced an excellent body of literature about the political debates concerning pension reform and uncle marriage.⁷⁸ While the political wrangling illuminated by these books is very interesting, such discussions are marked by two noticeable omissions. First, one must acknowledge the fact that the basic problem facing couples living in an uncle marriage remained. Laws stipulating that a widow’s pension benefits ended upon her remarriage were not rescinded. So for many, the 1956 reforms did not provide enough incentive to legalize their marriage. Second, they fail to consider another route that many couples took in their search for legitimization. Seeing that political changes were a long way off, religiously minded pairs often looked to the churches to sanction what they deemed as an authentic Christian marriage. Through a study of the response of both churches to the problem of uncle marriages, we are reminded once again that while the churches were active political lobbyists, this was not their main focus. Instead, they were institutions primarily designed to provide pastoral care to the faithful. In doing so, they had to deal with the very real concerns of everyday people and provide concrete solutions in the here and now. Their actions, however, stemmed directly from their confession specific views of marriage.

The Catholic Church considered cohabitation to be nothing less than concubinage. This was a grave sin, indeed, one worthy of denial of the sacraments.⁷⁹ From top

⁷⁷ DAW Generalakten 624/3: Copy of letter from Cardinal Frings of Cologne to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, Feb. 25, 1955.

⁷⁸ Heinemann, *What Difference*, 168-170. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 130-33. Sepp Groth, *Kinder ohne Familie: Das Schicksal des unehelichen Kindes in unserer Gesellschaft* (Munich: Juventia Verlag, 1961), 37-48.

⁷⁹ Canon 2357 §2: “Whoever publicly commits the delict of adultery, or publicly lives in concubinage, or who has been legitimately convicted of another delict against the sixth precept of the Decalogue is

officials to ordinary priests and missionaries, there were concentrated efforts to rectify the problem of concubinage. For example, Vicar General Riemer of Passau campaigned for stricter adherence to Article 50a of the Bavarian Penal Code, which provided monetary fines and possible prison time for unmarried couples who ‘disturbed the peace’ by openly living together.⁸⁰ Riemer wrote to the Ministry of Family Affairs saying that the police were often lax in punishing this offense and that the law itself was weak. Charges could only be filed if someone from the same building or the surrounding neighborhood went to the trouble to file an official complaint. Unless they were motivated by other factors or hatreds, most people were not willing to go to such extremes. This meant that the police could not get involved to halt these “moral grievances”. The Vicar General concluded: “We hold that from a pastoral care standpoint, this method of operation is unsound.”⁸¹

However, many couples living in an uncle marriage openly professed their desire for a church sanctioned marriage. Denial of the sacraments, they argued, was unjust as in every other way they were good Catholics. They were simply locked in an untenable situation. Laws passed during the Bismarck era mandated that a civil marriage be conducted before a church marriage could take place. Unfortunately, this civil service would cause the woman to lose her widow’s pension and they simply couldn’t survive without it. Thus, they had to forego a church marriage out of economic concerns.

Despite the fact that they were at the same time calling for tougher anti-concubinage laws, Catholic officials and ordinary priests and missionaries showed a great

excluded from legitimate ecclesiastical acts until he gives a sign of returning to his senses.” Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 748.

⁸⁰ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Memo from Vicar General Riemer, Feb. 8, 1955.

⁸¹ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Vicar General Riemer of Passau to Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Sept. 11, 1954.

deal of sympathy for couples facing this dilemma. Inquiries from pious laypeople into the possibility of securing a purely religious marriage without obtaining the necessary civil marriage ahead of time began to fall on ever more open ears.

Standing in the way of such efforts were two problems. First, the Catholic Church was afraid of undermining the authority of religious marriages. In no way did they want a religious marriage to seem more like something designed to make people feel better than an actual wedding before God. This would have run contrary to the long standing efforts of Catholic officials and family associations to secure equal footing for church and civil marriages that were discussed earlier in this chapter. A well known journalist named Dr. Hans Rost wrote to Bishop Landersdorfer of Passau in 1953 saying that the church should simply give up on hopes of achieving parity between civil and religious marriages and allow for religious marriages to be ignored by the state. This strategy, he consented, would produce a large number of couples who were concubines in the eyes of the state. However, he concluded, the police did very little to prosecute concubines anymore and it was a small price to pay so that “the so-called uncle marriages can at least be rehabilitated in conscience.”⁸²

In a strongly worded reply, Vicar General Riemer gave three reasons why the church rejected this strategy. First, the church simply couldn't give up on defending religious marriage nor deny its very real claims of legality. No one should be forced against his/her conscience to get a civil marriage after securing a properly ordained religious marriage. Second, he pointed out that one should not expect couples who had a proper religious marriage to think of themselves as concubines. Third, he said that the only way such a move could be allowed was if people who were married in a purely

⁸² ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Dr. Hans Rost to Bishop Landersdorfer, July 6, 1953.

religious service were recognized by the state as a purely church ordained couple, not as concubines.⁸³ Riemer's tone and pointed assertions illustrate that while the Catholic Church certainly didn't like people cohabitating, it was wary of downgrading the status of the religious marriage to something purely for look or an act to ease the conscience.

Second, and probably more important, was Par. 67 of the Marital Status Code (*Personenstandesgesetz*) that had been passed during the *Kulturkampf*. The real teeth for the laws concerning obligatory civil marriage, this ordinance carried monetary fines and even possible jail time for clergy members who married couples in the church before they had secured a civil marriage.⁸⁴ Particularly geared towards restricting the Catholic clergy, who had often protested against the necessity of a civil marriage, it was viewed by the Catholic Church as a nasty hangover from a very dark chapter in German history.⁸⁵

The Concordat of 1933 carried with it an important exception to this rule. Article 26 stated that in cases of "great moral emergency" (*schwere sittliche Notstand*), couples could be married in a religious service before filing for the civil marriage.⁸⁶ They were to do so, however, as soon as possible thereafter. This was conceived as a way for the

⁸³ ABP OA Matrimonialia Bd. IV: Memo from Vicar General Riemer, July 13, 1953.

⁸⁴ A copy of this ordinance can be found in "Unmöglicher Zustand: Die Onkelehen," *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Jan. 14, 1956.

⁸⁵ For a discussion of the Catholic view of the ordinance and a good overview of the attempt to repeal it in 1954, see "Mißbräuche sind nicht zu erwarten," *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Mar. 10, 1954. Despite the best efforts of the Catholic Church and sympathetic CDU/CSU politicians, the reform effort failed when the Bundesrat upheld Par. 67 in March, 1954. See "Strafvorschrift wird beibehalten," *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Mar. 20, 1954.

⁸⁶ Article 26 of the Concordat reads: "With certain reservations pending a later comprehensive regulation of the marriage laws, it is understood that, in cases of critical illness of one member of an engaged couple which does not permit of a postponement, and in cases of great moral emergency (the presence of which must be confirmed by the proper ecclesiastical authority), the ecclesiastical marriage should precede the civil ceremony. In such cases the priest is in duty bound to notify the matter immediately at the Registrar's office." In the supplementary appendix, a great moral emergency was seen to exist when: "there are insuperable or disproportionately difficult and costly obstacles impeding the procuring of documents necessary for the marriage at the proper time." Quoted and translated in *The Persecution of the Catholic Church in the Third Reich: Facts and Documents translated from the German* (London: Burns Oates, 1940), 520, 522.

critically ill to secure a last minute church marriage, and thereby a church funeral. It was also a way for couples facing urgent time restraints to carry out their marriage plans.⁸⁷

Just what constituted a “great moral emergency” was subject to wide interpretation.

For many observers both within and outside the Catholic Church, uncle marriage constituted a clear state of moral emergency. Couples were being forced into concubinage against their will because of unfair pension laws. With their eternal souls in jeopardy, it was, many argued, up to the Catholic Church to rectify the situation. Thus, priests should implement Article 26 of the Concordat and “right” the union. However, with the threat of Par. 67 hanging over their heads, most Catholic clergy members were less than willing to hold an open, purely religious marriage service for a couple that had not first secured a civil marriage.

There were several ingenious ways to get around such restrictions. First, priests could simply hold a private ceremony, enter the couple’s name in the parish books as married, and then ask them to receive the sacraments at a different church so as not to arouse attention. As parish records are sealed for sometimes in excess of a hundred years out of privacy concerns, it is difficult to determine how many such secret marriages were carried out. However, one can find letters from priests to their diocesan superiors commenting that they had done as such. The case of Father Josef Heigl of Falkenstein in the diocese of Regensburg is probably the best example of this.

⁸⁷ An excellent example of this occurred in 1946 in the Diocese of Passau. A German refugee woman from the Sudetenland was seven months pregnant and wanted her child to be considered legitimate in the eyes of God. Her Czech partner was in a Passau prison and was set to be deported in two days. The diocesan authorities in Passau stated that this was a clear example of a “great moral emergency” and implemented Article 26 of the Concordat. It did so with the caveat that the two must register the marriage with civil authorities as soon as possible. ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from BOP to Cath. Pastorate of the Cathedral of Passau (*Dompfarramt*), Aug. 17, 1946.

Father Heigl wrote to Archbishop Buchberger in 1952 saying that during the last popular mission he had married a couple living in concubinage without having them secure a civil marriage. The couple was very poor and had been living in an uncle marriage for fear of losing the woman's widow pension. Such arrangements were deeply distasteful for the religiously minded couple. Heigl felt that Article 26 of the Concordat could be implemented, minus the following registration with civil authorities, as the situation was clearly a "great moral emergency." The priest stated defiantly: "A state that knows and permits such cases has no right to punish a clergy member who, in concern for the immortal soul, is willing to carry out the marriage. I would handle this situation the same in the future." Saying that he was only a simple parish priest and that such matters were well beyond his authority, Father Heigl went on to ask Archbishop Buchberger to work with government officials to find a solution to this problem.⁸⁸ Vicar General Baldauf of Regensburg replied later the next month saying that priests were not permitted to follow such a course of action as civil marriages were obligatory. He went on to say that top Catholic officials like Cardinal Frings of Cologne were advocating for pension law reform.⁸⁹ However, Baldauf's reply neither officially rebuked Heigl nor absolutely forbade him from carrying out such marriages in the future. Instead, it seemed more designed to shield the diocesan authorities from potential litigation for violations of Par. 67. For the moment, at least, the matter seemed to be dropped.

Two years later, Heigl was again active in righting uncle marriage. In November of that year, he openly allowed Dr. Edmund Sattler, a refugee priest from the Archdiocese of Prague who was serving as a religious education teacher in Regensburg,

⁸⁸ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to Archbishop Buchberger, April 7, 1952.

⁸⁹ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from BOR to Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein, May 12, 1952.

to carry out a religious marriage in his church for a couple who had not secured a civil marriage first. The marriage was between a 65 year old pensioner and a 50 year old widow with three children. The pair had been living in an uncle marriage because they could not afford to lose the woman's widow pension. Father Heigl forewarned the diocesan authorities in Regensburg of his intentions earlier in the year.⁹⁰ The diocesan authorities reminded him again that the civil marriage was obligatory and warned him that such actions might bring severe repercussions, particularly for the Concordat. Much like in 1952, they did not specifically forbid him from carrying out the marriage.⁹¹ In his letter of reply, Father Heigl stated: "I can only follow the warning of no marriages without a previously secured civil marriage when I receive a strict ban. Then the responsibility no longer lies with me. Short of this, I hold it as my duty of conscience to eliminate concubinage wherever I possibly can, even under the threat of punishment."⁹² The diocesan authorities did not respond to Heigl's letter and appear to have assumed that their warning was enough to deter the wedding.

The following year, the Bavarian State Police office in Regensburg began an investigation into the marriage and the story was brought to public attention that September by the newspaper *Regensburger Woche*. When the story broke, Heigl immediately sought to clear his diocesan superiors and heaped condemnation on the state. In a letter to the *Regensburger Woche*, he wrote: "The diocesan authorities in Regensburg knew nothing of the matter. As for the rest, it is my opinion that the state is guilty for these, according to our beliefs, very sinful 'uncle marriages'. It has long had the chance

⁹⁰ This letter could not be found in the BZAR file concerning uncle marriage. However, it is referenced to in the BOR letter from May 5, 1954.

⁹¹ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from BOR to Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein, May 5, 1954.

⁹² BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to BOR, May 21, 1954.

to make more tolerable regulations for pensions that could change this situation.”

Drawing a line in the sand, he concluded: “We greatly regret this predicament, but in the end we hold: One must listen more to God and one’s conscience than men.”⁹³

As the story began to spread, Catholic Church officials became more and more nervous. The day after the story made the national papers, Apostolic Nuncio Muench called Vicar General Baldauf in Regensburg and demanded a report.⁹⁴ Baldauf wrote back the same day saying that Father Heigl himself admitted that the diocesan authorities in Regensburg had no previous knowledge of the marriage. He went on to argue that permission for the service had been neither asked for nor given. They referenced back to the letters from the previous year and said that after their warning, they hadn’t heard from Heigl and thought that the matter had been dropped. Baldauf apologized profusely for any damage that might have been done to the Concordat and made it clear that such actions would not be repeated.⁹⁵ Muench wrote back three days later to thank the vicar general for his report and let his disfavor with Heigl be known in a closing comment. “As you report, the assisting priest acted out of reasons of conscience. He must also call on his conscience when he is called to account before the state authorities.”⁹⁶ Muench made it clear that Heigl was on his own and should not expect assistance from the church hierarchy.

That Baldauf had already come to the same conclusion is evidenced by his response to comments made by Bavarian Minister of Justice Dr. Koch (SPD). On Sept.

⁹³ A copy of this letter was attached in Father Heigl’s letter to his superiors. See BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to BOR, Sept. 19, 1955.

⁹⁴ See, for example, “Trauung ohne Standesamt,” SZ, Sept. 23, 1955.

⁹⁵ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Vicar General Baldauf to Apostolic Nuncio Muench, Sept. 24, 1955.

⁹⁶ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Apostolic Nuncio Muench to Vicar General Baldauf, Sept. 27, 1955.

26, 1955, Koch had publicly announced that he would follow up on charges against Father Heigl and was certain that “higher church authorities” had given him permission to conduct the service.⁹⁷ Baldauf wrote to Dr. Koch the following day arguing once again that they had neither been asked for permission to carry out the service nor had they granted it. Heigl had acted alone, Baldauf assured him, and would face responsibility for his actions alone as well.⁹⁸

For his part, Father Heigl refused to back down. On Sept. 27, 1955 he wrote a defiant letter to Archbishop Buchberger saying that he was ready for the proceedings and was convinced that “...payment will await in heaven for any eventual punishment.” Heigl went on to say that his case had found a broad degree of public sympathy. He cited that the Regensburg *8 Uhr Abendblatt* had published an article under the title “A priest with heart.” Also, the examining magistrate for the case supposedly said to Dr. Sattler: “Why don’t all priests do the same thing?”⁹⁹

The case against Father Heigl would drag out the rest of the year. During the proceedings, three other examples of the priest marrying couples in a religious service without having them secure a civil marriage were found.¹⁰⁰ Heigl readily admitted to all three in a letter to Archbishop Buchberger and described them as “moral emergencies.” Once again he argued that until there was a formal ban on such activities he had a moral responsibility to right concubinage wherever he could.¹⁰¹ In the end, Heigl was found

⁹⁷ “Koch Staatsanwaltliche Ermittlungen abgeschlossen,” *KNA*, Sept. 26, 1955.

⁹⁸ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from BOR to Bavarian State Ministry of Justice, Sept. 27, 1955.

⁹⁹ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to Archbishop Buchberger, Sept. 27, 1955.

¹⁰⁰ “Immer neue Fälle in Niederbayern – Pfarrer spricht von sittlichen Notstand,” *8 Uhr Abendblatt*, Oct. 13, 1955.

¹⁰¹ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 9, 1955.

guilty of two infringements of the Marital Status Code and was fined DM 300.¹⁰²

Sympathetic clergy and lay members from all over Bavaria sent donations that more than covered this fee.

Two years later, Father Heigl sent something of a confession to Archbishop Buchberger. Now that the press was gone and the matter had gone silent, he wanted his superior to know what he had really been up to. In a very long letter, he detailed seven different instances (including the ones he was tried for) where he had conducted religious marriages without having the couple secure a civil marriage first. The first example was all the way back in 1938. Each one, in his mind, had been an example of a “great moral emergency” and therefore worthy of implementing Article 26 of the Concordat.

Recalcitrant to the very end, he summed up his actions with the following lines:

“Sometimes, I suffered because of the attacks of the press and the threatening court case...However, I was of the opinion: If I am convicted there, than I will fear God’s judgment no more. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake...”¹⁰³

The case of Father Heigl is illuminating for several different reasons. First, it firmly dispels the myth that the clergy, particularly the Catholic clergy, were some “black army” that blindly followed their leaders. Controversial themes such as uncle marriages created fault lines within the church. Age only accentuated these differences. Heigl was born in 1885 and quite rightly concluded that neither the church nor the state could really do all that much against him anymore. Heigl’s defiant stand against what he considered to be the unjust laws of the state is also intriguing for the insight it provides into the mental universe of the clergy after 1945. In many ways, it harks back to the private and

¹⁰² BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Oberstaatsanwalt Pschorn of Regensburg to BOR, Jan. 13, 1955.

¹⁰³ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Falkenstein to Archbishop Buchberger, Nov. 12, 1957. The last line is taken from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, Matt. 5:10 (DRB).

open resistance of Catholic clergy members to Nazi intrusions into matters of religious life. To think that such actions simply came to an end in 1945 would seem foolish.

Reactions to the Falkenstein case are also quite interesting. As evidenced by the above mentioned newspaper articles that proclaimed him a “priest with heart” and the fact that he received well over the rather large sum of DM 300 in donations following the case, there does seem to have been a broad level of sympathy for Father Heigl’s actions. Lay people were quick to seize upon his example to push for their own objectives. After the case became public, several other couples living in uncle marriages would try to use it as leverage in petitions to their local priests to have a similar type of ceremony.¹⁰⁴

The second way to get around Par. 67 of the Marital Status Code lay across the border. Particularly for those living in the southern Bavarian dioceses, the prospect of getting a quiet religious marriage in Austria and then “forgetting” to file for a civil marriage upon their return to Germany loomed large. Having been brought into Greater Germany during the Nazi period, Par. 67 of the Marital Status Code was also in effect in Austria. However, no one knew the German couples and their stay in Austria was so brief that it was very difficult for the state to know of such activities, much less stop them. For their part, priests in border parishes of the Diocese of Linz seem to have been, at least initially, quite open to the idea.¹⁰⁵ Adding to this, Austria dropped Par. 67 of the Marital Status Code in 1955, much earlier than the Federal Republic. While civil marriages were still obligatory in Austria and technically had to be filed before the religious marriage could take place, the threat of punishment for a priest who carried out

¹⁰⁴ BZAR Generalia 521.41: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Wunsiedel to BOR, Nov. 19, 1955. See also BZAR Generalia 521.41: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Eggenfelden to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 19, 1956. It must be noted that in both cases permission was denied.

¹⁰⁵ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Bischöfliche Ordinariat Linz to (Arch) Diocesan Authorities of Munich, Passau, und Regensburg, Mar. 26, 1956.

a religious service before the necessary civil one had been dropped. This led a growing number of German couples who were living in an uncle marriage to ask their priest if they could go to the Diocese of Linz and receive a quiet religious marriage.

Permission from the local priest was absolutely essential for such an arrangement as the marriage had to be registered in the records of the couple's home parish. The diocesan authorities of Linz made it clear: "The bishop is ready to allow marriages of this type provided that in each individual case a license (from the home parish) has been granted."¹⁰⁶ Seeking advice on how to reply to the requests of their laity to get a religious marriage in Austria, Bavarian clergy members began to write to their superiors. Until 1955, the southern Bavarian dioceses had a mixed policy towards this.¹⁰⁷ When asked by his counterpart in Passau about his previous stance on this issue, Vicar General Dr. Fuchs of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising said: "We have not supported, but also not hindered the religious marriage of pension concubines in Austria." The decision to give a license for such marriages was left to the local priest. The couple, he concluded, must be prepared to face the anti-concubinage laws of the Federal Republic upon their return. This was, however, a problem whether they got the church marriage or not.¹⁰⁸ Feeling that the practice undermined the authority of the religious marriage and might provide fuel for the critics of the Concordat, Vicar General Baldauf of Regensburg was a bit more skeptical and said that he did not want it to be general policy. Each individual case had to be reviewed and the license would only be granted in particularly noteworthy

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Disappointing, but quite interesting in itself, one cannot find concrete references to cases of uncle marriage in files concerning marriage for the Diocese of Würzburg. The files from Bamberg are still sealed.

¹⁰⁸ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Vicar General Fuchs of Munich to Vicar General Riemer of Passau, Dec. 3, 1956.

instances.¹⁰⁹ Vicar General Riemer of Passau made a similar argument.¹¹⁰ As it turns out, however, Riemer was quite busy ‘righting’ pension concubinage at home. This would lead to the so-called Tann trial, which threw uncle marriage into the national spotlight.

In March 1954, Father Neun, the priest of the small community of Tann, married two pensioners in a church ceremony without having them first procure a civil marriage. Once again, the two wanted to get married but could not survive without the woman’s widow pension. Someone notified state authorities of what had happened and Father Neun was brought before a court in Passau on charges of violating Par. 67. What made the Tann trial so noteworthy, or scandalous, was that the marriage had been expressly approved by Vicar General Riemer of Passau.¹¹¹ Unlike Falkenstein, where Father Heigl had self-admittedly acted according to his conscience alone, the events in Tann were officially sanctioned. For many, this was an example of the Catholic Church openly flouting the law. While unknown to the press or the prosecution, Riemer’s activities went deeper. Even during the Tann proceedings, he agreed to another secret marriage of two pensioners living in an uncle marriage.¹¹²

The case against Father Neun and Vicar General Riemer dragged out until January of 1956, but in the end both were considered guilty of violations of Par. 67 and had to pay a fee of DM 100.¹¹³ More importantly, however, the Tann trial brought

¹⁰⁹ BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from BOR to Bischöfliche Ordinariat Linz, April 10, 1956.

¹¹⁰ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from BOP to Bischöfliche Ordinariat Linz, April 5, 1956.

¹¹¹ A summary of the events at Tann can be found in “Unmöglicher Zustand: Die Onkelehen,” *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Jan. 14, 1956.

¹¹² ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Burgkirchen bei Altötting to BOP, Sept. 8, 1954. Reply of BOP, Sept. 10, 1954.

¹¹³ “Staat bestraft Mitwirkung bei Sakramentenspendung,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Jan. 15, 1956.

national attention to the question of uncle marriage and forced the Catholic Church to clearly define its policy on it.

No doubt seeing an opportunity to strike a blow at the Catholic backed CDU/CSU, Ollenhauer and the SPD showed righteous indignation over the events at Tann and pushed the Federal Minister of the Interior Dr. Schröder to discuss the Catholic Church's position on uncle marriage with the Vatican.¹¹⁴ While he agreed to do so, Schröder made it clear that he would handle the case in light of the fact that no other diocesan authority had expressly allowed such a marriage. While the state held very firmly that uncle marriage did not constitute a "great moral emergency" and was therefore not liable to Article 26 of the Concordat, it should not, he argued, be looking to start a witch hunt against the Catholic Church.¹¹⁵

The answer from Rome came over the course of the following year. In November, 1955, Apostolic Nuncio Muench wrote to Bishop Landersdorfer of Passau telling him that priests were bound by their duty to ensure that all couples they married had either secured or would secure in short order a civil marriage. The omission of this in the case of Tann was, he made clear, a violation of the Concordat.¹¹⁶ Following the verdict in the Tann case, Muench wrote to all bishops and archbishops in West Germany saying: "From the Secretary of State of His Holiness, I am requested to ask the honorable diocesan authorities in Germany that Article 26 of the Concordat only be used in the most urgent of cases. Permission to carry out a church marriage before the civil act may only be defended after strict examination of whether salvation (great moral emergency)

¹¹⁴ Verhandlungen des Deutschen Bundestages – Drucksache 1227, Zweite Wahlperiode, 1955.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in DAW Generalakten 624/3: Letter from Katholisches Büro Bonn to all (Arch-)Bishops in the Federal Republic, Mar. 17, 1955.

¹¹⁶ The contents of this letter were made public and are summarized in "Kirchliche und zivile Trauung," *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Nov. 11, 1955.

requires it.”¹¹⁷ Final word came the following summer. The embassy of the Federal Republic to the Vatican wrote a letter asking if it agreed with the following statement in regards to Article 26: “A great moral emergency, that justifies the carrying out of the church consecration of marriage before the civil marriage, does not exist if the execution of civil marriage would carry exclusively economic disadvantages for the proposed.” The Secretary of State for the Vatican wrote back saying that he concurred.¹¹⁸ Pension concubinage, the Vatican made clear, did not qualify as a great moral emergency and, thus, did not fall under Article 26 of the 1933 Concordat. As it secured the place of confessional schooling in Germany, the Concordat was deemed too important and the pope did not want to open it up to what was seen as unnecessary criticism.

Catholic observers sharply criticized the Tann ruling. The influential prelate from Würzburg, Max Rößler, called it the “misjudgement of Passau” in his article for the catholic newspaper *Fränkisches Volksblatt*. He wrote: “The common man on the street sees this as simply one more case where simple people, who made a decision based on a confusing relationship, are attacked with the ballyhoo of a murder and a responsible priest, who stood by these people with great understanding, is sentenced to punishment. Meanwhile, important figures like the millionaires of industry and film marry and divorce as they please – and all articles are in order and the sensational press roars its approval.”¹¹⁹ He concluded with the biting comment: “Why can’t, for example, a war widow who wants to get remarried keep a part of her pension if the income of her

¹¹⁷ DAW Generalakten 624/3: Letter from Apostolic Nuncio Muench to all (Arch-)Bishops in the Federal Republic, Jan 20, 1956.

¹¹⁸ Copies of these correspondences were sent by Apostolic Nuncio Muench to Archbishop Buchberger. Muench wrote that these documents should be treated as strictly confidential. See BZAR Generalia 521.40: Copy of letter from embassy of the Federal Republic to the Vatican, July 16, 1956 (Nr. 2517/56). Reply from Vatican Secretary of State, July 17, 1956.

¹¹⁹ “Unmöglicher Zustand: Die Onkelehen,” *Fränkisches Volksblatt*, Jan. 14, 1956.

husband is not enough to support them both. The state here wouldn't lose a penny, but it would keep the Federal Republic from being the nation with the most concubines.”¹²⁰

Diocesan newspapers like the *Passauer Bistumsblatt* also called the ruling a “misjudgment” and accused the state of interfering with the church’s right to provide the sacraments to the laity. They concluded: “The church is a sacred community and the priest, as the good shepherd, has the duty to tend to his sheep and wake them from their sleep if their relationships, for example in marriage, need to be brought in order.”¹²¹

Despite such hostility, the dioceses fell in line with the word from Rome and issued strong warnings to their clergy members about marrying couples in purely religious services or allowing them to go to Austria to do so.¹²² Against fierce resistance from the SPD, the FDP, and the Ministry of Justice, the CDU/CSU eventually gathered enough support to overturn Par. 67 in 1957 on the grounds that it discriminated against the clergy. The Catholic Church’s clear statement that uncle marriage did not qualify as a “great moral emergency” and was therefore not subject to Article 26 of the Concordat greatly eased this change in policy.

While it seemed like a great victory, the removal of Par. 67 raised something of another problem for the Catholic Church. The law that stipulated the end of a widow’s pension upon her remarriage was still in place. So, in essence, the problem of uncle marriage remained. However, thinking that the end of Par. 67 cleared the way for them to secure church sanction for their relationship without the penalties that a civil marriage

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ “Staat bestraft Mitwirkung bei Sakramentenspendung,” *Passauer Bistumsblatt*, Jan. 15, 1956.

¹²² See “Kirchliche und standesamtliche Trauung,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Nov. 27, 1957): 270-72. “Personenstandesgesetz und kirchliche Trauung,” *Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau* (Nov. 26, 1957): 83-4. “Personenstandesgesetz und kirchliche Trauung,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (Nov. 7, 1957): 85-6. “Rentengesetzgebung und Onkel-Ehen” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Nov. 29, 1957): 211-17.

would bring, lay people living in uncle marriages began asking in ever increasing numbers for purely religious marriages or for permission to go to Austria to secure one.¹²³ Most of these requests pointed out the examples of Falkenstein and Tann and commented that the actions of Fathers Heigl and Neun could now be emulated without fear of punishment. Having been burnt at Tann, the dioceses stuck to the harder line and braved the ire of the laity by refusing all such inquiries. Article 26 of the Concordat was still implemented in some cases, but it had to be made absolutely clear that financial considerations were not the main concern.¹²⁴

For the Protestant Church, all such manipulations were unthinkable. Marriage was not a sacrament, and as such, it was subject to the laws of the state. In response to Catholic efforts to secure equal status for religious marriages, the Protestant Church released a statement supporting obligatory civil marriages. While it made clear that marriage was an institution ordained by God, it went on to reemphasize the importance of the state when it said: "...However, like all other earthly existence, it (marriage) is no longer the same as its heavenly model and as such stands under the laws of inadequacy. This means that the secular community is required for the exterior form and for the

¹²³ See ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Sarleinsbach (Austria) to BOP, Oct. 6, 1964. Reply of BOP, Oct. 6, 1964. BZAR Generalia 521.41: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Kulmain to BOR, Oct. 2, 1957. Reply of BOR, Oct. 2, 1957. BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Tegernheim to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 10, 1957. Reply of BOR, Oct. 11, 1957. BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Ittling to BOR, 15 Oct. 1957. BZAR Generalia 521.43: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Gangkofen to BOR, Jan. 21, 1960.

¹²⁴ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. IV: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of St. Stephan in Passau to BOP, Sept. 10, 1958. In this case, an American serviceman impregnated his German girlfriend. The baby was due soon but the paperwork for the civil marriage was going to take much longer. The couple wanted to get a religious marriage so that the child would be considered legitimate in the eyes of God and then the subsequent civil marriage could follow in due time. The priest made certain to point out: "In no way do any kind of financial disadvantages play a role here, as they do in the case of pension concubines. There seems to lie here a true moral emergency." Vicar General Riemer permitted the marriage on grounds of Art. 26 of the Concordat on Sept., 15, 1958.

protection of marriage, unfortunately also sometimes for its separation.”¹²⁵ The EKD made similar comments the following year at its synod in Berlin.¹²⁶

While there were emergency stipulations that justified a religious wedding before the civil act in cases of the impending death of one of the partners, they were seldom used and had to receive Established Church Council clearance ahead of time. The few requests that did come were all denied.¹²⁷

Much to the disgust of Catholics, the Protestant established churches in general, and the EKD in particular, worked against the repeal of Par. 67. They did so for a variety of reasons. First, having been on the other side of the *Kulturkampf*, Protestants naturally had a much different view of its laws and felt that the ordinance was not discriminatory towards the clergy. Second, they were not willing to compromise on such issues unless the Catholic Church offered something in exchange. In the case of Par. 67, Protestant representatives wanted changes made in the Catholic policy on mixed confessional marriage.¹²⁸ As will be discussed later in this chapter, mixed confessional marriage was

¹²⁵ Quoted in “Evangelische Kirche bleibt bei Zivilehen,” *Volksfreund*, Dec. 2, 1953.

¹²⁶ “Evangelische Kirche zur Ehe,” *Main Post*, Mar. 23, 1954.

¹²⁷ For example, see LKAN LkR 2081: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Stammbach to LkR, June 1, 1959. Here, a sickly widow with two children wanted to marry a man of very modest means so that her children would have a father if she died. However, they could not afford to live without her widow’s pension. The two considered themselves to be man and wife but wanted it cemented in the eyes of God. Interestingly enough, the pastor of Stammbach couched his request for permission to carry out a quiet religious marriage in Catholic like terms. He said: “It seems to me that a moral emergency really does exist here.” The LkR wrote back on June 23, 1959 saying that the pastor should do all in his power to help the couple, but that they flatly rejected carrying out church marriages before the civil act in all but the most extreme cases.

¹²⁸ The position of both Catholics and Protestants in regards to Par. 67 is best summed up in a report by Prelate Böhler following the ordinance’s repeal in April, 1957. See DAW Generalakten 628 Bd. II: Report written by Prelate Böhler of Katholisches Büro Bonn to all (Arch)Bishops in the Federal Republic, April 25, 1957. Böhler had some very negative comments to make about the EKD and its stance on Par. 67. Reminiscing the debates that led up to the repeal, he wrote: “My reproach that one must at least tolerate the Catholic view, which is a demand of conscience, and then later in the freedom that such a solution brings make use of it or not, didn’t get through, namely because, as one explained, in light of the defamatory attitude of the Catholic Church towards the Protestant population regarding the practice of mixed marriage, the Protestant Church cannot show tolerance to the Catholic view.” He goes on: “I hoped to convince the participants in the following negotiations that the Catholic Church did not maintain its practices on mixed marriages to defame Protestants, but because they derive from the very substance of the Catholic view of

an extremely sensitive subject that neither side was willing to compromise on. Because of this, all attempts to create joint effort to push for the repeal of Par. 67 broke down. Finally, Protestants felt that by conducting secret, purely religious marriages, the Catholic Church was not only working to undermine state authority in matters of marriage law, but was also devaluing the whole institution of marriage.

Over time, the uncle marriage controversy resolved itself. The generation of women who had lived through the war and lost their husbands in it began to die off in the 1960's and 70's. Today, one hardly hears of it at all. But through much of the 50's it was a genuine concern, one that intimately involved the churches. An examination of reactions to the problem of uncle marriage illuminates several key points. First, while the churches engaged in active political lobbying, one must remember that this was not their primary focus. As institutions designed to provide pastoral care to the faithful, both churches had to deal with the very real concerns of their adherents in the here and now, regardless of which way the political winds blew in Bonn or Munich. Second, and intimately related to the first point, these relations with the laity were always a delicate balance of appeasement and the hard line. Some clergy members and church officials were more open to the idea of "righting" uncle marriage than others. Ordinary lay people were perceptive to these differences within the church and were quick to try and use the examples set by lenient clergy members as leverage in their own case. Inconsistency bred reproach and higher officials often had to step in to impose strict, but often unpopular, guidelines for all to follow. Third, the position of ordinary people towards the churches is thrown into sharper relief. A large number of couples decided for

marriage. Unfortunately, the Council of the Protestant Church decided to maintain its intransigent position. Through this, communal action was impossible. The Catholic side had to take up the fight for the removal of Par. 67 alone."

cohabitation over marriage against the express wishes of their church. Marital status was for them a private issue and the churches' talk about "God's ordained order" mattered little. However, as evidenced by the large number of people seeking a purely religious marriage, many more were deeply concerned about their standing in the eyes of the churches and went to extreme lengths to remain in good graces. This suggests that while their authority was indeed slipping, the churches could still count on the loyal support of a religiously minded core of believers. Finally, while neither church liked the idea of their parishioners living in uncle marriages, their subsequent actions in regards to the problem were completely different. This stemmed from their very confession specific views of marriage. The sacramental nature of marriage in the Catholic tradition necessitated a wholly more aggressive policy than the Protestant Church was ever willing to consider.

Divorce and Remarriage

In the years immediately following the Second World War, thousands of German couples divorced. Reasons for this rise in the number of divorces are not hard to find. Men came home traumatized and changed by the war and had a difficult time readjusting to civilian life. Further exasperating this, many required extensive care as they were either malnourished or injured. Wives had sometimes cheated or simply moved on emotionally during the long absence of their husbands. Couples that had been married for only a short time before the war or during the war itself often found that they simply didn't know or like each other anymore. All of these factors were magnified by the tough

living conditions in postwar Germany. Cramped housing and a lack of food strained even the best of relationships to the breaking point.¹²⁹

Divorce was legal according to German civil law. However, both churches spoke out strongly against it. The Catholic Church pointed again and again to Canon 1013 § 2, which read: “The essential properties of marriage are unity and indissolubility, which in Christian marriage obtain special firmness by reason of the sacrament.”¹³⁰ At national conferences, influential Protestants like Bishop Lilje of Hannover made comments like: “As a church, we hold the belief that marriage is fundamentally indissoluble.”¹³¹ Jesus, they both argued, made it absolutely clear: “What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.”¹³² Despite the clarity of such comments, positions varied widely as each church viewed divorce through their very confession specific lenses. Seeing marriage as a sacrament, the Catholic Church held that: “A ratified and consummated valid marriage can be dissolved by no human power and for no cause, outside of death.”¹³³ As marriage was not a sacrament in the Protestant tradition, it was subject to the forms and protection that the state proscribed. Therefore, if the state allowed for divorce, the Protestant Church had to do so also.¹³⁴

Divorce could not be separated from the even more controversial topic of remarriage. Even Jesus’ comments from the Gospel of Matthew showed how intertwined the two were. He said: “...whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for

¹²⁹ See, for example, “Ich weiß nicht, warum ich heiratete!,” *SZ*, July 26, 1946. See also, “Heiratslust und Scheidungsleid,” *SZ*, Jan. 29, 1949.

¹³⁰ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 352.

¹³¹ “Ehe unauflöslich,” published on KNA, Jan. 28, 1954. Bishop Lilje here was speaking at the national assembly meeting of the *Innere Mission*.

¹³² Matt. 19,6 (DRB).

¹³³ Canon 1118. Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 385.

¹³⁴ For comments on a report on civil marriage and divorce written by the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria, see “Evangelische Kirche bleibt bei Zivilehen,” *Volksfreund*, Dec. 2, 1953.

fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that shall marry her that is put away, committeth adultery.”¹³⁵ Thus, as postwar divorces turned into 1950’s remarriages, both churches had to clarify their position on the nature of divorce and the prospects of remarriage. This process was usually quite contentious and it provides us with an excellent window to view the internal dynamics of both churches. Also, as it touched their lives at a most personal level, lay members were intimately involved in these discussions and attempted to exert an ever increasing influence over them.

The raw number of postwar divorces in Bavaria shocked contemporary observers. The following chart shows a sampling of the number of civil divorces granted in Bavaria for the period between 1930 and 1960.¹³⁶

1930: 2,966	1933: 2,949	1936: 3,077	1939: 4,464	1940: 3,692
1941: 3,709	1942: 3,780	1943: 4,505	1946: 4,300	1947: 12,249
1948: 15,202	1949: 15,381	1950: 13,311	1951: 9,997	1952: 9,298
1953: 8,254	1954: 7,909	1955: 7,257	1957: 6,728	1960: 6,944

These numbers are a bit misleading and must be approached with caution. First, wartime dislocation and confusion meant that civil cases were seldom heard in 1944 and 1945. This created a backlog of divorce petitions that had to be processed once the courts began operating again. Second, roughly 40% of the couples who divorced in 1947-1950 had married during the war.¹³⁷ An oftentimes hastily arranged marriage followed by the extended absence of the husband was not, as one can imagine, a very good recipe for a stable relationship. Third, the “divorce boom” ran parallel to the previously mentioned

¹³⁵ Matt. 19,9 (DRB)

¹³⁶ StJBB, vol. 27 (1961), 25.

¹³⁷ StJBB, vol. 24 (1952), 43.

“marriage boom.” The years from 1947 to 1950 had the highest number of marriages for any period since 1919-1921. Finally, the explosion in the number of divorces abated as the postwar situation improved.

A breakdown of the number of divorces that takes confessional adherence into account is only possible for the years up to 1946 but some general trends can be detected.¹³⁸ For the sake of simplicity, only single confession marriages will be considered here. Of the 4,300 divorces granted in 1946, 3,127 included single confession partners (2,333 Catholic, 794 Protestant). At 74.6 % and 25.4% respectively, this corresponds quite accurately to the roughly 75% Catholic - 25% Protestant split in Bavaria. In 1936, these numbers were slightly different as Protestants made up roughly 35% of the total number of single confession couples granted a divorce. This percentage dropped to 32% by 1938 and was down to 27% by 1942. While it is difficult to track these numbers deeper into the postwar due to a lack of information, one does see patterns in the number of divorces granted at the state court in Munich (which served the primarily Catholic south) and the one in Nuremberg (for the more Protestant north) that suggest that this downward trend reversed itself. The percentages from 1936 are most likely a good rule of thumb to follow.¹³⁹ These suggest that Protestants were more likely to get a divorce, but not overwhelmingly so. Thus, it would be difficult to argue that this was a primarily Protestant problem.

Despite these caveats, many religious observers felt that the institution of marriage was in danger. Although divorce rates dropped in the 1950's, many pointed out that they were still almost twice as high as during the Nazi period. They were also

¹³⁸ StJBB, vol. 23 (1947), 48. Statistics concerning the confessional adherence of divorcees are not present in any of the subsequent volumes.

¹³⁹ StJBB, vol. 24 (1952), 42. StJBB, vol. 26, 28.

distressed by the fact that women were increasingly willing to call for an end to the marriage.¹⁴⁰ In 1946, 56% of the divorces granted in Bavaria had been initiated by men.¹⁴¹ By 1950, that number was almost equal.¹⁴² By 1957, women did so almost twice as often as men.¹⁴³ Women were also more likely to be considered the guilty party in the divorce proceedings. In 1948, during the peak of the divorce boom, the breakdown for the guilty party was as follows: 10.5% neither, 30.8% both, 25.6% woman, 33.1% man.¹⁴⁴ While these percentages would change dramatically as the 1950's progressed, a precedent had been set that was not soon forgotten.¹⁴⁵ Marital collapse was seen as detrimental to the family and particularly to children. The reports of church welfare organizations seemed to support this fear as a large number of the children under their care stemmed from divorced families.¹⁴⁶ Some kind of action needed to be taken to correct this crisis.

Once again, these efforts took place in two distinct, but interrelated spheres. There is an important body of literature concerning how both churches applied political pressure in an attempt to repeal the eased Nazi divorce laws that had been carried over by the Allies in 1946.¹⁴⁷ In 1938, marriage laws were rewritten to bring them into line with Nazi racial policy. While most of the new measures concentrated on eugenic concerns, one of them declared "marital disintegration" (*Ehezerüttung*) – strictly defined this was where a couple had been living separately for three years and the marriage was

¹⁴⁰ BZAR OA 1259: Letter from Josef Koch of Tirschenreuth to BOR, Jan. 10, 1949.

¹⁴¹ StJBB, vol. 23 (1947), 48.

¹⁴² 50.7% to 49.3% respectively. See, StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 28.

¹⁴³ Ibid. 36.3% to 63.7% respectively.

¹⁴⁴ StJBB, vol. 25 (1955), 40.

¹⁴⁵ In 1955, women were deemed the guilty party in only 11.6% of the divorces granted. See, StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 28.

¹⁴⁶ A mixture of reports from religious welfare organizations with sentiments such as these can be found in BZAR OA 1130 and DAW Generalakten 211.

¹⁴⁷ Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 85. See also, Heineman, *What Difference*, 194, 122-125, 154.

considered “fundamentally and irreparably estranged,” but in truth it was a very vague term that was open to wide interpretation by the courts – as legitimate grounds to file for a no-fault divorce. Following the war, the Allied Control Council reviewed German civil law codes to purge them of Nazi influence. While the racial restrictions and so-called “Aryan codes” were absent from the revised marriage laws released on Feb. 20, 1946, the eased divorce laws remained. Divorce for reasons of “marital disintegration” was codified as Par. 48.¹⁴⁸

Both churches felt that Par. 48 had amplified the postwar divorce boom and was a danger to the institution of marriage.¹⁴⁹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, they argued that the prospects of an easy divorce made it all the more likely that couples would enter into ill-conceived marriages without stopping to consider the gravity of marriage and the sacrifices it entailed. However, their efforts to secure political reform fell flat. Illustrating once again that the churches and other conservatives were not always of like mind, the CDU and CSU were not willing to complicate Civil Code reform discussions with hardline, anti-divorce policies drawn from church initiatives. The parties were much more concerned with how to best realize Article 3 of the Basic Law, which guaranteed the equal rights of men and women, in revisions to the Civil Code. The political left was

¹⁴⁸ EAM NL Faulhaber 5986: Pamphlet entitled “Kein Damm gegen Ehescheidungen,” written by Dr. Otto Gritschender and distributed by the Archdiocese of Munich, 1950. See also, Ernst Wolf, Gerhard Lüke, Herbert Hax, *Scheidung und Scheidungsrecht: Grundfragen der Ehescheidung in Deutschland* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1959), 78-90.

¹⁴⁹ For example, see LKAN LkR 2308: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Nov. 10-12, 1947. While no-fault divorces were rare, the churches did have something of a point here. Throughout the period under study, Par. 48 was consistently the second most common ground given for a conventional divorce. The first was Par. 43 (misc. marriage failures). See StJBB, vol. 25 (1955), 40. StJBB, vol. 27 (1961), 26. For example, in 1950, 9,127 divorces were granted on the grounds of Par. 43 (69% of the total number of divorces) compared to 1,958 for Par. 48 (14.7%). The next closest was Par. 42 (adultery) at 1,625 (12.2%). In 1954, the numbers were: Par. 43, 5,999 (76%); Par. 48, 1,086 (13.7%); Par. 42, 569 (7.2%). By 1959, the numbers were: Par. 43, 5,615; Par. 48, 672; Par. 42, 349.

also unreceptive as they felt that estranged partners should be able to end their marriages if they so desired.¹⁵⁰

Their efforts frustrated, the churches looked for different means to influence political decisions. Deciding that a personal approach was best, the Protestant Established Church Council asked Bishop Hans Meiser to speak with the Bavarian Minister of Justice personally to see if anything could be done about the streamlined divorce proceedings. He did so on two separate occasions, but neither produced any tangible results.¹⁵¹ The Catholic Church took a more public route. Pamphlet campaigns were used to not only step up the pressure on politicians and law makers, but also to convince the laity of the need to stay married. The Diocese of Würzburg published a pamphlet called “Save Marriage and the Family!” (*Rettet Ehe und Familie*) in 1953.¹⁵² It began: “In Holland, a breach in the dams and the flooding of the sea carries with it widespread death and ruin. Feverishly, they work day and night to repair the dams and pump the water back into the sea. A different kind of flood threatens to destroy marriage and the family, or at least seriously damage it, throughout western Germany.” That danger, the pamphlet made clear, was Par. 48, the so-called the “Brown-Red divorce law”(because the Nazis had introduced it and the Allied Control Council kept it in 1946 as a way to keep the Soviet Union happy), and the casualness that it brought to divorce. The pamphlet continues: “How easy it is for the adulterous man to get rid of his wife, who has given him her youth, love and years of loyal service, and leave her to take care of herself!” The diocesan authorities hammered home Jesus’ message on the indissoluble

¹⁵⁰ Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood*, 85-6. Heineman, *What Difference*, 154.

¹⁵¹ LKAN LkR 2308: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Nov. 10-12, 1947. In the same file, see also Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, April 12-14, 1954.

¹⁵² DAW Generalakten 627/2: Flyer entitled “Rettet Ehe und Familie!” written by BOW, Feb. 20, 1953.

nature of marriage from the Gospel of Matthew and concluded: “No pope, no bishop, no judge, and least of all a parliament, even when it is composed of several hundred people, can divide a legally concluded and consummated marriage, only death!” Bishop Döpfner considered this message so important that he ordered 300,000 copies and informed all clergy members that it should be hand delivered by lay people to every family in the diocese. Those living in mixed confessional marriages were particularly singled out as needing to hear its message. He went on to say that it would be best if Catholic youth groups were given the job of distributing the pamphlet as it would give them more of an occasion to actually read it.¹⁵³ Other dioceses ordered copies of the leaflet for similar distribution drives.¹⁵⁴

Despite all these efforts, eased divorce laws remained on the books through the period under study.¹⁵⁵ In fact, campaigns like those carried out in Würzburg oftentimes only served to aggravate the situation. The Federal Minister of Justice, Dr. Dehler, wrote not one, but two strongly worded letters to the diocesan authorities in Würzburg demanding that they retract the pamphlet.¹⁵⁶ Divorce laws, the minister argued, would be addressed after the changes necessitated by Article 3 of the Federal Constitution were realized in the Civil Code and until that time the churches should abide by the current laws. Vicar General Fuchs wrote back saying that the church could not compromise on such a fundamental issue and that the time for action was now. Needless to say, tensions ran high through the remainder of the 1950's as neither side would give in.

¹⁵³ DAW Generalakten 627/2: Letter from Bishop Döpfner to all pastoral care providers in the Diocese of Würzburg, Feb. 25, 1953.

¹⁵⁴ See, for example, DAW Generalakten 627/2: Letter from BOP to BOW, Mar. 18, 1953.

¹⁵⁵ Marriage and family laws were not amended until 1961, see Heineman, *What Difference*, 154.

¹⁵⁶ DAW Generalakten 627/2: Letters from Federal Minister of Justice Dr. Dehler to Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg, April 22, 1953 and May 28, 1953. It should be noted that Dehler (FDP) was known for his anti-clericalism.

The churches also failed in their efforts at political reform of a different kind. In 1905, the Bavarian Ministry of Justice decreed that the local pastor or priest should be notified when a couple filed for a divorce. In this way, special pastoral care could be provided. This provision had been cancelled during the Nazi period. Following the war, both churches were very interested in renewing this practice as they felt it gave them a last chance to save the marriage. Overburdened clergy members, particularly in large communities, often couldn't keep track of their parishioners' marital affairs and didn't realize there was a problem until it was too late.

The Catholic and Protestant churches worked together to petition the Bavarian Ministry of Justice in 1948 to bring back the measure. Saying that the practice would be a violation of the Bavarian Constitution, the American military government denied their request.¹⁵⁷ Hoping that a German government might be more understanding, the churches petitioned the Bavarian government in 1954 and 1958 to reinstate the practice¹⁵⁸. They received a similar response. Attempts at political reform had once again failed, yet the problem of rising divorce rates remained. Added to this were the growing numbers of divorcees seeking remarriage. No matter which way political winds blew, the churches had to fulfill their primary mission of administering the sacraments

¹⁵⁷ Here, they were referring to Article 107, Par. 5 of the 1946 Bavarian Constitution. It reads: "No one is obliged to disclose his religious convictions. The authorities have the right to inquire as to membership in a religious society only insofar as rights and duties are dependent thereon or a legally prescribed statistical census so requires." Because of this, the courts could not ask partners seeking a divorce to state their religious affiliations. This explains why confessional demographics regarding divorce are unavailable after 1946. A copy of the Bavarian constitution can be found in John Lane and James Pollock (eds.), *Source Materials*, 141-70. For the letter explaining this, see: BZAR Generalia 520.00: Copy of letter from Leonard J. Ganse of the legal department of the American Military Government of Bavaria to Bavarian Minister President and Ministry of Justice, Feb. 19, 1949. The news was passed on to the churches later that year. See, BZAR Generalia 520.00: Letter from Bavarian State Ministry of Education and Culture to all (Arch-)Diocesan Authorities in Bavaria and the LkR, Aug. 9, 1949. See also, LKAN LkR 2308: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Aug. 23-25, 1949.

¹⁵⁸ LKAN LkR 2308: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, April 12-14, 1954. In same file, see Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, July 15-17, 1958.

and providing pastoral care to the faithful. Thus, one must look at the point of contact between the churches and the laity to see how each church faced these twin problems at the ground level.

Because the Catholic Church viewed marriage as a sacrament, divorce was a particularly sensitive topic. Perhaps summarizing the Catholic position most succinctly, diocesan authorities in Würzburg replied to the query of a lawyer involved in a divorce case with the following: “It is the teaching of the Catholic Church, that only death can separate a legally closed and, through marital relations, consummated marriage. The separation of a church ordained marriage is always a great sin and should therefore be avoided at all cost.”¹⁵⁹

There was one way around this hard and fast rule. One could file for an annulment with the consistorium of a diocese to say that the marriage had not been entered into in good faith or that certain information – such as impotence or a lack of desire to have children – that would have invalidated the marriage proposal had been withheld. This was, according to Canon Law, the only way to authentically end a properly conducted Catholic marriage.¹⁶⁰ The consistoria, however, worked very slowly and granted annulments in only a few cases each year. For example, the Consistorium for the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising handled a total of 137 cases in 1947, 62 of which were new, and delivered a verdict in 37 of them. By 1949, the total was up to 196, 67 of which were new, and only 29 verdicts were delivered. For 1951, 235 cases were pending, 79 of which were new, and a verdict was delivered in 57 cases. Of these 57, the

¹⁵⁹ DAW Generalakten 624/1: Letter from BOW to Dr. Dr. Curt Illinger of Münnerstadt, April 23, 1950.

¹⁶⁰ Canon #1038, Par. 1: “Only the supreme authority of the Church declares authentically whenever divine law impedes or invalidates marriage.” Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 358.

marriage was annulled in 33 cases and affirmed in 24.¹⁶¹ Consistoria records are sealed out of privacy concerns, but one can detect a general trend in these statistics. The number of cases brought before the consistoria increased every year and probably continued to do so throughout the 1950's. Overburdened, but unwilling to compromise the integrity of so important an institution with hasty decisions, Catholic consistoria officials had to simply grind on as best they could. A backlog of cases quickly developed and an already tedious and uncertain process was slowed even further.

The hard line of the Catholic Church on divorce and the snail's pace of its marriage courts severely displeased many Catholic lay people. In particular, the innocent parties of civil divorces felt that they hadn't done anything wrong and should not be bound to a marriage that was terminated for reasons outside their control. This became even more complicated when there were plans for a second marriage. Diocesan authorities received numerous letters from individuals and their parents begging to be released from their first marriages so they could enter another. For example, one father wrote a plea on behalf of his son to the authorities in Regensburg. His son had married a woman in a Catholic service before the war. When he returned from the front he found his wife living with another man. She initiated divorce proceedings. The son was eventually considered the innocent party and given custody of the children. Since that time, he had met another woman and wanted to get remarried in a religious service so as to set up an "ordained" household for his children. Was it possible, the father asked, for him to have a religious marriage and still have access to the sacraments? The father wrote over and over that his son was completely innocent and that to abandon him in his

¹⁶¹ EAM NL Faulhaber 5040: Yearly report of the Consistorium of the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, 1951. Unfortunately, results for other years or in other dioceses could not be found.

time of need would compromise all the hard work that had been put into raising him to be a good Catholic.¹⁶²

The diocesan authorities wrote back saying that they could emphasize with the son's plight, but that they were bound to uphold God's law. A properly conducted Catholic marriage was valid until the death of one or the other partners. The son could still receive the sacraments if he did not get remarried, but there was no possibility of him securing a church marriage while his original wife still lived.¹⁶³

Stuck in what they considered to be an untenable situation and feeling slighted by their local religious authorities, numerous lay people decided to plead their case to higher authorities. Many wrote to the Archbishop of Munich, the principal authority of the Catholic Church in Bavaria, asking him to overturn the ruling of their home diocese. Each of these were rebuffed, usually with a phrase like: "Due to the heavy burden of official duties for his large archdiocese, it is not possible for the Cardinal of Munich to review requests from other dioceses."¹⁶⁴ Others decided to go straight to the top and wrote to the pope himself.¹⁶⁵ Officials in Rome simply sent the letters back to the authors' home diocese for them to send a reply.¹⁶⁶ Once again, the answer was the same. A properly conducted Catholic marriage was for life.

Logical consequences also stemmed from the Catholic Church's focus on the term: "properly conducted marriage." Couples who had only been married in a civil

¹⁶² BZAR OA 1259: Letter from Otto Hartung of Wiesau to BOR, Jan. 4, 1949. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 5993: Letter from Georg Guggemos of Kressen by Oy to Cardinal Faulhaber, May 31, 1946.

¹⁶³ BZAR OA 1259: Letter from BOR to Otto Hartung, Jan. 10, 1949. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 5993: Letter from EOM to Georg Guggemos, June 25, 1946.

¹⁶⁴ EAM NL Faulhaber 5993: Letter from Maria Remlein of Lohr am Main to Cardinal Faulhaber, June 7, 1950. Reply of EOM, June 16, 1950.

¹⁶⁵ BZAR Generalia 523.30: Letter from Werner Wilde of Sulzbach-Rosenberg to Pope John XXIII, Mar. 5, 1959. In the same file, see also Letter from Reinhold Ivan to Pope John XXIII, Dec. 30, 1958.

¹⁶⁶ BZAR Generalia 523.30: Letter from BOR to Werner Wilde, Mar. 12, 1959. In the same file, see also Letter from BOR to Reinhold Ivan, Feb. 6, 1959.

service or Catholics who entered into mixed confessional marriages that were sealed in another church were not, in the church's eyes, officially married. Therefore, they could get a civil divorce without losing their standing in the church.¹⁶⁷ Not only this, they could also secure a Catholic service for their second marriage (as the first one did not exist in the eyes of the church).¹⁶⁸ While it was fully in line with Catholic teachings concerning marriage, this policy infuriated many lay people. Individuals who had gone against the teaching of the church and secured a purely civil marriage or were married in another church could divorce and remarry at will. In the mean time, those who had gone to the trouble of getting a religious marriage were being punished for their loyalty to the church.¹⁶⁹

Despite being out of favor with the church, divorced Catholics (who had married in the church) who remained single until death, or the death of their original partner, were still eligible to receive the sacraments and have a church burial. If they wanted to get remarried in a civil service while their original partner still lived, deeper sins were afoot. As the original marriage was still considered binding, the person was thus married twice. In the eyes of the church, they were bigamists. Canon 2356 made their fate clear: "Bigamists, that is, those who, notwithstanding a conjugal bond, attempt to enter another marriage, even a civil one as they say, are by that fact infamous; and if, spurning the

¹⁶⁷ Missionaries and staff at marriage counseling centers almost encouraged people living in such unions to get a divorce as it would end the offense that their "marriage" caused. See, DAW Generalakten 632: Letter from Cath. Marriage Counseling Center of Würzburg to BOW, Sept. 9, 1953. DAW Generalakten 631: Letter from Leokadia Henkel of Schweinfurt to BOW, Feb. 15, 1954. DAW Generalakten 630: Letter from Caritas Association of Aschaffenburg to BOW, Mar. 1, 1961.

¹⁶⁸ BZAR OA 1259: Letter from the Cathedral Rectory of Buffalo-New York to Erzbischöflichen Kanzlei München, Sept. 27, 1952. Reply from BOR, Oct. 20, 1952. BZAR Generalia 523.20: Letter from Ludwig Vogl of Regensburg to BOR, May 31, 1955. Reply of BOR, June 2, 1955. BZAR Generalia 521.30: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Amberg to Bishop Buchberger, Jan. 28, 1946. Reply of BOR, Jan. 30, 1948. DAW Generalakten 624/1: Letter from Ms. S. to BOW, June 10, 1949. Reply of BOW, Sept. 5, 1949.

¹⁶⁹ This displeasure is discussed at length in BZAR Generalia 521.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Geisling über Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 12, 1951.

admonition of the Ordinary, they stay in the illicit relationship, they are to be excommunicated according to the gravity of the deed or struck with personal interdict.”¹⁷⁰

Despite such tough rhetoric, more and more people decided to get remarried in a purely civil service. Marriage statistics bear this out. The following chart shows the number of civil marriages carried out in Bavaria that included at least one previously divorced partner. The percentages are related to the total number of marriages filed that year.¹⁷¹

Year	Single man/ div. woman	Widower/ div. woman	Div. man / single woman	Divorced man / widow	Divorced man/ div. woman	Total # of Divorcees Remarried
1946	1291 (1.5%)	466 (0.5%)	2,619 (3.0%)	946 (1.1%)	665 (0.8%)	5,987 (6.9%)
1947	2,309 (2.4%)	613 (0.7%)	4,504 (4.8%)	1,770 (1.9%)	1,324 (1.4%)	10,520 (11.2%)
1950	2,997 (3.3%)	759 (0.8%)	5,625 (6.1%)	2,121 (2.3%)	2,364 (2.6%)	13,866 (15.1%)
1955	2,052 (2.6%)	596 (0.8%)	4,238 (5.3%)	667 (0.8%)	1,920 (2.4%)	9,473 (11.8%)
1957	1,846 (2.2%)	696 (0.9%)	3,845 (4.7%)	533 (0.7%)	1,843 (2.3%)	8,763 (10.7%)

¹⁷⁰ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 748.

¹⁷¹ Numbers taken from: StJBB, vol. 23 (1947), 45. StJBB, vol. 24 (1952), 40. StJBB, vol. 26 (1958), 26.

These numbers are very revealing if one approaches them with the necessary caution. First, one must acknowledge that confessional adherence is not mentioned in them. Thus, we cannot determine whether the adherents of one or the other confession were over- or underrepresented. Second, they do not tell us if the original marriage of the divorced partner was a purely civil one or had been confirmed in the church. These concerns are balanced out to some degree by the knowledge that Catholic clergymen and religious observers would have seen these exact same numbers and wouldn't have known either. Working from some of the same assumptions made here (Catholics making up 75% of the population and Protestants being only slightly more likely to get a divorce), it is no doubt that many expected the worst and considered a sizeable percentage of the above listed couples to be Catholic. Whether this was true or not is difficult to determine, but as perception is often more important than reality such numbers left a lasting memory.

When looking at them, one sees a noticeable spike around 1950 in the number of divorcees getting remarried. It does not seem to be too far of a stretch, to link this phenomenon with the "divorce boom" of the previous three years. It would make sense to argue that a large number of the people who got a divorce during the "boom" years of 1947-1949 chose to remarry in the early 1950's. As the 1950's wore on and conditions stabilized, these numbers began to slowly drop. Despite this, a precedent had been set and the Catholic Church was not soon to forget it. With anywhere from 10 – 15% of the total number of marriages conducted in Bavaria every year being, in their eyes, examples of bigamy, Catholic officials felt that something had to be done. Just what that should entail was, once again, the topic of much debate.

Canon 2356 was universally binding for Catholics. Bigamy was a sin worthy of excommunication. However, questions remained as to how to carry out that sentence at the local level. In every Bavarian diocese except Würzburg, an announcement in church of the names of those to be excommunicated was deemed at some point to be unnecessary. Instead, the local priest would deliver the notice of excommunication privately, perform the ritual of excommunication in church without disclosing names, and talk more generally about the sin of bigamy and the Catholic stance on the sacrament of marriage. Similar reasons were usually given for this strategy. Many lay members found the public announcement deeply distasteful, it was a tremendous psychological burden on the clergy, and, perhaps most importantly, it closed off any chance of future reconciliation between the guilty party and the church.¹⁷²

At the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg the question of what to do about second marriages came to a head. A careful study of the tape script from the proceedings and the meetings that led up to them shows how divisive the topic of second marriages could be within the church. Vicar General Vinzenz Fuchs, the seasoned and quite conservative mentor of the young Bishop Julius Döpfner, felt that the hard line was absolutely necessary. The names of those excommunicated for bigamy had to be read aloud in church so as to clearly show the church's disfavor. At the synod, he said: "The main point, I repeat, is that a consciousness of the sin of bigamy must be put into the people once again." If it wasn't, Fuchs argued, the damn would be opened to a flood of divorces and second marriages. Fuchs' concluded his remarks on bigamy in apocalyptic

¹⁷² *Diözesansynode der Erzdiözese Bamberg 1946* (Bamberg: Sebaldu Verlag, 1946), 35. See also *Diözesansynode des Bistums Eichstätt 1952* (Eichstätt: Ph. Brönnner und M. Daentler, 1952), 24. BZAR Generalia 521.00: Letter from Bischöfliche Ordinariat Regensburg to Cath. Pfarramt Geisling über Regensburg, Jan. 16, 1951.

tones: “Gentlemen, we must have strength as we are slipping. Either we go under amidst the general secularization and softness of the time or we priests stand firm and pull others to higher ground.”¹⁷³

Such strong rhetoric was not without reason. While many clergy members felt that Fuchs’ position was necessary and fully justifiable, an increasingly large number began to see it as overly harsh and untenable. At the 1950 deans’ conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, several important churchmen challenged Fuchs on the issue. They said that the public announcement of excommunication only closed the door to future reconciliation and risked losing the children of the guilty parties to Catholic religious education. Fuchs’ responded: “The people have been warned before.” Following the Vicar General’s lead, and with full support from Bishop Döpfner, the conference formally asserted that the excommunication decree for the sin of bigamy must be made from the chancel and that the names should be called out. Priests were also instructed to conduct yearly examinations of civil marriage records and compare them to the parish roles to check for any cases of bigamy.¹⁷⁴ Similar voices of concern were raised at deans’ conferences in 1951 and 1952. Both times, however, Vicar General Fuchs and Bishop Döpfner held fast.¹⁷⁵

It would seem unfair to dismiss the hard line of Fuchs and Döpfner as simply crass conservatism or power play. One gets a sense that they saw the bigamy question as

¹⁷³ DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, Oct. 11-14, 1954, 115.

¹⁷⁴ DAW Generalakten 376: Minutes from the Deans’ Conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, Jan. 31, 1950. For the official report, see “Oberhirtliche Weisung,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt*, no. 5 (Mar. 1, 1950): 38. Döpfner and Fuchs here were mainly seeking to firm up what had been very ambiguous terrain before. Given the low number of divorces and remarriages taking place in Lower Franconia before the Nazi period, diocesan authorities in Würzburg had not made specific ordinances relating to Canon #2356. The postwar divorce and marriage booms highlighted this fact and led to inconsistent policies that drew the ire of the laity.

¹⁷⁵ DAW Generalakten 376: Minutes from Deans’ Conferences on Mar. 6, 1951 and Nov. 28, 1952.

an existential crisis for the church. They accepted that the danger of losing the children of those excommunicated on the grounds of bigamy to Catholic religious education was very real. The clergy were instructed to spare no effort in pastoral care for those excommunicated so that they could find their way back to the church.¹⁷⁶ Nor were they unfeeling to the predicament of the clergy. Realizing that this was a very unpopular dictate and that many priests simply avoided doing it, they tried to ensure that it was carried out uniformly across the diocese. If some read the sentence publicly but others did not, it undermined the integrity of the ruling and brought about the inevitable scorn of the laity over inconsistency. In the end, however, both Fuchs and Döpfner saw the dissolution of the godly ordained institution of marriage as one of the greatest threats facing the church. This brought, Vicar General Fuchs made clear at the 1952 conference, “the destruction of the family and of all private and public moral life.”¹⁷⁷ With such high stakes, there was no room for compromise.

Despite the very clear position taken by Vicar General Fuchs and Bishop Döpfner, the question of what to do about Catholics who entered into a second marriage was still unresolved. At the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg, this theme was handled by the 7th Committee (Marriage and Family). While many of its members shared a common background and were quite collegial, strong disagreements over the proper punishment for those living in bigamy were expressed.

In his report given at the second preparatory meeting of the committee, Dr. Ernst Rösser, a professor of church law at the theological seminary in Würzburg, argued that while bigamy was unacceptable, the public announcement of excommunication was

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ DAW Generalakten 376: Minutes from the Deans' Conference, Nov. 28, 1952.

counterproductive. Calling people out in church only served to damage the essential trust relationship between the priest and his congregation. Bigamy must be punished, but it should be done so privately and with the utmost care. Only general statements about the sinfulness of bigamy should be read from the pulpit.¹⁷⁸

Other voices also called for the end of the public announcement. Offering a female presence in what were usually all male affairs, Marianne Schöning, diocesan chairperson of the Catholic Women's League, argued against the current practice. Despite all the talk of continued pastoral care, Schöning pointed out that the calling out of names in church only served to permanently alienate those excommunicated. Worse still, their children were likely to be lost to Catholic religious education as well.¹⁷⁹ Speaking on behalf of many priests who felt the practice placed too large of a psychological burden on them, Dr. Alois Schebler, priest in the community of Brendlorenzen, raised his concerns. He said: "The debate is heated, no one likes to make the announcement, one is put in a very embarrassing situation."¹⁸⁰

Others, however, felt it was necessary to draw a line in the sand. Father Georg Ramsperger of Kitzingen countered Prof. Rösser saying that the public announcement had to be made. General comments about the sinfulness of bigamy were all too easily ignored. On the other hand, he concluded, it was absolutely essential that all clergy in the diocese, and he hoped later on in all of Germany, accept their duty to make the announcement so as to avoid any charges of inconsistency. Vicar General Fuchs closed the session saying that while he acknowledged the legitimate concerns of those who were

¹⁷⁸ DAW Generalakten 755: Minutes from the second preparatory meeting of the 7th committee of the diocesan synod of Würzburg, July 12, 1954.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

against the public announcement, he still felt it was the only way to halt the flood of remarriages. Turning to more practical concerns, he said that if the current policy were continued, priests must be taught to handle the name calling with extreme care. This was not the time to stir up the fear of hell. That would only lose the person to the church forever. Nor should it be done in a matter of fact tone that downplayed the significance of the event. Rather, he should, it should be like the grieving shepherd who has lost one of his sheep. Sympathy should be shown to the tragedy of the situation and pastoral care should be continually provided.¹⁸¹

The report of Prof. Rösser and those of the other committee members were all sent to Bishop Döpfner in preparation for the synod. Due to the synod's tight schedule, discussion concerning bigamy was somewhat limited. Citing many of the reasons mentioned before, several priests and district superintendents raised their concerns about the public announcement of excommunication. Vicar General Fuchs' before mentioned speech about the need to reestablish an awareness of the sin of bigamy before the church was awash in a flood of infamy ended the debate. Bishop Döpfner spoke about the gravity of the situation, thanked those priests who had faithfully carried out the public announcement, questioned the consciences of those who hadn't, and called for a show of hands before making his decision. 70 voted to maintain the current practice of public announcement, 54 voted against it, and 27 abstained.¹⁸²

Bishop Döpfner was thus faced with a serious dilemma, one that really sums up the position of the Catholic Church in general in regards to the question of second marriages. He still maintained his belief that a public announcement of

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² DAW Generalakten 747: Synod Tape script, 104-119.

excommunication was necessary. It was the only way to let the laity know how seriously the church took remarriage. However, he also had to acknowledge the very real concerns of clergy members and laypeople about the lasting consequences of such actions. In the end, Döpfner decided on something of a middle course. The public announcement was to remain, but the calling out of names was to be removed.¹⁸³ In smaller communities, the priest was to announce each case of bigamy as it happened. Without naming names, he was to explain the church's stance on bigamy, perform the excommunication, and remind the congregation of their duty to pray for the souls of those led astray. As most people in the community would already know who he was talking about, or would soon find out, the threat remained, but the priest was spared the burden of actually reading out the names. In larger communities, the priest was to perform this same ritual three times during the year and simply list the number of cases that had come about. Döpfner emphasized that pastoral contact should not be cut off to those living in bigamy and that all efforts should be made to try and lead them back to the flock.

Döpfner's compromise ended official debate over the topic of bigamy in the diocese of Würzburg for the time being, but it certainly didn't please everyone.¹⁸⁴ Moderates still considered the measure too strong, while conservatives thought it had no cohesive power.¹⁸⁵ Stuck at this crossroad, the question of what to do about divorce and remarriage would plague the church throughout the remainder of the 1950's.

¹⁸³ Ibid. For the official ruling see *Diözesansynode Würzburg 1954* (Würzburg: Fränkische Gesellschaftsdruckerei Würzburg, 1955), 37.

¹⁸⁴ The topic of bigamy was not raised at any of the subsequent deans' conferences in the 1950's. See DAW Generalakten 376.

¹⁸⁵ For complaints that the proposed change would be too weak, see DAW Generalakten 755: Letter from Cath. Pfarramt Heiligkreuz in Würzburg to Bishop Döpfner, Oct. 18, 1954.

The controversy surrounding second marriages that played out at the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg says a great deal about the Catholic Church and its efforts to reestablish “God’s ordained order” for marriage after World War II. While Canon Law clearly defined divorce and remarriage as sins, serious rifts developed within the Church over what to do about them at the local level. Some priests and diocesan authorities felt that no matter how unpopular it might make them, a hard line had to be followed. Public excommunication with the names included was the only way to let the laity know of the church’s seriousness. One should not label such attitudes as unfeeling or crass. Rather, they stemmed from the genuine belief that the institution of marriage faced an existential crisis. Such views were certainly not universal. Even if they accepted the idea that marriage was endangered, many clergy members and lay people drew different conclusions. Sympathy and understanding for individuals caught in these circumstances, they argued, was the best means of pastoral care. Tough measures only served to permanently alienate those excommunicated from the church and risked losing future generations to Catholic religious education. Aside from highlighting these divisions within the Catholic Church, the questions concerning second marriages posed at the 1954 diocesan synod in Würzburg are also illuminating in that one can see how the sacramental nature of marriage in the Catholic tradition fundamentally shaped the parameters of the debate. With salvation very much at stake, there was little room to maneuver. While some priests and active lay people complained about *how* people were excommunicated for bigamy, there were never any discussions concerning *whether or not* they should be excommunicated for bigamy.

The response of the laity is also revealing. The large number of couples seeking divorce and remarriage against the will of the church indicates that many considered decisions regarding marital status to be a personal matter. The church had clearly lost a great deal of influence when it came to marriage. As it touched so intimately upon one of the church's three core pillars for postwar Christian renewal, this development was all the more painful. But one cannot simply say that the church failed in its efforts to reinvigorate religious life. Such comments would leave one at pains to explain the extreme lengths that some lay members went to (even so far as writing to the Pope) in an effort to receive church recognition for their marital choices. Obviously, some people really did care what the church thought and were deeply pained if they found themselves out of its good graces. While this does not change the fundamental fact that they did make decisions deemed unacceptable by the church, it does show that while an ever larger number of people began to drift out of the church's orbit, a core group sought to remain well ensconced within it.

The Protestant stance on divorce and remarriage produced quite different problems and reactions from the clergy and laity. Perhaps best summing up the Protestant position on divorce, the Established Church Council wrote: "The Protestant-Lutheran Church knows two sacraments: baptism and communion. The Protestant Church does accept that marriage is indissoluble; that it cannot be broken like any other contract. To the Protestant Church it makes no difference if the marriage was carried out in the church or if it was only a civil one. In both cases it is an ordained marriage. However, we are often faced with the fact that marriages are broken through the guilt of

individuals. The church cannot approve of such dissolutions, but it also can't overlook the fact that marriages are indeed broken due to the hard heartedness of man.”¹⁸⁶

Marriage was not a sacrament in the Protestant tradition, but it was still a contract between the couple and Christ. As mentioned earlier, pastors spoke constantly of the need to consider the gravity of this before rushing into marriage. However, they were also of the belief that the inherent sinfulness of humanity had tainted God's gift of marriage. This made it necessary to follow the rules and procedures set forth by the state concerning marriage to ensure the survival of the institution. As the state allowed for divorce, it was deemed acceptable, if unfortunate and to be avoided at all costs, in the eyes of the Protestant Church.¹⁸⁷

The position had far reaching consequences. First, it allowed for the rather embarrassing possibility of pastors getting divorced. The church took a very dim view of this as it quite necessarily undermined their fundamental message concerning marriage. In cases where the pastor was deemed the guilty party, particularly if adultery was the charge, he was immediately released. The pastor was also removed in cases where he seriously abused his wife, even if it did not lead to divorce. Such actions were considered contradictory to the inherent nature of the clerical position. If, however, the pastor's wife was considered the guilty party, then the pastor could continue his work and even get remarried. Pastors in these circumstances could expect a very rigorous analysis of their private life by church officials to determine whether they were indeed the innocent party.

¹⁸⁶ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from LkR to Josef Vogt of Wolfratshausen, May 13, 1959. Similar quotes can be found in “Evangelische Kirche bleibt bei Zivilehen,” *Volksfreund*, Dec. 2, 1953. “Evangelische Kirche zur Ehe,” *Main Post*, Mar. 23, 1954.

¹⁸⁷ KLO, Section II, Par. 8. Divorce should only be considered in cases of “adultery, willful abandonment, threat to one's life, severe physical abuse, and so forth...”

Some pastors who were considered the innocent party in their civil divorces were still released because evidence arose that could have brought their reputation into question.¹⁸⁸

Second, and much more importantly, accepting divorce meant that the Protestant Church also had to allow for remarriage. At first glance, one might assume that this allowance for second marriages meant that all the debates and controversies that so plagued the Catholic Church were non-existent in the Protestant Church. Such views are false. Different problems arose as a result of this position and the church became caught in something of a double bind. Seeking to shore up an institution that had been wracked by Nazi legal changes and war, it desperately tried to reinforce the idea that marriage was fundamentally indissoluble. At the same time it also openly accepted the possibility of divorce and allowed Protestants to get remarried and still be full members of the church. In an effort to balance these competing demands, compromises were made that usually ended up pleasing no one.

For individuals who were considered the innocent party in a civil divorce, remarriage was possible with only the permission of the local pastor. If the pastor had reason to doubt the findings of the court or if objections to the second marriage were raised by congregation members, then the case was sent to the Established Church Council for final determination.¹⁸⁹ When permission was granted, the wedding was supposed to be a simple affair “with all pomp removed.”¹⁹⁰ This was to reflect the church’s displeasure with the marital decisions of the previously divorced partner. As the actual wedding ritual is such an important part of the act of marriage, just what a simple

¹⁸⁸ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from LkR to Lutherisches Kirchenamt of VELKD, Mar. 17, 1952.

¹⁸⁹ KLO, Section II, Par. 9.

¹⁹⁰ KLO, Section II, Par. 14

service “with all pomp removed” actually looked like became a deeply controversial issue.

Thinking that they had done nothing wrong, individuals considered the innocent party of a divorce naturally felt that they were entitled to a full religious wedding. This was even more the case when a divorced partner married someone who had never been married before. Weren't they entitled to a full service? Some pastors agreed with such arguments and allowed for a normal wedding. Others felt that the wedding must be restricted to only its most essential elements. Some went so far as to forbid organ music, flowers, and altar decorations all together. Comparisons were inevitably drawn and stricter pastors were quick to feel the scorn of their laity. Trying to steer clear of such controversies, numerous pastors and district superintendents wrote to the Established Church Council seeking advice. Did “with all pomp removed” mean that there could be organ music but no solos? What about flowers? Could they be on the altar but not behind it? The very specific questions posed in these letters gives us a hint of the level of pressure being applied to pastors by concerned couples and their families.¹⁹¹

For its part, the Established Church Council largely ignored the problem until the mid 1950's. The usual reply was that the pastor must use his best judgment to decide what elements were absolutely essential to the service and which ones were just for show.¹⁹² This only bred inconsistency and further resentment. In 1954, clear guidelines were finally laid out. They were, however, deeply unpopular. The Established Church Council decreed that all excessive decoration was to be removed from weddings that

¹⁹¹ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Heidenheim to LkR, May 16, 1946. In the same file, see also Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Windsbach to LkR, Dec. 5, 1949. Letter from 2nd Pastorate of the Prot. Erlöserkirche in Munich to LkR, July 4, 1954.

¹⁹² LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from LkR to Prot. District Superintendent of Heidenheim, July 4, 1946. In the same file, see Letter from LkR to Prot. District Superintendent of Windsbach, Dec. 19, 1949.

included a person who was previously divorced. In very specific language, it said that while organ music could be used for the singing of communal hymns, solos, choral music, and other musical pieces were not allowed. The altar was to be free of any candle, floral, or other decoration. In every way, this was to be a simple affair. Going further, the council reminded all pastors that they had a personal duty to uphold the ordinances of the church. They said: “In every case, it is a blow against the accepted ordinances of our established church and an irresponsible carelessness in the supervision of the sanctuary when the pastor does not hold the marriage couple to these regulations... The anger that arises from unsympathetic couples or their families as a result of this ruling is in every case a healing anger and should therefore under no circumstances be avoided by the pastor.”¹⁹³ Denied what they felt to be their God given right, lay people facing these prospects complained bitterly and called for a revision of the church regulations from 1922. Such changes would not be made until 1966. The significance of ritual in the wedding thus made the topic of remarriage every bit as controversial in the Protestant Church as it was in the Catholic Church.

Generating even greater conflict was the decision of whether or not to let those considered to be the guilty party of a divorce get remarried in a church service. According to church regulations, such persons could only be remarried if they secured the permission of the Established Church Council.¹⁹⁴ In such cases, the council launched an investigation to determine the nature of the offense that led to divorce, whether they thought it would be repeated, and a host of other concerns. The files from these

¹⁹³ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from LkR to all Prot. District Superintendents, July 12, 1954.

¹⁹⁴ KLO, Section II, Par. 11. Following passage of the nazified 1938 Marriage Laws, the Protestant Church determined that both partners in a no-fault divorce had to seek Established Church Council permission in order to remarry. See, “Trauung Geschiedener,” *Amtsblatt für die evangelische-lutherische Kirche in Bayern r.d.R.* (June 9, 1944): 30.

proceedings are sealed out of privacy concerns, but supplemental evidence suggests that the council was very hesitant to grant its approval. In cases where it did, it was made absolutely clear that the wedding was to be a very modest affair.

This seemingly straightforward division of authority was complicated by the war. Due to the breakdown of communication and transportation, the hierarchies of both churches were forced to grant significant powers to the regular clergy. In 1945, the Protestant Established Church Council decreed that authority for determining if the guilty party of divorces could remarry lay with the district superintendent.¹⁹⁵ In reality, even this was wishful thinking. With little contact to the outside world, the local pastor was usually left to decide by himself whether or not the person should be allowed to remarry.

As conditions improved in Germany in the late 1940's, the Established Church Council quite naturally wanted its authority in this matter, and many others, back. However, many clergymen had grown quite fond of their new found independence and were loathe to relinquish it. The matter came to a head in March 1948, when the Established Church Council decided that it should once again determine such cases.¹⁹⁶ No doubt thinking that the message would be disseminated by those in attendance, the council did not make any kind of formal announcement of this decision to the clergy and only minimal arrangements were made for its execution. What resulted was chaos.

Some pastors either didn't know about the ruling or simply ignored it and continued to make such decisions themselves.¹⁹⁷ Several reasons for the latter approach existed. Personal knowledge of the individuals involved often led pastors to be more

¹⁹⁵ "Kirchliche Trauung," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern r.d.R.* (Sept. 22, 1945): 2.

¹⁹⁶ LKAN LkR 2068: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Mar. 16-18, 1948.

¹⁹⁷ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Naila to LkR, July 17, 1948. In the same file, see also Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Dittenheim to LkR, Aug. 5, 1950.

sympathetic. Also, the desire to avoid conflict with the laity no doubt played a role in many cases. Others argued that tough policies on remarriage were counterproductive as they only encouraged couples to live outside of wedlock.¹⁹⁸

Such beliefs were not uniformly held. Many pastors felt that the rules of the church must be followed and that a strong statement was needed to halt the wave of divorces. For them, approval from the Established Church Council was a must. This stance proved problematic for such clergymen for two reasons. First, the council was ill prepared to handle the enormous number of applications it received as only one council member and a handful of assistants had been set aside for the job. By October 1948, they were receiving an average of 25 new applications per week.¹⁹⁹ Less than a year later, this number had tripled as a result of the remarriage boom that took place around 1949-1950.²⁰⁰ Even with the help of extra assistants, the process slowed to a snail's pace. Decisions sometimes took as long as eight weeks to be reached. Naturally, the couples involved complained bitterly about having their wedding plans held in limbo for such an extended period of time. Second, the Established Church Council was noticeably stricter in its decision making and seems to have denied permission in many cases. These individuals had only to point out the fact that some pastors readily gave their consent to such marriages to show that the church was being ambiguous and inconsistent. The Established Church Council tried to halt such unflattering comparisons in 1950 by officially announcing that no marriage involving the guilty party of a divorce could take

¹⁹⁸ LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Schweinfurt to Prot. Regional Superintendent of Ansbach, Oct. 21, 1948. In the same file, see also Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Sennfeld to LkR, Dec. 16, 1948.

¹⁹⁹ LKAN LkR 2068: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Oct. 19-21, 1948.

²⁰⁰ LKAN LkR 2068: Minutes from Vollsitzung of LkR, Mar.16-17, 1949.

place without its approval.²⁰¹ Many pastors openly flouted such regulations.²⁰² All this meant that pastors who did try to enforce the hard line were subject to the often unbearable scorn of their laity.

As it was a fundamental violation of their strategy for postwar Christian renewal, the Protestant clergy and hierarchy were clearly against the proposition of eased divorced and remarriage. However, Protestant tradition dictated that the laws of the state concerning marriage and divorce must be followed. Thus, they had to allow for both. Inconsistencies and embarrassing break downs in authority resulted from their attempts to balance these two contradictory forces. Some pastors were dead set against divorce and remarriage and felt that a clear message had to be sent to the laity to show the church's disfavor. Others were much more sympathetic to the idea and feared that following a hard line would only encourage couples to choose cohabitation or purely civil unions. Similar disagreements were seen in the Catholic Church, but they could never progress to the point that they did in the Protestant Church due to the sacramental nature of marriage in the Catholic tradition. As Protestant pastors and church officials soon discovered, there were inherent benefits and risks to having a more ambiguous policy.

For their part, Protestant lay people were quick to pick up on these internal tensions within the church to press their own agenda. One quickly notices that the softer policy on divorce and remarriage in the Protestant Church by no means made them dead issues. Catholics may have complained about not being able to get remarried, but Protestants grumbled just as much over questions of how and when they could. In the end, however, one still sees a desire on the part of at least some Protestants to secure the

²⁰¹ LKAN LkR 2068: Minutes from Haussitzung of LkR, Oct. 17, 1950.

²⁰² LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Kitzingen to LkR, June 14, 1952.

blessing of the church for their marital decisions. While many balked at the church's policy on remarriage and chose to either cohabit with their new partner or have a purely civil service, others decided that the religious component of marriage was important enough to warrant no small amount of effort in seeking the good graces of the church. The church had indeed lost a great deal of influence over the moral decision making process of its laity, but it was by no means a spent force.

Mixed Confessional Marriage

Despite the ample and serious warnings of both churches, more and more people began to choose marriage partners from outside their confession after World War II. Mixed confessional marriage became one of the hottest and most contentious issues facing the two churches. Evidence of this can be seen in the special pastoral care letter on the subject released by the German Bishop's Conference in 1958.²⁰³ Here, the highest authorities in German Catholicism spoke in no uncertain terms about what they saw as the true crisis of their time. It begins: "From the press and radio you know that mixed marriage stood at center of our concerns and debates at the last bishop's conference. The number of mixed marriages has risen to become a flood. The heart of the church bleeds from the loss of hundreds of thousands. We bishops can no longer remain silent..."

Despite the absolute seriousness that this document displays, mixed confessional marriage is one of the least studied aspects of marriage and marital life in postwar West

²⁰³ For a copy, see "Gemeinsames Hirtenschreiben der deutschen Bischöfe über die Mischehe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1958): 1-2. This pastoral letter was read aloud in every Catholic Church in Germany the following Sunday.

Germany.²⁰⁴ In light of the ecumenical breakthroughs of the 1960's, the hard line of both the Catholic and Protestant churches on mixed confessional marriage might appear bizarre or hypocritical. However, a serious discussion of the confessional component of marital status opens several fruitful avenues for examining the role of the churches in postwar West Germany. First, debates concerning mixed confessional marriage and what to do about it provide an excellent window onto the internal dynamics of the churches. Second, as it was one of the most elementary ways that Catholics and Protestants came into contact with one another, mixed confessional marriage and discussions of it shed a great deal of light on the topic of inter-confessional relations. Finally, the growing number of mixed confessional marriages says a great deal about the limits of church influence in West German society. While the churches were very vigorous in their attempts to limit the number of mixed confessional marriages, they could, for a variety of different reasons, do little to stop them.

Before moving on to address church responses to mixed confessional marriage, it is necessary to determine how many such marriages were actually taking place. The following chart shows the total number of marriages registered in the state of Bavaria for the years 1933, 1946, 1950, 1954, and 1957. It then shows the number of single confession marriages and their percentage of the whole. These are then broken down further into Catholic and Protestant categories.²⁰⁵ Then, the total number of mixed marriages and their percentage of the whole are listed.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ Mixed marriage is a noticeable omission in otherwise excellent works on marriage by authors such as Robert Moeller and Elizabeth Heineman. Werner Blessing has perhaps the best discussion of mixed marriage in "Deutschland in Not, wir im Glauben..." 94.

²⁰⁵ As they made up such a tiny fraction of the total number, Jewish and "other" marriages have not been included here.

²⁰⁶ Statistics taken from StJBB vol. 20 (1934), 21; StJBB vol. 23 (1947), 46; StJBB vol. 24 (1952), 40; StJBB vol. 25 (1955), 36; StJBB vol. 26 (1958), 26.

Year	1933	1946	1950	1954	1957
Total # of Marriages	64,976	86,183	91,823	77,367	81,766
Unmixed marriages	56,173 (87%)	68,986 (80%)	71,671 (78%)	60,649 (78%)	64,263 (79%)
Purely Catholic	40,476 (62%)	50,908 (59%)	54,882 (60%)	47,268 (61%)	50,244 (62%)
Purely Protestant	15,247 (23.5%)	13,679 (16%)	15,873 (17%)	12,925 (17%)	13,512 (17%)
Total # of Mixed Mar.	8,803 (13%)	17,197 (20%)	20,152 (22%)	16,718 (22%)	17,503 (21%)

These numbers can be better understood by looking at two other charts. Working through the various Bavarian dioceses, the first shows the number of mixed confessional marriages that occurred for every 100 purely Catholic marriages.²⁰⁷

Year	1935	1946	1950	1954	1957
Augsburg	6.2	16.4	15.5	13.4	13.1
Bamberg	27.1	44.1	36.3	34.6	38.1
Eichstätt	8.7	19.9	17.7	19.4	18.4
Munich	7.1	19.1	16.4	16.7	16.4
Passau	0.9	10.7	7.9	7.0	7.5
Regensburg	3.2	14.4	12.3	11.0	11.9

²⁰⁷ *Kirchliches Handbuch*, vol. 24 (1957), 348; vol. 25 (1962), 542.

Würzburg	7.8	21.6	16.8	16.4	17.2
Average	8.7	20.8	17.5	16.9	17.5

The second chart shows a similar set of numbers for the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria.²⁰⁸

Year	1933	1946	1950	1954	1957
	22.9	37.2	40.9	42.1	40.1

Several conclusions can be drawn from a look at these statistics. First, one notices the rise in the number of mixed confessional marriages that took place between 1933 and 1946. This is particularly noticeable in places like the Diocese of Passau, where mixed confessional marriages were previously almost non-existent. Second, mixed confessional marriage rates remained high throughout the period under study. Unlike the cases of divorce and purely civil marriages, mixed confessional marriage rates did not sharply decrease as economic and social conditions improved in the 1950's. Third, Protestants were more likely to enter a mixed confessional marriage than Catholics. This seems to stem from two factors. First, as Protestants made up only 25% of the population, the pool of potential Protestant spouses was smaller. This made it more likely that Protestants would find a spouse outside their confession. Second, as will be discussed later, the Protestant Church had a more lenient policy towards mixed

²⁰⁸ "Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern r.d.R.* (Sept. 5, 1935):107. "Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt," *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 16, 1949. "Beilage zum Kirchlichen Amtsblatt," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern*, Nr. 3, 1958. "Äußerungen des kirchlichen Lebens in der ELKB," *Amtsblatt für die Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirche in Bayern* (1962): 4.

confessional marriage than the Catholic Church. This may have encouraged Protestants to look for spouses from outside of their confession.

Mixed confessional marriage was certainly not a new phenomenon in Bavaria. Protestants and Catholics had lived in close proximity to one another for centuries in areas like Middle and Lower Franconia and some no doubt intermarried. Urbanization and industrialization in the late nineteenth century led to even more mixed marriages as adherents of both confessions were drawn to the cities. In spite of this, mixed confessional marriages before the mid-1930's were highly concentrated in places like Munich, Nuremberg, and the industrial centers of Middle and Lower Franconia. People living in the overwhelmingly Catholic south or in the almost uniformly Protestant region of Upper Franconia simply didn't have much contact with members of the other confession. As such, mixed confessional marriages in these areas were few in number. While it was a much larger issue for the Protestant Church, mixed confessional marriage was not heavily discussed in Bavarian Catholic circles except in places like Munich or the Archdiocese of Bamberg, whose territory was the most confessionally diverse of all the Bavarian dioceses. Three key factors fundamentally changed this situation and led to the rapid increase of mixed confessional marriages after 1945.

First, the Nazis silenced all talk of the so-called dangers of mixed confessional marriage in the press. In a letter to the Catholic Bishop of Berlin, Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels gave an explanation for this stance. "If the national socialist state does not wish for the struggle against confessionally mixed marriages to be in the press, it in no way means that it wants to take the side of one confession or the other, rather that through this refusal a source of widespread confessional tension, which has divided the

German people into two separate groups as if they were two totally different people, will be removed.”²⁰⁹ Hardly proponents of ecumenicalism, the Nazis no doubt had other considerations in mind when they made this policy. First, they wanted Germans to think more in terms of race than of confession. Second, and intimately connected to the first, they sought to raise Germany’s population so that it would be better prepared for war. If every German’s pool of potential marriage partners was cut in half because of religious concerns, the state would suffer. The ramifications of this Nazi ban were immense. An entire generation grew up hearing little to nothing of the churches’ positions on mixed confessional marriage as they could not be discussed in any non-church forum.

Second, the large number of refugees that were settled in Bavaria following the war upset pre-existing confessional divisions. Despite the requests of leading church figures that the refugees be settled along confessional lines, their overwhelming number and very sudden appearance left the state with few choices in terms of settlement. Because of this, Protestant communities developed literally overnight in the deeply Catholic south and Catholics found themselves in the heavily Protestant region of Upper Franconia.²¹⁰ While the arrival of religiously dissimilar refugees often bred animosity, it also increased familiarity. With this came the increased likelihood that men and women of different confessional backgrounds would find each other and decide to get married.²¹¹

Third, and most importantly, more and more people seem to have felt that their choice of a marriage partner was a personal decision. It was not a matter that concerned the churches. One man was quoted as saying: “What, if anything, does mixed marriage

²⁰⁹ ABP OA Matrimonalia Bd. II: Copy of letter from Reichminister für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda to Cath. Bishop of Berlin, June 23, 1938. Copy sent to all dioceses on July 2, 1938.

²¹⁰ Ian Connor, “Churches and the Refugee Problem in Bavaria,” 405.

²¹¹ “Neue Heimat durch Eheschließung,” SZ, April 12, 1950.

mean? You know that I take my religion seriously. But the church wanting me to follow its rules when I have found a woman that I love and want to marry – that goes too far. If a woman really loves me, I don't care if she is Catholic or not.”²¹² In light of the rising number of mixed confessional marriages, one could safely argue that this attitude was quite common. It is also quite telling. In decisions regarding the need to attend play an active role in the life of the church, education, and, here, key rites of passage such as marriage, more and more people chose to follow their own interests and ignore the teachings of their church. This speaks a great deal about how a rising ethos of individualism undermined values such as obedience and responsibility that were the basis of not only the churches' focus on the need to follow “God's ordained order for marriage” but also their moral authority in general.

Neither church liked mixed confessional marriages. In fact, both had a host of rules in place to try and prevent them. Canons 1061-1064 regulated mixed confessional marriage for the Catholic Church.²¹³ If a Catholic person wanted to get married to someone of another confession in a Catholic service, he or she had to sign an oath saying that all children resulting from that union would be baptized and educated Catholic (c. 1061 Par. 2). In addition to this, the Catholic partner had an obligation to try and convert the non-Catholic spouse (c. 1062). Finally, Catholic priests and officials were bound to try and prevent mixed marriage wherever they could. If that was not possible, they were to ensure that the Catholic spouse fulfilled all promises made before the marriage (c.

²¹² AEB Rep. 70 NLT 99 (Josef Hildenbrand) Nr. 27: Quoted in a pamphlet entitled “Mischehe?,” May 4, 1949. Numerous clergy members mentioned this kind of attitude in their members. For example, see DAW Generalakten 752: Letter from Cath. Priest Josef Ulbrich of Cath. Pastorate of Theinheim über Eltmann to Notar der Diözesansynode Würzburg, July 5, 1954. BZAR Generalia 521.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Geisling über Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan 12, 1951. This sentiment was also commented on in an interview with OKR i.R. Rudolf Meiser (son of Bishop Hans Meiser), Dec. 21, 2004.

²¹³ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 365-367.

1064). Canon 2319 provided the real teeth for these measures. Catholics who were married by a non-Catholic minister or who entered into marriage with the explicit or implicit agreement that the forthcoming children would be baptized and educated outside of the Catholic Church were subject to automatic excommunication.²¹⁴ Protestant rules were not as severe as this, but were still worded in the strongest of tones. The Regulations Governing the Administration of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria dictated that the church would not perform a wedding whereby the Protestant partner was obligated to baptize and educate the forthcoming children in another confession.²¹⁵ If a mixed couple went to a Catholic church to have the wedding and tacitly agreed to have the children baptized and educated Catholic, then the Protestant partner lost his or her church voting rights and the right to be a godparent.²¹⁶ If the Protestant partner signed an oath to this effect, then he or she lost these rights as well as the right to receive communion and have a church burial.²¹⁷ For all intents and purposes, he or she was no longer considered a member of the Protestant Church.

There were good reasons for such tough regulations. First, mixed confessional marriage often led to outright conversion as one or the other partner officially left their church to join that of their spouse. Withdrawal from the church was usually done at the local government office and was more a matter involving the payment of church taxes. However, many lay people wrote to their bishop or church authorities to explain their actions. Pastors and priests also compiled informal lists of the reasons given for leaving the church. While the accuracy of such lists certainly leaves something to be desired,

²¹⁴ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 737.

²¹⁵ KLO, Section II, Par. 7.

²¹⁶ KLO, Section II, Par. 7, III.

²¹⁷ KLO, Section II, Par. 7, IV.

church officials assumed them to be correct and acted accordingly to try and halt mixed marriages. For example, out of a total of 51 people (including children) in the Diocese of Regensburg whose withdrawal from the church was reported to the diocesan authorities, 28 of them did so on the grounds of mixed confessional marriage.²¹⁸

Second, and intimately connected to the first, both churches feared that refugees living in diaspora regions would be assimilated into the opposing confession through mixed marriage. This was particularly the case for the Protestant Church, which was always on guard lest it be overwhelmed in the predominantly Catholic state of Bavaria. Pastors and concerned parents living in the Catholic south wrote several letters to Protestant officials asking for more resources and better pastoral care. One Protestant refugee from Silesia who had been settled north of Munich wrote: “My son wants to marry a Catholic girl here and shall most likely become Catholic. My wife cries day and night. It is terrible with the Catholics. The children all learn together in the school and the poor kids are made Catholic...I beg you to help me. I want to save my children...”²¹⁹ Similar voices of concern were raised by Catholic priests active in predominantly Protestant areas. One young curate wrote: “We do not know if the young people will soon be marrying Protestants. This means that we must never lose sight of them. We must know every single lamb. A priest from another district said: ‘3 have already become Protestant through marriage.’ Angrily, he explained: ‘This pack never introduced themselves to me. I didn’t even know that they were there.’ Today we must

²¹⁸ BZAR Generalia 511.11: Statistics concerning withdrawal from the church, dates range from 1945-1960. See also, DAW Generalakten 386: Letter from Josef Grotz (S.J.) of Würzburg Theological Seminary to BOW, July 7, 1958.

²¹⁹ LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. VI: Letter from Otto Schilm of Ahrain to Superintendent Gillmann of Hilfswerk der EKD, Feb. 20, 1950. See also LKAN LkR XI 1438c Bd. II: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Günzburg/Donau to LkR, Jan. 7, 1946.

introduce ourselves and go to the lambs: ‘Go forth and teach,’ says the Savior, not wait until you have been introduced.”²²⁰

Most importantly, both churches intensely disliked mixed confessional marriage because of the way it threatened the other two main components of their plans for postwar Christian renewal: worship participation and confessional schooling. Children of mixed partners, they feared, would be lost to their particular confession’s schools and subsequently from their church in general.²²¹ This was particularly the case in diaspora regions. Priests in predominantly Protestant areas like Ansbach and the region north of Nuremberg said that mixed confessional marriages crippled the worship attendance rates of Catholic children and bred community schools. One wrote: “Religious education in the school and in the home leaves much to be desired. This is particularly the result of the disadvantageous influence of mixed marriages (40%).”²²² Priests also repeatedly complained about how Catholic children from mixed families were more likely to be registered in Protestant or community schools.²²³ Echoing the concerns of the Protestant father mentioned above, Protestant pastors feared that mixed confessional marriages only

²²⁰ DAW Generalakten 647/1: Letter from Cath. Curate of Wargolshaufen über Mellrichstadt to BOW, July 17, 1946. See also, BZAR OA 2143: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Straßkirchen to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 13, 1951. BZAR Generalia 142.21: Letter from BOR to Cath. Deans of Atting – Bogengerg – Deggendorf – Gieselhöring – Pilsting and Pondorf, July 12, 1948.

²²¹ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 257: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Fürth to LkR, Jan. 5, 1947. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Georg Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, Nov. 8, 1949. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Georg Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, July 28, 1950. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-1: Report on Catholic schools in the District of Amlingstadt for the years 1947 and 1948. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-2: Report on Catholic schools in the District of Ansbach for the years 1950 and 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-3: Report on Catholic schools in the District of Bamberg for the years 1950 and 1951. AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-16: Report on Catholic schools in the District of Nuremberg for the years 1950 and 1951. BZAR OA 477: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Semerskirchen über Neufahrn to Archbishop Buchberger, Oct. 13, 1956.

²²² AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-2: Yearly reports concerning Catholic schools religious in Ansbach for 1949/1950.

²²³ For example, see AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/14-1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Baiersdorf to Cath. Cathedral Canon Dr. Schmitt of Bamberg, May 20, 1955. See also letter from May 20, 1957.

increased the already strong likelihood that a Protestant child living in the diaspora would wind up in a Catholic school. Without a clear Protestant voice at home and facing the direct or indirect pressure brought to bear at school, the child would eventually become Catholic.²²⁴

While the threat of outright conversion was certainly real, there was a much greater concern. If children were not told exactly what to believe, the churches argued, the confusion of being presented with two legitimate choices of religion would lead them to choose neither and they would become religiously indifferent. Reports from cities like Nuremberg highlight this fear. The Catholic priest for the parish of St. Elizabeth wrote: “Laziness and indifference in religious life. The youth have a very difficult time talking about the supernatural. The reasons for this are life in the big city and, more importantly, mixed marriage.”²²⁵ Protestant District Superintendent Georg Merkel of Nuremberg made similar comments. Several mixed couples that he visited said that they didn’t want to decide their child’s religious preference. Rather, the child should make that choice on his/her own. Merkel noted wryly that when he replied to this statement by telling them that they had indeed made a choice for their children, and that it was for them to be religiously indifferent, he usually got the door slammed in his face.²²⁶

Attitudes such as these posed an enormous problem for the churches. How were they to get their message across about the dangers of mixed confessional marriage in the face of such indifference? Two strategies were simultaneously employed: education and

²²⁴ For example, see LKAN LkR V 919a Bd. VI: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Landshut to LkR, April 25, 1950.

²²⁵ AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4415/1-16: Yearly reports concerning Catholic schools in Nuremberg for 1950-1951. See also the report from the parish of Herz Jesu.

²²⁶ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 270: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Georg Merkel of Nuremberg to LkR, Oct. 10, 1947.

restriction. Both produced only mixed results and often led to tension both within and between the churches.

The Catholic and Protestant churches went to great lengths to inform their adherents about the need to marry within one's confession. Pamphlets, lectures, group discussions, and special pastoral care were the preferred means for disseminating the churches' message. In 1949, the Catholic publication *Mann in der Zeit* published a pamphlet entitled "Mixed Marriage?" After discussing some of the reasons for the dramatic increase in the number of mixed marriages, it went on to give several examples of how a lack of religious unity in the family created tension, particularly when it came time to have children. In one story, a Protestant man marries a Catholic woman. They have a child and she wants it to be raised Catholic. The man is just happy that the child is healthy and agrees. Then, they have another child and the wife wants it to be raised Catholic as well. This time the man is not so forthcoming because he feels left out of the special relationship that the mother and first child have. This leads to strife in the house and the man reluctantly agrees to a Catholic upbringing so as to keep the peace. However, as man of the house he feels that he must really put his foot down if there is another child. That child eventually comes and the father insists that it is baptized Protestant. This raises the ire of his parents-in-law and devastates the mother. It is also bad on the child as it is disassociated from the other two children. The story concludes saying: "Now do you understand why the church warns about mixed marriage? What mother can stay mute, when she sees one of her children in misery...Therefore: Warn

others of mixed relationships! Then you will have done more against mixed marriage than the longest sermon and the hardest rules.”²²⁷

The Protestant Church also distributed pamphlets of this nature. In particular, it focused on the refugees living in southern Bavaria. Almost 50,000 copies of “Can one remain Protestant in a Catholic land?” were distributed. The pamphlet discussed the need to remain true to the Gospels even when the nearest Protestant church was far away and pastoral care sparse. It went on to argue that Protestants should never feel inferior to Catholics despite their larger numbers. It says: “The years since the great flood of Protestants into the realm of Catholicism have shown us that where we Protestants have taken our beliefs seriously and practiced the faith, the Catholics have been obliging.” The reasons given for the distribution of this pamphlet were: “Through this, Protestants will be strengthened in their faith. This can help prevent mixed marriages or hinder the severing of ties that Catholic marriage and child education bring about.”²²⁸ In order to bolster Protestants already living in mixed marriages, a pamphlet entitled “An open word concerning mixed marriage: The peace of your marriage is in danger!” was distributed in Ingolstadt, near Munich. In short, simple paragraphs it approached accusations supposedly made by Catholics such as “Your marriage is not valid because it was not sealed before a priest.” The pamphlet countered: “Your consent (to marry) was given before the Triune God. You have called God – the living God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ of which there is no other, neither for Catholics nor for Protestants – before the marriage altar and he has laid his blessing upon you.” Because of this, Protestants should answer defiantly: “My marriage is valid because it was carried out before the

²²⁷ A copy can be found in AEB Rep. 70 NLT 99 (Josef Hildenbrand) Nr. 27. See also, LKAN LkR 2371.

²²⁸ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Amt für Gemeindedienst to LkR, Feb. 19, 1951. A copy of the pamphlet is also included in this file.

living God; because it was done in the name of Jesus Christ; because it is the calling of the Holy Spirit.”²²⁹

Lectures and group discussions were also mediums through which the churches sought to warn their flocks about the danger of mixed confessional marriage. Primers were provided to assist in the preparation of both. In a series designed for use in Catholic young women’s groups, leaders were encouraged to discuss the sacramental nature of marriage and the need for religious uniformity in the family. One section reads: “If there is a lack of unity in faith, then the community of the family cannot fully develop. That is, when one of the marriage partners is not baptized, is of a different belief, or is distanced or fallen away from the Catholic faith.”²³⁰ This became even more essential when there were children in the house. Countering those who felt that religious education was something only done in school, group leaders were to stress that children formed their religious views by looking at their parents. Thus, it was up to them, and in particular the mother, to ensure that their children were baptized Catholic, learned simple prayers and songs, and were taught about good and bad in clear terms. A lack of religious unity in the household fundamentally undermined these efforts and only led children to become religiously indifferent.²³¹

Protestants also produced material of this nature. As part of the “Our way in marriage” series discussed earlier in this chapter, Pastor Wilhelm Horkel wrote about the dangers of mixed marriage. While a wedding was a very happy event that should be

²²⁹ A copy of this pamphlet can be found in LKAN LkR 2371. In the same file, see also Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent of Munich to LkR, Oct. 7, 1955.

²³⁰ BZAR OA 1301: Pamphlet entitled “Die Christliche Familie,” written by Otilie Moßhammer. Part of the “Glaubenstunden für Frauen” series, 1945.

²³¹ BZAR OA 1301: Pamphlet entitled “Die religiöse Erziehung des Kleinkindes,” written by Otilie Moßhammer. Part of the “Glaubenstunden für Frauen” series, 1945.

celebrated, it could also be tremendously painful if the partners were confessionally dissimilar. “When one of the partners is of a different confession and feels like a stranger in our house of worship there is a pain that, even if it is not felt on that happy day, will leave a long shadow over the course of the marriage.”²³² Horkel went on to lay out a common theme that runs throughout Protestant discussions of mixed marriage. Couples might not consider their mixed confessional backgrounds an important issue while they were young, but once death approached it became more pressing. As her Catholic husband lay dying, he recounts, a Protestant woman called the Catholic priest to perform last rights. Seeking to right the wayward marriage, the priest told her that only a backdated Catholic marriage (*Nachtrauung*) could save the man from the fires of hell. To soothe the conscious of the dying man, she consented to the deathbed marriage. However, she never forgave herself for going against her faith and it was a source of pain for the rest of her life.²³³

Depictions of Catholic priests who would stop at nothing to secure a Catholic marriage for mixed couples were the stock-in-trade of Protestant discussions of mixed marriage. Even as late as 1959, high level Protestant officials made open comments at lecture nights such as: “We have so much in common with the Catholic Church. Therefore it is hard to understand why the Protestant marriage of a Catholic Christian should be seen as a renunciation of belief. Church law is responsible for this dilemma.

²³² Wilhelm Horkel, “Mischehe?,” 1.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

Catholic beliefs are imprisoned in law. It becomes then a duty for every Catholic priest to be ‘fanatical’ against Protestant marriages of Catholic lay people.”²³⁴

Comments such as these infuriated Catholic observers. A monk living in the area wrote a letter of reply that was printed in the same paper. He wrote: “Mixed marriage is strongly forbidden in the Catholic Church not because it sees Protestants as bad or unbelieving people, but because experience has shown that it produces the danger of religious indifference in the Catholic partner... Some have labeled it ‘fanatical’ if a Catholic priest is duty bound to warn of mixed marriage and its consequences. If a Protestant pastor does the same thing, is that then somehow not ‘fanatical?’”²³⁵ Thus, while both churches were adamantly opposed to mixed marriage, much of their discussion of the theme was wrapped up in confessional finger pointing. The impact of mixed confessional marriages on inter-confessional relations will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

Pamphlets, lectures, and group discussions were all key aspects of the churches’ efforts to educate the laity about the dangers of mixed marriage, but better pastoral care was seen as the only real solution. Pastors and priests were constantly reminded by their superiors to use every opportunity at their disposal to ward off mixed marriages or to minister to those already living in one. Suggestions for how to best realize this included: ample discussion of marriage and family ideals in Sunday worship, letting youth group leaders know of their responsibility to warn young people about the dangers of mixed marriage, creating opportunities for young men and women to meet confessionally

²³⁴ “Wir haben soviel Gemeinsames,” *Vilisiburg Nachrichten*, April 8, 1959. These comments were made by one Pastor Braun, a member of the Established Church Council. He was one of the council’s main advisors on the theme of mixed marriage.

²³⁵ “Leserstimme: Ueber die Mischehe,” written by Dr. Edmund Piekorz, Beichtvater of the Magdalenerinnen von Seyboldsdorf, *Vilisiburg Nachrichten*, April 18, 1959.

similar partners, home visits, and, most importantly, a clear and consistent voice against mixed marriage. Compromising statements or a timorous tone would only result in the laity doubting one's sincerity.²³⁶ The clergy were also instructed to use advantageous bible passages in the religious education curriculum for older students to discuss the need to marry within one's confession.²³⁷ Those providing pastoral care to former soldiers interned in POW camps in Bavaria were to prepare the men for the challenges that faced them upon their return to civilian life. Fearful that the men had been indoctrinated with Nazi ideas during their long years of service or, worse, that the younger men would have never heard of the churches' views on mixed marriage due to the Nazi ban, pastors and priests talked at great length about the topic.²³⁸

Better education for the laity was the first element of a two part strategy to halt the growth of mixed marriages. Restrictions made up the other half. In particular, this included pre-marital oaths and changes to the actual wedding service of a mixed couple. In the Catholic Church, and sometimes the Protestant Church as well, mixed confessional partners had to sign an oath before they could have a church wedding. In the Catholic Church, this stemmed from Canon 1061 § 2. It read: "The Church does not dispense

²³⁶ For discussions of pastoral care in regards to mixed marriage, see BZAR Generalia 522.50: "Bischöfliche Weisung an den Klerus über die seelsorgerliche Behandlung der Mischehenfrage," Mar. 3, 1958. See also DAW Generalakten 376: Report from Cath. Deans' Conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, Nov. 18, 1953. DAW Generalakten 747: Tape script from the diocesan synod in Würzburg, Oct. 11-14, 1954, pg 94-103. BZAR OA 1132: Report from Cathedral Canon Franz Günther given at the 1958 diocesan synod in Regensburg, April 22-23.

²³⁷ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Bayreuth to all instructors of religious education, June 4, 1956. BZAR Generalia 522.50: "Bischöfliche Weisung an den Klerus über die seelsorgerliche Behandlung der Mischehenfrage," Mar. 3, 1958. DAW Generalakten 761: Report from "Passauer Diözesankonferenz," Sept. 3-5, 1946.

²³⁸ DAW Generalakten 649: Letter from Petrus Brücklmeier (OSB) to Bishop Ehrenfried, July 4, 1946. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6187: Letter from Father Friedrich Pfanzelt of Dachau to Cardinal Faulhaber, Jan. 6, 1946. EAM NL Faulhaber 6187: Monthly report from Father Roth to Cardinal Faulhaber concerning the Dachau POW camp, Feb. 5, 1946. LKAN LkR 2458 Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Albertshofen to Prot. District Superintendent of Kitzingen, Aug. 27, 1945. LKAN LkR 2458: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Ingolstadt to LkR, Oct. 9, 1945.

from the impediment of mixed religion, unless the non-Catholic spouse gives a precaution to remove the danger of perversion from the Catholic spouse, and from both spouses there is a promise that all children will be baptized only Catholic and so educated.”²³⁹ Usually this oath took the following form: “The Catholic Partner: I swear before God the all knowing that I will only seal my marriage before a Catholic priest and that all children that result from this marriage will be baptized Catholic and instructed in the Catholic religion (place for signature). The non-Catholic partner: I declare myself in agreement with the oath taken by my bride/groom. I promise to ensure for the Catholic education of any children, even if our marriage bond is severed due to death (place for signature). (Place for signature of priest).”²⁴⁰ Forms such as this were not standard policy in the Protestant Church, but some pastors did implement them in an effort to halt mixed confessional marriages.²⁴¹

Oaths of this nature proved to be a lightning rod for controversy both within the churches and between them. While Canon Law bound all Catholic priests to secure such an oath before marrying a mixed couple in the church, the situation at the ground level often proved more complicated. Some priests felt these oaths to be overly harsh on the laity and simply didn’t use them. Tough measures such as these, they decided, only encouraged couples to live out of wedlock or to have a purely civil service.²⁴² Others found them essential and used them extensively as part of their effort to stem the tide of mixed confessional marriages.²⁴³ Some made only the Catholic partner sign the oath,

²³⁹ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 366.

²⁴⁰ EAM NL Faulhaber 5040: Copy of “Eidesformel vor Abschluss einer gemischten Ehe,” no date.

²⁴¹ LKAN LkR 2371: Minutes from Haussitzung of LkR, June 1, 1948.

²⁴² See, for example, DAW Generalakten 624/2: Letter from BOW to Cath. Pastorate of Königshofen i. Gr., Nov. 14, 1952.

²⁴³ See, for example, DAW Generalakten 376: Report from Cath. Deans’ Conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, Nov. 18, 1953.

while others said that the Protestant partner must sign as well.²⁴⁴ Such inconsistency raised the ire of many lay people, both Catholic and Protestant.

This was only exasperated by differences between the dioceses. The vicar general of the diocese of Eichstätt wrote a letter to the other (arch-) dioceses in Bavaria asking about their policies concerning mixed marriage oaths. In Eichstätt, he explained, they tried to enforce the practice of both partners signing the oath. He continued “Recently we have seen many examples in our diocese of the non-Catholic partner complaining about the oath or refusing to sign it completely. Quite often, the reason given is that in other Bavarian dioceses the non-Catholic partner does not have to sign such an oath, rather, a spoken guarantee is enough.” Some kind of unified policy was needed to avoid such unfavorable comparisons.²⁴⁵ Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg wrote back admitting that they did not have a standard procedure for implementing Canon 1061 in his diocese. Only an open refusal on the part of the non-Catholic spouse to secure the Catholic baptism and education of the forthcoming children, he said, was ground for a priest to deny the marriage. Fuchs went on to say that forcing non-Catholic partners to sign an oath would only lead to tougher mixed marriage policies from the Protestant Church. The matter, he concluded, was significant and should be brought before the Bavarian bishop’s conference that year.²⁴⁶

Vicar General Baldauf of Regensburg wrote back saying that in his diocese the oath had to be signed by the Catholic partner. The non-Catholic partner was strongly encouraged to sign, but not forced to. Baldauf went on to write that there was little

²⁴⁴ LKAN KrD München 419: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Endorf, Dec. 14, 1959.

²⁴⁵ DAW Generalakten 624/3: Letter from Cath. Vicar General of Eichstätt to the Vicar Generals of all Bavarian (Arch-)Dioceses, Mar. 26, 1957.

²⁴⁶ DAW Generalakten 624/3: Letter from Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg to Vicar General of Eichstätt, April 12, 1957.

chance of any standard policy being formed in Bavaria because of regional differences and the varying opinions of the bishops.²⁴⁷ Baldauf scratched out these two reasons and they did not appear in the final version of the letter, but he seems to have had a good point. Despite the suggestion of Vicar General Fuchs, the topic was not brought up at the Bavarian bishop's conference and the dioceses did not bring their policies into line during the time period under study. Regional variations, most importantly the number and relative strength of Protestants in a given territory, and episcopal preferences often led to fundamental differences between the dioceses. In the case of marriage policies, such distinctions touched the lives of Catholic lay people in a very intimate way. This inevitably led to quick comparisons and often harsh criticism.

Although mixed marriage oaths were not the standard policy of the Protestant Church, there was a great deal of debate in Protestant circles over whether or not restrictions such as these were a good idea. Realizing that the problem of mixed confessional marriage was only going to become more of an issue, many Protestant pastors and district superintendents began to question current regulations. The threat of having one's church voting rights or the ability to be a godparent taken away, some argued, was simply not enough to stop most people from entering into a mixed marriage. Nothing was being done to secure the Protestant baptism and education of the children resulting from mixed marriages and many were being lost to the Catholic Church because of its stronger policy. Perhaps oaths like those used in the Catholic Church were necessary.²⁴⁸ Others felt that tough measures would only drive people away from the

²⁴⁷ BZAR Generalia 522.50: Letter from BOR to Vicar General of Eichstätt, Mar 28, 1956.

²⁴⁸ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Bezzel to LkR, Dec. 5, 1946. See also, LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Michelau to LkR, Dec. 2, 1946. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Lichtenfels am Main to LkR, Nov. 25, 1946

church and encourage them to live out of wedlock.²⁴⁹ The Established Church Council responded to both arguments the same way. While acknowledging that certain elements of the 1922 Regulations Governing the Administration of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria needed to be revised to bring them into line with current conditions, such changes would have to wait for the approval of the council and the synod. Until that time, the current practices were to be followed. Altering the church's regulations proved to be very difficult and a revised code was not released until 1966, at which point changes stemming from the Second Vatican Council had seriously changed the landscape of confessional relations. However, differing opinions such as these show how the explosion in the number of mixed confessional marriages after World War II created tension within the churches over what should be done about it.

Oaths for couples wishing to enter a mixed confessional marriage were also the source of a great deal of inter-confessional bitterness. Debates arose as to whether or not children from a previous marriage, or illegitimate children, who were being brought into the marriage were subject to the oaths. Moreover, were Protestants whose marriage had been sealed in the Catholic Church bound by Canon Law? In essence, the churches had to grapple with questions of religious freedom and the peaceful coexistence of the two confessions.

World War II created millions of widows and widowers, many of whom had children to support. As time passed and the economic situation improved in West Germany, a large number of these men and women decided to get remarried. Some, no doubt, entered into mixed confessional marriages. Premarital oaths concerned any forthcoming children, but did they apply to children brought into the marriage? For both

²⁴⁹ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Lohr to LkR, April 25, 1949.

churches, the answer was no. But certain stipulations applied. In the case of the Catholic Church, children stemming from a previous marriage that had been conducted in a Protestant church, or illegitimate children, were not subject to Canon 1061 and could be baptized Protestant and attend Protestant religious education.²⁵⁰ As authorities in more than one diocese pointed out, this did not release the priest from his pastoral duty to try and secure the Catholic baptism and religious education of that child.²⁵¹ Protestants may not have known that diocesan authorities were expressly stating this as policy, but they did know that heavy pressure was being brought to bear on Protestant spouses and children living in mixed marriages conducted by the Catholic Church. Numerous pastors wrote in to complain about this practice saying that it was a violation of these individual's right to religious freedom.²⁵² However, on more than one occasion the Established Church Council recommended a similar course of action for Catholic children brought into Protestant marriages.²⁵³

Protestant pastors and church leaders also went to great lengths to inform their lay people that they were not liable to Canon Law. Therefore, they were in no way bound to sign a Catholic pre-marital oath.²⁵⁴ If they did sign such a document, pastors reminded, the 1922 code of regulations stated that they could no longer receive communion or have a church burial. In essence, they were no longer members of the Protestant Church.

²⁵⁰ BZAR Generalia 521.00: Letter from Father Erich Kasperlich of Ransbach to BOR, Feb. 7, 1950. Reply from BOR, Feb. 10, 1950. See also, DAW Generalakten 624/3: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Ochsenfurt to BOW, Nov. 3, 1954. Reply of BOW, Nov. 4, 1954.

²⁵¹ See letters of reply in Ibid.

²⁵² LKAN LkR 2068: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Donauwörth to LkR, April 9, 1946. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Niederpappenheim-Osterdorf to LkR, May 27, 1948.

²⁵³ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Oberkotzau, July 28, 1948. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Lohr am Main, July 5, 1949

²⁵⁴ LKAN KrD München 419: Copy of "Erklärung der Bischofskonferenz der VELKD zur Mischehe," June 5, 1958. This was the reply of the Protestant churches to the special pastoral care letter from the German Bishop's Conference concerning mixed marriage from earlier that year.

Catholic officials said that this policy showed a refusal on the part of the Protestant church to take Catholic beliefs seriously. Cathedral Canon Dr. Kramer best explained this at the 1958 deans' conference for the Diocese of Würzburg when he said: "The canonical laws of the Roman Catholic Church also apply in total measure to Catholics living in a mixed marriage. If Protestants join into a mixed marriage with them, they are affected by Canon Law. Nothing can alter the polemical framework of this sentence. Church regulations cannot be fundamentally abandoned." Protestants living in a mixed marriage were showing intolerance to their Catholic spouses' faith, he concluded, if they thought that the sacramental nature of marriage in the Catholic tradition somehow didn't apply to them.²⁵⁵

Pre-marital oaths were clearly a source of inter-confessional tension. The rhetoric through which this bitterness was articulated is particularly interesting. Gone were the derogatory terms that the confessions traditionally used to deride each other. Rather, both accused each other of breaking the confessional peace. Protestants entering a mixed marriage in the Catholic Church often complained to their pastors that the Catholic priest had pressured them into signing a pre-marital oath. It is often difficult to tell if this was true or just an attempt on the part of Protestant lay people to avoid losing their membership on account of signing such an oath. Whatever the case may be, many pastors responded to such accusations by writing to their Catholic counterparts. While one might expect these letters to be laced with terms like "intrusion," "intolerance," or "bigotry," they seldom appear. Instead, pastors used phrases like: "Such actions are a violation of the confessional peace and only lead people away from Christianity towards

²⁵⁵ DAW Generalakten 376: Minutes from the Cath. Deans' Conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, Oct. 28-29, 1958

nihilism or radicalism.”²⁵⁶ Similar terminology was also employed in Protestant announcements concerning mixed confessional marriage. After attempting to dissway their adherents from entering into mixed confessional marriages in the first place, pastors often went on to say that Protestants who did enter into such a union were not subject to Canon Law and attempts to force them to do so were a violation of the confessional peace.²⁵⁷

Catholics made such accusations as well. As mentioned earlier, pre-marital oaths were not standard policy in the Protestant Church but some pastors did make use of them. Feeling pressured to sign, Catholic lay people showed copies of the forms to their priests and complained about the practice. Some priests mailed these on to their diocesan authorities to ask what should be done. Official letters usually followed. For example, diocesan authorities in Munich wrote to the Protestant Established Church Council in 1948 inquiring as to whether these forms were simply the private initiative of concerned pastors or church accepted practice. The letter concludes: “In closing, we are extraordinarily concerned that we will be forced into the position of having corresponding measures and we cannot believe that a disturbance of the confessional peace lies in the interest of either confession in Bavaria at this time.”²⁵⁸

At a meeting of the standing committee of the Established Church Council a few days later, top Protestant officials balked at what they saw to be Catholic hypocrisy. Such measures, they argued, were already the standard operating procedure in most

²⁵⁶ LKAN LkR 2371: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Lichtenfels to Cath. Pastorate of Lichtenfels, Sept. 22, 1948. Almost exactly the same wording can be found in LKAN LkR 2371: Copy of letter from Prot. Pastorate of Christuskirche in Munich to Cath. Pastorate of Groß König in Munich, May 10, 1948.

²⁵⁷ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Burtenbach, April 30, 1951. The Established Church Council here was replying to a copy of the announcement read before the church on Mar. 9, 1951.

²⁵⁸ LKAN LkR 2371 Letter from EOM to LkR, May 28, 1948.

Bavarian dioceses.²⁵⁹ In the end, they decided to send a letter that spelled out Protestant policies for mixed confessional marriages and explained that such forms were not officially sanctioned. However, they also included copies of Catholic pre-marital oath forms sent to them by various pastors and concluded: “We see only one way to avoid an overburdening of the consciences of our Protestant lay people and a disturbance of the confessional peace. That is, when Catholic priests are instructed to refrain from demanding that Protestants sign such mixed marriage oaths.”²⁶⁰

Pre-marital oaths were one means through which the churches attempted to use restrictions to halt the rising tide of mixed confessional marriages. These proved to be deeply controversial and were the source of heated debate both within and between the confessions. They were not the only example of church restrictions, though. Changes to the actual wedding service itself were also implemented. One must readily admit that this was more a matter for the Catholic Church. In the Protestant Church, mixed couples who had received permission from the pastor to get married could have a full wedding. The Catholic Church took a much different stance. Mixed confessional marriages could take place in a Catholic Church. “But,” said Canon 1102 § 2, “all other sacred rights are prohibited; but if from this prohibition more serious evils will flow, the Ordinary can permit others of the usual ecclesiastical ceremonies to occur, excluding always the celebration of Mass.”²⁶¹ Because of this, the service for a mixed couple had to be altered as the normal wedding mass could not be carried out when Protestants were involved. Once again, the situation on the ground proved infinitely more complex than this very clearly worded regulation would make it sound. The significance of the wedding ritual

²⁵⁹ LKAN LkR 2371: Minutes from Haussitzung of LkR, June 1, 1948.

²⁶⁰ LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from LkR to EOM, July 31, 1948.

²⁶¹ Peters, *1917 Canon Law*, 380.

itself turned such restrictions into a major bone of contention not only between the clergy and the laity, but also between the clergy and their diocesan superiors.

To bring practices in line with the 1917 Code of Canon Law, a commission in Rome formally declared in 1925 that mass could not be celebrated at a Catholic wedding involving a confessionally mixed couple.²⁶² A service where the mass was performed or a silent mass in the sacristy could be held after the wedding, but there had to be a distinct break between the two. In either case, the couple had to remove themselves from the place of honor in front of the chancel before any mass was held.²⁶³ By and large, this policy seems to have been followed until the final years of World War II. Given the generally small number of mixed confessional marriages taking place in most Bavarian dioceses during this time, it was not a major source of controversy. This changed significantly when the rapid increase in the number of mixed confessional marriages coincided with the enabling powers given to the clergy during the final war years and the early postwar period. Lacking any means of contact with their superiors, priests were largely left to their own devices and had a tremendous amount of authority over the administration of the sacraments.

Feeling that the current policies were turning people away from the church or fearing conflict with the laity over the hyper-sensitive issue of wedding rituals, some priests began to allow mixed couples to have a full wedding service, including the mass. Others, however, took this prohibition more seriously and followed the guidelines laid out in 1925. If they knew that their wedding would be restricted, these priests argued,

²⁶² "Brautmesse," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 12, 1947): 138-39.

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

Catholics might not be so willing to enter into a mixed marriage.²⁶⁴ Thus, during the initial phase of the rapid growth of mixed confessional marriages, there was little uniformity in the Catholic response. While this confusion was probably inevitable given the decentralization of church authority and generally chaotic conditions of that period, it created a precedent that would seriously complicate future attempts to resolidify Catholic policy regarding the wedding of mixed couples.

Judging from the letters sent to diocesan authorities by ordinary members of the clergy, the laity found wedding service restrictions to be deeply distasteful. Many threatened to have either a purely civil or a Protestant wedding if they were not allowed to have a full Catholic wedding.²⁶⁵ Inconsistencies in the handling of this delicate situation only fueled their scorn. In almost every case, the priests pointed out, couples who were denied the wedding mass said that they knew of a relative or an acquaintance who had married a confessionally dissimilar partner in a full service. Whether this was true or just a convenient argument is hard to determine, but it clearly left priests facing a difficult decision. Should they hold the line to try and ward off mixed marriages or accommodate the laity and keep the peace? Seeing that there wasn't a good answer, many began to turn to the diocesan authorities for clarity.

Even if it was unpopular with the laity, a clear ruling from the bishop made a priest's life much easier. He could then show the ordinance to the offended couple and say that his hands were tied. For their part, diocesan authorities were eager to reestablish

²⁶⁴ BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Fürth im Wald to BOR, Mar. 11, 1949. This letter talks about a recent conference for priests held in the area. The attendees were divided about how to handle the wedding mass issue for mixed couples.

²⁶⁵ BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Fürth im Wald to BOR, Jan. 10, 1948. See also, BZAR OA 1259: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Irlbach to BOR, Nov. 21, 1949. DAW Generalakten 376: Letter from Cath. Dean Eltmann to BOW, Dec. 2, 1949.

their authority after the chaos of the war. These parallel desires led most of the dioceses to draw up standard policies for the weddings of mixed couples in the late 1940's and early 1950's.²⁶⁶ However, this should not suggest that these ordinances were enacted without serious debate or were uniform across diocesan lines.

Mass at the wedding of mixed confessional couples was one of the key topics of discussion at the 1950 deans' conference for the Diocese of Würzburg. Vicar General Fuchs began by reading a report he wrote concerning mixed confessional marriage. He commented: "The number of mixed marriages and the ease with which it is entered into these days is alarming. A consciousness of the damage of mixed marriages and the church's sharp forbiddance of them must be raised in the faithful."²⁶⁷ Setting the tone for the following debate, Fuchs went on to argue that while less stringent policies might mollify the laity, they did nothing to halt the indifference being shown to mixed marriage. The secretary for this meeting recorded an annotated version of what was said next and through this we get an excellent behind the scenes look at Catholic discussions of wedding service restrictions.²⁶⁸

"Eck (Würzburg): Where the Catholic religious education of the children is guaranteed, then Holy Mass.

Popp (Lohr): Holy Mass upon special request; couple kneels at front.

Bishop Döpfner: Catholic policy must be explained to these people in a timely and understanding way. Everyone must understand the seriousness.

²⁶⁶ "Brautmesse," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 12, 1947): 138-39. "Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1949): 1-8. "Trauung bei gemischten Ehen," *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (May 11, 1948): 41. BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from BOP to all (Arch-)Diocesan Authorities in Bavaria, Oct. 8, 1949.

²⁶⁷ DAW Generalakten 376: Minutes from the Cath. Deans' Conference for the Diocese of Würzburg, Jan. 31, 1950.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

Dr. Kramer: Consideration must be given to the diaspora where there are many mixed marriages.

Roeser (Meiningen): Previously there was no Holy Mass; Catholics understand that.

Dr. Miltenberger: Obligingness; no bridge with previous policy.

Gengler: We preach against mixed marriage but celebrate it like any other (marriage); unclear handling!

Kunzmann (Miltenburg): (The Archdiocese of) Freiburg has a unified policy; no wedding mass.”

Following the lead of Bishop Döpfner and Vicar General Fuchs, the deans eventually decided to enact tougher policies that demanded a clear break between the wedding service and the performance of mass.²⁶⁹ This was hardly the result of unanimous decision. Several argued that special considerations must be taken into account and that concessions must be made. Others disagreed. Looking ahead to possible comparisons drawn by the laity, one pointed to the policies of a nearby diocese. Clearly, consensus was very hard to reach on such a sensitive topic.

Similar debates no doubt took place in the other Bavarian dioceses. The Diocese of Regensburg and the Archdiocese of Bamberg enacted policies along the same lines as those decided on in Würzburg. Usually, they declared that priests should go to the sacristy and perform a silent mass after the wedding ritual had taken place. In any case, there needed to be a distinct break between the wedding and the mass to reinforce the church’s displeasure with the whole affair.²⁷⁰ The Archdiocese of Munich and the Diocese of Passau had a much milder stance. Here, the break between the wedding and

²⁶⁹ “Oberhirtliche Weisung,” *Würzburger Diözesanblatt* (Mar. 1, 1950): 38-9.

²⁷⁰ “Belehrung über das heilige Sakrament der Ehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1949): 1-8. “Trauung bei gemischten Ehen,” *Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg* (May 11, 1948): 41.

the mass was much less defined. Mass could be held immediately following the wedding ritual. The couple could either leave the place of honor in front of the chancel and sit in the pews while the mass was carried out or the priest would move to a side chapel to perform the mass while the couple stayed at the chancel.²⁷¹ In many of the small parish churches that dotted southern Bavaria, these distinctions were hardly noticeable and the two services blended into a seemingly unified whole.

Inevitably, comparisons were drawn. Illustrating a much broader problem, the Catholic priest of Eggenfelden wrote to his diocesan superiors in Regensburg in 1957 complaining that in the neighboring parish of Gern, only one kilometer removed but part of the Diocese of Passau, mass was being held at the weddings of mixed couples. The priest stated that this seriously undermined his ministry because many laypeople wrote him off as being intolerant and hard. Worse still, couples who wanted to enter a mixed confessional marriage and have all the normal wedding rituals could simply apply for one in Gern. In this way, the tougher restrictions imposed by the Diocese of Regensburg were rendered ineffective.²⁷² Vicar General Baldauf of Regensburg wrote to his counterpart in Passau to inquire into the matter. He was informed that the diocese mandated two separate services be held, but that in all actuality they usually blended together.²⁷³

As all of these examples point out, the use of restrictions as a means to halt mixed confessional marriages was plagued with difficulties. Regional particularism, internal

²⁷¹ "Brautmesse," *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 12, 1947): 138-39. BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from BOP to all (Arch-)Diocesan Authorities in Bavaria, Oct. 8, 1949.

²⁷² BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Eggenfelden to Vicar General Baldauf in Regensburg, Jan. 22, 1957.

²⁷³ BZAR Generalia 522.55: Letter from BOR to BOP, Jan. 25, 1957. In the same file, Letter from BOP to BOR, Jan. 28, 1957.

disagreements, and, most importantly, the attitude of the local pastor or priest all led to their inconsistent application. For their part, lay people were very perceptive to these oftentimes subtle variations and attempted to exploit them for their own ends. This, in turn, only fueled debates both within the churches over how to reply. In this intricate web of contacts, we can see a great deal about the nature of everyday, lived religion and the challenges facing the churches as they sought to reestablish God's order for marital life.

These controversies were by no means confessionally contained. Mixed confessional marriage was one of the most elemental ways that adherents of the two confessions came into contact with one another. This necessitates a look at how the flood of mixed confessional marriages after World War II affected inter-confessional relations. Themes that surfaced before in the examination of pre-marital oaths show up once again in discussions of one of the single greatest sources of tension between the two confessions: Catholic popular missions.

While the mission work of the Catholic Church in postwar West Germany focused primarily on stimulating religious involvement and deepening religious identity, its second, and only slightly less important, task was to rectify marriages that were deemed in one way or another to be aberrant. With titles like "Endangering the secrets of marriage through mixed marriage," sermons were used to dissuade Catholics from entering into mixed marriages. Citing the 1930 papal encyclical "Casti Connubi," one such sermon went: "This religious character of marriage, its sublime signification of grace and the union between Christ and the Church, evidently requires that those about to marry should show a holy reverence towards it... They, therefore, who rashly and

heedlessly contract mixed marriages, from which the maternal love and providence of the Church dissuades her children for very sound reasons, fail in this respect, sometimes with danger to their eternal salvation...”²⁷⁴ Others spoke in much bolder terms. One sermon entitled “There is a Hell,” emphasized the promise of damnation for those who violated the sacrament of marriage and drew detailed pictures of the horrors of Hell that awaited the unrepentant sinner.²⁷⁵

As part of their preparation for the mission, priests were supposed to draw up a list of all Catholics from the parish who were living in a mixed marriage that had not been sealed in the Catholic Church.²⁷⁶ During the mission, heavy pressure was brought to bear on these individuals to either secure a backdated Catholic marriage or to get a civil divorce. The latter was seen as acceptable because the marriage was not considered binding and, as such, was not liable to the same laws concerning the indissoluble nature of the sacrament of marriage.²⁷⁷ Efforts were also made to convert the non-Catholic partners of mixed confessional marriages. Catholics were reminded that Canon Law bound them to the duty of bringing about the conversion of their non-Catholic spouses. Missionaries would tell the Catholic partner of a mixed marriage that had been sealed in the Catholic Church that his or her spouse could leave at any time, remarry, and still be a member of the Protestant church. They on the other hand, would be stuck in a dead, but binding marriage for life. Conversion was the only solution to this dilemma because it

²⁷⁴ DAW NL Vitus Brander 35: “Casti Conubi,” part of a collection of sermons for popular missions, 1949-1952.

²⁷⁵ DAW NL Vitus Brander 35: “Es gibt eine Hölle,” part of a collection of sermons for popular missions, 1949-1952.

²⁷⁶ “Volksmissionen,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising* (Dec. 15, 1946): 141-43. These were similar to the lists of people who had only secured a civil marriage that were discussed earlier in this chapter.

²⁷⁷ Protestant pastors complained bitterly about such actions. See, LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Neustadt a.d. Waldnaab to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951. See also, LKAN LkR 2371 Prot. Pastorate of Neuburg/Donau to LkR, Dec. 14, 1951.

brought everyone under the same set of rules. Monks were also known to speak in very vivid terms to Catholic partners about the tortures of hell that awaited their non-Catholic spouses in hopes of securing a conversion.²⁷⁸

One should note that the zealotry with which some monks went about this task created rifts between them and the normal clergy. Many local priests did not want to see their quiet life or good relationship with the Protestant pastor disrupted by the heavy-handed intrusion of the missionaries.²⁷⁹ Despite this, most saw the missions as a chance to spread Catholic influence and reestablish “ordained marital life” in the community and openly encouraged such activities. In their post-mission reports to diocesan authorities, priests always made sure to mention the number of mixed marriages, or other marriages deemed aberrant, that had been “righted” during the mission and the number of conversions.²⁸⁰ The tone of such letters was usually a mixture of triumph and sadness. Priests and missionaries were pleased that the missions had raised consciousness of the danger of mixed marriage and that many sought to bring their marriage into line with Catholic principals. In almost every report, one reads of anywhere from one or two to over a dozen mixed couples who had a backdated Catholic marriage. On the other hand, an even larger number of Catholics spurned the efforts of the mission to bring their marriage in line. Many reports have quotes like: “12 marriages righted, 500 still

²⁷⁸ While no doubt exaggerated, reports of such activities made by lay people were passed on by local pastors. See, LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Epiphaniaskirche in Allach to Prot. District Superintendent of Munich, June 17, 1952. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Auerbach to LkR, Nov. 13, 1955.

²⁷⁹ Several Protestant pastors picked up on these subtle tensions. See, LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Lohr am Main to LkR, Feb. 27, 1953. See also, LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Rentweinsdorf to LkR, Feb. 7, 1955.

²⁸⁰ The file DAW Generalakten 623/1 contains a host of these letters. See, for example Cath. Curate of Bischbrunn über Marktheidenfeld to BOW, Feb. 11, 1947. Cath. Pastorate of Unterweissenbrunn to BOW, Dec. 2, 1948. Cath. Pastorate of Müdesheim to BOW, Dec. 30, 1948. Cath. Pastorate Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Catholic popular missions in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, 1948-1950.

unrehabilitated”; or “Five out of the 44 mixed marriages in the village brought into order.”²⁸¹ While a priest or bishop might take comfort in knowing that a few more souls had been saved, such numbers clearly indicate the limits of church influence over the marital decisions of ordinary Germans.

Letters from Protestant ministers in towns visited by the missions paint an altogether different picture. Tending to look more at the Protestants lost to conversion or the number of backdated Catholic marriages for mixed confessional couples, pastors claimed that the missions were nothing more than campaigns of calculated coercion. More generally, the mixed marriage policies of the Catholic Church were seen as an open attempt to undermine the Protestant faith. Not only this, they argued, such actions were detrimental to the institution of marriage itself as they showed no respect for marriages carried out in by the Protestant Church and were encouraging mixed couples to divorce.²⁸² Such beliefs were poignantly summed up in a twist on the famous bible verse from Matt. 19,6: “What therefore God hath joined together, let not the Catholic Church put asunder.”²⁸³

Once again, however, we can see this internal bitterness being articulated through a rhetoric that focused on the so-called confessional peace. Protestants argued that the

²⁸¹ Respectively, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Report concerning Cath. popular missions in the Archdiocese of Munich and Freising, 1948-1950. St. Emmerman in Munich, Sept. 18-Oct. 15, 1950. DAW Generalakten 623/1: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Rothenfels am Main to BOW, Jan. 10, 1947. See also, EAM NL Faulhaber 6094: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Konigin des Friedens in Munich to EOM, Nov. 23 – Dec. 2, 1950. BZAR Generalia 521.00: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Geisling über Regensburg to Archbishop Buchberger, Jan. 12, 1951.

²⁸² LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Neustadt a.d. Waldnaab to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951. See also, LKAN LkR 2371 Prot. Pastorate of Neuburg/Donau to LkR, Dec. 14, 1951. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Epiphaniaskirche in Allach to Prot. District Superintendent of Munich, June 17, 1952. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Pastorate of Auerbach to LkR, Nov. 13, 1955. LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. II: Copy of letter from Oberkirchenrat H. Schnell of Hannover to Pastor Max Lackmann of Soest/Westphalia, Feb. 10, 1958

²⁸³ LKAN LkR 2371. This was part of a message read before the congregation in the Prot. church of Lichtenfels on May 6, 1956.

mission work of the Catholic Church and its stance on mixed confessional marriage were the greatest dangers to the confessional peace. In the very same church announcement from which the previous quote was taken, the pastor made reference to the recent visit of Jesuit missionaries by saying: “We deeply regret that the confessional peace in Lichtenfels has been disturbed. For many years I have worked together in peace with the Catholic priest when our common interests required it. For many years, we Protestants have lived in peace with the Catholic population.”²⁸⁴ Because of this, he continued, it was all the more painful when the Catholic Church tried to “play off the Catholic and Protestant partners of a mixed confessional marriage against each other...” Before his quip about the Catholic Church putting marriage asunder, he made it clear: “Couples whose marriages were sealed outside the Catholic Church are not living in sin. Rather, their marriages are ordained and valid!”²⁸⁵

To counter the special pastoral care letter from the German Bishop’s Conference released in the 1958, the Established Church Council decreed that the response of the United Protestant Lutheran Churches of Germany should be read aloud in every Protestant church in Bavaria on June 15, 1958 and talked about extensively in lectures and group discussions. The first paragraph of the reply reads: “Expulsion and migration have fundamentally altered the religious composition of the population in every part of the Fatherland. Protestant and Catholic Christians live closer together today than they ever have in the past. Because of this, the number of marriages that include both Protestant and Catholic Christians has increased. In a mixed marriage, the two

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid. The term used is *Wilde Ehen* (literally, wild marriages). It refers to people living together without being married.

confessions meet each other more directly than in any other place. Every such meeting binds us to work for a true peace between the Christian churches.”²⁸⁶

Catholics responded to such accusations by arguing that they were not to blame for worsening inter-confessional relations. Rather, it was the refusal on the part of most Protestants to accept Catholics and their differing beliefs that endangered the confessional peace. Catholic priests complained to their diocesan superiors that Protestants were violating the confessional peace by openly criticizing their attempts to reestablish “ordained marital life” in the community. In so doing, they only served to encourage Catholic lay people to question the message of their priests.²⁸⁷ Catholic writers and officials argued that Catholic mixed marriage policies were not undermining the institution of marriage, rather they were strengthening it. In reply to a lecture given by a Protestant official that was very critical of the Catholic Church, one monk wrote to the local newspaper: “The Catholic Church is strong, maybe incomprehensibly strong to those standing outside of it; but one must accept that, like a mother, its warnings and punishments serve the greater good of preserving the Catholic faith.” He concluded: “Comments from the Protestant side that the mixed marriage pastoral care of the Catholic Church is nothing more than propaganda do not serve the confessional peace.”²⁸⁸

These sentiments were perhaps summed up best in the 1958 special pastoral care letter from the German Bishop’s Conference concerning mixed marriage. The second paragraph reads in full: “He who warns against mixed marriage does not disturb the

²⁸⁶ LKAN KrD München 419: Copy of “Erklärung der Bischofskonferenz der VELKD zur Mischehe,” June 5, 1958. This statement went on to make clear that a mixed marriage conducted in the Protestant church was a legitimate marriage and that attempts to undermine it were not in the interest of the confessional peace.

²⁸⁷ DAW Generalakten 791: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Sulzfeld am Main über Kitzingen to BOW, Feb. 26, 1957.

²⁸⁸ “Leserstimme: Ueber die Mischehe,” *Vilisbiburg Nachrichten*, April 18, 1959. Written by Dr. Edmund Piekorz, Beichvater of the Magdalenerinnen of Seyboldsdorf.

confessional peace. Even non-Catholic religious communities lament mixed marriages. Even they know that marriage is not a good place for the meeting of the confessions. He who lives in a mixed marriage suffers more than others under the misfortune of split beliefs and it is often more than he is able to bear. Therefore, he who warns against mixed marriage helps relieve such sorrow and mental anguish; he serves the religious peace.”²⁸⁹

This rearticulation of confessional conflict will be discussed in much greater detail in Chapter 5. For now, it is suffice to say that mixed confessional marriage was one of the greatest sources of inter-confessional animosity in the years between World War II and the Second Vatican Council. Controversies over it graphically illustrate how the churches’ efforts at postwar Christian renewal could not be confessional contained. As such, they had major, and oftentimes negative, consequences for inter-confessional relations.

This is all the more interesting in light of changes that occurred in the 1960’s. Reform movements in the Protestant church and Vatican II’s “Decree on Ecumenism” from 1964 opened the door for so-called ecumenical marriages. While both churches still warned against mixed marriage, and continue to do so today, a mixed couple could get married in a service officiated by both a Protestant pastor and a Catholic priest.²⁹⁰ This dramatic shift should not lead one to dismiss the churches’ previous practices as bizarre or overly harsh. The churches spoke out forcefully against mixed confessional marriage for very legitimate reasons. Both feared that mixed confessional marriages would lead to

²⁸⁹ “Gemeinsames Hirtenschreiben der deutschen Bischöfe über die Mischehe,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg* (Jan. 7, 1958):1-2.

²⁹⁰ See, “Unitatis Redintegratio,” on the Vatican website. http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents. See also, Blending, *Aufbruch der Kirche in die Moderne*.

higher conversion rates. Such concerns were certainly justifiable given the information available to the churches. However, this was not the biggest reason for their apprehension. A lack of unity in belief, they argued, created tension within the family and led to religiously indifferent children. The latter was of particular import given the churches' strong emphasis on worship and confessional schooling. Hence, both churches felt beholden to speak out against such unions. This does not mean that they did so in a unified voice. Debates over how strictly anti-mixed marriage policies should be enforced were quite heated. Some felt that German society was awash in a flood of infamy that only the toughest of measures could roll back. Others disagreed saying that this would only drive the faithful away or, worse still, encourage them to live out of wedlock or to only have a civil marriage. When coupled with regional differences and the tremendous autonomy given to pastors and priest in the immediate postwar years, such disagreements led to inconsistent policies that raised the ire of many lay people.

For their part, the laity were increasingly open to the prospect of a mixed marriage. Despite the ample and serious warnings of the churches, mixed marriage rates jumped significantly after the war and remained high throughout the 1950's. There were several reasons for this dramatic change. The Nazis had banned any criticism of mixed confessional marriage in public discourse so as to encourage population growth. This meant that the generation reaching prime marrying age in the late 40's and early 50's had heard little of the churches' message concerning the dangers of mixed marriage. Adding to this, the arrival of the refugees seriously disrupted traditional confessional boundaries. This increased familiarity between the two and inevitably led to mixed marriages. The primary reason seems to have been that more and more people felt that their choice of

marriage partners was a personal decision. With this, much of the authority on which the churches' talk about the duty to follow "God's ordained order for marriage" melted away. The fact that single confession marriage rates remained at roughly 80% cautions against taking this conclusion too far and arguing that the growth of mixed confessional marriages is an outward and visible sign that the churches completely failed in their efforts to re-Christianize German society. But one must readily admit that it shows how difficult it was to enact even core tenets of such plans in a society that was undergoing rapid change.

CHAPTER 5

The Confessional Peace: Protestant-Catholic Relations from 1945 to the Second Vatican Council

After years of Nazi terror and wartime destruction, the Catholic and Protestant churches saw the end of World War II as a new beginning that allowed them the chance to reorient German society along Christian lines. Both engaged in vigorous efforts to re-Christianize Germany and the Germans. But in birthplace of the Reformation, such actions quite necessarily included the possibility for inter-confessional tension. Confession had been, and remained, a critical prism through which Germans viewed each other and the world. It was a long standing source of bitterness in Germany. Thus, the traditions and sense of religious identity that each church sought to rejuvenate were loaded with confessional animosity. The Nazi years had substantially altered these ingrained patterns of confessional strife. The experience of joint persecution by the state led many postwar observers, from both inside and outside the churches, to conclude that it was time for Catholics and Protestants to put aside their differences and work together to rebuild the country both morally and physically. What was needed, they argued, was a confessional peace. Petty bickering between the two confessions had left the institutional churches too weak to counter the slide into Nazi barbarism. If the two could only work together in peace, then the mistakes of the past would not be repeated.¹

¹ For more general discussions of confessional relations and the perceived need for cooperation, see Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, 502, 523-529. Bark and Gress, *A History of West Germany*, Vol. 1, 337-339. Kettenacker, *Germany since 1945*, 127-129. For more specific examinations of the concept of the confessional peace, see Robert Brown, *The Ecumenical Revolution: An Interpretation of Catholic-Protestant Dialogue* (New York: Doubleday, 1967). Stephen Neill and Ruth Rouse, eds. *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517-1948* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1967), 489-495. The reformation historian Joseph Lortz was probably the biggest proponent of the confessional peace in the immediate postwar era. In 1945, he summarized many of his views on the confessional peace in a small handbook for use in parish discussion. See Joseph Lortz, *Die Reformation: Thesen als Handreichung bei ökumenischen*

This concept of the confessional peace bore real fruit. After 1945, the churches and their adherents worked together in ways considered hitherto impossible. This was less the result of ecumenical groups such as *Una Sancta* than of a mutual striving towards better understanding. As discussed earlier, examples abound of the churches joining together under the rubric of the confessional peace to defend joint interests such as confessional schooling. Many congregations went out of their way to provide assistance and a place for worship to confessionally dissimilar refugees. One can also find the respective clergy associations making mutual help agreements. Finally, the Catholic and Protestant presses allowed for inter-confessional dialogue and published informal dictionaries to make sure both sides knew and respected what the other was talking about.²

While such actions attest to the decisive rupture that years of Nazi rule and war created in German society, it would be foolish to argue that the centuries of conflict between Catholics and Protestants were simply forgotten in 1945. The postwar era should not be seen as the inevitable slide towards ecumenicalism or the Second Vatican Council. As evidenced in the preceding discussions of religious holidays, confessional schools, and mixed marriage, the years between 1945 and 1960 were rife with inter-confessional tension. One should certainly not apply Olaf Blaschke's thesis of the nineteenth century being a "second confessional age" to the mid twentieth century, but the anxiety and communal hatreds present in the 1940's and 50's bear striking similarities

Gesprächen (Meitingen: Kyrios, 1945). See also, Leonard Swidler, *The Ecumenical Vanguard: The History of the Una Sancta Movement* (Pittsburgh: Duquense Univ. Press, 1966), 17-24.

² Examples include, but are not limited to AEB Rep. 4/4 (Schulreferat) Nr. 4412/4: Letter from Cath. Pastorate Marktgraitz über Lichtenfels to EOB, 16 Dec. 1948. LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Agreement between the Kath. Klerusverband and the Evang. Luth. Pfarrerverein in Bayern, 8 July 1952. LKAN LkR XV 1650a Bd. II: Minutes from Haussitzung of the LkR, 14 May 1957.

to those discussed in his and other works on confessional relations in the nineteenth century.³

This raises the question of how the churches attempted to balance their desire to rejuvenate inherently antagonistic religious traditions and beliefs with the realization that they and their adherents had to work together to prevent any future calamities. Answers can be found by looking at two case studies: the Ochsenfurt sugar factory incident of June 28, 1953 and the dedication of the “whole” of Germany to the Virgin Mary by Cardinal Frings of Cologne at the national assembly of Catholics in Fulda on September 4, 1954. At Ochsenfurt, the Catholic bishop of Würzburg, Julius Döpfner, refused to take part in a dedication service when he found out that the Protestant district superintendent for Würzburg would also be performing a religious act at the ceremony. With national parliament elections scheduled for the coming autumn, the Ochsenfurt incident served as a lightning rod in debates concerning the feasibility of bi-confessional cooperation in the political arena and, more generally, in West German society as a whole. The Marian dedication debacle was smaller in scale than Ochsenfurt, but was still deeply controversial. Bishop Hans Meiser furiously protested the inclusion of German Protestants in the dedication to the Virgin Mary and argued that the Catholic Church had only become more intolerant since 1945. While both cases were more extreme examples of confessional animosity, they were certainly not isolated incidents. Rather, they illuminate much broader patterns of confessional relations and bring developments that have been discussed in earlier chapters into sharper relief.

³ Olaf Blaschke, “Das 19. Jahrhundert: Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?,” *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 26 (Jan. – Mar., 2000) 38-75. Jonathan Sperber, *Popular Catholicism*. See also, Michael B. Gross, *The War Against Catholicism*. Helmut Walser Smith, *German Nationalism and Religious Conflict: Culture, Ideology, Politics, 1870-1914* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1995).

Immediately striking is the rhetoric used during the controversies. As was the case with popular missions and religious holidays, one finds little mention of tried and true terms such as “heretic” or “superstitious”. Instead, both sides accused the other of breaking the confessional peace. This was the new great evil that each side fostered to talk about the other. Protestants went on the offensive, claiming that the Catholic Church’s tough stance on mixed services and its renewed dedication to the Virgin Mary were a conscious provocation. Therefore, they endangered the confessional peace. Catholics responded more defensively, arguing that Protestants were breaking the confessional peace by refusing to accept Catholics and their differing beliefs on sensitive issues like Marian devotion.⁴ Naturally, each side claimed that they were the ones doing all the work to further the confessional peace. The differences in the uses of the rhetoric of the confessional peace are quite striking, but difficult to explain. Attempts to write them off as mere Bavarian particularism are foiled by the fact that Catholic and Protestant officials, as well as ordinary men and women, from around Germany used the term in a similar manner. Whether this has something to do with the fundamental nature of German Protestantism, which was defined quite specifically in terms of not being

⁴ For comparison to other examples of the rhetoric of the confessional peace, see the following: "Würzburg huldigt der Himmelskönigin," *Würzburger Katholisches Sonntagsblatt*, Dec. 17, 1950. DAW Generalakten 79: Letter from Bishop Josef Stangl of Würzburg to Bishop Dietzfelbinger, Jan. 7, 1960. "Brief an einen Protestanten," *Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung*, Oct. 1, 1950. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 132: Letter from LkR to all Prot. Regional Superintendents, May 2, 1947. LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Letter from Prot. Pastorate Kulmbach to Oberbürgermeister Hagen of Kulmbach, May 26, 1947. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from EOM to LkR, May 28, 1948. LKAN KrD Nürnberg 239: Minutes from meeting about the creation of confessional schools in Nuremberg, May 13, 1948. LKAN München 493: Copy of letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Regensburg to Bayer. Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus in Munich, May 16, 1950. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from LkR to Prot. Pastorate of Burtenbach, April 30, 1951. LKAN LkR 2371: Letter from Prot. Vicarage of Neustadt a.d. Waldnaab to LkR, Nov. 30, 1951. LKAN KrD München 493: Copy of report from Katholische Schulorganisation in Bayern, May 15, 1951. LKAN KrD München 215: Copy of letter from LkR to Prot. District Superintendent of Bayreuth, July 16, 1953. LKAN LkR 2371: Message from church leaders of the Prot. parish of Lichtenfels read to congregation, May 6, 1956.

Catholic, or is merely an example of Catholic apologetics would be an engaging point of debate. Here, however, it will suffice to focus on an essential point. There was, on the one hand, a mutual understanding of the need for a confessional peace during the postwar era. This in and of itself is quite significant as it created an impulse for improved relations between Catholics and Protestants that would eventually result in the ecumenical breakthroughs of the 1960s. On the other hand, the confessional peace could and often did become a new rhetorical weapon in confessional struggles that stretched back for centuries.

The Ochsenfurt Incident

The Second World War and the division of Germany crippled the German sugar industry. The area that would become the Federal Republic had only 27% of the land formerly devoted to sugar beet cultivation in Germany. Of the 201 sugar refining facilities that had existed in this area before the war, only 73 remained at least nominally in operation. In 1950, Bavarian farmers harvested some 560,000 metric tons of sugar beets. However, the Regensburg sugar refining factory, the only such facility in Bavaria, could process a mere 330,000 metric tons. The remainder had to be divided up and sent to 27 other sugar factories in both West Germany and Austria. The expense of transportation, spoilage caused by the lag between harvesting and refining, and the overburdening of existing facilities left farmers and sugar producers exasperated. Consumers were no less so. Even as late as April 1950, monthly ration cards allotted only 250 grams of sugar per person.⁵

⁵ Winfried Gehlert and Fred Zeller, *50 Jahre Süddeutsche Zuckerrübenverwertungs-Genossenschaft: Zur Geschichte der Bäuerlichen Beteiligung in der Süddeutschen Zuckerwirtschaft* (Wertheim: Hinckel Druck, 2000), 16.

This untenable situation led Süddeutsche Zucker AG to make plans to build another sugar factory in Bavaria. As it already had a sugar beet drying facility and was located near the rich sugar beet fields of Lower and Middle Franconia, the town of Ochsenfurt was chosen to be the site. Ochsenfurt was a somewhat sleepy, predominantly Catholic town on the Main River about 20 km south of Würzburg. As the new factory would bring much needed jobs to the area, the town of Ochsenfurt wholeheartedly welcomed the decision and plans moved ahead quickly. The cornerstone for the factory was formally laid on May 21, 1951. Bishop Julius Döpfner of Würzburg performed an official Catholic dedication rite at the event. Representing the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria was District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg. Schwinn was invited because, while the town and region were predominantly Catholic, 80% of the factory's directors and roughly 50% of its workers were Protestant.⁶ Schwinn performed no official religious ceremony that day and was dressed in only civilian clothes.⁷ In the Lutheran tradition, only the cornerstones of churches may be formally dedicated.

The sugar factory was completed two years later and a festive dedication ceremony was planned for June 28, 1953. Much like 1951, both Bishop Döpfner and District Superintendent Schwinn were invited. As the day of the ceremony approached, it appeared that everything was in order and that the factory would get off to a rousing start. Events quickly proved otherwise and West Germany's sugar problems took a back seat to a crisis of a much different and older sort.

During the morning service at the Protestant church in Ochsenfurt, which was led by District Superintendent Schwinn, the Protestant pastor, Hans Kipfmüller, was pulled

⁶ LKAN LkR v. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to LkR, June 29, 1953.

⁷ A copy of the program for the cornerstone dedication can be found in Gehlert, *50 Jahre*, 32-33.

aside by a representative of the local Catholic church. He asked if Schwinn planned to be in full religious attire for the dedication ceremony and if he would perform an official religious act. When Pastor Kipfmüller replied that he did indeed plan to do so, the Catholic representative informed him that there might be a problem and quickly left. After the service, Schwinn was met in the sacristy by an obviously agitated Dr. Josef Holik, the main director of the sugar factory. Having only just arrived in Ochsenfurt and been informed of the extent of Schwinn's involvement, Bishop Döpfner had said that Canon Law forbade him from taking part in a ceremony where an ordained clergy member of another confession performed an official religious act in full religious attire. As a bishop was clearly a bigger draw than a district superintendent, the director wanted to know if Schwinn would still attend the service but not wear his robe or perform the dedication prayer. It was now 10:55 and the dedication ceremony was scheduled to begin in five minutes. A decision had to be made quickly. Schwinn did not want a shadow to fall upon such a grand occasion, but he also did not want to seem neutered by the Catholics. He thus replied that he would not take part in the ceremony at all.⁸

News of what had transpired behind closed doors spread quickly through the small town and the mood turned ugly. Protestant farmers pelted the carriage that escorted Bishop Döpfner to the factory with curses and stones. It took a great deal of effort to calm the crowd enough to hold the ceremony, which was repeatedly interrupted by boos and curses that worsened when it was announced that the Protestant dedication act had

⁸ Accounts of what happened on the morning of the Ochsenfurt incident vary. The author cross referenced several sources to find the elements that each held in common. See LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Report from BOW concerning the Ochsenfurt incident, July 2, 1953. "Ochsenfurter Zuckerfabrik eingeweiht," *SZ*, June 29, 1953. LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to LkR, June 29, 1953. "Aus einem Napf," *Der Spiegel* (July 15, 1953): 9-10.

been cancelled. Perhaps wisely, Bishop Döpfner beat a hasty retreat back to Würzburg after the service.

The situation did not improve that afternoon. An assembly of some 10,000 sugar beet farmers, many of whom were Protestant, had gathered to celebrate the dedication of the new factory. Church and government leaders who were present feared that the events of that morning and the liberal amounts of alcohol flowing around might lead this group to violence.⁹ The police arrived to monitor the situation and the crowd was eventually dispersed without incident. However, this was not enough to stop a series of protests that were held the following week in nearby villages. The largest was held on July 5th in Uffenheim. Led by Bavarian State Parliament representative Falk, a Protestant member of the CSU who was also the mayor of Uffenheim, several incendiary comments were made to hundreds of farmers in attendance. Falk stated: "When there continue to be incidents where the equality of the Protestant part of the population is called into question, can we truly say that we live in a democratic state under the rule of law? These protests will not remain solitary events if such incidents are explained away as harmless organizational failures and not as a fundamental violation of the equal rights of the Protestant population."¹⁰

Confessional relations following the Ochsenfurt incident were clearly in desperate straits. In an effort to assuage the situation, Father Braun, the local Catholic priest, and Pastor Kipfmüller released a joint message of reconciliation on July 2nd that called on the

⁹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to LkR, June 29, 1953.

¹⁰ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Report entitled "Protestkundgebung gegen den Zwischenfall in Ochsenfurt" sent out by Evangelischer Pressedienst, July 5 1953.

adherents of both confessions to live together as Christian brothers and sisters in peace.¹¹ Such pronouncements, however, did little good and reactions to what had just happened would prove intense. Before examining the repercussions of the sugar factory debacle, it is necessary to address briefly the series of events that led up to it.

Contemporaries and subsequent chroniclers have laid much of the blame for the Ochsenfurt incident at the feet of Bishop Döpfner. Döpfner was a native son of Lower Franconia and had been enthroned as Bishop of Würzburg at the age of 35 in 1948. The youngest bishop in all of Germany, Döpfner was intelligent, driven, and well liked in his diocese. After Ochsenfurt many labeled him a fiery Catholic hardliner or, worse, an incompetent youngster. Summing up such beliefs, Dr. Otto Seeling, President of the State Association of Bavarian Industry, wrote to Hans Meiser, the Protestant Bishop of Bavaria, commenting: “It seems to me to be unwise to entrust high church positions to all too young men because their eagerness is greater than their common sense.”¹²

The shadow of Ochsenfurt would follow Döpfner throughout his career and he openly referred to it as one of the darkest times in his life. In an interview shortly before his death in 1976, then Cardinal Döpfner commented on his selection as Bishop of Berlin in 1956. Despite the insistence of the Pope, Döpfner was concerned about taking over what was justly seen as the most difficult diocese in all of Germany. He pointed to the Ochsenfurt incident to justify his argument that he was possibly not the best man for the job. Döpfner eventually took the post, but shortly after his arrival in Berlin, Federal

¹¹ DAW Generalakten 528: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Ochsenfurt to BOW, July 8, 1953.

¹² LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Dr. Otto Seeling (Präsident des Landesverbandes der Bayerischen Industrie) to Bishop Meiser, June 30, 1953.

Republic President Heuß took him aside and only half jokingly said: “But remember, don’t have any Ochsenfurt incidents in Berlin.”¹³

The scorn heaped on Bishop Döpfner after Ochsenfurt seems unjustified. He was young and uncertain, but he was certainly not incompetent or a hard-line fanatic. In 1949, the previous Protestant District Superintendent of Würzburg had commented to his superiors that Bishop Döpfner was kindhearted and friendly to the Protestant minority in the region and that he was someone they could really work with.¹⁴ In 1951, Protestant District Superintendent Schwinn himself wrote to Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg saying: “We are deeply thankful for the joint work on common interests and see in the sermon of the Bishop (Döpfner) from January 25 a true gift.”¹⁵ Perhaps more than any other bishop in Germany, Döpfner stressed the need for better communication and common action with Protestants. Döpfner had been poorly informed about what to expect upon his arrival in Ochsenfurt and his actions there seem best described as those of a young man who fell back on the letter of the law when faced with a critical moment of decision.

Aside from the role played by Bishop Döpfner, there was, and remains, a great deal of debate over what other factors led to the Ochsenfurt incident. Protestants argued that the program for the festivities had been circulated 14 days before the event and it clearly stated that District Superintendent Schwinn would give an official dedication prayer. Pastor Kipfmüller went on to say that on two separate occasions he had

¹³ Oskar Niesinger, ed. *Julius Cardinal Döpfner: Erinnerung, Bildnotizen, Zitate* (Würzburg: Echter, 1976), 96.

¹⁴ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Würzburg to Bishop Meiser, Dec. 23, 1949.

¹⁵ DAW Generalakten 793: Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to BOW, 9 Feb. 1951.

mentioned to Father Braun that Schwinn would perform an official religious act.¹⁶ As everyone supposedly knew the extent of Schwinn's involvement, Döpfner's behavior could only be described as a conscious provocation. This insult, they argued, was no isolated incident, but simply another example of the growing intolerance of the Catholic Church in postwar West Germany.¹⁷

The rhetoric that Protestants used to discuss this perceived offense, however, is of particular interest. While Döpfner's actions were certainly seen as intolerant and hostile, they were not defined in such terms. Instead, the Bishop was accused of violating the confessional peace. District Superintendent Schwinn's first report to the Protestant hierarchy in Munich was headed: "Serious disturbance of the confessional peace by Bishop Döpfner of Würzburg."¹⁸ The standing committee of the Established Church Council had an emergency meeting on Monday, June 30th, to discuss what was labeled "The disturbance of the confessional peace at Ochsenfurt".¹⁹ The first official pronouncement of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria after the incident was capped off with the phrase "We deeply regret that the confessional peace was destroyed by the events at Ochsenfurt."²⁰ That this particular wording was used rather than something from the panoply of derogatory terms that the confessions normally used to deride each other with is telling. Clearly, accusations of breaking the confessional peace had become a new rhetorical weapon in a very old conflict.

¹⁶ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Report of LkR concerning the Ochsenfurt incident, July 4, 1953.

¹⁷ This sentiment is perhaps best summed up by the title of the *Landeskirchenrat* file concerning the Ochsenfurt incident in the Protestant archive in Nuremberg. It reads: "Intolerance and encroachment of the Catholic Church, here Ochsenfurt." LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt).

¹⁸ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to LkR, June 29, 1953.

¹⁹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Haussitzung of the LkR, June 30, 1953.

²⁰ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Explanation of the LkR on the "Ochsenfurter Zwischenfall", June 30, 1953.

Naturally, the view from the Catholic Church was quite different. The cause of the Ochsenfurt incident was officially defined as organizational failure. Father Braun said that he was informed in a meeting with Director Gerstberger in May of 1953 that the ceremony would follow the same format as the cornerstone dedication of 1951. Father Braun said that he interpreted this as meaning that Schwinn would once again attend but not perform an official religious act. However, it appears that Gerstberger did not relay any such message to Dr. Holik, who was in charge of organizing the ceremony on June 28, 1953. Father Braun argued that he had been unaware of the exchange of letters and meetings that had taken place between Schwinn, Pastor Kipfmuller and Dr. Holik in which the District Superintendent had been invited to perform such a rite. Unaware that a joint service would be problematic for the Catholic Church and thinking that Pastor Kipfmuller and Father Braun had worked out the details amongst themselves, Dr. Holik felt he did not need to further address the matter and went about organizing the rest of the ceremony. The priest argued that he first became aware that Schwinn would be performing an official religious dedication on the night before the ceremony during the rehearsal, at which point it was too late to do anything about it.²¹

In regards to the program guide for the ceremony, Father Braun argued that he only saw a copy of the one released on June 27th, which stated that Schwinn would attend, but would not perform an official religious act. Braun claimed to have never seen or heard of the yellow program that, according to the Protestants, had been distributed earlier in the month. This was, it turns out, only an example copy that had been given to

²¹DAW Generalakten 528: Report concerning the meeting of Father Josef Braun of Ochsenfurt and Cath. Cathedral Canon Heinrich with Director Dr. Holik and Director Lange of the Ochsenfurt sugar factory, July 7, 1953. See also LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Copy of report from BOW concerning the Ochsenfurt incident, July 2, 1953.

a small number of factory officials and representatives of the farmers' association.²²

Braun here touches on an essential point. If one really had to dole out blame for the incident it could be this: there really were two different program guides - the yellow one that said Schwinn would perform the dedication and the second, white one that listed him only as an observer.²³ In the ensuing confusion, neither side took the necessary steps to rectify the situation before it was too late. Even worse, both could justifiably point to one of the program guides after the fact and feel that they were in the right.

In private, Father Braun went further in allocating blame for the Ochsenfurt incident. In a letter to the diocesan authorities in Würzburg, he argued that it was not only organizational failure, but Protestant intolerance that had led to the crisis.

Undermining the integrity of the joint message of reconciliation put out by Father Braun and Pastor Kipfmüller following the incident, the priest detailed how Pastor Kipfmüller had poisoned the confessional environment in the town well before the sugar factory debacle. Father Braun spoke of his excellent relations with Pastor Kipfmüller's predecessor, Pastor Herrmann, and said that the two had a great deal in common and had worked together to resist the intrusions of the Nazis. This spirit of cooperation, he said, had spread to the entire town and confessional relations were excellent. However, when Pastor Herrmann retired in 1951 and was replaced by Kipfmüller, things took a turn for the worse. The new pastor preached in triumphant tones about Luther's rebellion from the "decadent" Catholic Church and staged a Christmas play with the youth that viciously parodied a Franciscan monk. To the Catholic wife of one of the teachers at the local

²² DAW Generalakten 528: Report concerning the meeting of Father Josef Braun of Ochsenfurt and Cath. Cathedral Canon Heinrich with Director Dr. Holik and Director Lange of the Ochsenfurt sugar factory, July 7, 1953. The author could not determine how Pastor Kipfmüller received a copy of this program guide.

²³ A copy of the latter can be found in Ibid. A copy of the former can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt).

Protestant confessional school, Pastor Kipfmuller supposedly commented: “When you come over to us, you leave the darkness for the light.”²⁴ Father Braun denied that Pastor Kipfmuller had ever told him about the level of District Superintendent Schwinn’s involvement at the dedication and claimed that Kipfmuller intentionally avoided contact with him.

Braun’s saved his most damning criticism for a short postscript. The terminology he chose to use is illuminating. It reads in full: “In answer to my question, ‘Pastor, why can’t we have the confessional peace that once existed here?’ he replied: ‘Since 1945, our church has become sharper.’ I answered: ‘But that doesn’t mean that in our small community of Ochsenfurt the confessional peace cannot be maintained.’ After more conversation of this kind, he went further and said that he had joined the Nazi Party in 1935 and had a membership number under 100,000.”²⁵

Much like the Protestant sources mentioned above, age-old Catholic accusations of Protestant intolerance, hatred, and slander, joined here by newer charges of Nazi sympathies, were still readily apparent. However, they were now articulated using the rhetoric of the confessional peace. This was the new great insult and both confessions were equally unabashed towards using it.

Questions of blame, however, are not as revealing as an examination of the reactions to and repercussions of the Ochsenfurt incident. As it was such a controversial event, ample documentation exists to examine the public and private reactions of church

²⁴ Quoted in DAW Generalakten 528: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Ochsenfurt to BOW, July 8, 1953.

²⁵ Ibid. Both Kipfmuller’s claim of being a longtime Nazi and Braun’s discussion of it are a bit suspect. One should note that roughly 1 million people joined the Nazi Party in 1935, thereby throwing Kipfmuller’s comment about having a membership number under 100,000 into doubt. On Braun’s part, Catholic priests were often very quick in the postwar years to denounce their counterparts as Nazis or Nazi sympathizers. The author could not find evidence to determine whether or not Kipfmuller had indeed been a member of the Nazi Party. Braun’s inclusion of the Nazi reference in a postscript makes one wonder if he simply added it to leave a deep impression on the reader.

officials, the coverage provided in the secular and religious press, and popular opinion in general.

The Diocese of Würzburg reacted immediately to the Ochsenfurt incident by trying to prove that Döpfner had made the correct decision and bore no ill will towards Protestants. On June 30, 1953, the diocesan authorities of Würzburg published an official notice on the Catholic News Agency that explained their position. As both the secular and religious press picked it up over the wire and reprinted it widely, this article should therefore be considered the official line of the Catholic Church. It reads in full: “1. A dedication performed by the church is an act of worship, not a religiously colored courtesy. The Catholic Church forbids communal worship services with other confessions. Because of this, the Diocese of Würzburg holds to the following line: Official dedications should represent the local religious balance. Therefore, in primarily Catholic areas the Catholic priest should preside and in primarily Protestant areas the Protestant pastor should preside. The representative of the other confession should perform no religious act in the ceremony, but may attend as an observer. 2. The incident could have been avoided if the Bishop had been notified ahead of time that the dedication would include a religious act by the Protestant confession. 3. The agenda of the Bishop cannot be truthfully interpreted as intolerance. The Bishop has discussed the great concern of Christianity, the unity of all believers, on numerous occasions and has showed a loving understanding for his separated brothers. However, the tragedy of the division of the faith will not be overcome through a blurring of deep differences, but through common effort inspired by responsible conscience.”²⁶

²⁶ A copy of this release can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt). It was also reprinted in several other media sources. See, for example: “Aus einem Napf,” *Der Spiegel*, (July 15, 1953): 11.

Building upon this theme of church law and the responsibility of each confession to work towards a greater understanding of the other, the main mouthpiece of the diocese, the *Würzburger Katholisches Sonntagsblatt*, published an article on July 12th that stated that the two confessions had a great deal in common and could work together to fight secularism, poverty, and immorality. In no way, it argued, did church law hinder such efforts. Law created order and structure for relations between the confessions; it was only through law that parity could be guaranteed. While the article concluded that the Ochsenfurt incident was the result of a truly unfortunate failure of organization, it strongly pushed home the point that, by following church law, Döpfner had made the only decision that guaranteed the rights of both confessions.²⁷

On July 4th, Bishop Döpfner himself apologized for any harm that may have come from his decision and said: “Any insult to the Protestant population was the farthest thing from my mind. I will continue, as I have in the past, to work for better cooperation between the confessions.”²⁸

In reply, the Protestant established church council released the above mentioned memorandum on June 30th. It began by arguing that Döpfner had not been concerned about church law at all, but was making a statement. In previous years, there had been numerous cases of joint services where the clergy of each confession performed religious acts in full religious attire. “As this practice had been forbidden by the Catholic Church for several decades,” they argued, “we believed that this new development after 1945 was

²⁷ "Ochsenfurt: Gedanken zum Kiliansfest 1953," *Würzburger Katholisches Sonntagsblatt*, July 12, 1953.

²⁸ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Report entitled "Jede Kränkung hat mir ferngelegen" sent out over Catholic News Agency (KNA), July 4, 1953.

a serious effort to reach the confessional peace.”²⁹ Without stating so explicitly, the none-too-subtle message was that Döpfner’s actions at Ochsenfurt had betrayed this new spirit of openness and destroyed any hope of a confessional peace.

The memorandum went on to strike a much more conciliatory tone. It concluded: “We hold it as absolutely essential that the two churches come to a mutual conclusion on the here raised questions before they should further endanger our people. We are ready to enter into discussion with responsible men of the Catholic Church so that such events, which are a provocation to the Protestant Church, can be avoided in the future.”³⁰

In much the same light, District Superintendent Schwinn, who had seen an advanced copy of the article in the *Würzburger Katholisches Sonntagsblatt* from July 12th, placed posters around the city of Würzburg on the night of July 11th for his Catholic neighbors to read the next morning. In it, he complained about the dismissive tone of the article in the Catholic newspaper and went on to spell out once again how the Protestants had done their part to avoid the incident and had done nothing to damage the confessional peace. He concluded, however, “We do not want to continue focusing on single questions or on church law. We are shocked that so much discord has been raised

²⁹ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Explanation of the LkR on the "Ochsenfurter Zwischenfall," June 30, 1953. The Established Church Council had a point here. Numerous Protestant pastors and district superintendents wrote in after Ochsenfurt commenting on how they had performed joint services in full religious attire with Catholic clergy members and high ranking officials like Cardinal Faulhaber of Munich without incident. In file LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt), see letters from District Superintendent Schmerl of Gunzenhausen to LkR, July 2, 1953; Regional Superintendent Koller of Regensburg to LkR, July 2, 1953; and Regional Superintendent i.R. Daumiller of Munich to LkR, July 10, 1953. Protestants had even more damning evidence in the form of a picture in the Würzburg newspaper. In it, one can clearly see Catholic Bishop Ehrenfried and Protestant District Superintendent Schadewitz, the predecessors of Döpfner and Schwinn, performing a joint service of remembrance for the war dead in full religious attire. See “Würzburg gedenkt seiner Toten,” *Main Post*, April 25, 1946. Protestants were quick to print and distribute copies of this picture to bolster their arguments after the Ochsenfurt incident.

³⁰ LKAN LkR XIV 1600 Bd. I: Explanation of the LkR on the "Ochsenfurter Zwischenfall," June 30, 1953.

between the confessions. Let us do everything we can to ensure that each man receives his entitled rights so that we can stand together again in trust.”³¹

In public, the message of both churches in light of the Ochsenfurt incident was thus one of reconciliation and the need for mutual understanding and respect. The debacle was portrayed by both sides as a regrettable, if not tragic, setback to the creation of the confessional peace, but one that could be overcome through open-minded communication. As both churches made clear, this entailed an honest consideration of the differences that existed between the two confessions, not a shallow ecumenicalism that merely papered over them. Such attitudes helped lead to the speedy official resolution of the Ochsenfurt incident, but the bitterness expressed in private by clergy and church leaders alike show why the debacle would cast such a long shadow over confessional relations.

District Superintendent Schwinn was clearly hurt by Döpfner’s actions at Ochsenfurt and his letter to the established church council from June 29, 1953 rails against the Bishop.³² Schwinn would go on making accusations against Döpfner in both public and private for the better part of a month. But even Protestants with cooler heads showed plenty of mistrust towards their Catholic counterparts. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg wrote to all clergy under his jurisdiction saying: “The solution presented by the Catholic side, ‘in primarily Catholic areas ceremonies should be led by the Catholic priest, in primarily Protestant areas by the Protestant pastor,’ is no solution. One could someday say: What is good for Würzburg is good for all of Bavaria. Bavaria

³¹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Copy of message from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to Catholics in the Diocese of Würzburg, July 11, 1953.

³² LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg to LkR, June 29, 1953.

is a primarily Catholic state, so!”³³ Many Protestant pastors in rural parts of Middle and Upper Franconia even threatened to stop the common practice of allowing the small Catholic population in the area to use their church buildings for mass.³⁴

Catholics too had some rather aggressive comments to make in private. In addition to Father Braun’s comments about Pastor Kipfmüller, Vicar General Dr. Fuchs of Würzburg wrote to District Superintendent Schwinn and accused him of not making any effort to inform Catholic officials about the nature of Protestant dedication rights (a reference to the cornerstone dedication of 1951). He also argued that Schwinn had failed to let the Bishop know of his level of involvement in the dedication ceremony at Ochsenfurt and was therefore largely to blame for the incident. Going still further, Fuchs blamed Schwinn for blowing the incident into a scandal through his public accusations and incendiary press releases. Fuchs concluded with the biting comment: “As responsible men, we must do in all consciousness that which is necessary, be it convenient or inconvenient.”³⁵

Speaking of reconciliation in public but harboring mistrust and hate in private, the churches moved quickly to put Ochsenfurt behind them. Their attempts to downplay the incident were complicated by the extensive coverage and commentary provided by the secular press on the events that had unfolded at the sugar factory. As confessional rancor sold newspapers and magazines, it behooved the press to keep the incident in the public’s eye.

³³ LKAN KrD Nürnberg 64: Letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg to all Prot. pastorates in the region of Nuremberg, July 1, 1953.

³⁴ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Hof to LkR, July 7, 1953.

³⁵ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Copy of letter from Vicar General Fuchs of Würzburg to Prot. District Superintendent Schwinn of Würzburg, July 13, 1953.

By and large, the coverage was quite critical. Showing that the churches did not have a corner on accusations of breaking the confessional peace, the left leaning *Münchener Merkur* ran an article that lamented how the events at Ochsenfurt had destroyed the confessional peace that developed out of the joint experience of persecution at the hands of the Nazis, and that confessional tension had once again been brought to the center of public attention. Such hatred, it concluded, was an unhealthy and unnecessary part of German history that the churches themselves bore responsibility for. While the letters sent to church officials by ordinary people after the incident would seem to speak to the contrary, the newspaper concluded: “Thus it is no wonder that the public, and this includes in the first ranks members of both confessions, are as tired of confessional conflict as they are of party conflict.”³⁶

Openly leftwing newspapers such as the *Neckarecho* argued that this violation of the confessional peace was merely a symptom of the intolerance bred by confessional schools. To avoid such incidents in the future, parents should put their children in community schools. Furthermore, events of this kind demonstrated that there was no room in the CDU/CSU for Protestants, who should therefore vote for the SPD.³⁷ Conservative, pro CDU/CSU papers such as the *Bayerische Staatszeitung und Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger* tried to counter such publicity by arguing that in its responses to the incident, the CDU/CSU was doing its part to uphold the confessional peace. As the confessional peace “was sealed with the blood of both confessions during the Third

³⁶ “Der konfessionelle Friede,” *Münchener Merkur*, July 4-5, 1953.

³⁷ DAW Generalakten 526: Article is included in a letter from Mr. M to Bishop Döpfner, June 30, 1953. Access to Generalakten File 526 was granted only on the condition that all authors should remain anonymous.

Reich,” it was up to them “to continually renew and serve it through prayer and good sense.”³⁸

National media outlets took an even more critical view of the Ochsenfurt incident and, in particular, heaped scorn on Bishop Döpfner. The national weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* ran an article saying that in an area such as Franconia, where confessional relations were traditionally tense, Döpfner’s actions were irresponsible. It concluded: “Should only Lower Franconia be denied ecumenical sugar? One must ask the Diocese, was the whole thing really so important that hundred year old wounds had to be torn open anew?”³⁹ The news magazine *Der Spiegel* reserved over half of its six page article on the incident for a detailed discussion of Döpfner himself. Clearly insinuating that the Bishop was a hard-line Catholic fanatic, it mentioned no less than six times that he had studied at the Germanicum in Rome.⁴⁰

The religious press also provided extensive coverage and commentary on the incident. While the opinions expressed generally followed confessional lines, there were some rather surprising conclusions and even a few notes of dissension. The *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt*, one of the most widely distributed Protestant newspapers in Bavaria, published an article complaining how the “ample unfriendliness” of Döpfner had led to a disaster for the confessional peace. Unlike the secular press, however, it did not dwell on the character of Döpfner or label him a bigot. Instead, it attempted to use

³⁸ “Um den konfessionellen Frieden,” *Bayerische Staatszeitung und Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger*, July 4, 1953.

³⁹ “Kein Simultanzucker in Franken,” *Die Zeit*, July 9, 1953.

⁴⁰ The Germanicum is one of the colleges of the Gregoriana, the Vatican university. It was founded in 1552 by the Jesuits under the auspices of Pope Julius III. St. Ignatius of Loyola wanted to train elite groups of young priests that could return to their homeland and lead efforts to counter the Reformation. The college had a reputation for being ultra orthodox. Four of the seven bishops of Bavaria at the time of the Ochsenfurt incident, including Döpfner, were alumni of the Germanicum. See “Aus einem Napf,” *Der Spiegel* (July 15, 1953): 9-14.

the incident as an opportunity to deepen religious involvement. While not dismissing the need for such rites, it asked why the clamor for religious dedications of bridges, factories, and other material items was growing at the same time that people were going to church less frequently and putting more of their faith in worldly things. Vain hopes to endow “dead things with the secret power of the living God” did not constitute a dedication and only led to the possibility of disasters like Ochsenfurt. A real dedication, they concluded, was when one put one’s faith in God and trusted in his grace.⁴¹

The weekly newspapers of the other six Catholic dioceses in Bavaria all ran articles supporting Döpfner and reprinted the explanation provided by the diocesan authorities of Würzburg.⁴² Opinions within the Catholic Church concerning the Ochsenfurt incident were certainly not unanimous though. Critical voices, albeit at lower levels, could be heard. The Catholic newspaper for the Nürnberg-Fürth region began its article on the Ochsenfurt incident by saying: “The first reaction of most readers, and no doubt of many Catholics, was to scratch their heads at the seemingly incomprehensible actions of the Würzburg bishop. The explanation of the diocesan authorities could also not remove the bitter taste of the incident...One could argue with very good ground that in this concrete situation another decision would have perhaps been the lesser of evils.”⁴³ Using an argument similar to that expressed in the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt*, the article went on to deflect some of the criticism away from Bishop Döpfner by stating that the ever growing appetite for more elaborate dedications with more prestigious guests was partly to blame for the incident. It also said Döpfner had

⁴¹ “...-weihe!,” *NEG*, July 5, 1953.

⁴² For example, see “Konfessionelle Eintracht nicht betroffen,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, July 12, 1953.

⁴³ “Ochsenfurt: Der Zwischenfall,” *Die Pfarrfamilie: Katholischer Kirchenanzeiger für Nürnberg-Fürth und Umgebung*, July 12, 1953. One must note that this paper is from a Catholic diaspora region.

been bound by church law and that this duty had nothing to do with intolerance.

However, the criticism had been made and would even be reprinted in the secular press.⁴⁴

The Ochsenfurt incident serves as an excellent case study because one can not only see the reactions of the churches and the press, but also get a sense of public opinion through the flood of letters received by the principal characters involved. Bishop Döpfner himself received well over one hundred letters with opinions that ranged from support, to hate, to disbelief.

Catholics from Würzburg and all over Germany wrote to express their love and devotion to the young bishop in his darkest hour. The priests of the city of Würzburg wrote a joint letter saying: “Out of deep concern, the clergy of the city of Würzburg will do our share to carry the heavy cross that God has placed on your Excellence’s shoulders.”⁴⁵ Many others showed their support by arguing that the press had blown the incident all out of proportion. One man wrote to the editors of the Würzburg based *Main Post* complaining of their “slimy editorial comments...that are a blow to our Bishop Julius.”⁴⁶

Hate mail far outweighed letters of support. One Protestant man wrote: “If you and your colleagues continue to agitate against Protestantism with such methods, we will, much like the great German Martin Luther, give your Roman church the answer it deserves. We kneel only to God and not for man or icons. Our Protestant church is a

⁴⁴ The secular press seemed surprised that such comments would be made in a Catholic newspaper and sometimes reprinted them verbatim. See “Schlußwort zu Ochsenfurt,” *NN*, July 13, 1953. Catholic officials and clergy members were equally perplexed about the note of dissension and some complained bitterly about it. It should be noted that the article was written by a lay author. See DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Cath. Pastorate of Moggast to Bishop Döpfner, July 14, 1953.

⁴⁵ DAW Generalakten 526: July 4, 1953. Sharing the “heavy cross” or the “way of the cross” were common phrases used in the letters of support to Bishop Döpfner. See also DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from laypeople of three districts in the Diocese of Würzburg to Bishop Döpfner, July 16, 1953.

⁴⁶ DAW Generalakten 526: Copy of a letter from Dr. S to the *Main Post*, July 1, 1953.

German Confession of Faith!⁴⁷ Criticism was certainly not reserved for Protestants. One Catholic man pointed to the irony of the Bishop's talk about Christian compassion and love in light of the sugar factory debacle. He concluded: "If God is love, then how can one be so uncaring?"⁴⁸ Others simply wrote in with vitriolic comments or random threats such as "Too bad I wasn't there, otherwise you wouldn't have had any hair left on your head."⁴⁹

Most of the letters that Döpfner received were on one of these two extreme poles of opinion. However, there was a distinct middle group that expressed disbelief. As opposed to confessional-polemical terminology, these developed more secular or post-confessional themes. Many referenced to the Nazi years and the Cold War to voice their disbelief. One man wrote: "After the experience of the Third Reich and with the situation in the East, I actively protest all individual actions that burden or destroy the people's peace and their willingness to build democracy."⁵⁰ Some wanted Döpfner to explain the grounds for his decision or to ask him why a joint service was problematic. Others asked why the two confessions couldn't just get along. One Protestant woman summed up such letters when she wrote: "How is it possible that one can hold such a view in this day and age when the whole of Christendom is in danger, not just one confession. I often ask myself, what would Christ do if he were to return to the world now? He knew neither

⁴⁷ DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Mr. K to Bishop Döpfner, no date.

⁴⁸ DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Mr. P to Bishop Döpfner, June 29, 1953

⁴⁹ DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from "many farmers in the Ochsenfurt region and beyond" to Bishop Döpfner, no date.

⁵⁰ DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Mr. S to Bishop Döpfner, July 4, 1953.

Catholics nor Protestants; instead he preached of the Truth and showed an all embracing love for mankind.”⁵¹

While these letters of disbelief caution against drawing Olaf Blaschke like conclusions about the nature of confessional relations in the postwar era, it does seem clear that confessional antagonisms retained their power to deeply polarize West German society. The repercussions of this tension could be clearly felt in the world of politics. This was even more the case with the sugar factory debacle as Federal Parliament (*Bundestag*) elections were scheduled for the following autumn. There was a great deal of concern in CDU/CSU circles that worsening confessional relations would cripple their attempts to make a biconfessional party. A Catholic man from Heidelberg who was active in the CDU wrote to Bishop Döpfner saying: “Many colleagues of mine have used the incident to argue that common action by Catholics and Protestants in the political field isn’t possible and that the CDU is therefore an unsuccessful attempt that must end.”⁵²

Chancellor Konrad Adenauer obviously shared such concerns as he became personally involved in efforts to minimize the damage caused by the Ochsenfurt incident. Writing not as Chancellor but as head of the CDU, Adenauer wrote strongly worded pleas for reconciliation to Protestant Bishop Meiser and to Cardinal Wendel of Munich on July 3rd.⁵³ He wrote: “The idea of the Union, that means the unity of the two

⁵¹ DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Ms. L to Bishop Döpfner, June 30, 1953. The charge of “What would Jesus do?” was a common one used by laypeople who disagreed with official church policies or decisions.

⁵² DAW Generalakten 526: Letter from Mr. S to BOW, June 29, 1953.

⁵³ DAW Generalakten 528: Copy of letter from Konrad Adenauer to Cardinal Wendel of Munich, July 3, 1953. LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Konrad Adenauer to Bishop Meiser, July 3, 1953. While having confession specific comments, both letters were quite similar. The quotation used above is present in both letters. Adenauer wrote to Cardinal Wendel, and not to Bishop Döpfner himself,

confessions in politics, has proved itself through practical work. It is the correct conclusion to be drawn from the experiences of the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. It is also the correct conclusion in light of the dangers that threaten both confessions alike. It is therefore unfortunate, that the incident at Ochsenfurt has been misused by certain political circles and personalities to try and turn Protestant voters against the CDU/CSU.⁵⁴ The repercussions of such a development would be bad for both confessions, but it would be disastrous for the strength of the Christian block in Germany....We stand before difficult political decisions that greatly concern both the future of our Fatherland and the Christianity of both confessions. From small events such as these grow large political developments that neither the Catholic nor Protestant side is more responsible for.”

While Adenauer and the CDU/CSU went on to win an absolute majority in the 1953 elections, there were good reasons for such concern. Through much of the 1950's, the CDU and CSU were primarily Catholic parties. However, they needed the support of Protestant voters if they wanted to defeat the SPD/FDP coalition. This was even more the case in Bavaria, where the incident took place, as the Bavaria Party, a strongly conservative party that sought greater autonomy for the State of Bavaria, was drawing more and more Catholic voters away from the CSU.⁵⁵ But with a full lineup of ultra

because the Archbishop of Munich and Freising was the prime authority in all matters of Bavarian Catholicism.

⁵⁴ Adenauer here was probably referring to efforts of the SPD to use the Ochsenfurt incident to attract Protestant voters away from the CDU/CSU. See footnote #35.

⁵⁵ In 1954, the CSU was actually defeated in Bavarian state elections for the first and last time by a four party coalition that included the SPD, FDP, Bayernpartei, and the BHE (Block der Heimatvertrebenen und Entrechteten – a party that catered to German refugees from the East.) In light of the total dominance of the CSU in Bavarian elections since 1957, it is easy to forget that the party struggled to find traction in the late 1940's and throughout the 1950's amongst the confessional and socio-economic fractures of Bavarian society. See Peter James, *The Politics of Bavaria - an Exception to the Rule: The Special Position of the Free State of Bavaria in the New Germany* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995), 99.

conservative, ultra Catholic politicians such as Alois Hundhammer, the CSU was a hard sell to Protestants. In the wake of the Ochsenfurt incident, several prominent Bavarian Protestants wrote to Bishop Meiser saying, for example: “After this, we must reconsider whether we want to vote for the CSU or the party of Heinemann. The CSU is too ‘black’ and we Protestants are only tolerated in it.”⁵⁶

For Protestants, the Ochsenfurt incident spoke of the need for a greater Protestant voice in the CDU/CSU. Bishop Meiser echoed this sentiment in a meeting on July 11th with Dr. Neuhäusler, the Catholic Suffragan Bishop of Munich. Dr. Neuhäusler commented that poor confessional relations could have political consequences that would benefit neither side. Meiser replied that he wholeheartedly agreed, but went on to say that he hoped the incident would drive home the need for CSU and state government leaders to reconsider their policies. “The Protestant population cannot help but feel that its repeatedly uttered cries for parity are going unnoticed and that its entitled rights are not granted. Programmatic words must be joined with convincing action if the CSU wants to avoid losing Protestant voters to other parties. There is no time to lose before the Federal Parliament election.”⁵⁷ Bishop Meiser made similar comments to Chancellor Adenauer in a letter on July 22nd.⁵⁸

Even while such political positioning was taking place, both churches were moving quickly towards official reconciliation. Despite the somewhat biting comments of Bishop Meiser mentioned above, the meeting between him and Suffragan Bishop Neuhäusler of Munich, who spoke on behalf of Cardinal Wendel, did clear the air on

⁵⁶ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from Erwin Miller of Zeitlofs to LkR, July 6, 1953.

⁵⁷ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Memo to LkR entitled "Betreff: Ochsenfurt" written by Bishop Meiser, July 13, 1953.

⁵⁸ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Copy of letter from Bishop Meiser to Konrad Adenauer, July 22, 1953.

many issues surrounding the Ochsenfurt incident and paved the way for a meeting between Bishop Döpfner and Bishop Meiser on July 20th.⁵⁹ Here, Döpfner apologized again for any misunderstanding that might have developed because of his decision and reassured Bishop Meiser that insulting the Protestant population was the farthest thing from his mind that day. The two consciously avoided concrete discussions of joint worship policies, focusing instead on improving confessional relations on a broader level. In the end, the two released a joint statement asking “Catholic and Protestant Christians, regardless of confessional differences, to live and work together in a spirit of mutual trust and true brotherhood.”⁶⁰ When District Superintendent Schwinn, still reeling from the perceived insult of Bishop Döpfner, continued to complain in public about dismissive articles in the Catholic press and of Catholic intolerance in general, the Protestant Established Church Council sent a letter saying that any further comments on his part would not be tolerated as they contradicted the reconciliation efforts of Bishop Meiser and showed a lack of unity in the Protestant camp.⁶¹ Clearly, both churches had had enough of Ochsenfurt and wanted it to go away.

The incident lingered on though and cast a long shadow over confessional relations. In a move that effectively ended the very short tradition of joint services, both the diocesan authorities in Würzburg and the Protestant established church council wrote confidential letters to their clergy telling them to avoid all ceremonies where a member of

⁵⁹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Memo to LkR entitled “Betreff: Ochsenfurt” written by Bishop Meiser, July 13, 1953.

⁶⁰ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Memo to LkR written by Bishop Meiser concerning his meeting with Bishop Döpfner, July 20, 1953.

⁶¹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Copy of letter from LkR to Prot. District Superintendent of Würzburg, July 30, 1953.

the other confession was liturgically involved.⁶² The other Bavarian dioceses followed suit and this policy would remain in place until reforms in the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria and those wrought by the Second Vatican Council were implemented in the mid 1960's.

The Ochsenfurt sugar factory incident superbly illustrates the dual nature of this concept of the confessional peace and says a great deal about confessional relations in postwar West Germany in general. As evidenced by the meeting between Bishops Döpfner and Meiser, Catholics and Protestants could work together in ways thought impossible before to put aside their differences and develop a greater understanding and respect for each other. Calls for a confessional peace, which stemmed from the joint experience of persecution at the hands of the Nazis and the common threats of communism and consumerism, clearly influenced such efforts and helped shape the contours of inter-confessional discourse. However, the intensity of emotions, the political repercussions, as well as the backbiting and general bitterness that the Ochsenfurt incident generated show that confessional tension was far from dead. Religious hatreds that had festered and boiled for centuries survived both Nazi persecution and wartime devastation well intact. In many cases, as seen by the comments of Father Braun about the Nazi past of his counterpart, they had been strengthened by them. These age old conflicts even had the power to assimilate the concept of the confessional peace. Illustrating a much broader pattern of accusation, both churches and their adherents blamed the other of breaking the confessional peace at Ochsenfurt.

⁶² LKAN LkR z. XIV 1624 (Ochsenfurt): Letter from LkR to all Prot. Regional Superintendents, July 9, 1953. DAW Generalakten 791: Copy of letter from BOW to all Cath. Deans in the Diocese of Würzburg, Oct. 3, 1953.

The sugar factory incident should not, however, be seen as an isolated example or a mere speed bump on the road to improved confessional relations and the ecumenical breakthroughs of the 1960's. The 1954 Marian dedication debacle would rehash many of the same themes and rhetoric that were used at Ochsenfurt. While certainly smaller in scope, the Marian dedication still generated a great deal of bad blood. This largely stemmed from the controversial nature of Marian culture in postwar West Germany and the lingering animosity from Ochsenfurt. Although the primary act of this incident took place outside of Bavaria, many of the key players involved were Bavarian and one can find excellent documentation about the event in files from Bavarian church archives.

Marian dedication of the whole of Germany

On the night of Saturday, September 4, 1954, Franciscan monks from the nearby Frauenberg monastery carried their most holy icon, the "Mater gaudiosa", in a solemn procession to the cathedral square of Fulda. The flame from their torches was spread to the roughly 100,000 people in attendance to create a moving candlelight vigil. After the singing of several Marian hymns, Cardinal Josef Frings of Cologne, dressed in his most ornate liturgical garb, mounted a podium in front of the cathedral and proceeded to dedicate the whole of Germany to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary. He said: "On the grave of our holy patron, your bishop and martyr, Saint Boniface, we, the emissaries of all stems of our German people, raise our souls in full confidence to you, the shelter of mankind. We dedicate ourselves to your immaculate heart so that we may love our Lord and God as you did, with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our

strength. We dedicate our families to you. We leave our people to your motherly protection...”⁶³

Following the dedication, several more Marian hymns were sung and the Franciscan monks began the slow trek back to their monastery. That night, the streets of Fulda shone brightly in the candlelight and echoed with the sounds of singing. Churches were filled to capacity with those wishing to pray. The following day, Federal Labor Minister Anton Storch, a local Fuldan and CDU member who was also serving as chairman of the assembly, gave secular credence to the religious dedication during his address at the closing ceremony when he stated: “Yesterday, in a special ceremony, we dedicated ourselves and the whole of Germany to the Virgin Mary...Today we feel like brothers and sisters in the bosom of our mother, the Catholic Church.”⁶⁴

The Marian dedication was a visually stunning ritual and served as the true highpoint of the five day assembly. In its form and content, it was also the most moving encapsulation of the ideals of the Marian Year of 1954. But before Cardinal Frings had even spoken a word, it was deeply controversial. A dedication of all German people to the Virgin Mary quite necessarily included Protestants.

Writing as head of the United Protestant-Lutheran Churches of Germany, not as the bishop of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria, Hans Meiser sent a telegram to Cardinal Frings on Sept. 3, 1954. In it, he warned about the potential inclusion of German Protestants in the Marian dedication scheduled for the following evening. Once again, the rhetoric employed is illuminating. “In wide circles of our Protestant

⁶³ Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken, ed. *Ihr sollt mir Zeugen sein. Der. 76. Katholikentag vom 31. August bis 5. September 1954 in Fulda* (Paderborn: Bonifacius Verlag, 1954), 454-455.

⁶⁴ Ludwig Pralle and Josef Hans Sauer, eds. *Gaude Fulda: Ein Erinnerungsbuch* (Fulda: Parzeller, 1954), 43.

community there is deep alarm at the news that during the national assembly of Catholics in Fulda the German people will be dedicated to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary. This information comes not only from the daily press, but also appeared on Aug. 28, 1954 in a report from the Catholic News Agency. Because the protection of the confessional peace lies near our heart, we must regret that the religious sensibilities of the Protestant population would be offended by such an announcement. Bound to the word of God, we as Protestant Christians know that there is no other intermediary between God and man than Jesus Christ. The report from the Catholic News Agency for Aug. 31, 1954, only states that Catholic Germany will be dedicated to the Virgin Mary during the national assembly of German Catholics in Fulda. However, we beg you to see to it that effects that may endanger the confessional peace among our people are not brought about through misleading pronouncements.”⁶⁵

Archbishop Lorenz Jaeger of Paderborn responded to Bishop Meiser on the morning of Sept. 5th during the Pontifical Mass. In his sermon, “The Concerns of St. Boniface – Our Concerns,” Jaeger commented that the unity of belief that St. Boniface had brought to Germany was not just in danger, it had been destroyed. After years of bitter confessional conflict following the Reformation, boundaries had been drawn that deeply marked German culture and history. However, he argued: “The time of these Catholic and Protestant ghettos...is finally over.”⁶⁶ Freedom of movement, industrialization, and population transfers during the war and postwar years had forced

⁶⁵ A copy of the telegram can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): It is difficult to tell exactly which newspapers Bishop Meiser was referring to. As will be discussed below, many of the major newspapers either said nothing about the scope of the dedication or said that it was only for the Catholic part of Germany.

⁶⁶ Zentralkomitee, *Ihr sollt mir Zeugen sein*, 457.

adherents of each confession to come to terms with one other. Common suffering at the hands of the Nazis had led both churches to work together for common ends.

Jaeger went on at some length about how these improved relations could produce a flowering of Christian responsibility in Germany. While acknowledging the need for cooperation and the benefits of it, Jaeger warned that one must be wary of a “false and colorless inter-confessionalism”.⁶⁷ In wording that bears striking similarities to the response of the diocesan authorities of Würzburg following the Ochsenfurt incident, Jaeger hammered home that, “The division of the faith will not be overcome by seeking to forget the differences between beliefs.”⁶⁸ Religious indifference, cowardice, laziness, and a desire for peace at all costs, he argued, had undermined faith in the “full Catholic truth” and of the need to bear witness to it.

Jaeger concluded: “Don’t say to me, such candid confessions in word and deed lack the necessary consideration for those of a different way of thinking. Certainly, non-Catholics can run counter to a truth of the faith or even possibly be scared by an utterance of Catholic life. We have once again felt the pain of this in yesterday’s spontaneous, and very ill-considered reaction of the Bavarian Protestant Bishop Meiser to the Marian dedication of the Catholic people. Nevertheless, that does not remove our duty to live and to profess the whole and unbroken faith. With the truth, there can be no compromise...”⁶⁹ The confessional peace, Jaeger made clear, could only be brought about by an honest consideration of the differences that existed between the two churches. “Only those who, out of their love for one truth and one Christ, feel pain over the division of the church in Germany will have the strength to practice true tolerance

⁶⁷ Ibid., 458.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 459.

towards Christians of another confession and offer up their hands for common work. The pain of the division of the church in Germany is proof of our love for it. The suffering from the separation of the faith is the first step in overcoming it.”⁷⁰

After a period of uncertainty over the exact wording of Cardinal Frings’ dedication, Meiser, writing this time on behalf of the bishops of the United Protestant Lutheran Churches of Germany, made a formal protest in the form of an open memorandum dated Sept. 11, 1954.⁷¹ Restating many of the warnings from his telegram to Cardinal Frings and objecting to Archbishop Jaeger’s comments about his “ill-considered reaction”, Meiser wrote: “As those bound to the word of God alone, we Protestant Christians have resolved to raise an official protest. Against the ‘full Catholic truth’, of which Archbishop Jaeger spoke of in his critique of my telegram, I must bear witness to the full Protestant truth in the name of Protestant-Lutheran Christianity in Germany.”

Meiser then proceeded to lay out a point by point refusal of Catholic Marian culture. In stressing the intercessory powers of Mary, Catholics were, according to Meiser, undermining Jesus’ position as intermediary between God and man or, worse, were trying to fit Mary into the Trinity. He continued: “A dedication to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary is incompatible with the Word of God... We know only one in whom we can find shelter through all of the trials of this age, namely Jesus Christ. God redeemed the entire world, and therefore also our German people, through the sacrifice of Christ on the cross...”

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ The original copy of this memorandum can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe 1950-1955): All subsequent quotes are taken from this version.

Meiser, however, saved his most damning critique for the conclusion. Once again, his choice of terminology is illuminating. “When the whole of Germany is dedicated by a Cardinal to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary, we can understand it as nothing other than that through a representative of the Roman Curia, an act has been carried out over us Protestant Christians without our knowledge or consent that radically contradicts our beliefs and confession. In it, we must see encroachment that we who are bound by conscience to God’s Word sharply reject. We ask if such a claim serves the urgent necessity of the confessional peace among our people.”

Much like the Ochsenfurt incident, Protestants wrapped their accusations of Catholic intolerance and encroachment in the rhetoric of breaking the confessional peace. The initial Catholic response to such claims is also quite similar to the Ochsenfurt incident. While stressing the benefits of improved ties, Archbishop Jaeger made it clear that the confessional peace could only be guaranteed through an acceptance of the differences that existed between the confessions, not a shallow “inter-confessionalism” that papered over them. And just as the previous year, the Marian dedication debacle quickly became a lightning rod for confessional animosity in society at large. In fact, coming so close on the heels of the sugar factory incident, reactions to the comments of Cardinal Frings and Bishop Meiser would prove even more intense in some cases. It is necessary once again to address briefly the series of events that led up to this eruption of religious tension before moving on to examine its repercussions.

The roots of the Marian dedication stretch back to the darkest days of World War II. On Nov. 7, 1942, Pope Pius XII dedicated the whole world to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary. This act was presented as an example for individual countries,

dioceses, parishes, and ordinary people to follow.⁷² While there was talk of a dedication for Germany in 1946 and several individual dioceses were subsequently dedicated to the Virgin Mary, the rubble and confusion of the immediate postwar years prohibited any kind of national initiative. Following the tremendous outpouring of Marian piety during the Holy Year of 1950 and in the first months of the Marian Year of 1954, calls for a dedication of Germany to the Virgin Mary once again surfaced.

The topic was deeply controversial and even within the Catholic Church questions arose as to the necessity of such an act. In February, 1954, the priest of Waldershof, in the diocese of Regensburg, wrote to his dean for instructions on how to handle a petition drive that had been started by Dr. Brucklachner of nearby Amberg. In an effort to bring about the “so necessary spiritual renewal of Germany...”, she was asking for signatures to petition the German bishops to “dedicate the whole of Germany to the immaculate heart of the Virgin Mary on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception and following the example set by his Holiness Pope Pius XII with the 1942 world dedication.”⁷³ Seeking advice, the dean of Wunsiedel wrote to the diocesan authorities in Regensburg asking if this program should be supported by the church. The diocesan authorities wrote back saying that a special action of this type was not necessary as the 1942 world dedication was still binding.⁷⁴

Despite such reservations, many Catholic observers felt that a single act was needed to truly encapsulate the goals and ideals of the Marian Year. Members of the Central Committee of German Catholics, a powerful national organization that was in

⁷² Norbert Trippen, *Josef Kardinal Frings (1887-1978): Sein Wirken für das Erzbistum Köln und für die Kirche in Deutschland* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), 475.

⁷³ BZAR Generalia 660.00: Letter from Cath. Dean of Wunsiedel to BOR, Feb. 18, 1954.

⁷⁴ BZAR Generalia 660.00: Letter from BOR to Cath. Dean of Wunsiedel, Feb. 22, 1954.

charge of organizing the biennial national assembly, felt that the dedication of Germany to the Virgin Mary would be just such an event. They needed the right person to administer the right. Cardinal Frings of Cologne fit the bill perfectly. Head of the German Bishop's Council, Frings was a well-known and respected figure. His involvement in such a ceremony was certain to generate attention. Also, he was a strong devotee of Marian culture. Frings helped organize a tour of the famous statue of the Virgin Mary from Fatima, a church approved apparition sight in Portugal, through the Archdiocese of Cologne from April 30, 1954 to December 8, 1954. Housed in the Cologne cathedral during its first week in Germany, the statue was visited by no less than 60,000 people. This tremendous outpouring of Marian piety reached its highpoint on the night of May 9, 1954, when Cardinal Frings crowned the statue during a moving ceremony in the cathedral.⁷⁵ Years later, Frings wrote: "It was the general verdict that never before had so many prayed so piously in the Cologne Cathedral. As the fruit of this prayer, there was from the very start an active acceptance of the Holy Sacrament. The numerous confessionals were constantly full."⁷⁶

Feeling that the upcoming national assembly of Catholics in Fulda provided a proper stage for such a ritual and that Cardinal Frings was the best man to lead it, Suffragan Bishop Hengsbach of Paderborn, the assistant general of the Central Committee of German Catholics, wrote to Frings on June 10, 1954 asking him to get involved.⁷⁷ A proposed prayer that had been approved by an official in Rome was included. After minor revisions, Frings agreed to go ahead with the dedication on June

⁷⁵ Trippen, *Josef Kardinal Frings*, 479-80.

⁷⁶ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 480.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 483.

16th and it was announced publicly. The proposed dedication, however, was quite specifically for Catholic Germany alone.⁷⁸

While it is difficult to pinpoint when and why, Cardinal Frings began to consider enlarging the scope of the dedication to include the whole of Germany. Rumors of such a move began to spread and obviously circulated to the point where Bishop Meiser caught wind of them. However, an official announcement to reflect this change was never made by Frings or the Catholic Church in general. Uncertainty filled the void. As mentioned in the telegram from Bishop Hans Meiser earlier, the Catholic News Agency did print conflicting reports on Aug. 28, 1954 and Aug. 31, 1954. The former said that the whole of Germany would be dedicated while the latter said that only the Catholic part would.⁷⁹ In fact, even as late as the morning of September 4th, the chief editor of the Catholic News Agency telegraphed Bishop Meiser to assure him that they had never officially announced that the Marian dedication was for the whole of Germany, rather that it was for the Catholic part alone. Only a prayer of intercession was scheduled for the whole of Germany. Dr. Bringmann went on to say that he could readily understand why a dedication that included them against their will would anger Protestants and assured the Bishop that they had “no desire to damage the confessional peace.”⁸⁰ The Catholic News Agency was not the only media outlet that suffered from confusion over the extent of the Cardinal’s forthcoming dedication. At the beginning of September, some major daily

⁷⁸ For an example of the public announcement of the dedication, see “76. Katholikentag in Fulda,” *Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg*, (June 22, 1954): 122-23.

⁷⁹ A copy of both press releases can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955).

⁸⁰ A copy of this telegram can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955).

newspapers were still printing that the dedication was for the Catholic part of Germany alone.⁸¹

The opening ceremony of the national assembly on Aug. 31, 1954 began to make the situation clear. The president of the Central Committee of German Catholics, Prince Karl of Löwenstein, gave a speech that briefly addressed the upcoming dedication. Vastly underestimating its potential for generating conflict, he said: “We have taken it upon ourselves at this German national Catholic assembly to dedicate our families and our whole country to the mother of our lord. A Protestant woman who is totally unknown to me wrote to express her concern that Catholics presumed the right to dedicate the whole of Germany to the Mother of God although they know that the majority of Germans are Protestant and think differently in these matters than we. I take the concern of this woman who is unknown to me seriously. A dedication is in fact first and foremost an act of personal devotion and can therefore only be spoken for those who are ready and in a position to willingly carry it out. At the same time, however, it is a plea to the mother or our lord that she give her particular protection to our people and fatherland in these difficult times. That we do not want to exclude anyone who must carry together the German fate from this intercessory prayer will surely also be understood by protestant brothers.”⁸²

If Prince Karl of Löwenstein did not make it clear enough that the whole of Germany would be dedicated, on Sept. 3, 1954, Bishop Johannes Dietz of Fulda did. In a well attended speech during the afternoon service, he stated: “This Catholic national assembly holds a particular significance because of the dedication of Germany to the

⁸¹ “Ihr sollt mir Zeugen sein,” *SZ*, Sept. 1, 1954.

⁸² Zentralkomitee, *Ihr sollt mir Zeugen sein*, 28.

heart of the Immaculate Mother of God.”⁸³ These comments were made in the presence of Friedrich Lahusen of Bremen, the Vice-President of the Congress of the German Protestant Church, who represented German Protestants during the assembly. The Vice-President never mentioned the comments of Bishop Dietz in his subsequent speech. Rather, he focused on the point that while the differences between the two confessions were clear for all to see, the common interest of bearing witness to Jesus Christ was something they shared. He concluded: “We all know of the different natures of our churches. I mean, that we all, dear sisters and brothers, suffer painfully and constantly because of this separation. Let us therefore never stop praying to God to grant us in his mercy the unity which humans can not bring about.”⁸⁴ It was most likely around the time that Lahusen was finishing these lines that Bishop Meiser’s original telegram was sent to Cardinal Frings.

Questions of blame for the Marian dedication debacle did not arise to the extent they did after Ochsenfurt. Cardinal Frings’ decision to expand the scope of the dedication to include the whole of Germany was not as perplexing to most people as Bishop Döpfner’s refusal to take part in the ceremony at the sugar factory had been. It was the motivation for this move that proved controversial. Catholics claimed that they merely wanted to include everyone in their prayers for protection and guidance. Protestants, on the other hand, saw it as outright encroachment on the part of one of the leading Catholic officials in Germany. What is truly striking about the whole incident is the high degree of confusion over just who the dedication was to cover. Here the finger must be pointed at Cardinal Frings. His plans for the ritual were obscured to the point

⁸³ Ibid., 417.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 419.

that even the official media outlet of the Catholic Church in Germany printed contradictory reports. This lack of clarity not only helped lead to the debacle but greatly fueled the ensuing conflict. Some Protestants interpreted Frings' silence as quiet malevolence and treachery rather than simply poor communication. While the lead up to the Marian dedication debacle is still somewhat unclear, it is necessary to move away from questions of blame to examine the repercussions of the event through the reactions of the churches themselves, the secular and religious press, and the public in general.

As reports from Fulda began to filter in, an emergency session of the standing committee of the Protestant Established Church Council was called for Sept. 7, 1954. Even at this point, there were still some questions as to the exact wording of Cardinal Frings' speech. It was becoming increasingly clear though that he had indeed included the whole of Germany in his dedication. One member of the council pointed out that such a move contradicted both an article in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* from Sept. 1, 1954 and the telegram from Dr. Bringmann of the Catholic News Agency that said only the Catholic part of Germany would be included. The council decided that copies of Bishop Meiser's telegram and the telegram from Dr. Bringmann should be sent to the other established churches, the Lutheran Church Office (a governing council in the United Protestant-Lutheran Churches of German), and the central office of the Protestant League to garner their support and ask for suggestions on how best to reply. It was also determined that an official letter of protest should be formulated that would both condemn the dedication and explain the reasons for Meiser's initial telegram.⁸⁵ The open memorandum from Sept. 11th was the result. This would be the only official response of any Protestant church body to the Marian dedication.

⁸⁵ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Minutes of Haussitzung of LkR, 7 Sept. 1954.

Unlike Bishop Döpfner after the Ochsenfurt incident, Cardinal Frings gave neither a formal explanation for his decision to expand the dedication nor an apology for any misunderstandings that may have resulted from it. No official notices came from the archdiocesan authorities in Cologne either. Many seem to have felt that Archbishop Jaeger's comments during the concluding ceremony of the assembly best summarized the Catholic stance on Meiser's protest and nothing further needed to be said in public.

Numerous indirect references did appear over the next few months. Ironically, one of the most noticeable came from Bishop Döpfner. Seeking to capitalize on the dedication at Fulda and culminate the Marian Year closer to home, Döpfner decided to renew the dedication of the Diocese of Würzburg to the Virgin Mary in a service scheduled for Oct. 3, 1954. After a candlelight procession that was joined by thousands of Catholics from the city and surrounding region, Bishop Döpfner defiantly reproached Protestant nay-sayers in his dedication sermon. He said: "Our Holy Father, the Pope of the Marian dedication, has spoken again and again on trust in the protection of Mary...So today we also offer up the land and people of this diocese to the motherly protection of Our Lady...We leave to the motherly protection of Mary even those brothers and sisters in the territory of this diocese that do not belong to the Catholic Church. If, recently, certain sides have labeled the dedication of the German people to Mary as an expression of the power play of the Catholic Church, therein lies an offensive misjudgment that we must dismiss. As little as the Catholic teaching of the one, true church of Christ leads us to disregard or violate the consciences of different believers, the Marian dedication makes us think even less of overpowering non-Catholic Christians. Because all people are ordained by the mercy of Christ and his church, we also dedicate all people to the

protection of the Mother of Christ and the Queen of Heaven.”⁸⁶ This proved to be the extent of official pronouncements concerning the Marian dedication. Cardinal Frings and Bishop Meiser never met to iron out their differences and there were never any joint appeals for reconciliation. Officially, the matter was dropped without resolution.

Once again, though, the private reactions of church officials proved much more caustic. On Sept. 2, 1954, Regional Superintendent Schieder of Nuremberg wrote to all Protestant clergy members under his jurisdiction to give them instructions on how to handle the proposed dedication by Cardinal Frings. In light of the confusion over what would actually be said, Schieder cautioned against making outright accusations during the morning service on Sunday, Sept. 5th. Any false statements might necessitate an embarrassing retraction later on. If Cardinal Frings really did dedicate the whole of Germany to the Virgin Mary, however, Schieder said it should be perceived as clear “encroachment against Protestant Christendom”. Either way, pastors were strongly encouraged to discuss the Protestant stance on Marian culture. He wrote: “Naturally, talk about the unbiblical nature of Marian dogma is quite acceptable if the proper texts are available. The pastor must decide it if it necessary in individual parishes. If it happens, it can only take place out of a sense of pain over the false path of a portion of Christianity. Quite understandably, it is important to say: Germany has been atoned by God through the death and resurrection of Christ our Lord. That we as a people and as individuals have a part in this depends not on some ecclesiastical dedication, but on ‘faith alone’.”⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Quoted in “Das Herzogtum dein eigen ist,” *Frankisches Volksblatt*, Oct. 4, 1954.

⁸⁷ LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Copy of letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Schieder to all clergy in the region of Nuremberg, Sept. 2, 1954.

The Established Church Council sent a similar message to all Protestant clergy members a month later.⁸⁸

Much more aggressive in tone were letters sent by Bavarian Protestant church officials to Cardinal Frings and Federal Minister Anton Storch. For example, Protestant Vicar Joachim Eckstein of Neumarkt/Oberpfalz wrote to Cardinal Frings on Sept. 15th, to express his disgust. Talking about the Marian dedication, he wrote: “I must consider this to be an attack against my freedom of personal belief and conscience and consequently as a blow to Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution.”⁸⁹ Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach wrote to Federal Minister Storch on Sept. 7th.⁹⁰ In this letter, which eventually circulated quite widely in Protestant circles, Koch made it clear that his fellow coreligionists saw Storch’s comments as an affront to their confession and as unveiled power play on the part of the Catholic Church. He did so using the rhetoric of the confessional peace. Commenting on Storch’s affirmation of the Marian dedication, Koch wrote: “How could you, as a responsible statesman, talk like that. You know as well as I that today, where so much for our people is at stake, it matters more than ever that the confessional peace is defended and unity between the confessions is strengthened. Through your pronouncements, you have endangered and drawn into question confessional unity.” In language reminiscent of Protestant remarks following the Ochsenfurt incident, Koch concluded: “Please understand, these lines are an expression of my great concern for the confessional peace and the political destiny of our people.”

⁸⁸ LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Letter from LkR to all Prot. clergy, Oct. 8, 1954.

⁸⁹ Quoted in Norbert Trippen, *Josef Kardinal Frings*, 486. Article 4, Paragraph 1 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Germany from May 23, 1949 reads: “Freedom of faith, of conscience, and freedom of creed, religious or ideological, shall be inviolable.”

⁹⁰ LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Copy of letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach to Federal Minister Storch, Sept. 7, 1954. An almost similar letter can be found in LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Gunzenhausen to Federal Minister Storch, Sept. 8, 1954.

Storch replied to this letter on Sept. 10th, arguing that the regional superintendent had misunderstood the motives behind the Marian dedication.⁹¹ He said that the participants of the national assembly had prayed again and again for peace and a better future for Germany. To show solidarity with their German brothers and sisters, Catholics, he argued, truly desired to include Protestants in such prayers. However, as it was indeed a *Catholic* national assembly, one should expect that these prayers would follow Catholic forms. Storch made it clear: “In these religious acts and in such prayers there is no kind of degenerate desire to run down other Christian confessions.” Storch went on to comment at length on how the Central Committee for German Catholics had gone out of their way to invite Friedrich Lahusen to the national assembly and that his presence had been warmly received by those in attendance. This was proof, he concluded, “of the positive attitude that characterizes the relationship of the two great Christian confessions in Germany to one another.” In making such comments, Storch seems to have been none-too-subtly implying that Meiser’s telegram illustrated a general lack of willingness on the part of Protestants to accept Catholics and their differing beliefs. It was Catholics, he made clear, who were doing all the work to improve confessional relations.

This was probably the most commonly held sentiment by Catholic officials following the Marian dedication, but opinions were certainly not uniform. In an insightful letter to Cardinal Wendel in Munich, Archbishop Buchberger of Regensburg discussed the Marian dedication and the potential implications of more wide-reaching

⁹¹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Copy of letter from Federal Minister Storch to Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach, Sept. 10, 1954.

comments about the Virgin Mary to be made by the Pope that fall.⁹² Buchberger complained bitterly about what he called the “tactless attack of Bishop Meiser.” However, the whole incident, he confessed, made him very uneasy. After the unrest in not only Protestant, but also some Catholic circles about the dedication, he feared that Pope Pius XII’s “solemn crowning of the Mother of God as ‘Queen of the whole world’ will only throw oil in the fire.”⁹³ He continued: “The title ‘Queen of the World’ is so new and so unclear that even many Catholics don’t understand it. What should that mean: ‘Queen of the whole world?’ Does that mean the whole universe? If so, then one cannot find a firm foundation for it in scripture and tradition. What else should it mean? Queen of the whole Earth or of all mankind? This title would also cause many to scratch their heads, even members of the clergy. We should not allow ourselves to be deluded. Do we not have the duty, out of consideration of a fearful storm in our fatherland and with consideration of the danger that the divide between Catholics and Protestants will be increased, to inform his Holiness about the consequences of the crowning of Mary as the ‘Queen of the whole world’.”

As evidenced by his comments about it being better to hold Catholic mass in a beer hall than in a Protestant church, it would be difficult to claim that Buchberger was a great supporter of ecumenicalism. However, it does seem clear that he, and most likely many others, wanted to clearly define the boundaries of Marian culture so as to avoid

⁹² BZAR Generalia 660.00: Letter from Archbishop Buchberger to Cardinal Wendel, Sept. 21, 1954. Unfortunately, the author could not find a reply from Cardinal Wendel.

⁹³ Buchberger is referring here to the papal encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam* that proclaimed the queenship of Mary. The real capstone of the Marian Year, it was given by Pope Pius XII in Rome on Oct. 11, 1954 (Feast of the Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary). There was a great deal of controversy within the Catholic Church over the exact wording of the encyclical before it was released. The final version did not contain the phrase “Queen of the World,” instead it used: “Queen of Creation”; “Queen of heaven and earth”; and “Queen and Mother of Christendom”. An English version of the encyclical *Ad Caeli Reginam* can be found on the Vatican website: http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents.

confessional confrontation. Not upsetting Protestants was certainly one of the Archbishop's motives, but he seems to have been much more concerned with legitimizing Marian culture in the eyes of ordinary Catholics. Overly ambitious or vague statements about the Virgin Mary might lead Catholics to distance themselves from Marian devotion for fear of looking backward or superstitious.

As mentioned earlier, the Marian dedication debacle did not lead to any major efforts towards reconciliation on the part of either church. Officially, the matter was left unresolved. However, as these private correspondences illustrate, a real sense of bitterness built up on both sides about the dedication and Protestant reactions to it. The handling of the dedication in the secular and religious press runs almost exactly parallel to this duality.

For the most part, the secular press said very little about the dedication and the resulting conflict. *Die Zeit* commented that the Marian dedication had been a moving experience, but said nothing about the extent of Cardinal Frings' wording or the ensuing controversy.⁹⁴ *Der Spiegel* simply said nothing at all. Other national papers like the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* wrote that Cardinal Frings dedicated the whole of Germany to the Virgin Mary and even mentioned the fact that Bishop Meiser had written a telegram in protest, but provided no commentary.⁹⁵ They also failed to mention the official protest that Meiser filed on Sept. 15th. One also fails to find commentary on the controversy in the papers of the political left and right. The *Süddeutsche Zeitung* probably had the most extensive coverage of the dedication debacle, but even this was paltry. In their pre-dedication commentary, the editors wrote that the motto for the

⁹⁴ "Ihr sollt mir Zeugen sein," *Die Zeit*, Sept. 9, 1954.

⁹⁵ "Zeugnis der Zweihunderttausend in Fulda," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 6, 1954. See also "Meiser telegraphiert Frings," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Sept. 6, 1954.

national assembly, “You shall be my witnesses,” should not be interpreted as bearing upon the relationship of the Catholic Church to other confessions or to the state. Instead, “the relationship between Christians of the different confessions has improved to the point that it can be a foundation for the political redevelopment of Germany...”⁹⁶ When events highlighted once again that a yawning divide remained between the confessions, the editors said nothing. There was a lengthy article discussing Meiser’s protest in a later edition, but it was reported strictly as news, not as a topic worthy of expanding upon.⁹⁷ It appears that after the media blitz of the previous year and with no election looming in the background, editors felt that the Marian dedication debacle didn’t have the sizzle to sell newspapers and magazines.

While the secular press was largely silent about the Marian dedication and its ramifications, the religious press covered it extensively. Here, the bitterness conveyed in private by church officials found its public expression. The rhetoric of these articles is strikingly more hostile than those following the Ochsenfurt incident.

Protestant papers like the *Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt* were indignant about Frings’ inclusion of Protestants in the Marian dedication. “Because the whole of Germany remains predominantly Protestant, this clumsy formulation has raised a lot of dust and makes it appear that the trusting cooperation of all Christians is ever more illusionary.”⁹⁸ Rather than use the incident as an opportunity to deepen religious involvement among Protestants as was done after Ochsenfurt, this article went on to argue that the dedication debacle only highlighted the need for greater parity in official life and the selection of government officials. Comparing the current situation to past

⁹⁶ “SZ-Kommentare: Katholikentag in Fulda,” *SZ*, Sept. 1, 1954.

⁹⁷ “Fulda erlebt die erste Missions-Revue,” *SZ*, Sept. 7, 1954.

⁹⁸ “Konfessionelle Rechenkünste,” *NEG*, Sept. 12, 1954.

persecution at the hands of Catholics, it said, “And much like after the 30 year defensive battle against the Counter Reformation, they (Protestants) must once again fall back behind the protective walls of parity.” While acknowledging that so much was being said about parity recently that it was “getting on the nerves” of many people, “a truthful and fair partnership” between the confessions was the best solution to the spate of recent confessional blowups.

Catholic papers spoke in even stronger tones. The diocesan newspaper for Munich, the *Münchner Katholischen Kirchenzeitung*, published an article that openly challenged Meiser’s refusal of Marian culture. In particular, it took offense at Meiser’s comments about Catholics trying to slip Mary into the Trinity. The article made it clear that all Catholics knew that the Trinity only included the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. However, Marian devotion kept them focused on the human incarnation of Jesus. When Mary was put in the corner like in the Protestant faith, the mystery of the human incarnation of Jesus could not be seen in its entirety. Because of this, “the divinity of Jesus Christ can no longer be unconditionally and absolutely believed.”⁹⁹ Replying to Protestant claims that Marian culture was superstitious and unbiblical, the article concludes: “When one remembers the liberal and Protestant theology of the previous generation, and when one hears once again voices in the Protestant camp that talk of a ‘cleansing’ of the Gospel, under which the miraculous human incarnation of Christ may fall, then we would like to leave this question to the Lutheran Bishop so that he may ask around his own Protestant camp: Do you still have the Trinity?”

⁹⁹ “Die heiligste Dreifaltigkeit und das Mariendogma,” *Münchner Katholischen Kirchenzeitung*, Sept. 19, 1954.

Other diocesan newspapers like the *St. Heinrichsblatt* from Bamberg ran articles that were designed to both reassure Catholics and undermine Protestant criticisms. “No one,” they argued, “is more mindful of individual freedom and self-determination than our church.”¹⁰⁰ The Marian dedication had done nothing other than “give witness to the faith” and “neither an unloving word nor an unfavorable thought against Protestant Christians” had emanated from Fulda. Meiser, they commented, had completely misunderstood the meaning of the dedication. The Catholic Church respected the fact that individuals have the freedom to choose what they bind themselves to. Therefore, the dedication was not conceived as an obligation that had to be carried out by all. Instead, it was a general call to all those who would accept it to rededicate themselves to Mary, who, in turn, leads to Jesus. If one did not believe in the intercessory powers of the Virgin Mary and chose not to accept this call, than that was their business. However, they had the duty to respect the rights of others to do so. Highlighting the belief that Catholics were the ones doing all the work to improve confessional relations, the article states that Meiser’s criticisms were more “protestant” than “evangelical” and that he should take Paul’s words from 1st Corinthians to heart.¹⁰¹ Putting Protestants on the defensive, it concluded by saying that this reply to Meiser’s protest was not motivated out of a desire to “aggravate the conflict,” but out of the hope that this spirit of charity would help “we Christians to work together on the great mutual tasks of the day.”

Independent Catholic newspapers like the *Deutsche Tagespost*, a national Catholic paper printed in Augsburg, went even further. In his protest, they argued, Bishop Meiser

¹⁰⁰ “Am Rande: Protestantischer Protest gegen die Marienweihe,” *St. Heinrichsblatt*, Sept. 26, 1954.

¹⁰¹ 1 Cor. 13.4-7 DRB. “Charity is patient, is kind. Charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil. Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth: Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

had wholly overlooked numerous instances where the Catholic Church had assisted Protestants or worked in unison with them. None could doubt that: “In his self-assertion, Meiser has not shown tolerance to Catholic freedom of belief and conscience, that, on the contrary, the Catholic Church has embarrassingly abided by, to the point of self forgetfulness, in relations with its Protestant brothers...”¹⁰² Parallels were drawn between Meiser’s attempts to limit Catholic self expression and the persecution of Catholics during the *Kulturkampf*. However, the offense ran deeper. The article concludes: “The pain that Catholics feel stems not only from the fact that their consciences and equality have been so unfairly and unjustly infringed upon and been rendered suspicious by such official reprimands, but also from concern about common issues. Only by way of a confessional peace in the country can the decisions of the day be granted credibility and strength.” Despite all his talk of the confessional peace and tolerance, Meiser’s protest, it made clear, showed that Protestants were neither willing to accept Catholics and their differing beliefs nor concerned about improving confessional relations.

As was the case following the Ochsenfurt incident, the principle characters in the Marian dedication debacle received a flood of letters from people of all walks of life. Bishop Hans Meiser was sent roughly 130 letters that ranged in opinion, much like those sent to Bishop Döpfner following the Ochsenfurt incident, from support, to hate, to disbelief. Unlike the diocesan authorities in Würzburg, a senior official of the Protestant-Lutheran Church of Bavaria answered each letter with a brief reply. Through a reading of these correspondences, one gains a real sense of public opinion concerning the dedication and the logic behind Meiser’s protest.

¹⁰² “Warum immer noch Protest,” *Deutsche Tagespost*, Oct. 18, 1954.

Protestants from Bavaria and the rest of West Germany wrote to express their support for Bishop Meiser's strong stance against Catholic "encroachment". Representatives from the other Protestant established churches in West Germany backed Meiser and complained bitterly about the "dismissive attitude of Catholic officials towards your legitimate protest."¹⁰³ Many ordinary Protestants felt that by not officially announcing the extent of the dedication, Cardinal Frings had "betrayed the honor of Protestant portion of the population."¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the whole incident was seen as merely another example of "the rising intolerance of the Catholic Church, which is reminiscent of the Counter-Reformation."¹⁰⁵

Once again hate mail far outweighed letters of support. One Catholic man wrote: "Myself and many others, for whom harmony and peace between the Christian confessions is a heartfelt wish, have listened with great regret to your repeated protests against the Marian dedication in Fulda." The author then went on to spell out his case against Meiser. It was the prerogative of the Catholic Church to decide if and when it would dedicate a country to the Virgin Mary. Also, it had the right to include all Christians in such a dedication because "all believers in Christ belong to the Catholic Church, even when they are separated from the Church." It could make these claims

¹⁰³ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Landesbischof der Württembergische Evang. Landeskirche to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 15, 1954. See also, LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Kirchenleitung der Evang. Luth. Landeskirche Schleswig-Holsteins to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 20, 1954. LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Landessuperintendent der Evang. Reformierte Kirche in Nordwestdeutschland to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 13, 1954.

¹⁰⁴ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Gottlob Bosch of Ebersbach a.d. Fils to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 23, 1954.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

because of the some 2 billion people on Earth, 400 million were baptized Catholics. Compared to this, the “small herd” of Protestants was insignificant.¹⁰⁶

Established Church Council member Hans Schmidt sent a searing reply to this letter a few days later. He argued that after making such claims to universality, Catholics should not be surprised to hear the “full Protestant truth” being spelled out by Bishop Meiser in protest. Schmidt went on to conclude: “When such claims are raised in the future as they were in Fulda, strong official protest from Protestant Christians will be inevitable. Your deep concern over the disturbance of the confessional peace can not be taken seriously by Protestant Christians, because, in the end, these ungrounded claims destroy the harmonious cohabitation of the confessions. It is fully inconsequential if our bishop spoke in the name of two million or 20 million believers.”¹⁰⁷

One Catholic woman wrote to Bishop Meiser complaining: “Don’t you also have the same belief that God had a loving mother! Can you acknowledge God but reject the mother? ...How must such ingratitude hurt the mother, when her children don’t recognize her?”¹⁰⁸ The Established Church Council sent a copy of this letter to the Protestant pastor in her area and asked that he write a letter of reply. Pastor Ballweiser commented that in the battle against the “powers of hell” the two confessions had much in common. However, there were not only differences between them, but deep divisions that would not be easily overcome. He stated: “You yourself have said, for example, that the Bishop - and surely you mean here all Protestant Christians - ‘reject Mary’.” The reasons why

¹⁰⁶ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from I.C. Lotter of Unterbrunn bei Gauting to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 17, 1954.

¹⁰⁷ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from LkR to I.C. Lotter of Unterbrunn bei Gauting, Sept. 28, 1954.

¹⁰⁸ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Maria Kastenhuber of Hochsträß to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 5, 1954.

Protestant Christians could not take part in Marian devotion were, he argued, best explained in the declaration made by Bishop Meiser concerning the dedication of the German people to the Heart of Mary. To show that this stance was biblically sound, Ballweiser concluded: “Only on the side do I comment, that in the story of the expulsion from Paradise it does not say ‘The woman shall bruise thy head’ rather ‘And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel’.”¹⁰⁹

While most of the letters sent to Bishop Meiser are couched in such confessional-polemical terminology, several express a sense of disbelief. Perhaps showing how mixed opinions were concerning Marian culture in postwar Germany, this middle group is somewhat larger than the similar assortment received by Bishop Döpfner following the Ochsenfurt incident. In general, the letters of disbelief fall into two general categories. First, many authors felt that Meiser’s comments were politically motivated and that his religious objections to Marian culture were disingenuous. One of the more interesting theories in this category came from a lawyer who felt that Meiser’s protest was merely an effort to satisfy conservative Protestants who were disgruntled over the Bishop’s broad acceptance of the “current Catholic government’s course.” In particular, he argued, the Bishop’s support of remilitarization, “that American crusade ideal,” made him look like a lackey of the predominantly Catholic CDU/CSU. He concluded with the question “Should that really be compatible with the genuine posture of good Protestants?”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Here, Pastor Ballweiser is quoting Gen. 3,15 LB. LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Pastor Ballwieser of Herrnsheim über Marktbreit to Maria Kastenhuber of Hochsträß, Sept. 23, 1954.

¹¹⁰The author claimed that he “did not belong to the circle of fanatic Protestants”, but that he “exercised practical Christianity in daily life.” LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Dr. Jur. Max Merten to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 11, 1954.

Thus, Meiser, in this man's eyes, was using inter-confessional conflict as a convenient shield to ward off dissent within the Protestant camp.

Established Church Council member Hans Schmidt wrote a letter of reply the following month. In it, he pointed out, quite rightly, that Meiser had questioned remilitarization and stood up to the "current government course" on several occasions. Schmidt concluded: "Above all, we would like to clearly suggest that steps from the side of the church like the protest of the Bishop to the Marian dedication should not be judged as being purely political, rather as namely ecclesiastical, drawing from Christian beliefs and from Christian events that you no doubt take part of in the life and worship of your community. Political considerations are as far removed from Bishop Meiser's objection as they were from Martin Luther's protest." Despite such comments, Schmidt went on to justify Meiser's condemnation of the Marian dedication by saying that the experience of the Third Reich had reminded them of the need to proclaim the faith and to bear witness to it in public.¹¹¹

While some doubted Meiser's motives, many more questioned the necessity of his protest. Some wanted the Bishop to explain the grounds for his decision or to ask him why a dedication of the whole of Germany was problematic. Others asked why the two confessions couldn't just get along. Perhaps best summing up such opinions was a letter from Count Josef Maria of Soden-Frauenhofen. The Count talked at length about how, despite being Catholic, he lived in harmony with his Protestant wife and how his father, who served at one point as the State Minister of the Interior under the monarchy, had worked hard to smooth relations between the confessions. Because of this, he was deeply

¹¹¹ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955). Letter from LkR to Dr. Jur. Max Merten, Oct. 6, 1954.

grieved by Meiser's comments about the Marian dedication endangering the confessional peace. At the root of this protest, he argued, was a grave misunderstanding of the nature of the dedication. He concluded: "What does it mean, to dedicate the German people to the Mother of God? For us Catholics, who believe in the effective intercession of Mary through her divine son, that means in the end: the German people are commended to this intercession. Should we exclude all non-Catholics, in particular our Protestant brothers and sisters?"¹¹²

Once again, Hans Schmidt wrote a letter of reply. Speaking in deferential tones, Schmidt made it clear that while the Count may have seen the Marian dedication as a thoroughly Christian practice that included the whole population, Protestants saw it otherwise. Cardinal Frings' failure to officially announce the extent of the dedication and comments by officials such as Archbishop Jaeger showed that this was more than just "a solemn acknowledgement of the unique position of Mary in the Kingdom of Christ." Instead, it was an example of a growing sentiment in Catholic circles that "Germany must now make right the damages that were inflicted to the Virgin Mary and her honor during the time of the Reformation." Meiser had protested the Catholic rite, Schmidt concluded, because: "Such dedications and such interpretations go well beyond the inner-church realm."¹¹³

While it is important to be mindful of such voices of disbelief when drawing conclusions on the nature of inter-confessional relations in postwar West Germany, it seems quite safe to argue that confessional antagonisms retained their bite and sharpness

¹¹² LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from Josef Maria Graf von Soden-Frauenhofen to Bishop Meiser, Sept. 18, 1954.

¹¹³ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Letter from LkR to Josef Maria Graf von Soden-Frauenhofen, Sept. 24, 1954.

after 1945. This was once again felt in the world of politics. Bishop Meiser continued to point to the dedication as justification in his demands for confessional parity in the assignment of government ministers until his retirement the following year. Several prominent Protestant church officials expressed their disgust with the predominantly Catholic CDU/CSU in letters to Federal Minister Storch. In his letter that was mentioned above, Regional Superintendent Koch from Ansbach went on to address the political ramifications of the minister's comments and reminded him that worsening relations between Catholics and Protestants would be very bad for the CDU/CSU. Koch said that he had previously tried to encourage both Protestants and Catholics to join the CDU/CSU and saw the party as providing a secure political footing for Christianity in Germany. However, "after such comments as those that you made at the national assembly of Catholics in Fulda, it will be very difficult to maintain such views."¹¹⁴ The Protestant district superintendent of Gunzenhausen made similar threats, claiming that Protestant farmers, "who voted for you in overwhelming majority last year," wouldn't vote CDU/CSU again.¹¹⁵ There was a small measure of truth in such words. In the Bavarian State Parliament election held on Nov. 28, 1954, the CSU polled quite poorly among Protestants and was thrown into opposition for the first and last time by a four party coalition.¹¹⁶

In spite of such outcomes, one cannot help but notice that the Marian dedication debacle made smaller political waves than the Ochsenfurt incident. Indeed, the controversy surrounding Cardinal Frings' comments in Fulda was a much smaller affair

¹¹⁴ LKAN KrD Bayreuth 163: Copy of letter from Prot. Regional Superintendent Koch of Ansbach to Federal Minister Storch, Sept. 7, 1954.

¹¹⁵ LKAN LkR z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe: 1950-1955): Copy of letter from Prot. District Superintendent of Gunzenhausen to Federal Minister Storch, Sept. 8, 1954.

¹¹⁶ Spindler (ed.), *Handbuch der bayerischen Geschichte*, Vol 4/1, 627.

in general. This led some to conclude that Ochsenfurt only reached the notoriety it did because of the upcoming Federal Parliament election.¹¹⁷ Confessional animosity, they argued, had largely been resolved through the joint experience of Nazi persecution. Tragically, however, it was whipped up by demagogue politicians who were trying to make a name for themselves. In short, the incident had everything to do with politics and very little to do with religion. In some ways, reactions to the Marian dedication debacle, or more importantly the lack thereof, support this argument. Secure in power after his landslide victory in the 1953 elections, Chancellor Konrad Adenauer did not push for better relations between the two confessions after the Marian dedication. As opposed to their extensive coverage and commentary on the Ochsenfurt incident and its ramifications, the secular press largely ignored the controversy surrounding Cardinal Frings' comments. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the two churches never made any moves towards official reconciliation. This would seem to suggest that without the looming threat of a mass exodus from the CDU/CSU hanging over their heads, the churches were not willing to open dialogue with one another.

One should rightfully acknowledge that the Ochsenfurt incident was a much bigger affair than the Marian dedication because of the upcoming election. However, it is something quite different to say that confessional animosity was merely a strawman that politicians dragged out at election time. This would deny the very real antagonisms that continued to exist between Catholics and Protestants. These two incidents were not isolated occurrences, rather they were simply better publicized examples of the

¹¹⁷ Among others, this sentiment was expressed to the author by Dr. Winfried Gehlert, former director of the sugar factory in Ochsenfurt, in a private correspondence.

confessional animosity that was interwoven into the churches efforts to restore Christian traditions after World War II.

The years of Nazi persecution and wartime destruction brought the two churches and their adherents closer together than they had ever been before. While the Marian dedication debacle did not lead to any official reconciliation of the kind seen after the Ochsenfurt incident, examples of these improved relations can still be seen. The mere fact that the Vice President of the Congress of the German Protestant Church, Friedrich Lahusen, was even invited to attend the National Assembly, an act unthinkable before 1945, is telling. Calls for the confessional peace clearly influenced such efforts and helped pave the way for greater respect and understanding between the confessions. However, as was the case with the Ochsenfurt incident, the intensity of reactions and general bitterness that the Marian dedication debacle generated show that confessional tension was still alive and well. In many cases, particularly in regards to the very controversial topic of Marian culture, it had only gotten worse since the end of the Second World War. The concept of the confessional peace was assimilated into these age old controversies. Not only Bishop Meiser and other Protestant and Catholic officials, but also everyday people blamed their religious counterparts of breaking the confessional peace. Rather than the traditional claims of intolerance, encroachment, heresy, or superstition, which, no doubt, were still used quite frequently, both confessions and their adherents now focused on supposed violations of the confessional peace. This was the new great evil that each side employed to deride the other with. Thus, one must conclude that while the concept of the confessional peace could provide an impulse for

reconciliation efforts between Catholics and Protestants, it could also be a whip in the hands of older animosities.

CONCLUSION

In the wake of 12 years of Nazi rule and a war that had left the country in ruin, the Catholic and Protestant churches saw it as their mission to bring both Germany and the Germans back to Christ. Indeed, this was their postwar calling. Many within the churches felt that God had allowed these institutions to remain intact during the years of Nazi persecution and wartime destruction so that they could engage in this monumental task of re-Christianization.

In their eyes, a return to Christ was the only way to address the real cause of Germany's collapse into National Socialism and its subsequent destruction in the war. This was the all too passionate embrace of materialism. While it took many forms, materialism was the attempt to live without God. It was the belief that only the things of this world mattered. It led people to presume that they could build a paradise on Earth without any help from God. In short, materialism caused humans to fall away from God. They felt that they must no longer put their trust in God or fear him. As the churches either explicitly stated or implied through subtle changes in nouns and pronouns, there was nothing specifically German about this sin. All had succumbed to it. Over the course of several decades, if not centuries, such beliefs had steadily undermined the Christian based social and moral order of not only Germany, but the West as a whole. With this, the hubris and natural evil of power hungry man had been released. The rise of National Socialism was the inevitable result. However, as the fundamental root of Nazism was this broader sin, other nations and peoples should not attempt to judge Germany for its shortcomings. They were just as guilty as Germany and the Germans.

The churches were not alone in making such arguments. Conservatives in general tended to focus on broader, and thus not exclusively German, forces that had helped bring about the rise of the Nazis. In the immediate postwar years, Catholic and Protestant politicians from the CDU and CSU spoke in tones very similar to the churches about the evils of materialism and how it had opened the door for the rise of political radicalism. The politically conservative historian Gerhard Ritter published a book in 1948 called *Europe and the German Question (Europa und die Deutsche Frage)*. In it he stated: “Today everyone is engaged in an eager search for the ‘roots of National Socialism’ in German history. This is a very necessary enterprise; this book is part of it. But it is bound to fail if we limit our search to Germany.”¹ Ritter then went on to point out certain political traits of modernity that he felt had led to Nazism. Prominently discussed were Jacobin and republican nationalism from the French Revolution, racist ideals from the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the rising militarism seen in all nations of Europe, not just Germany, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which led to the catastrophe of World War I. There was, he clearly implied, nothing specifically German about origins of National Socialism. Much like the churches, these conservatives, and no doubt many others, neither raised nor answered the seemingly logical next question of why National Socialism arose in Germany when its origins were supposedly more universal.

While their understandings of the origins of National Socialism were in line with those of other conservatives, the churches’ interpretations of Germany’s destruction in the war were quite different. They were strongly shaped by religious convictions. According to both churches, the suffering that Germans now experienced was God’s

¹ Gerhard Ritter, *Europa und die Deutsche Frage* (Munich: Münchner Verlag, 1948), 51.

judgment for violations against the first commandment. God's patience was immeasurable, but it was not without limits. He simply could not allow the blasphemy that was such an inherent part of materialism to continue forever. Justice had to be rendered. And rendered it had been. God had stretched out his mighty hand through the workings of the world and punished the Germans. It was punishment for the real burden of sin that all Germans, and indeed all Christians, bore. This was the fundamental religious guilt that stemmed from falling away from God.

God did not punish simply to punish though. He was not a wrathful sadist who enjoyed seeing humans suffer. Rather, God loved man. Proof of this was the sacrifice of his son Jesus on the cross. Further witness to this love could be found in the many blessings that God had bestowed even at the same time that he was punishing the Germans. God's punishment thus had a deeper meaning. It was a call to return home. It was a reminder that humans must trust solely in God. It showed them that the work of their own hands could crumble to dust at any time. Germans had been too caught up in their materialistic ways to hear the warnings sent through his church, whichever one it might be, so God wiped out everything that they might listen without any distractions. Germans, the churches made clear, must pay heed to God's definitive statement and return to him.

As per the teachings of the gospels, the churches pointed out, the only way to return to the father was through the son. Germans must rededicate their lives to Christ. Only in Christ could they find all the things they so desperately wanted and needed. Only in Christ could they find salvation. Christ provided real sustenance for a people suffering from a truly deep spiritual hunger. Christ brought real peace, not just a pause in

the fighting. Christ provided the only firm foundation on which Germans could rebuild their spiritual and material lives. All else, as they had so visibly seen, would collapse like a house built on sand amidst the tempests of the time. But most importantly, Christ would lead all those who followed him back to the house of God. There, they would be met much like the prodigal son had been when he returned to his father's house; with feasting and rejoicing. The roots of materialism that had led to Germany's collapse into Nazi barbarism and its subsequent destruction in the war would be torn out and a new era of real peace and prosperity, not shallow worldly ones, would dawn.

In the devastation that surrounded them, the churches argued, Germans must see that they had only two choices. They could either abandon the path of materialism that led away from God and rededicate their lives to Christ or they could continue to fall away from God and run the risk of even greater punishment. Having seen the awesome power of God's hand once, the decision should be clear.

Both churches saw it as their mission to ensure that their adherents did indeed come to the correct conclusion. Bringing people to Christ had always been their calling, but it took on a whole new level of urgency in light of the sheer magnitude of what had transpired in Germany in the very recent past. They felt it was their duty to use all their resources and influence to clearly and resolutely point the way to Christ. They had to spread the message of Christ so that all would know to follow him. They had to create a political, legal, social, and cultural foundation on which a re-Christianized Germany could be built. They had to make their voices heard if Germans continued to fall away from God. In short, they had to rebuild the soul of Germany.

This sense of calling and these religious based understandings of Germany's destruction and what should happen as a result of it fundamentally shaped the churches actions and inaction in the postwar period. Only with these in mind can one begin to comprehend why the churches acted as they did. It explains why they talked so much about German suffering and so little about self-criticism and guilt in the political sense. While it had many other uses and was indeed showed a real lack of will to more honestly reckon with the past, one must acknowledge that the churches' talk of German suffering was strongly shaped by religious convictions. We should not think it overly surprising that people whose whole life had been steeped in religious ways of thinking understood events through a religious context. Regular clergy members and top officials from both churches were not being disingenuous when they argued that the depravation that Germans now experienced was punishment from God for their fundamental religious guilt that stemmed from falling away from him. Many no doubt truly believed that this burden of sin was the "real" problem facing not only Germany, but the whole of Christendom. It was the embrace of materialism that had inevitably led to the rise of National Socialism. For this blasphemy, God had rendered his justice. But God's punishment had a deeper meaning and purpose. God took everything away from the Germans so that they might clearly understand their folly. In essence, he provided a teaching moment. It gave Germans the opportunity to examine their own lives to see where and how they had fallen away from God.

This, in the churches' eyes, was the critical self-reflection that truly needed to take place in postwar Germany. Wallowing in guilt over the crimes of the Nazis would do nothing. In the first place, the churches and Christians in general had, according to

their own biased views of the past, resisted the Nazis and knew little of the crimes they had committed. Hence, they could not be held responsible for them. More importantly, it would only address the symptom; not the real problem. Only from this religious self-criticism could Germans come to grips with this problem and realize what must be done. Germans must see that they must put their full faith in God. They must know that the only way to the father is through the son. As such, they needed to make a conscious decision to follow Christ's example of complete obedience to God. If Germans as a whole rededicated themselves to Christ, Germany would once again be placed on a strong Christian foundation. With this, the context that had led to National Socialism in the first place would be removed. The roots of materialism would be pulled up. In their work to get Germans to make this decision to return to Christ, the churches certainly felt that they were doing more than all the Allied tribunals and denazification trials put together. These could only address the symptoms of Germany's problems, not the real cause. They were based on the self-righteous assumption that the roots of National Socialism were peculiarly German and not, as the churches argued, the result of a more universal embrace of materialism. Moreover, they all smacked of victor's justice. Germany, the churches made clear, needed denazification of a totally different sort. The only way to truly address the real cause of the Nazi's rise to power was to get all Germans, and eventually all Christians, to rededicate their lives to Christ and put their complete trust in God. We must not agree with or even like such interpretations of how to come to terms with Germany's brutal past. They were indeed highly problematic as they did not account for why so many "good" Christians voted for Hitler, accepted the creation of a totalitarian police state, applauded the launching of World War II, and turned a blind eye

to the persecution and murder of the Jews. However, we must accept that this was the lens through which most church officials and clergy members viewed what had happened over the past 12 years and what should be done about it in the postwar era. This sense of calling and these religious based understandings of the past, as well as the convictions that stemmed from them, were certainly not the only factors guiding the churches' actions and inaction in the postwar period, but their significance is much greater than historians have previously suggested. In demonstrating this point, this dissertation provides a more nuanced understanding of the ways that German institutions and German society at large worked through and sought to come to grips with the Nazi past.

This common understanding that materialism was the real problem and that a return to Christ was the only solution provided both churches with shared convictions that shaped their responses to new developments such as the Cold War and the "Economic Miracle." Showing the flexibility of this concept of materialism and illustrating once again the common understandings that they shared with other conservatives, both churches argued that communism, and indeed Marxism in general, emerged from the same materialist base as National Socialism. They were both examples of man's attempt to do away with God and live solely by the works of his own hands. As such, communism was a major threat to the re-Christianized Germany that the churches were seeking to bring about. It must be challenged with all possible means.

Here, however, a clear rift began to form. Many conservatives argued that security could only come under America's nuclear umbrella. Peace could only be attained through armed deterrence. The churches responded to such claims by saying that while defense was important and necessary, real security and peace could never come

from weapons alone. To believe they could was merely to repeat the same grievous error that had brought about communism in the first place. This was the sin of trusting in the works of one's own hands alone. In its own way, it was a falling away from God. As evidenced by the ruins that still littered the German landscape, God would not tolerate such blasphemy forever. Justice would be rendered on all – godless communist and nominally Christian alike. Thus, there was only one solution. Germans must rededicate their lives to Christ. Soviet communism could only be faced and overcome if Germans followed Christ's example of complete obedience to God. West Germany, and the west in general, had to literally crackle with the spirit of Christianity. Only in this way could true peace and security be found.

While clergymen and ecclesiastical officials from both churches would continue to decry the evils of "godless communism" throughout the 1950s, a more practical form of materialism at home drew increasing attention. This was consumer capitalism. In many ways, the churches saw this as even more dangerous than the worldview materialism of the east. It was much more insidious in nature and affected even nominal Christians. It ripped apart the fabric of society and moral order in a variety of subtle ways. It bred envy in those with greater material possessions. It led to an all-consuming and very unhealthy competition for the acquisition of goods. It also led to greed and an increasing lack of concern for the less fortunate. For all of these reasons, it was yet another example of the falling away from God that had brought so much misery in the past.

The churches repeatedly warned that this passionate embrace of consumerism carried with it heavy consequences. God would not allow such sins to continue forever.

Just as Germans had been punished in the past for falling away from God, they would be punished again if they did not mend their ways. The only way to avoid such a disastrous outcome was to return to Christ. Germans had to give up the hypocrisy of fighting one form of materialism in public but giving free reign to another in their private lives. They must realize that one cannot serve both God and mammon at the same time. Rather, they must rededicate themselves to Christ. They must follow his example of complete obedience to God. Only through this could they find true prosperity.

The churches' core messages remained remarkably similar and consistent during the period from 1945 to 1960. This should not suggest that no real differences arose. Their references to what exactly Christ provided altered significantly to match changing realities. More importantly, one sees that while the churches generally reverted to euphemisms and circumlocutions when discussing Nazism they were quite explicit in naming the evils of communism and consumer capitalism. Still, the central themes remained. Materialism was the real root of all of Germany's problems. It took on any number of seemingly incompatible guises, ranging from National Socialism to Soviet communism to consumer capitalism, but it was always the same. Materialism was the attempt to live without God. It was a falling away from God. God had already rendered his justice for this blasphemy once. He would do so again if Germans did not come to see their folly and decide to return to him. Thus, each and every person must examine his or her own life to see where he or she had fallen away from God. Each and every person must then seek atonement for this fundamental religious guilt. The only way to do this, the only way to return to the house of God, was to rededicate one's life to Christ. Only by following Christ's example of complete obedience to God could one hope to find

salvation. If Germans as a whole rededicated themselves to Christ, West Germany would be placed on a strong Christian foundation that could weather any storm. The roots of materialism would be pulled up and a whole new era of real peace and true prosperity, not shallow worldly ones, would dawn.

While both churches could be quite vague about what it actually meant to return to Christ, this should not, as many historians have argued, lead us to believe that the whole project of re-Christianization was a farce. The churches took it very seriously and worked very hard to explain how indeed one returned to Christ. In their own unique ways, the churches spelled out three concrete steps that must be taken. First, one must attend worship services on Sundays and participate in special events. Second, parents must educate their children in the ways of the faith. In particular, this meant that they must ensure that their children attended confessional schools. Third, one must ground one's marriage on what was referred to as "God's ordained order." The amount of attention devoted to these three topics far outstripped anything else. They were without question the three pillars on which both churches sought to rebuild the soul of Germany. The churches' sustained focus on them throughout the postwar period shows that their efforts to bring about Christian renewal were by no means a farce or a smokescreen.

The churches knew that their beliefs about these essential points could not simply be left in sermons. They had to be translated into the here and now if they were to have any kind of resonance. The churches thus set out to actualize them. Such actions took place in two spheres. The first was that of law and politics. Both churches waged lengthy and heated political battles, particularly in the late 1940s, to secure what they felt to be the essential framework for their re-Christianization efforts. In these, they found

varying results. In some fields, the churches, in particular the Catholic Church, were not able to shape legal and political developments to their wishes. Eased divorce laws that had been passed during the Nazi period were retained. So too were laws passed during the *Kulturkampf* that mandated a civil marriage. In others, the churches found much greater success. Their lobbying for legislation that ensured that Sundays and certain religious holidays remained designated as days for spiritual edification and rest from work bore considerable fruit. They also helped secure the passing of a package of laws that forbade a wide variety of activities during the regularly scheduled time for worship services on Sundays and religious holidays. The churches also pushed successfully for a constitutional provision and a set of specific laws that officially recognized confessional schools and the right of parents to choose what kind of school their children would attend. After the intense persecution experienced by the churches and many of their adherents during the Nazi period and the Nazis' legal and political shenanigans, these were very real victories that speak of the tremendous influence that the churches had in postwar West Germany.

The importance of such activities in the legal and political sphere, whether they ended in success or failure, cannot be denied. However, the way that historians have exclusively focused on them is shortsighted. As influential a role as they may have played in the shaping of West Germany's early political, legal, and constitutional structure, the churches were not simply lobby groups. At heart, they were religious bodies that were intimately concerned with the spiritual lives of ordinary individuals. As such, their efforts to bring about postwar Christian renewal centered mostly on influencing the opinions and actions of regular people. First and foremost, the churches

sought to convince their adherents of the need to rededicate their lives to Christ. Policy decisions in Bonn or Munich were a critical part of this, but they meant nothing if Germans themselves didn't make the decision for Christ. Thus, as the first serious examination of the churches' work at the most basic and tangible levels in this nitty-gritty sphere of public opinion and the reception it found, this dissertation grants new insights into not only the substance of this re-Christianization project but also the place of the churches and religion in general in postwar West German society.

From this front line perspective, one can see the real shape and context of the churches' efforts to actualize their ideas. One also sees the tremendous difficulties that this transformation process generated. Judging from the remarkable consistency of theme and focus seen in the sermons from this period, there seems to have been a general consensus within both churches about what needed to be done to bring Germans back to Christ. Considerable debate arose over the question of just how to go about doing it. Each church was marked by deep internal divisions. Moderates sought to reform the practices, traditions, and laws of their church (be it Catholic or Protestant) to bring them more into line with modern society. They felt that the church had to be more flexible on matters such as liturgical reform, school structure, and marriage regulations. They argued that retaining deference to old practices simply because they were old or always following the hard line of church law only served to drive the laity away. Conservatives, on the other hand, felt that such actions would only dilute the inherent unity of religious practices and traditions and leave them bereft of integrative power. In their opinion, modifying church law to the dictates of current popular opinion would cut away the foundation of absolute truth on which church authority rested. In short, the church must

stick with the tried and true. Whatever one's position on such debates, one must accept that both sides made legitimate arguments which were based on inherently valid beliefs. This in and of itself was the fundamental problem. Both sides were convinced that they were right. In turn, this created a vicious self-defeating dynamic. One cannot help but notice the way that these disputes began to take priority in the minds of clergy members, church officials, and lay people on both sides over the fundamental and shared goal of bringing souls to Christ. Torn as they were on the inside, the churches were slow and hesitant in their responses to changing realities and new developments. Action they did commit to often became bogged down due to compromise policies that pleased no one. Worse still, ideological differences within the churches led ordinary pastors and priests to inconsistently apply church regulations. As their lives were touched in a very intimate way by these variations, lay people were very sensitive to them and were quick to protest or draw unfavorable comparisons. Facing such setbacks, each side became only further convinced of the inherent correctness of its stance. This in turn fueled ever greater problems and unrest amongst the laity. Moreover, the years of infighting devoured valuable time and energy that could have been used to carry out the original plan of re-Christianization. The cost in wasted energy was enormous. Self-defeating dynamics such as this were no doubt present in other large organizations and institutions at this time, but they were, and remain, particularly intractable in the churches because of the nature of what was involved. With salvation literally at stake, few were willing to compromise on core points.

This view from the trenches also allows us to see the often negative consequences that these re-Christianization efforts had for inter-confessional relations. In the name of

Christian renewal, each church sought to rejuvenate religious traditions and worship practices that were by their very nature antagonistic. Figures such as Martin Luther and the Virgin Mary were used quite successfully to generate feelings of identity and inclusiveness. Such feelings, however, were defined solely through exclusion. In short, a focus on one could not help but alienate and enrage those dedicated to the other. As they could in no way be confessionally contained, the churches' attempts to provide religious education and moral guidance, particularly in regards to the choice of marriage partners, were also the source of tension. More generally, one can see that the churches' very ideas of what the Christian in re-Christianization meant were quite different and not uncommonly defined over and against the other. Many Catholics claimed that Protestantism itself was to blame for unleashing the forces of materialism that had led to the rise of National Socialism and all of Germany's other problems. Because of the inherent weakness of their faith, Catholics argued, Protestants fell quickly away from God and were easy prey for secular, demagogic leaders such as Adolf Hitler. Thus, only through a stronger commitment to Catholicism could one find the way to return to Christ. Only Catholicism could stand up to the trials brought about by the rise of materialism. Protestants retorted by saying that the Catholic Church was intolerant and that its actions willfully undermined both government and Christian authority. Largely looking through the lens of Martin Luther, Protestant clergymen and church officials saw the Catholic Church as power hungry, corrupt, and hell-bent on re-conversion. Catholicism in general was seen as a weak and superstitious faith; one whose time had passed. Protestantism, and in particular orthodox Lutheranism, was the only *real* Christianity. Only Protestantism was grounded on scripture. It alone pointed the way to Christ. All of this

led the years from 1945 to 1960 to be rife with inter-confessional tension. In no way should they be seen, in regards to inter-confessional relations, as the inevitable slide towards Vatican II.

The context in which such hostility took place was considerably different though. Confessional hatred was certainly nothing new. Indeed, it had been an intimate part of German society since the time of the Reformation. The Nazis and war years did not wipe all this away. The idea that it took Hitler to bring the two confessions together is false. The experience of joint persecution at the hands of the Nazis and Germany's complete destruction in the war did, however, have many lasting effects. They caused the churches, along with many of their followers, to realize that they must work together to rebuild Germany both morally and physically so as to ward off any future calamities. It produced a common understanding of the need for a confessional peace. Continual bickering had distracted the churches' energy and focus away from the real work that needed to be done: countering the rise of materialism. If the two could only work together in peace, then the mistakes of the past would not be repeated and (West) Germany could be rebuilt on a strong Christian foundation. In many ways, this concept of the confessional peace produced real results. After 1945, the churches and their adherents worked together in ways considered hitherto impossible. This provided an impulse for reconciliation that would come to fruition in the 1960s.

The real rub, obviously, was that all of this was taking place at the very same time that the churches were pushing forward with their inherently antagonistic plans for re-Christianization. The awkward balance that the churches attempted to strike between the two can be seen in the way they utilized this rhetoric of the confessional peace. Both

used the term to define a goal that they felt worthy of striving for. With this general target in mind, differences that had been stumbling blocks in the past could be smoothed over. When disagreements arose, the term took on an altogether different purpose. Rather than fall back on tried and true terms such as “heretic” or “superstitious,” both sides accused the other of breaking the confessional peace. This was the new great evil that each fostered to talk about the other. While the two churches used the rhetoric of the confessional peace somewhat differently, both employed it as a new weapon in their very old struggle. One might conclude by saying that while confessional animosity was expressed through a different context and perhaps seen in a different light because of the Nazi and war years, it survived them well intact and was only strengthened by the churches attempts to rebuild the soul of Germany.

From this low angle perspective, one also gains a more detailed picture of the response that the churches’ efforts found. In all cases, they were something of a mixed bag. Both churches could still expect a loyal core of followers to show up for worship services every Sunday. But attendance rates never did return to their pre-1933 levels. As the postwar period progressed, specific groups, namely men, refugees, and young people, increasingly decided to stay away. By the end of the 1950s, participation levels had largely returned to the same low levels seen at the end of the Nazi period. Special religious events, on the other hand, still had considerable drawing power. They could pull both committed adherents and religious outliers alike back into the orbit of the churches, if only for a short time. But even these began to lose their efficacy and luster over time. In regards to schools, one cannot help but notice the significant number of Bavarian parents who placed their children in confessional schools during the years under

study. However, the 1950s also saw the beginning of a noticeable falloff. In full freedom, more and more parents chose community schools for their children. The churches' work in the field of marriage and marital status saw an all-together more complicated echo from ordinary Bavarians. The immediate postwar years saw dramatic increases in civil marriages, divorces, second marriages, and mixed confessional marriages - all of which the churches were opposed to. As economic and social conditions began to stabilize in the 1950s, most, but not all, of these levels dropped. Despite the intense effort on the part of both churches to warn couples against them, mixed confessional marriage rates remained high. Neither church could be pleased with the large number of people who made marital decisions that ran contrary to what they called "God's ordained order for marriage," but they had to be heartened by the extreme lengths that some adherents who had made such choices would go to try and stay in their good graces. Thus, one should certainly not hold that the churches' efforts to rebuild the soul of Germany were a complete failure. Too many people either maintained or renewed their commitment to their church to make such an argument. On the other hand, a clear downward trend is apparent. More and more people chose to ignore the churches' message regarding the three concrete steps that one must take to return to Christ.

Clearly, this was more the case for Protestants than it was for Catholics. One reason for this was more sociological in origin. The heartland of Bavarian Protestantism straddles Franconia, and as such, most Protestants were Franconian. Since the nineteenth century, Franconia had been much more urban and industrialized than the rest of Bavaria - where agriculture and the crafts had traditionally held sway. It is difficult to determine the causes of this difference and one must note that postwar economic growth began to

change this situation by bringing industry to the latter, but it is clear that Franconians had been and continued to be more likely to work in “modern occupations” – industry, professions, services, and civil service. Intellectual consequences stemmed from these sociological differences. Traditionally, these were the groups that were most impacted by secularizing trends. This would seem to account for the large number of Protestants (Franconians) who had and continued to buck the authority of their church.

Arguments that focus on sociological concerns have a great deal of explanatory power, but it only goes so far. They are at pains to explain examples such as the strong connection that many Catholics living in the more urban and industrialized parts of Franconia maintained to their church. More fundamental, doctrinal differences between the two confessions also seem to have been at work. Quite simply, Catholicism was all-together more inclusive and binding than Protestantism. This stemmed from several factors. First, the unified world view of the Catholic Church and its resolute focus on duty seems to have been much clearer and ultimately more persuasive. The Protestant Church in Bavaria may have been solidly grounded on orthodox Lutheranism, but this could not cover over the fact that Protestantism in general was deeply divided. This led to unfavorable comparisons and meant that Protestants did not have a really unifying spirit to draw them together. Second, the Catholic Church had a much broader self-definition than the Protestant Church. It was more than simply a voice that guided people, it was a mother. It was family. It had to guide its children so that they could lead truly happy and fulfilling lives. This led it to tackle the task of re-Christianization in a fundamentally more aggressive way than the Protestant Church ever could. Finally, the rich and dense world of rituals and customs that were bound up with Catholic beliefs

proved to have far greater drawing power than the Protestantism's focus on the word. When taken together, these sociological and doctrinal differences no doubt played a role in causing the Catholic Church's efforts to find a stronger echo from ordinary Catholics than those of the Protestant Church did from regular Protestants.

While one must acknowledge this point, it is also quite clear that both churches struggled to get their message about the need to return to Christ across to their adherents. The Protestant Church was not the only one affected by downward trends. While they did not do so in a linear or consistent way, overarching factors dragged down the efforts of both churches and helped pave the way for the collapse of the 1960s and 70s.

First, the churches were not working in a society without preconditions. Certain segments of society had pre-existing ideological commitments, often stemming from before the Nazi period, which led them to be militantly anti-church. More common were people who had long, if not always, been religiously indifferent. Protestants were more strongly represented in these categories, largely due to the reasons mentioned above, but Catholics were not completely absent from them. Regardless of their confession, such people were for the most part well beyond the churches' sphere of influence. They were something of an intractable core that the churches had little access to. As such, calls for a return to Christ in the postwar period found little reception amongst them.

Second, experiences from the Nazi years had lingering effects that were difficult to overcome. Heavy indoctrination in the ideology of National Socialism caused many to become outward opponents of the churches. This was particularly the case with young people. Having grown up hearing only the Nazi world view, they could not simply jettison it after the war. It was a fundamental part of their character. As disturbing as it

was to the churches, the overt hostility that stemmed from such beliefs was not the main reason that the Nazi period was so deleterious to the churches' plans for postwar Christian renewal. Even more problematic was the way it severed connections that were once taken for granted in the minds of many people. The Nazis' conscious organization of a wide range of oftentimes mandatory activities, particularly for young people, on Sunday caused a whole generation to grow up largely doing something other than going to church on Sunday morning. As Sunday worship service attendance had simply not been a major element of their formative years of development, it did not seem to hold any kind of special place in their lives. It was not the "normal" thing to do. Similar statements can be made for special religious events as well. The Nazi years also helped break down deeply ingrained ideas about schooling. Before 1933, only a handful of community schools existed in Bavaria. Confessional schooling was by no means uniformly agreed upon, but for most people it was simply an accepted part of Bavaria's school landscape. A tremendous amount of inertia had to be overcome for community schools to find common appeal. While deeply controversial, the transformation of all elementary schools into community schools during the Nazi period provided the necessary push and gave such schools a sense of tradition. Finally, the Nazis' work to silence all talk about the supposed dangers of mixed confessional marriage led many to stop thinking that there was something inherently wrong with such unions. Neither the collapse of 1945 nor the mighty efforts of the churches in the postwar era could firmly reestablish these and other connections that had been broken during the Nazi years.

Third, the churches' were increasingly at odds with their nominally conservative, Christian political allies. In the immediate postwar era, there was considerable overlap in

the understandings of the past and what must result of it between the churches and politicians from the CDU and CSU. Both stressed this concept of the rise of materialism and the need to re-Christianize German society. Working from such beliefs, politicians from these parties were very receptive to the desires of the churches. They fought alongside them to ensure the passage of constitutional articles and laws that protected Sundays and holidays and the time of worship and secured the reestablishment of confessional schools and the right of parents to choose them. As the 1950's progressed, however, the position of these parties began to change. Directly connected to their interpretation that anti-socialism was the logical progression of the anti-materialism on which they had been grounded, the CDU/CSU began to take a decidedly more liberal turn. West Germany, they felt, had to be made into a capitalist bulwark against the communist east. As such, they adopted Ludwig Erhard's ideas for a social market economy. In Bavaria itself, this shift was marked by the rise of liberal minded, pro-business politicians such as Franz Joseph Strauß and Hanns Seidel. Throughout the remainder of the decade they would champion industrial modernization and consumer capitalism. The churches still maintained tremendous influence in these parties, but things had definitely changed. CDU/CSU politicians increasingly rejected the wishes of the churches or chastised them for stirring up confessional animosity that undercut the fundamental belief that the two confessions could work together in the political field that undergirded the parties' support. More importantly, they pursued policies in fields such as tourism and schooling that were at odds with the churches' plans for postwar Christian renewal. This political sea-change pulled the ground out from underneath the churches and made it all the more difficult for them to translate their ideas into reality. One should

not find it overly surprising that the churches began to argue more and more that in encouraging consumer capitalism and the “Economic Miracle,” West Germany’s “Christian” parties were in essence leading the country right back to the materialism that had brought about the rise of National Socialism. One might conclude by saying that while the churches’ efforts in the postwar era were certainly part of broader conservative trends to reestablish a quasi-authoritarian, patriarchal order, they had their own distinct direction and focus.

Fourth, the churches undermined their own efforts at bringing about postwar Christian renewal in a variety of ways. They contradicted themselves and made what can only be referred to as stupid mistakes on numerous occasions. They told the refugees that they had a home in the church but then refused to get rid of discriminatory policies that reinforced the conclusion that this was anything but the case. Their newspapers were loaded with often glaring mixed messages. The examples go on and on. Solutions to all of these foibles could have been found but were not. In addition to these manageable problems, there were also more intractable ones. The stagnation, inconsistency, and wasted energy that the internal divisions discussed earlier helped lead to must certainly be considered as one of these. More important was the lack of manpower. This was, admittedly, a problem that was largely outside of their control. But it had major ramifications. The churches simply didn’t have the presence on the ground to fulfill their ambitious plans and promises. Worship services, religious education, and basic pastoral care all suffered greatly due to the overburdening of the clergy that resulted from a lack of new recruits. This in turn caused the laity to protest in disgust or simply fall farther and farther away.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, neither church was able to come to terms with the new culture of consumption that developed during this period. Mass consumerism provided a wealth of alternatives to involvement in religious activities. Rising standards of living meant that more people had the time and the money to take part in or imbibe such alternatives. The churches thus had to compete with movies, magazines, dance halls, motorcycles, and a host of other things for the time and energy of their adherents. Try as they might, the churches simply didn't have the resources or the offerings to keep up. But mass consumerism undercut the churches' efforts in a more profound way. It generated a whole ethos of consumption. At the heart of this was the idea of choice. It stressed the right of people to pick and choose the activities that they would take part in and the freedom to make their own decisions. An embrace of this ethos of consumption meant adopting an ethos of individualism. One could rightly argue that consumption proved to be the main vehicle for the transformation of German society from authoritarianism to an individualistic democracy. This spirit of individualism proved deeply problematic for the churches. More and more people saw essential life choices on issues such as religious involvement, schooling for one's children, and marital plans as personal decisions. They were matters that didn't involve the churches; regardless of all their talk about duty and responsibility. This undermined the structural stability of all three of the pillars on which the churches hoped to build a re-Christianized Germany. Worse still, it undercut fundamental values such as obedience, hierarchy, and sacrifice on which the churches' authority as a whole rested.

An awareness of these developments should not lead one to the conclusion that the churches' efforts were either doomed from the outset or were a complete wash. It

does, however, raise once again the question of the specific place of religion and the churches in the post-1945 world. A letter received by the Protestant Established Church Council in 1953 from a Protestant woman suggests an answer. In it, she explained how she had been shocked to find a famous phrase from the Apostle Paul being used out of context in a radio commercial for bread crumbs used to make the ubiquitous *schnitzel*. She went on to say that she talked the matter over with some friends but found that they didn't seem to have a problem with religious quotes being used to sell products. She, however, was outraged and asked the church to file an official protest.² The church would go on to do so but it appears that nothing changed as a result.

On the one hand, as illustrated by this woman's knowledge of the Apostle's words and her great concern over them being used out of context, religion was still very much a part of the landscape and popular conscience. There was a core group of the religiously inclined who remained strongly attached to their beliefs and their churches. Such people ensured the survival and influence of the churches. Their mere existence undermines basic theories of modernization that stress a linear rationalization and secularization of the world. Quite simply, religion touches on far too many basic human needs for it to disappear. On the other hand, the commercial itself shows how religion was increasingly overshadowed by the burgeoning materialist, consumer driven society that developed in the Federal Republic. More and more people, as represented by the woman's friends, were slipping out of the churches' orbits and becoming indifferent to religion. Despite all their mighty efforts, the churches could do little to stop this. While still significant, their influence had profound limits. The churches' attempts to rebuild the soul of Germany

² LKAN LkR 2001: Letter from Hertha Krämer of Lengries to LkR, Dec. 1, 1953.

were thus not a complete failure, but they struggled to find traction in a society which was undergoing rapid cultural, social, and ideological change.

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z. V 948 Bd. I (Bibelwochen 1937-1956)
2081 (Kirchliche Trauung vor standesamtl. Eheschließung 1959-1964)
2068 (Trauungen Allgemein 1925-1964)
2371 (Mischehen 1932-1957)
2308 (Ehescheidungen - Sühntermin in Ehesachen 1926-1964)
2310 (Evangelische Eheanbahnung [Ehenot] 1929-1960)
1919, 1920 (Gottesdienstordnung 1922-1964)
1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 (Evang. Kirche und Rundfunk – Morgenfeiern 1933-1964)
2451, 2452, 2453 (Seelsorge in den Zivil-Interniertenlagern 1945-1948)
2456 (Kriegsgefangenenbetreuung 1945-1946)
2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462 (Seelsorge in den Kriegsgefangenenlager 1945-1961)
2378 (Seelsorge: Allgemeine)
VI 1178a Bd. III, IV (Landesjugendpfarren 1940-1964)
V 963a (Frauenwerk 1926-1959)
VI 1178b (Jugendwarte 1946-1964)
VI 1179 (Bezirksjugendpfarrer 1935-1964)
VI 1180 (Kirchl. Jungmänner und Jungmädchendienst 1939-1959)
1948 (Jugendgottesdienste 1924-1964)
1950 (Erziehungssonntag 1939-1963)
XIV 1600 Bd. I, II (Verhältnis zu Römisch Katholisch Kirche 1937-1959)
z. XIV 1600 Bd. I (Marienweihe 1950-1955)
z. XIV 1624 (Unduldsamkeiten und Übergriffe d. kath. Kirche; hier Ochsenfurt)
XV 1650a Bd. I, II (Pressewesen 1920-1959)
X 1368h (Kirchenstühle 1921-1962)
XI 1438c Bd. II & III (Seelsorgestellen 1933-1964)
3972 (Schulfragen: Allgemeine 1955-1964)

Bestand: Kreisdekanat Bayreuth (KrD Bayreuth)

163 (Verhältnis zu Römisch Katholisch Kirche 1947-1960)

¹¹³⁴ The staff at the Landeskirchliches Archiv Nürnberg is now undertaking the mammoth task of re-systematizing the labels of all 10,000 Landeskirchenrat files from the period between 1922-1964. At the time that research for this project was conducted, the work was only half finished. Files with simply arabic numerals (ex. LkR 3972) are ones that have been relabeled. Files with a mixture of roman and arabic numerals and letters (ex. LkR X 1386h) are those that had not yet been relabeled. Upon completion of the re-labeling project, the archive plans to produce a concordance so that researchers can locate the old file numbers and find out their new numbers.

Bestand: Kreisdekanat München (KrD München)

- 6 (Kirchliche Lageberichte 1921-1939, 1948-1951)
- 91 (Rundschreiben des Kreisdekans 1923-1951)
- 213 (Verhältnis zu Römisch Katholisch Kirche 1932-1950)
- 214 (Desgleich 1942-1946)
- 215 (Desgleich 1950-1960)
- 222 (Mitbenützung evang. Kirchen durch andere Konfessionen 1940-1947)
- 252 (Parteien (meist CSU) 1945-1952)
- 386 (Ordnung und Gestaltung der Gottesdienste 1953-1972)
- 419 (Trauung: Allgemeines und Konfessionsverschiedene Ehen 1953-1977)
- 425 (Volksschulrecht 1952-1966)
- 434 (Religionsunterricht: Allgemeines 1951)
- 491 (Kirche und Schule 1940-1947)
- 493 (Kirche und Schule: Allgemeines 1947-1951)
- 651 (Allgemeines über Gemeindearbeit 1952-1976)
- 667 (Filmverführungen: Funk und Fernsehen 1930-1951)
- 672 (Jugendarbeit: Allgemeines und auf Landesebene 1943-1951)
- 674 (Jugendarbeit in der ELKB 1948-1956)
- 675 (Amt für Jugendarbeit 1952-1955)
- 683 (Männerarbeit 1938-1951)

Bestand: Kreisdekanat Nürnberg (KrD Nürnberg)

- 6 (Berichte des Kreisdekans sowie einzelner Dekanate und Pfarrämter über die politisch, militärisch, und kirchliche Lage nach den Zusammenbruch 1945)
- 32 (Grundsätzliches zur Lage der Kirche)
- 42 (Korrespondenz (Sammelakt) mit Landesbischof D. Meiser 1938-1956)
- 53 (Korrespondenz mit den anderen Kreisdekanen 1947-1957)
- 60-67 (Rundschreiben des Kreisdekans an alle Pfarrämter und Dekanate 1943-1958)
- 132 (Verhältnis zur römisch-katholischen Kirchen 1940-1950)
- 147 (Entnazifizierung 1945-1947)
- 193e (Bayerische Pastorkonferenz 1948-1955)
- 208 (Kirchliche Festtage (Feiertagschutz, Richtlinien, Predigthilfen) 1935-1950)
- 209b (Allgemeines über Sonn- und Feiertage 1947-1957)
- 209c (Sonn- und Feiertagschutz 1946-1956)
- 238 (Schulkampf um die Bekenntnisschule 1949-1951)
- 239 (Evangelische Bekenntnisschule: Allgemein und im Kirchenkreis 1946-1957)
- 240 (Jugendunterweisung und Religionsunterricht – Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches, v.a. Lehrerbildung 1946-1957)
- 241 (Religionsunterricht: Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches 1948-1957)
- 245 (Religionsunterricht: Allgemeines, Lehrplan, Lehrmittel, Religionsnoten, Pflichtstundenmaß 1936-1955)
- 256 (Lehrer als Religionslehrer: v.a. Anstellung, Besuche durch Geistliche, Fortbildung, und Schulreform 1946-1950)

- 257 (Religionsunterricht an Volksschulen: Beurteilungen, Bevollmächtigungen, Aufteilung zwischen Pfarrer und Lehrer 1947-1957)
- 270 (Berichts der Dekane über Visitationen des Religionsunterricht an Volksschulen 1935-1950)
- 278 (Kirchliche Lebensordnung: Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches, Einzelfälle 1937-1952)
- 279 (Kirchliche Lebensordnung betr.: Allgemeines (Seelsorge) 1952-1958)
- 294 (Kirche und Tages- und Zeitfragen (Schulen, Wahlen, Parteien) 1941-1954)
- 317 (Jugendarbeit: Allgemeines 1946-1958)
- 318a (Jugendarbeit im Dekanatsbezirk: Allgemeines und Grundsätzliches 1946-1949)
- 318b (Jugendarbeit im Dekanatsbezirk: Einrichtungen 1953-1957)
- 320a (Landjugend 1953)
- 324b (Frauenarbeit 1948-1957)
- 324c (Arbeit an besonderen Bildungs-, Berufs-, und Lebenskreisen 1946-1957)
- 332 (Betreuung heimkehrender Kriegsgefangener 1945-1949)

Bestand: Diakonisches Werk (DW)

- 868 (Evangelisches Aktionsgemeinschaft für Familienfragen 1954-1957)

Bestand: NL Georg Bell

- 112 (Predigten zu Bußtag, Volkstrauertag, und Ewigkeitssonntag 1940-1967)

Bestand: NL Kurt Frör

- 59 (“Christliche Erziehung im Elternhaus” 1956)

Bestand: NL Joachim Geister

- 2 (Jugendarbeit und Bezirksjugendpfarrer Schwabach 1953-1957)

Bestand: NL Leonhard Henninger

- 48 (Verschiedene Vorträge, z.B. “Die geistige und die religiöse Lage Deutschlands”, “Die Selbsterstörung der Mensch in unser Jahrhundert”, “Muß ein Christ an Gottesdienst teilnehmen”)
- 62 (Jugend und Jugendarbeit 1945-1959)

Bestand: NL Helmut Lindenmeyer

- 94 (Predigten (auch Rundfunkpredigten) 1946-1974)

Bestand: NL Hans Meiser

- 50 (Jugendarbeit 1937-1954)

51 (Frauenwerk 1935-1952)
65 (Nachkriegszeit –Allerlei 1945-1952)
201/5 (Einzelne Frage: Kath. Kirche 1954-1955)
205 (Beziehungen zu anderen Kirchen – Katholische Kirche)
212/3 (Nachkrieg, Zusammenarbeit mit der MR 1946)
212/4 (Nachkrieg, Kirchliche Lage nach dem Zusammenbruch. Niederschriften über
Besprechungen mit führenden Männern 1945)
212/5 (Nachkrieg, innerkirchliche Lage 1944-1947)
212/6 (Nachkrieg, Lageberichte 1945-1947)
219 (Schulpolitik 1945-1955)
226-234 (Allgemeine Korrespondenz 1944-1954)

Bestand: NL Heinrich Riedel

50 (Handakte Riedels über eine Aussproche im Landeskirchenamt über das Problem der
Seelsorge in der Landeskirche aus der Jahr 1948)

Bestand: NL Arnold Schabert

15 (Flüchtlingsfrage (v.a. Vorträge und Predigtmeditationen))

Bestand: Koller Dokumenten

Bd. 1 & 2

Unpublished Sermon Collections

Otto Dietz
Heinrich Koch
Julius Schieder

Contemporary Newspapers and Periodicals

Amtsblatt des Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus
Amtsblatt für das Bistum Passau
Amtsblatt für die Diözese Regensburg
Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese Bamberg
Amtsblatt für die Erzdiözese München und Freising
*Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche in Bayern*¹¹³⁵
Bayerische Staatszeitung und Bayerischer Staatsanzeiger
Bayrischer Tag
Das Baugerüst
Der Spiegel

¹¹³⁵ From 1945-1947, the official gazette of the Protestant Lutheran Church of Bavaria was called the *Amtsblatt für die evangelisch-lutherische Kirche rechts des Rheins*. The name change went into effect on Jan. 1, 1948.

Deutsche Tagespost
Die Junge Gemeinde
Die Pfarrfamilie: Katholischer Kirchenanzeiger für Nürnberg-Fürth und Umgebung
Die Zeit
Erlanger Tagblatt
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
Fränkisches Volksblatt
Kirchliches Handbuch: Amtliches statistisches Jahrbuch der Katholischen Kirche Deutschlands
Main Post
Mittelbayerische Zeitung Regensburg Umschau
Münchener Katholische Kirchenzeitung
Münchner Merkur
Neustädter Tagblatt
Nürnberger Evangelisches Gemeindeblatt (NEG)
Nürnberger Nachrichten (NN)
Passauer Neue Presse
Passauer Bistumsblatt
St. Heinrichsblatt
Statistisches Jahrbuch für Bayern (StJBB)
Süddeutsche Zeitung (SZ)
Vilisbiburg Nachrichten
Volksfreund
Würzburger Diözesanblatt
Würzburger Katholisches Sonntagsblatt

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Frau Dürschner, Nuremberg, Oct. 24, 2004

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