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Articles

The Triumph of Confessionalism in Nineteenth-Century German Lutheran Missions

James A. Scherer

The middle third of the nineteenth century was the formative period for Lutheran missions and for growing Lutheran confessional consciousness. Missionary work was for the first time done explicitly in the name of the Evangelical Lutheran Church rather than under the banner of the Kingdom of God or in the name of nondescript evangelical church. Lutheran foreign missionary societies begot younger Lutheran churches in Asia and Africa, largely in their own image, and Lutheran diaspora missions led to the formation of confessionally homogeneous Lutheran communities in the Americas and in Australia. The ecumenical stance of Lutheranism as a world confessional grouping, and the perplexities faced by Lutheran younger churches in the church union movement, are incomprehensible apart from this nineteenth-century background.

Sometime after 1830, Lutheranism emerged in a new institutional, theological and ecumenical configuration which may be designated as neo-Lutheranism. It is in this movement, rather than in the evangelical awakening, that Lutheran missions have their particular source.

Outward changes

What changes took place in the outward face of Lutheranism in the middle third of the nineteenth century?

a. Lutherans became conscious once again of their distinctive confessional identity within Christendom. The Enlightenment and pietism had, in different ways, nearly obliterated this confessional awareness. The Prussian church union and other united churches, moreover, sought to suppress confessional consciousness. By the 1830s, however, a confessional revival—marked by the eager reappropriation of the Lutheran confessions—was in progress. In the 1840s it expressed itself in repeated demands for confessional purity and exclusive

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church fellowship. A rejuvenated Lutheran church now began to make ecclesiastical claims for itself that could scarcely have been predicted in 1800, when confessional consciousness lay moribund.

b. Lutherans, having become aware of their confessional identity, began to enter into broader intra-confessional relationships across territorial church and national boundaries. The freedom gained through the looser relationship between church and state after the Napoleonic period facilitated ventures in inter-regional Lutheran fellowship. Missionary work, together with the need for a common Lutheran strategy against unionism and state encroachment, served to draw Lutherans together. Some early landmarks in pan-Lutheran confessional ecumenism were Wyneken's emergency call for North American diaspora mission aid, sounded in Petri's 1842 Hannover conference; Graul's 1845 Dresden appeal to "the Lutheran church of all lands" to unite in support of missionary work in India; and Harless' 1848 Leipzig conference summons to Lutheran churchmen to discuss a common church movement.

c. Lutheranism became a world-wide phenomenon by means of missions and immigration. Diaspora and mission churches were added to territorial churches of reformation background to form the nucleus of a Lutheran world community.¹ Nearly a century was required, however, before these churches could be linked together in a close-knit world confessional fellowship. To the extent that geography, language and culture declined as local marks of Lutheran identity, the confessions came to the fore as the inter-regional bond between Lutheran churches of the world.

d. Severe disturbances to the internal peace and harmony of territorial church and mission society accompanied the struggle for confessional supremacy. Confessionalism waged war against unionism; the principle of exclusive church fellowship based on the confessions, as espoused by separatists, came into conflict with the principle of inclusive fellowship, which was fostered by confessionally neutral territorial church administrations. Here and there, Lutheran free churches splintered off from territorial churches. In the mission societies, separatists did their best to purge unionists and remnants of the evangelical awakening. It was impossible to disengage the missionary effort from this partisan struggle, which at times approximated a crusade for truth.

Causes

What caused this sharp confessional reaction in the mid-nineteenth century?

a. The chief causes of post-Napoleonic religious conservatism have already been noted. The awakening movement stimulated personal spiritual renewal on

¹ Cf. K. Schmidt-Clausen, LW X (1963), 38.

a Biblical basis through voluntary societies. It rejected Enlightenment humanism and embraced the Pauline Gospel of repentance and forgiveness. The evangelical awakening retained a strongly non-confessional flavor. Its missionary and ecumenical endeavors were carried out under the sign of the Kingdom of God. Inevitably, however, the awakening began to influence the life of the churches.

b. The Prussian evangelical union was the immediate occasion for the Lutheran confessional reaction and consolidation. Unionistic coercion alone does not, however, account for the growth of confessional loyalty, which also had its positive aspect. In Germany, awakening piety nearly everywhere underwent a transition to churchly revival and became confessional in the process. Neopietism and confessional orthodoxy suddenly discovered themselves to be churchly allies.² The Lutheran confessions, after long disuse, were again eagerly embraced as historic testimonies to Biblical truth. A generation of younger post-war theologians reared in the awakening tradition suddenly declared themselves to be self-consciously Lutherans.³ There had occurred, said Petri, a natural progression from justification by faith to the doctrine of the church not unlike the inevitable transition from adolescent immediacy to mature adulthood.⁴

c. Lutheran missions arrived on the scene precisely in the midst of this quickening churchly and confessional revival. They were both a direct result of that revival, and an additional stimulus to it. Although Lutheran interest in missions had initially been nurtured by the awakening movement, it now gained

² O. Kibler, *Mission and Theologie: eine Untersuchung über den Missionsgedanken in der systematischen Theologie seit Schleiermacher* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1929), p. 79. Cf. Beyreuther, in RGG3, II, 621f.: "Pietism became orthodox and affirmed dogma and confession out of inner necessity."

³ F.W. Katzenbach, *Die Erlanger Theologie* (München: Ev. Presseverband für Bayern, 1960), pp. 118-119, quotes Thomasius' description of the "natural progression" from the "evangelical conviction to the churchly one," which he felt to be almost universally typical of his contemporaries. Thomasius wrote: "We stood with our experience in the center of (Lutheran doctrine), viz., in the article of justification. Thus we were Lutherans even before we knew it, without reflecting much on the confessional uniqueness of our church and the confessional differences which divided it from others, we were (Lutheran) in fact. We were not yet even aware of these differences. We read the symbolic books of the church as testimonies of healthy doctrine to clarify and confirm our knowledge of salvation; their symbolic meaning troubled us little. But as soon as we began to ask about the way God led us, about the testimonies from which our faith grew, about the historical roots of our present in the past of the church, we became conscious that we were standing in the midst of Lutheranism. It was the case that our Christian doctrine of salvation was exactly a Lutheran one, since in fact the Lutheran Church is, and will be nothing else, than the witness of the one, Christian saving truth.... From this center in which we ourselves found salvation, we read and lived with the air of the scriptures more deeply into that confession and recognized in it...the expression of our own conviction of faith. It was thereafter a matter of faith and of conscience to esteem it and join in confessing it. We blessed the church for it, we rejoiced to belong to it. Thus we became Lutherans voluntarily, from the inside out." Petri, Loehe, Graul and Harms all belonged to this generation of men of the evangelical awakening who became late converts to confessionalism.

⁴ Petri, *Die Mission und die Kirche*, p. 4.

a secondary motivation from confessionalism. Since missionary activities fell outside the jurisdiction of the confessionally neutral territorial churches, the work of voluntary missionary societies provided the champions of confessionalism with an instrument for promoting their own cause.

Missionary work became a point of concentration for confessionally minded forces, and thus acquired a church-political significance in relation to the confessional struggle within the home churches.⁵ The partisan struggle was first carried by individual confessionalists into the councils of missionary societies, and from there it reacted upon the churches of the homeland as well as upon the mission fields. Politically, Lutheran missions tended to become the special preserve of separatists; theologically, of conservative repositioning theologians. Their influence was often checked by more moderate elements, but the danger that missions would be exploited for propaganda purposes was never remote.

Neo-Lutheran ecclesiology

a. In Neo-Lutheranism, it was usual to speak of a particular visible church as the church in the primary sense. This was a major shift in emphasis from the reformation view of the church as an assembly of believers scattered throughout the earth, having one head (Jesus Christ), and recognizable by means of the universal marks of Gospel and Sacraments. The church as understood in terms of the cross was *hidden* (not invisible) except to faith. In its most essential character, it was a spiritual fellowship. It did, however, become visible through the assembling of God's people around proclamation and the Sacraments, through which Christ's presence was mediated. In Neo-Lutheranism, the center of gravity was moved from the church as the universal—hence also the unique—Body of Christ to the church as a particular visible body, or rather, a plurality of particular bodies. The emphasis now lay on the church as a *denomination*.

b. The reformers believed that the church was recognized as a local embodiment of the *una sancta* through the outward marks of preaching of the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. The particular visible church of Neo-Lutheranism, however, was a church founded on the confessions, which were regarded as mediating the special Lutheran understanding of the Word and Sacraments to Lutheran churches. The church now became a *visible, confessional church*; the confessions were given *church-founding* or *constitutive* significance. While not abandoning the reformation concept of one holy catholic church founded on the Gospel and Sacraments, Neo-Lutheranism added to it a definition

⁵ Petri, p. 3, states: "I believe that our question is, if anything, more serious and consequential for the home church than for the new church to be established on the mission field."

of the *Lutheran Church* holding the confessions as its constitutive marks.⁶ The relationships between the two ecclesiologies continued to be a problem.

c. The visible, confessional church was further undergirded by a theory of ecclesiastical legitimacy, according to which the historic confessions acquired the right not merely to perpetuate their separate ecclesiastical existence, but also to *propagate* themselves as separate ecclesiastical communities. From the Peace of Augsburg (1555) and Westphalia (1648) until the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire (1806), this right had been secured by legal recognition in individual territorial states. Secularization, however, had reduced the churches to quasi-public religious corporations and undermined the older legal foundations. In 1840, Julius Stahl attempted to re-establish this right by means of a rather mystical appeal to a theory of confessional legitimacy, or institutional *Kirchenrecht*.⁷ Petri subsequently gave the notion of *Kirchenrecht* a missionary application.

d. Central to all Neo-Lutheran ecclesiology is the concept of the church as an organism undergoing inward and outward development according to quasi-biological laws.⁸ The idea of the church as an organic body was generally derived from the concept of body (*soma*) in the Letter to the Ephesians, where it is closely associated with the fullness (*pleroma*) of Christ. Inwardly, this body was developing toward greater fullness in the comprehension and expression of truth, i.e., through theological, liturgical and constitutional refinement. Outwardly, it was growing in geographical comprehensiveness and universality through its missionary penetration of new peoples and cultures.

Petri, Loehe, Graul and Harms all saw the Lutheran church as emerging from a shameful past—the wilderness or captivity of rationalism—into a prom-

⁶ This view of the confessions as "church founding" and the idea of a "confessional church" (*Bekennnis-Kirche*) have been criticized as deviations from the reformation standpoint. Cf. Holl, *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, III, 370-371; Kantzenbach, "Das Bekenntnis/Problem in der lutherischen Theologie des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Neue Zeitschr. f. Syst. Theologie* IV (1962), 314-317. G. Gloege and W. Maurer, in RGG3, I, 987-1009, and H. Weissgerber, *Encycl. L.C.*, I, 571, characterize confessional positivism as a false development which is contrary not only to Scripture but also to the spirit of the confessions themselves.

⁷ Hirsch, V, 176ff. Stahl (1802-1861) in 1840 published "Die Kirchenverfassung nach Lehre und Recht der Protestanten," a work combining traditional post-Westphalian jurisprudence with restoration conservatism. Stahl linked the church to the state as a part of a total order existing by divine ordinance for man's well-being. The visible institutional church with its protective ordinances of ministry and confessions existed by divine right. According to Hirsch, "Stahl translated the counter-revolutionary restoration philosophy into Lutheranism" (p. 179).

⁸ On the origins of organic thinking, its relations to romanticism, and its influence on Neo-Lutheran ecclesiology, see W. Maurer, "Das Prinzip des organischen in der evangelischen Kirchengeschichtsschreibung des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Kerygma und Dogma* VIII (1962), 256-292; M. Schmidt, "Die innere Einheit der Erweckungsfrommigkeit, usw.," *Theol. Lit. Zeit.* 1949, pp. 17-28; F.W. Kantzenbach, "Vom Lebensgedanken zum Entwicklungsdenken in der Theologie der Neuzeit," *ZRGG* XV (1963), 55-86.

ising future through the organic development of spiritual potentialities latent in the confessions. Since revelation was a process of organic self-disclosure, there could be no return from a higher to an earlier or less perfect stage, but only consistent progress toward perfection and fullness.

e. The church in Neo-Lutheran ecclesiology remained an assembly of believers, but it frequently also approximated an objective institutional church. The new appreciation of the Sacraments—Harms' view of baptism as a decisive event, and Loehle's interpretation of the Lord's Supper as a culmination of Christian experience—produced a higher view of the church. Ministry was now commonly regarded as a divinely instituted *office* rather than as a function of the corporate body. This trend paralleled the growth of Anglo-Catholicism in England. These catholicizing and institutional tendencies contained the seeds of a *theologia gloriae*.

Neo-Lutheran Missions

There was less unanimity about Neo-Lutheran missions than there was about Neo-Lutheran ecclesiology.

a. On one point there was total agreement, viz., that Lutheran churchly missions had as their goal *plantatio ecclesiae* and not merely *conversio gentium*.⁹ The aim of the awakening movement, to win souls for the Savior, had certainly not been abandoned. Now, however, it was qualified by the addition of a second goal: to church the converts. In accordance with the concept of the church as an organic body developing inwardly and outwardly, missions were somehow conceived to be part of a process of biological reproduction in which the genetic heritage of Lutheran doctrine was transmitted via the confessions from the mother church to its missionary daughter.

b. Some form of church-mission integration generally followed as a consequence of the churchly view of mission. There was, however, no consensus as to what integration meant in practice. All Neo-Lutheran thinkers understood it to mean, at the very least, doing missions according to confessional norms and sending out missionaries pledged to the Lutheran confessions. On the structural side, there was less agreement. Petri and Harms, in Hannover, wanted missions fully integrated into the territorial church.¹⁰ Their efforts to bring about

⁹ Maurer, "Sendende Kirche," *Luth. Miss. Jb.* 1951/52, pp. 65-74; Gensichen, "Missions-geschichte der neuen Zeit," T37ff.

¹⁰ Concepts of church-mission integration espoused by Petri and Harms in the 1850s did not reach their fruition in Germany until the 1950s. Recently, the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD), the Evangelical Church of the Union (EKU), and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany (VELKD), along with several territorial bodies, took actions that would partially integrate the work of mission societies into church structures. Cf. W. Freytag, "Die Landeskirche als Teil der Weltmissions," *Reden und Aufsätze*, ed. Hermelink-Margull (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1961), II, 160-174; Th. Müller-Kruger, "Die Frage nach der Integration von Kirche und Missionsgesellschaft

integration, however, were only moderately successful. Leipzig, by contrast, retained the form of a voluntary society and preferred a looser relationship to the territorial church.

* Loehe, Graul and Harms all proposed novel schemes for overcoming a vexing problem of Lutheran polity: the anomaly of a missionary call which did not arise out of a congregation or some other recognized ecclesiastical authority.¹¹ These experiments also failed, with the result that structural integration between church and mission fell short of a definitive solution in Neo-Lutheran circles.

c. The Neo-Lutheran attitude toward ecumenical relations in missions was not altogether consistent. Theologically, Neo-Lutherans put forward their confession as an ecumenical *via media*. In practice, however, the concept of a visible confessional church generally ruled out all cooperation between Lutherans and non-Lutherans except in externals. Unofficially comity was sometimes practiced, but this did not imply mutual recognition or church fellowship between Lutherans and others. Considering the bias against unionism in Germany, trans-confessional unions on the mission field were never a serious possibility. Neo-Lutheran concern for unity moved entirely along intra-confessional lines.

Incidents of a negative or threatening character further strengthened Neo-Lutheran reserve toward cooperation and fellowship with other denominations. Anglicanism in India, intertwined with British colonial authority, posed a seeming danger to Lutheran missions for both confessional and political reasons. Beginning with the Anglicanization of certain former Tranquebar mission congregations in the 1820s, Anglicanism continued as a confessional irritant to Lutheranism for more than a century.¹² The memory of unpleasant experiences increased Lutheran caution in ecumenical relationships.

d. The conviction that Germans possessed a special missionary charisma which enabled them to adapt to foreign cultural particularities was shared by Neo-Lutheran missions. This charisma included an ability to recognize and re-

im Europäischen Raum," *Jb. Evangelischer Mission* 1964, 52-64; idem, "Towards Church-Mission Integration in Germany," IRM LIII (1964), 182-190; H. Meyer, "Mission in ökumenischer Verantwortung," *Mission und Diakonie in ökumenischer Verantwortung*. Synode der EKD, Bethel 1963 (Witten: Luther Verlag, 1963), pp. 38-52. In North American Lutheranism and in the Church of Sweden Mission, integration came in the nineteenth century.

¹¹ This is the theological significance of Loehe's proposal to do mission out of the midst of an existing congregation; of Graul's proposal to associate missionary candidates with supporting congregations in the sending church; and of Harms' idea of uniting mission with the life of a Christian colony.

¹² Specific Anglican-Lutheran encounters include: 1. Anglicanization of Tranquebar outstations and SPCK stations in South India, 1820-1826; 2. The Rhenius affair, 1835; 3. Basel mission difficulties with the CMS over Lutheran orders, 1836; 4. Berlin Institute candidates refusing to enter the SPG, offer to Dresden mission, 1836; 5. Threatened transfer of Rajahmundry to CMS, 1869; 6. Anglicanization of 7000 Gossner Kols, 1869. The two World Wars produced further examples.

spect unique and God-given values in non-western cultures and nationalities, and a willingness to preserve and utilize existing cultural foundations by means of linguistic and ethnological analysis for the development of indigenous folk-churches. Among Neo-Lutheran thinkers, Graul pursued this line most consistently.¹³ Neo-Lutherans differed among themselves on the theological interpretation of *Volkstum*, or nationality, however, as the sharp cleavage between K. Graul and L. Harms demonstrates. There was an absolutely consistent relationship between confessional loyalty and belief in the German charisma.

We shall now examine the basic missionary and ecumenical ideas of the four principal fathers of Neo-Lutheran missions: Petri, Loehe, Graul and L. Harms. After contrasting their views on church and mission, confessions, unity, and mission methods, we shall draw inferences for the influence of confessionalism upon missionary practice.

Ludwig Adolf Petri (1803-1873): The Father of Lutheran Missions

Ludwig Adolf Petri was Hannover city pastor, a leading theologian in the Lutheran territorial church of Hannover, and an active member of the Hannover city mission association which initially gave its support to the North German Mission (est. 1836). Petri, feeling a tension between the awakening evangelical piety of the North German Mission, which undertook to be a joint vehicle for Lutheran and Reformed mission undertakings, and his own growing Lutheran churchly confessional consciousness, in 1841 attacked the unionistic, supra-confessional position of the North German Mission as no longer tenable. He set forth his own then-still novel proposal for a Lutheran churchly and confessional foundation for mission in a penetrating tract, *Die Mission und die Kirche* (1841), still untranslated. Petri maintained that "mission is nothing other than the church itself in its mission activity." The church is missionary in its very nature, and therefore mission activity cannot dispense with the support of the church. Over against pietistic individuals and voluntary groups who claimed the right to do mission, Petri asserted that only existing churches in their concrete, legal and historical forms possessed that right. Petri has been hailed as "domestic strategist" for Lutheran missions, and his ideas lead directly to the practice of church-mission integration. His treatise had an important influence on Loehe, Harms and other contemporaries.

¹³ On this point see G. Hermann, *Dr. Karl Graul und seine Bedeutung für die lutherische Mission* (Halle, 1867), 147-156; Warneck, *Evangelische Missionslehre* (Gotha, 1897-1903) III-3, 23; Warneck, *Outline of Hist. of Prot. Missions*, 1906 ed., 404; C. Mirbt, "The Extent and Characteristics of German Missions," *World Mission Conference* 1910, IX, 215; W. Elert, "Die lutherische Mission und die Volkstümer," *Morphologie des Luthertums*, II, 278-90. The critical study is J.C. Hoekendijk, *Kerk en Volk in de Duitse Zendingwetenschap* (Utrecht, 1949; German trans. München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1966).

Johann Konrad Wilhelm Loehe (1808-1872)

Wilhelm Loehe, a younger contemporary of Petri, took over the Hannover theologian's views on churchly-confessional mission and actually put them into practice in the life of the Lutheran Church of Bavaria. As a theology student, Loehe had helped to organize a mission association in his home city of Fuerth, affiliated with the trans-confessional Basel Mission (est. 1815). By 1836, however, he switched his allegiance to the newly formed Lutheran Mission Society of Dresden/Leipzig, which had broken ranks with Basel. In 1841, as pastor of a village congregation in Neuendettelsau, Loehe began advocating the formation of a society for home and foreign mission "in the sense of the Lutheran church" (organized in 1849). His key ecclesiological writing, *Three Books Concerning the Church* (1845), closely reflected Petri's views and declared that "mission is nothing but the one church of God in its movement—the actualization of one universal catholic church." Loehe's conviction that Lutheran mission must be done out of the heart of a congregation, in conformity to the confessions, contained the seed of his North American mission colonization scheme. It sought to combine pastoral and missionary functions at Frankenmuth (1845), Frankentrost (1846), and Frankenlust (1847). Theological education at the preachers' and teachers' seminary in Fort Wayne (1846), Loehe believed, might equally serve the needs of diaspora pastors and missionaries among the Indians.

While it is true that some of Loehe's creative insights—linking congregation and mission, evangelizing both baptized and unbaptized, combining proclamation with works of love and mercy, and integrating pastoral and missionary functions—could not stand the test of practice in North America, he should be credited with important advances in Lutheran mission theology and strategy. Loehe's often stormy relations with the Missouri Synod, and his contribution toward the founding of the Iowa Synod, can be studied elsewhere.

Karl Graul (1814-1864)

Karl Graul has the distinction of being the first genuine missiologist produced by the Lutheran confessional movement. The Dresden Mission had begun as an auxiliary to the Basel Mission (1819-1836), but in 1836 cut its ties with Basel and was transformed into the Evangelical Lutheran Mission in Saxony. Dresden opposed Basel's practice of sending Lutheran mission candidates to London to receive Anglican ordination and to work under the Church Missionary Society. Some Lutheran candidates, moreover, were refusing to take communion in Reformed congregations in Basel. Graul, barely thirty years old in 1844 when he became the society's new director, quickly reorganized the Dresden board, redefining its policies and constituency, and

moving its headquarters to Leipzig. In 1845 Graul issued a general appeal for support to "the Evangelical Lutheran Church in All Lands—Forwards or Backwards." The new Leipzig director set himself the task of defining the Society's mission principles by spending four years (1849-1853) in the Near East and India, studying the languages, cultures and social contexts, especially in India, where the Leipzig Mission was preparing to take over the work of the earlier Danish-Halle Mission at Tranquebar. Returning to Leipzig in 1853, Graul taught courses in the Tamil language and literature at the mission house, and published nine volumes of missiological studies (many of which can be found in the library of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis). When ill health forced him to resign his directorship in 1861, Graul prepared himself for a lectureship in mission studies at Erlangen University.

Sadly, Graul died in 1864 shortly after delivering his Erlangen habilitation address on the place of missiology in university education. Even so, his short but brilliant career helped to lay the foundations for scientific missiology. A staunch confessional Lutheran, Graul followed Petri and Loehe in believing that the church's confession should have a decisive influence on its mission practice.

Louis Harms (1808-1865)

Pastor Louis Harms of Hermannsburg had close ties with Petri and in many ways resembled the Bavarian village preacher, Loehe. As a young vicar, Harms helped to found the Lauenberg missionary association, then affiliated with the inter-confessional Rhenish Mission Society (est. 1828). When the North German Mission was formed in 1836, Harms went as a delegate to its founding assembly, closely identifying himself with its unionistic policies. Harms in fact served on a joint doctrinal committee for the mission which in 1839 prepared a six-point Lutheran-Reformed agreement on common altar fellowship. In 1844 Harms came to the Hermannsburg congregation as assistant to his father. He succeeded him as chief pastor in 1848, and continued the practice of sending contributions to the North German Mission and helping some of its mission candidates recruited from the Hermannsburg congregation.

In 1850, Harms broke with the North German Mission and established Hermannsburg as an independent Lutheran mission with its own mission house. His reasons seem to have been more personal and administrative than confessional: following Petri, Harms was seeking the integration of the Hermannsburg Lutheran mission into the life of the Hannover territorial church. His 1851 proposal for an organic relation between Hermannsburg and Hannover was coolly received by the church consistory. In 1857, however, the second group of Hermannsburg missionary pastors was publicly examined and ordained in Hannover in the presence of the royal family. By 1878, Louis Harms' brother, Theodor, protesting growing state church rationalism, took Hermannsburg entirely out of the state church and made it a Lutheran free church.

Louis Harms' missionary thinking was never sharply defined, but reflected a mixture of evangelical awakening piety, Lutheran confessional impulses, and a dose of eschatological fervor. He believed that mission overseas was a living extension of the worship and Sacraments of the home congregation. When the Harms brothers sent out two contingents of missionary colonists from Hermannsburg to Africa in 1853 and again in 1857, they told the colonists to take with them "the glory of our worship, the pure doctrine and sacraments of our church, and the power of our singing." Louis Harms laid special emphasis on Baptism, "the sacrament of rebirth, the only entrance into the spiritual life, so that (the Africans) may become the children of God." So great was his confidence in the regenerating power of Baptism that he advocated a virtually unconditional administration of it. The Hermannsburg field superintendent for South Africa was obliged to put a stop to this policy. Harms' emphasis on the principle of integration of church and mission, which led to the exportation of North German church orders and practices, failed to take into account the needs of contextualization. Harms' mission colonization scheme, which envisaged a self-supporting European mission colony in Africa as a base from which "missionaries might encircle an entire land with a network of mission stations, and people might be converted and armed with Christian behavior and culture," was condemned by the sober Karl Graul as naive romanticism. Here also the Hermannsburg field superintendent was quickly forced to separate Hermannsburg's African mission effort from its overseas colonization scheme. For both Loehe and Harms, the complexities of Gospel and culture relationships on the mission field were not truly foreseen. Such were the beginnings of Lutheran missionary thinking in Germany around the middle of the nineteenth century.