

Augsburg Confession War: The Conflicts Concerning Lutheran Confessional Beliefs Arising from the North Carolina Lutheran Synod in the Early 1800's¹

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On June 13, 1820, just a few days after the 1820 North Carolina Lutheran Synod meeting in Lincolnton, North Carolina, Rev. Paul Henkel wrote his son Solomon Henkel to inform Solomon² that the synod meeting actually had been the “Augsteburgische Confessions Krieg”.³ For the Henkels and their followers the reason for the controversy and the subsequent separation involved the departure of the North Carolina Lutheran Synod leaders from traditional Lutheran practice and doctrine. Their opponents, on the other hand, viewed them as impediments to ecumenical Lutheranism. The subsequent creation of the Tennessee Synod maintained a Lutheran confessional stance which also affected other Lutheran bodies at that time and for future generations.

The primary players in the controversy included the Henkels, Lutheran ministers and Lutheran supporters – Rev. Paul, the father; minister sons David, Philip, Andrew, and Charles; sons Solomon and Ambrose, proprietors of the Henkel Press in New Market, Virginia. David Henkel was born in Staunton, Virginia in 1795 and had been involved with Lutherans and Lutheran churches. Their antagonists were led by Rev. Gottlieb Schober, Moravian-turned Lutheran minister, and other North Carolina Synod leaders including Rev. Robert Johnston Miller, Episcopal-turned Lutheran, and Rev. Carl Storch. German educated Lutheran minister. The Augsburg Confession serves as the primary confessional document of the Lutheran faith and is an integral part of the book of Concord, the collection of Lutheran confessional writings.⁴ The controversy and the rupture of 1820 had its roots in issues raised over a number of years.

Germans who moved to North and South Carolina encountered conflicting religious beliefs. They were a linguistic minority with few qualified ministers. Other issues impacting the Germans included pietism, rationalism, and union meeting houses. English pietistic leaders emphasized revivals which further complicated their German religious identity.

¹ I need to inform the readers that much of the research in this paper was done collectively between me and Mark Smith of Conover, NC. Mark died of an aneurism in 1996. I edited and completed his history of St. John's Lutheran Church. We also collaborated on an article printed in the Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly. This essay is dedicated to the memory of Mark Smith. I presented this research at the Lutheran Historical Conference on October 14, 2006 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Charleston, South Carolina.

² I will often refer to members of the Henkel family by their first name in an effort to streamline the text.

³ Paul Henkel to Solomon Henkel, 13 June 1820, German, Henkel Family Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC, hereafter cited as HFP, Duke. If the manuscript was in German, I will indicate.

⁴ Mark Smith, ed. Robert C. Carpenter, *Lifting High the Cross for 200 Years St. John's Lutheran Church Missouri Synod Conover, NC*, (Baltimore, MD: Gateway Press, Inc. 1998), 70, hereafter cited as Smith, *St. Johns*.

German religious beliefs were more varied than some have supposed. Carolina Germans included Lutheran, Reformed, Moravian, Mennonite, Amish, Dunker, and Seventh Day German Baptist. The interplay of various German religious groups was a significant factor in defining southern German religious impact.⁵

The scarcity of ordained ministers and the quality of these leaders was the most significant challenge Germans faced. The ministerial shortage in North Carolina, especially west of the Catawba River, was very serious prior to the American Revolution. One Lutheran minister⁶ and a preacher who considered himself a Reformed minister but held strong pietistic and unorthodox beliefs⁷ did serve as itinerant preachers west of the Catawba River. Near the Catawba two German Baptist ministers served a Dunker settlement.⁸

By the Revolution, John Gottfried Arendt, a Lutheran school teacher ordained by a layman from South Carolina, served congregations west of the Catawba. Ministerial shortages were a factor in the creation of the North Carolina Synod in 1803. Previously in 1794, Lutheran ministers had ordained Robert Johnson Miller, an Episcopalian, to serve Lutheran churches. In 1810 the Synod offered ordination to the Moravian, Gottlieb Schober, of Salem.⁹ The pietistic leanings of some Lutheran clergy and the religious beliefs of the non-Lutherans created a Synod without a consistent understanding of Lutheran doctrine.

German theologians of the 17th and 18th Century pioneered the concept of Pietism by suggesting that contemporary churches were too formal and lacked personal conviction in Jesus Christ. They recommended emotional worship, service to others, and suggested that personal salvation should include a personal conversion experience. This “heart religion” was balanced by rationalists whose beliefs mirrored scientific and cultural aspects of the Renaissance. Rationalist Christians assumed that beliefs could be analyzed and that the human role in understanding God was essential.¹⁰

The Pietist movement, which contemporary Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists embraced, swept the south and was especially rampant west of the Catawba River. Revivals, also called camp meetings, personalized religion. Ministers preached to

⁵ See Susanne Mosteller Rolland, “From the Rhine to the Catawba: A Study of Eighteenth Century Germanic Migration and Adaptation”, Doctoral Dissertation, (Atlanta: Emory University, 1991) for this thesis especially Chapter 6, hereafter cited as Rolland, “From Rhine to Catawba”.

⁶ He was Rev. Heinrich Wartmann, also spelled Workman. See Theodore G. Tappert and John W. Doberstein, translation, *The Journals of Henry Melchoir Muhlenburg*, (Philadelphia: The Evangelical Lutheran Ministerium of Pennsylvania and Adjacent States and the Muhlenburg Press, 1958), Vol II, 581, for Muhlenburg’s opinion of him.

⁷ His name was Rev. John Frederick Doubbert, variously spelled. He was a Weberite in South Carolina prior to coming to NC and returned to minister there during the Revolution. See Smith, *St. Johns*, 27-34 for a discussion of Doubbert with primary source documentation.

⁸ Their names were Christopher Guiss, variously spelled, and Abraham Earhard. See Rolland, “From Rhine to Catawba”, 377-378, 426-427.

⁹ Raymond M. Bost and Jeff L. Norris, *All One Body: The Story of The North Carolina Lutheran Synod 1803-1993*, (Salisbury, NC: Historical Committee, North Carolina Lutheran Synod, 1994), 30, 34-35, 57, hereafter cited as Bost and Norris, *All One Body*. Smith, *St. Johns*, 40, 77-79. His German name was Johann Gottfried Arends.

¹⁰ Robert C. Carpenter and Mark Smith, “David Henkel and the Genesis of American Lutheran Confessionalism”, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, (Winter 1998), Vol 71, No 4, 187-190, hereafter cited as Carpenter and Smith, “David Henkel Genesis”.

solicit an emotional experience. Conversion was often accompanied by “speaking in tongues”, shaking, and other physical expressions of faith. Some members of the North Carolina Lutheran Synod also supported revivals.¹¹

The union meeting house was a common phenomenon in Pennsylvania and also in North Carolina. Usually German Lutheran and Reformed congregations met together and often shared ministers. The union church was a practical arrangement which allowed for more ecumenical religious practice. When combined with a scarcity of trained ministers, the issues of union meeting houses, camp meetings, Pietism, and Rationalism created a vacuum for confessional Lutherans which set the stage for the Augsburg Confession War of 1820.

On December 18, 1813, after taking up residence in Lincoln County, North Carolina, young David Henkel wrote an extensive German letter to his father. He quoted extensively from the Bible. Early the next year he expressed his theological beliefs in simple yet confessional Lutheran terms as an eighteen year old in an English letter to Solomon. Both letters were probably intended for the entire family and were to validate young David’s readiness for the ministry. He cited the Bible but no Lutheran theologians as authorities for his belief system.¹²

David wrote that “when we are convinced of the evil of sin, the emptiness of all below; . . . it is then we live, not to ourselves but to him who died for us and rose again.” He insisted that “the first thing in living to Christ is a genuine repentance toward God. . . .” He continued: “Faith in Christ that enables us to live to him, is not the cool assent of the mind to the truths of Christianity, but is a full persuasion, or heartfelt assurance that Christ hath died for me, and I have redemption in his blood, sealed [with] the forgiveness of sin.”¹³

He understood that his own belief system was based upon “external means of grace”. These “external means” could therefore lead to faith in Christ.¹⁴ But David stated categorically that the measure of human understanding involved the Bible. The Bible and the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion gave assurances, “important pledges to assure us of God’s favor”. He contended that God was their author and instituted them for man.¹⁵ David’s dependence upon the Bible and his emphasis upon the sacraments were essential elements in his faith and how he perceived the Lutheran belief system.

David contended that baptism created regeneration in the baptized. “[T]hrough the faith in the Lord and Savior Christ, who alone has done everything for us, and through that which he through Holy Baptism gives and pours over us, thereby we are

¹¹ *Ibid.* Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 50-56.

¹² David to Paul, 18 Dec 1813, German, Miller-Henkel Papers, Folder III, The Handley Library, Winchester, Va., microfilm reel 187, hereafter cited as The Handley Library microfilm. I read the microfilm at the Virginia State Archives, Richmond, Va. The German letter remains largely un-translated. David to Solomon, 15 Jan 1814, 8653-c. Box 1, Letters from David Henkel, 1812-1815, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va., hereafter cited as UVA.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ David Henkel, *Essence of the Christian Religion by David Henkel*, (1817), unpaginated, located at Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA and University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, hereafter cited as *Essence*. It was originally a sermon delivered at White Haven Lutheran Church in then Lincoln County, NC (now Gaston County).

born again.”¹⁶ “To be born again of water and of the Spirit and to be cleansed with the washing of water by the word are synonymous.”¹⁷ Baptism was not a ritual and was not an emotional outpouring but the result of God’s grace to man.

David also communicated that Holy Communion involved the “real presence” of body and blood within the bread and wine. He believed that Christ’s omnipresence conferred the “real presence” in Holy Communion which Jesus commanded.¹⁸ He rejected Communion as a ritual or as non-essential for faith in Jesus Christ. Both Baptism and Holy Communion were essential elements for believers. The confessional Lutheran beliefs expressed by David became the catalyst for disagreements with Reformed, Presbyterian, and other North Carolina Lutheran leaders.

It was on printing business for the Henkel Press that David departed south in 1812. While selling books, three South Carolina Lutheran ministers licensed him that same year as a catechist. Two years later he accepted the call to the Lincoln County, North Carolina Lutheran congregations which had been previously served by his brother, Philip Henkel. He began his assent toward full ministerial ordination.¹⁹

In 1813 a significant issue arose at the North Carolina Synod meeting. The issue involved whether a catechist or a candidate could perform the sacraments. A second issue involved the order by which persons might become fully ordained to the ministry. Neither was resolved and in 1814 the North Carolina Synod submitted a letter to the Pennsylvania Ministerium requesting their opinion. Also in 1814, Synod agreed that future ministers must be at least 21 years of age. For the nineteen year old David Henkel this was not good news. In 1815 David’s congregations petitioned Synod to ordain him. He and Daniel Moser, also a catechist, served all the churches and meeting houses in present Gaston, Lincoln, Catawba, and Cleveland County. A catechist could not perform the sacraments, which created serious issues with the congregations of Moser and David. These congregations posed the issue of whether a candidate, the next grade in the ministry, could perform Holy Communion without full authorization from synodical and apostolic leadership. David and his congregations stated this issue forcefully and contended that the external means of the “laying on of hands” would confer authority. Previously Synod had not summarily practiced the “laying on of hands”. Synod licensed David and Daniel Moser as candidates at the 1815 Synod meeting without the “laying on of hands”.²⁰

¹⁶ *Kurze Nachricht vom den Verrichtungen der ersten Conferenz der Deutschen, Evangelisch Lutherischen Prediger, gehalten in dem Staat Tennessee den 17ten Julius, 1820*, (New Market, VA: S. Henkel, 1821), 26, 34, hereafter cited as *Kurze Nachricht*.

¹⁷ David Henkel, *Treatise on Prayer*, Fragment IV attached to the *Tennessee Synod Minutes*, 1828, and also reprinted in the *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, Reorganized, during its 14th session; held in St. John’s Church, Catawba County, N. C., from October 9th to 10th, 1875*, (printed by Deacon Jonas Paysour, near Dallas, NC 1876).

¹⁸ *Essence*

¹⁹ Smith, *St. Johns*, 70.

²⁰ F. W. E. Peshau, trans., *Minutes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolinas*, (Newberry, SC: Aull & Houseal, Printers, 1894), 18, hereafter cited as Peshau. Stirewalt’s *NC Synod Minutes*, 1813-1815, Stirewalt Family Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. There appear some variations in the two sources. I will also quote from original Minutes which I found at the Lutheran Archives in Salisbury as *NC Synod Minutes* with the date. Jacob Scherer to Gottlieb Schober, 26 Oct 1815, North Carolina Lutheran Synod Archives, Salisbury, NC, RG:NCS, 1.1.1, Folder #1. The North Carolina Lutheran Archives have been transferred to the archives at the Lineberger Library at the Southern

For David and Daniel Moser and as well as their congregations the issue would appear to be ordination. Partly it was. But a departure of philosophy was also occurring. David and his followers believed that the “laying on of hands” was Biblical and Lutheran because it passed apostolic succession and blessed the receiver with the Holy Spirit with which to conduct God’s business. For David and others, receiving the Holy Spirit in this fashion was necessary for Holy Communion, Baptism, and other spiritual duties of a minister. Yet, some North Carolina Synod leaders opposed the practice. As 1816 approached, David Henkel would be twenty-one and would certainly be ordained in a Biblical and Lutheran manner.

Daniel Moser’s and David’s congregations petitioned Synod for their ordination. In most of these petitions the specific mention of the “imposition of hands” was made. One petition set the tone for a divisive Synod meeting. The petition from St. John’s in present Catawba County was delivered by Frederick Hoke and specified that St. John’s would “break off” from Synod because Synod had not treated the congregation properly. They would “forgive” Synod if David were ordained.²¹ The disappointment of David, Daniel Moser, and their congregations came quickly. Instead of ordaining them, Synod chose to impose the order of ordination recommended by the Pennsylvania Ministerium, which added deacon prior to full ordination. The new order included catechist, candidate, deacon, and ordained minister. David and Moser were not ordained and their status was not improved to the new deacon status. Instead their candidate status was renewed for another year. New requirements prior to full ordination were added: “systematic instruction by an ordained preacher for the term of three years,” and improvement in the languages.²² David was assigned to Schober, which would be a questionable choice.

David and his supporters were able to initiate a variation which met with considerable controversy. They succeeded in convincing Synod to renew David’s candidacy status with the “laying on of hands” which provided the added authority to confer the sacraments at any church or congregation throughout the Synod. Synod president Carl Storch opposed this compromise and refused to participate in the ceremony. Ironically, Schober conducted the ceremony, which David recorded in his diary as his being “ordained by Geo. Schober.” This unusual notation indicates the uniqueness which David viewed this new procedure.²³ If the compromise of 1816 was supposed to resolve issues associated with ordination and with confessional issues relating to the “laying on of hands”, it failed and instead created significant discussion. A confrontation and a rush of correspondence occurred.

Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbia, SC with the following citation: North Carolina Lutheran Synod Collection, James R. Crumley Jr. Archives, Columbia, SC. Footnotes will be hereafter cited as NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

²¹ Petitions from Lebanon, Zion, Schoolhouse, “Stadt”, Wilkes County, Kastner’s, “Alten”, McCobins, White Haven, St. John’s Churches, RG:NCS, 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS. Some petitions are in English and some in German. The St. John’s petition is in German. Smith, *St. Johns*, 90-93.

²² *NC Synod Minutes*, 1816, 8; Peshau, 26-29.

²³ *Ibid.* L. L. Lohr, “Diary of David Henkel, 1812-1830”, typescript, (1915), hereafter cited as “David Henkel Diary”. Original typescript was located at Synod Archives in Salisbury, NC. The original Diary is at the Virginia State Archives in Richmond filed under David Henkel’s Journal, Henkel Family Papers, 1795-1875, #28019, Box 1, Folder Diaries & Notebook.

The confrontation occurred between Schober and David. Around Christmas 1816 David preached at churches in present Davie and Davidson Counties, which had been vacated by Rev. Ludwig Markert, who had moved west. Schober, who had been appointed by Synod to supply these congregations, wrote David a letter, which “vulgarly call[ed] [his] visit ‘a rambling abroad on Christmas’”. While Schober’s letter has not been located, David’s sharp response suggested that Schober wrote him out of “the sudden impulse of a low trivial passion”. David had responded to the requests of parishioners in those churches and had not given Schober notice. David told Schober that he intended “to do the people a kindness” and suggested that his censure of David was “too severe and unfair”. David rather sarcastically asked: “Wherein have I transgressed the rules of polite education? Or endeavoured not to walk with the senior ministers?” David informed Schober that even though the congregation members asked him to continue serving them and to confirm their children, he declined. David declared: “We are brethren and should therefore rejoice when the gospel is preached; no matter about local interest, nor transient honours [sic].” “We belong, as yet, to one connexion [sic]. . . [and should] think charitable of one another.”²⁴ Schober viewed the encounter as inappropriate interference while David viewed it as a misunderstanding. The incident created ill will on the part of both participants. Whether Schober did not want congregations he served to hear the preaching and theology of David can only be surmised. He may have also objected to the eagerness of the congregations to seek out a young pastor instead of a more seasoned and fully ordained one.

Rev. Robert Johnston Miller, the Episcopalian turned Lutheran, wrote Schober three letters, one prior to the 1816 Synod meeting and two afterward. On July 17, 1816, prior to Synod meeting, Miller observed “the cloud in the north east quarter of our little Synodical horizon. . . .” Miller stated that he has “long seen it gathering and therefore, am not much surprised to hear that it begins to lower, but however pretentious [sic] it may appear, I hope it will be dispelled without producing a general much less an universal deluge. . . .” He believed that “old Paul is the only link that holds us to our Pennsylvania or any other Brethren, we might then dread the consequences of its explosion. . . .” Miller thought that the Pennsylvania connections were much “more durable . . . than even Paul, however important he might suppose himself to be in that respect.” Miller believed that a link “forged by the hand of our blessed Emmanuel will keep us united” with any “Spiritual Brethren”, whether Methodist or Calvinist or Pennsylvania Lutheran. Miller referred to Paul as “the would be Pope”. He suggested that just as Luther had rebelled against the formal church of his day, that the time may have come to dispel “infidelity and formality” in the current day. He observed that Paul would “rather be an old Lutheran than a Calvinistic or methodistic one yet for my part I know of no such Lutherans, but this is in my opinion a mere pretext, for with you I fully agree that if there is ever a separation [sic] it will be by the H’s and for the reason you have assigned. . . .” He supposed that Paul would not make the break with Pennsylvania or with the North Carolina Synod, “headstrong as I believe him to be”. Miller closed the letter by hoping that the union of the Synod may be preserved.²⁵ The “reason” for the potential “separation” that Miller attributed to Schober remains undocumented. Miller’s

²⁴ David to Schober, 14 Mar 1817, RG:NCS 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

²⁵ Miller to Schober, 17 Jul 1816, *ibid.*

expectation that Paul would disrupt the upcoming Synod meeting did not occur, as Paul, like Miller, was unable to attend.

In mid-1816 Solomon Henkel wrote a letter to Rev. Gottlieb Schober accusing him of practicing non-Lutheran beliefs. At the time of the writing of the letter David was visiting family in Virginia. Solomon accused Schober and other North Carolina Lutherans of practicing predestination and of not following Lutheran doctrine concerning the sacraments. Schober responded by not defending his belief system but rather emphasized the need to align with Pennsylvania. Those who were not willing to conform would be removed “out of the circle . . . as chaff will come from the wheat.”²⁶

Miller’s second letter was written in December after the October Synod meeting. He suggested that David, Moser, and Frederick Hoke, a Synod delegate from one of David’s congregations, had misrepresented him. He believed that David and Moser were “authorized by Synod to administer the holy supper” and recommended a White Haven parishioner to participate. He appeared to agree with Solomon and challenged Schober that he must be “under some mistake” concerning the rite of Communion. Miller suggested that the Lord’s Supper is not a rite or ceremony but rather “divine institutions”. Miller referred to “Hoke’s or D’s threat”. The threat, as previously discussed, was for St. John’s to separate from Synod if David was not ordained. The issue of Synodical power then presented itself: “And, why these young men should be so pressing to have power & authority in their hands, especially when we consider the very slender qualifications some of them possess, & why [sic] the people should wish it, & push them on, is what I cannot well account for. . . .” Frederick Hoke had also charged inconsistency at Synod which Miller said had no merit.²⁷ Miller comprehended with the Henkels that Schober believed that the Lord’s Supper was a symbol, a ritual, which differed from both Lutheran and Episcopal doctrine.

Others also wrote letters of concern about the state of affairs after the Synod meeting. Philip Henkel wrote Schober quoting a letter from his brother Solomon with Biblical references concerning the Scriptural basis of the “laying on of hands”. He contended that it was not merely a ceremony but it allowed the Holy Ghost to enter a person. He also quoted early Christian writers. Solomon and Paul also wrote to Schober. They discussed the Biblical authority for the “laying on of hands” but also supported the additional grade of deacon for ordination. While they supported David, they also appeared to moderate their position. Others, like Peter Schmucker, suggested that Synod remain with the “old order” for ordination. His position appears to contradict the “laying on of hands” for ordination as essential but also might suggest that the additional grade of deacon be rescinded.²⁸

²⁶ Schober to Solomon, 22 June 1816, German, Schober Papers, Old Salem Museums and Gardens Research Files, Winston-Salem, NC, hereafter cited as Schober Papers, Old Salem. Solomon’s letter to Schober has so far not been located. On that same date Schober wrote Robert Johnston Miller. Miller’s response on 17 Jul 1816 was a response to what Schober wrote him which presumably included information from the Solomon Henkel letter.

²⁷ Miller to Schober, 9 Dec 1816, RG:NCS 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

²⁸ Philip to Schober, 16 Apr 1817, Paul to Schober, 20 Jan 1817, Jacob Scherer to Schober, 7 Feb 1817, Solomon to Schober, 25 Feb 1817, Paul to Schober, 17 May 1817, J. Peter Schmucker to Schober, 27 Sept 1817, *ibid.*

The Synod meeting of 1816 came perilously close to splitting the conference. The “bitterness from Lincoln”²⁹ involved ordination, the “laying on of hands”, and apostolic authority for ordination. Two years later Schober reminded Solomon how close synod had come to a separation at that time.³⁰ These issues were symptomatic of the philosophical disconnect between a broad-based Christian Lutheranism and a stricter confessional Lutheranism. Previous events had contributed to this growing chasm.

In 1814 Rev. Schober announced that he planned “to dish up some new well seasoned and agreeable sauce, or views in religious conceptions”. He planned to translate a work entitled: *Scenes in the World of Spirits*, also called *Spirits Scenes*. This book had been written by Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, a German professor of economics, an eye surgeon, a prominent literary figure and theologian from Marburg, Germany. Stilling held pietistic views and wrote essays and fiction exposing the belief system. His pietism had a mystical tendency and his writing was full of metaphors and symbolism. He wrote of fifteen scenes encountered by man after his death in the spirit world.³¹

Scenes was an unusual Lutheran theological piece. In it Stilling wrote about the “soul after death and until the resurrection is floating above her body, and is in a manner magnetically attracted to same.” He wrote: “by their fruits ye shall know them” in reference to good works. He sought for man to “bring our depravity to light, the sooner are we delivered therefrom by the blood of Christ” as a conversion experience would do. Christian instruction should occur after the conversion. Stilling emphasized “good actions” and suggested that there were “classes” in heaven based upon man’s piety. He also held a poor opinion of Protestant ministers, scientists, universities, and the established church. He endorsed Christian missionary societies and endorsed a “universal union” with all Christians. Stilling stated that “for the World of Spirits, the law of morality must be the determining ground in the spirit of man.” Christians of the highest class are described thusly: “after you have advanced much further in heavenly knowledge, you will receive by degrees the capacity to see the corporeal world again, and only then . . . be called an Angel”.³²

When Schober’s translation emerged, printed by the Henkel Press, David initially endorsed the work and promised to sell books. By the middle of 1816 David openly broke with the theology found in *Scenes*. He referred to Stilling as a “Schwärmer”, a fanatic. Brother Solomon scolded him to stop publicly criticizing the piece. Other Lutherans found it curious “that a Lutheran preacher would present such a book to the

²⁹ *NC Synod Minutes*, 1816.

³⁰ Schober to Solomon, 10 Aug 1818, Folder II, The Handley Library microfilm 187.

³¹ F. Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietists During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1963), 257-265. The German name for the book is *Szenen aus dem Geisterreiche*. Jerry L. Surratt, *Gottlieb Schober of Salem* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 15, hereafter cited as Surratt, *Schober*. Henry Stilling, *Scenes in the World of Spirits*, translated and copyrighted by Gottlieb Schober, Salem, NC (New Market, VA: Ambrose Henkel & Co., 1815), hereafter cited as *Scenes*. See also A. J. Roeber, *Palatines, Liberty, and Property German Lutherans in Colonial British America* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 62-65 and Chapter 3 for a discussion of how Jung-Stilling’s pietist beliefs challenged orthodox Lutheran and village belief systems.

³² *Scenes*, ix, 7, 24, 32-33, 47, 60, 64, 122-123, 130, 133, 149, 151, 197, 205-211, 213, 244.

public view. . . .”³³ As a candidate for ordination in 1816, David Henkel found the teachings in *Scenes* to be contrary to Lutheran confessional beliefs, and his conscience would not allow him to be silent.

In 1816 David Henkel preached a four hour sermon at White Haven Church in present Gaston County, NC. By the middle of 1817 he printed this sermon. *The Essence of the Christian Religion* would appear to be an essay on solid Lutheran thought with special emphasis upon the sacraments. But David wrote it to counter the teachings found in *Scenes*. Known as his “God is Love” sermon, David emphasized that grace, God’s love, saved mankind as a free gift. He insisted upon the “real presence” doctrine of Holy Communion. He also insisted that conversion can come through instruction, the sacraments, and hearing the Word of God. The means of grace allows for Christian conversion making an emotional conversion experience unnecessary.³⁴

At the same time David also published another essay entitled *The Loud Trumpet of Futurity*. While *Essence* challenged the philosophy embraced by *Scenes*, David conducted a direct assault with *Loud Trumpet*. David viewed life after death without the mysticism of Stilling: “The souls of believers are in paradise, amusing themselves with the wonders of the invisible world. . . .” Unbelievers were “complaining in miseries”. Believers were identified with light and unbelievers with darkness. David spoke of classes of people, but the main distinctions he offered were between believers and non-believers. David suggested that occasionally motives of preachers were not always religious: “because their aim was not to glorify God by their ministry; but to elevate themselves to high ecclesiastical dignities, to rule over other ministers with absolute liberties.” David challenged slave owners to treat their slaves from a Biblical point of view, parents to be good examples for their children, and husbands to treat their wives better. While David used reason and rational discussions throughout his treatise, he quoted liberally from the Bible. In reference to pietism David suggested that an “experience” might not be the proper measure of their belief and that “the Judge [God] pronounces them workers of iniquity”. David closed the essay thusly: “But before we close these scenes, . . .” an obvious reference to Schober’s book.³⁵

Significantly the Henkel Press printed *Scenes*, and David found a local Salisbury printer for his two works. David’s family and other ministers did not uniformly support David at this time. Father Paul thought that North Carolina should conform to the ordination procedures of Pennsylvania and that Philip and David should follow his advice. The appearance of *Essence* and *Loud Trumpet* influenced Robert Johnston Miller’s next letter to Schober in July 1817. He reported to Schober that “little D” had published his four hour sermon “in order to give a fair blast of his Trumpet”. Miller felt that his motivation was to give it “at some of his Superiors, in age & office, at least, if not of wisdom, goodness, & learning. . . .” He further stated that “the little bigman” intended to throw Storch, Schober, and Miller “quite into the back ground: this at least appears to

³³ J. Peter Schmucker to Schober, 12 July 1816, German, Solomon to Schober, 29 July 1816, German, Godfrey Dreher to Schober, 10 July 1816, RG:NCS, 1.0.1 Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

³⁴ *Essence*. In Robert Johnson Miller to Schober, 15 July 1817, RG:NCS, 1.0.1. Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS, Miller reported to Schober that David had printed against *Scenes*.

³⁵ David Henkel, *A Loud Trumpet of Futurity, Or a Few Reflections on Future Things* (Salisbury, NC: Jacob Krider, 1817), 3, 5, 9, 15, 27, 29, 32, 42, 45-48, 52.

be one of the objects. . . .” Miller stated support for moving the Synod meeting but questioned that the move would “put a staff into the hands of enemies?”³⁶

With the 1817 Synod meeting approaching, the doctrinal and ordination issues created the possibility for confrontation. It had been rumored that David Henkel would not attend Synod. Philip advised Schober to allow David to speak at Synod. During the summer Daniel Moser wrote Schober. He communicated that his congregations expected his ordination and that they were not pleased with the changes in the ordination process. His congregations were concerned that he was not properly licensed to conduct the sacraments “without the laying on of hands”. He told Schober that they viewed the requirement as Scriptural. He warned him: “I fear separation” which his congregations had threatened.³⁷

The 1817 Synod meeting was held with less conflict than expected. A change in the ordination procedure was proposed but failed with Rev. Miller dissenting. Synod took some very important actions. It renewed the candidate status of David and Moser. Its minutes stated that both would be ordained at the 1819 Synod meeting. David and Moser both seemed agreeable. Synod also authorized a committee to compile a constitution for Synod and Gottlieb Schober to produce a publication on the anniversary of the Reformation. Synod changed the meeting date from fall to spring and omitted the 1818 synod meeting. Synod also authorized congregational use of *Gemeinschaftliche Gesangbuch* and the English liturgy authored by Rev. Frederick Quitman of New York, both decidedly unionist.³⁸ The publication of *Luther* and subsequent events from Pennsylvania altered the assigned meeting date.

Schober and a committee completed the Synod constitution, and he composed a major publication, which became known as *Luther*. Schober exercised a free hand in his writing. With the 1818 publication of *Luther* others would be able to observe the doctrinal basis of Schober’s theology. Also either in 1817 or shortly thereafter a “leading minister” of Synod chastised David for teaching contrary to the church. David proved his theology by using a Latin book of Concord. When that did not suffice, he found a German Concord which provided evidence of the difference in theology. Issues of ordination continued to disturb Lincoln County churches. On April 14, 1818, Schober reported to Solomon that there was “no peace because of the ordination”.³⁹ But with the printing of *Luther*, others would further observe the doctrinal drift.

³⁶ Solomon to Schober, 29 July 1816, Miller to Schober, 15 July 1817, RG:NCS, 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS; Paul to Solomon, 20 Jan 1817, German, UVA, 8653-I, Box 1, Folder 1813-1817; Paul to David, 26 May 1817, German, Albert Ross Wentz Library, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, PA, hereafter cited as LTS.

³⁷ Philip to Schober, 3 Sept 1817, German, Daniel Moser to Schober, 27 Aug 1817, German, RG:NCS, 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

³⁸ *NC Synod Minutes* 1817; David to Solomon, 4 Dec 1818 and 29 Oct 1817, UVA, 8653-c, Box 1, 1816-1819, Letters from David Henkel. See also Benjamin A. Kolodziej, “Pietism and Rationalism: A Dichotomy of Resemblance”, *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, Vol 77, No 1, 35-54, especially 47-50, hereafter cited Kolodziej, “Pietism and Rationalism”. Peshau, 30-34.

³⁹ Gottlieb Schober, *Comprehensive Account of the Rise and Progress of the Reformation of the Christian Church by Dr. Martin Luther, actually begun on the 31st day of October, A. D. 1517; interspersed with views of his character and doctrine, extracted from his book; and how the Church, established by him, arrived and progressed in North Carolina – as also the Constitution and Rules of that Church, in North Carolina and adjoining States, as existing in October 1817*, (Baltimore: Schaeffer & Maund, Printers, Booksellers and Stationers, 1818), 211, hereafter cited as *Luther*. Socrates Henkel,

Stilling's *Scenes* and *Luther* embody remarkable similarities. Stilling described his denominational theology thusly:

I will neither be called Calvinist, Moravian, nor Seperated [sic] Christian, or Puritan, all this savors of sectarian spirit; I confess myself simply and only to the doctrine of Jesus and . . . wear as a distinction of the politically established Christian societies, . . .⁴⁰

Schober in *Luther* commented about his own theology:

I think my sentiments and experiences are as orthodox and Calvinistic as need be, and yet I am a sort of speckled bird among my Calvinist brethren. I am a mighty good churchman, but pass among such as a dissenter in prunello. On the other hand, the dissenters, many of them I mean, think me defective, either in understanding or in conscience, for staying where I am. Well, there is a middle party, called the Methodists, but neither do my dimensions exactly fit them; I am somehow disqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party; but there are a few among all parties who bear with me and love me, and with this I must be content.⁴¹

Stilling supported missionary societies. Schober in *Luther* also endorsed them:

. . . we see the morning star rising; union is approaching in Europe by Bible Societies, in America likewise, in which are united all persuasions . . . Missionary Societies . . . Sunday schools . . . revivals of religion . . .⁴²

Stilling held a strong ecumenical position. Schober translated and planned to print a second volume of *Scenes*. From this translation Stilling exposed a strong unionist tone:

. . . but the proper and grand union in love into one flock, will only then be effected when the tempest from the West, blows them all together into one fold . . . the variety of opinion in nonessentials, and which are made to be principals, continues to divide the minds of the best men, although the foundation of faith is with them all alike . . . my inward calling to operate

History of The Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod, (New Market, VA: Henkel & Co., 1890), 13, hereafter cited as Henkel, *Tennessee Synod History*; see also Louis A. Smith, "The Early Career of David Henkel", *Lutheran Quarterly*, (Autumn 2002), Vol XVI, No 3, 317, hereafter cited as Smith, "Early Career of David Henkel". Schober to Solomon, 14 Apr 1818, German, Schober Papers, Old Salem.

⁴⁰ *Scenes*, vii. See also Carpenter and Smith, "David Henkel Genesis", 192-194 for the first time the comparison between *Scenes* and *Luther* was made. Surratt, *Schober*, 164-165.

⁴¹ *Luther*, 211.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 209-210.

towards a union of spirit, to effect internal not external union of the religious parties of all Christians.⁴³

Schober adhered to Stilling's ecumenical Christian beliefs and stated them thusly in *Luther*:

Why are we not all united in love and union; why this distance, controversies, disputes, condemning one another, why this splitting into forms? . . . Union in spirit, as soon as the Lord pleases is to appearance easy . . . and to raise the spirit of love and union, among all the believers in the divinity of Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and man; so that we may arrive to that happy period foretold, of living blissfully as one flock, under one Shepherd.⁴⁴

What should orthodox Lutherans make of *Luther* and of *Scenes*? How do the sacraments and the means of grace figure into the theology espoused by these writings? *Luther* included a copy of the Augsburg Confession. The version used, however, was not the original Unaltered Augsburg Confession. *Luther* was printed in English which also caused confusion among those who still spoke mostly German in their homes and churches.

If *Luther* was going to create a more consistent and calmer climate in the North Carolina Synod, it failed with its loose, pietistic, and unionist doctrine. A more immediate problem arose with an error. *Luther* confused the plans for ordination by incorrectly printing the names of candidates to be ordained at the next Synod. Another confusion was the fact that while the new Synod constitution "firmly fixed" the Synod meeting date for Trinity Sunday each spring, other issues would cause a change in that date. Schober pasted a paper over the name Trinity in many copies of *Luther*.⁴⁵

The Pennsylvania Ministerium had contacted Schober about the North Carolina Synod sending a delegate to a joint meeting to discuss the creation of a "general synod". These plans were known by May 1818 but Rev. Storch, Synod president, did not change the meeting date for Synod until early 1819. This abrupt change in the newly written constitution without proper vote or adequate notification would become a serious issue in the impending crisis.⁴⁶ The late notification would prevent a number of pastors and delegates from attending.

Other issues during 1818 derived from David Henkel's habit of disputing with those whose theological practice did not conform to his. Throughout 1818 conflicts with

⁴³ The second volume is in manuscript form Schober Papers, Old Salem. Quotation is from manuscript Vol. II, Scenes VII, VIII. Schober planned to print the second volume of *Scenes* but because of the controversy the first volume presented he did not. See Schober to Solomon, 10-15 Jan 1816, German, *ibid*.

⁴⁴ *Luther*, viii, 209-211. See also Surratt, *Schober*, "An Ecumenical Vision", 177-192.

⁴⁵ Henkel, *Tennessee Synod History*, 15-18.

⁴⁶ Schober to Solomon, 9 May 1818, German, Schober Papers, Old Salem. Schober to David, 10 Feb 1819, German, LTS. In this letter Schober notified David of the meeting change and "thought, and am nearly sure" he notified other Synod members. In Philip to Solomon, 10 May 1819, German, UVA, 8653-i, Box 2, Henkel Family Papers, Philip discussed his late notification which prevented his and others attending Synod.

ministers and members of other denominations increased. One of these conflicts was with Andrew Hoyl, a “Dutch Presbyterian”, who attended Philadelphia Meeting House in present Gaston County. Hoyl had attended Lutheran services under Philip and David when no Reformed or Presbyterian ministers were available. A legal dispute also arose between David and Hoyl, which further alienated the two. The year 1819 would become a year of confrontation and intrigue.

On April 26, 1819, the North Carolina Synod met. Synod president Storch authorized the meeting date change. Five pastors, four candidates (including Moser and David), five catechists, and twelve lay delegates attended.⁴⁷ While David and Moser thought ordination as promised in *Luther* and at the last Synod meeting was imminent, they were about to be surprised.

The 1819 ambush was carefully orchestrated. In October 1818 Schober had written David threatening him that “an examination of the Truth” would be conducted at Conference. Schober then proposed that, if David would stop advocating his beliefs and doctrines, the accusations would disappear. If Schober thought that David could be appeased in such a manner, he was mistaken. On November 4 most likely as a result of the previous letter, David and Moser met Schober in Salem. Schober communicated to Paul that at the meeting David “was completely full of his controversial sermons”. It may be assumed that this meeting was to resolve the issues or as part of the young candidates venture toward ordination. In early 1819 Schober informed Paul of the November meeting and that David had offended Presbyterian minister James Hall through David’s teachings but did not inform Paul that he planned to put David on trial. Schober’s letters to Paul and Solomon in 1818 and early 1819 confirm that Moser would be ordained, fail to indicate either ordination or a trial for David, encourage support for the General Synod, and suggest that he supported peace and a unified synod.⁴⁸

On Easter Monday, April 12, 1819, David Henkel served Philadelphia Lutheran congregation. Andrew Hoyl was present at the services. David inquired that he had heard that Hoyl planned to bring charges against him. Hoyl in front of a number of witnesses “pointedly declared” that he did not plan to bring charges against David and promised him that if he changed his mind that he would notify him so that he could provide a defense. Yet the previous week Hoyl had been deposed and seven others also gave depositions. After the David Henkel-Andrew Hoyl meeting, Hoyl sent Adam Cosner to Rev. Storch and asked him about the feasibility of bringing charges against David. Storch gave permission and Hoyl continued to gather depositions. Of the 44 depositions taken by Hoyl, nine were solicited prior to the Easter Monday meeting.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ *NC Synod Minutes*, 1819.

⁴⁸ Schober to David, 20 Oct 1818, original is at LTS and a copy is at HFP, Duke. Schober to Solomon, 21 June 1818, 10 Aug 1818, 18 Jan 1819 and Schober to Paul 4 Jan 1819, all in German, Folder IV, The Handley Library microfilm 187. “David Henkel Diary”, 1818.

⁴⁹ David Hinkle Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, hereafter cited as David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. Hoyl’s deposition was taken April 5 and most of the other seven were dated April 7. Sketch of David Henkel’s trial at Buffaloe Creek on the 26th & 27th of April, 1819, LTS, hereafter cited as David Henkel’s trial. Answers to Andrew Hoyle’s Publication against the Reverend David Henkel by a committee of investigation, July 20, 1820, transcr., C. L. Coon Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University. John Huffman, Peter Rhyne, Adam Cloninger, Michael Rhyne, Jacob Plonk, Solomon Tothearu, Jese Elmore Certificate 10 Oct 1819, Henkel-Miller Family Papers, The Handley Library, Winchester, VA. Adam Cloninger Certificate Against Hoyl and Costner, 16 Oct 1819,

Hoyle planned to charge David with lying and perjury concerning a local court case, with teaching contrary to Lutheran practice, and with failing to cooperate with other denominations. At what point David learned that Hoyle would attend the Lutheran Synod meeting and would bring these charges is not known. There were only thirteen days between the encounter at Philadelphia and the synod meeting. It is possible that he did not discover it until he arrived at Synod. While no documentation has been discovered to directly link Hoyle, Storch, and Schober to the plot, the coincidences appear to confirm their involvement.

On April 25-26 Rev. Storch, Synod president, conducted the “untimely” Synod meeting (David later called it the “bastard Conference”) and allowed two non-Lutherans to appear with charges against David Henkel. Andrew Hoyle, the Reformed, and Adam Cosner, the excommunicated Lutheran, brought charges. Hoyle took the lead. His first set of charges involved a lawsuit and damage to his reputation. David Henkel had been called for a deposition in a case between Susanah Williams and David Linebarger. He had attempted to reconcile differences of the two parties but had failed. David swore a deposition in front of Andrew Hoyle. Afterward he realized that he had recalled a discussion between Linebarger and Cosner, the contents of which he had not included in his deposition. Hoyle accused David of perjury and of lying in the deposition. When David responded to Hoyle’s charges with counter-charges, Hoyle claimed that his reputation had been damaged by David’s “rash behavior”. Both threatened each other with slander and lawsuits. Adam Cosner’s involvement resulted in his excommunication from Philadelphia Lutheran Church.⁵⁰

The legal case involving Williams and Linebarger began in 1814 first with the charge of bastardy against Linebarger and then with the charge of trespass against Linebarger. Linebarger pleaded guilty to the bastardy charge. The trespass case was adjudicated Spring Term of Lincoln County Superior Court in 1816. Hoyle used this three year old case against David in the 1819 Synod meeting. The time lapse and arbitrary nature of the accusations contributed to the inability of David and his supporters to respond to the charges. If this issue was as important as Hoyle and others supposed, they should have accused David earlier and would have prosecuted him in court for lying.⁵¹ The accusation, that David told a lie, laid the groundwork for the ambush.

Jacob Costner Certificate Against Hoyle and Costner, 16 Oct 1819, The Handley Library. These depositions prove the chain of events. Adam’s last name is also spelled Costner.

⁵⁰ David Henkel’s trial, LTS. Depositions from The Handley Library. Gottlieb Schober, *Review of a Pamphlet, issued from the Press of the Western Carolinian, in Salisbury, N. C.* (Salisbury: Bingham & White, 1821), hereafter cited as *Schober’s Review*, 49 printed Andrew Hoyle’s Memorial. Numerous depositions including Andrew Hoyle, Adam Cosner, and others, David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. David to Solomon, 31 May 1819, German, 8653-c, Box, 1, 1816-1819, Letters from David Henkel, UVA.

⁵¹ See Lincoln County documents at North Carolina Archives, Raleigh, NC: Trial and Appearance Docket, 1807-1834, CR060.322.1; writ of arrest and bail bond, Williams’s Declaration, Lincoln County Civil Action Papers, 1813, 1814, 1816, CR060.325.5, CR060.325.6. The issue began with a bastardy case against David Linebarger with Susanah Williams as the pregnant party. See Lincoln County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions Minutes 1813-1817, CR060.301.5; Lincoln County Bastardy Bonds, 1810-1814, CR.060.102.1. Susanah Williams filed a trespass suit because David Linebarger refused to marry her. She lost the case in Superior Court. Court records suggest that David was not called as a witness in the case and there is no evidence his affidavit was presented. David’s deposition has not been found.

The next day Hoyl and Cosner again appeared at the North Carolina Lutheran Synod meeting. They brought additional doctrinal charges against David. They charged that David was not cordial in relations with other religious leaders, that he had charged his confirmands “that birds of a feather ought to flock together” thereby avoiding marriage with persons outside of the Lutheran faith, and that he had disputed with Presbyterian ministers Humphrey Hunter and James Hall.⁵²

David’s disdain for other denominations and his strict adherence to Lutheran principles resulted in Hoyl’s bringing evidence concerning the creation of a uniquely Lutheran Church. Henkel had advocated the building of a strictly Lutheran church and wrote “Proposals” for the church to serve the Beaverdam and Long Creek congregations. The “Proposals” included adherence to the omnipresence of Jesus Christ, that Christ instituted the “means of grace”, that “water baptism” created “regeneration”, that the “laying on of hands are necessary to increase faith and holiness”, and that “the bodey [sic] and Blood of Jesus Christ is Present and inseperable [sic] Connected with the elements [sic] of Bread and wine”. Any minister who adhered to the specified principles would be allowed to preach in the church. Since the principles were uniquely Lutheran, they would exclude other protestant faiths. William Vickers, the landowner offering to donate the land for the church, refused to comply after reading the conditions.⁵³

Hoyl leveled more specific doctrinal charges against David. He contended that David taught “transubstantiation”, the Roman Catholic view of Communion. He also charged that David could forgive sins, used the “laying on of hands” to receive new members, and encouraged baptism without faith. David reported to Solomon that he was called the “Catholic Priest from Lincoln”.⁵⁴ David responded to these doctrinal charges which led to major discussions.

Rev. Gottlieb Schober clearly differed with David on Holy Communion. In October 1818 Schober responded to David’s paper about Communion, which was most likely part of his ministerial training. Schober’s response exposed their doctrinal differences. David believed in the Lutheran “real presence” doctrine of Holy Communion. Schober could not accept, “no, no – I cannot believe” that “to receive from Mr. Henkel the Sacraments, who by these few words made bread body & wine blood. . . .” He believed that David was “making people secure in forms & not in realities, how easy is it to go to heaven for an adulterous heart to be absolved by Mr. Henkel”. Schober also questioned the omnipresence of Christ and suggested that “to none will it effect conviction of necessity of spiritual regeneration and of adopting him as their God & Saviour”.⁵⁵

⁵² See depositions of Elisabeth Friday, Margaret Friday, Louisa Costner, and Peter Costner, David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. Most of these depositions were also printed in *Schober’s Review*.

⁵³ Proposal For building a house of Publick worship on or between the waters of Beverdam & Longcreek as the Commissioners may direct with 29 Mar 1818 letter from William Vickers and response from Jacob A[derhold] 16 Apr 1818, LTS. The original document at LTS was most likely written by elder Jacob Aderhold from Beaverdam Congregation. A copy of this document is also found at David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. Hephzibah Presbyterian Church appeared on the land of William Vickers some years later.

⁵⁴ David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. David to Solomon, 4 Dec 1818, German, 8653-c, Box 1, 1816-1819, Letters from David Henkel, UVA.

⁵⁵ Schober to David, 20 Oct 1818, LTS. See also Smith, “Early Career of David Henkel”, 315-316.

The doctrine of omnipresence also created considerable controversy at the Synod meeting. David discussed the concept in relation to the “laying on of hands”, the Lord’s Supper, and baptism. Rev. Storch responded that he did not believe such a doctrine and that “if 500 Bibles said so, he would still not believe it”. David contended that Scriptures supported the Lutheran doctrine of Communion with the concept of omnipresence.⁵⁶

David was not prepared for a trial. He had no depositions; he naively believed Andrew Hoysl’s earlier statement that there would be no charges. Even so, he and his congregational delegates attempted to defend his position. Daniel Moser reported that “the old preachers,” Schober, Storch, and Miller, “would not listen” to the testimony of David and his deputies.⁵⁷ Synod found no significant doctrinal issues and no confirmation that David had lied but found that he had failed to cooperate with other denominations and with Andrew Hoysl. Synod punished David by reducing his candidacy status to catechist for six months until the next Synod. He was admonished to improve relations with other faiths, especially Presbyterians. He apologized to Andrew Hoysl, and they shook hands. Schober wished that Henkel had been reduced for one year or permanently. Other Synod business included the appointment of Gottlieb Schober to attend the Baltimore meeting to discuss a general synod. Synod ordained Daniel Moser to the office of deacon. Another interesting twist occurred when Synod put stipulations on Union Seminary, the school founded by Philip Henkel and Joseph E. Bell in Tennessee. At the previous meeting Synod had endorsed the school, had recommended using funds from the sale of *Luther* to support it, and solicited funds from other areas. But at the “untimely meeting” Synod withdrew support until Philip and Bell produced a constitution for their school. In addition they stipulated that Synod would support the school only if the constitution was in accord with the Lutheran and “Reformed Church”.⁵⁸ But the drama was to continue.

Delegates from two of David’s congregations traveled to Tennessee to solicit Philip Henkel’s attendance to the constitutionally sanctioned synod meeting. Philip and others came on Trinity Sunday to have the synod meeting. Rev. Storch, the minister at Buffalo Church, agreed to open the church for worship but ordered that no other discussions be held in it. On Monday discussions were held and Philip ordained David Henkel and Joseph E. Bell as ministers. Daniel Moser also attended the proceedings as did delegates from many of David’s Lincoln County churches. This “oak tree ordination meeting” certainly was extra-legal. David and Philip interpreted the sanctions against David as being six months **or** until the next synod meeting. Philip contended that the “untimely meeting” was unconstitutional since the Synod constitution “firmly fixed” the synod meeting date as Trinity Sunday and that the oak tree ordinations were therefore legal. Even though David accepted full ministerial ordination, he adhered to the specifications of the “untimely synod” and limited his ministerial duties for the six month

⁵⁶ Daniel Moser Certificate, The Handley Library. Two versions of Moser’s Certificates exist, one in English and one in German. They are dated 9 Oct 1819. Historians have long questioned who made the “500 Bibles” statement. Moser confirms that it was Storch who said it and not Schober. See Smith, “Early Career of David Henkel”, 317. David to Solomon, 23 Jan 1818, German, 8653-c, Box, 1, 1816-1818, Letters from David Henkel, UVA.

⁵⁷ Daniel Moser Certificate, The Handley Library

⁵⁸ Peshau, 37-39. *Schober’s Review*, 20, 29, 46. David Henkel’s trial, The Handley Library. *NC Synod Minutes*, 1819.

time period to those of a catechist, which excluded Holy Communion.⁵⁹ The “untimely synod” and “oak tree ordinations” presented the North Carolina Lutheran Synod with a serious impasse. Events leading up to the next synod meeting would determine the future of the synod.

On April 15, 1819, shortly after the “oak tree ordinations” Philip reported to his father Paul that he “mediated revenge” on Trinity Sunday. He told Paul that his actions were to defend the rules, which should not be broken. He also contended that three men should not manipulate the rules.⁶⁰

Initially Paul and Solomon Henkel agreed with the synod’s decision to discipline David. But did the subsequent oak tree ordinations doom the synod to a split? Schober thought so and wrote Solomon: “They have now separated themselves from us, and no ministry could recognize them, if David and Bell are allowed to perform the Sacraments legitimately.” Soon after the ordinations, Rev. Robert Johnston Miller reported to Philip, Bell, and Peter Hoyle, David’s father in law, that Schober had written him a letter suggesting: “Let us break off with them.” In an effort to thwart the effects of the “oak tree ordination” Schober composed a circular which informed the general public that David “is not at this time authorized to administer the Lord’s Supper” and that he was never an ordained minister from the North Carolina Lutheran Synod. When the “untimely” synod minutes emerged, Schober inserted “did they separate themselves from us” and instructed Solomon not to send copies of the minutes to Philip or Joseph E. Bell. On May 30, 1819, Schober wrote Paul encouraging him not to accept Philip’s explanation of the “oak tree ordination” and expressed opposition to a synodical separation.⁶¹

Paul Henkel, founder of the North Carolina Synod, the Virginia Synod, and the Ohio Synod, remained uncertain about what to do and others waited for his opinion. Philip encouraged his father to come and “investigate everything”. Starting in June Paul embarked on a long journey into Tennessee and North Carolina. While in Tennessee he met with Philip, preached at churches, and discussed the possibility of a conference in Tennessee. On October 4 he arrived at David’s house. Paul conducted his own investigation while in North Carolina. He administered Communion four consecutive weekends with David assisting. He gathered certificates and petitions. The North Carolina congregations west of the Catawba River overwhelmingly supported David. Paul next visited the Lutheran congregations east of the Catawba. He and his wife

⁵⁹ Philip to David, 15 Apr 1819, LTS. David Henkel trial, The Handley Library. David Henkel, *Carolinian Herald of Liberty; Religious & Political*, (Salisbury, NC: Krider & Bingham, 1821), 20, hereafter cited as *Carolinian Herald*. Peter Hoyle Certificate, The Handley Library. Philip Henkel Deposition, 11 Sept 1829, North Carolina Archives & History, Raleigh, NC, North Carolina Supreme Court file 1531, hereafter cited as NC Supreme Court File #1531. “David Henkel Diary”, 1819. See also Smith, *St. Johns*, 103-106. Henkel, *Tennessee Synod History*, 15.

⁶⁰ Philip to Paul, 15 Apr 1819, German, Folder II, The Handley Library, microfilm 187. While the three men were unnamed, he obviously referred to Schober, Storch, and Miller.

⁶¹ Solomon to Schober, 17 May 1819, and Paul to Schober, 26 May 1819, found in *Schober’s Review*, 35-36, original letters not found. Schober to Solomon, 20 July 1819, Schober Papers, Old Salem. Joseph E. Bell to David, 15 June 1819, LTS; Peter Hoyle Certificate, The Handley Library. Schober’s circular was attached to Andrew Hoyle to an unnamed congregation, 20 Oct 1819, LTS. Peschau, *NC Synod Minutes*, 40; Schober to Solomon, 2 Aug 1819, Schober Papers, Old Salem. Schober to Paul, 30 May 1819, German, Folder IV, The Handley Library microfilm 187.

encountered Rev. Storch. They discussed the issues and Paul suggested that a new trial be conducted in Lincolnton so that all witnesses could be heard. Storch told Paul that David and Philip were biased against the “old preachers”. Paul then sought Rev. Gottlieb Schober and found him on the road to Pine Church. Little was resolved. Paul wrote to Solomon that his investigation revealed that Schober, Miller, and Storch “acted high handed” with David. He described Schober as “mean” and “arrogant” and that “the split” in the Synod may be too great.⁶² Apparently Paul indicated to Schober and Storch that he planned to appear at the Lincolnton Synod meeting and that the matters would need to be resolved then.

One interesting piece of information that Paul discovered involved a monetary gift from Andrew Hoyl to Gottlieb Schober which was to be used to defray expenses for his General Synod meeting in Baltimore. Paul advised David not to pursue a bribery charge in the matter.⁶³ He also most likely informed Storch of this information.

When Paul returned to Point Pleasant, he found an inflammatory letter from Schober. Schober suggested that Paul need not come to North Carolina and accused him of spreading untruths on his trip. Paul advised David to be careful about what he said and to avoid legal action. The Henkels and their supporters planned to attend the synod meeting in 1820 but also discussed three options: discuss the issues at Synod which hopefully would result in upholding David’s ordination; join the newly formed Ohio Synod; or create a synod of their own. They also planned to use the power of the press to support their position.⁶⁴ While the Henkels were unclear on what course to take, their North Carolina opponents were again plotting strategy.

On November 6, 1819, Schober wrote to Andrew Hoyl. He noted that Philip had threatened to put something in print against Rev. Miller. He referred to his adversaries as “Lyars” and noted that he wanted “to keep our Ministry and Church uncontaminated with impurities – of Popish & Despotic arrogance & pride. . . .” He wrote “our church” to the non-Lutheran Hoyl. He once again regretted that Synod had not “dismissed D. totally”.⁶⁵ Schober and Hoyl had served together in the North Carolina Senate some years ago. They knew each other politically, socially, and belonged to the same economic class.

Ominous events in Tennessee suggested a break in the Henkel camp. Money problems plagued Union Seminary. By December 29, 1819, Joseph E. Bell had accepted a teaching position in Lincolnton from John B. Harry at Pleasant Retreat Academy. Bell also made doctrinal accusations against Philip. This was unexpected since only a month

⁶² Philip to Solomon, 17 Aug 1819, German, UVA, 8652-i. Box 2, Folder 1819-1823, Letters from Philip Henkel. William J. Finck, *Chronological Life of Paul Henkel from Journals, Letters, Minutes of Synod*, (New Market, VA: 1935-37, repr. 1957), 446. “David Henkel Diary” 1819. Most of these certificates and petitions are at The Handley Library and a few are at LTS; The David Henkel Notebook is a collection of documents and narrative and is housed at UVA, Henkel Family Papers, 8653-c. Philip to David, 29 Dec 1819, Paul to David, 11 Nov 1819, both German, LTS, provide information about Paul’s meetings with Storch and Schober. Paul to Solomon, 30 Oct 1819, German, UVA, 8653-i, Box 1, 1818-1820.

⁶³ Daniel Moser Certificate, The Handley Library; Paul to David, 7 Dec 1819, German, LTS.

⁶⁴ Schober to Paul, 22 Nov 1819; Paul to David, 7 Dec 1819, German, LTS. Philip to David, 9 Dec 1819, German, 29 Dec 1819, German, 14 Mar 1820, LTS. Philip to Paul, 9 Dec 1819, German, Folder II, The Handley Library microfilm 187.

⁶⁵ Schober to Andrew Hoyl, 6 Nov 1819, David Hinkle Papers, UNC-CH. Andrew Hoyl was a wealthy and politically powerful person in Lincoln County.

earlier, Philip believed that Bell was firmly in the Henkel camp. By March 1820 Bell was residing in Lincolnton.⁶⁶ This sudden change of allegiance was not the only surprise prior to the Lincolnton Synod meeting.

Just as David had been surprised at the “untimely” synod meeting, a new conspiracy presented itself. On May 19, 1820, only nine days before the Synod meeting in Lincolnton, Andrew Hoyl published a letter in *The Star, and North-Carolina Gazette*, a leading state newspaper. The *Star* article presented information about the Williams-Linebarger case, the synod trial, and the “oak tree ordination”. He even attacked Paul for reporting falsely in his investigative trip to North Carolina. He also made new accusations against David. He claimed that David had falsely attested to the character of a John Brown, supposedly a Revolutionary War veteran who was seeking money to purchase a horse. Hoyl contended that Brown was an “imposter”. Brown apparently made negative comments about Andrew Hoyl, and Hoyl attributed those comments as emanating from David. Hoyl repeated that David had lied and that Synod had acted correctly in disciplining him: “scripture forbids a double tongued man from being a teacher in the church.”⁶⁷ Timing was of the essence. The *Star* article was perfectly timed for those opposing David Henkel. With the appearance of the article so close to the Synod meeting and with the out of state attendees not seeing it until they arrived, David and his supporters were once again put on the defensive without notice.

The issues at the North Carolina Synod meeting involved theological points of dispute, ordination issues, and political concerns. Within this context the momentous conference occurred.

At Emmanuel’s Lutheran Church in Lincolnton, Deacon Daniel Moser’s congregation, Synod met on Monday after Trinity Sunday. Schober, Storch, and their supporters sent a political question to the Henkels. They questioned whether the Henkels would “be governed by a majority of preachers and deputies?” This query derived from the controversy in 1816 when Miller, Schober, and Storch believed that David and his supporters wanted to usurp their authority. They posed the same issue at the 1819 “untimely” meeting. They understood that their supporters had sufficient votes to carry the issues by a majority vote. The “altern predigers” framed the entire controversy with David, ordination, doctrine, and the General Synod in political terms, specifically, control of the Synod.⁶⁸

The Henkel group responded in writing that they would be governed by the newly written 1817 constitution found in *Luther* and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. With the Henkel response they gathered in two groups under the oak trees near the “Old White Church”, as Emmanuel’s Church was called at that time. One group was made up mainly of pastors and a few delegates, while the Henkel contingent had three pastors and a large number of delegates. The Henkel group postured first by contending that David’s “oak

⁶⁶ Philip to Paul, 29 Dec, 9 Dec, 1819, and 16 Mar 1820, all German, Folder II, The Handley Library microfilm 187.

⁶⁷ Andrew Hoyl to the Editor of the Raleigh Star, *The Star, and North-Carolina Gazette*, Friday, May 19, 1820, North Carolina Archives microfilm Ra NCSw-2, no page numbers. This publication confirms the power of Andrew Hoyl.

⁶⁸ Paul to Solomon, 31 May 1820, German and Paul and David to Solomon, 1 June 1820, German, UVA 8653-I, Box 1, 1818-1820, Paul Henkel Letters. There were two letters attached. See previous citations: David Henkel’s trial, LTS; Miller to Schober, 15 July 1817, Miller to Schober, 17 Jul 1816, Miller to Schober, 9 Dec 1816, RG:NCS, 1.0.1, Folder #2, NC Synod Collection, SLTS.

tree ordination” should be valid and then by challenging the General Synod. Paul offended the other group by suggesting that it was a “year-old empire of fanatics”. The discussions were heated and after some time they entered the church for the meeting.⁶⁹

The synod meeting began with sermons by Rev. Storch and Rev. Schober. The first discussion centered on the validity of the ordinations of David and Bell, which the “alten predigers” rejected. Then issues turned to doctrine. Philip spoke first and then David. Storch, Schober, and their followers argued that all doctrinal matters should be determined by a majority vote while David contended that they should be decided by the Bible and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. David argued that baptism is a means for regeneration. He then argued that Schober and others did not adhere to Lutheran practice concerning the Lord’s Supper but Schober interrupted his presentation. Storch intervened: “Now you see, people, the young man is naughty to disagree with us, the old bareheaded preachers.” David then argued against the General Synod by suggesting that it violated Article VII of the Augsburg Confession. Schober struck the book David used in his argument.⁷⁰

Inside the church the question arose again: Would the Henkels unite and take a seat at Synod? Paul answered that they could not unite with a conference which would not adhere to the constitution or the Augsburg Confession. The North Carolina Synod leaders wanted to endorse the Plan-Entwurf of the General Synod, but the Henkels found it incompatible with Lutheran practice. The Henkels had openly declared that Schober and others were non-Lutheran in their beliefs and practices. Compromise was becoming increasingly unlikely. The leaders of the North Carolina Synod then left the church. They re-convened at John B. Harry’s hotel nearby where they completed their Synod meeting.⁷¹ For Schober and Storch the separation was a political one, failing to adhere to a majority vote of all issues. For the Henkels it was doctrinal and rooted in the willingness of Synod’s leaders to abandon its own constitution and key elements of the Augsburg Confession.

The next day at Harry’s Hotel two delegates from David’s congregations attended the Synod meeting. They argued for a trial but were met with resistance. Synod did not want David to argue in front of spectators in Lincoln County again. Henkel supporters viewed a brighter note when Rev. Miller, who was absent on Monday when Schober had denied that Synod had a constitution, forced him to admit “his error”.⁷²

The Henkels and their supporters remained in Lincolnton, observed the North Carolina meeting, and plotted their strategy. They were surprised that the North Carolina Synod reversed itself from the previous day and endorsed the “oak tree ordination” of Joseph E. Bell, who was ordained by Philip with David. They understood that Bell’s ordination would mean alignment with the North Carolina Synod. The Henkel group expected Synod’s acceptance of the Plan-Entwurf and of the General Synod. Paul wrote Solomon to start the printing presses to report to all Lutherans and to others the events of

⁶⁹ Paul to Solomon, 31 May 1820, German, UVA, cited above.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* Paul to Solomon, 13 June 1820, German, HFP, Duke.

⁷¹ *Ibid.* Paul to Solomon, 31 May 1820, German, UVA. The involvement of John B. Harry in recruiting Joseph E. Bell appears to have been consistent with his support of the North Carolina Synod leaders. He was also a wealthy political leader in Lincoln County.

⁷² Jacob Aderhold To the Citisens of this and adjacent State and all that Love truth, 12 Feb 1821, LTS. Jacob Aderhold and John Abernethy attended the meeting.

Lincolnton.⁷³ It was at this point that Paul characterized the Synod meeting as the Augsburg Confession War which Solomon understood to mean that the North Carolina Synod had abandoned traditional Lutheran practice and doctrine.

Later on July 17, 1820, Henkel supporters met in Tennessee and established the Tennessee Lutheran Synod as a stronghold of confessional Lutheran beliefs. The Henkels started a public relations campaign after the Lincolnton meeting to influence other Lutherans. Paul wrote an open letter to Virginia Lutheran congregations to invite them to join the Tennessee Synod and to expose the North Carolina doctrinal shift. Efforts were also made to strengthen ties with the Ohio Synod where Paul's sons, Andrew and Charles, ministered.⁷⁴

The Henkels concentrated their efforts on opposition to the General Synod. To them it symbolized the drift away from the teachings of Martin Luther and into union with other denominations. They coordinated many missionary trips and used the power of the Henkel Press to spread the word. In 1821 David visited congregations in Virginia and in Pennsylvania. The publications David and others carried included *Kurze Nachricht* in German, the English *Carolinian Herald of Liberty*, and "Tennessee Synod Objections to the General Synod", a pamphlet which was widely distributed. The Henkels appealed to local congregations. They felt that in many cases the pastors were out of touch with the local church members. It was reported that one Pennsylvanian circulated 1200 copies of "Tennessee Synod Objections to the General Synod".⁷⁵ The Pennsylvania Ministerium had led the General Synod movement in 1818. By 1823 it reversed itself and withdrew from the General Synod because of the opposition of rural congregations and opposition to union with the Reformed Church. The timing suggests that the Tennessee Synod publications and confessional position significantly influenced the decision. The decidedly local congregational governance position of the Tennessee Synod also played a role as congregations expressed their desire for a truly Lutheran church body, which is to be locally controlled.⁷⁶ The Henkels carried their confessional Lutheranism to other areas.

In 1822 Philip visited Kentucky and Indiana, and David made a similar trip the following year, at which time he formed a conference. Tennessee Lutheran pastors continued to serve these areas. During the 1820's Tennessee Lutherans also served Missouri Lutherans and ordained a minister to serve them. In 1835 Indiana formed a synod which was based upon strict Lutheran confessionalism.⁷⁷

⁷³ *NC Synod Minutes*, 1820. Paul and David to Solomon, 1 June 1820, and Paul to Solomon, 31 May 1820, UVA, cited above.

⁷⁴ Paul and David to Solomon, 1 June 1820, UVA, Paul to Virginia Churches 1 June 1820, German, UVA. Many letters were exchanged during 1820-21 discussing the issues and most are at UVA.

⁷⁵ David to Solomon, 29 Nov 1821 and 17 Dec 1821, German, UVA, 8653-c, Box 1, 1820-1821, Letters from David Henkel. Henkel, *History of Tennessee Synod*, 63.

⁷⁶ Joseph L. Anderson, "The Confessional Principals of the General Council, the General Synod, and the United Synod of the South in Seeking Lutheran Unity," *Lutheran Historical Conference*, (1972), Vol. V, (1974), 19. Lawrence R. Rast Jr., "Cultivating the Holy Religion of Jesus: The Ministry and Ministries according to David Henkel and the Tennessee Synod", *The Lutheran Historical Conference*, (Volume 16, 1994), 101-111.

⁷⁷ Philip to Solomon, 2 July 1822, German, UVA, 8653-I, Box 2, 1819-1823, 1829, Letters from Philip Henkel; Philip to Solomon, 18 July 1822, German, same source. "David Henkel Diary", 1823. David made another trip in 1825. Henkel, *History of Tennessee Synod*, 49-50, 86, 88. Rudolph F. Rehmer, "Indiana Lutherans in the Nineteenth Century Crossroads, American Lutheranism: Crisis in Historical

While the Tennessee Lutherans traveled and wrote, various issues arose in North Carolina. The war of words had begun with *Carolinian Herald*, but soon Schober responded with *Review of a Pamphlet*. Throughout the 1820's pamphlets, flyers, and letters flew back and forth among the factions. Tennessee's attempts to reconcile were re-buffed and both synods coexisted in North Carolina and the southeast until the creation of the United Lutheran Synod in 1921.⁷⁸ David and his followers' fear that the North Carolina Synod was Lutheran in name only continued to be the issue.

In 1821 the North Carolina Lutheran Synod met with officials of the North Carolina Episcopal Church. Rev. Miller and John J. Ravenscroft had long advocated union with others and were now in concert with Schober and Rev. Adam Empie, Episcopalian, to create a Lutheran-Episcopal union. On June 17, 1821, following the North Carolina Episcopal meeting the North Carolina Lutheran Synod resolved that "the Lutheran Synod and the Protestant Episcopal Church of North Carolina should be united together" and that the Episcopal and Lutheran Churches may exchange representatives and attend each others conventions. The North Carolina Lutherans appointed Lutheran minister representatives to attend the next Episcopal meeting and at least three Episcopal representatives attended the 1822 Lutheran Synod meeting. Further cooperation dissipated because of doctrinal disagreements and the North Carolina Synod's movement back into confessional Lutheranism.⁷⁹ Others were also deciding between the competing brands of Lutheranism.

In 1823 South Carolina ministers who belonged to the North Carolina Synod met with David and Daniel Moser in North Carolina and they "compromised". Rev. Herscher preached against the General Synod at Philadelphia Lutheran and a few days later South Carolina ministers, Samuel Herscher, Godfrey Dreher, and Michael Rauch, refused to be seated at the North Carolina Synod meeting. In November David traveled to South Carolina to create a "union". While the union did not occur, the South Carolina pastors left the North Carolina Synod and in 1824 created the South Carolina Synod with a confessional Lutheran stance. They refused to join the General Synod until 1833 and only under conditions affected by the Tennessee Synod positions.⁸⁰

In 1823 Rev. Daniel Scherer wrote Paul Henkel stating consistent adherence to the Lutheran doctrines of the Tennessee Synod and requested dialog. His letter specified commonality with the Augsburg Confession, the Lord's Supper, and Baptism, issues which had initially caused the split. At this same meeting in 1823 Rev. Schober and Rev. Storch held no official offices in the North Carolina Synod, and Rev. Miller had joined the Episcopalians. By 1824 union with Reformed and Episcopalian bodies had failed, as did the ecumenical dream of Schober. The North Carolina Synod's membership declined

Consciousness?" *Lutheran Historical Conference*, (1988), 70-87. The Tennessee Synod Minutes include various notations of missionary trips in the 1820's. Petitions from Missouri Congregations concerning Ephraim R. Conrad, LTS.

⁷⁸ See Smith, *St. Johns*, 119-136 for a fuller discussion.

⁷⁹ John J. Ravenscroft to Solomon, 16 July 1818 and 14 Oct 1818, UVA, 8653-g, Box #3, 1818-1820, Misc. Correspondence. G. MacLaren Brydon, "The Ministry of the Reverend Robert Johnston Miller in North Carolina," typescript, Collection #10340, UVA, 43-48.

⁸⁰ "David Henkel Diary" 1823. Godfrey Dreher to David, 21 May 1823, and David to Godfrey Dreher, 23 Jul 1823, partial typescript, LTS. Brent H. Holcomb, *Journal of the Rev. Godfrey Dreher, 1819-1851*, trans. (Easley, SC: Southern Historical Press, 1978), 10. Interestingly the Dreher Diary is missing pages covering November 1823 which could have shed much light on the situation.

significantly so that only five pastors, candidates, or catechists attended the synod meeting.⁸¹

The Tennessee Synod had spread through travel and the press the distinct confessional teachings of Martin Luther to eastern and western congregations. The complex web of issues demands some analysis. Was the break a political one, the result of the ordination issue, or a doctrinal dispute? What was the role of personalities?

For the leaders of the North Carolina Synod the ordination of David, Moser, and other young aspirants to the ministry became an issue of political control. An example of this political attitude involves the North Carolina Synod's acceptance of Bell's "oak tree ordination". The inconsistencies of *Luther* about ordination, the failure of the Synod to follow its own newly written constitution, and Schober's confusing explanations expose ordination as a precipitating political issue. These actions and the two "ambushes" of 1819 and 1820 suffered by David and his congregations illustrate the political nature of the Synod leaders.

The bottom line is that Schober and the old preachers believed that David and Paul challenged them for control of Synod. Paul Henkel, Miller's "Pope", stood as a significant impediment to the promotion of their goals. They incorrectly framed David's and later Paul's arguments as political, assuming that power was the objective. Naively David never understood the political realities of challenging seasoned, wealthy and established leaders. His unapologetic confrontations based upon his religious conviction and his reluctance to accept the authority of the "altern predigers" was interpreted by them as a political challenge. They used their synodical political power to deprive David and Moser of timely ordination.

The Henkels came to their theological position in an evolutionary fashion. David was the first to attempt to correct what he saw as the North Carolina Synod drifting away from Lutheran practice. He suggested that the "laying on of hands" should be used, stated that baptism is regeneration, emphasized the Lord's Supper, and challenged Schober's *Scenes*. At first David's family was not necessarily in agreement with his positions, but they ultimately began to understand his perspectives. The ordination issue swayed Philip into David's camp. Paul and Solomon came later as a result of Paul's North Carolina investigations and David's influence. The Henkels were not the only ones who noticed the Synod's doctrinal drift. Methodist Rev. James Hill observed that the Lutherans failed to adhere to Lutheran doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper.⁸² The Henkels appear to have been correct in their suspicion that a theological philosophy they could not support was driving the North Carolina Synod away from strictly Lutheran practice. The complicity with Schober, Storch, Miller, and Hoysl suggested an ecumenical adherence to a universal Christianity. The North Carolina Lutherans were not alone in its movement toward ecumenicalism and pietism. John George Schmucker, Pennsylvania Ministerium leader, was also an admirer of Stilling, author of *Scenes*, and his son Samuel Simon Schmucker supported Christian union and minimized Lutheran doctrine. Many supporters of the General Synod desired a union with Reformed and

⁸¹ Peshau, 57-59. Daniel Scherer to Paul, 9 June 1823, German, NC Supreme Court File #1531, NC Archives, Raleigh, NC.

⁸² Hill sent a letter of inquiry about Lutheran Communion doctrine which David contested in *Carolinian Herald*. See Smith, "Early Career of David Henkel", 315-316, 321-324. Richard H. Baur, "Paul Henkel, Pioneer Lutheran Missionary", *The Lutheran Historical Conference*, Vol VIII (1978), 67-69.

Lutheran, as the Henkels suspected. The failure of the General Synod to use Luther's Catechism or the Augsburg Confession as support documents demonstrates the limit of Lutheran adherence.⁸³ The Henkels and their supporters believed that the creation of the General Synod would end Lutheranism as developed by Martin Luther.

Essentially, the theological conflict was between ecumenicalism and strict adherence to Lutheran practice, or in a personal sense pragmatic Gottlieb Schober versus youthful and zealous David Henkel. Gottlieb Schober and David Henkel were the main characters, old man versus young man. Their differences were striking.

The first and most obvious was their age. David was just twenty one during the 1816 controversy while Schober was sixty one, the generation of David's father, Paul. It would be logical for the experienced Schober to expect David to respect him and his views. He must have been frustrated with the upstart's brashness. Conversely, David resented Schober's refusal to respect his intellect, good intentions, and dedication to the service of the Lord.

A second difference concerned education: Schober had been formally trained at Nazareth Hall in Pennsylvania, while David's education came from private instruction. Some researchers have suggested that David was an "autodidact". He received an education from Simeon Yager in Virginia and most likely used the vast libraries of his brother, Solomon, and his father. Schober's formal education, coupled with his experiences, provided him with a more pragmatic and cosmopolitan view of the world and its issues. David's limited experiences, finely tuned to Lutheran heritage and doctrine, created a sincere, even provincial, view of himself, others, and the church.⁸⁴ David prided himself in strict Lutheran doctrinal adherence and must have viewed Schober, the Moravian turned Lutheran, as an opportunist.

A third difference concerned their professional backgrounds and their routes to ministry. Schober had been a successful business man, lawyer, and state legislator before accepting the Lutheran ministerial commitment. He had also been a Moravian, willing to adjust his faith as needed. David, on the other hand, had worked for Henkel Press and had listened intently to his father's sermons and following his and other Lutheran minister's example. He had been around traditional Lutheranism all his life. He must have viewed theological adjustments as incompatible with his belief system. Each probably viewed the other as clueless as to what their dispute was really about.

A fourth difference involves their economic status. Schober was a wealthy man, owner of a paper mill, tinsmithy, and large amounts of land. David Henkel never accumulated significant wealth. He owned a farm and a slave but was primarily a clergyman. Schober had been a state legislator and was prominent in the Salem community; David never sought public office. Schober was already a Synod leader when David arrived from South Carolina.

⁸³ James Lawton Haney, "John George Schmucker and the Roots of His Spirituality", 67-98 and Verlyn O. Smith, "Theological Authority in S. S. Schmucker and C. Porterfield Krauth in Lutherans and Pietism," *Lutheran Historical Conference*, (1990), Vol. 14, 1992, 99-118. Kolodziej, "Pietism and Rationalism". Surratt, *Schober*, Chapter 11.

⁸⁴ Andrew to Ambrose, 14 Sept 1809, Henkel Family Papers, Box 1, Folder 1, SC#2065, Carrier Library, Special Collections, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA.

Ironically, it was probably not their differences that made their mutual enmity almost inevitable, but rather their similarities. David Henkel and Gottlieb Schober were two very strong-minded individuals.

Many of their similarities can be seen only as virtues. Both had remarkable intellects and were good at debate. They each possessed significant leadership abilities and enough charisma and credibility to attract followers. They each believed that their position was the correct way to ensure the survival and future success of the Lutheran faith.

Other similarities were, perhaps, not so praiseworthy. Schober's biographer, Jerry Surratt, described him with "a fiery disposition": "bound to antagonize", "headstrong and totally unwilling to compromise on matters of practice as well as principle". Bernheim described David as "unyielding in his opinions" and as having "a mind that was clear, active and penetrating; he was quick in discerning an advantage, and not slow in making use of it."⁸⁵ These attributes are not of men naturally inclined to negotiation and compromise. Their inability to find common ground doomed the North Carolina Synod in its original form.

There were other issues as well. Schober exhibited a judgmental attitude toward others who did not meet his ideals. In Surratt's biography, there are a number of examples of his judgmental personality. One such incident involved a young lady in Salem who Schober charged with immoral conduct. It seems that Schober was unable to countenance David because of the incident which brought him to Lincoln County, North Carolina. David was charged with "shameful conduct towards a woman in the house of a Mr. Gates in Matthews parish Orangeburg District , S. C." The committee, which included Schober and Storch, found David "guilty" and censured him. "Out of regard toward his relation this censure was not published but covered by the mantle of love in hopes of amendments in the conduct of the accused." Paul recommended that the censure be passed "unanimously".⁸⁶ Just as Schober believed that the Salem lady was guilty, it is very possible that David's conduct in South Carolina kept Schober from accepting him as an equal or a minister of God. Since David was reluctant to accept Schober's leadership, Schober may have assumed that David lacked moral judgment. It is most likely that Schober never intended to ordain David.

The "Augsburg Confession War" divided Southeastern American Lutherans. But it also stimulated the preservation of confessional Lutheran doctrine specifically in Lutheran congregations, many rural, and most loyal to the teachings of Martin Luther throughout America. David Henkel created at least two purely Lutheran congregations and encouraged the dissolution of the union meeting houses.⁸⁷ He also authored

⁸⁵ Surratt, *Schober*, 2, 11, 60, Chapter 5, 109. G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements and of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina*, (Philadelphia: The Lutheran Book Store, 1872), 442-443. Smith, "Early Career of David Henkel", 304. Bost and Norris, *All One Body*, 63-64.

⁸⁶ Manuscript Minutes, 1814, RG:NCS 1.0.1, Folder #1, NC Synod Collection, SLTS. While this incident did not appear in Synod Minutes, I found it in the Manuscript Minutes, which Schober kept, but did not publish.

⁸⁷ Trinity Lutheran Church in Vale, NC was begun with the following in its original deed: "for the use of a public Meeting house to [be] used and occupied by the congregation who profess and believe all the doctrines of the Augsburg Confession of faith delivered to the Assembled diet in Germany and such ministers only who defend all doctrines of said confession. . . ." Lincoln County Deed Book 29, 680,

numerous doctrinal theses, essays, and books which through the Henkel Press served to communicate Lutheran materials to generations of Lutherans. It is also significant that the Book of Concord was published in 1851 as Charles Porterfield Krauth began his return to strict Lutheran practice.⁸⁸ The Synod break created legal precedent when the two synods sued over who held control of a local congregation in Rowan County, North Carolina. The North Carolina Supreme Court adjudicated that synod control of a local congregation would rest with the pastor.⁸⁹ This precedent is still in practice in North Carolina.

The war of the printed word continued for many years. David, his family, Schober, and his supporters employed various means to win others to their side. It is unfortunate that they used propaganda, disinformation, and character assassination to state their cases. Their unwillingness to compromise over time created a disservice to the aspirations of the Lutheran church in the south and the nation.

In the final analysis the “Augsburg Confession War” was about personalities, ordination, and politics, but it was mostly about Lutheran confessional beliefs. David Henkel and the Tennessee Synod helped return American Lutherans to the confessional beliefs of Martin Luther.

23 Apr 1821. New White Haven was formed as a purely Lutheran Church, separate from White Haven, a union meeting house and was first mentioned on 19 Mar 1826 in “David Henkel Diary”, 1826.

⁸⁸ David Henkel authored the following: *The Essence of a Christian Religion by David Henkel* (1817); *A Loud Trumpet of Futurity, Or a Few Reflections on Future Things* (1817); *The Carolinian Herald of Liberty, Religious and Political* (1821); *Objections to the Constitution of the General Synod* (1821); *The Heavenly Flood of Regeneration, or Treatise on Holy Baptism* (1822); *An Answer to Joseph Moore, A Methodist* (1825); *Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Tennessee Synod* (1828) Henkel authored most of it; *Treatise on Prayer* (1828); *A Translation from the German of Luther’s Small Catechism* (1829); *An Essay on Regeneration* (1830); *A Treatise on the Person and Incarnation of Jesus Christ, in which some of the principal arguments of the Unitarians are examined* (1831), see also Smith, *St. Johns*, 138-139.

⁸⁹ North Carolina Supreme Court File #1531, NC State Archives, Raleigh, NC. The church was Organ Lutheran Church in Rowan County, NC.