

GEORG ERNST FERDINAND SIEVERS

Pioneer Pastor with a Heart for Missions

BORN: **MAY 18, 1816** *Lüneberg, Kingdom of Hanover*

DIED: **SEPTEMBER 9, 1893** *Frankenlust, Mich.*

ALTHOUGH FERDINAND SIEVERS LOST BOTH PARENTS by the age of 7, he still obtained a university education that prepared him for ministry in the Lutheran Church. Moved by reports from the mission field written by F.C.D. Wyneken, Sievers decided to carry out his ministry in America instead of Germany. By this time, J. Wilhelm Löhe was implementing a plan to establish Lutheranism on the frontier by sending a pastor along with immigrants to settle together as a congregation on land purchased for that purpose. Löhe chose Sievers to be one of those pastors. The result was Frankenlust (founded 1848), the third congregation/settlement in Michigan that Löhe began. In 1849, both the pastor and congregation joined The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

Life and ministry were difficult at first. Besides his pastoral work, Sievers acted as business manager for the settlement, since he was the only one who knew enough English to deal with merchants. When sickness struck, he was in effect also the doctor since none was available locally. More than once, Sievers himself almost died due to illness, but God restored him to health and he continued to serve his people until shortly before his death in 1893.

The Saginaw River valley continued to attract German immigrants, and Sievers's congregation grew accordingly. Other congregations began in places like Saginaw and Amelith, and Sievers was active in helping them to get started, although this meant difficult travel by way of Lake Huron or barely existent roads.

It was not only Germans to whom Sievers wanted to bring the Gospel. In 1850, the Synod chose him to be chairman of its Board for Missions — a position he held for the next 43 years! Sievers supervised the Synod's efforts

to reach the lost with the Gospel. For many years, this meant evangelizing to American Indians. In Michigan, Sievers worked hard to maintain the Synod's Indian mission, Bethany, until the 1860s when the Indians moved away. He also traveled to Minnesota to begin mission work there and to gather German Lutherans into congregations.

Sievers also made it his responsibility in conventions, conferences and periodicals to remind the Synod of its responsibility to reach out to others besides the German Lutherans. If we pray, "Thy kingdom come," he argued, then we should also do something to help it come. In America and around the globe, God was opening doors to spread the Gospel. The Missouri Synod needed to respond by putting men and money into mission work. In 1894, the year after Sievers's death, the LCMS sent two missionaries to India.

For more information about the 175th anniversary of the LCMS, visit lcms.org/175.

DISCOVER MORE

August R. Suelflow, "The Life and Work of Georg Ernst Christian Ferdinand Sievers," **Part One** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 20, no. 3 (October 1947): 135–41; **Part Two** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (January 1948): 180–87; **Part Three** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21, no. 1 (April 1948): 36–41; **Part Four** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (July 1948): 75–87; **Part Five** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (October 1948): 100–114; **Part Six** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 21, no. 4 (January 1949): 175–80; **Part Seven** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 22, no. 1 (April 1949): 43–48; **Part Eight** *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (July 1949): 77–84.

Theodore Graebner, *Church Bells in the Forest* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1944), 48–55.

F. Dean Lueking, *Mission in the Making* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), 35–50.



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NO OTHER NAME

– 175 YEARS –



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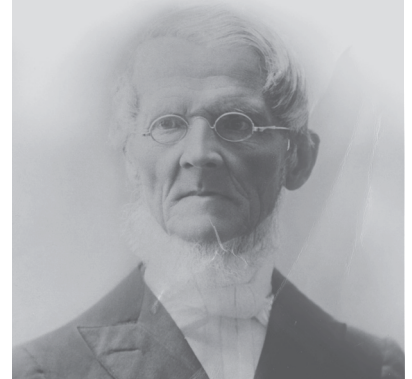
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