

J. ADAM ERNST AND J. GEORG BURGER

The First Two Löhe Missionaries to America

J. ADAM ERNST

BORN: **NOVEMBER 27, 1815** *Öttingen, Bavaria, Germany*
 DIED: **JANUARY 20, 1895** *Euclid, Ohio*

J. GEORG BURGER

BORN: **JULY 4, 1816** *Nördlingen, Bavaria, Germany*
 DIED: **MARCH 26, 1847** *Willside, Ohio*

ALTHOUGH J. WILHELM LÖHE NEVER CAME TO AMERICA, his contributions to the founding of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod were second to none. The Synod's first Indian mission (Frankenmuth, Mich.) and its first seminary (Fort Wayne) both had their start because of Pastor Löhe. But even more important were the men that he recruited, trained and sent to preach God's Word in America. Many became pastors of the Synod.

J. Adam Ernst was one of the first two to come, and he became a founder of the Synod. Just a few years earlier, Ernst had been back in the old country, working as a shoemaker. But he was a pious Christian who read in a church paper an article by Löhe about America. Relying on reports from F.C.D. Wyneken, a missionary to America, Löhe pressed the need for good Lutherans to do something to address the terrible spiritual situation on the American frontier. Many sent in money. Ernst offered himself.

Löhe decided to train him for the mission field. After three months, a second man volunteered, J. Georg Burger, a coat weaver from Nördlingen. Beginning in the fall of 1841, the men were trained with a curriculum including everything from Lutheran doctrine to American history — and penmanship! By the following summer, Löhe decided they were ready, so off they went. Although Löhe's original plan was to send teachers, pastors were needed even more, and that's what Ernst and Burger soon became, as did dozens more of the emergency helpers that Löhe subsequently sent.

Both men served parishes in Ohio and became members of the Ohio Synod. Unfortunately, it was less than fully

Lutheran. Its pastors did not even have to commit themselves to the Lutheran Confessions. In Cleveland in September 1845, Ernst, Burger and seven others decided to withdraw from the Ohio Synod. But before starting their own synod, Ernst and two other men traveled to St. Louis to see if C.F.W. Walther and others would join them in establishing a new church body. The answer was yes. A third meeting was held in Fort Wayne to adopt a constitution. They also settled upon a name, The German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio and Other States (originally in German, of course). Finally, they decided to hold their first convention in Chicago in April 1847.

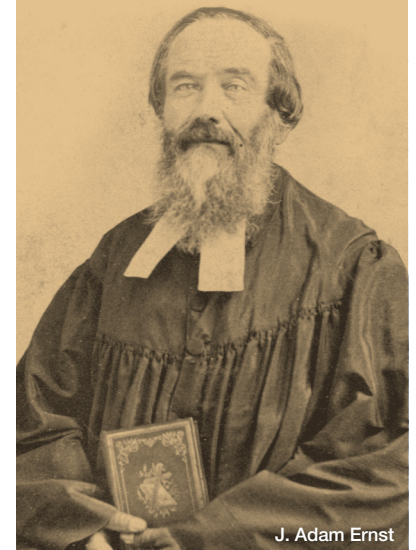
Ernst was there and joined the new church body. He had participated in all three preliminary meetings. But Burger had died not long before that first convention. Ernst passed away many years later after a long and fruitful ministry that even included bringing Confessional Lutheranism to Canada.

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

DISCOVER MORE

Erich H. Heintzen, *Love Leaves Home: Wilhelm Loehe and the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1973).

Erika Geiger, *The Life, Work, and Influence of Wilhelm Loehe, 1808–1872*, trans. Wolf Dietrich Knappe (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2010).



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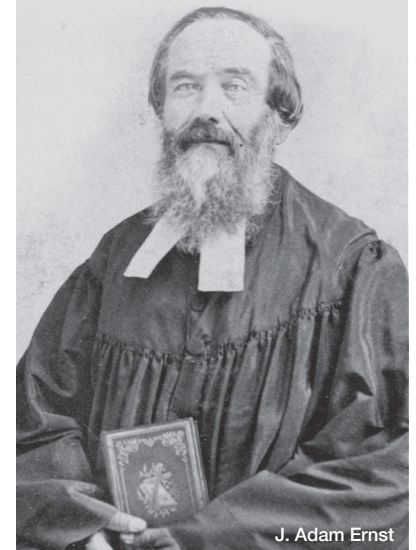
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