

HISTORY
OF THE
EVANGELIC UNION
OF THE
BOHEMIAN MORAVIAN
BRETHREN
IN TEXAS

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STATEMENT AS TO THE HISTORY DOCTRINE, POLICY
AND WORK OF EVANGELICAL UNION OF THE
BOHEMIAN AND MORAVIAN BRETHREN IN NORTH
AMERICA.

History of Christianity in Bohemia

The first inhabitants of Bohemia were Bojas, from which the name Bojohemum was taken and then Bohemia. After them came the Markomans, who in the fifth century, A. D. overpowered and expelled the Slavonic Bohemians.

Christianity was introduced to Bohemia by two brothers, Cyrill and Method, whom Ratislav, the Prince of the great Moravian Empire had requested from the Greek Emperor, Nicholas, A. D. 863.

Their excellent work soon attracted the attention of Rome and awakened the envy of the German Bishops. Cyrill invented a special Slavonic alphabet and translated the Holy Scripture and other ecclesiastical writings into the Slavonic language. Both Bohemia and Moravia soon became Christian countries and used in their worship the Slavonic language instead of Latin. On account of this, in the year 868, both Slavonic Apostles were called to Rome by Pope Nicholas the I., but before their arrival Adrian the II, became Pope, and received them with honor not heeding the complaints of their enemies. Permitting them to worship in the Slavonic language in Rome. Cyrill becoming sick, entered the monastery and died in Rome, Feb. 14, 869, A.D.

Method returned as Archbishop of Moravia, Bohemia, and part of Hungary, having obtained permission to use the Slavonic translation of the Bible, Slavonic worship and Greek doctrine. By this he aroused the enmity of the Bishop of Passau and Salzburg both of whom stuck to the Latin language and the Roman doctrine. On account of this they made complaint to Prince Svatopluk and the Pope, and succeeded in again getting him summoned to Rome, and limited the use of Slavonic language in worship. He sent with him a German Bishop Wishing, who watched Method and annoyed him until he died

of grief, according to tradition, April 16, 885, A.D. Method did not make conversations like the Germans with force of arms, but by teaching and preaching the word of God. Services were held in their native tongue and the people learned to read and write, so that after Method's death there was a National church that resembled the Apostolic church in purity. The independence of this church, however, was in the way of Germans who adhered in their worship to the Roman method and the Latin language suppressing the native tongue, but when later a strife arose between the sons of Svatopluk, and the Bohemian Prince, the Prince fell, and no longer ruled Moravia. In 907, A. D. the Pagan Magyars invaded Hungary and conquered the empire of Moravia, after which the ecclesiastic life lost its National appearance and independence. The Bohemian prince voluntarily surrendered and was under the protection of the Germans, and by this act the Latin worship was gradually established until the Slavonic liturgy nearly totally vanished. In spite of this the Bohemian-Moravian people opposed the foreign spirit, as evidenced by the fact that the Emperor, Charles the IV. 1335-78 found himself bound to strictly prohibit the marrying of the priests, the use of the cup at the holy communion, and the use of the Bohemian language at the services. The foundation of the Bohemian University in Prague 1348, A.D. the first in the centre of Europe, added not only to the general education of the Bohemian people, but also, at the same time, to a more perfect understanding of the decay and the corruption of the Roman Church.

Thus it happened that gradually more and more voices were heard, calling for a reformation of the church, being encouraged by Waldense and Albigense, fugitives, that had been expelled from France and Italy and sought refuge in Bohemia. The principle merit in this respect belongs to Conrad of Waldhaus, who convinced the Bohemian people of the necessity of reformation and prepared them for it. His first successor at the Tynsky Church in Prague, Milic of Kromeriz, made the first steps in this direction. Matthias of Janov, followed him in 1380 A. D. after the ground was so far prepared that the holy communion under both conditions could be recommended and administered to the people. He also

rejected the worship of saints and images. The principal merit however, in regard to the reformation he acquired by the circulation of successful writings containing reform thoughts and which routed his enemies. By this he prepared the path to him whom the Providence selected for the spiritual leader of the Bohemian people, John Hus.

John Hus, the Reformer.

John Hus was born in Husinec Bohemia July 6th, 1369. His parents were farmers and of his early life very little is known. It was at the university of Prague that he excelled in such a degree, that in 1393 he became Baccalaureus, after three years Mister; two years later professor at the University; at last dean of the faculty of philosophy, and in 1402, A. D. a preacher of the Bethlehem Chapel, and at the same time confessor of Queen Sophia. Hus with tiery eloquence, preached against the oppression of the people, laid bare the sins of the priests and some of the so called religious orders, complaints were made against him to the Pope. During this period his friend Jerome of Prague had returned from England and brought with him some of Wycliff's books by which Hus was confirmed in his conception of the abuses of the Roman Church, therefore he commenced to preach against the doctrine of absolution, and other corruptions of the church, on account of which, he was proclaimed a heretic and excommunicated.

Hus did not cease to direct his sermons and-writings against this doctrine, stating that no priest can forgive sin, but only God was thus empowered. He taught that the Holy Water at the mass does not become the flesh of Christ and opposed the adoration of the saints, especially of Virgin Mary. Equally was he zealous against the traffic in ecclesiastic office. Thus he incited against himself the church as well as the Pope, and when King Wenceslaus, at his intercession, limited the right of the foreigners at the University, they removed from Prague. The number of his irreconcilable enemies abroad were multiplied. Over the city of Prague the Pope proclaimed the interdict and caused thereby a revolt of the people. Hus being expelled from Prague, preached in the country until at last he

was called before the Ecumenical council at the city of Constance. He attended, relying on a safe conduct guaranteed by the Emperor Sigismund, who gave him his imperial word that he could go before the council unmolested and return to his native land without any injury. But scarcely had he entered Constance, when he was treacherously arrested and at the council he was challenged and compelled to recant his teachings. For his adherence to the truth as taught by the scriptures, he was in the presence of the Emperor sentenced to death, and on July 6, 1415 A. D. burned at the stake, to the eternal shame of the Emperor Sigismund, and the Roman church. Singing psalms, and praying for his enemies, this great and good man suffered martyrdom.

In order that the Bohemians should not have any remembrance of him, his ashes collected with part of the soil were thrown into the river Rhine. His friend, Jerome of Prague, had a suit before the Ecumenical council at Constance and was forced to recant. But as he immediately said that he was sorry, that he recanted, he was also burned at the stake.

Thus were murdered the preachers of the pure truth of God, but the light could not be extinguished and the truth itself could by no means be suppressed. The Bohemian people began to uproar against the faithless emperor and the blood-thirsty church. Dec. 2, 1415, the Bohemian diet sent a threatening letter to the council demanding permission of using both bread and wine at the Holy Communion and the Bohemian language at the services, instead of Latin. But as Rome would not yield, the Nation uproared with Zizka in the lead and appeared in 1419 before the capital of Prague, by which action the Hussite wars began. The Pope and the Emperor endeavored to suppress the uprising. The emperor sent army after army into Bohemia, but Zizka smashed them even after having become blind. Not being afraid of death and having hope in God and the righteousness of its demands, the people became invincible. In 1420, Sigismund marched with an army of 100,000 men toward Prague, but Zizka arrived in a hurry with his Taborites, and defeated him on Mount of Vitkov (now Zizkov.) The same fate encountered a second expedition of the imperial army of 300,000 men near Zatec. In 1422 Zizka already blind on both

eyes, compelled Sigismund to evacuate Kutna Hora and engaged him, at Nemecky Brod in a bloody battle, when Zizka, victor of eleven battles not defeated by any of the armies sent against him, died Nov. 11, 1424 near Pribyslava. He was succeeded by Prokop the Great, a commander equally brave and cautious. The Pope, after Zizka's death had hoped, that he would subdue the Bohemians and make good the losses therefore he proclaimed a new war, while the Taborites in order to enforce the acknowledgment of religious liberty, made victorious invasions into Austria, Saxony, Lusitz, Silesia and Hungary. When a fresh army of 160,000 men, consisting chiefly of German soldiers concentrated near Tachov, it was defeated in 1427 by the victorious Prokop. In the fourth and last expedition, the Pope, together with the emperor, collected, though with great difficulty, an army of 44,000 cavalry and 90,000 infantry of their best soldiers. Both armies met at Domazlic, in 1431, but there scarcely was any fighting at all. When the Taborites numbering 10,000 commenced singing the song "All You Who are God's Soldiers" made an attack, the imperial forces became frightened to such a degree that they sought to save their lives by running. The Papal Cardinal Cesaring beseeched and threatened them, having personal command of a division in vain he waved his cross of gold. At last he saved his life by flight, leaving his Cardinal gown and hat behind. The whole camp with an enormous booty fell into the hands of the victors and ground was covered far behind the boundary with dead enemies.

It is to be regretted that from the beginning of this movement two parties existed among the Bohemian people. They were the Calixtines, to whom belonged the citizens of Prague, together with the university and a part of delicate noblemen who being satisfied with petty concessions, and on the other side the Taborites, who endeavored a thorough renewal of the church and a return to pure Apostolic faith and independence from Rome. As long as there threatened danger to Bohemia from the outside, both parties tightly held together and repelled all the attacks of the enemy victoriously, but as soon as the danger was over they quarreled among themselves.

The emperor, as well as the Pope, realizing after the defeat of their forces at Domazlic, that with armed forces in Bohemia nothing could be done, commenced to negotiate. The brave leader, Prokop, with the eloquent but ambitious preacher, Rokycan, was sent out at the head of a deputation A.D., 1433, for the purpose of negotiating a treaty with the council at Basle, where they demanded for the Bohemians as follows:

1. Free preaching of the Bible.
2. The use of bread and wine at the Holy communion.
3. Permission to use their native tongue at divine services.
4. The exclusion of the clergy from all secular offices and authority and, in cases of crime, jurisdiction of civil courts over clergy and laity alike.

As in Basle no agreement was attained and the council sent a deputation to Prague. This, however, negotiated secretly with the nobility, and with Rokycan incited them still more against the radical Taborites,

Now a new delegation was sent to Basle, but no agreement could be reached, therefore new delegates came to Prague. who finally agreed to the four articles of the compact, reserving however the right for the church to interpret them as to the meaning. Thus by cunning negotiations Rome attained the recognition of its authority and had success which could not be attained with arms. The result of these negotiations was the tratricide war between the Bohemians themselves, which ended May 30, 1434, at the battle of Lipan, where the leader Prokop fell and the Taborites were defeated by the united Calixtines and Catholics.

The freedom that the Bohemians had up to this time enjoyed, and had fought fearlessly against the whole world in defend, was lost: Priest Rokycan was elected Archbishop of Prague, but the compacts proved to be lentil porridge for which the Bohemians sold their freedom, being unable to overcome prejudices and to get wholly rid of Roman supremacy, Emperor Sigismund finally recognized the Bohemian King who died within a year A. D. 1447.

The Bohemians elected the leader of Utraguism George of Podebrad, king, 1458, but the Calixtine church; being satisfied with the compacts, did ,not make any progress in reformation.

It did not develop but rather grew worse; consequently many sects originated in Bohemia and Moravia of which only one proved to have vital strength and developed into a grand church, which is: The Union of the Bohemian Brethren.

After the annihilation of the Taborites, whose doctrine at the end of its development was totally evangelical, there were yet many faithful to the Lord who clearly perceived that it was impossible to renew the church upon the apostolic basis as long as the last bonds with Rome were not broken off, but at the same time they were convinced that even the very defense of God's truth by force is not in harmony with the spirit of Christ. The corruption of the church began just at the time when Constantine with worldly power commenced to defend it.

Peter Cheltic (1390-1454) may be considered founder of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren denominations. After hard experiences of this warlike period, he devoted himself with his whole soul to the study of the Bible. The results of his searching are preserved in twelve books. (The Net of Faith, Collection of Sermons, Of the Rogue and its Image, etc.) Around him a circle of friends assembled, called the Chelticky Brethren.

Another prominent man, Brother Rehor a son of Rokycan's sister, a moderate man and earnest character, also collected around himself a circle of friends with whom he considered the reformation of ecclesiastical life.

Having asked his uncle Rokycan for advice, he was referred to the writings of Peter Chelticky, by which he was confirmed, that he ought to start the reformation. He returned again with his friend Kuropican, requesting him to become the leader of the movement and to break off with Rome totally. On account of the Rokycan's slowness the negotiation was protracted seven years. When afterwards George of Podebrad, his friend and patron, A. D. 1452, became regent of the Bohemian kingdom, the hope of becoming archbishop revived in his heart. Rokycan refused them any participation considering the matter as very serious and hard to be accomplished. In order to get rid of his friends and to satisfy his conscience, he requested of George of Podebrad a royal dominion, Lytice, on the boundary of that they might safely

live there and worship God with good conscience. Rehor with his friends settled there in 1457. Among them were citizens of Prague, Bacalausei, masters of arts, noblemen and farmers with their wives and children making a settlement in the village Kunvald. They commenced to till the soil, pursue trades, and most of all to instruct themselves jointly on the ground of the Holy Scriptures, living simply and modestly according to the example of the Apostolic church, according to the Scriptures, serving God and the neighbor in love as *Unitas Fratrum Bohemorum*. Brother Rehor, traveling through the country, did mission work and gathering the remains of Taborites, dispersed Waldensiens and the better class of the Calixtines, had in 1467 fifty communities of the people devoted to God and separated from Rome. As they had separated not only from Rome, but also from the Calixtines or Utraquists, whose ardent friend was the king George of Podebrad and his wife, soon prosecution set in.

The Bohemian brethren not only suffered the prosecution patiently, but commenced to organize without delay. Rehor being released from prison in Prague, settled on the domnion near Rychnov, where he began to gather the scattered Union of the Bohemian brethren. Up to this time the brethren had chosen their priests from the ranks of Calixtines who had joined them. But at this time many have been incarcerated, and the brethren not willing to accept the priests or their ordination from their persecutors, Roman or Calixtines, sent messengers to the Greek Church, which they penetrated until down to India, but everywhere they met with corruption. For that reason an assembly was called to meet at Lhota near Rychnov, which was attended by sixty delegates from Bohemia and Moravia. There they selected nine men from their own number of whom they elected three to become priests. A little boy was given twelve folded voting tickets of which only three tickets were marked with the words: "He is." After having given to each of the nine selected men one ticket, it was found that all the marked tickets had found their men in which they perceived an omen of God's providence. The following were elected: Mattias Kunvaldsky, Thomas Preloucky, Elias Krenovsky.

The assembly acknowledged the elected priests, in Apostolic manner, and ordered that Stephen, bishop of Waldensians, living on the boundary of Austria and Moravia, should ordain them in order that the Apostolic succession be preserved. This was done. Thus Matthias Kunvaldsky became bishop and the other two were installed and ordained as preachers. All three proved themselves role examples of Christian faith and piety. At the same time, at the assembly in Lhota a council of six was elected who managed the affairs of the Union.

A new persecution set in. King George at the assembly in Benesov, ordered severe measures to be taken against the Brethren, and Rokycan, feeling himself offended, called them “pikarts”. In 1473, when King George died, his widow Jane, renewed the persecution. The Brethren were arrested and tortured, some were burned at the stake, their churches closed so that they had to take refuge to the woods and caverns in the hills (Cliff Dwellers Jamnici.) (But sticking steadfast to the Gospel, the Bohemians waited through the night of their prosecution, in the darkest hours still turning their eyes toward the horizon like men awaiting morning.—Mrs. E. G. White in *The Great Controversy*.)

Brother Rehor proved now to be the good spirit of the Union. He defended the Brethren by various tracts, public papers and evidences of faith, remaining to his death in 1473, truthful to the teaching of Hus, Wycliffe and Chelcicky. The more the enemies suppressed the Union, the more it spread not only among the rural populace, but also among armed men and nobility. About the year of 1500, somewhat earlier than the German and Swiss reformation, the Union had eleven thousand adult male members in Bohemia and one hundred thousand in Moravia organized in two hundred congregations. The Union developed constantly progressing in the evangelical spirit, so that the defense of its faith. Apology from the year 1532 and the confession of faith from the year 1535, were published at Wittenberg with a preface of Doctor Martin Luther. The Brethren kept up friendly relations with the reformed church and their bishop Augusta sent Matthias Cervenka to Bucer in Strassburg A. D. 1540, who met there

Calvin, with whom he opened a friendly correspondence, but a union with either one was never accomplished, although the Union of Bohemian Brethren was strongly inclined to the doctrine of the reformed church. A strict discipline of the union was a hindrance on one side and on the other side was a national historical development of the church. In the doctrine the Union considered the Bible as the only rule of faith and life, accepted in early days justification by faith, retained only two sacraments, abolished another (second) baptism, introduced at the beginning, but retained till to end its ecclesiastic discipline, putting emphasis upon signification of deeds and upon the proving of faith by acts of charity. As to the holy communion the Union, from its beginning, was inclined to the teaching of a spiritual acceptance of Christ's body, but afterwards passed over to a clearer reformed expression. The organization of the Union was episcopal in its later days it had four bishops or seniors, who regulated the church matters with an assembly, the delegates to which were elected by all the congregations. In the assembly a supreme judge presided, in matters of faith and discipline decided the Synod.

The senior ordained the priests according apostolic example. The priests pursued trades living during the earliest period in celibacy, having deacons to their assistance. The administration of the congregations was executed by elected elders, who had supervision over the church members, women were under the control of matrons. The church became prominent by its real piety, the care for the poor irreproachable life, charity and faithfulness in their fulfillment of duty. The activity of the Union proved to be most efficient on the field of education, and in literature. In nearly everyone of the larger towns they had their schools and a publishing house, the first being established in Miada Boleslava in the year of 1500. The Brethren published their confession in 1535 and their last catechism in 1608. They also published a considerable number of different singing books valued from 25 fl. up to 30.000 fl. i.e., ten to twelve thousand dollars with sketches, and sometimes with very skillfully finished initials. Their principle merit, however, was the translation of the Bible from original

languages, called *Sestodilna Bible Kralicka*, by ten most learned men from the year 1579—1593, in the castle of Zerotin in Kralic, Moravia, and which was supplied with excellent explanations and was published at that place too. The translation is so precise that it is used now-a-days. George Strejc translated at that time also Calvin's "Institution" into the Bohemian and rhymed the Psalms for the French melodies of Gaudimel published already in a fifth edition in the year 1594. Up-to-date this translation of Psalms is used in our churches.

The Union had its historical, philosophical, linguistic, physical, political, and economical; but especially pedagogical writers, among whom John Amos Komensky is today an unattainable authority, and we believe that he is not fully understood up to this time. It is to be regretted, that Komensky having received a call to the Yale University in America could not accept the call on account the necessity of his presence to care for the dispersed remains of his brethren in Europe. In the second half of the sixteenth century such was the condition. The Union and the Utraquists, the majority of which at this time had joined the Lutherans, increased so much in number, that about nine-tenths of all the Bohemian people belonged to the evangelical confession. The Catholics had decreased from one third to one tenth. Destruction, however, was being prepared and signs of a nearing storm became more and more evident. Infamous Pope, Alexander the III. sent against the Union in Moravia a Dominican inquisitor Institoris to whom the king Vladislav, with a strict mandate against the Brethren, was a help.

Ferdinand I. from the year 1526, king of Bohemia, was unable to suppress reformed tendencies in a letter of his own hand-writing addressed to Ignatius of Loyola, A. D. 1551, he called twelve Jesuits to Vienna and appointed Peter Canisius court-chaplain. During the administration of Rudolph II. already two hundred Jesuits were working in Bohemia. These sly and blood thirsty murderers of all nations, abusing the trust of the people, stuck in their cunningness to education, taught in their schools without any remuneration, succeeded in making many a youth of the evangelical nobility Roman Catholic. Among others also the famous Abrecht of Waldstein, whose

parents belonged to the Union of the Brethren, till at last they usurped the schools and the University and even the Utraquist Consistory and renewed the Archbishop seat, evacuated since the Husitic Era in the year 1561, the seat having been vacant 149 years. Just as the case was at that time in Bohemia, I see with horror, that the Jesuits now work in schools and all other departments in the United States, abusing the freedom of this country by confession and mission and preparing the ground to their equally hellish plans. The Jesuits succeeded in entering into families, especially the families of nobility, finding devoted assistance in Roman Catholic wives of the nobles, that have been imported from Italy and Spain into Bohemia.

Rudolph II. (1576-1612) a pupil of the Jesuits, struggled terribly with the Bohemian nation about the “Magistate” Magna Charta Libertatum, promising religious liberty and equality to all, yielding only when the Bohemians made preparations for resistance electing thirty directors. Mathias count of Thurn began to collect soldiers, 1609, but as he did not fulfill his promises and oaths, dissatisfaction spread over the whole nation.

When Ferdinand II. also the pupil of the Jesuits, in the year 1617 was crowned as king of Bohemia, he too did not mind the magistrate though he had sworn to preserve it before his coronation, but considered the spreading and strengthening of Papism as his vital task, and when the Catholics became so insolent that they closed a newly erected church in Bronov and demolished another one in Hroby, both acts being sanctioned by the emperor and king, the evangelical people took refuge to violence and threw two vice-regents Martinic and Slavata together with the clerk, Fabricius, out of the window of the royal castle, May 23, 1618, established a government of thirty directors, declared that Ferdinand II had forfeited his throne, and elected for their king Frederick of Pfalz, who belonged to the Reformed church.

This was an unhappy election. The battle at Bila Hora, Nov. 8, 1620, though unimportant, led to a thorough humiliation of Bohemia and the suppression of the gospel because the king fled at the first moment.

It is unnecessary to review the events of the Thirty Years War. It did not change the circumstances, because the Bohemians were betrayed and sold by the Sivedes who made the treaty at the place of Westphalia. The Calixtines having treacherously joined the Catholics at the battle of Lipan 1444 for the suppression and annihilation of the Taborites now got their reward. The preachers of the Union and the reformed church, just as well as all the teachers, were expelled from Prague and from the whole kingdom. The same year, June 21st the executioner beheaded on the square in Prague 27 Bohemian noblemen. Three fourths of all the property in the kingdom were confiscated and given to Catholic foreigners and corrupt adventures. Churches were handed over to Roman Catholic priests, the Latin language was again introduced at divine services, the cup prohibited, Magestate abolished, and at last also the Lutherans were expelled. The University with all the schools was given over to the Jesuits A. D. 1622. Over three hundred castles and forts, one hundred towns and eleven thousand villages disappeared from the surface of the earth. The Population of the Country decreased from three millions to eight hundred thousand. Those that could not flee were murdered. More than one thousand four hundred families of the nobility, among them four hundred of aristocracy, thirty-six thousand families from towns and villages, moved to foreign countries. Commissioners of anti-reformation gave out the watch word: "Cedere out catholice credere:" i.e. "Get out of the country or become a Catholic" otherwise you will be tortured and killed. The Utraquists and the Lutherans moved to Saxony, the Reformed to Holland and England, the Union of the Bohemian Brethren, mostly to Poland where in Leshma their church still flourished, with them one hundred preachers and John Amos Komensky the last bishop of the Union and thirty thousand emigrants so that besides the Polish Union a Bohemian Union got a strong hold there. From Moravia the fugitives turned, to Hungary and Transsylvania. Komensky died in his eightieth year in Amsterdam, Holland, after many voyages and hard work, in organizing schools in England, Sweden, and in Hungary, and writing precious books and pamphlets numbering over one hundred, which besides the

Holy Scriptures were the chief comfort to the dispersed herd and as costly as pearls they are still today ornament of every library. He wrote also: “The testament of the dying mother, Union of the Bohemian Brethren,” in which with a prophetic pen he wrote the following: I trust God that after the passage of the tempest of his wrath sent upon our heads for our sins, the domination of thy affairs will be returned to thee O, Bohemian people! and on account of this I hope, I am making thee, the inheritor of all that whatever I have inherited from my ancestors and through hard and difficult times have harbored, especially, (1) the grace to the pure truth of God, which the Lord began to show us before other nations, at first through the work of our Master John Hus. (2) I bequeath to thee a zealous desire for God’s truths and for this reason I bequeath into thee as an inheritance, the Holy Bible. (3) I bequeath to thee especially the discipline, which ought and must be among the children of God, (the grace.) (4) I bequeath to thee, to serve Lord our God and to serve Him with one hand (United with other Protestants in the nation.) (5) I deliver to thee and thy sons the endeavor. of purification and cultivation of my dear and beloved mother tongue. (6) I beseech thee, the youth for a better, more diligent and more effective practice than was before:-Alive be, O blessed be nation, in God, don’t die, thy men may be numberless! What afterwards happened within the Bohemian nation after the departure of the wealthier, population, and how the poor suffered and died, that could not leave the country, only God knows. The heart bleeds, the hand trembles and the tear darkens the sight.

That the people by the turn of the hand could not become Catholics, is evident. In A. D. 1652 the enemies figured still two hundred thousand Protestants in the country, which was one fourth of the population, During the reign of the kings and emperors, Leopold I, Joseph I, and Charles VI (1657-1740) persecution and murdering continued. Even Maria Therese 1740-1780, used the prison and deportation to Transsylvania and even the hands of executioners for the suppression of Protestants. The evangelical knowledge gleamed constantly under the ashes, nightly secret meetings were held in cellars, caverns, and on deserted places, and though the punishment of

death was fixed upon the import of the Bible from a foreign country, still the Bible and even sometimes preachers found a way to visit and re-strengthen the perishing head. At last the noble emperor, Joseph II, uttered the magic word by editing the Toleration Patent, Oct. 13, 1781, by which he stopped the persecution and the torture of poor victims, and led out the dead from the grave to the light. Of course this did not mean equal rights for all citizens, the less freedom. It was only toleration, but after a period of one hundred and sixty years of murdering and strangling of people whom they deprived of books and all resources of education and replaced only rosaries, music, and stupefying frankincense, images, unintelligible Latin, it is to be wondered, that somebody could be found who preserved his faith or had the nerves to confess it publicly.

The time for response was limited to the first of Jan. 1783. Many wavered, distrusting the government from which till now they experienced but ruse, cunning tricks and outrage, and thus let the time pass by. In spite of that however at the end of the year 1782. ninety thousand souls applied to the surprise of all; Toleration was intended mainly for foreigners especially of Germany, a considerable number of which lived in Austria. The interpretations and restrictions of the Toleration Patent effected, that the government circles were unpleasantly surprised that especially country people from Bohemia and Moravia and mostly from the poorest and hilly parts responded and abdicated the Catholic faith. Conversions, after the time for reporting had passed, were made very hard. As the people avowed mostly to the faith of the Lamb, i. e. Union of the Boh. Mor. Brethren that used to have on its seal a lamb with a flying flag, by whose looks people have been fed and preserved their mother tongue and watered their thirsty souls for centuries, the government proclaimed that the Toleration Patent does not refer to the Union of Boh. Mor. Brethren, but only to the Augsburg or Helvetic confessions. Thus it was anticipated, that the people could not establish a national church again. The people, however, were not acquainted any more with the differences of these confessions. The Lutherans lived in Saxony the Reformed in Switzerland, and both confessions

were represented in Hungary. This was the reason why the people requested their preachers from Hungary, and if they got a Reformed Magyar, or a Lutheran Slave, for their preacher they became on many instances Reformed or Lutheran. From this, it is evident, that the government did not mind the conscience but politics, especially in regard to Germany.

Congregations were permitted to be organized only there, where either one hundred families or five hundred souls were reported, thus many minorities perished. They were prohibited to build churches except prayer houses without steeples and bells, without entrances from the main road, without round windows and without organs. The registers of members births, deaths, and marriages, were handled by Roman Catholic priests, but if any Evang. preacher baptized someone, performed funeral services or rites of matrimony, the parties concerned had to pay a contribution or "stola" to the Roman Catholic priest stationed in that place. Children of mixed matrimony had all to be educated in the Roman Catholic religion. Mission was done by the Catholics but was prohibited to be done by the Protestants. Protestants had no admission to political offices nor advance in the army, though at the levy of troops, they seldom were omitted. They could support their own schools, but had to pay for the Catholic schools too, as if they had none of their own. In later days, especially during the administration of the present Emperor Frances Joseph I, circumstances became better in every respect and nearly all restrictions were abolished, so that equality really would exist, if the Roman Catholic church were not the state church and would not form such a brutal fanatic majority raised by Jesuits. At the end of 1906 there were in Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the provinces of the Bohemian crown, two hundred ninety four thousand, two hundred eleven Protestants of which about half were Reformed and the other half Lutherans, of the latter about a half again Were Germans.

The over population of these countries and the national oppression, unfriendly feeling toward the Slaves, was the cause already in the second half of the last century of a strong immigration, which at first turned to Russia; but when the religious intolerance of that empire was noticed and

experienced, the emigration turned to the United States. The first considerable influx of emigrants to America, consisted chiefly of fugitives of the Revolution Period of 1848; they were followed later by a poorer class seeking homesteads and lands for cultivation. Emigrants from Bohemia and western part of Moravia settled chiefly in the northern part of the United States; while those of eastern Moravia nearly exclusively turned to Texas. The first Bohemian Evangelical sermon in Texas was preached by pastor John Zvolanek at Fayetteville A. D. 1855. He disappeared, however, without having organized any congregations at all. The oldest congregation in Texas was organized by Rev. Joseph. Opocensky 1864 in Wesley, Texas, who immigrated with his people 1858 from Moravia and died in Wesley, Texas 1870. At the same time Rev. Joseph Kun began work in the North who besides others, especially organized the congregation of Ely, Iowa, where he settled being also for two years Prof. of classic literature at the Western College. He died in Ely 1894. The work of both of these ministers was a blessed one and laid the foundation to many congregations that have been organized since that time. After the death of Rev. Joseph Opocensky, Adolph Chlumsky first minister in Krabcice Bohemia was called to Wesley, Texas 1872, but being unable to accept the call on account of sickness in his family he sent his brother Louis Chlumsky vicar at that time in Nemecky Moravia. He seeing plenty of work called in 1876 his former fellow-student Rev. Henry Juren from Cermna Bohemia, who settled in Fayetteville, Rev. J. L. Chlumsky returning 1881 to Bohemia. There he stands in the service of the church up-to-date. Rev. Henry Juren attended to all the congregations of Texas for a series of years quite by himself. Only from 1888-1891 he was joined by Rev. B. Lacjak, who, however, suddenly died. Adolph Chlumsky, born 1842 in Bohemia, having worked from 1866-1872 in Moravia, then till 1889 in Krabcice, Bohemia, came in that year to Texas, and settled in Brenham from hence he serves to his congregations. Rev. L. Von Lanyi joined us in April 1903, settled in Blevins, hence, besides his German congregation, he attended to our churches in Ocker and Caldwell. To our regret he left in Sept. of the same year in

order to join his family in the north leaving a good remembrance behind himself. Rev. Theodore Kubricht, born at Bohemia in 1864, who studied theology in Oberlin, Ohio, was called to the pastorate at Wesley, 1896 at which place he worked till 1901, when he left Wesley for Chicago to study medicine. At the end of 1905, he settled in Taylor, Texas, where Jan. 27, 1906 he was ordained by the Union of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren, and became minister of the church in Taylor.

The Evangelic Union of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren consists now at the beginning of 1907, of 13 organized congregations and 5 pastorates. In the year 1893 an attempt had been made to unite the different congregations in Texas into a whole, but it failed. At the beginning of 1902 Rev. A. Chlumsky of Brenham commenced to publish a monthly paper "Bratske Listy" for the purpose of fostering of religious knowledge and mutual approach of the dispersed Protestants, especially in Texas. The knowledge of mutual community and spiritual consolidation was awakened so far, that already on Nov. 15th 1903, representatives of churches in Granger and Taylor, met and agreed only on a strong friendly union among themselves but summoned also other churches to join them and to form a union. As a result of this endeavor, the first general assembly of delegates of all congregations in Texas was called on the 29th day of December 1903, to Granger, to which 22 representatives of nine congregations and pastorates have been sent. Among the guests was also Rev. P. Dyck as representative of the Texas District of the German Ev. Synod of North America. In the preliminary transactions regarding organization the question had been proposed whether it would be advisable to join one of the already existing churches or to organize a new independent church. Our faintness and weakness pointed to the first. But where and who could be joined? Our people at large are ignorant of the German language, and of the English very imperfectly. Besides this every denomination has its historical development, to us entirely strange one and has its peculiarities, by which it differs from others and also from ours.

Our people as they are now, came mostly from the Reformed church but also from the Lutheran, as a result of the forced ordinance of Emperor Joseph II. To organize an entirely new denomination and increase the number of the existing ones, would require more deeply seated motives, to disregard one or the other fraction that suffered with us, fought with us and lived with us in love, and to adhere to one fraction would be out of harmony with brotherly love and our historical development. For we are the sons of one mother and one nation. As it became evident that the majority of our congregations have already been incorporated under the name of Boh. Mor. Brethren, and further that our circumstances in regard to language require an independent management in order that every one should have an access and could understand by means of his own mother tongue, therefore, a motion was accepted unanimously, with applause to return to most perfect church, to the martyred old Union of the Boh. Mor. Brethren, in which there are no such differences that would not be overcome by brotherly love.

Thus the prophecy of the last bishop, Komensky, was fulfilled and his sincere desire “that the management of thy affairs will be given to thee again, O, Bohemian people!” So that the stick of Judah and of Ephraim shall become one stick in the hand: of God. When he collects our scattered bones and puts flesh upon them, and. covers them with skin and puts breath in them that they shall live, that they shall know that He is the Lord to whom nothing is impossible (Ezekiel 37.)

Just as the Reformer, Dr. Martin Luther, in different oral expressions had stated and in some letters among others, also to the council in Prague had declared the Union of the Bohemian Brethren for Brethren and fellow believers, in the same way J. Calvin, June 29th, 1560, had handed to the delegates of the Brethren in Geneva a letter signed by all ministers of Geneva, in which he acknowledges the Union as a sister in faith, so have we asked the German Evang. Synod of North America for recognition and opening of their schools in Elmhurst, Illinois, and the Theological Seminary at St. Louis, Missouri, to our youth to which it willingly and cordially consented and

accepted two of our candidates into their institutions without remuneration.

In the Assembly at Granger, December 29th, by-laws for our churches have been prepared and accepted, the Polity for the denomination was prepared and accepted at the second synodal Assembly in Taylor, December 28th, 1909. The denomination was thus provided with a state charter.

Doctrine.

The Union of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren of North America, firstly, is a Christian Church, "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (I. Cor. 3,11) secondly, it is an Evangelical church because the Scriptures, as the revealed word of God, are the only rules of faith, intercourse and life. (John 5, 39' Gal. 1, 8, Phil. 3: 16; I. Cor. 1: 12;-13; Rev. 22:18) Further it is a brotherly Union, because brotherhood remains in love; which is the bond of perfection and the fulfillness of the Testament (Rom. 12, 10-20, Math. 28, 8,)

Finally it is Bohemian-Moravian, because it is the descendant and heir of the time honored Union of the Bohemian-Moravian Brethren.

For this reason, also, the different affairs and all services as well as the training and instruction of the youth ought, to be performed in the mother tongue on the basis of the symbolic books of the Union i. e. *Confessio Fratrum Bohemorum*, or the confession of faith teachings and religion of the Union of the Bohemian Brethren presented to Emperor Ferdinand I. by the Lords and Knights of the Union A. D. 1608. Firmly believing that at last "the truth will prevail" as was the motto of our ancestors, we endeavor to attain a more perfect perception of the Holy Scriptures, using herein the evangelical rights of conscience (I. Tess. 5:21.) The other symbolic evangelical books: the Helvetic or Reformed and the Augsburg or Lutheran confessions, we are inclined to use as far as they agree with God's word. — The legislative and executive power of our church is instructed to a Synod, which meets annually on the memorable day of the burning at the stake of our Reformer

John Hus, the 6th of July alternately in one of our churches. The Synod consists of ministers of the Union and delegates elected, one delegate being elected for every fifty members of a congregation. Small congregations and Pastorates not having fifty members have the right to send one delegate. The management of the Union between the sessions of the Synod is in the hands of a Synodal committee, president, vice president, secretary and treasurer, elected for one year. The affairs of the different congregations are executed by elders elected for a term of one year. The board of trustees elders consists of at least four members, the minister as president, curator as vice president, secretary and treasurer: In larger congregations one elder is elected for every ten members. The execution of discipline is in the hands of elders, resp. the Synodal committee, or the Synod itself. (Matt. 18-15:i7.)

All property belongs to individual congregations, but if a congregation should cease to exist, the Union takes possession of the property as administrator. If during a period of fifteen years no new congregation at that place should be established and possession of the property not duly otherwise regulated such property goes to the treasury of the Union.

Work

(a) Home Mission Work.

Collections for mission were undertaken in the Evangelical Union of the B. M. Brethren A. D. 1905 with the understanding that half of the amount collected should be appropriated to Home Mission Work, the other half, however, to the mission among the heathens. In 1905 \$18.90 has been set aside for home mission. Of this Rev. A. Chlumsky received \$9.45 and Rev. Henry Juren also \$9.45 as compensation for traveling expenses in visiting and organizing dispersed members of our church. General result of this work was this: Rev. A. Chlumsky visited Oklahoma and organized there a congregation at Prague, Lincoln Co. Rev. Henry Juren, when the Presbyterian denomination by its mission smashed our congregation at Barden's Creek near Smithville, Texas, and absorbed the church building by a farm of bargain collected the

rest of our people and organized them into a small congregation holding services in private houses and at the school house. In 1906 \$32.96 has been collected for Home Mission Work. Of this Rev. A. Chlumsky received \$7.64, Rev. H. Juren \$14.10 and Rev. B. Kubricht \$11.22. The general result was: Rev. Chlumsky organized a congregation in Buckholts. Rev. H. Juren organized one in Wallis and Rev. B. Kubricht established a Sunday School in Taylor. For want of workers and scanty means nothing more could be accomplished.

(b) Foreign Mission Work

Being too weak to begin mission ourselves, we resolved to support the Evangelical Mission in India conducted by the German Evangelical Synod of North America. For this purpose we handed over to the German Evangelical Synod of N. A. (Rev. H. Wolf, Bensenville, Ill.) in 1905 \$18.90 and in 1906 \$33.00.

(c) Educational Work

We have no schools up to this time. We need badly a school for the education of teachers for Sunday and Evening Schools. To this end we made collections for a "Fund of the Union." From collections, among our church members this fund amounted at the end of the year 1906 to \$224.00 For the support of two students in Elmburst, Ill, we have a "Student's Fund." At the end of the school year 1905-06 the collections amounted to \$122.55 expenses \$84.00 so that \$18.55 are left in the treasury.

(d) Institutional and General Work

We have no benevolent institution as yet as are Hospitals, Orphan Homes etc. All we have in this respect is a benevolent society, that pays to relatives of deceased members as many dollars as the society numbers of members. At the end of the year 1906 our benevolent society had 38 members income

amounted to \$235.70 and expenses to \$66.27. For the payment of the first assessment \$38 are held ready. Reserve fund amounts to \$131.42.

Brenham, Texas.
June, 18th 1907.

The following photos and data was added by Patrick Koehler in 2002:

Rev. Adolf/Adolph Chlumsky (kloom ski) was born October 3rd, 1842 in Dvakacovice, Bohemia, son of Rev. Jan Chlumsky and Elizabeth (Hrubes) Chlumsky.. He studied two years in Levoce, Hungary, then one year in Vienna, at the University of Austria. He then finished his studies in Basil at the University of Switzerland where he remained for five semesters until the outbreak of the Austrian-Prussian war. He was ordained in 1866. That year he started a church in Velka Lhota (pronounced Vel-ka Ho-ta), Moravia, a small village near Dacice located about 58 miles west of Brno, Moravia.

He and Julie Rosa Kun were married Jan 23rd, 1867 at Vanovice, Moravia, served by her stepfather, Rev. Jan Benes. Rev. Jan Chlumsky, father of Adolph performed the service.

Adolph served at Velka Lhota until June 1872, then moved his family to Krabcice, Bohemia, about 20 miles north of Prague, near Roudnice. He served as superintendent of a girls school near Krabcice. He and his family emigrated to the US and arrived in Brenham, Texas on Sept 5th, 1889.

His wife, Julie Rosa Kun was daughter of Rev. Vilem Kun and granddaughter of Rev. Alexander Kun. Her mother was Karoline Opocensky Kun Benes, brother of the Rev. Josef Opocensky of the Wesley church.



Believed to be Adolf as a child (abt. 1848) with his father, Rev. Jan Chlumsky

Rev. Adolf Chlumsky with signature, pastor at Velka Lhota ~1869



Rev. A. Chlumsky, date unk.

Always traveling between churches!



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