

Pastor
C.F.A.F.
Schirmeister

The Father of the Lutheran Church in Queensland

22 July 1814 - 8 Oct. 1887



By Jake Zabel, BTh

2017

While Kavel¹ and Fritzsche² are mainly responsible for establishing the Lutheran Church in South Australia, the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Queensland was achieved through the hands of many. Among these great Lutherans of the North are Hausmann³, Heiner⁴, Hellmuth⁵ and Langebecker⁶ but the most significant of all the Queensland Lutherans is Pastor Carl Frederick Alexander Francis Schirmeister the father of Lutheranism in Queensland. Through his faithful, energetic and sometimes even controversial ministry he is responsible for organising the Lutherans of Queensland and establishing the first united Lutheran synod in Queensland.

Early Lutheranism in Queensland

After South Australia, the most popular state for German migrants was Queensland however the Lutheran history between these two states is vastly different. Most of the German migrants to Queensland weren't necessarily Lutheran and didn't hold to the same strictly confessional views of their Southern counterparts. Lutheranism first came to Queensland through the hands of two important men, Dr. John Dunmore Lang⁷ and Pastor Johannes Gossner⁸. Pastor Gossner was an adult convert to Lutheranism who started a non-denominational missionary institution in Berlin, his dream was to train lay people who could support themselves with a trade while ministering to the natives. Dunmore was, as Hebart said "the energetic leader of the Presbyterian Church in Sydney." (p112) He had received from the government a lease of land and a government subsidy of £150 per year for the purposes of mission work to the Aboriginals of the Moreton Bay area. Being unable to find any missionaries for this task he sought the help of Gossner and on July 9 1837 a group of clergymen and missionaries were sent to Australia. On January 23 the following year they arrived in Australia and by June they settled in Moreton Bay at a place called Zion's Hill (later renamed German Station⁹). A second group of missionaries arrived from Gossner in 1844 but despite their hard work the mission was destined to fail, the clergymen left and the missionaries turned to the task of maintaining a livelihood in order to survive. None of these men were ever registered as Lutheran pastors and as Theile wrote (p7-8) none of these first Gossner missionaries appear again in the Lutheran history. With the exceptions of pastors Hausmann and Niquet¹⁰ who both left to work in Victoria, the former returning after only six years to play a major role in the establishment of the Lutheran Church in Queensland. It is here at the ending of the Moreton Bay mission where pastor Schirmeister enters the scene.

Pioneer Pastor of New Zealand and Queensland

Pastor Schirmeister –whose full name is Carl Frederick Alexander Francis (Franz) Schirmeister, most books wrongly sight his initials as C.F.A Schirmeister but all the church documents record him as C.F.A.F. Schirmeister, he even signs him daughter's wedding certificate this way (see Appendix)– was born in Eberswalde, Germany on the 22nd of July 1814 the son of a civil servant, Hans Schirmeister and his wife Albertina, nee Muszel. As an

¹ August Ludwig Christian Kavel (1798 -1860)

² Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche (1797-1863)

³ Pastor Johann "Godfrey" Gottfried Hausmann (1811-1901)

⁴ Pastor Ernst Christian Friedrich Theodor Heiner (1827-1901)

⁵ Pastor Carl Gottfried Hellmuth (1827-1895)

⁶ Pastor Theodore Friedrich Heinrich Johann Langebecker (1845-1909)

⁷ Dr. John Dunmore Lang (1799–1878)

⁸ Pastor Johannes Evangelista Gossner (1773 -1858)

⁹ Now Nundah, Queensland a suburb of Brisbane

¹⁰ Johann Peter Niquet (1811-1903)

adult he studied theology at the University of Halle and after graduation he was ordained as a minister in the Prussian State Church and became a private tutor. Schirmeister was a skilled musician and tutored the son of Baron von Puttkammer¹¹. He had been contemplating the mission life for years and was finally thrown into it by the untimely death of the baron's son. Seeking mission work he came to the Gossner Theological College in 1841 to become a missionary (Schirmeister 1877, fn. 14). On June 12th 1842 five missionaries were commissioned at the Bethlehem Church in Berlin, their destination, New Zealand.

Schirmeister was made the leader of the group of five by Gossner and the team set sail from Bremen in July. The group arrived in New Zealand in early 1843.

Upon arriving they were turned away as the Anglican and Methodist missionaries had already established missions here and were in need of no more help. A Wesleyan minister, Samuel Ironside¹², advised the group to go and minister to the Maoris on the Chatham Islands where no mission had yet been established.

Their first task was to farm the land as ships rarely came out to the islands. One of the men, a J.G. Engst¹³, wrote of these times saying that all they had were pigs and potatoes that had been imported by the whaling ships. (Grope 1975, p30) Each of the missionaries went to a different village (or pa) in order to learn the language and culture of the natives. To assist them Schirmeister translated a Maori grammar book from English into German.

The mission, however, was met with resistance from the locals and the primitive lifestyle was near unbearable, the only rays of happiness to shine on their miserable time on the islands came in the form of three young deaconesses sent from Gossner in 1846. Among these women was Maria Alwina Gehricke who became the loving wife of Franz (as Schirmeister preferred to be called) and the couple were blessed with two daughters. According to an article in the Brisbane Courier in 1905 his eldest daughter, who was born on the islands, often spoke of an experience on the island in which the family's grass-hut had burnt down. A Maori woman faced the flames to save the baby and the bible. As Maria wept, Franz comforted her saying, "Don't cry! The best was saved – our child, our Bible." Grope picked on this story in his article for the Lutheran in 1975 stating that these words from Schirmeister summed up his entire pastoral life "nothing was as important as people and the Holy Scriptures." (p33)

In 1848, Bishop Selwyn¹⁴, of the Anglican Church, visited the missions. He attempted to persuade Schirmeister to join the Anglican Church but failed as Schirmeister was strongly committed to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church.

As the mission failed the Schirmeisters and the Hunts left the main island and went to live on Pitt Island, here Schirmeister tutored the Hunt children. In 1855 Schirmeister fell seriously ill and was taken to Wellington by Bishop Selwyn. Continual sickness forced Schirmeister to leave New Zealand and in 1857 he was brought to Sydney where he was cared for by Dr. Lang. Schirmeister wished to return to Europe but while recovering in Sydney he was persuaded by Dr. Lang and his brother-in-law Pastor Gehricke¹⁵, one of the 1844 missionaries, to come and serve at German Station. However, seeing that the Aboriginal mission was coming to a close he turned his sights on the German settlers and sought a mission to bring them to (or back to) the Lutheran faith. Schirmeister wasted no time and had

¹¹ Baron Robert Viktor von Puttkamer (1828-1900)

¹² Pastor Samuel Ironside (1814-1897)

¹³ Pastor Johannes Gottfried Engst (1819-1910)

¹⁴ Bishop George Augustus Selwyn (1809-1878), the first Anglican of New Zealand

¹⁵ Pastor Johann Wilhelm Gericke, who was ordained in the synod of New South Wales in November 1856 together with Pastor Niquet

himself registered as the first Lutheran pastor of Queensland (he remained the only registered pastor until 1861 when Hausmann returned). Schirmeister began to minister to the German migrants of Brisbane and conducted the first Lutheran service in the Wharf Street Baptist Church on April 30 1857, attended by only 12 worshippers. The congregation grew and they continued to use the Baptist church until Christmas Day 1861 when the congregation moved into their own church, appropriately named Bethlehem. The congregation worshipped here until 1882 when they built the larger St. Andreas (St. Andrew's) Lutheran Church, made from fine stone. Schirmeister also erected the first South Brisbane church on Cordelia Street in 1862, the congregation eventually moved to the Nazareth Lutheran Church due to the smallness of the church and the risk of flooding.

Schirmeister did not remain localised to Brisbane, however. He travelled far and wide on foot and by horseback. The energetic and far-sighted pioneer pastor travelled to Ipswich and Toowoomba to preach and to organise the congregations. One of his greatest, but also controversial, feats was the founding St. Paul's Lutheran Church on Philip St. Toowoomba 1859. In 1863 Schirmeister sought a pastor for the Toowoomba church and received a Pastor Angar¹⁶ sent freshly from the Gossner Society. On May 10th 1863 Pastor Schirmeister ordained Pastor Angar and installed him as pastor of the Toowoomba congregation, an act he would soon come to regret. Only a year later Schirmeister had to step in and relinquish Angar from his position after the congregation were dissatisfied with his ministry. "It appears that he mistakenly or maliciously forged a doctor's name to a death certificate for one of his parishioner." (Waterson) The congregation was split as a number of members remained faithful to Angar and founded the Independent German Church on Perth St. These members spoke rather harshly of Pastor Schirmeister and the news began to report the incident. In May 1864, Theodore Franz wrote a letter to the editor of the Brisbane Courier in which he comments on the controversy. He defends and praises Schirmeister saying that the papers have wrongly vilified him.

During the 1860's and 70's the German/Lutheran population began to boom. In 1861 only 2000 Germans made up the 30000 Queenslanders but by 1879 the German population had grown to over 17000, which were scattered over the rural areas. Pastor Schirmeister and Hausmann set to work organising the settlers accompanying many of them into the bush. Schirmeister tirelessly worked to provide the Lutherans with a building and pastor, again turning to his beloved Gossner Society who sent another team of missionaries to Australia, arriving in September 1866, among them was Langebecker. He also sought help from the multid denominational Basel Mission Seminary in 1877 and 1887 (see Schirmeister's letter), obtaining Pastor Maier¹⁷ in November 1877 and Pastor Wallatt¹⁸ in 1888.

As Pastor Tim Jarick commented in his 150yr History of St. John's Ipswich, Schirmeister travelled continuously around South-East Queensland in order to preach and teach, baptise and organise, marry and bury. "Even before some of the Germans immigrants had got out of their boat in Moreton Bay, Pastor Schirmeister baptised their babies who had been born during the long voyage at sea." (Jarick p14)

¹⁶ Pastor Carl August Angar

¹⁷ Pastor Ernst Otto Maier (1855-1905)

¹⁸ Pastor Heinrich Wallatt (1850-1940)

Schirmeister truly was the father of Queensland Lutheranism. Through his energetic and faithful ministry he brought order to the Lutheran Church of Queensland. His far-sighted and tireless efforts to the ministry have permanently etched his name in history. Although at times his mission seemed controversial he never ceased his dream of establishing a Lutheran Church in Queensland. Whether in Prussia, New Zealand or Queensland he always cherished above all else the Word and the people, he sought neither fame nor fortune and even sacrificed his health in service to God. “Without him most of the early Queensland Lutherans would probably have been absorbed in[to] the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches.” (Gunson)

Schirmeister worked ceaselessly until his death from lung cancer on Saturday October 8th 1887 (wrongly dated by Leske as 1885 p84). After suffering from ill health, his dying words were, “Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” (Grope 1975, p33 and 1988, p13) The news was broken to his congregation the next day when Pastor Langebecker took the service. His funeral was attended by over 800 people and was conducted on October 15th by Pastors Heiner, Griffith and Egen¹⁹. The great ‘father of the Lutheran Church in Queensland’ died aged 74 leaving behind his widow and two married daughters.

Church Union and the Lutheran Confessions

Schirmeister’s greatest challenge was organising the pastors and congregations of Queensland as one united synod. (Jarick p26)

Leske stated that despite Schirmeister’s energy he never spent the time to learn the Lutheran Confessions (p84). Despite this, however, Schirmeister remained devoutly Lutheran, Hebart said that Schirmeister and Heiner worked along ‘positive Lutheran lines’ unlike Hausmann and the others. (p114) Schirmeister always stood by the Lutheran Church, while in the Chatham Islands he was offered the financially beneficial chance to become an Anglican pastor by Bishop Selwyn, but he turned it down because “despite his theological and missionary training, Schirmeister was a confessional Lutheran, at all times concerned to establish and promote the Church of the Reformation.” (Grope 1875, p32) Schirmeister even refused to attend a pastors’ conference in Ipswich 1859 which sought synodical unity because fellow pastors, mainly Hausmann, would not support him against the un-Lutheran practice of laymen preaching in the churches. (Theile p14) It was Schirmeister’s emphasis on orthodoxy that antagonized some of his Gossner colleagues, particularly Hausmann who “allowed laymen to preach and ordained some of them without theological training.” (Gunson) Brauer in his history on the ELCA writes that there was an unbridgeable gulf between the rigid Lutheran orthodoxy of the Hermannsburg pastors and the lax confessionalism of the Basel and Gossner pastors. It is this huge gulf that Schirmeister desired to bridge in order to achieve a single Lutheran synod in Queensland. Schirmeister was the perfect person to try and bridge this gap for he fell directly in the middle of the two sides. He was strongly confessional and cherished his Lutheran values, gaining a close friendship with pastors Heiner and Hellmuth. However, Schirmeister considered the Hermannsburg pastors too rigid in doctrine. His feelings towards the two groups are shown in the letter he wrote to Pastor Herlitz²⁰ in 1877 (see Schirmeister’s Letter 1877). Schirmeister wrote to Herlitz requesting his assistance in requiring a pastor from the Basel Seminary.

¹⁹ Pastor Theodore Immanuel Egen (1846-1932)

²⁰ Pastor Hermann Herlitz (1834-1920)

This letter shows how desperate Queensland was for pastor, since the letter shows that Schirmeister did not have a very high opinion of the Basel Seminary. He called Basel confessionally loose and he used the words of John 1:46 to mock them, saying “can anything good come from Basel?”. He even had to specify that, if possible, they sought a ‘truly evangelical man of the Lutheran Confessions’ with a doctrine that cannot be blown about by the wind or the favour of man

In this letter Schirmeister makes reference to the two parties of Lutherans in Queensland. He obviously doesn’t belong to either side as his comments are made to insult them. He accuses the Hermannsburg party of acting like papist calling them ‘superorthodox and on their way to Rome’. While he accuses the Hausmann party Mysticism (to use a modern term), saying that that Hausmann has fallen pretty far into the enthusiasm. Schirmeister also complains about a young Pastor Hartwig²¹ who belongs to the Hausmann Party. Hartwig is described as a young preacher that despised study, and claimed that because he was ‘so full of spirit and life that he preaches best if he has not prepared himself’. Schirmeister called him an ignorant young man and said that Hartwig boasted his ignorance based upon Matthew 11:25, “because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children.”

According to his letter this there was quite a controversy at the church at German Station due to Pastor Hartwig. Hartwig was originally a laymen in the parish whom Hausmann selected placed in charge of the congregation (according to Schirmeister, Hausmann had forced Hartwig upon the congregation). Pastors Burghardt²², Hausmann and Gaustad²³ had selected Hartwig placed him in charge of German Station and Zillmere²⁴ in 1873. Hartwig had operated under probation for two years as a lay minister and was only ordained in 1875 (Theile p257). After the congregation could no longer endure the ‘unwashed chatter’ Pastor Hausmann became upset with the congregation at German Station and also with Schirmeister who had taken care of the congregation after Hartwig had taken a call to the Douglas parish in 1877. It was the German Station congregation that Schirmeister sought a pastor. His request was answered in the form of Pastor Maier²⁵, who arrived in Queensland in November 1877 and worked at German Station and Zillmere, later extending his work to South Brisbane. He served here until 1886 when he accepted a call Charters Tower, and was replaced Pastor Egen from New South Wales (see Schirmeister 1887).

In Schirmeister’s letter he states that he belonged to neither of the two parties in Queensland and it is obvious from the letter that this caused him to come under attack from both parties. He mentioned that Hausmann had claimed that Schirmeister was not spiritual while the Hermannsburg pastors claimed that he was not orthodox. He boasts that none of their accusations can stand and that he has bested them both.

On a more positive note, in this 1877 letter Schirmeister comments on his friendship with pastors Hellmuth and Heiner. Schirmeister said that he had worked much on them in regards to fellowship and that they had had ‘conferences about conferences’. However, despite these ‘conferences about conferences’ there was no fellowship intended, which caused Schirmeister deep grief.

These three men had a very close relationship and worked hard for synodical unity, it is sad that the parting of the synods severed Hellmuth from this friendship. In 1879 pastors

²¹ Pastor August Daniel Hartwig (1850-1921)

²² Pastor Friedrich Wilhelm Burghardt (1844-1917)

²³ Pastor Christopher Gaustadt

²⁴ Suburb of Brisbane, QLD

²⁵ Pastor Ernst Otto Maier (1855-1905)

Schirmeister, Hellmuth and Heiner were joined by pastors Maier, Goessling²⁶ and Eberhard in a conference initiated by Goessling at Kirchheim²⁷. The six pastors met and bound themselves to the Lutheran Confessions and agreed to work together and support one another. The same group met again in March the following year to reaffirm their unity but no further actions were taken. Then on November 28th 1883 Schirmeister called together a conference at North Brisbane of all Lutheran pastors in Queensland. Only about half arrived; present were Schirmeister, his companions Hellmuth, Heiner, Goessling and Maier, also Pedersen, Prenzler²⁸, Heuer²⁹ and the two Koehnke brothers³⁰. A constitution was drawn up and they all agreed to form the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Queensland. However 1884 passed and no unity occurred. But then, with the arrival of pastor Sueltmann came a revived desire for union and on January 29th 1885 a conference was held at Bethania. A constitution was drafted and approved and the responsibility fell to Schirmeister and Sueltmann to arrange a time and place for the final union of all Queensland pastors. The Lutherans of the North came so close to becoming one united synod and if it wasn't for the mingling of Pastor Herlitz, union may have been achieved.

In 1883 Hausmann had already joined Herlitz in unity and his congregation at Beenleigh was a part of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Victoria. Herlitz had now come to Queensland in order to seek further unity between the pastors of Queensland and his own synod. He pushed Schirmeister and Heiner into union with the less confessional party (to which Schirmeister was closer in doctrine). Therefore on June 9th 1885 pastors Schirmeister, Heiner, Hausmann, Langebecker, Maier and Copas³¹ met at Bethania and form the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Queensland (ELSQ). Schirmeister was named as president and Heiner as sectary and the constitution of the synod was signed. This synod may have been the less confessional but their stance on Lutheranism rings out in the first clause of the constitution: "The Queensland Lutheran Synod joins the entire Lutheran Church in confessing the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the Word of God, the only rule and guide of faith and life, and all the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church as the genuine presentation and exposition of the Word of God." (Grope 1975, p33 and 1988, p13) Schirmeister even stated in his 1887 letter that synod was not 'superorthodox' like certain other groups in Australia, but that their synod was committed to the Symbols of the Lutheran Confessions (meaning the Book of Concord). The Hermannsburg pastors had not been invited to the conference and understandably they refused union with the ELSQ and on August 5th 1885 eight pastors met and founded the United German and Scandinavian Lutheran Synod of Queensland (UGSLSQ), ironically their constitution was almost identical to the ELSQ, since both constitutions were based on the one written in January 1885.

Schirmeister had dreamed of seeing a united Queensland but due to his rash decision under the guidance of Herlitz he had instead created a greater divide. But whatever mistakes Schirmeister made "the Lutheran Church of Queensland must ever keep in grateful memory the name and life's work of Pastor Schirmeister." (Theile p28)

²⁶ Pastor J F R Goessling

²⁷ Haigslea, Queensland

²⁸ Pastor Christoph Wilhelm Conrad Prenzler (1849-1922)

²⁹ Pastor G H Heuer (1854-1932)

³⁰ Pastor Joachim Koehke and Johann Koehke

³¹ Pastor F Copas

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Schirmeister, C.F.A.F. 23rd February 1877, *Letter to Brother Herlitz*, translated by Jake Zabel

Appendix:

Appendix: The Marriage Certificate for the wedding of Dr. Frederick Sachse and Johanne Schirmeister (the daughter Pastor Schirmeister) conducted by Pastor C.F.A.F. Schirmeister

SCHEDULE D.
28 VICTORIÆ, NO. 15.
* (COPY OF) CERTIFICATE OF MARRIAGE.

† Insert Minister's or Registrar's Christian Name and Surname at full length.
Insert Designation. I, C. F. A. F. Schirmeister being
Minister of the Lutheran Church

* Church or place where Celebrated. do hereby certify that I have this day at German Station near Brisbane duly celebrated Marriage between

BRIDEGROOM ...

Insert Bridegroom's Name (in full) Frederick Otto Sachse
 „ Rank or Occupation Doctor of Medicine
 „ Residence Toowoomba
 „ Condition (Bachelor or Widower) Widower
 „ Age (Last Birthday) 55 years
 „ Birthplace (Town or Place) Halle (County or Shire) Russia (Country) Germany
 „ Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Johannes Sachse
 „ Father's Rank or Profession Councillor of Justice
 „ Mother's Name (Christian Name) Friederike (Maiden Surname) Wach

AND

BRIDE ...

Insert Bride's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Johanna Bertha Elisabeth Schirmeister
 „ Rank or Occupation (if any) _____
 „ Residence German Station near Brisbane
 „ Condition (Spinster or Widow) Spinster
 „ Age (Last Birthday) 18 years
 „ Birthplace (Town or Place) Mission Station (County or Shire) Chatham Islands (Country) New Zealand
 „ Father's Name (Christian Name and Surname in full) Charles Frederick Alexander Francis Schirmeister
 „ Father's Rank or Profession Minister of Religion
 „ Mother's Name (Christian Name) Ludine Friederike Maime (Maiden Surname) Gericke

WITNESSES (² Witnesses' Names in full) — Before John William Gericke & Friederike Schmidt
after declaration duly made as by law required.

Dated this twelfth day of November 1867.

C. F. A. F. Schirmeister
(Signature of Minister or Registrar)

Signatures of Parties to the Marriage. } Frederick Otto Sachse
 } Johanna Bertha Elisabeth Schirmeister

Sign } John William Gericke
 } Friederike Schmidt

* N.B.—To be handed to the Minister or Registrar to the parties Married, immediately after the Marriage.

The Consent of the father of the Bride

C. F. A. F. Schmeister

was given to the Marriage of Sophanna Albertine Elizabeth Schmeister

with Frederick Otto Fackler

the said Sophanna Albertine Elizabeth Schmeister being under
the age of Twenty-one years.

C. F. A. F. Schmeister

Minister or Registrar

Schirmeister's Letters

Translated by Jake Zabel

1877 – Letter to Brother Herlitz

F. Schirmeister³², Kent Street, Brisbane Valley to Pastor Herlitz³³, Melbourne. (23/2/1877)

Dear Brother Herlitz,

Firstly, greetings and blessings in the Lord Jesus! After you, brother³⁴, gave us hope that we might obtain from the Basel Institute a pastor for German Station, I reported this to the local congregation, and they have declared that they³⁵ would be pleased if you would just get a good man, who would like to come, so I have enclosed a document that most of the current congregation has signed. Undoubtedly the congregation will be much stronger only when these folks can once again have a capable pastor residing among them. I hope that the inset is in accordance with the purpose, and that you, brother³⁴, will support our application to the Basel Committee. It can be assumed that the congregation will raise the travel money for the pastor soon enough.

From July this year, immigration from Germany to here will start operating strongly; in any case it would be the best and cheapest way if the pastor came directly here to Queensland on the immigration ships as their pastor coming over. If the Basel Committee wanted to take the trouble, and solicit a free passage for the pastor to sail from Germany to Queensland on an immigration ship, it is likely that this would be granted by the Agent General for Queensland, the Honourable A. Macalister in London³⁶. If the pastor would, as an ordinary immigrant (in the cabin of course), come over with a German or outgoing ship from England, he'd get here a Land-order for 40 acres of land, which could then be of some good to the congregation, and so, I think, the passage of the pastor to the congregation would be no difficult case.

As I am the mediator for the teachers that we get here in Queensland from Basel, I prefer my mighty indignation of a large amount of these folks to that, which, such as you have in your area, saying "Can anything good come from Basel?" (John 1:46) But that I can already carry, and the indignation against me will settle soon, if we can just get a good man. May it be from me alone that we have established a real, living, but also sober Christianity here.

So that you can conscientiously support this matter to the Committee in Basel, I want to say a word about my position and make a note about the whole situation here. There are now two parties here. One is represented by the pastors Hellmuth³⁷ and Heinle³⁸, which I call superorthodox, who are on their way to Rome³⁹. The other party has Pastor Hausmann⁴⁰ at the top. They aim to counteract the dead orthodoxy, but fall over to the other side⁴¹. These

³² Carl Frederick Alexander Francis(or Franz) Schirmeister was commonly called Franz

³³ Pastor Hermann Herlitz (1834-1920)

³⁴ Schirmeister simply abbreviates it as I. Br. I am unsure what the I stands for

³⁵ Literally she in the German, the she is a reference to the Church which is normally depicted using feminine language e.g. The Bride of Christ

³⁶ The Honourable Arthur Macalister (1818-1883)

³⁷ Pastor Carl Gottfried Hellmuth (1827-1895)

³⁸ Possibly meant to be Pastor Heiner, who would later join Schirmeister in the more liberal party the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Queensland (ELSQ), Ernst Christian Friedrich Theodor Heiner (1827-1901)

³⁹ The more conservative 'superorthodox' party would later become the United German and Scandinavian Lutheran Synod of Queensland (UGSLSQ)

⁴⁰ Pastor Johann "Godfrey" Gottfried Hausmann (1811-1901)

⁴¹ The more liberal 'enthusiasts' party would later become the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Queensland (ELSQ) which Pastor Schirmeister would be the synodical president of

folks are pretty far fallen into the enthusiasm. I stand between these two and can hold to neither of these two parties. When I say that Pastor Hausmann is already quite far fallen with his people into the enthusiasm, it may indeed seem strange to you (especially since the January edition of the Christian⁴² Messenger published a report that the consecration in Mount Cotton is sober enough). Nevertheless, Pastor Hausmann always provides new evidence that persuades me that I do not judge him wrongly. Hausmann's Party does not dare to say that I have no spiritual life, they really have never approached me and yet these folks are looking forward to all the ways to suspect in my own church members the most absurd things before and bring about the end times. With the other party, represented by Hellmuth and Heinle, I can agree neither. We have always been in a friendly relationship. In truth, I have worked much on them. We have held conferences about conferences. However, there is nothing intended, and I have had some deep grief. After Pastor Hellmuth resigned (threw down) his post on the Loganer municipality⁴³ and Mrs. Pastor Heinle has begun a public Boardinghouse - a sign with gold letters hanging out: "Mrs. Heinle Boarding Residence" - and I have expressed my serious opinion about it, out of friendship. If Hausmann and his people cannot deny my spiritual life, Hellmuth and Heinle cannot prove that I'm not orthodox. They make an idol of Baptism and Communion. I think I am not saying too much: I have Baptism and Holy Communion as a means to an end. "The reason is, I base myself in Christ and his blood." On that I base myself through faith - and "the things; so that I find true eternal⁴⁴ good", and I feel it and I live, thank God, now already about 36 years⁴⁵.

If Pastor Hausmann could switch at will here, we would not need to look for pastors. He has prophets enough on hand - just a shame that, while according to 1 Cor. 14:32 the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, to run away the spirits of the prophets with the prophets. Since Pastor Hausmann recently ordained a young man named Hartwig⁴⁶, a really quite ignorant young man who boasts his ignorance⁴⁷ on top of Matt. 11:25 and the preacher despises "studying", because he is so full of spirit and life that he preaches best if he has not prepared himself. The same Pastor Hausmann had forced upon the church of German Station. Since they could no longer endure unwashed chatter Pastor Hausmann is now very angry with the church at German Station and at me, because I have taken care of this church that do not like such a man as Hartwig. This church is for which I now search for a pastor from Basel and ask for your advocacy for this. From the above, you will be able to sufficiently recognize the whole situation here.

I have dealt for years with how my place here in Brisbane would like to be occupied after my departure, but I have not yet dealt with it, and I have only just thought of Basel, but have not said anything about it. Send to Basel! The Uniate, confessionally loose Basel?! Brother³⁴ it is important that we get a truly evangelical man of the Lutheran Confessions, for the work is a matter of the heart, which is founded in the Gospel. Truthful, who cannot be blown back and forth by every wind of doctrine or the favour of men, who can combine love and the necessary seriousness to exhort, and rebuke and also a pastor who requires general education. On the first sample, which we get from there, much depends. May our dear Lord and Saviour give the church at German Station a shepherd after His own heart, who feeds the souls of heart and of reason everywhere in a figure conforming himself to sound doctrine.

⁴² Written Bhr. Messenger, possibly meant to be Chr. Messenger (Christian Messenger) (see footnote 20)

⁴³ Possibly the Logan Community Council

⁴⁴ The word for eternal is 'ewige' Schirmeister misspelt it 'ewge'

⁴⁵ That would be 1841 possibly when Schirmeister started his studies at the Gossner Theological College

⁴⁶ Pastor August Daniel Hartwig (1850-1921), ordained in 1875

⁴⁷ The word for ignorance is 'Unwissenheit' Schirmeister misspelt it 'Unwissheit'

Pastor Hellmuth is currently in Maryborough⁴⁸, maybe he will go completely there⁴⁹, but I'm afraid it will do for the kingdom of God no good, for he will come into conflict with Brother Copas⁵⁰.

Books obtained by Mr. Fabian.

Lüneburg has received your invoice.

Can you send to me 5 Christian⁵¹ Messengers in one package, namely for me, Fr. Linai, Martin Bick, Thomas Wagner and F. Ledderhose.

The churches in Logan⁵² and Albert⁵³, served by Pastor⁵⁴ Hellmuth⁵⁵ have previously written to Germany to Pastor Fengler⁵⁶ a pastor in Cottbus⁵⁷. At their request I have also inserted a letter to Pastor Fengler. Meanwhile I, along with Pastor Hampe⁵⁸ of Toowoomba⁵⁹, also serve the local churches with the highest need.

You lay once more the business concerning the pastor to your heart, I remain in love your brother in Christ.

F. Schirmeister

Letter from Basel 1877 – Letter to the Honourable A. Macalister

Committee of the Evangelical Mission Society in Basel (05/06/1877) to the Agent-General for Queensland, the Honourable A. Macalister⁶⁰, London.

Honourable Sir,

The community in German Station in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, has addressed the committee of the Evangelical Missionary Society in Basel to please choose a man from among the pupils of the Evangelical Mission Institution as a preacher and pastor and send him in the course of this summer. The Committee has therefore decided to select Mr. Otto Maier⁶¹ from Köngen, Kingdom of Württemberg for this post, and he has accepted the offer of the community at German station and will make the trip to Queensland once the necessary

⁴⁸ In 1872 dissension arose at St. John's Lutheran Church at Maryborough causing their pastor, Pastor Copas, to leave Maryborough for a few years. During this time the congregation was served by Pastors Hellmuth, Heiner and Gaustad. At the time of this letter Hellmuth was still serving the Bethania parish while also serving Maryborough.

⁴⁹ In 1876 when Pastor Hellmuth relinquished his position as Bethania Lutheran Church and moved to St. John's Maryborough and served there until 1885. Although, while Hellmuth served Maryborough he continued to serve congregations in the Bethania parish (see footnote 22)

⁵⁰ Pastor Fredrich R Copas (1839 -1906), served St. John's Lutheran Church at Maryborough from 1867-1872. After dissension arose he left his congregation which was then taken over by Pastor Hellmuth. Copas eventually returned to Maryborough and developed a congregation around himself which in 1878 became St. Matthew's Lutheran Church Maryborough, Copas served here until his death in 1906

⁵¹ Chr. Messenger, Chr mostly likely stands for Christian, mostly likely what is meant above (see footnote 11)

⁵² The Logan Reserve Congregation were members of the Bethania parish but due to the great distance met in a school on Sundays where they were served by the parish teacher Pastor A Mohr

⁵³ Elkana Lutheran Church Alberton built in 1869, the congregation moved and began St. Peters Lutheran Church Alberton in 1887

⁵⁴ In the German L Hellmuth, there was no pastor L. Hellmuth that served in Qld, most likely this is a typo, he most likely meant P. Hellmuth as in Pastor Hellmuth

⁵⁵ Pastor Hellmuth assisted in serving these congregations until they were able to acquire their own pastor who came in the form of Pastor M Eberhardt in 1879

⁵⁶ Pastor Gottlieb Fengler served in Cottbus 1867-, Pastor Fengler collected money for building of the churches for the Lutheran (Old Lutheran) Church in Prussia, and the Lutheran churches in America, Australia, Russia, Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Austria

⁵⁷ Misspelt Cotbus

⁵⁸ Pastor Gottlieb Daniel Hampe (1834-1917), came to Australia to 1866, served in churches in South Brisbane, Warrak and Toowoomba till 1877, then in NSW in Grafton and Sydney. In 1882 he went to Victoria to Dimboola & Lochiel. He retired and returned to Germany in 1910.

⁵⁹ Misspelt Toomoomba

⁶⁰ The Honourable Arthur Macalister (1818-1883)

⁶¹ Pastor Ernst Otto Maier (1855-1905), arrived in QLD in Nov 1877

preparations have been made for him. The community at German Station, however, is wanting the Committee of the Evangelical Missionary Society at Basel, to kindly ask, on their behalf, for you, honourable sir, to give their future pastor, the aforementioned Mr. Otto Maier, free passage in the cabin on one of immigration ships sailing direct from Germany to Queensland. This prompts the committee to ask you:

1. whether this request of the community, respectively our committee, can be met, and when, by what ship and in which German port Mr. Otto Maier could be assured as free cabin passage an immigrant Pastor?
2. whether, if no immigration ship should depart from Germany directly to Queensland within a few month, you sir could assure for Pastor O. Maier free passage on an English immigration ship?
3. whether it is subject no objection if Mr. Otto Maier's mother, a widow, who wants to accompany him as an immigrant to Queensland, would travel with him on the same ship, if you could also grant her free crossing?

I realise here that the granting of free passage does not benefit Mr. Otto Maier nor the Evangelical Missionary Society to Basel, but only the community of German Station, because in case of failure to grant free passage, the community would have to bear the travel expenses.

Have you, esteemed sir, the kindness to answer my friendly inquiry of the Evangelical Mission Society as soon as possible?

Sincerely,

The members of the committee of Evangelical Mission Society

1887 – Letter to Inspector Oehler

F. Schirmeister⁶², Brisbane, (03/05/1887) to Inspector Oehler⁶³,

Most honoured Inspector,

About 10 years ago I applied⁶⁴ on behalf of the community German Station and the corresponding branch to the then inspector of the Basel Mission House, Mr. Josenhans⁶⁵, with the request to, where possible, provide the mentioned community with a pastor. Our request was then met when we received Mr. Ernst Otto Maier⁶⁶ from the institution, who, after having worked for over 8 years under the local communities, during the past year took a call to Charters Towers, a town in northern Queensland, and Mr. Pastor Immanuel Egen⁶⁷ who worked for approximately 14 years in the colony of New South Wales in connection with the Synod of Victoria, took over the position of Pastor Maier.

Back in June 1885, the local "evangelical-minded" pastors came together to form a synod⁶⁸, and since then several churches, which had been operated for a time by

⁶² Carl Frederick Alexander Francis (or Franz) Schirmeister was commonly called Franz

⁶³ Theodor Oehler (1850-1915), inspector of Basel 1884-1904, director of Basel 1904-1909

⁶⁴ Referring to his 1877 letter to Pastor Herlitz

⁶⁵ Friedrich Joseph Josenhans (1812-1884), was the inspector of Basel for 30 years stepping down due to health reasons in 1879

⁶⁶ Pastor Ernst Otto Maier (1855-1905), arrived in QLD in Nov 1877

⁶⁷ Pastor Theodore Immanuel Egen (1846-1932), Egen served at Ebenezer, Bethel, Jindera, and Gerogery until 1886 when he was called to QLD

⁶⁸ The Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Queensland (ELSQ)

Hermannsburg⁶⁹ pastors, connected, and also new congregations have been formed, and we therefore desperately need teachers, so I turn on behalf of the respective churches again⁶⁴ to the venerable Basel Mission institution in the hope that this time we will be helped again from our present distress. Although we know that the Basel Institute has undertaken to supply Kamerun⁷⁰ with missionaries, we hope that even one man will be left or could be found by switching from your venerable committee, who is willing, to take over the pastoral work in two or three of our rural churches. A man whom the love of Christ urges to work for the Lord Jesus, a man with a mission right spirit and zeal would probably be as necessary here as in Kamerun and could work here with great blessing among our fellow countrymen.

Our synod⁶⁸ is committed to the symbols of the Lutheran Church⁷¹. But those pastors that belong to our synod are no such superorthodox Lutherans, as you will find, elsewhere here in Australia - not excluding Queensland⁷². The churches for which we ask for a pastor, therefore expect a man who is committed to the symbols of the Lutheran Church, but is Evangelical⁷³ minded.

The churches however promise their pastor £100 fixed salary per annum, including approximately £30 more would come for fees plus free lodging. A solid-built, spacious house for the pastor is already here, and when the latter knows how to earn the love and trust of the churches by faithful work, so it is, as a Christian pastor who seeks not wool but the sheep, nothing external⁷⁴ remains to be desired.

The man, which the venerable committee would select, and who would be willing to help us in our work here in Queensland, we would accept as sent by the Lord. Of course, it is expected that he follows our synod⁶⁸, and he would at the same have a support. The churches involved shall undertake to pay the travel expenses for their pastor, or if they were arranged there he could accomplish his transportation to here more quickly, which, if he came with the outgoing Sydney German ships, he shall come at not too high a price.

Hereby I put this for the Lord's work such an important thing in the Lord's hands with the request that you, dear Inspector, and the venerable committee may want to consider this by coercion.

Sincerely,

F. Schirmeister

Pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of North Brisbane

⁶⁹ The Hermannsburg Aboriginal Mission in Central Australia

⁷⁰ Kamerun (German Cameroon) was a West African [colony](#) of the [German Empire](#) from 1884 to 1916 in the region of today's [Republic of Cameroon](#)

⁷¹ The Book of Concord in all its parts 'The Three Ecumenical Creeds, The Unaltered Augsburg Confession, The Apology of the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles, The Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope, The Small Catechism, The Large Catechism, The Epitome and Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord'

⁷² The United German and Scandinavian Lutheran Synod of Queensland (UGSLSQ), considered the more conservative of the two early synods in Queensland, Also be referring to the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Australia who had

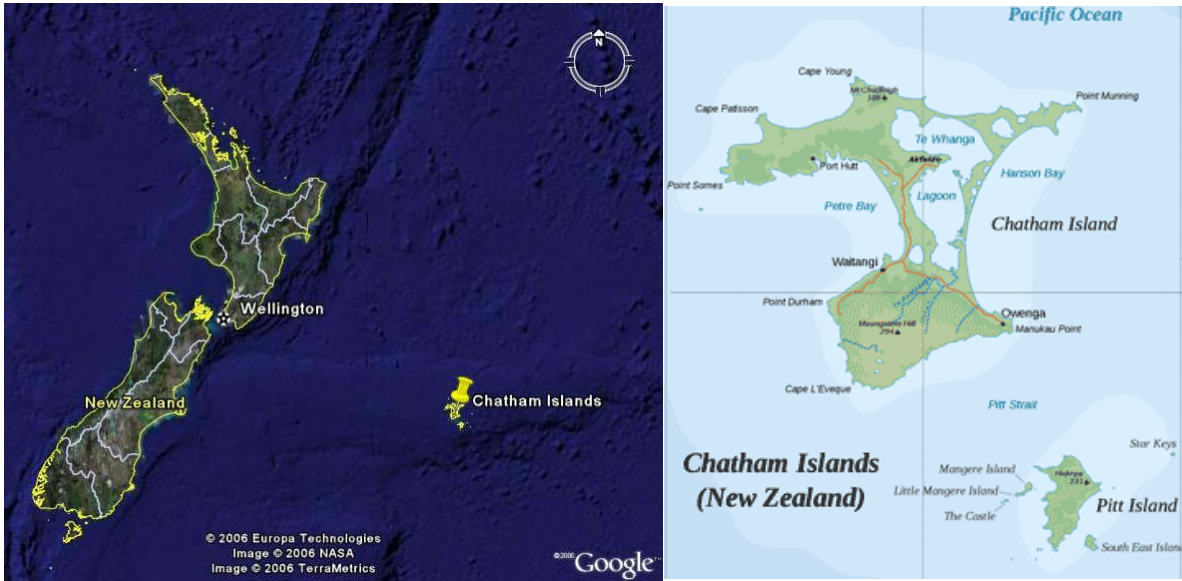
⁷³ As in Protestant

⁷⁴ Outer things, worldly possessions

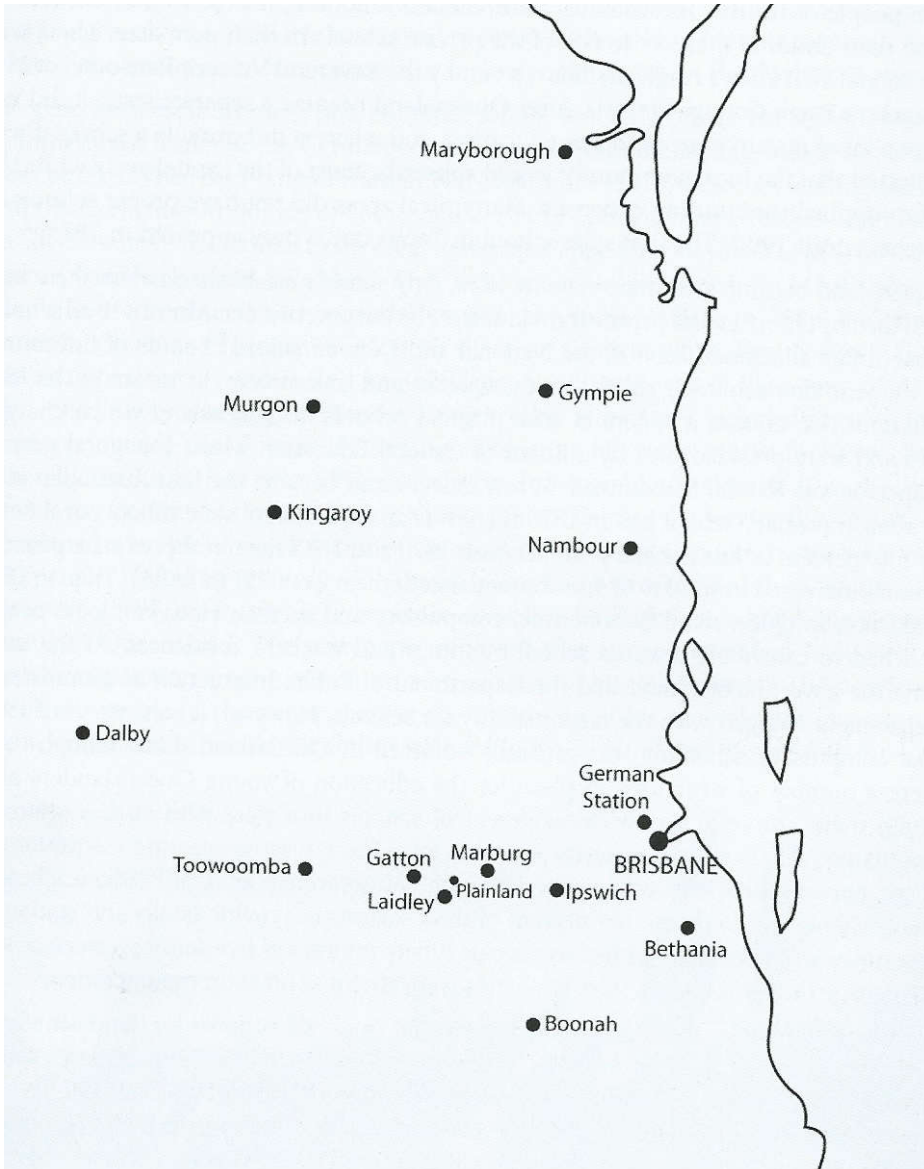
Pictures

Left: map showing the location of Chatham Islands in respect to New Zealand

Right: map of the Chatham Islands



Map of South-East Queensland showing the settlement of the Germans





Pastor Schirmeister



Dr. John Dunmore Lang



The Honourable Arthur Macalister



Friedrich Joseph Josenhans



Friedrich Joseph Josenhans



Inspector Oehler



Pastor Hausmann



Pastor Egen



Pastor Herlitz



Pastor Maier and his wife