

**Welcoming Strangers: German Lutheran Immigration to Waterloo County, 1945-1960s**

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Following the end of the Second World War, Canadians organized support to help European refugees and displaced persons escape poverty and obtain passage to Canada.<sup>1</sup> Years of war left many Europeans, particularly in Germany, without food, shelter, or basic material possessions like clothes. Germany and other European countries faced such an extensive economic and humanitarian crisis after the war that it seemed unlikely they would ever recover without extensive international aid. Starting shortly after the war's conclusion in 1945, Canada's various ethnic and religious groups began to fundraise to send money overseas and help their coreligionists in the "motherland" recover from the devastation of war. German-Canadian Lutherans took a particular interest in assisting postwar refugees and displaced persons (DPs), as many of Europe's most vulnerable happened to be ethnic Germans and other practitioners of the Lutheran faith. German-Canadian Lutherans established the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) in 1946 in an effort to send aid overseas and also facilitate DP migration to Canada. Their efforts proved successful. By 1960, organizations like the CLWR sent over seven million pounds of relief goods to Europe and helped over 20,000 DPs migrate to Canada.<sup>2</sup>

Historians have paid significant attention to how the CLWR and other Jewish and Mennonite organizations campaigned to admit refugees and DPs to Canada during the 1940s and 1950s.<sup>3</sup> These histories, however, tend to focus on the relationship between DPs and their new Anglo-Canadian neighbours, rather than the established immigrant communities that helped

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<sup>1</sup> Although the terms "displaced person" and "refugee" refers to a specific legal category of persons, Canadians often used terms such as refugee, displaced person, and immigrant interchangeably. I have elected to use the term DP for the sake of consistency. For a discussion of these legal categories and how the DPs defined themselves, see Pascal Maeder, *Forging a New Heimat: Expellees in Post-War West Germany and Canada* (Göteborg: V&R unipress, 2011), 23.

<sup>2</sup> Carl Raymond Cronmiller, *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada* (Toronto: Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, 1961), 240.

<sup>3</sup> See for example Angelika E. Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy?: Canadian Immigration Policy and the Admission of Germans, 1945-50," *Canadian Historical Review* LXXIV, no. 2 (1993): 226-263; Marlene Epp, *Women without Men: Mennonite Refugees of the Second World War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Adara Goldberg, *Holocaust Survivors in Canada: Exclusion, Inclusion, Transformation, 1947-1955* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2015).

them migrate to Canada. As a result, histories of postwar Canada tend to describe how Anglo-Canadians pressured newly arrived DPs to assimilate into mainstream Canadian culture. Historian Franca Iacovetta, for instance, emphasizes how middle class Anglo-Canadians sought to regulate aspects of immigrant life in postwar Canada. These Anglo-Canadian “gatekeepers” tried to integrate newcomers into a hegemonic Canadian culture based on British and middle class “respectable” values. Although the term “gatekeeper” typically refers to immigration officials and “those who determine admission requirements and regulations for a country or institution,” Iacovetta broadens this term as a useful shorthand to include the “wide array of reception, citizenship, and regulatory activities” that immigrants faced after they arrived in Canada. Gatekeepers monitored immigrant behavior, ranging from their parenting style, clothing, food, and mental and physical health, in an effort to coerce them to conform to Canadian cultural norms.<sup>4</sup> Subsequent case studies on postwar German immigrants have thus far confirmed Iacovetta’s conclusions.<sup>5</sup> Yet, these studies pay less attention to how DPs interacted with established German-Canadian communities.

This paper seeks to rectify this omission by focusing on how Waterloo County’s established German-Canadian Lutheran community interacted with a new generation of European DPs from 1945 to the 1960s. In particular, it examines the tensions and debates that emerged within Waterloo County’s German-Canadian Lutheran community as a result of the influx of DPs that entered their community and churches following the war. By examining the relationship between German-Canadian Lutherans and newly arrived DPs, this paper argues that a preoccupation with assimilation did not define the experiences of German DPs in postwar

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<sup>4</sup> Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Hans Werner, *Imagined Homes: Soviet German Immigrants in Two Cities* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2007); Alexander Freund, “Contesting the Meaning of Migration: German Women’s Immigration to Canada in the 1950s,” *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 41-42, no. 3/1 (2009-2010): 1-26.

Waterloo County. Rather than acting as “gatekeepers” like Anglo-Canadians, prominent German-Canadian Lutheran leaders in Waterloo County drew upon their own ethnic heritage as Germans to create a welcoming environment for a new generation of immigrants in the region. They saw helping DPs migrate to Canada as both an ethnic and religious duty to help their fellow German Lutherans abroad. Once DPs arrived in Canada, Lutheran churches functioned as spaces where DPs could continue to speak the German language and local pastors worked to ensure DPs were not treated as second-class citizens. In contrast to other Canadian communities, German DPs became incorporated into the region’s pre-existing German-Canadian community with little controversy. The strong bonds that formed between Waterloo County’s pre-existing German community and the recently arrived DPs moreover complicated Anglo-Canadian attempts to assimilate DPs. Waterloo County’s minority Anglo-Canadian community operated as “gatekeepers” and encouraged DPs to assimilate into Canadian society. However, they ultimately failed at accomplishing this goal as Waterloo County’s German culture remained strong enough to prevent complete DP assimilation.

Waterloo County provides a particularly appropriate case study in which to explore the interactions between one established immigrant community and a new generation of immigrants. Unlike other central Canadian cities that had strong Anglo-Canadian elites governing local affairs, and unlike prairie cities in Western Canada that contained a mix of different immigrant communities, Waterloo County remains unique due to its historically large presence of German immigrants.<sup>6</sup> The 1951 census, for instance, still showed Germans as the largest ethnic group in Kitchener, accounting for almost half the population.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the community had the largest

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<sup>6</sup> Royden Loewen and Gerald Friesen, *Immigrants in Prairie Cities: Ethnic Diversity in Twentieth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> John English and Kenneth McLaughlin, *Kitchener: An Illustrated History* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1983), 246-247.

population of Lutherans in Ontario and a great deal of institutional support. The Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, established in 1911, trained a great number of the nation's Lutheran pastors and the community moreover boasted some of the oldest Lutheran congregations in Canada, dating back to the 1860s and earlier.<sup>8</sup> More importantly, although the area's English and Scottish population carried a great deal of social and cultural currency, so too did the region's German population. Members of Waterloo County's German population included members of the local business, political, and religious elite. Although German immigrants may have had a minority status in other Canadian communities, Waterloo County remained unique in that German Canadians played an equally, if not greater, role in determining the community's social and cultural life as their Anglo-Canadian neighbours. Historian Kathleen Neils Conzen refers to this phenomenon as the "localization of immigrant cultures." Localization, Conzen argues, refers to –

“the tendency of an immigrant-constructed culture to embed and reproduce itself...in the educational institutions, political and governmental organizations, businesses, media, and popular culture of the broader local community. Consequently, what are initially ethnic group values come to play a strong role in determining the local ‘rules of the game,’ in molding ‘the way we do things here,’ in shaping non-group as well as group life on the local level.”<sup>9</sup>

This paper demonstrates how the localization of German culture in Waterloo County helped cultivate a welcoming environment for German DPs by examining several different points of contact between German Canadians, Anglo-Canadian gatekeepers, and postwar DPs. First, it describes the efforts of Waterloo County's German-Canadian population to help German DPs migrate to Canada and the reception they received upon their arrival. It then describes how Anglo-Canadian gatekeepers unsuccessfully tried to assimilate German DPs by weakening the German language. Finally, it compares the experiences of Lutheran congregations in Toronto and Waterloo County to demonstrate how German DPs outside of the Waterloo County core did not

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<sup>8</sup> Cronmiller, *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada*, 213-219.

<sup>9</sup> Kathleen Neils Conzen, “Mainstreams and Side Channels: The Localization of Immigrant Cultures,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 11, no. 1 (1991): 6-7.

have the same experiences, or successes, in combating assimilation. By examining these different cases, this paper argues that the localization of German culture allowed German-Canadians and DPs in postwar Waterloo County to thwart attempts to assimilate their community into mainstream Anglo-Canadian culture.

### **Waterloo County's German Lutheran Community Prior to 1945**

The “localization of immigrant culture” in Waterloo County did not always have the positive impact that Conzen’s definition implies. In fact, Waterloo County’s reputation as a center of German culture hurt its community during the hysteria of the First World War. Anglo-Canadian nativists during the war conflated any signs of German language with disloyalty and “the enemy.” Berlin famously changed its name to Kitchener in 1916 in an effort to appear patriotic, although this did little to stop the local German population from experiencing discrimination at the hands of Canadian soldiers stationed in the region.<sup>10</sup> German Lutherans, in particular, became the targets of “patriotic” Canadian soldiers. Unlike German Baptists or Catholics, Lutherans continued to conduct religious ceremonies in the German language and preached their weekly sermons in German. Anglo-Canadians worried that Lutheran pastors hid secret “pro-German” messages in their sermons. Several Waterloo County pastors faced brief imprisonment as a result of these unfounded rumors, and one pastor, the Reverend C.R. Tappert, was forced to leave town in order to ensure his safety from a mob bent on assaulting him.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, 110-117, 130; Patricia P. McKegney, *The Kaiser’s Bust: A Study of War-time Propaganda in Berlin, Ontario, 1914-1918* (Bamberg, ON: Bamberg Press, 1991), 55-57; Geoffrey Hayes, *Waterloo County: An Illustrated History* (Kitchener, ON: Waterloo Historical Society, 1997), 120-122

<sup>11</sup> Hayes, *Waterloo County*, 115; W.H. Heick, “The Lutherans of Waterloo County during World War I,” *Waterloo Historical Society* 50 (1962): 24-25

Waterloo County's "localization" of German culture alienated its German Lutheran community during a war that made it unpopular to be German.

The localization of German culture persisted despite the hardships Waterloo County endured during the First World War. The region's German culture did not completely disappear after the war, but rather changed in order to meet the popular patriotic standards of the day. Local leaders like amateur historian William Breithaupt and novelist Mabel Dunham sought to balance the community's German and Canadian identities by crafting a new German identity for the region. Rather than the previous emphasis on German culture as expressed through musical festivals like the *Saengerfest* or its reputation as the industrial "Busy Berlin", Breithaupt tried to craft a new identity that acknowledged Waterloo County's German and Canadian identities simultaneously. Throughout the 1920s Breithaupt and Dunham disseminated a new history of the region that tried to balance the community's German reputation with the newfound emphasis on Canadian patriotism. Through commemorative brochures, literary works, and the erection of the Waterloo Pioneers Memorial Tower in 1926, Breithaupt and others created what historian Geoffrey Hayes has since labeled the "pioneer myth."<sup>12</sup> Breithaupt's pioneer myth consisted of a narrative that had similarities with other Ontario communities that also celebrated their 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneer or "Loyalist" founders.<sup>13</sup> His histories argued that Waterloo County's origins derived from the German-Dutch Mennonites that made the "trek" from Pennsylvania to Waterloo County. He described these pioneers as honest, thrifty, and praised them for their ability to overcome the "the forces of nature."<sup>14</sup> While many Ontario communities applied these traits to their pioneer ancestors, Breithaupt also reminded his audiences of the German-

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<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga: A Revisionist Approach to Waterloo County's German Identity," *Ontario History*, 91, no. 2 (Autumn 1999): 136.

<sup>13</sup> Norman Knowles, *Inventing the Loyalists: The Ontario Loyalist Tradition and the Creation of Usable Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga," 141.

Mennonite heritage of Waterloo County's pioneers. Although associations between Germans and "the enemy" remained popular in 1920s Canada, Breithaupt constantly reminded audiences that the community's Germanic origins was no cause for concern as these pioneers were peaceful agriculturalists absolutely loyal to Britain like other pioneers.<sup>15</sup> Their ancestors may have been German, but they were also the "nation-building pioneers" that Anglo-Canada celebrated as well. Breithaupt's pioneer myth resonated with the rest of the Waterloo County's German community. Rather than the previous markers of "Busy Berlin's" localized German culture, the pioneer myth came to embody Waterloo County's localized German culture instead.

The pioneer myth succeeded because it celebrated the region's German culture in a way that Anglo-Canadians deemed acceptable. As a result, the myth continued to resonate among the region's German-Canadian Lutheran community throughout the subsequent decades.<sup>16</sup> This proved particularly true during the Second World War, when German-Canadian Lutherans had to prove their loyalty yet again. Another war with Germany threatened to revive the discrimination many experienced during the First World War and Lutheran pastors took a greater precaution than during the previous war to ensure that the same type of discrimination did not again occur. Pastors temporarily stopped preaching in German so as to not be accused of preaching in the language of "the enemy" and installed visibly patriotic symbols, such as flags and honour rolls, in their churches to prove their loyalty.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, pastors used the pioneer myth to once again reiterate that they should be seen as both German *and* Canadian. Carl Klinck, a professor at Waterloo College and member of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elmira, drew

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<sup>15</sup> Hayes, "From Berlin to the Trek of the Conestoga," 140.

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Ross Fair points out that the pioneer myth continues to resonate in modern Waterloo Region. See Ross Fair, "'Theirs was a deeper purpose': The Pennsylvania Germans of Ontario and the Craft of the Homemaking Myth," *Canadian Historical Review* 87, no. 4 (2006): 653-684.

<sup>17</sup> Elliot Worsfold, "Cast Down, But Not Forsaken: The Second World War Experience and Memory of German-Canadian Lutherans in Southwestern Ontario," *Ontario History* CVI, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 65-71.

explicitly on the pioneer myth in a 1939 article titled “Waterloo College and the Nazi Issue.” Klinck intended the article to act as an early argument against the possible discriminatory attacks he and others in Waterloo County could face on account of their ethnicity and faith. He wrote that that the Second World War once again revived the “falsehood, perpetuated since the Great War by...mistakenly patriotic enthusiasts, that Lutheranism and Pro-Germanism (now known as Nazi-ism) are synonymous.”<sup>18</sup> Klinck’s paper combatted these public perceptions by using historical and contemporary references framed in the pioneer myth. He noted that the 1931 census stated only six percent of Ontario’s Lutherans were born in Germany. He argued that even this minority was not cause for concern, as most of this group “are old people” who came to Canada as “youthful pioneers,” long before Hitler’s rise to power.<sup>19</sup> John Reble, a Waterloo County pastor, drew on similar themes in a 1939 speech that connected the area’s current membership with their “Loyalist” ancestors. He described how many Lutheran churches in Ontario originally formed as a result of the Loyalist migration to Canada and were at all times “loyal and faithful citizens of King and country.” The long history of Lutheranism in Canada demonstrated, according to Reble, that the church “is native to [Canadian] soil” and could therefore work in cooperation with the Canadian state.<sup>20</sup> Such sentiments helped convey their loyalty to Canada while also recognizing their German culture.

Waterloo County’s German culture remained intact during two world wars, largely thanks to Breithaupt’s pioneer myth and the local support for German institutions and culture. As Conzen reminds us, the “localization” of German culture “had a pragmatic purpose...to assert the immigrants’ claims to equal status with older comers within the nation’s family, to generate

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<sup>18</sup> Laurier Archives (hereafter LA), Carl Klinck fonds (hereafter CKF), Klinck Papers, 2.1.3 Waterloo College and the Nazi issue, 1.

<sup>19</sup> LA, CKF, Klinck Papers, “Nazi issue”, 1-3.

<sup>20</sup> LA, Eastern Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada fonds (hereafter ESF), Synod Convention Minutes, June 1939, 14.

their own foundation myths.”<sup>21</sup> In Waterloo County, the pragmatic purpose of the pioneer myth and other instances of German culture functioned to highlight how German-Canadians belonged to Canada just as any other ethnic group did. Although their ancestors may have migrated from Germany instead of the United Kingdom, Waterloo County’s German population believed they were just as loyal as their Anglo-Canadian neighbors. The world wars occasionally threatened this belief, but stories like the pioneer myth ensured that Waterloo County’s German reputation remained intact when DPs started to arrive in the late 1940s.

### **Organizing Postwar Relief and Sponsoring German DPs**

Helping Germany recover from the devastation of the Second World War emerged as the key issue in the immediate postwar period in Waterloo County. Years of war in Europe left many civilians homeless or in poverty. The extensive bombing campaign initiated by the British and Canadians meant many German cities, particularly those that engaged in war work, were almost bombed out of existence. Food proved scarce and many Germans found themselves facing an extensive humanitarian crisis.<sup>22</sup> Canadians felt obligated to help desperate Europeans recover from this poverty, but Waterloo County’s German Lutheran population felt as though they had a distinct obligation to help German DPs and refugees after the war ended in 1945. As fellow Germans and Lutherans, prominent pastors and laypeople in Waterloo County were compelled to raise money to alleviate the suffering of their coreligionists in Europe.

Publicity material and speeches from Waterloo County pastors made it clear that they expected their congregations to help raise enough money to send food and clothing overseas to

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<sup>21</sup> Conezen, “Mainstreams and Side Channels,” 8.

<sup>22</sup> On the human cost of the war, see R.M. Douglas, *Orderly and Humane: The Expulsion of the Germans after the Second World War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012).

ailing DPs. The editors of the *Canada Lutheran*, a prominent local magazine, called upon its readers to “extend the hand of practical compassion and encouragement” to suffering Germans. Published just one month after the war ended, they told their audience to ignore the wartime patriotism that vilified the German people. “We have had enough of harsh accusations and lofty criticism springing from sheer prejudice,” they concluded. “The people of Europe crave our understanding.”<sup>23</sup> John Reble made their religious obligations to Germany abundantly clear during his a 1946 speech to his fellow Lutherans. He told the pastors and laymen in attendance that the “YOUNG CHURCH in America must save the OLD CHURCH in Europe, so desolate, so shamefully weak and tired, bleeding out of many wounds.”<sup>24</sup> The Reverend Nils Willison agreed. He wrote that while other religious organizations “are organized to help immigrants... Surely we Lutherans must not – we dare not – leave it to them to look after our Lutheran people.”<sup>25</sup> Lutherans had a special debt to their brethren overseas that North America’s Lutheran community needed to fulfill due to their shared faith.

Ethnic bonds also motivated Waterloo County’s Germans to help their brethren across the sea. In fact, sympathetic attitudes towards Germany caused some German-Canadian Lutherans to express anti-American and anti-British sentiments in their calls to help Germany recover from the war. The mainstream and secular presses often ignored the fact that Germany required relief primarily as a result of destruction caused by the Allied armies. Pastors in Waterloo County, however, put the blame solely on the devastating American and British bombing campaigns. Paul Eydt, a Kitchener pastor, described DPs as “the 12 million people of various countries in

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<sup>23</sup> “Understanding is a Virtue,” *Canada Lutheran*, June 1945, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Minutes of the 84<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, 18-21 June 1946, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> LA, ESF, 30 Canadian Lutheran Council (hereafter CLC), Folder 30.4.2.2.1., Nils Willison to Pastors, February 1949.

Europe [that] have been uprooted due to POST WAR ALLIED ACTION.”<sup>26</sup> Their own identities as Germans provided them unique insight into the plight facing Germans overseas. Unlike their Canadian counterparts, they did not see Germany’s needy as members of a former “enemy nation,” but rather as people deserving help and acceptance. They resented any vilification of the German people, and encouraged their pastors to ignore popular images of the German “enemy” in favour of a more sympatric image of a people recovering from a cruel war.

Local Lutherans certainly had the ethnic and religious motivation to help German DPs, but they did not necessarily have the bureaucratic structure in which to do so. Germany’s humanitarian crisis was so great that it would require more than just one or two congregations raising money to alleviate European suffering. In order to pool their resources, Waterloo County Lutherans met at Kitchener’s St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in January 1946 to discuss providing relief and aid to Germany. The meeting ultimately helped “to continue efforts towards reopening the channels for relief to Germany and other nations.” United behind the common purpose of helping DPs, the meeting prompted local Lutherans to “find ways and means for cooperating in sending food and clothing to Europe.”<sup>27</sup> This initial partnership among Waterloo County Lutherans led to a subsequent meeting with other Canadian Lutherans in Ottawa two months later to discuss “relief work in Europe, particularly on behalf of sufferers in former enemy countries.”<sup>28</sup> As fellow Germans, they expressed a natural affiliation towards helping Germany, even if Canadians still considered it an “enemy country.” As individual communities or congregations they would be unable to meet Germany’s humanitarian crisis. As a united group, however, they had a greater chance of reaching Lutherans across Canada to accomplish

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<sup>26</sup> Paul Eydt, “The Stranger Within Our Gates... The D.P.,” *Canada Lutheran*, February 1949, p. 2.

<sup>27</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.2.4.2, Resolution adopted at the Joint Meeting of Pastors of the Missouri and Canada Synod in St. Peters (sic) Church, Kitchener, 18 January 1946.

<sup>28</sup> Nils Willison, “Rolling Echoes,” *Canada Lutheran*, April 1946, p. 12.

their fundraising goals. Waterloo County Lutherans established the Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) during the meeting and nominated Lloyd Schaus, a Waterloo Lutheran Seminary graduate, as its first executive director. The CLWR formed with the mandate to help Germany recover from the war by sending food, clothing, and other resources overseas.<sup>29</sup> In December 1946, the CLWR decided to expand its mandate to include immigration reform as well as relief work. They decided that “due to the widespread interest of European peoples to move to Canada, and due to the fact that many of these are Lutheran, it was decided that a Canadian Lutheran body or committee should undertake to look into the matter of immigration.”<sup>30</sup> The CLWR’s formation gave Canadian Lutherans the beginning of a bureaucratic organization that would allow them to conduct nation-wide level fundraisers in order to provide relief for Germany. It gave Canadian Lutherans the means to which distribute relief and other goods overseas and hopefully alleviate some of the hunger, homelessness, and poverty many Germans found themselves in after the war.

Helping DPs migrate to Canada, however, proved more difficult. While the federal government did not place any restrictions on shipping goods to former enemy countries after 1946, the government did place limitations on the types of DPs and refugees they would be admit to Canada. In this regard, the federal Canadian government worked closely with the United Nations and its International Refugee Organization (IRO) to determine which DPs would receive the opportunity to migrate abroad. Jewish victims of the Holocaust as well as other Europeans impacted by Nazi Germany’s military campaign, such as Latvians, Estonians, and other Eastern Europeans, received attention from the IRO and the Canadian government about possible opportunities to relocate. As of 1946, Canadian immigration policy allowed Canadian citizens to

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<sup>29</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.2.4.2, Canadian Lutheran World Relief Meeting Minutes, 28 March 1946.

<sup>30</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.2.4.2, Resolutions Passed at CLWR General Meeting, 5 December 1946.

sponsor their parents, siblings, or children to migrate to Canada. This policy happened to include people living in Europe's DP camps, and created a possible avenue for the CLWR to bring DPs to Canada.<sup>31</sup> CLWR officials encouraged its laypeople to participate in this "close relatives scheme" because it allowed their German-Canadian laity to reconnect with family members under a policy already approved by the federal government. In this sense, Canadian immigration policy worked in concert with the CLWR's ethnic goals. Lutherans eagerly wished to bring family members to Canada to escape Germany's poverty, and the Canadian government's policy allowed this to happen. Initially, the ethnic goals expressed by the CLWR seemed they could be met without difficulty.

However, the government failed to make it clear that not all Europeans in displaced persons camps were eligible for migration. The IRO did not permit the movement of all DPs without restriction. In fact, the organization barred any DPs with German citizenship from migrating outside of Germany. The IRO still considered individuals with German citizenship "the enemy" and regarded these DPs as Germany's responsibility, not theirs.<sup>32</sup> As a result, approximately one-third of the initial requests made by German Canadians to bring their relatives to Canada were rejected because they asked to sponsor relatives with German citizenship.<sup>33</sup> The IRO's restrictions, and the Canadian government's willingness to follow them, ultimately hampered the CLWR's initial attempts to encourage German migration to Canada.

The CLWR responded to these restrictions by sending several delegations to Ottawa in an effort to convince the government to admit German DPs regardless of whether they held German citizenship or not. Several Waterloo County pastors attended these meetings, including Schaus, Eydt, and Willison, in order to establish the political capital necessary to change the

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<sup>31</sup> Sauer, "A Matter of Domestic Policy," 239.

<sup>32</sup> LA, ESF, 30 CLC, Folder 30.4.2.2.1., Traugott Herzer to Sylvester Michelfelder, 10 May 1946.

<sup>33</sup> Sauer, 239.

government's legislation. They met with Senator William Euler, a former Kitchener mayor and fellow Lutheran, who subsequently encouraged his fellow senators to allow for greater German immigration.<sup>34</sup> The CLWR pastors also met with Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, who felt particularly obliged to help the CLWR due to his own connections to Waterloo County. Although King generally opposed liberalizing the government's immigration policies, a 1947 meeting with Eydt, whom King referred to as "a Minister in Kitchener," convinced him that "the door might be opened a little wider for refugees."<sup>35</sup>

These initial political connections allowed members of the CLWR to meet with other Canadian politicians and plead their case for immigration reform. Many government officials, however, privately held the same prejudices as the IRO. After six years of war, many MPs had little desire to actively help those with German citizenship, let alone help them migrate to Canada. Waterloo County Lutherans therefore had to demonstrate that German DPs could be counted on as loyal citizens, and not the ex-Nazis government officials believed them to be. In order to accomplish this lofty goal, CLWR delegates drew upon the pioneer myth. While the pioneer myth was previously used during the two world wars to prove their loyalty, Waterloo County members of the CLWR employed it to once again demonstrate that all Germans could be counted as good citizens in Canada. Their tactic worked, and sympathetic politicians explicitly drew on the pioneer myth in the House of Commons in an effort to convince their peers to liberalize their immigration policy. One MP, Walther Tucker, reminded his colleagues that "our finest immigrants have been those who came to us from the various countries of Europe, who are of German ethnic origin. We have in Canada literally hundreds of thousands of people who are

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<sup>34</sup> LA, ESF, 30 CLC, Folder 30.2.2., Minutes of the Committee on Immigration and Resettlement (Eastern Division) of the Canada Committee of the LWF, 21 March 1949; Sauer, 248-249, 254.

<sup>35</sup> Diaries of William Lyon Mackenzie King (hereafter King Diary), 7 February 1947.

of that descent.”<sup>36</sup> J.A. MacKinnon, the Minister of Mines and Resources, also expressed sympathy for DPs based on these common cultural understandings of Germans as good pioneers. He described how his hometown “consisted of highland Scots and people of German origin,” he told the House.

“We did not know those people as anything but Canadians...In every way they were the best possible settlers and the best people we could have. They have made a great contribution to this country not only in western Ontario but all across Canada. I am very sympathetic to the suggestion that carefully selected people with that background should be allowed into Canada as soon as possible.”<sup>37</sup>

The notion of Germans as effective settlers proved to be a powerful discursive tool in which to argue for German DP immigration. Several MPs from across Canada vouched that farmers in their constituencies were overall satisfied with the quality of the DPs from other European countries that currently worked on their farms. Wilbert Thatcher, an MP from the CCF, stated that “if there is one feature of any governmental policy that I can agree with, it has been their bringing in of these farm workers.” In fact, Thatcher wished “they would extend this program a little further and allow our Canadians of German descent to bring in their relatives from Germany.” “In the past, Canada’s experience has been that the German people usually have made the best possible settlers,” he argued. “They have made good agriculturalists. I think we are missing a bet if we do not take advantage of the huge pool of manpower in Germany at present time.”<sup>38</sup> Of course, Thatcher recognized that any potential German immigrants “will have to be screened” so that they did not admit any Nazis into Canada. With this caveat aside, Thatcher reminded his colleagues that “we are in the process of building a nation, and the manpower that we choose today is going to determine, to some extent at least, the kind of nation we shall have in the future...There are many reasons why we should change our present policy towards

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<sup>36</sup> House of Commons Debates, 2 May 1947, p. 2704.

<sup>37</sup> House of Commons Debates, 24 June 1948, p. 5776.

<sup>38</sup> House of Commons Debates, 3 December 1949, p. 2682.

Germans.”<sup>39</sup> If immigrants determined Canada’s future, Thatcher’s speech made it clear that Canada’s future needed to consist of immigrants who had could politically and culturally conform to Canada while contributing to it through their hard work. The pioneer myth and the CLWR’s lobbying helped German DPs appear as ideal immigrants who could overcome associations with their Nazi past.

The CLWR and their political allies succeeded in reforming Canadian immigration policy. Their advocacy resulted in the Canadian government issuing PC 1606, which granted the CLWR’s request that DPs with German citizenship could now migrate to Canada. A few months later, the government expanded the order by formally no longer classifying German nationals as “enemy aliens.”<sup>40</sup> The CLWR’s unwavering support for immigration reform and their use of the pioneer myth helped skeptical MPs change their attitude towards accepting German DPs in Canada. While previously associated with Nazism in the popular consciousness, and legally referred to as enemy aliens, the pioneer myth highlighted the positive associations often connected to their German ethnicity. German DPs were not “enemy aliens,” but rather “loyal pioneers” just waiting to come to Canada. PC 1606 helped the CLWR accomplish their goal and opened up the possibility for German DPs to start new lives in Canada.

### **Welcoming the Initial Wave of Displaced Persons**

Displaced Persons started to arrive in Waterloo County by early 1948, and increased in the early 1950s thanks to the government’s liberalized immigration policies. The arrival of so many DPs dramatically changed the demographics of Lutheranism in Ontario, and Waterloo

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<sup>39</sup> House of Commons Debates, 3 December 1949, p. 2682.

<sup>40</sup> Howard Margolian, *Unauthorized Entry: The Truth About Nazi War Criminals in Canada, 1946-1956* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 89-90.

County in particular. The Canada Synod, the largest body of organized Lutherans in Ontario, increased their membership from approximately 38,000 to 64,000 between 1950 and 1960 as a result of DP migration.<sup>41</sup> Many German DPs who chose to live in Waterloo County eventually settled in downtown Kitchener. This is, in part, because the CLWR bought several apartments to function as temporary housing for DPs to occupy before they found stable housing. As the concentration of DPs living downtown was quite high, Lutheran congregations located nearby experienced the largest demographic changes at their churches. Many DPs overwhelmingly chose to attend the nearby St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church as their place of worship. Its downtown location certainly made it an appealing congregation to many recent arrivals, but it was the frequency with which St. Peter's offered German-language services that motivated most DPs to attend. Although St. Peter's pastor, the Reverend Albert Lotz, suspended German language services during the Second World War, he decided to reintroduce them once the threat of discrimination during the war passed. By 1948, Lotz decided to offer German-language services once again.<sup>42</sup> The decision proved timely and happened to coincide with the first DP arrivals in Waterloo County.

As German immigration to Waterloo County increased in the early 1950s, so too did the number of German DPs that attended St. Peter's on a weekly basis. Rather than aiming to assimilate these newcomers, Lotz and the church council at St. Peter's tried to create a welcoming environment for the newly arrived DPs. The dramatic increase of congregants wishing to speak German instead of English prompted Lotz to increase the number of German-language services each week. Moreover, the church council authorized the congregation to

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<sup>41</sup> Carl Raymond Cronmiller, *A History of the Lutheran Church in Canada* (Toronto: Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Canada, 1961), 242.

<sup>42</sup> The church council solidified this choice and agreed to offer more German services if Lotz deemed necessary in LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter's, reel 17, Church Council Minutes, 12 December 1948.

purchase more German-language prayer books to meet the linguistic needs of the church's newcomers in 1951.<sup>43</sup> DPs therefore did not remain a fringe part of St. Peter's, but became incorporated into the congregation as valued members. While English services remained popular at the congregation, Lotz ensured that German-speaking members received equal attention and importance in his church. In 1952, Lotz "promoted" several German DPs to high-ranking members of the congregation. The church customarily stationed members of its church council outside the church's doorstep each Sunday to greet members of the congregation as they entered the building. As no German DPs served on the church council, Lotz realized that this weekly tradition essentially excluded German DPs. He therefore recruited several DPs to act as greeters alongside their English counterparts, ensuring that both German and English speakers received representation each Sunday.<sup>44</sup> In doing so, Lotz demonstrated that recent German arrivals were just as important as the elite members of the church council. Lotz's effort to include German immigrants in the "welcoming party" suggests he wanted a "unified congregation" that was not overtly divided along class or linguistic lines. Lotz achieved internal unity in a way that empowered and elevated the status of St. Peter's German DPs rather than seeking to assimilate them. Lotz and his congregation performed a careful balancing act that resulted in churches unified by a shared respect for both German and English speakers.

An ability to speak German remained an important qualifier for leadership roles within Waterloo County congregations. St. Peter's placed importance on the ability to speak German when they sought to hire another secretary to help meet the demands of the growing congregation. The church council emphasized that the first requirement of the new job would be

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<sup>43</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter's, reel 17, Church Council Minutes, 9 July 1951; LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter's, reel 18, Church Council Minutes, 10 February 1952; LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter's, reel 13, Annual Congregation Meeting, 12 February 1956.

<sup>44</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter's, reel 17, Church Council Minutes, 11 February 1952.

proficiency in both English and German. The church council hired Mrs. Michael Gondosch, as she was “particularly suited for the position because of her facility with both languages.”<sup>45</sup> It was important to the church council that those they hired to represent the congregation also embody their German-English members.

Not all congregations offered German-language services quite as frequently as large congregations like St. Peter’s. While Lotz preached several German-language services a week, other Waterloo County congregations offered a service perhaps once a week or several times a month. Yet, this does not mean that these congregations did not place an equal importance on making German DPs feel welcome in their community. The Reverend C.S. Roberts at St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church in Waterloo, for example, took time to visit the homes of recently arrived German DPs in order to encourage them to attend the church. Although St. John’s operated primarily in the English language, Roberts still conducted monthly German services that he hoped to grow thanks to the DPs. “Though not accustomed to attending services regularly in their home land,” Roberts acknowledged, “many who are negligent might become regular attendants at our German service.”<sup>46</sup> Regardless of its popularity, speaking German remained an important aspect of church life at these congregations. Their pastors invested time and resources in maintaining the German language even if English was the dominant language of that particular congregation. The localization of German culture proved strong enough in Waterloo County that even smaller congregations like St. John’s could not ignore it.

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<sup>45</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, reel 13, Church Council Minutes, 16 November 1959; LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, reel 13, Church Council Minutes, 14 December 1959.

<sup>46</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.1.1.176, St. John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church Annual Report for 1964.

## Gatekeeping in Waterloo County

Lutheran congregations in Waterloo County provided spaces for German DPs to continue to speak and worship in the German language. Outside of the closed confines of the church, however, German DPs encountered secular institutions and people in Waterloo County that sought to assimilate them into Canadian life. Just like other urban cities in Canada, Waterloo County had charitable organizations that aimed to provide DPs with services such as English-language classes and advice on finding jobs and permanent housing. The Kitchener-Waterloo Council for Friendship (KWCF) was one of these institutions that interacted with German DPs alongside the community's established Lutheran communities. The KWCF and their volunteers fall under what historian Franca Iacovetta classifies as a "gatekeeper" institution due to their primary goal of hoping to assimilate immigrants.<sup>47</sup> The KWCF started in a very similar fashion to other "gatekeeping" organizations throughout Canada. Muriel Clement, a member of Waterloo County's English community and the wife of former Kitchener mayor William Clement, founded the KWCF at the local YWCA in 1937 as an "international club" for other middle-class women in Waterloo County.<sup>48</sup> The club originally functioned as a way for elite women to discuss culture "relating to the new and old world – music, travelogues, films and stunts." In the postwar period, the organization broadened its scope to include philanthropic work among "newcomers with problems of employment, housing, obtaining furniture, giving advice, [and finding] their new way of in Canada."<sup>49</sup> It hosted English-language classes, offered cooking lessons, and sponsored

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<sup>47</sup> Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers*, xii, 10-12, 19.

<sup>48</sup> English and McLaughlin, *Kitchener*, 157-158.

<sup>49</sup> University of Waterloo Special Collections & Archives (hereafter UW), Kitchener-Waterloo Council of Friendship Papers (hereafter KWCFP), History File, K.W. Council of Friendship, 16 March 1969.

different “folk” or “multicultural” events where newcomers could showcase dancing, music, and food from Europe.<sup>50</sup> At its core, the KWCF and its employees had the ultimate goal of assimilating DPs into mainstream Canadian culture. Clement made this mandate clear to all DPs that participated in KWCF events. “We are a melting pot, and privileged to be part of it,” she wrote. The KWCF wished to “assimilate not merely integrate.”<sup>51</sup> Although well-intentioned, the institution sought to undermine the German ethnicities of newcomers in favour of a common Canadian identity. Unlike the Lutheran church, which provided a space for German DPs to preserve their ethnicity and language, the KWCF aimed to assimilate German DPs into mainstream Canadian culture.

Encouraging German DPs to speak English instead of German composed the bulk of the KWCF’s time. Learning how to speak English certainly had practical purposes. KWCF employees recognized that DPs would need to learn English if they hoped to advance their job prospects, gain a Canadian education, and eventually converse with their children who eagerly embraced the English language. However, their campaign to increase the German language had political intentions as well. Gatekeepers saw it as their duty to transform recently arrived DPs into Canadians indistinguishable from the rest of society. As Clement openly admitted, language “is the great stumbling block to integration,” and the sooner DPs spoke English the sooner that they could become assimilated Canadians.<sup>52</sup> Language proved to be a key marker of difference not only because it separated DPs from the English mainstream, but also because it encouraged DPs to remain within their ethnic communities instead of the broader Canadian populace. Moreover, gatekeepers believed they needed to “de-program” DPs from the fascist and communist countries they often migrated from. They needed to learn the language of democracy

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<sup>50</sup> Iacovetta, chapter 6.

<sup>51</sup> UW, KWCFP, History File, K.W. Council of Friendship, 16 March 1969.

<sup>52</sup> UW, KWCFP, History File, K.W. Council of Friendship, 16 March 1969.

and freedom instead of totalitarianism, and the English language provided the way to do this. Learning English would not only allow DPs to speak like Canadians, but to also learn their values.<sup>53</sup>

The KWCF offered several different classes for DPs that encouraged the English language and promoted Anglo-Canadian values. Even seemingly innocent classes and clubs encouraged DP assimilation. W.H. Mertens, a volunteer teacher at the KWCF, encouraged DPs to use their English-language skills to also increase their fluency in civic affairs. In 1957, Mertens and Clement created a social hour called the “Canadian Affairs Discussion Group.” They envisioned the group as a place to discuss current and global events to help turn newcomers into informed citizens. Mertens decided that the group should play host not only to immigrants, but also to native-born Canadians. In this sense, immigrants would improve their English and also learn the duties of citizenship from already established Canadians, rather than only socializing with their own ethnic group.<sup>54</sup> Thanks to staff members like Mertens, the KWCF was not politically neutral spaces. Learning English functioned as more than just a utilitarian necessity. English represented an opportunity for German DPs to not only learn the language of North America, but also its values. Unlike the Lutheran congregations these DPs attended on the weekend, the KWCF placed no importance on retaining German. English, they believed, was both a practical necessity as well as the path to good citizenship. Unlike their Lutheran churches, German DPs found that gatekeeper organizations sought to dismantle their German language and culture in favour of a single conformist culture based around the English language.

Yet, the high concentration of German DPs in Waterloo County complicated gatekeeper efforts to encourage the use of the English language. As DPs could speak German at their

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<sup>53</sup> Iacovetta, 14-15.

<sup>54</sup> UW, KWCFP, Notebook File, Report of Ed. Comm. of C. of F. at Executive Meeting, 12 May 1957.

churches, clubs, and occasionally at work, German DPs had few reasons to obtain anything other than a basic knowledge of the English language. In the mid-1950s, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce contacted its Kitchener branch to seek their advice on integrating DPs into Canadian society. Kitchener, with its historic and contemporary relationship with immigration, seemed well suited to answer the Ontario Chamber of Commerce's questions on immigration. The organization hoped that its Kitchener branch could help "prepare a master plan or pilot plan on integration of newcomers to this country" that could be tested in Ontario communities and perhaps, if successful, used across Canada.<sup>55</sup> The chamber's plan proved ill-advised right from the beginning, particularly given the KWCF's trouble successfully assimilating German DPs. Regardless, the chamber appointed Joseph Connell, a member of Kitchener's Anglo-Canadian community, as the director of the plan. In 1957, however, Connell publicly dissolved the committee looking into DP integration, as he "could not present any plan since the city was failing in turning newcomers into Canadians."<sup>56</sup> Connell expressed dismay over his discovery that DPs could "barely speak English" even "after being in Kitchener four or five years." "A serious situation exists in Kitchener," he remarked. "I was amazed at how little is being done."<sup>57</sup>

Connell's public resignation triggered a small controversy in Waterloo County, as members of the committee freely shared their thoughts on Kitchener's "failure" to assimilate DPs with the local press. Their inability to force German DPs to stop speaking German sat at the crux of the committee's frustrations and failures. The committee found that "many of the newcomers are not too anxious to speak English except under dire necessity, and we find a

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<sup>55</sup> "Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told," *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

<sup>56</sup> "Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told," *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

<sup>57</sup> "Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told," *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

distinct trend on the part of many of them to retreat to the comfort and security of using their own language.”<sup>58</sup> Waterloo County’s established German-Canadian population, as well as the density of German DPs, essentially allowed DPs to continue speaking their language that would otherwise be eroded in communities with a larger Anglo-Canadian population. While investigating the degree to which DPs assimilated, Connell found evidence that the German language actually thrived among DPs. He resentfully noted that he received a request from a German ethnic club asking permission to use the local YMCA to host their meetings. “We had offered them the free use of our building, our pool, our sports facilities...but I couldn’t go for that,” Connell replied.<sup>59</sup> Gatekeepers in Waterloo County were supposed to be assimilating DPs into their organizations, and yet this request showed signs of the exact opposite occurring. German-language groups, it appeared, were trying to “take over” Anglo-Canadian institutions like the YMCA. Contrary to Connell’s gatekeeping goals, the German language seemed to be growing stronger rather than weaker.

In their condemnation of Kitchener’s German DPs, Connell and the rest of the committee often drew direct links between the difficulties in integrating German DPs and Waterloo County’s established German-Canadian population. G.E. Eastman, one of the committee’s members, believed that Waterloo County’s ethnic associations needed to “explain what their objectives were” in light of the region’s failure to “Canadianize” its newcomers. Connell proved equally skeptical about the role of current German ethnic clubs in Waterloo County. Throughout his investigation, one ethnic association approached Connell and asked him to join their association and offered to teach him German. Connell admitted that their offer was “half in fun,

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<sup>58</sup> “Survey 200 Groups For Integration Data,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 21 February 1957.

<sup>59</sup> “Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

half in fellowship, but is it a trend?”<sup>60</sup> The gatekeepers worried that Waterloo County was actually becoming more German as a result of the DPs. The committee generally hoped that the Canadian education system would solve the question of DP assimilation, even if they could not. By speaking English at school, the committee hoped the children of DPs would become fluent in English and stop speaking German. However, one committee member noted pessimistically that Waterloo County’s current German-Canadian population proved that this was not true. He described how “older people, born in this country, who live in rural areas and still talk with a strong accent” proved that the community had more generally failed at assimilating current and previous generations of immigrants.<sup>61</sup>

The CLWR and local Lutherans seemed partially to blame for this trend. Connell concluded that the current DPs in Waterloo County could be divided into two groups. The first group consisted “of people who chose to come to this country,” like the Hungarian refugees of 1956. This group, he believed, showed positive signs of integrating into Anglo-Canadian cultural norms. The second group, however, consisted of DPs “who came because of war, because they were induced to come, because of relatives. They seem to feel as long as they have a roof over their heads and eat that is their only concern.”<sup>62</sup> This latter category of course referenced the programs sponsored by the CLWR. These DPs arrived through schemes that Waterloo County’s Lutherans used to bring their fellow Germans overseas and, in Connell’s mind, served to strengthen German culture in the area. The resiliency of the German language led Connell to believe that “it may be best to follow the English idea of handling immigrants.” He suggested

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<sup>60</sup> “Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

<sup>61</sup> “Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

<sup>62</sup> “Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

that when “large groups” of immigrants arrived, the government “put them into camps and teach them English for three or four months. Then when they’ve learned the language, and been clothed and fed well, let them out.”<sup>63</sup> Connell’s harsh vision represents an extreme version of a coercive Canadian nationalism that Waterloo County’s German-Canadian Lutherans fought against. Connell wanted to forcibly stamp out the German language through imprisonment, whereas local Lutherans worked to maintain a healthy balance of German and English in their congregations. Connell’s views represented those of an Anglo-Canadian outsider who ignored the unique German traditions in Waterloo County.

German Canadians in Waterloo County responded to Connell’s report and public airing of grievances with equal passion. The ethnic bonds between German DPs and German-Canadian residents ensured that Connell’s view did not achieve hegemonic status in Waterloo County. The German Canadians that shared their views with the press refuted Connell’s assertion that Waterloo County somehow failed at assimilating their DPs. One letter to *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record* questioned Connell’s conclusion entirely. “Has the plan really failed or has it failed only in the opinion of those who presented it to the Kitchener Chamber of Commerce directors?”<sup>64</sup> One letter drew, much to Connell’s chagrin, on Waterloo County’s German past to prove their point. “New Canadians of years ago who chose Kitchener for their place of residence helped make our community the envy of many other cities. I am sure those who have arrived in the past five or six years will do likewise.”<sup>65</sup> Clement also rejected the committee’s conclusions. As the KWCF’s leader, she took personal offense to his assertion that they failed to assimilate

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<sup>63</sup> “Kitchener Plan to Integrate New Canadians Fails. C of C Told,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 20 February 1957.

<sup>64</sup> Canuck, “Letter to the Editor – Is It a Failure?” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 22 February 1957.

<sup>65</sup> Canuck, “Letter to the Editor – Is It a Failure?” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 22 February 1957.

immigrants. She therefore defended herself and the KWCF by drawing on the discourses of postwar democratic values that gatekeepers elsewhere commonly expressed.

“Our government presents Canada to Europeans as a land of opportunities where they will be welcomed, be free and enjoy the benefits of free enterprise among people who want them and are anxious to integrate them. We cannot think that Canadians would expect them to live in camps and be ‘let out’ when they have learned the language. This is absolutely incompatible with our idea of democracy and individual freedom to think and speak as we please within the bounds of law and morals.”<sup>66</sup>

Despite her personal goal of assimilating German DPs, Waterloo County’s German traditions made it difficult for gatekeepers like Clement to uniformly reject the desire on behalf of DPs to continue speaking German. Clement wrote that trying to eliminate the German “presents a real challenge to us,” particularly without disrespecting “the Pennsylvania Dutch immigrants who helped make this the admirable community it has become, and whose descendants’ German, to which we do not object.”<sup>67</sup> While she and Connell agreed in principal that assimilation was desirable, the pluralistic discourses in Waterloo County prevented her from embracing Connell’s more extreme and hardline approach.

Local legends like the pioneer myth made it difficult for community members like Clement, despite their assimilative goals, to fully embrace the hardline approaches of outsiders like Connell. Just as it had in generations past, the pioneer myth continued to be used in Waterloo County to help German immigrations feel at home. As a group of DPs who arrived in North America with very poor English skills, little money, and possible Nazi or “enemy” ties, DPs did not “belong” in a society that stressed Canadian conformity. German DPs were clearly “outsiders.” However, the immigrant, and specifically German, history of Waterloo County created a unique situation that allowed German DPs to eschew this outsider status. As fellow

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<sup>66</sup> “More Activity by Canadian-Born People Urged Toward Immigrants,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 23 February, 1957.

<sup>67</sup> “More Activity by Canadian-Born People Urged Toward Immigrants,” *The Kitchener-Waterloo Record*, 23 February, 1957.

Germans, DPs could access popular myths Waterloo County that helped include them in the community.

The pioneer myth provided a cultural framework for gatekeepers to situate German DPs and prove to men like Connell that, perhaps gradually, German DPs would become good citizens. The pioneer myth provided an important reminder that Germans could, and historically did, contribute to Canadian national life after the initial period of settlement. In 1957, Andrew E. Thompson, a member of the Department of Citizenship, tried to combat the anti-immigrant sentiment in Ontario by drawing on the province's Loyalist history. He encouraged Ontarians to stop associating all European immigrants with "displaced persons" that could pose a threat to their job security. Instead, Thompson advocated that Ontarians view DPs as "the same as the United Empire Loyalists. They came here under political pressure," just like the DPs that fled communism from Europe. He furthermore noted the irony that Ontarians felt some discomfort over the number of European immigrants, but that "we feel secure about the British, Irish or Scottish newcomer...yet they are all newcomers aren't they?"<sup>68</sup> Clement usefully capitalized on Thompson's remarks and modified them for her local Waterloo County audience. The Loyalists or the "Irish" meant very little to Waterloo County's predominantly German population. Clement therefore repeated Thompson's remarks but broadened them to reference Waterloo County's German and "Pennsylvania Dutch" history. She noted, for instance, that "these new citizens have had enough faith in Canada to decide to make their homes here – as did our ancestors from Germany, England, Scotland, Switzerland, etc. These are the people who will help fulfill our destiny as a nation."<sup>69</sup> While Thompson addressed a general Ontario audience, Clement's remarks could not ignore Waterloo County's German past. The strong localization of German

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<sup>68</sup> UW, KWCFP, Newsclippings File, "Immigrants Are Vital to Expanding Labor Force, Canadian Club Told," Unknown, February 1957.

<sup>69</sup> UW, KWCFP, History File, K.W. Council of Friendship, 16 March 1969.

culture forced her to acknowledge the reality of the community's German ethnicity. Clement had to grant Waterloo County's German forebears the same status bestowed on other settlers in Ontario.

Stories like the pioneer myth helped German DPs feel welcome in Waterloo County. This opportunity, however, was not available to all postwar immigrants. Specifically, Waterloo County's nonwhite immigrants faced barriers that German DPs did not as a result of their race. As an immigrant aid society, the KWCF theoretically helped all newcomers to Waterloo County. Yet, their records indicate that the majority of their resources helped European rather than Asian or Caribbean immigrants. For instance, the KWCF initially decided to award a university scholarship to one "Dutch East Indies student" but subsequently rescinded the offer when her principal suggested that the scholarship go to a white student instead.<sup>70</sup> Such instances contradict and demonstrate the limits of the KWCF's declarations of tolerance. While the organization proudly boasted that its membership included "people from all national groups, community groups, service clubs and women's organizations," Clement simultaneously stated that "newcomers from Europe are especially welcome" within the KWCF.<sup>71</sup>

European immigrants, such as German DPs, furthermore could only relate to stories like the pioneer myth as a result of their racial status as whites. Popular racial stereotypes in postwar Canada held that only white Canadians could claim the status as "pioneers" or "settlers." Japanese Canadians, for instance, could not craft a similar pioneer myth that focused on Anglo-conformity and loyalty because many English Canadians saw the Japanese as inherently "unassimilable." Regardless of how long the Japanese lived in Canada, English Canadians believed them too racially distinct and tied to their homeland to ever fully become "Canadian."

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<sup>70</sup> UW, KWCFP, Notebook File, Minutes of Meeting, 16 September 1963.

<sup>71</sup> UW, KWCFP, History File, K.W. Council of Friendship, 16 March 1969.

Even though Japanese Canadian families may have lived in Canada for several generations, English-Canadian society largely saw the Japanese as temporary “sojourners,” not permanent “settlers.”<sup>72</sup> As the pioneer myth was tied explicitly to settlement, Japanese Canadians could not cultivate a similar myth that tied their community to Canada’s founding. With such popular and dominant discourses on race, nonwhite Canadians could not access the same Anglo-Canadian narratives of loyalty and conformity as easily as German immigrants in Waterloo County. The success of the pioneer myth ultimately hinged on Germans’ ability to conform to an English-Canadian narrative of the past due to their racial status as white.

### **The KWCF as a German Organization**

The strong localization of German culture in Waterloo County further undermined gatekeeper attempts to assimilate German DPs. As Conzen notes, one of the primary indications of a localized immigrant culture is the ability for immigrants to obtain high-ranking positions in the community’s social and cultural institutions.<sup>73</sup> As more DPs arrived in Waterloo County, the more previous German DPs and established German-Canadian Lutherans became involved with the KWCF. Although the institution remained under Clement’s control, increased participation from Waterloo County’s German community helped to undermine her assimilationist goals, even if the KWCF did not recognize it. In an effort to promote assimilation among younger DPs, the KWCF created a series of university scholarships for DP students currently in high school. University-level education, the KWCF believed, promoted assimilation as it reinforced the English language and promoted economic mobility. DP students could qualify for the award if

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<sup>72</sup> Aya Fujiwara, *Ethnic Elites and Canadian Identity: Japanese, Ukrainians, and Scots, 1919-1971* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 47.

<sup>73</sup> Conzen, 6-7.

they attended a Waterloo County high school and showed promise of attending university. They deliberately distributed the awards to students who had a strong knowledge of the English language, which conveyed to the KWCF their desire to assimilate. The scholarship requirements stipulated that the DP student submit several essays in English to the scholarship committee if they lived in Canada for less than five years. If they expressed a fluent knowledge of English, they remained in the applicant pool and had an opportunity to win a KWCF scholarship to attend university in Ontario.<sup>74</sup>

The KWCF intended their scholarships to reward young DP students for their willingness to assimilate into Canadian social norms. Ironically, the awards simultaneously created bonds between Waterloo County's established German-Canadian community and German DP newcomers. The KWCF scholarships required extensive fundraising campaigns in order to raise enough money to offer a variety of scholarships to numerous DP students each year. Thus, KWCF members contacted some of Waterloo County's elite families and businesses in an attempt to secure finances for their scholarships. These community leaders, however, often happened to be members of successful German-Canadian families. For instance, the prominent Kaufman family donated enough money to create a new scholarship titled the "Mrs. A.R. Kaufman Scholarship." This money sponsored Ute Lischke, a German DP to study modern languages at the University of Waterloo. Similarly, the Schwaben Sick Benefit Society sponsored Waltraut Schork to study modern languages at the University of Toronto.<sup>75</sup> Although the KWCF intended these scholarships to promote assimilation, they actually generated greater contact between Waterloo County's German-Canadian population and recent German DPs. The KWCF, and gatekeeper organizations more generally, always feared that immigrants would use

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<sup>74</sup> UW, KWCFP, Scholarship Fund File, Kitchener-Waterloo Council of Friendship Scholarship Fund, 22 March 1962.

<sup>75</sup> UW, KWCFP, Scholarship Fund File, 1966 Scholarship Winners – Council of Friendship, n.d. 1966.

their institutions to promote ethnic culture. By asking prominent German-Canadian for funds to help German DP students, the KWCF inadvertently caused their scholarship program to facilitate bonds between two generations of Germans.

As the KWCF operated on a largely volunteer basis, some of their volunteers happened to overlap with members of the local German Lutheran community. In an effort to increase attendance at their English classes, the KWCF started to advertise its classes on German radio stations and at Lutheran churches with large German DP populations. The advertisement campaign worked. Not only did enrollment in the KWCF's English classes increase, but it also generated interest in the program among the community's German-Canadian population. As enrollment in English classes grew, so did the number of children the KWCF had to watch while their mothers took English classes. In 1962, "ladies from the different Lutheran parishes" started to assist the KWCF's daycare program. Most notably, Gertrud Reble, John Reble's wife, started to volunteer and look after the children.<sup>76</sup> Reble's involvement with the KWCF increased in the following years after her introduction to the organization in early 1962. Her role in the organization soon expanded outside of looking after children and she became involved in the KWCF's English classes more generally. She joined the organization's network of women who helped prepare food for the organization's celebrations, such as Christmas parties and graduation ceremonies for the English classes. By 1965, Reble personally registered German DPs for KWCF English classes at the different Lutheran congregations in Waterloo County.<sup>77</sup> By participating in the KWCF, Reble and the other Lutheran volunteers managed to make the organization an extension of life at the church. They functioned as important intermediaries between DPs and their new host society, whether it was through attending German-language

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<sup>76</sup> UW KWCFP, Notebook File, Report Given to Education Comm. of C. of F., 22 March 1962.

<sup>77</sup> UW, KWCFP, Notebook File, Agenda, 13 January 1965.

services together at St. Peter's or by helping DPs learn basic English. Such actions served to undermine the essential goal of most gatekeepers: the explicit assimilation of a single homogenous ethnic group into mainstream society. With a large number of DPs and extensive interaction with established German-Canadian communities, gatekeepers found it difficult to fully assimilate German newcomers.

Gatekeepers found their efforts to regulate and assimilate German DPs severely complicated compared to other Canadian communities. The high concentration of German DPs in Waterloo County alongside the pre-existing population of German Lutherans hampered assimilative strategies that worked well elsewhere. Simply put, gatekeepers tried to enforce a Canadian culture that did not have hegemonic status in Waterloo County. Although the KWCF wished to assimilate German DPs, they found their heavy-handed attempts to do so insufficiently convincing. The localization of German culture furthermore allowed German DPs and German Canadians alike to subvert their gatekeeper aims. They turned the KWCF events into spaces that represented their own German heritage rather than the integrationist goals of the gatekeepers.

### **German Culture in Toronto and Waterloo County**

As Waterloo County essentially operated as the Lutheran capital of Ontario, Lutheran congregations in other communities often turned to the Lutheran leadership in Waterloo County for support when dealing with internal disputes. Waterloo County pastors became increasingly entangled in controversies in other communities in the 1950s and 1960s as more European DPs arrived. Unlike the welcoming atmosphere Waterloo County Lutherans provided German DPs, other congregations struggled to accept and embrace their brethren from across the sea. Ontario

communities simply did not have the strong localization of German culture that Waterloo County did, and Lutheran congregations in these communities struggled to incorporate DPs into their congregations. By examining tensions between Canadians and DPs in other congregations, the importance that localized German culture in Waterloo County played in combating assimilation becomes clear.

Waterloo County pastors C.T. Wetzstein and Horace Erdman first heard of tensions between DPs and Canadian Lutherans brewing in Toronto in the early 1950s. As the two pastors in charge of mission outreach, Wetzstein and Erdman learned that Toronto's Trinity Lutheran Church suffered as a congregation due to conflict between its Canadian-born members and recently arrived DPs. Trinity originally opened in 1935 as a result of Lutheran attempts to expand their influence outside of traditional Lutheran centers such as Waterloo County. Although initially founded as a German language congregation, the principal founders intended that the church would eventually switch to the English language as the congregation grew in size. Compared to other communities like Waterloo County, Toronto did not have a large number of German Lutheran immigrants that could support Trinity as an exclusively German church for the foreseeable future. Trinity's founders expected that Trinity, as a "mission church," would inevitably grow to attract English-speaking Canadians regardless of their ethnic heritage.<sup>78</sup> The arrival of so many DPs to postwar Toronto considerably complicated these plans. Trinity's pastor, the Reverend Albert Pollex, offered primarily English-language services as of the late 1940s, but increased attendance from German DPs in the 1950s caused German-language services to grow. The demand proved so great that Pollex hired William Goegginger, a German DP that worked as a pastor in Germany, to help him preach the increasing number of German

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<sup>78</sup> Concordia Historical Institute (hereafter CHI), Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953.

services. Attendance to the English-language services dwindled, and it initially appeared as though Trinity become a German, rather than English, church.

The sudden increase in German-language services led Pollex to worry “that the English group would lose out” to the German DPs. As large German services were contrary to Trinity’s original purpose, Pollex started to discourage attendance to German-language services at Trinity. He deliberately scheduled German-language services at undesirable and impractical times in the hopes that German DPs would attend English services instead. Moreover, several German DPs accused Pollex of misreporting the number of DPs that attended the German services. Pollex reported to Waterloo County pastors that these services were “poorly attended,” whereas German DPs claimed the number of congregants actually increased each week.<sup>79</sup>

German DPs voiced their concerns to Goegginger, and convinced him to push for greater DP representation within Trinity. In order to accomplish this goal, they had to empower the congregation’s German DPs and weaken Pollex’s power and stature as Trinity’s pastor. Goegginger proposed increasing the number of eligible voters in the congregation by confirming more German DPs as full members of the congregation. In July 1952, Goegginger put forward the names of several German DPs for voting membership. However, these men did not attend the congregational meeting and therefore could not be received and confirmed as voting members. The German congregants blamed Pollex for deliberately not notifying the DPs that they needed to be present at the meeting in order to be recognized as members. Privately, Pollex expressed concern about nominating so many German DPs for voting rights. He believed he needed to first

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<sup>79</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953.

to “ascertain whether their beliefs were truly Lutheran.”<sup>80</sup> Like other Anglo-Canadian gatekeepers, Pollex feared that the frequency with which German DPs lobbied for language rights signified that they wished to use the Lutheran church solely as a means to maintain their ethnic traditions. He worried that the German newcomers attended church to socialize with their fellow DPs rather than for the purpose of worship.<sup>81</sup> Giving German DPs the right to vote, and therefore the ability to shape the future of the congregation, consequently threatened Pollex’s ability to lead Trinity towards an English-speaking future.

Goegginger and the German DPs did not make the same mistake at the next congregational meeting in October 1952. Goegginger attended the congregational meeting with over twenty new German DPs eligible to become voting members at Trinity. Their attendance represented nothing short of a coup. Bolstered by the rise in German voters, a German DP spokesman immediately presented a motion requesting that the DP members of Trinity separate from Pollex and Trinity. They wished to form a *Dreieinigkeitsgemeinde* [Trinity congregation] of their own, with Goegginger as their pastor and German-language services granted the authority and frequency that Pollex so often denied them. Pollex and the English-speaking members of the church council would be dismantled and replaced with a German-speaking administration. Pollex and the English members of Trinity outright rejected the proposal. Their rejection caused around thirty German-speaking congregations to immediately leave the meeting

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<sup>80</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953; CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, A. Buszin to Herbert Mayer, 4 January 1953.

<sup>81</sup> Pollex’s concerns were the product of a broader concern about whether Lutheran DPs from Europe could truly adapt to and conform to North American Lutheran standards.

in protest, perhaps demonstrating that they would no longer be associated with Pollex's vision of Trinity one way or another.<sup>82</sup>

Trinity's German DPs followed their protest by sending a petition asking to form their own separate congregation to Erdman and Wetzstein in Waterloo County. As members of the missions board, they controlled the church's finances and ultimately decided which congregations would receive financial, and moral, support. The debacle at Trinity confused the two Waterloo County pastors, who in contrast managed to keep their Canadian and German DP members working in harmony. Wetzstein simply could not see how Pollex, Goegginger, and Trinity's English and German congregants could not worship peacefully together. Privately, Wetzstein blamed Pollex for creating trouble at Trinity. Unlike their own congregations, Pollex seemed to be creating controversy by meddling with the German-English traditions that produced harmonious congregations in Waterloo County. Wetzstein and Erdman personally visited Trinity in an effort to promote reconciliation and decrease animosity between the two sides. In his address to the congregation, Wetzstein promoted the vision of linguistic tolerance practiced by his congregation in Waterloo County. He told Trinity's English congregants "that a Christian should not be concerned too much about language but that we should be ready to serve people in every language and should make it possible that all people, no matter what their language is, might be able to hear the gospel."<sup>83</sup> Wetzstein and Erdman therefore created a "compromise" wherein Trinity had to remain as a single congregation, but grant its German congregants greater rights. They agreed to give Trinity's German population its own treasury and to move German language services from the early morning to the more popular 11:00am time

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<sup>82</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953; CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Buszin to Mayer, 4 January 1953.

<sup>83</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953.

slot. Henceforth, they agreed that Pollex would preach the English language service at 9:30am, and Goegginger would preach a German language service at 11:00am.<sup>84</sup> This decision was ratified at a November congregational meeting and received the congregation's overwhelming support. Thanks to Goegginger's efforts in the previous meetings, the voting membership of Trinity now consisted primarily of German DPs. Although Pollex and other English congregants voted against the motion, they were overwhelmed by the German voters.<sup>85</sup>

The compromise clearly favoured Trinity's German congregants at the expense of Pollex's authority. Although they had little choice but to accept the Wetzstein-Erdman Compromise, Pollex and other Canadian-born members of Trinity deeply resented the mission board's decision. Pollex subsequently wrote to the board and sarcastically thanked them for the money they provided to help Trinity's DP members. He rhetorically whether this money was "given to 'take in' the D.P's or was it given to 'have the D.P's take over'?"<sup>86</sup> The Wetzstein-Erdman Compromise, Pollex believed, showed that there were certain "strings attached" to this money that suggested he had to obey them, even if they undermined his authority. Pollex's wife Gertrude expressed equal outrage over the "embarrassing" compromise. She personally blamed Goegginger as the leader of the German DPs and gossiped that he "turns up his nose at our theologians, our Seminary, etc." She wondered whether Goegginger "and his people have any

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<sup>84</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953; CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Buszin to Mayer, 4 January 1953.

<sup>85</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, The D.P. Situation in Toronto, Canada, 4 February 1953; CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Buszin to Mayer, 4 January 1953.

<sup>86</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Albert Pollex to Frank Streufert and Mayer, 29 December 1952.

interest in us outside of our money and subsidies” and believed that the compromise set Trinity back “twenty years or more back in time if this situation continues.”<sup>87</sup>

The Pollex family shared the same assimilationist goals as other Anglo-Canadians in Toronto that sought to regulate postwar DPs. They prioritized speaking English and believed their success as a congregation was tied to all of its members speaking English, instead of remaining linguistically, and therefore culturally, divided. The same localization of German culture did not exist in Toronto, and thus DPs had a more difficult time combatting the assimilationist drive of Pollex and their Anglo-Canadian peers. Protecting the German language at Trinity, after all, officially came from Waterloo County pastors who did not fully understand why the language question proved so divisive in Toronto. One member of the mission board responded to the Trinity controversies by noting that “difficulties are bound to occur” when so many ethnicities live in close proximity. However, “among Christian people all difficulties should always be ironed out in a God pleasing manner” which the Wetzstein-Erdman Compromise seemed to fulfill.<sup>88</sup> For Waterloo County Lutherans, the best solution seemed to be imposing their own model of diversity on Trinity to solve its problems.

In contrast to the contentious relationship between Pollex and German DPs at Trinity, debates over language did not lead to the extensive congregational breakdown in Waterloo County. Lotz and his German-Canadian church council largely prevented any dissenters from mobilizing too much support because of the strong localization of German culture in Waterloo County. At St. Peter’s annual congregation meeting in 1957, one congregant voiced his concern that “a greater effort should be made to encourage more of the German members to make use of

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<sup>87</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Buszin to Mayer, 18 January 1953; CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Gertrude Pollex to Mayer, 11 January 1953.

<sup>88</sup> CHI, Board for Missions in North and South America Collection, Supplement 2, Box 14, DP Work Folder, Mayer to Adam Ulrich, 5 January 1953.

the English Services.” Lotz rejected the layman’s position and stated that the German immigrants had ample opportunity to partake in English life at the church if they so chose. He replied that “the two groups get along harmoniously and that every effort should be made to appraise the situation objectively.”<sup>89</sup> A few congregants occasionally expressed their uncertainty over St. Peter’s willingness to continue its German-English model. Peeter Vanker, a young seminary student, voiced his concern about German DPs at a 1967 congregation meeting. Vanker was a member of what one pastor once referred to as Waterloo Lutheran Seminary’s “rebellious generation” of seminary students. Vanker and his fellow students in the late 1960s developed a reputation for questioning the community’s ethnic traditions in favour of their more “modern” and evangelical approaches to preaching. They particularly criticized the insistence of pastors like Lotz who encouraged German-language services, and instead favoured English-language services so that their churches would appeal to “all” Canadians. After listening to various members of St. Peter’s praise its work among German DPs, Vanker requested that the church council authorize a special committee in order to discern whether the church’s leadership “should contribute more towards the English segment of the congregation.” He believed that the church should place a greater emphasis on integration so that the Germans “might proceed unitedly (sic) in the total congregation.”<sup>90</sup> Vanker was clearly an outlier at the meeting, as his motion did not receive endorsement from the congregation. Unlike Trinity in Toronto, Lotz’s refusal to indulge any of the congregation’s critiques of its German congregants cultivated an atmosphere of tolerance rather than doubt. By the late 1960s, the localization of German culture at St. Peter’s could not be seriously criticized, even by younger members of the congregation like Vanker.

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<sup>89</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 St. Peter’s, reel 13, Annual Congregation Meeting, 3 February 1957.

<sup>90</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter’s, reel 18, Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes, 29 January 1967.

St. Peter's German traditions continued into the 1960s, even without Lotz's insistence. When Lotz retired from St. Peter's in 1961, the church council had to find a replacement pastor. They created a list of desirable traits that they wanted their new pastor to embody. At the top of the list, they stated their new pastor had to speak fluent German. Thus, they disqualified several promising candidates with important family lineages in the community. The church council rejected Fred Little, the son of seminarian and St. Peter's congregant C.H. Little, from the position even though he had completed intern work at St. Peter's during his time as a seminary student. The church council cited his weak understanding of the German language as the primary reason they rejected him. Instead, the majority of the church council voted to offer the job of pastor to Otto Reble, John Reble's son, who was bilingual and completed graduate work in Germany.<sup>91</sup> Otto graciously declined the position and the congregation subsequently offered the job to Henry Opperman in 1961.<sup>92</sup> As Opperman was born in Waterloo County and spoke fluent German, he seemed the perfect fit for St. Peter's. Opperman accepted the call and looked forward to return to "the city of my birth and early life."<sup>93</sup> In selecting Opperman, the congregation ensured that they had a pastor that would maintain the congregation's German culture.

Opperman's arrival at St. Peter's coincided with an internal debate about the congregation's future. St. Peter's grew considerably in size since the end of the Second World War thanks to the arrival of so many German DPs to Kitchener's downtown core. The church council frequently commented on the church's cramped quarters as a result of the congregation's steady growth. Shortly after Opperman's arrival, the church council started to consult with the

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<sup>91</sup>LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter's, reel 18, Church Council Minutes, 13 June 1961; LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter's, reel 18, Special Meeting of Church Council Minutes, 28 June 1961.

<sup>92</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter's, reel 18, Special Meeting of Church Council Minutes, 29 October 1961.

<sup>93</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.1.1.55, Albert W. Lotz to Henry Opperman, 31 October 1961; LA, ESF, Folder 50.1.1.55, Opperman to St. Peter's Congregation, 6 November 1961.

congregation about whether it should construct a new larger church building, or perhaps split into two separate English and German-language congregations. In 1963, the congregation ultimately decided to remain as one single congregation that would keep its German heritage and customs an essential part of the church. Opperman ensured the congregation continued its German and Canadian cultures while the new church building moved towards completion. In June 1963 the church council unanimously voiced their dedication to “work harmoniously toward the ultimate objective, set out by the church Council, of a total congregational life and attitude” based on its shared German and English traditions.<sup>94</sup>

Congregational cohesion at St. Peter’s represented a model for other Lutheran congregations to follow. By the early 1960s, the CLWR continued to remind congregations that they “must continue to be the back-bone of all our efforts to make our migrants feel at home.” John Reble agreed and proudly told his audience at St. Peter’s that their “policy and method...in this respect is well known throughout the Church. It is with St. Peter’s an act concerned love and not by law,” that they welcomed German newcomers into their church. He maintained that the German-English model at St. Peter’s continued to be a shining example in Lutheran congregations throughout Canada.<sup>95</sup> The new St. Peter’s church building was completed by 1967-1968 and allowed the congregation to continue its German-English traditions in less cramped quarters. “We can justly and humbly proud of our new building in the heart of the city,” Reble told the congregation in 1968.<sup>96</sup> St. Peter’s provided pastors with strong evidence that the localization of German culture helped produce unified and model congregations.

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<sup>94</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter’s, reel 18, Special Congregational Meeting Minutes, 23 June 1963.

<sup>95</sup> LA, ESF, Folder 50.1.1.55, The Pastor’s Report, 1962.

<sup>96</sup> LA, ESF, LM10 Kitchener St. Peter’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, reel 18, Annual Congregational Meeting Minutes, 28 January 1968.

## Conclusion

Publicity material distributed by Waterloo County Lutherans often relied on Biblical passages in order to motivate their laypeople to donate charitably to the many DP fundraising campaigns of the 1940s and 1950s. They frequently quoted Matthew 25:35: “For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. I was thirsty, and you gave me something to drink. I was a stranger, and you took me in.” The passage aptly represents the charitable spirit pastors wished to instill in their followers and encouraged them to assist a German DP stranger they had likely never met. Yet, “stranger” does not fully capture how German-Canadian Lutherans conceptualized needy Germans and Lutheran DPs following the war, either. German Lutherans in Waterloo County freely gave their time, money, and resources to help German Lutherans in Europe due to a sense of ethnic and religious solidarity. The ethnic and religious bonds that existed between German-Canadian Lutherans and DPs ensured that local Lutherans never conceived of postwar immigrants as strangers. As fellow Germans and Lutherans, DPs were just newcomers to the already thriving German culture in Waterloo County.

The localization of German culture in Waterloo County helps explain why local Lutherans greeted DPs so enthusiastically. Stories like the pioneer myth created a cultural framework that not only made German Canadians feel welcomed, but could also be extended to make DPs feel at home as well. Unlike other Canadian communities like Toronto, gatekeepers had little success assimilating German DPs in Waterloo County. Gatekeepers tried to enforce the English language to encourage assimilation, but did not have the same power that they did in other communities dominated by Anglo-Canadians. The KWCF, and other gatekeepers like Joseph Connell, could not assimilate German DPs into an Anglo-Canadian society because the

localized culture in Waterloo County was German, not English. The localization of German culture was so strong that, by the 1960s, the KWCF included prominent members of the German-Canadian community like the Rebles and the Kaufmans. As members of the KWCF noted, it was difficult to encourage DP assimilation when the established community of German Canadians had yet to fully assimilate either.

Examining the interactions between DPs and German-Canadian Lutherans in Waterloo County provides a unique counterpoint to the emphasis on assimilation in postwar Canadian history. Although DPs no doubt came to adopt more Canadian and English norms in the decades beyond this study, the initial waves of DPs did not feel the same pressure to assimilate in Waterloo County that they encountered elsewhere in Canada. Pastors and congregants alike reaffirmed their desire to continue worshipping in the German language and incorporated DPs into their congregations. Although DPs may have arrived as strangers, Waterloo County's localized German cultures ensured they did not remain that way for long.