Lutheranism in South Australia — its origins and contributions to South Australian life

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Introduction

In 2015 Australians commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli landing. To many Australians, Gallipoli is viewed as the formation of our nation, and the foundation of our national identity through ideals such as mateship, bravery, endurance, honour and ingenuity in the face of adversity. Over the next few years of the Centenary of Anzac, Australians, and the world, will be reflecting on the events of World War One. Australia, a newly formed nation, was keen to prove its worth during the war, as were the individuals who went to fight and embark upon what they believed would be a grand adventure. But what was happening in Australia during the war? A particular map of South Australia appeared many times from 1916 in the South Australian newspapers, and even on the front page of the Sydney Mirror. It was captioned with ‘Is this Germany or South Australia?’ or ‘Deutschland Ueber Sued Australien’.
A debate raged: was it unpatriotic to the war effort to have a state with so many German place-names? The following is an excerpt from one of those discussions from *The Mail* 27 May 1916 p. 10:

Tolerance has invariably distinguished the British. While those remarkable changes have been in progress, not only in the enemy’s country, but also in that of one of their allies, they have offered no protest against the use of German. The Prince of Wales has not abandoned the Teutonic motto ‘Ich Dien’ (I serve) on his crest. The Australians, in particular, have been marvellously lenient. Shops conducted by people of enemy origin have not been interfered with, and the internments have been relatively few. The language has not even been banned from the schools. The time has, however, arrived for South Australia to take stock of the German names which figure on her maps, and in doing so the authorities will be only following the example met by the Berlin officials. Extremes in this land of freedom are deprecated, but several titles are outrageously offensive at the present juncture. It is an insult to our glorious Allies…. Splendid confirmation of British generosity is found, among other things, in the fact that today Adelaide has a statue on the pedestal of which there is a beautiful panel illustrative of the departure from their own country of German emigrants for the land of religious liberty—South Australia. Realising the excellent work the settlers from the Fatherland have done out here, few people would advocate the revocation of every name having a Teutonic ring, although this State has many of them, among which may be quoted Kaiserstuhl, Rosenthal, Buchsfelde, Hahndorf, Blumberg, Friedrichstadt, Lobethal, Neudorf, Friedrichwalde, New Mecklenburg, Heidelberg, New Hamburg, Steinfeldt, Gruenthal…

The debate ended with the changing of these 79 German place-names in 1917.

Why are there so many German names here, what do these German place-names have to do with Lutherans in Australia, and what does this have to do with the contribution of Lutherans to the South Australian colony and state?

At the outbreak of World War One, the Lutheran church in Australia was commonly known as ‘the German church’, because it was founded by migrants from Prussia—regions now in Germany and Poland. German was the language of the Lutheran faith—used for services, printing the church papers, and teaching children the basics of faith at school and in confirmation lessons. The colonial newspapers regularly reported on events of ‘our German friends’, noting their steadfastness, their work ethic, their cultural peculiarities and their faith. Church events, such as dedications, regularly included a German service in the morning and an English service in the afternoon—always well attended by the community at large. In 1899, Governor Sir Samuel Way laid the foundation stone for St Stephen’s church in Adelaide. The scene was ‘gay with flags which fluttered from the scaffold poles’ and ‘the German flag and the Union Jack were floating in the breeze side by side’ (Hoffman, 2012). Their language use and peculiar customs, so different to the British settlers, were noticeable, and therefore the term ‘German church’ and ‘German friends’ was used—and until the outbreak of war it was an affable epithet!
These Lutheran migrants settled initially in Klemzig and Hahndorf before they began to spread across the state, and in fact, across the nation. Many regions in the Adelaide Hills, the Barossa, and later the mid-north and along the Murray River, were first settled by German Lutherans. They named their communities after places in their homeland, significant people in their migration, religious names, or names that described the locality and terrain—hence South Australia ended up with a map that could have been confused with Germany!

The Lutheran Church in Australia had begun in 1838 with the arrival of about 500 migrants from Prussia, led by their Pastor, August Kavel. They were sponsored personally by George Fife Angas of the South Australian Company, who had taken pity on their religious plight and the persecution they were facing in Prussia.

In 19th century Prussia there were two Protestant churches—the Lutheran church, to which the majority of Prussians belonged, and the Reformed (or Calvinist) church to which the King belonged. In an attempt to simplify church governance, in the spirit of modern tolerance, and because his wife was of the Lutheran church, the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm III united these two churches under one administration. This occurred in 1817 on the 300th anniversary of the beginning of Luther’s Reformation.

Over the following decade the King introduced a new worship book to be used by the two churches, and by 1830, its use became compulsory. However, a group of Lutherans who were to become known as ‘Old Lutherans’ refused to use this worship book, arguing that it was against their conscience and did not allow them to worship in the true Lutheran manner—the way they and their forefathers had worshipped since Luther’s Reformation. This resulted in these Old Lutherans worshipping in secret, led by a handful of pastors who resigned or were dismissed from office in the King’s state church for not using the approved worship book. If caught holding these services, the pastors were imprisoned. Parishioners were fined and these fines were doubled in each successive instance until their meagre resources were exhausted.
In contrast to most of the rest of the world at the time, schooling in Prussia was compulsory, which it had been since the mid-18th century. However, since most schools were parish schools administered by the local pastor and paid for by parishioners, it followed that the Old Lutherans refused to send their children to the schools run by the church they opposed. Unfortunately, there was no alternative school for them to attend. The children were therefore truant and the parents subject to penalties and fines. If they couldn't pay, their goods—including livestock, tools and implements, furniture and clothing—were confiscated or they were imprisoned.

It seems that the authorities in the Züllichau district were particularly zealous in prosecuting truant Old Lutherans. According to Gottlob Dolling in Rentschen in 1833 ‘it started with forcing the children to go to school but then nothing came of that either so they came with truancy fines, which they didn't pay either so their goods were confiscated’ (Zweck 2013b).

In short, it was an intolerable situation which resulted in Pastor Kavel and his followers migrating to Australia in 1838 aboard four ships: the Prince George, the Bengalee, the Zebra and the Catherina, settling initially at the village they named Klemzig, after Pastor Kavel's home parish. It has been acknowledged that these migrants are in fact, Australia’s first refugees.

The migrants on the ship the Zebra however, did not remain long at Klemzig. Their story is noteworthy in that the captain of the ship, 34-year-old Captain Dirk Hahn, had been so impressed by their behaviour aboard the ship, and by their religious piety, that he undertook to personally assist them to settle into the new colony. When they arrived at Port Adelaide the Zebra migrants, greeted by an unbuilt, Spartan colony and hampered by a language barrier, were unsure of what to do and where to go. Hahn acted far beyond his duties as captain, encouraging and assisting his charges to find productive land to support themselves and produce goods to sell in Adelaide.

Kavel’s plan had been for the Zebra families to settle at Klemzig alongside the previous arrivals, but on inspection by delegates of the Zebra, it was determined that the land would not be sufficiently productive. Hahn encouraged his charges to search for land elsewhere, so that they could take care of their physical needs as well as their spiritual needs saying ‘I know you emigrated on account of your faith but believe me, the care for the soul is fruitless, if the body is left exposed to hunger and worry. God has given you a body as well as a soul. Take counsel together on whether the soil will produce something before you have consumed all your stored provisions.’

After several unsuccessful attempts to secure a lease in the Adelaide district, Captain Hahn encountered land-owners MacFarlane, Finiss and Dutton, who owned land near Mount Barker. Hahn arranged to go with them to inspect a portion of their land. Determining that it was suitable for his charges and giving his opinion that ‘it seems to me that nature has squandered and lavished her gifts on Australia. I would never have believed such land to exist on the earth’, he arranged the conditions of the lease and this was signed on 28 January 1839.
One of the children aboard this ship who went to Hahndorf was Traugott Wilhelm Boehm, and one of his descendants is Adam Goodes, Australian Rules footballer and 2014 Australian of the Year. The writer told this part of the migration story and religious persecution to Adam as part of SBS television's *Who do you think you are?* episode which aired in 2014.

The migrants leased this land, and named the settlement ‘Hahndorf’ (‘dorf’ meaning village) in grateful recognition of their captain.

With such a large and widespread congregation, Kavel needed assistance and he sought help from other Old Lutheran pastors in Prussia. Gotthard Daniel Fritzsche arrived in 1841 aboard the *Skjold* with his congregation of 250 souls—they too are considered as religious refugees. Fritzsche and his congregation were accommodated by Kavel’s people in Klemzig, Glen Osmond and Hahndorf, but it was obvious that more land was required, so they founded the village of Lobethal (meaning ‘Valley of Praise’), while 28 families founded Bethany, the first Lutheran village in the Barossa.

**A chiefly mining country**

Johannes Menge, a German who was employed by the South Australian Company as a mineralogist, had visited the Barossa Valley and recommended it as highly fertile and productive land for settlement. Menge, observed in the *South Australian Register* of 30 May 1840 ‘I am sure this will become in time a chiefly mining country’. German (and Lutheran) miners from the Harz Mountains were prominent in the early years of copper mining at Burra, while the Goddefroy shipping company of Hamburg transported the copper to Europe after off-loading the latest contingent of German immigrants.

As families continued to grow, and land was needed to support new generations; as more Lutherans migrated to South Australia—often joining relatives or fellow countrymen; and as land was opened across the state, Lutherans continued to establish new villages. A Lutheran legacy for land division and conveyancing is the Torrens title system—named after Robert Torrens, an English parliamentarian, although it is claimed that the idea in fact came from Lutheran lawyer Ulrich Hubbe, who had migrated in 1842 after assisting the first contingents of Old Lutherans in Hamburg. From the Adelaide Hills to the Barossa, Lutherans expanded to the Mallee and the mid-north in the 1860s, and the Murray Flats, the Upper North and Yorke Peninsula in the 1870s. Often they poetically named the settlements describing the countryside or their own feelings: valley of praise; valley of roses; valley of hope; hill of flowers; green hill; hill of grace; beautiful spring; beautiful field. The place-name changes of 1917 eradicated such a picturesque description of what the Lutherans encountered and felt when they saw the places that were to become their homes. In at least one instance, the name was changed to reflect the contribution of the settlement to South Australia: Lobethal was changed to Tweedvale in recognition of the woollen mills, which were started by the Lutherans Kramm, Kumnick and Kleinschmidt in 1870, and over the next 120 years went on to become a significant export industry and a household name throughout Australia under the Onkaparinga brand.
The village of Bethany in 1846. Plate 60 from South Australia illustrated by George French Angas (London: Thomas M’Lean, 1847). ‘One of the most interesting and beautifully situated of the German settlements in South Australia is the village of Bethany, at the foot of the Barossa Hills ... the open country, and rich, undulating districts in the vicinity, with the mountain ranges beyond, render the situation a desirable one ... The time chosen for this scene is a calm evening towards the end of summer (February) when all is glowing in the violet warmth of the departing day; the effect represented is one peculiar to the clear, dry climate of Australia, at this season of the year’.

State Library of South Australia B 15276 / 60

‘The schoolroom of the Aborigines at the native location’ on the banks of the Torrens June 1843.

Sketch by William Anderson Cawthorne on page 24 of his Literarium diarium or Diary of daily life in Adelaide 1842-43

State Library of New South Wales Mitchell Library A 103 / Item 3.

The locality was called Piltawodli (brush-tail possum home) by the Kaurna people—today a memorial plaque in the car park near the Torrens Lake Weir marks the place.
It is estimated that 750 to 2,000 Old Lutherans migrated for religious freedom. They were quick to become naturalised British citizens: after the first Lutheran constituting synod in May 1839, 121 attendees walked to Government House in Adelaide to sign and pledge an oath to “bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. So help me God” (Schubert 1997, p. 100). The date was Queen Victoria’s birthday. Pastor Kavel spoke: “We have found what we have been seeking for many years—religious liberty: we hailed, and hail that Sovereign under whose direction we are now placed: we consider her and her Government as ordained of God, and with all our heart we are desirous of being faithful subjects and useful citizens’ (Schubert 1997, p. 100).

After the persecution in Prussia ended in 1845, Lutherans continued to migrate, for a mixture of ‘push and pull’ factors—with approximately 15,000 settling in South Australia by the turn of the century. Enticed perhaps by economic reasons—above all the possibility of owning their own freehold land—many Prussian Old Lutherans simply wanted to join fellow believers in a place where they were treated as equals, whereas they remained a disadvantaged, and often derided, minority denomination in Prussia. The major factor was surely chain migration, as South Australian German Lutherans would write and tell of their new life and success in South Australia which would encourage their families, friends and neighbours to migrate. Shipping company agents were employed to ‘spruik’ South Australia and actively seek people to fill their passenger ships on the costly Australia run. And still others came for adventure, for prosperity, or because they were unhappy with the political and social situation in Germany and came for a better life.

**Skilled migration**

In 1849 there was a new group of German migrants aboard the ship *Princess Louise*, many of whom were intellectuals or skilled artisans, leaving Germany as they had participated in or sympathised with the failed revolutions that swept across Europe in 1848. They chartered the ship themselves, after having formed a South Australian Colonisation Society in Berlin (Payne & Schomburgk 1998). Many of these migrants were also Lutheran, though not Old Lutherans, and left a lasting legacy on South Australian society. They were advised to come to South Australia by the great German geographer Alexander von Humboldt because it already had German settlers, and they initially attempted to follow the pattern of rural settlement at Buchsfelde.

While well-known names such as Carl Linger, musician and composer of the *Song of Australia*; Julius Schomburgk, goldsmith; Richard Schomburgk, botanist and head of the Adelaide Botanic Gardens; and Alexander Schramm, artist, embodied the highest achievements of German culture in fields such as music, botany, education and the arts, politics and the press, those same fields of activity flourished at a range of levels throughout the German and Lutheran community. Although they often moved in urban and English intellectual social spheres, the ‘48ers perhaps represent the pinnacle of the broad and highly varied German and Lutheran community, with two—Otto Schomburgk and Carl Muecke—establishing and ministering to liberal Lutheran congregations at Buchsfelde and Tabor Tanunda, which later merged into the Lutheran mainstream. In many respects they were similar to the Lutherans who migrated before them and those who followed. Whilst the earlier emigrants had come
for religious freedom, these ‘48ers came for freedom from the economic and political situation. They came from a society that valued knowledge, culture, education and hard work—values that are so evident through the ‘ordinary’ Lutheran communities that settled across the country.

The industriousness of the Lutheran immigrants in the new colony is apparent. Within days of the migrants arriving aboard the ship Zebra in 1839, German Lutherans were carting water from the spring at the Halfway Hotel on the Port Road to sell at Port Adelaide. The women in particular were noted for their hard work: already at the Port and in Klemzig they became the washerwomen for local households; they were proficient at driving carts or wielding an axe, and it was the women who shorn the sheep for MacFarlane or the South Australia Company in the Adelaide Hills. John Bull in 1884 wrote of the German women shearing sheep: ‘The shearers were principally young women… without shoes and stockings… who were waited on by the men of the village, who, when called on, caught and carried the sheep to the shearer’ (German Heritage Research Group 2010, p. 9).

Many of the male Lutheran migrants had been tradesmen in Prussia. A newspaper reported in 1839 that ‘the men (whatever may be the appropriate trade which they more immediately profess) are all useful labourers in digging and fencing, and many of them excellent in building, sawing, and carpentry work. In labour of this kind they are often preferred to our own countrymen, who in many cases might do well to imitate their patient and enduring habits’ (Schubert 1997, p. 100). More importantly, this meant that their settlements were able to be largely self-sufficient, with all the necessary skills represented among them.

**A life of agriculture**

Because ‘Kavel’s People’ had migrated together as a congregation seeking religious freedom, it was natural for them to settle as a community so they could engage together in congregational life. Whilst faith was the impetus, they also needed to be able to support themselves as a community. Angas had intended them to work as labourers hired out to English settlers across the colony until they paid off their debts to him for the ship’s passage, but Pastor Kavel, as soon as he arrived, recognised that the colony could only flourish through the kind of agriculture his people were best able to provide, and wrote to Angas: ‘If the ground continues to be barren and waste as it is now, a comparatively small number of wealthy men will get immensely rich … but the greater number … will and must become beggars, spending their little money in high wages for dear provisions before they have been able to lay their hand on the plough’ (Schubert 1997, p. 83).

With the aid of Charles Flaxman, Angas’s agent based in South Australia, Kavel persuaded Angas to allow his Germans to settle on two of his country sections, although this meant incurring even more debt to Angas. Having been peasant farmers in Prussia, they established small-holdings for agricultural endeavours, the first of which was Klemzig where they immediately began to grow vegetables and sell them to the townsfolk in Adelaide. Later the women walked each week from Hahndorf to sell produce in the city.
In contrast, many English settlers were large land-holders—pastoralists—and they did not provide the colony with vegetables or other fresh foodstuffs. According to August Fiedler, who opened the first inn at Klemzig, the English paid good prices for vegetables ‘because the Englishman knew only about his trade’.

In the early planned villages each family had their own plot of land which ran lengthways from the village street down to the river, thereby all having equal access to the water source. All families grew their own food including grains, vines, fruit and vegetables (Munchenberg et al 1992, p. 49). The success of the Barossa Valley wines for example, grew out of the community practice of mixed farming on each plot of land: although the eastern provinces of Prussia have never been regarded as a wine-growing region, wine was widely grown there but only on a small scale in the 19th century. The creators of Australia’s most prestigious red wines can trace their ancestry back to that region (Maksymowicz 2014): think Hentschke’s Hill of Grace and Max Schubert’s Grange Hermitage, which are certainly the pinnacle of the wine industry that grew out of this broad base. However, Fiedler at Klemzig and above all at Langmeil experimented with all types of grapes, even exhibiting in Paris.

Pastors and teachers were also allocated plots of land to supplement their meagre and often unpaid stipends. It wasn’t unusual for a pastor to be given a cow by the parishioners, or for a portion of his wages to be paid in butter and eggs, and regular deliveries of wheat and firewood were mandatory. Life was community oriented with, for example, a rolling pin being passed between the women of each household to do their baking, after the weevils had been sifted out of the bad imported flour through the one sieve the village owned.

There were no potatoes to grow until the Alma arrived from Hamburg, and Fiedler, with the help of mineralogist Menge, bought five barrels of seed potatoes to be planted out (Schubert 1997, p. 96). They brought grain with them to plant in their new homeland, but soon realised that rye, the staple grain of their homeland, was unsuitable for the South Australian climate. They turned to wheat, which was just one of the range of products grown on each family’s mixed plot. In 1840 the South Australian Company reported to Britain that the German settlement of Klemzig had cropped 96 acres of barley and 27 of wheat. Hahndorf had sown 100 acres each of wheat and of potatoes, managing to till the soil with home-made implements. The farmers soon realised that they needed larger acreage for their wheat: South Australia became the bread basket of the country as demand rocketed during the 1851-52 gold rushes. The German farmers by and large stayed home and ploughed their fields, and harvested good profits as the price of wheat quadrupled, in turn encouraging expansion into new areas.

Out of the legacy of these communities we have the recent notable Lutheran wheat breeder, Dr Tony Rathjen. In 1965, at the age of 25, Tony was appointed as wheat breeder at the Waite Agricultural Research Institute in Adelaide, transforming wheat from being ‘one of the most risky and poorly adapted of the cultivated crop species in Australia’ in the 1960s to the beginning of the 21st century where ‘bread wheat was regarded as the best adapted of local crops, and despite some problems with stem,
stripe and leaf rusts, the crop least vulnerable to pests and diseases.’ As reported in an ABC television Rural Report of 3 July 2014, Tony’s contribution to this change was ‘disproportionally high’ compared to the rest of Australian contribution. His varieties made up to more than 40% of the wheat grown in Australia. He used the royalties from the Yitpi variety to fund linguistic research of Australian languages and the study of the cultures of Australian Aborigines, particularly in relation to land usage, according to a Waite Research Institute website post on 28 August 2012.

Wheat requires mills, and in Bethany Daniel Schlinke established a water mill in 1843 in the gully that still bears his name, and went on to operate a windmill and then a steam mill. In Hahndorf is Wittwer’s flour mill. As Hahndorf was on the route between Adelaide and Victoria, travellers would stop at the mill for service, having their horses shod at the smithy whilst they waited. At Greenock Christian Finck had a mill, which was eventually taken over by Friedrich Laucke, whose son Condor became famous as a prominent politician as well as a miller. Laucke flour is still well-known and supported in South Australia, with grain developed by Tony Rathjen used in the popular bread mixes that have revolutionised domestic bread baking (Ross 2014).

And to use the wheat you need bakers and a food production industry. In 1837 the South Australian Company sent the ship Solway to settle Kangaroo Island. On board the ship were a number of bakers including Wilhelm Milde from Hamburg. The colony was recruiting migrants (including a significant number of Lutherans) with practical skills, and Milde was contracted for a term of three years (Milde 1984, p. 33). Once his contract ended he opened his own bakery and confectionary business in Currie Street, but unfortunately did not make a profitable business and so moved to Tanunda and eventually became a Lutheran school teacher.

The Menz chocolate factory, producers of our famous Fruchocs, grew from a grocery and bakers business of a Lutheran widow, Magdalena Menz. The business was located in Wakefield Street, not far from St Stephens Church where the family became prominent members. Her sons in 1884 developed the business into a biscuit factory which produced the iconic South Australian biscuits the ‘Yo Yo’ (that now bears the Arnotts brand) and in 1893 added confectionary production to become the company we know today.

Supporting trades
There were of course, other trades supporting the running of the community. There were many blacksmiths and wheelwrights of German descent who built ploughs, cultivators, harrows, strippers, wagons drays and buggies. In the early days the German style wagon was very popular, it was traditional, simply constructed and therefore cheaper. These wagons were drawn by two to four horses. Later, German descended tradesmen also built English wagons (which had springs) and table top trolleys. The latter needed larger teams of horses (8-14 or more) to carry heavier loads (Ross 2014, p. 3).
In 1906 on a property at Sheoak Log (between Daveyston and Rosedale), Johann Carl Wilhelm Ahrens established his own blacksmith shop. He served the local farming community smithing, shoeing horses, and fixing machinery, working hard to build up his loyal clientele base. His son and grandson continued in the business and it grew to be a successful national company, providing silos, rural sheds, and stone and land rollers. Still based at Sheoak Log today, it employs 380 workers internationally with an office in China, and has developed beyond its rural base supporting local agriculture and viticulture to extend into large-scale steel construction and project management.

Interestingly, Wilhelm Ahren’s obituary in the Freeling congregation in 1963, simply states that he died at 90 years, 8 months and 19 days of age. He was a father of eight sons and two daughters and he was baptised, confirmed, married and buried a Lutheran. There is no mention of his success in the business world—the focus is completely on his life as a Lutheran and a father.
Wherever a Lutheran community settled, they set to work to make it habitable and productive. And the number one priority was to ensure there was both a place of worship and a school to educate the children. The usual practice was to erect a school-house first which could be used for teaching throughout the week and then could be used for worship on the weekend—the teacher and students had to rearrange the furniture ready for Sunday worship and the teacher was the church musician playing the violin or organ—music has always been important to Lutherans and an integral part of religious life. In the 19th century Germans were predominant in the music life of Adelaide and beyond, both within and outside the church, from organ builders and music teachers to orchestras, bands and choirs. This continues today, for example, with the Hermannsburg Aboriginal Women's Choir who have recently toured through Germany, and composers such as Andrew Schulz and Graham Koehne. Koehne has recently been appointed Director of the Elder Conservatorium: the conservatorium grew out of the Adelaide Music School founded by Professor Reimann, who was at the same time the organist of Bethlehem Lutheran congregation, playing the organ he had donated to the church.

This practice of schooling was consistent, despite the financial obligation on families struggling to get established. This minority Lutheran community established 115 schools between 1839 and 1914, although not all of them survived. One can argue that the Lutherans had a system of education 30 years before the colony even began to consider compulsory state education in the 1870s—and Lutheran teachers like Rudolph Miethke and Wilhelm Nadebaum who had grown up under a compulsory system in Germany were among the foremost proponents of compulsory schooling.

Teaching English
Education was so important for Lutherans because it was the means of teaching the faith—through the Bible, Luther's catechism and the beloved hymn tradition. All secular subjects were also taught, and before the end of the 19th century English was used for instruction in all subjects except religion and the German language. But the teaching of English had begun much earlier: in 1850 Julius Rechner began teaching English not only to his school pupils but also to local adults in three evening classes each week: from the start the young people were keen to learn English, and contrary to general impressions, they also become involved in local community affairs in district councils and colonial/state politics. It must be noted that in the midst of war hysteria, the government closed all Lutheran primary schools in 1917, with the exception of the school at Koonibba mission near Ceduna.

All three of the first Lutheran settlements established schools in 1839 within a few months of their arrival, and they were soon followed by the first Lutheran school for Aboriginal children. Missionaries Schuermann and Teichelmann began a school for the Kaurna children on the banks of the River Torrens in December 1839—known as Piltawodli. The establishment of the school was a remarkable achievement in view of the fact that they first had to learn the unrecorded language of the Kaurna people, which they could acquire only through interaction with the Kaurna people themselves. Teichelmann records ‘we made the first experiment with instructing the children to read in their own language. And in 1840, six children could write
and about double the number [could] read in their own language’ (Teichelmann 1962 facsimile edition). Letters written in Kaurna by the children were sent to the Dresden Mission Society back in Germany and have now been returned to Adelaide by being presented to the Barr Smith Library at the University of Adelaide during a recent visit by the current Director of the Mission Society.

**Teacher training**

Very early on it was recognised that there needed to be an institution to train more Lutheran pastors in the colony and to train teachers. In 1848, after a few earlier attempts, Pastor Fritzsche established a little college in Lobethal, well before the state was considering training for teachers. One of Fritzsche’s pupils was Traugott Wilhelm Boehm. Fritzsche confirmed Boehm in 1850 and he immediately began training to be a teacher. He was teacher for a period at the Hahndorf congregation school (Butler 1989, p. 19) before he established the Hahndorf Academy in 1857 with partial assistance from a government grant. The Academy was to provide a ‘sound and good English and German Education’ for the population in a predominantly German area, which also included English settlers. It was the first school in South Australia of higher education outside Adelaide. Boehm’s school taught the classics—Latin, Greek, French, German—and English, history, geography, arithmetic, natural philosophy, natural history, drawing and music. The school was attended by pupils from surrounding districts and boarders from Adelaide. Prominent families such as the Bonythons, the Downers, the Holdens and O’Hallorans sent their children to the Academy, and many old scholars contributed greatly to South Australia.

Minister for Education Friedrich Basedow began his career as a teacher in the Lutheran school founded by Pastor Muecke in Tanunda. In 1869 Muecke left the ministry but went on to support the development of technical education, teachers’ colleges and libraries as well as compulsory primary education. Having studied natural science at the Universities of Bonn and Berlin, he had a deep interest and support for teaching science. The championing by Muecke and Basedow led to the development of an agricultural school—Roseworthy College—as noted in their entries in the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. The congregation school attached to Bethlehem Church in Flinders Street, taught both Hans Heysen and Adolf Schulz. In 1908 Schulz became head of South Australia’s teacher-training college, and lectured in education and educational psychology. He was one of the pioneers of Australia’s earliest Diplomas of Education. The Schulz Building at the University of Adelaide is named in his honour.

Teachers at this Bethlehem school included the Heyne sisters, Laura and Ida, daughters of the botanist Ernst Bernhard Heyne (of Heyne’s Nurseries) who had also been chief plantsman at Melbourne Botanic Gardens and who had identified and documented many South Australian plants. He wrote gardening advice for the directory that became the *Lutheran Almanac* and in 1871 published *The fruit, flower and vegetable garden* (Andrew, Thomas and Clark, Adelaide), the first South Australian gardening guide. The Heyne Nursery claims to be one of the oldest family businesses in the land still run by the original family. The Heyne sisters
went on to establish a Lutheran bookshop, which in 1913 became the first church-owned Lutheran book company, which soon became a publishing house. Whilst not owned by the church any longer, the company still exists in Adelaide under the name of OpenBook Howden. Another Heyne sister was Agnes, who married Pastor Kasper Dorsch. She too, was a remarkable teacher. She was the first female to win a University Scholarship, graduating from a Bachelor of Arts at Adelaide University in 1891, being awarded first-class honours in classics and mathematics. She tutored the children of at least four governors. She was appointed as teacher at Concordia College between 1923 and 1943, where she also taught classical languages to theological students. Her position heralded a new era of co-education in private secondary schooling: in recognition of her outstanding teaching skills, her appointment was used as reasoning for turning Concordia College into a co-educational school. The other Lutheran College, Immanuel, already had female students enrolled from 1897.

January 1848 saw the publication of the first foreign-language newspaper in Australia. It was *Die Deutsche Post für die Australischen Colonien*, a bilingual paper which also served to convey government notices to the German-speaking public. The publisher was 22 year old Carl Kornhardt, a Lutheran migrant. In June that year he published an edition of Luther's *Small Catechism*—essential for teaching faith to the children—as well as pamphlets and other materials for local congregations. Prior to this, all religious resources had to be imported or brought out with the migrants, and local publications were sent back to Germany to be printed with German type. In 1862 the first church paper was printed by Georg Eimer in Tanunda, with eleven monthly editions before its abrupt end. In 1865 the paper was taken up again under the editorship and direction of Pastor Auricht. Auricht's printing press (by this time taken over by Pastor Auricht's son) has the distinction of printing the first indigenous New Testament in 1897, translated into Dieri by Lutheran missionaries Reuther and Strehlow (Graetz 1988, p. 101).

**Aboriginal schools and languages**

The early Lutherans left a marvellous legacy for many Aboriginal communities in the sphere of preserving their languages, in ethnography and in championing for the people and their culture even when that went against the grain of government policies. A month before Kavel arrived, two Lutheran missionaries, Clamor Wilhelm Schuermann and Christian Gottlob Teichelmann, arrived in Adelaide. They had been sent by the Dresden Mission Society in Germany in order to minister to the Aboriginal people of South Australia. They were joined in August 1840 by Heinrich August Eduard Meyer and Samuel Gottlob Klose, who worked until 1846 in Adelaide, Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln, at which time their mission work was terminated because of lack of financial support. The instructions given to them by the Mission Society included the following: Church and school must go together as Christians must be able to read God’s word, The Scriptures must be available in the people’s language, and the preaching of the Word must be based on accurate knowledge of a people gained through studying their religion and culture (Lockwood 2013, pp. 83-84). Schools were also established at Port Lincoln and at Encounter Bay as well as Piltawodli on the River Torrens.
An excerpt from Teichelmann’s 1841 *Aborigines of South Australia: illustrative and explanatory notes of the manners, customs, habits and superstitions of the natives of South Australia*, reveals the missionaries’ cultural and language endeavours, in order to preach God’s grace:

The Aborigines of South Australia have generally been represented by those who have reported of this land, as a race of beings differing little from the higher animals. The statements are intended to apply to the mental endowments of the Aboriginal inhabitants of South Australia, they are incorrect, and most likely not resting upon personal enquiry and experience; as these will meet in them with the same gifts and talents as in Europeans; for in instructing their children the same faculties are observed as in others, so that there is comparatively no difference between a European and an Aboriginal child. But we can hardly judge of a nation’s mental faculties before we are properly acquainted with them, which to this very moment is not the case with the natives of South Australia, an acquaintance which under the past and present conditions could not be made… (p. 5). Two years we have been living amongst this people, and have left nothing untried. First we endeavoured to acquire their language to a certain degree, which lasted more than a year, before we came so far as to converse with them upon more serious subjects. To accomplish this, we went to their encampments in the morning and evening, took them to our cottage, worked together with them, as building their houses, digging and planting for their and our own use, instructing them in other manual labour, for which they got rations…. (p. 11).

The legacy these missionaries left is still being harvested. By the 1930s there was no person alive who could speak the Kaurna language. A number of years ago, the records that the missionaries had kept—their diaries, correspondence and vocabularies, which are held by Lutheran Archives—began to be used by linguists of the University of Adelaide. This resulted in the Kaurna language reclamation program. Initially it was mostly the language resources that were utilised, but increasingly, the correspondence and the contextual records are being studied. More knowledge is being gleaned of the society and culture of the Kaurna people, helping further with cultural repatriation.

Around Adelaide, Encounter Bay and Port Lincoln dual names in English and Kaurna, Ngarrindjeri and Bangarla are being used, for example for parklands and on buses. These are words that have been reclaimed through these programs. New words are able to be created for modern day appliances, such as telephone or internet, based on existing structures. The legacy left by the records and the work of the Dresden missionaries is giving back an identity to a community which had been lost. The Kaurna language, for example, is now taught in some primary schools.

Other Lutheran missions in South Australia were at Bethesda, situated at Killalpaninna on Coopers Creek and also at Hermannsburg in Central Australia. Of particular note from Hermannsburg are the Strehlows—missionary Carl and his wife Frieda, and their son Ted and his anthropological and linguistic work. Also of note is the painter Albert Namatjira, who was baptised at Hermannsburg, lived there,
and began his painting there. In fact, it was Lutheran missionaries who first took his art work to Lutheran conventions for sale, and contributed to his rising fame. His funeral address by Pastor Albrecht in 2002 stated:

Albert, as we called him, was not only a member of the Aranda tribe and of the Lutheran Church; I venture to say, he was not [even] looked upon as belonging to Australia only, he was [a] world figure. Through his art, he had interpreted the beauty of this country to a vast multitude of people. He had made them see our ranges, trees, and landscapes in that glorious sunshine, and under those changing colours, as perhaps no other corner of our globe knows.

The strong Aboriginal art tradition emanating from Lutheran missions continues in the painters of the Hermannsburg School, the Hermannsburg Potters who were the first indigenous group to take up ceramic arts, and in the dot-painting of the Papunya artists; and the Yalata women who told their story of the Maralinga bomb tests so powerfully through images in Christobel Mattingley’s 2009 *Maralinga: the Anangu story* (Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, NSW).

**Closing words**

In this paper it has only been possible to skim the surface of the Lutheran contribution to South Australia and it has barely touched on arts and culture. However, it is clear that Lutherans exerted great influence upon the shaping of South Australia, and still make valuable contributions. For the first century after their arrival Lutherans, and the contribution they made, were conspicuous because of their German names and their use of the German language. Today the cohesion based on the foundation of their faith continues, but in the multicultural society that has developed particularly since World War Two, the traditional German names look quite normal among the wide diversity of languages and cultures that are not simply tolerated but positively appreciated by Australians today.

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