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Cover photos: left to right, top row: Horst W. Gutsche (Lutheran Church), Gustav Sonnenberg (German Church of God), Georg Nordmann (Catholic Church), Clement Hoyler (Moravian Church); bottom row: Emil Eberhardt (Lutheran Church), Theodore E. Jesske (Evangelical Missionary Church), ??? (German Baptist Church), Wilhelm Kowalski (Pentecostal Assemblies)

Preface

On one day in September 2015 I met Pastor Horst Gutsche in a café in Calgary's Bridgeland for the first—and as it turned out—the only time, in person. We had been aware of each other's work, and our e-mails before this meeting had established that we had many interests in common. He was a very active researcher and had published extensively on the Germans from Russia, especially from Bessarabia; I had researched and published six books on the cultural history of the German-speaking communities in Alberta from the 1880s to the present. At the time of our meeting he had already put together a huge database on the personal histories and careers of German-speaking Lutheran pastors in Alberta, and had begun to collect biographical and career information on German-speaking clergy in several other religious groups. I was just completing my most recent project and was ready to continue my work in this area. So we decided to pool our experience, knowledge and resources to compile a *Biographical directory of clergy in Alberta's German-speaking communities: From the 1880s to the present*, recognizing the pivotal importance of the German-speaking churches in the settlement of the province and their absolutely essential function in creating well-organized communities. The directory would consist of entries for clergypersons in the various faiths and religious communities, presenting in concise form their lives and work among the members of their communities. Based on his extensive knowledge of pastors in all faith groups across the province Horst would continue to research their history to the present and to put together several data bases. It was decided that I would follow up on contacts that he had already established and to begin to work with certain other religious groups and to compile histories of their German-language pastors on my own. In addition, I would be responsible for editing, formatting and publishing the final manuscript.

This meeting was the beginning of an intensive and productive working relationship developed through countless phone calls and literally hundreds of e-mails, and over time, we developed a very close personal friendship. But when we began our work Horst knew that he was suffering from an advanced stage of melanoma, and the time of his passing was not a question of if but of when.

I followed up on the numerous contacts in the eleven religious groups with German-speaking pastors in their history that Horst had established, and developed many of my own. I had the good fortune to receive excellent support from the leaders as well as the membership in the various groups.

A year and a half after our first meeting the efforts by so many have come to fruition in an authoritative reference work of about 190 pages. It is also available on the Internet, which makes it possible to search its contents by key words such as birth place, background, training and service.

Horst was active to the end not only with this book but with other ideas such as establishing a central location for a library on Russian-German materials in Alberta, consolidating the many smaller holdings in Calgary, Edmonton, Medicine Hat and elsewhere. For both of us the idea of keeping alive and passing on the history of the pastors in Alberta's German-speaking communities was very important. As he said at one time, "I fear that the next generations will no longer have the 'characters' that immigrated to build up our province and to start a new life here."

Pastor Horst Gutsche completed the massive research on the bibliographical entries for Lutheran pastors and a first draft just a few weeks before his passing. He died in Edmonton on December 8, 2016 and is buried at Onoway, Alberta.

This book is dedicated to Pastor Horst Gutsche.

Manfred Prokop

Okotoks, May 2017