

## SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S PILGRIM FATHERS

Many of you may know that South Australia was the only state or colony settled without convicts. But it's more than just the absence of convicts that makes South Australia's beginnings exceptional. It is the presence of men like Pastor August Kavel, who was born in Prussia in 1798. His is an exciting story of freedom.

In Prussia, in 1830, the King issued a decree that effectively created a State Church with a new order of worship. Many Christians were against such a move and stood up for their freedom to worship. There followed many years of persecution. Churches were closed, pastors were sent to prison and families had possessions taken from them. But nothing could stop these determined Christians who continued to meet in homes, barns and forests. Their faith was strengthened through such trials and revival broke out.

In the face of such pressure, emigration seemed the only answer. For several years, Pastor Kavel struggled to make arrangements, until, finally, in 1838, the Christians were released to sail to freedom in South Australia.

When they arrived, they were met by severe heat, drought and the suspicion of the British settlers. They worked tirelessly to farm the new ground and their agricultural success helped the struggling colony through some very difficult times.

The centre of their village was the church, with services held more often and attended more faithfully than in any other section of the colony. They sang hymns while they worked and, while others complained of the hardships of pioneer life, these faithful Christians rejoiced in their freedom to worship God.

The industry, culture and Christianity of these brave pioneers contributed richly to the development of South Australia. They provided a strong foundation of freedom, unity and worship, a foundation that the church of today can build on.